



THE ASSOCIATION & VOICE OF THE US SEWN PRODUCTS INDUSTRY

2023 Reflections

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By: Xochil Herrera Scheer

The Chicago Pattern Maker

www.xochil.com

As I reflect and take stock of the year coming to a close and start to formulate my goals for the new year ahead, there is much to be thankful for, lessons learned, and opportunities for growth.

I just went through the exercise of figuring out my company “stats” in the last month - the typical running of financial reports and meeting with my accountant before the end of the year - and maybe the less typical creation of an end of the year “Wrapped” Instagram Reel. This will recap some interesting figures such as how many clients and products we worked on this year, and some funny ones, like how many times the airline lost my suitcase this year, or how many cups of coffee kept me going through the day.

Some highlights this year which I am very proud of... Over a third of my clients are repeat customers! Just about half of the products my clients launched in 2023 were Made in the USA!

I put myself in front of a lot of eyes this year through events and conferences, teaching, and social media. I’m especially proud of the floor talks series at Texprocess America this year, where I moderated and participated in 7 sessions overall. I’ve been more active on LinkedIn this year (taking my own advice; ([see my column from August](#)), and as a result of these experiences have already secured 3 speaking engagements for 2024.

At the Fall SEAMS Conference, we shared a lot of moments learning together in Raleigh, along with some drinks, dance moves, and a handful of Barbie memes which I sprinkled into my panel, “Closing The Loop - Circularity Through Collaboration”. Sustainability was a hot topic at the conference, discussed from different angles in other panels, but also industry wide. This has been trending for years, but growing interest level and real-world adoption has made these conversations a lot more practical, and less “pie in the sky” theories. Obstacles still exist, but collaboration is a key way to remove many barriers.

Technology continues to rapidly evolve - our industry is talking about automation and digitalization for both development and manufacturing more than ever. I’m sure we’ll hear more about Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning in 2024, as these tools have a huge potential to impact supply chain operations. Digital fashion software brings the ability to make fit changes and apply design customizations easily and quickly. Retailers and brands are implementing this at higher rates than ever, and honestly, this circles back to sustainability too - reducing wasted time and resources.

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Direct To Consumer brands have disrupted the industry so much at this point, that mainstay big brands are trying to adopt what they can to stay nimble and profitable as the economy and consumer desires continue to shift. Another trend the industry is embracing is more inclusive fashion - not only size and body type, but abilities/disabilities, ages. These are categories that have a lot of opportunities since they are not well served currently. Finally, I think reshoring and nearshoring will continue to dominate both in conversation and in action ([look at the featured SEAMS pavilion at the upcoming Texworld show](#)). All of this is really exciting news for a close-knit domestic supply chain (pun intended).

Some of my 2024 goals include further collaboration with other SEAMS members, both through projects and shared business, and through a marketing and educational context. I'm excited to be joining the Board of Directors officially and will be working to bring more people into the organization. We've already had a couple of meetings around website improvements, and ways we can share more stories from our members.

Personally, I intend to utilize my SEAMS email blasts this year - and encourage you to add this to your list too. So many companies don't take advantage of this great benefit! I plan to implement additional technology into my company's workflow, specifically more with 3D pattern and prototyping, and will dedicate more time for training and professional development for my team to grow. I'll be continuing to teach and speak. Ultimately, I hope to reach more people, inspire growth, to make people consider more possibilities.

Wishing all of you a happy holiday season, with rest and renewed spirit to tackle the new year ahead!

Cheers friends!