**Member Spotlight: Sewn Products Equipment Company (SPEC)**

*In our latest edition of SEAMS Member Spotlight, Sewn Products Equipment Company (SPEC), is highlighted. Company President Dan Berzack answers our questions.*

**Company headquarters:**Jefferson, GA

**Year founded:**2002

**Primary specialties:**Spreading, cutting and sewing equipment and parts/supplies

**Number of employees / locations:** Seven in Georgia, four in California and four in Honduras

**Markets served:**North America, Central America, Caribbean

**Company history and current ownership:**

SPEC was founded in 2002 by Mel and Caryl Berzack. In 2012, Dan Berzack joined the company. Dan purchased the company from Mel and Caryl in 2015. In 2016, Dan – and his wife Stephanie Berzack – purchased Ahearn Denning Machines in Los Angeles, CA.

**Company differentiators:**

“SPEC/Ahearn Denning Machines are distribution companies. Since we are not a manufacturer, we are able to source a range of machines and solutions and then pair those with our customer’s needs. This allows us to find the absolute best solutions for every individual challenge our customers face. Additionally, this diverse range of products and solutions puts us in front of a very diverse range of customers. One day we might be helping a customer that is building aircraft flight surfaces and the next we might be helping a fulfillment center with their packaging requirements. This has an added benefit of giving our team a range of experience that is unlike that of many of our competitors. We may see a challenge or a process in one industry – that can benefit our customers in a completely different industry.”

**How company transitioned its products and services during the pandemic:**

“Again, as a distributor, we were easily able to shift and pivot during the pandemic to offer our customers the solutions they needed at that time. Our lines of ultrasonic welding and sewing equipment really took off during the pandemic as our customers looked for ways to produce PPE. We became experts in mask and face shield production.”

**Biggest challenges and lessons learned during the COVID-19 crisis?**

“We did learn quite a few lessons during the pandemic. The first lesson learned was that we are an integral part of onshore and nearshore production success. Without companies like SPEC/Ahearn Denning Machines, there would be even greater challenges for companies that want to manufacture soft goods in our markets. The second lesson we learned is that we are not the type of company that can be successful at remote work. This forced us to be creative with our schedules so that we are able to work from our offices while keeping everyone safe and isolated. Finally, we learned that being a full range distribution company gives us a lot of avenues of approach to keep our business going. Our folks

learned to follow the challenges of our customers – finding solutions and supporting our customers is a win for everyone involved.”

**The pandemic aside, how company adapted over the last few years to remain competitive, especially as a lot of textile/apparel/sewn production moved offshore:**

“First of all – we do our best to follow our customers to wherever their production goes. That being said, we also understand that many times we have to adjust our own view of the potential when change happens. For example, if an apparel manufacturer moves their production out of the country, we might not be selling them spreading/cutting and sewing machines. But they might continue to do business with us using our lines of automatic folding and packaging systems or our lines of pallet wrapping systems. We have also found that many times we are able to help our customers continue to remain profitable while still manufacturing in the United States if they upgrade their process from manual to automatic. This all goes back to the advantages of being a distributor – we find the right solution for the specific challenge that our customers face.”

**Thoughts on the Made-in-America/Americas movement and strategy to remain competitive in the U.S. and this hemisphere:**

“With regards to production onshore, we find that our strategy centers around automation. A high labor rate market cannot sustain production without leveraging the most efficient and automated systems available. Conversely, in more competitive labor markets, automation still has its place. But in these markets, automation enhances productivity and quality. Understanding these principles allows us to provide the appropriate recommendations to our customers no matter where they are geographically located.”

**Business outlook for the company for the foreseeable future:**

“Even with all of the challenges we have faced as a society over the past few years, our companies have seen solid growth year over year (except for 2020). I give total credit for this success to our team of employees. Mike Sanders, Elan Zeichner, Charles Bromberg, Luis Hernandez, Alex Guillen, Hugo Cruz and Gerardo Seravia – these folks have driven our company forward through some challenging times, to say the least!. These are all sales folks – but on many occasions I have seen these guys turning wrenches or unloading containers. They are humble, motivated and want success. They want to see their customers succeed. They want to see our company succeed. Not only do we have a great sales team, but we have a great administrative team as well. Laura Salas and Marie Godfrey are led by Stephanie Berzack. Every ‘i’ is dotted and every ‘t’ is crossed. Our technicians are remarkable and keep everything humming – from simple handheld cutters to fully automated systems – they can install and fix just about anything and are not afraid of a challenge. So the question that was asked was ‘what is my business outlook for our companies for the foreseeable future’ … with this team, I can only see success.”

**Thoughts on business conditions, health of the apparel/textile/sewn products industry markets going forward and things that will make SPEC successful in this environment:**

“SPEC/Ahearn Denning Machines are going into 2023 aware of the fact that there may very well be some economic challenges ahead. As long as we continue to listen to our customers and ensure that we have the latest and greatest equipment and technology to offer our customers, I am certain that we will be able to succeed in the face of some fiscally challenging times to come.”

**The Value of SEAMS’ membership:**

“Being a member of SEAMS allows us to network with customers and colleagues from around our industry. I think it’s really important for us to be a part of organizations like SEAMS so that we are able to maintain and grow these relationships. Being a member also helps bring to light some of the challenges our industry faces while giving us the opportunity to find solutions together.”