



THE ASSOCIATION & VOICE OF THE US SEWN PRODUCTS INDUSTRY

Member Spotlight: Prime Medical

Note: Each edition of our newsletter, SEAMS features one of our esteemed members. In this edition of SEAMS Member Spotlight, Prime Medical, is highlighted. Wayne Wilson, Founder & President, answers our questions.

Company headquarters: Clearwater, FL

Year founded: 2014

Primary specialties: Medical scrubs, medical lab coats, medical privacy panel curtains and masks. Samples for future introductions, medical warm-up jackets, patient gowns, patient robes, patient caps, PJs, bed linens, napkins, tablecloth, aprons, chef coats and towels.

Number of employees: Six locally, one in Denver, one in San Diego, four individual purchasing groups.

Markets served: Primarily the healthcare industry and environmental services.

Brief company history:

“We were a startup in 2014 manufacturing just scrubs and lab coats. In 2016, we brought in a couple more partners, filled some key positions and acquired more investment. None of the present or new hires had any industry knowledge, which was a challenge for me. We attended the APIC trade show in 2016-2019 and we were discovered by Clorox in 2016. We signed a three-year exclusive contract with Clorox in 2018 and labeled all the scrubs, lab coats and curtains Clorox Pro. We ended that contract with Clorox in mid-2021.”

Impact of the pandemic:

“After COVID hit our business in 2020, the wrong pegs occupying the wrong holes started to bail from the company. Eventually, two of the partners bailed shortly after that. Today, I am the only manager running the business. I have total control since mid-2021 and I’ve made some adjustments, cut expenses, laser focused on our targets and now surrounded myself with a talented dedicated team. Our future is much brighter now.”

Product transition during the pandemic:

“We introduced masks that kept the lights on. We just hung in there and stayed the course. We identified a couple different markets that would benefit in using our product and we started to advertise in those journals. The biggest challenges and lessons learned? It seemed that everything hit us at once. Lack of sales, 1099s locked out of the hospitals, low morale for most. This is probably going to sound nuts, but failure wasn’t an option. I just dug my heels in deeper and looked at our market opportunities. We made some changes and survived., Now we’re on the right path.”

Company adapting during the pandemic:



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“Out of every bad situation there is opportunity. The lack of sales allowed us to amass a very large inventory and when the pandemic hit, we were able to service the industry the next day where other suppliers were waiting for product sitting offshore. Nobody had to wait for our product.”

Challenges and opportunities:

“The challenges to me are just speed bumps you must navigate. I started marketing the company and updating our website. Opportunities are around every corner if you only take the time to look. That aside, do your homework, stay laser focused on your market, persevere and keep moving forward. Learn from your mistakes.”

Differentiators:

“We have a patent fabric that is bleach friendly that kills bacteria and most viruses when washed in bleach. Our employees believe in doing good, and our products do just that. We are a close-knit group and provide excellent customer service.”

Made in America movement:

“We started out making our products in the States before we contracted with Clorox. As a startup with Clorox, we had to be competitive coming out of the gate with other well-established brands, so we went to Mexico for the large-volume production. I also had a small domestic sewing facility in the Miami area for quick turns and special programs. Unfortunately, my Miami facility shut down because the owner died from cancer. Now I’m in the hunt for a domestic manufacturer for our scrubs, lab coats and privacy panel curtains. I might have a few contracts in the works that require made in the USA. That’s one reason I’m looking for a domestic partner.”

Challenges and opportunities for made in USA or in the Western Hemisphere:

“I think the biggest challenge in the USA is price. The biggest challenge for us in this hemisphere is continuity. A small U.S. shop can adapt and make changes quickly. Offshore, an operator knows only one operation unless they have been cross trained and worked in module.”

Outlook:

“Excellent for the foreseeable future. I now have a new team.”

Business conditions:

“I think the timing is right for more opportunities in the sewing industry. I also know finding skilled labor and holding on to them is a big issue. Times have changed, and the employer must get creative to create an atmosphere that attracts and retains talent. “Our success is going to be excellent product with excellent personalized service. We’ll focus on our present market and expand it. Later, we’ll look at another market that can benefit by using our product. I’ll expand the product offering where I see opportunity.”

On benefits of SEAMS:

“I first went to SEAMS events in 1990. I took a break and went over to another organization, where I eventually became the [resident. Conditions there changed, so I came back to SEAMS in the late 1990s or early 2000s. I’ve been at SEAMS ever since. I’ve been to all the network conferences except for a couple.”