

tv exposure MADE *spanx* OWNER WINNER

Sara Blakely, owner of Spanx, a specialty hosiery marketer, missed the grand prize on Fox network reality show "The Rebel Billionaire." But she says the exposure she got for her company made her a winner.

Ms. Blakely markets a footless pantyhose designed to enhance the female figure.

Her slogan: "No More Grid Butt." Her products are made by Acme-McCrary Hosiery Co. in Asheboro, NC.

On the TV show, Blakely came in second to an entrepreneur from Salt Lake City. Both were competing for the job of running one of British tycoon Richard Branson's enterprises after a three-month

stint as president of Virgin Worldwide. Virgin Airlines is one of the divisions.

Blakely's Spanx last year had sales in excess of \$20 million. Her hosiery is sold in specialty and department stores across the United States. She plans to launch a new line of seamless pajamas on QVC this spring.

global supply chain ISSUES *prompt* OPTIONS

Development of supply chain strategies – a 10-year trend among hosiery manufacturers – faces new challenges in the global environment.

Commitment to the supply chain involves a minimum inventory and on-time shipments. But the surge in global trade in the past four years has put strains and new charges on all forms of transport.

As manufacturers shifted to countries where production is cheaper, deeper structural problems have been seen in supply lines, according to some importers.

As a result, some manufacturers are building costly buffer stocks – which can involve

setting up days or weeks worth of supplies – to avoid shutting down production lines.

The option would be failure to make on-time deliveries.

U.S. manufacturing companies have struggled to recover from the recession, with tougher global competition and rising costs of labor, raw materials and health-care. At the same time overseas sites for U.S. producers also are feeling the pressure of rising materials and energy costs.

Manufactured goods made up 85 percent of the \$472 billion deficit reported by U.S. trade officials. Imports of manufactured goods, including those made by U.S. pro-

ducers, amounted to \$1.13 trillion in 2004.

Despite some of the bottlenecks, American manufacturers say the savings from going outside the U.S. are too significant to abandon. In some cases, high-tech communications is being used to determine which U.S. ports to use to expedite shipments.

Because of customer concerns about shipments and inventories, many manufacturers are touting their domestic capabilities. Also, more companies are maintaining an open relationship with small suppliers who can provide goods and services in a timely fashion.

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