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Made In The USA

Manufacturers large and small weigh in on the benefits of staying stateside

Companies based in the U.S. hope to win buyers over by showcasing their offerings as high quality items, which on average take less than half the time to ship than their overseas competition, but foreign made goods with lower prices might seem more desirable during these tough times. Read on for *LDB Interior Textiles'* annual comprehensive "made in the USA" roundup.

Large American manufacturers find quality control and short lead times set them apart from importers.

For retailers, buying foreign goods usually means having to commit to stocking a sizeable inventory, but with products made here, retailers can let manufacturers carry the inventory costs for them. Bud Young, vice-president of Capel Rugs says, "The number one benefit for buying American to the buyer is that they don't need to commit to a certain inventory; doing so creates a risk for them. With a limited inventory retailers can show a variety of products, which is great for the con-

sumer because they have a limited time to shop and it makes them feel as if they have options." Capel Rugs, a family-run company established in 1917 in North Carolina, has supplied braided rugs for more than 90 years. Sold through retailers, private catalogs and in stores, Capel continues to do its own dyeing, spinning, braiding and sewing in its North Carolina facilities.

Young also mentions that Capel's COM (Customers Own Material) program, started last year, has become a huge success for them. Capel can construct a rug that perfectly matches a designer's or customer's vision, and in an environment in which people are cutting back, personalization is key. It can be done in less than 14 days, which Young says would be impossible to do if the company's factories were located elsewhere.

For businesses not looking to make large investments in inventory, connecting with a manufacturer that can drop ship is a huge advantage. Doug

American Companies Show Their Roots In Their Rich Histories

With many Americans losing their jobs, businesses built and grounded here provide stability. “We’re employing people. Something that is on the minds of everyone right now is jobs,” says Jeff Chilton from Perfect Fit. Started in 1932, Perfect Fit manufactures slipcovers, mattress pads and pillows, and quickly grew into one of the largest home textile suppliers. For Perfect Fit importing just doesn’t work, especially for pillows. As a low value item, the cost to ship would be too high and they have found that shipping compressed pillows and blowing them up here takes away some of the pillows’ performance features.

Pendleton feels the same way about providing jobs for the people in its community. “We started in America 100 years ago and we still weave here in Pendleton—the brand’s soul is here,” says Christnacht. We are people of the cloth, and we work where we live. We actively participate in the community and we are linked to the town and the people.”

As costs rise for labor, shipping and import taxes, U.S. manufacturers are offering retailers creative alternatives, affording them the chance to place small orders, which helps retailers maintain their own businesses during these rocky economic times.

Smaller American manufacturers find their niche by drawing on local resources.

More than ever, smaller companies are gaining a competitive edge. With less inventory than larger manufacturers, they can easily move what they stock, regardless of the country’s economic situation. Keeping production local helps small companies stay in touch with production and customers, from beginning to end. Understanding what the consumer wants makes it possible for these smaller players to react quickly and produce faster than their foreign counterparts.

Sylvie Guieysse, a Brooklyn, NY-based pillow designer originally from France, had been so inspired by the enthusiasm, diversity and constant optimism of the American people that she incorporated her business last year. She recently noticed that more

- The Beach Boys, once called the “Pendletones,” made the Pendleton Woolen Mills’ plaid shirt their wardrobe of choice and started a fashion craze among young Americans.

- Capel Rugs’ “Old Homestead” braided rug was inducted into the World Floor Covering Association Hall of Fame in 1978.

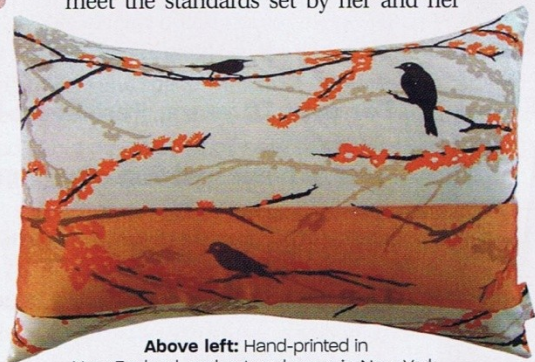
- The sisters behind Hable Construction came up with the name for their company by borrowing it from their great grandfather’s construction business in Texas. Originally a potter, he decided to build roads when he arrived in Texas in the early 1900s.

- Arthur Tauber, founder of Avanti Linens, once wore Yankee jersey #4 at Baseball Fantasy Camp in Ft. Lauderdale, FL. He spent seven days hitting the field with baseball great Mickey Mantle, which got him revved up for the November market in 1985.



than “made in the USA,” making products locally is the trend; buyers are itching for a sense of community and are supporting local artists and designers. Buying from big box stores doesn’t give buyers the same type of connection, explains Guieysse. In grocery stores and restaurants, the use of fresh, local ingredients is stressed and it’s the same at craft and home goods stores.

As a small business, Guieysse is able to easily maintain the quality of her products, making sure her hand-made pillows and other home goods meet the standards set by her and her



Above left: Hand-printed in New England, and cut and sewn in New York, Hable Construction’s Pink Poppy/Oyster Linen pillow brightens any space. **Above:** Bright Summer from Sylvie Guieysse’s Bird Collection is cotton and silk organza with a French-style back closure.

buyers. Guieysse says, “When you are located so close to your retailers, they will tell you next time they see you if your quality has dropped.”

Linda Bentson, president and owner of Thief River Linens, known for its exceptional fabrics, also