



THE ASSOCIATION & VOICE OF THE US SEWN PRODUCTS INDUSTRY

MILLENNIAL CORNER:

Pandemic brought out the best in our industry

Editor's note: Our continuing Millennial Corner feature on the newsletter gives the younger generation – who in the near future will serve in leadership positions and guide the direction of the association – a larger voice and platform NOW and will help them engage more the entire SEAMS' membership while busting stereotypes.

By Ryan Smith
Sales Representative
Printcraft

I think it goes without saying that every person worldwide has been affected in some way or another by COVID-19. This virus killed, injured, stressed out and tested the best people, processes and industries that the world has to offer. It changed the way people viewed and interacted with each other and the way we perceived each other. It highlighted the vulnerabilities associated with the ease of global connection. It tested our most innate human qualities, standards and freedoms.

We all made a sacrifice for the greater good and health of our neighbors, friends, family and even complete strangers. We changed the way we lived, communicated, worked, educated and operated. We completely changed our lives, all to save other's lives.

Charles Darwin once said, "It is not the strongest or the most intelligent who will survive but those who can best manage change," and this was more apparent than ever in February 2020. We have always worked to instill the necessity of adaptation at Printcraft, as this is the key to success and prosperity. Change can be a painstaking process but will always be the brainchild for growth.

It was imperative that we began working with the DLA (Defense Logistics Agency) and multiple other partners to source and supply products needed for PPE (Personal Protective Equipment). We began working with new materials and modifying machinery, too. We did what was necessary in order to retain all of our employees and meet the ever-changing needs of the pandemic.

It was nice to see so many American companies adapt and work together throughout the pandemic. By all means, the pandemic emphasized the importance of a vertical supply chain in the U.S. without having to rely on foreign nations for products. This has and will continue to make the Made In USA movement prosper and reach heights we haven't seen in a half century. To see everyone come together during such difficult times, it reassured me that the heart and soul of the American spirit is alive and well.

EMPOWERING THE MADE IN AMERICA MOVEMENT



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One of the most important aspects of our business that changed immediately was the personal interaction with our customers and suppliers. We like to get in front of our customers and suppliers and have always placed face-to-face meetings and visits as a top priority. Working in an isolated environment on video calls was a huge transition for us and always felt so impersonal.

Out of all the various aspects of our business that will permanently change, swapping in-person meetings for video meetings will not happen. As things have relaxed over the last couple months, it has been nice getting back in front of everyone and showing our gratitude.

We have been very fortunate over the last year to have kept full employment and grow our business and market reach. Over the last year, our business has exploded and allowed us the opportunity to hire more staff and expand our facility. We would never have been able to do this without cooperation and loyalty from our incredible staff, customer base, supplier network and amazing organizations such as SEAMS.

Considering what Americans were able to do in a few short months, I have faith that all of us will continue working together to build our independence from foreign nations.