

1 quality and service is...

Despite offshore price pressure, dyestuff supplier stands firm on value of quality and service.

by BRENT CHILDERS, Editor

With sourcing taking on a whole set of different ramifications for manufacturers today there's more and more talk about potential partnerships and the benefits of such relationships.

An analogy could be found on the fairways. It's time for the tournament to begin and your threesome gets a solo with the name Tiger:

That concept is not new to Melatex, a dyestuff and chemical supplier for the hosiery industry since 1964.

Pat Lawrence, president of the Charlotte-based company, realized several years ago that the business landscape for hosiery manufacturers was changing and the volume of domestically produced hosiery goods was shrinking as other countries had begun tooling their manufacturing capabilities.

The company from its inception has staked its success on one two-fold tenet of good business – quality and service.

Quality to Lawrence and his staff wasn't just going to be verbiage in advertisements or sales pitches. As those developing countries began sourcing U.S. markets, Lawrence said the lower quality in some of the product at that time was evident. Melatex was the first dyestuff supplier to originate a certificate of analysis (COA) with each drum shipped and it is still a major component of Melatex's effort to ensure quality products for its customers.

And while the quality of many of those products converted to the minus column, so did pricing.

But Lawrence said he has never wavered from his belief that quality in means quality

out and he has remained committed to that philosophy.

"We sell efficiency," Lawrence says. "No adds and reworks. It's been our whole ballgame. We help the manufacturer set up procedures that run

"We sell efficiency. It's been our whole ballgame."



*Patrick Lawrence,
President
Melatex*

and we sell products that run well!"

That's no surprise to Jill Patton, president of Johnson Hosiery Mills Inc. in Hickory, N.C., who praised Melatex as a Johnson supplier:

"I can't say enough good things about Melatex," Patton said. Their knowledge is outstanding and their service is hands above anyone in the industry. They are one of the most fantastic companies I work with."

In addition to the full service and beyond that Lawrence says the entire 25-person Melatex staff is committed to, he says expertise is another integral component of the company's business plan.

Lawrence says the company over the last several years began aligning itself with some

of the largest names in the business – Lanxess, Dystar, Microban and most recently American Natural Bio-Solvents, a company that has developed a line of environmentally friendly products that are designed to produce more efficient operations.

With relationships with those companies cemented, Lawrence says Melatex brings the expertise from those firms to the dyeing operations that the Melatex staff services.

"Not only do we have the quality found in their products, we also have the support that they bring to the table," he says.

Scott Dow, with Microban, complimented Melatex as "the leading distributor of Microban."

"They are our ears and our voice. They get our message out there," Dow says. "their technical expertise is unsurpassed."

Dow said the Charlotte-based dyestuff supplier increased its sales for Microban by 20 percent.

"We're very happy with our relationship with Melatex," Dow said.

Kevin Corley, vice president of operations for Melatex, offered a hypothetical example of a manufacturer who is having problem in the dyerroom and subsequently brings in consultants – at today's going rate for consultants – to diagnose the problem and offer solutions.

"They would be bringing in a consultant to what we do for free," says Corley. "That's part of the value we offer at Melatex."

Corley cited a real example of a manu-



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facturer that had become involved with a regulatory matter with its municipality over the effluent. It was a dilemma because the manufacturer was having to discard a certain amount of excess material to meet the fastness quality required in the product. Meet the quality standard and place the effluent at odds with the city. Meet the city's standard and lose quality required by the customer.

The manufacturer called Melatex and Corley says his staff identified and helped implement the solution that satisfied both the desired standard in the product and the effluent.

Lawrence says he realizes his sales reps may be in his office after reading this article but he says he will not waver from his belief that quality and service – no matter how big or small the order – is paramount to having the lowest price points.

"We walk in with a lot of experience," Lawrence says. "We treat the five-pound order as just significant as the 5,000-pound order. I'm really proud of that."

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