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SEAMS' members give Texprocess Americas, Made In America Pavilion high marks

By Devin Steele

ATLANTA – Last month, for the first time in four years, Texprocess Americas took place – and SEAMS' Supply Chain USA Pavilion was back as the centerpiece for the American-made movement.

The trade show, again co-locating with Techtextil North America for the first time since 2018 at the Georgia World Congress Center, assembled much of the textile supply chain for three days of networking, education and business development.

Many SEAMS' members exhibited in SEAMS' Pavilion and said being close to likeminded companies in the supply chain was a plus.

Following – listed in alphabetical order – are reports submitted by several members, who touched on the success of the show, their products and services, the Supply Chain USA Pavilion and SEAMS' networking event at Top Golf.

Alvanon

Alvanon's highlight was the new men's and women's body standards that were recently launched, said Jill Coleman, Business Development Director.

Based in New York, Alvanon is a global innovations company that helps apparel brands improve their fit to reflect modern-day consumers. Since 2001, Alvanon has used the latest technology and body shape data to advise the world's leading apparel brands and retailers on fit and sizing strategies.

"Tools are still needed for success," she said. "These standards and tools, both physical and virtual, are keys to success for reducing inventories, returns and waste."

Coleman added that the show met the company's expectations.

"It was great to see people come back, although there weren't as many mid-tier brands," she said. "However, it was great to see the inspiring new clients come through and to see their progress over the last two years."

Coleman said that participating in SEAMS' Supply Chain USA Pavilion helped attract potential new clients, adding that she was also pleased with SEAMS' networking venue, Top Golf.

Buhler Quality Yarns by Samil Spinning

Buhler Quality Yarns, Jefferson, GA, spent three busy days seeing existing customers and meeting potential ones, according to Jeff Gladden, Textile Engineer.



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“We had a lot of interest in our FR (flame-retardant) yarns and met new contacts for them,” he said.

Gladden called the association’s networking outing a “great event and lots of fun, and I made new friends and contacts.”

Carolina Cotton Works

Textile finishing company Carolina Cotton Works, Inc. (CCW), Gaffney, SC, saw its expectations met at Texprocess Americas in terms of visits, prospects and quality of time spent, according to President Bryan Ashby. “I would like to have seen more traffic, though,” he said.

CCW showcased fabrics of all types, Ashby added. Its business has transitioned to a much greater portion of fabric sales vs. commission dyeing and finishing, he added.

“We enjoy being close to vendors and customers who are SEAMS members,” Ashby said of exhibiting in SEAMS’ Pavilion. “It made it easy to keep current and catch up on new trends and events, etc.”

SEAMS’ outing at Top Golf allowed CCW to invite customers from out of state “who came to the show to meet us and explore other companies,” he said. “It was very well organized and executed.”

The Chicago Pattern Maker

Xochil Herrera Scheer, Owner and Pattern Maker at SEAMS’ member The Chicago Pattern Maker, did not have a true “booth,” but she did co-host The Studio floor talks series with Shoshana Burgett of Color Karma. Activity levels in that section appeared strong throughout the show.

“We found all sessions to be very well attended, and the audience interaction with the speakers was great,” she said. “We received lots of positive feedback both during and after the show, and I had a number of new connections to follow up with after the show.”

Scheer also had time to walk the floor, and she gave it positive marks.

“I thought this was a great show,” she said. “The exhibitors, symposiums and floor talks were informative and forward-thinking, and there was a sense of collaboration across areas of the industry that I don’t recall seeing in such a way before in my decade-plus of attending this show. I heard that attendance was down slightly, but I found those who did attend to be highly engaged, and I am happy that I was able to be there and grow my network through attending and being involved with The Studio floor talks.”

Speaking about the SEAMS’ Top Golf event, Scheer said, “This was a fun venue and I think it made for a more casual networking experience, easy to move between bays or inside to talk with different people, and everyone was having a great time. I would love to see more experience-based events such as this in the future!”



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Clothier Design Source

All expectations were met for Mindy Martell of Clothier Design Source, St. Paul, MN, “because the traffic that was there seemed to be more serious buyers and more deeply entrenched people in the industry,” she said. “There wasn’t a whole lot of traffic just walking around just for the sake of checking it out.”

The company’s highlight service was The Apparel Mentor membership program that helps new entrepreneurs to the industry get educated. Its focus at the show was sharing with others how it makes better customers for them.

The company is a Made-in-America apparel factory and design house that has served brands from around the country.

And exhibiting in the Supply Chain USA Pavilion of the show was a plus, Martell added.

“It’s always wonderful to be with fellow USA manufacturers and network,” she said. “We were able to find some sources we have been looking for and also able to become a source for others in various capacities. It was fruitful all around.”

Contempora Fabrics

Lumberton, NC based knitter Contempora Fabrics stayed “incredibly busy” the entire time, according to Hannah Rich, Product Development Engineer.

“I thought the show was great!,” she said. “We made some great connections, walked away with a lot of potential new opportunities for our business and found some new vendors that can supply the specialized equipment we need. Having only ever been to Techtextil in Raleigh, it was very exciting to see the Texprocess side of the industry.”

The product line company reps were asked about most frequently was its cooling technology Rich said.

“Recently I completed an experiment comparing a variety of cooling technologies on the market using some of our best-selling fabrics,” she said. “We wanted to do our own apples-to-apples comparison so we can help our customers make informed decisions when they’re ordering fabric with this special technology. We got people from a variety of industries interested in that kind of fabric and our test results – from athleticwear to workwear to medical – pretty much everyone wants to stay cool.”

SEAMS’ Pavilion was a visual draw to attendees, Rich pointed out.

“Being in the Supply Chain USA Pavilion is so nice because when anyone walks up to your booth they already know, ‘all right, this fabric is Made in the USA. I don’t have to worry about this getting stuck on the ocean.’ So just the fact that we’re in that section means without talking to anyone we already have something going for us,” she said.



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And she also endorsed SEAMS' after-hours gathering: "I loved the Top Golf event! It's so nice to see our vendors and customers in a non-work environment," she said. "It really helps to strengthen the relationships we already have with them. It's also so nice to see people in person at a social event after going so long without being able to put faces with names."

Datatex

Datatex, an Italy-based IT software solutions provider for the textile and apparel industry, enjoyed a nice mix of visitors from companies looking to upgrade their ERP to some seeking specific modules for specific solutions, said Shannon McCarthy, Head of Business Development and Administration – Americas, Alpharetta, GA.

"Texprocess met our expectations," he said. "There was good foot traffic, and the visitors to our booth were many decision makers, not just information gathering."

McCarthy added that "the SEAMS pavilion always gets good foot traffic, and we benefit from each other's participation in it. Plus, it's always good to see our customers there and other friends in the industry."

He called the Top Golf event "a fun, original networking event. It was a great way to meet new people and also great to reestablish connections after being away from events for such a long time."

Draper Knitting Company

Representatives of Draper Knitting Company, Canton, MA, spoke with visitors mostly about wool (the Draper Wool Bar, a low MOQ, on-hand program) and the ability to digitally print on wool and other natural fibers, according to President Kristin Draper.

"We worked with Kornit to show people the versatility of digitally printing on wool," she said.

She added that the show was well worth the company's time.

"This was a great show," she said. "It was great to see customers, suppliers and machinery in the USA all under one roof. Like other shows this year, people are ready to be back in person and starved for fresh ideas."

Draper added that it was great being a part of the SEAMS Pavilion, "seeing fellow Made-in-the USA-ers and being able to help potential customers and then referring them to a neighbor for cut-and-sew or other steps in the process – all here in the USA."

She called the Top Golf function "fun and interesting."

"We did meet some new people and had a good time," she said. "The venue was really cool. The pro was fantastic! Some people mingled and tried things out and others just stayed put in their small foursome, which made it impossible network with them. I think I would give it an 8 out of 10. In the past,



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there have been 'parties' where we literally stood around after standing for two days at the trade show, so this was creative and fun!"

FAM USA

FAM USA, Inc., a Made-in-America (Snellville, GA) company specializing in athleticwear, corporate branding, cut and sew and product development, made the most of its presence at Texprocess Americas, said COO Torey Rose.

"We were able to make some really good connections within our industry during the show to help us grow our business," she said.

Sales Director, Ian Winslett, added, "The contacts we made were both potential clients as well as some services and products we may need to look at for our growth."

Highlighted products were team sports apparel that is being produced in the U.S., Rose added. "People who came by our booth were interested in or looking for a factory that does sublimation and sews knits," she said.

"There were a lot of people interested in USA print/cut/sew," Winslett added. "As the supply chain issues grow worse, the demand for American factories is increasing."

Rose said it was "very encouraging to see other vendors producing in the USA" in the SEAMS' Pavilion. "I felt that we had good traffic there, and people were interested in stopping to talk and learn more," she said.

Winslett added: "The traffic that we encountered seemed to be on the lookout for a USA-made solution."

They both called the networking outing "great!" "We had never been to Top Golf, which was a lot of fun," Rose said.

Winslett said the venue, which combine fun and food with networking, was exceptional. "It gave us exhibitors a chance to connect with each other whereas we might have missed that chance given that we were busy working the show during the week," he said.

Gerald Schwartz, Inc.

Gerald Schwartz of Tucker, GA based Gerald Schwartz, Inc. said show attendance was greater than he expected.

"Attendees came to the show with certain needs, and it was great speaking to them to help solve their requirements," he said. "We are busy all day on Tuesday."

The company is a softgoods solutions provider for hardware, trim, fabric, findings and other component needs, serving the commercial and the military markets.



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“We are heavily involved with Made In USA textile trim items, and SEAMS supports that idea,” he said, regarding the company’s presence in the SEAMS’ Pavilion.

Hamrick Mills

Hamrick Mills, Gaffney, SC, exhibited at Texprocess with the hopes of meeting as many current and new customers as possible at the show – and they accomplished that, according to Roy Lockett, Sales Manager.

“After months/years of not being able to meet with our customers and friends in the textile industry, we were able to finally meet face to face in one location,” he said. “We had the opportunity to reinforce our product offerings to the visitors we met. Whereas we did not have any ‘new’ products to offer, we did meet with several potential customers that expressed their desire to move some of their business back to the US. Time will tell if this happens.”

Added Sales Director Jim Hopkins: “We were able to see a multitude of former, current and prospective customers in a few days in one place. Economically, it would be exceedingly more expensive to accomplish this with individual trips.”

Exhibiting in the SEAMS’ Supply Chain USA Pavilion greatly increased foot traffic due to Hamrick Mills’ affiliation with the association, he added. “And, for the customer experience, it was a ‘one-stop-shop’ area. You could find the entire supply chain in one area.

Lockett said traffic was very good for the first two days of the show, and he believes the SEAMS Pavilion helped in that area. The third day was dead as most trade shows generally experience.”

Henderson Sewing Machine Co.

For Henderson Sewing Machine Co., Inc., Andalusia, AL, Texprocess Americas was a good exhibition that “either met or exceeded my expectations,” said CEO Frank Henderson.

“Our ‘real work’ begins after the expo is over,” he said. “Therefore, it will take our staff some time to get the ‘real’ results. During an expo, we are able to present new products, new offerings and expand on current technology to assist customers in understanding what is new and what is capable of helping manufacturing operations.”

Henderson noted that there was a good quality and quantity of attendees who were serious about business and not as many “tire kickers” as in the past. “Our Henderson Sewing booth was well visited and hopefully appreciated for the technology and automation presented,” he said.

The company showcased robotics, automation and technology that will be the “new norm” for manufacturing of textile products, he said. This was the theme for our booth and what we wanted visitors to understand. Automation and robotics are an absolute necessity to reduce costs, reduce inefficiencies, drive process optimization and mitigate the work force challenges plaguing our industry.”



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Top Golf was an “awesome venue” and offered an opportunity for industry brethren to “meet, eat and drink! Congratulations to SEAMS on your efforts.”

Minnesota Knitting Mills

Texprocess lived up to expectations for Minnesota Knitting Mills (MKM), Mendota Heights, MN, according to Britt Moore, Director of Sales and Customer Services.

“It was well attended and the level of interaction on the floor and at all events was very good,” he said. “The number and quality of networking events was also impressive.”

MKM highlighted its eco-friendly headwear line of products, along with its US cotton fabric and FR fabrics.

Much of the supply chain being housed in the SEAMS’ Pavilion provided a tremendous advantage, Moore said. “On more than one occasion we were able to provide quotes for new projects by simply gathering the other members of the Pavilion together,” he said.

He called the Top Golf outing “a great event, as people were able to interact while enjoying food and drinks. It didn’t hurt that it was a beautiful evening.”

MMI Textiles

MMI Textiles of Brooklyn, Ohio, with new narrow weaving operations in Lenoir, NC, saw consistent traffic during the three-day event, according to COO Nick Rivera.

“The show absolutely met our expectations,” he said. “It was great to be back in Atlanta, where the show has been hosted for many years. It was amazing getting to connect with customers and partners who have not traveled during the pandemic. The global supply chain crisis is causing customers to really expand their sourcing efforts, and our organization was happy to help those we could during the show.”

Rivera added that the customers in which MMI engaged were looking for standard products that it provides on a daily basis. “The supply chain is very challenging right now, as mentioned, and we had several conversations with our partners on how we can help them in this current environment.”

Being a first-time exhibitor in the SEAMS Pavilion, MMI Textiles didn’t know exactly what to expect, he pointed out. “But we thought it was a big success. I was impressed with our traffic and again had lots of great conversations over the three days at the show. We definitely plan to be there again next time.”

Manufacturing Solutions Center (MSC)

The Conover, NC based Manufacturing Solutions Center (MSC) spent time at the show explaining many of the changes that have occurred at the center over the last year or so.



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Among them was the partnership between the MSC and the Textile Technology Center (TTC) under the new Manufacturing and Textile Innovation Network (MTIN), announced last year, according to Tanya Wade, who works in the PPE/Textile Resource Lab. In addition, MSC reps discussed the new PPE testing lab at the center, and the new MSC2 facility that will be opening early September and will house a Resource Lab for brands and manufacturers to source options for domestic textile materials/products.

At the show, the center also launched its campaign to backfill its business incubator program at MSC1, as its current companies move to MSC2 later this summer, added Tony Whitener, Special Projects Director.

“The show exceeded my expectations regarding the number of exhibitors, as well as attendees that came through,” Wade said. “I thought some people would still be a little leery about traveling and/or taking part in large group settings, so I was pleasantly surprised with the attendance.”

The MSC was represented at both Texprocess Americas and Techtextil North America. The Manufacturing and Textile Innovation Network (MTIN) booth promoted its two entities – the MSC and the Textile Technology Center (TTC) at Gaston College –in the education section of the Techtextil North America. The MSC booth in the SEAMS’ area highlighted the new MSC2 facility that is being built.

“I love being part of the SEAMS Pavilion at tradeshows for several reasons,” Wade said. “Everyone in the SEAMS Pavilion are members and normally familiar with each other, which creates an inviting atmosphere with all of the laughter and chitchat going on. For this reason, there is also a lot of client referrals that take place in the SEAMS Pavilion. And one of my favorite things about the SEAMS Pavilion is that brands and manufacturers alike recognize it as the area to visit when looking for a domestic supply chain.”

Webber added: “We have had a longstanding, successful relationship with the SEAMS Pavilion, and this show was no different. It was great being with everyone focused on Made-in-USA. This has become the ‘go-to’ area for customers looking for Made in the USA.”

Wade said she had a great time at the Top Golf event. “It’s a smart way to introduce more of the female members to the game that we incorporate into our conferences. I know several of them who would have never signed up for a golf game, but came out to this event and had a great time. My hope is that this inspired some of the female members to give it a try and that they enjoyed it enough that they will want to learn how to play it. And, in turn, they will sign up for some of the SEAMS’ tournaments in the future.”

Sewn Products Equipment Company (SPEC)

Dan Berzack, President of Sewn Products Equipment Company (SPEC), Jefferson, GA, had one word to describe Texprocess North America: “Fantastic.”

“The quality of visitors was just right and included a number of folks that were looking for equipment to make efficiency or production improvements,” he said. “The foot traffic was consistently good

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throughout the show. We also really enjoyed catching up with customers and colleagues not only at the show – but at the many after-hour get-togethers that were offered.”

SPEC offers such a wide array of equipment that it didn’t have one item or machine that garnered more attention than anything else, Berzack said.

“That being said, the real standout was that we found that we had customer interest in just about all the machines we had on display,” he said. “One person might have been interested in our automatic cutting solutions, while another might have interest in the automatic fusing and stacking solution we had on display. Our entire team was busy with customers, explaining machines and their uses throughout the duration of the show.”

Berzack noted that three SPEC representatives participated in the networking event, and they “had a fantastic time. They had many opportunities to meet and greet both customers and industry professionals at the event. Plus, they really enjoyed the Top Golf!”

Tukatech

Tukatech of Los Angeles presented one of the most dynamic exhibitions at Texprocess Americas, with LIVE production and on-demand manufacturing throughout the show.

Offering turnkey smart factory packages, the company showed a microfactory that reverses the development process of apparel production with the goal of eliminating waste. The approach to achieving this goal is through demand manufacturing, making garments AFTER they are sold. At the event, Tukatech did live production for Los Angeles Apparel and had more than 30 representatives on hand from around the world, according to Chris Walia, Chief Operating Officer.

The technology display includes software and hardware for use in large- or small-scale apparel production. System specialists provided demos on the show floor for digital pattern making, grading and marker making, as well as 3D fashion design. Hardware included sublimation printing, automatic high-ply fabric cutting, tension-free fabric spreading, a dual-head single-ply laser cutter and unit production system that work in concert.

“I think visitors appreciated being able to see how lean they run, how agile they are and that they didn't need a ton of space or people,” said Savannah Crawford, Chief Collaborator at Tukatech. “We weren't just doing a demo on the hour with a small little spread. We were really cutting markers, and we were really bundling. It was a functioning factory. I think people appreciated seeing the real-life aspect of it, not a demo machine.”

Tukatech is the brainchild of founder and CEO Ram Sareen, an innovator and visionary who is molding the next generation of pattern making for fashion designers. He and his team stayed busy throughout the show meeting existing customers and demonstrating “not what is possible, but what is,” he told eTC during the show.

Crawford said Tukatech was incredibly pleased with the event in its entirety.



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“We were most surprised on Day 1, right out of the gate, at how busy it was,” she said. “We were planning for the second day to be the peak, the craziest day, but Day 1 was really busy, too. So that was a pleasant surprise. We had pretty good traffic the whole time, even the last day.”

Walia noted that SEAMS and Tukatech share a common mission of bringing production back to the USA.

“That's very important and very in line with what Tukatech has been talking about for many, many years when we started our microfactory concept,” he said. “We really are aligned with what SEAMS believes in, where we can create this on-demand manufacturing or versatile facilities, or what we call our Smart Factory Concept. And it can be done here, and we're doing it. And it's with like minds that we can help nearshore production if not reshore it. We've been able to network with those who are looking for partners and vendors to help them succeed, and we piggyback off of each other. SEAMS has done a great job connecting people together, and it's only going to grow.”

Tukatech brought a number of its staffers to the Top Golf event, which allowed people to get to know each other in a relaxed environment, Walia said.

“Everybody loved it all the way around,” he said. “Just meeting people from industry and being able to catch up and let loose – this is how meaningful relationships build and grow. We get so consumed with work, work, work, that we were able to just break away for a little bit and get to know people and who they are and enjoy some time together. And then knowing that we're all working for the common industry was the cherry on top.”

Verdant Innovations/Cellulose Solutions

Texprocess represented a coming-out party for Verdant Innovations, Spanish Fort, AL

The company was introduced to the world last month by Cellulose Solutions, which wholly owns Verdant, a specialist in green chemicals. Verdant Innovations chemicals are formulated using plants, soil and natural energy from the earth's resources and are designed for a circular economy – from manufacturing and treatments to replacement back into the earth void of all known and suspected hazardous components.

“It was our first time presenting at a show and was a great opportunity for us to showcase some new products to the industry,” said Matthew Short, Business Development Manager. “The show did surpass our expectations.”

Highlight products were Verdant's antimicrobial and mosquito-repellent chemicals, which generated some interest from multiple companies. Cellulose Solutions joined SEAMS earlier this year and participated in the SEAMS “Supply Chain USA” Pavilion at Texprocess.

“I believe being in the Supply Chain USA Pavilion helped add to our story and allowed better traffic from being in the space,” Short said.

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