



THE ASSOCIATION & VOICE OF THE US SEWN PRODUCTS INDUSTRY

MILLENNIAL CORNER:

## **Technology helped Henderson Machinery get job done during pandemic**

*Editor's note: Here is our latest installment of our Millennial Corner feature. This blog 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 Sean Burke**

**Director of Business Development, Henderson Machinery Co.**

I feel like I need to start this out with an over-used phrase we have all seen too much during the past 18 months, but I will spare everyone. It has been a rollercoaster for the industry as a whole and for me at Henderson Machinery. As an equipment supplier, our foundation is service and support, which was a little difficult at times last year and this year.

Henderson Machinery Inc. was deemed essential due to our customers making PPE and medical textile products. We have a great group of technicians with over 20+ years of installing, servicing and providing training for textile equipment we sell. With the travel restrictions, a lot of them felt like they were spinning their wheels because they couldn't be onsite assisting customers.

With a lot of patience from our technicians, and my filming/video editing background, we were able to compile a library of videos ranging from machinery installation to fixing once-in-a-lifetime problems. As one of our technicians, Steve says, "We R'in and D'in!" (Researching and Developing) and trying to replicate equipment/quality issues was a hurdle at times, but it made us all think outside the box.

The pandemic has affected how we do business, but it was a necessary bridge we had to cross to get out of some outdated practices. Social media, video calls and creative marketing have been valuable tools to get more dialogue between existing and new customers to fully understand their production requirements and bottle necks. From a Millennial perspective, I like this style of working and engaging with people – it is far less intrusive than showing up at their door.

The use of video calls was also critical with our suppliers since they could not assist us with onsite installations. There were a handful of large-scale projects (knitting machines, yarn winding equipment, fabric spreaders) that would have taken a lot longer to install if it wasn't for video calls and WhatsApp. It has been a lot harder for older generations to understand and navigate the technologies to continue to do business this way.

I feel these practices will continue during preliminary discussions, but nothing beats an in-person meeting, or a factory visit to see the entire manufacturing process.



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We did lean heavily on SEAMS to reach out to members, educate them on some new technologies and try to recruit existing customers to join the association. Labor has always been an issue and we were able to connect some of our customers with SEAMS' members that had open capacity.

SEAMS gained a lot of new members in the past few months and I'm excited to see some new faces at Techtextil North America and SEAMS' Annual Networking Conference!

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