

RAVEN

SUMMER 2016 | No. 26





Allen E. Gant, Jr.
CEO AND CHAIRMAN

Dear Readers,

What do Hasbro, Wilson Sporting Goods, General Electric and Ford Motor Company have in common? All four were recently named the “Most Innovative Companies of 2016” by Fast Company magazine. Three of the four companies are also more than 100 years old (Hasbro is 93). In an era of startups, think Airbnb, Uber and Netflix, each of which also nabbed a spot on the list, it is impressive that four companies founded before 1924 are among the faces of innovation in the 21st century.

These companies have built on generations of success and evolved their core competencies to become the powerhouses they are today. The same is true for the customers featured in this issue of Raven magazine, including businesswoman Carolyn Miller. Miller, owner of Boat Covers Unlimited, traces a passion for custom sewing to her grandmother. Inside, you will learn how a six-year-old Miller went on to own her own business on Lake Norman in North Carolina.

Lawrence Fabric & Metal Structures is known for design and engineering excellence. The company has thrived for 70 years by weathering any storm, including a decision to eliminate its residential awning program. As you will read, the decision, tough as it was, has since transformed the business. Transformation is central to Chaparral Boats’ commitment to innovation and diversification as well. With the recent purchase of a new Robalo line of outboard power boats, Chaparral is securely positioned to weather another 50 years. In an interview with the founder, we learn the benefits and value of thinking long term.

For coastal residents, solar protection is a necessity, including shade sails which are growing in popularity among the customers of Coastal Canvas Products. The profile on this coastal Georgia awning company includes tips to help readers visualize the right application for their outdoor shade project. Likewise, the story of M&M Awnings & Signs is one of tremendous growth, longevity and loving what you do. Find out how a business founded in a garage would soon be providing awnings to Radio City Music Hall, Carnegie Hall and The Museum of Modern Art.

Mexican company Martex traces its founding to the Mexican Revolution in 1926, when the great-grandfather of the company’s current president fled for Cuba. His eventual return would lead to the founding of a specialized textile manufacturer whose products today range from tablecloths to tactical military gear. His great-grandson also has a can’t miss story or two on his entry to the family business.

Finally, in an interview with the general manager of Glen Raven Asia, you might be surprised by the projected growth of the Chinese economy through 2018. You’ll also learn about the major trends in indoor and outdoor textiles in Asia today, including how surging economic growth is shaping consumer spending.

As these articles indicate, our ability to survive and thrive in a global economy without borders depends on how well we identify new ways to continuously push our businesses forward.

Allen E. Gant, Jr.



Brand recognition for Sunbrella®, which Boat Covers Unlimited, Inc. uses exclusively, plays a critical role in the success of the North Carolina company. | Page 14

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ON THE COVER:

CHAPARRAL BOATS, A WORLD-LEADING MANUFACTURER OF FIBERGLASS BOATS, HAS MANUFACTURED BOATS IN NASHVILLE, GEORGIA SINCE 1976, AND THE COMPANY HAS BEEN OFFERING SUNBRELLA® FOR NEARLY AS LONG.

CHAPARRAL BOATS:

BUILT RIGHT THE FIRST TIME



ROBALO 222

"When you're fortunate enough to enjoy fishing and water sports from an early age, you can't help but develop a passion for the water and boating," said Buck Pegg, founder of Chaparral Boats, a world-leading manufacturer of quality fiberglass boats. "Even so, it's a bit funny how I got into the boat business."

Buck was raised in Michigan on a small lake where he spent his free time waterskiing, fishing and boating. His family eventually moved to Hollywood, Florida, where his father opened a store. When Buck was 21 years old, his father purchased a fiberglass gun to build marine mufflers, swimming pools, dock boxes and a variety of related products.

"My dad thought fiberglass was just the best thing," Buck recalled. "I worked in the factory and cut my teeth on a variety of projects, but after a few years I needed a product of my own."

That product was a 15-foot tri-hull that sold for just \$675 in 1965. This bellwether boat laid the foundation for the company's growth

and expansion over the next 50 years. As the company grew slowly and steadily as sales of the tri-hull fiberglass boat took off, they decided to purchase land in Fort Lauderdale to build a manufacturing plant. However, by the time the county approved the property sale, the size of the plant that Chaparral Boats was allowed to build had shrunk to just 50,000 square-feet.

"That's when we started looking for another location. Fifty-thousand square-feet was just too small for what we needed to build," Buck said. "In 1976 we moved the company to Nashville, Georgia, and I have to say it was one of the most important and successful decisions I've made in my life."

Nashville, Georgia is a small community with less than 10,000 residents in Berrien County. Chaparral Boats is the largest employer in the community, and many of its employees are second- or third-generation. Once it relocated, the company went to work building fiberglass boats while slowly growing its manufacturing capabilities. Having started with just 35 employees and 35,000 square-feet,

RIGHT As part of its manufacturing process, Chaparral Boats tests each new boat in an indoor test tank in southern Georgia, where 800 employees work in a million-square-foot facility.



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the company now employs 800 and manufactures across over a million square feet located on 150 acres.

“We didn’t grow as fast as some other companies, but we sustained and kept growing over our entire company’s history,” said Buck. “We’ve always said we would build it right before we move onto something else, and that’s what we’ve done thanks to our people and our steady and consistent management that has allowed us to meet challenges and forecast trends to stay ahead of the curve.”

Over the years, the company has seen its fair share of challenges and has taken advantage of opportunities when they arise. Recessions have come and gone, and Chaparral Boats has maintained its position as a premier market share leader in the industry by diversifying and investing in different technologies that align with its manufacturing capabilities.

“We’ve found that one of the major keys to our success is our ability to stay nimble and decisive; we’re a large company that operates like a small company when it comes to decision-making,” Buck said. “We are also fortunate to have the facilities and a skilled workforce that allow us to react quickly to changes in the market or consumer-driven trends.”

Chaparral Boats’ mission is to first build the best fiberglass boat. The company offers its dealers and customers their choice of power plants which currently include sterndrive, outboard and jet powered engines. This power of choice has allowed Chaparral to fully embrace new market trends, such as the jet-powered boat.

“It’s a huge undertaking to offer three different designs – sterndrive, outboard and jet powered. Fortunately, we have the square footage across six plants that simplifies the manufacturing process for each style of boat that we offer,” Buck said. “We’ve realized that there isn’t just one segment that will sustain us at the level where we want to be. That’s why we diversified and are constantly making new, innovative and quality products that consumers want to own.”

Their commitment to quality products extends across their product range from their highest-end boats to the H20 – a value boat for entry level buyers introduced during the last recession. With the introduction of the H20, Chaparral reestablished the pricing integrity that was lost during the recession, while offering a product that didn’t compromise on quality for value.

“We use the same materials on those boats that we use on our largest and most high-end boats,” said Buck. “Some boat manufacturers would cut quality in order to cut price, but we are committed to quality. That means if we have to buy materials for our boats, we buy the best ones.

“We have been using Sunbrella® products for 35 years and we like using Sunbrella because it’s an American company and the quality is always consistent. To be able to say you offer Sunbrella products as your canvas is a great marketing tool because it is known for its durability, UV protection, mildew resistance – a whole list of benefits, including its stability when it gets wet and dries or goes from a warm to a subzero climate,” Buck explained. “We offer quality boats and we like being associated with a quality brand.”

A commitment to quality, innovation and diversification has served Chaparral Boats well over its long tenure as a major manufacturer of fiberglass boats. With the purchase and growth of its Robalo line of outboard power and the steady growth from jet power, Chaparral Boats is securely positioned to weather the next 50 years. Chaparral



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and Robalo currently manufacture both sport and fishing boats, each of which are market share leaders.

“We’re not short-term thinkers. Anytime we determine our next step, we always ensure that it’s in the best interest of the company as a whole – from our employees to our dealers to our shareholders,” Buck said. “As long as we keep our focus on our customers and remain flexible and nimble, we can continue bringing value to all of our stakeholders. We’ll keep building the business one step at a time.”

On the web at chaparralboats.com



“We’ve always said we would build it right before we move onto something else, and that’s what we’ve done thanks to our people and our steady and consistent management that has allowed us to meet challenges and forecast trends to stay ahead of the curve.”

BUCK PEGG
Founder of Chaparral Boats



Shade sails add a striking visual element to a homeowner's outdoor space, and they are also incredibly resilient and flexible to the elements.

COASTAL CANVAS PRODUCTS:

'WHEN YOU FIND YOUR SHADE SPOT, YOU'VE FOUND A PLACE OF RELAXATION'

Summers in Savannah, Georgia are long, hot and steamy. Bounded by the Savannah River and Atlantic Ocean, the coastal metropolis is renowned for its muggy atmosphere and stifling, grueling heat that permeates Georgia's oldest city.

For those who call Savannah home, including business owners lining the iconic downtown area and residents whose homes line the many rivers that flow through the city toward the Atlantic, it takes more than shade trees to stay comfortable. This type of climate, locals say, is only bearable when the sun is kept at bay.

"Solar protection is an absolute necessity in Savannah," said Ellen Barber, co-owner of Coastal Canvas Products, a commercial and residential awning company located minutes from the city's Riverfront district. "The hot climate here is as certain as the city's distinct southern charm."

Founded in 1975, Coastal Canvas Products manufactures and installs custom shade products such as canvas awnings, metal canopies, shade sails, fabric tension structures, walkway covers, porch drapery and similar fabric and aluminum products. The company also sells and installs products for solar protection, and regardless of the application, it relies on the creativity of its associates to bring projects to life.

"We draw our design inspiration from the endless possibilities that our products create by adding personality and branding to

restaurants and storefronts, and character and style to residential homes," said co-owner Andrew Barber. "We realize it takes more than a long history to be successful. We must keep pace with the changing market, maintain the highest standard of quality and supply the finest customer service possible."

The Barbers, a husband-and-wife team, purchased Coastal Canvas in 2012 from founder Glenn Wood, who remains with the company as a senior sales associate. Originally from Atlanta, the couple combined their experience as a licensed general contractor, real estate broker and developer (Andrew) and interior designer (Ellen) to create a fabric-oriented, design-build business that encompasses 20,000 square feet.

"We were both looking for a catalyst for a career change and combining our construction and design backgrounds into a single company was very appealing from a creativity standpoint," she said. "As it turned out, moving into a fabric-oriented business was not as daunting as we first thought."

More than four years after the Barbers' self-described "leap of faith," their company has grown by 25 percent each year and employs 30 associates. Commercial and residential awning installations make up the majority of their business, followed by retractable awnings, metal canopies and a growing trend among residential customers, shade sails.





“The word ‘shade’ is about finding comfort in a hot climate. When you find your shade spot, you’ve found a place of relaxation.”

ELLEN BARBER
Co-Owner of Coastal Canvas Products

“It has become increasingly common to see shade sails in recreational parks and restaurant patios, but we are beginning to gain traction for use in residential spaces,” said Ellen Barber. “Educating homeowners about shade sails makes all the difference in helping them visualize the right application for their outdoor shade project.”

For example, she emphasizes:

PUT THEM AT EASE – From the sheer scale of the fabric to the intricate hardware needed, shade sails are beautiful, architectural statements. They can also seem like daunting projects, but they’re not as challenging as they look. With the right computer software and collaboration customers will be able to envision a shade sail in their outdoor space in no time.

FOCUS ON VERSATILITY – Not only do shade sails add a striking visual element to a homeowner’s outdoor space, they are incredibly resilient and flexible to the elements. Sails aren’t just beautiful; they are very strategically and scientifically installed to ensure the most shade and wind coverage.

OPTIONS, OPTIONS, OPTIONS – Some homeowners see shade sail structures and think they’re too large for their backyards, they’re just for pools or they won’t be able to find a color they like. In addition to pools, shade sails are wonderful options for deck coverings and even side yard gardens, and they come in colors for every taste and architecture style. Coastal Canvas Products serves up and down the Savannah coastline and its South Carolina neighbor, Hilton Head Island, and given the similar climates of both areas, the company uses Sunbrella® fabrics for its products.

“What we love about Sunbrella is what our customers already know – the acrylic fabric won’t fade and adds a burst of color to any outdoor setting, including colorful stripe patterns popular with today’s customers,” Ellen Barber said. “The word ‘shade’ is about finding comfort in a hot climate. When you find your shade spot, you’ve found a place of relaxation.”

“As long as I can remember,” Andrew Barber added, “Coastal Canvas Products has had a partnership with Glen Raven. Glenn Wood has specified more Glen Raven and Sunbrella fabrics than any other textile manufacturer since our company’s founding and the same is true today for Ellen and me.”

The Barbers also credit business-building support from Glen Raven’s distribution subsidiary, Trivantage®, as a crucial part of their company’s success.

“Our relationship with Trivantage is one of the most important factors in our company’s success,” he said. “They are genuinely interested in us and our business, and they don’t hesitate to assist. They bring us new ideas and keep us abreast of changes in the industry and trends that impact customer tastes.

“Trivantage is more than a warranty guarantee; they foster deep relationships and provide support that always goes above and beyond.”

On the web at coastalcanvas.net



In addition to their aesthetic appeal and marketing value, commercial awnings offer shade and create a sheltered entrance for businesses, including those offering outside seating areas.





M&M AWNINGS & SIGNS:

A STORY OF GROWTH, LONGEVITY AND LOVING WHAT YOU DO

The story of M&M Awnings & Signs is one of tremendous growth. What started as an auto upholstery business in a small, two-car garage in East Northport, New York, has grown into a full-service awning and sign company now occupying 22,000 square-feet in the small, central Long Island village of Islandia. Situated 45 minutes outside of Manhattan, M&M Awnings & Signs is uniquely positioned to take advantage of the booming economic growth occurring across the region from New Jersey to Montauk.

“Our greatest growth potential right now is in large commercial awning projects,” said Mike Mere, owner and president of M&M Awnings & Signs. “There are a lot of franchises opening up that are using awning programs and we are getting a piece of the business. In fact, our biggest challenge is keeping up with the rapid growth of business.”

Mere started his career in 1973 when, fresh out of high school, he began an apprenticeship at an antique auto upholstery restoration business run by two scrupulous German men. Mere described the job as “very strict,” and after five years, he had learned enough to strike out on his own. He founded an auto upholstery business before moving into the marine business. After just two years, his business had expanded from the two-car garage to 2,000 square feet, and a fateful interaction with a customer would lead Mere’s business on the path it currently treads today.

“A customer came in one day with an awning and asked if we could duplicate it,” Mere explained. “I had to do quite a bit of research, but was able to find a welding company to make the framework while I fabricated the awning cover. A few friends helped me install the first awning ever made by our company.”

Three years later, M&M Awnings & Signs purchased the building and expanded beyond 2,000 square feet, taking over the first and second floors. By 1992, the business had outgrown the building and relocated to a 12,000 square-foot facility in the town of Huntington, New York. After 20 years in the Huntington location, the business outgrew the space again.

“Even with additions we made to the location, we couldn’t keep up,” Mere said. “Last year, with the help of the Small Business Association and the Industrial Development Association on Long Island, we purchased another building which allowed us to expand into our current location in a large industrial park. The awning industry is really strong and definitely on the upswing.”

Though Mere hopes the recent move and expansion to the 22,000-square-foot



Large commercial awning projects for Radio City Music Hall, The Museum of Modern Art and the LaGuardia and John F. Kennedy International Airports originated inside a 22,000-square-foot manufacturing facility on Long Island, New York.

facility will be the last, with the growth M&M Awnings & Signs has experienced in recent years, the company is already preparing for future expansion into the building next door.

"All in all, we find business very good," Mere said. "We're adding more people and more equipment to help us keep up with the large commercial projects we've secured. Last year, we did projects at Madison Square Garden and Penn Station and our business saw an 85 percent increase. And as of March 2016, we are up 116 percent for the first quarter."

Mere attributes much of the success of his company to the longevity and dedication of the people who work at M&M Awnings & Signs. The company's 22 employees have 145 years of combined experience and, according to Mere, "share a competitive attitude toward perfection."

"We all take great pride in the work that we do," Mere said. "I won't hire more people if I don't feel like they are qualified for the job – they would do more harm than good. It takes a good five years to train someone and we only add employees through personal recommendations, which helps keep new employees focused."

"When you take a close look at any business, one of the biggest factors of its success is the

employees," Mere continued. "At the end of the day, it's the people that work at M&M Awnings that have made it successful."

Thirty percent of M&M Awnings & Signs' business is residential, and over the past several years, the company has seen shade sail systems and pergola covers grow in popularity. The company has worked with Glen Raven from the very beginning, and they purchase all of their Sunbrella® fabric and 80 percent of the hardware from Trivantage®, Glen Raven's distribution subsidiary.

"Every year, we take down 600 Sunbrella awnings and store them for the fall and winter," Mere said. "One of our greatest innovations in recent years is the modification of our larger washing machines to handle the unique properties of Sunbrella fabrics."

Over the years, M&M Awnings & Signs has worked on projects ranging from contemporary homes in the Hamptons and local Italian restaurants to large commercial projects including a series of Gap stores, Radio City Music Hall, Carnegie Hall, The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) and the LaGuardia and John F. Kennedy International Airports.

"If you are in a business and it never changes, you get bored," Mere said. "Our industry is always changing and we keep it exciting

"When you take a close look at any business, one of the biggest factors of its success is the employees."

MIKE MERE

Owner and President of M&M Awnings & Signs





so everyone wants to come to work. I'm just one man and I'm proud of what I've accomplished, but there are people who have been here for 25 years and they are just as responsible for our success. It says a lot when you have people of retirement age that don't want to go."

And the business is truly never the same. Every project utilizes different shapes and colors, and no two buildings and awning designs are exactly the same. M&M Awnings & Signs is constantly creating something new, and to Mike Mere, that's what keeps his work exciting.

"When you go down the street and see your work, you feel a strong sense of pride," Mere said. "I pretty much live for this."

On the web at mmawning.com

FROM APPLE PIES TO BIMINI TOPS, BOAT COVERS UNLIMITED OWNER DOES IT ALL BY HAND

“After I sewed my first boat cover as a teenager, I told my grandmother, ‘This is what I want to do.’ I’m still sewing and teaching the next generation of sewing enthusiasts, and I couldn’t be happier.”

CAROLYN MILLER
Owner of Boat Covers Unlimited, Inc.



“Tell me about your grandmother.”

It was a simple query, asked, in part, to help tell the rich story behind a family business that has been a fixture on Lake Norman, north of Charlotte, North Carolina, for nearly 30 years. It was a powerful query as well, meant to trigger memories of the story behind the inspiration that led to a successful, thriving business.

With a wide smile that conveyed the warmth of the memories, Carolyn Miller, owner of Boat Covers Unlimited, Inc., replied softly, “How much time do you have?” If eyes are indeed a window to the soul, Miller was ready to recall a time when the future artisan began absorbing and refining a craft – sewing – alongside a woman whose calling card was a needle and thread.

“My grandmother was one of the greatest influences in my life,” Miller said. “She was an incredible seamstress who could make anything out of fabric. I trace my passion for sewing to her, and



any business success I enjoy today is in no small part due to her guidance and influence.”

When Miller was in elementary school, she would spend late afternoons and many weekends by her grandmother’s side learning how to sew. Miller’s grandmother often made dresses for her, and one day the six-year-old said she wanted to make a dress, too.

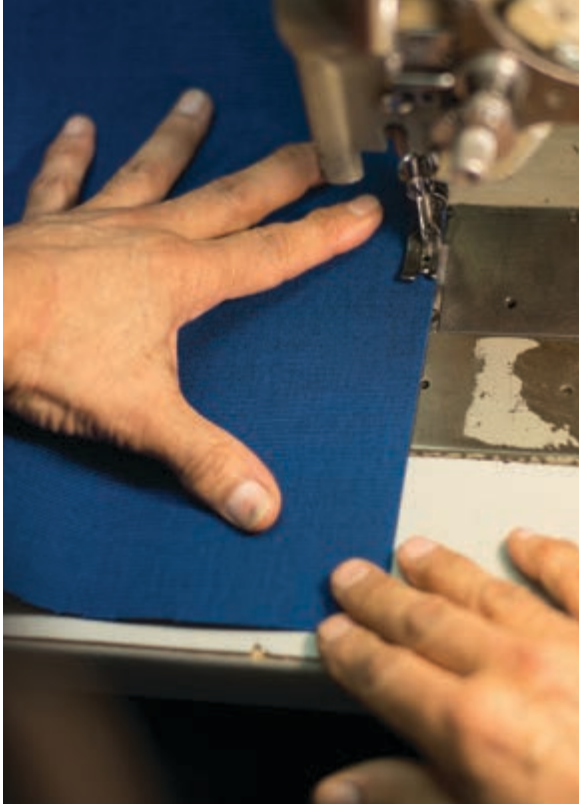
“I remember as a young girl watching her sew almost effortlessly,” Miller said. “She taught me how to follow a pattern and make dresses, and she soon taught me the art of crocheting, knitting and cross stitching – not to mention how to bake apple pies. I learned early on how to create almost anything by hand.”

After a decade as a budding seamstress, Miller’s first job, in sewing prep, came at age 16 working in the canvas shop at Dukes Marina (now closed). She sewed her first boat cover at

Dukes, and that’s when she knew she had found her calling. Miller was soon sewing for Boat Covers Unlimited, which has graced the shores of Lake Norman, the largest man-made body of freshwater in North Carolina, since the mid-1980s.

Miller and a business partner eventually purchased Boat Covers Unlimited in the late 1990s and in 2004 she bought out her colleague and took over full ownership of the Mooresville company. Today, Boat Cover Unlimited produces custom boat covers, mooring covers, golf cart enclosures, boat and house enclosures, and Bimini tops – and all custom work originates at Miller’s fingertips.

“My grandmother taught me a lot about creativity,” she recalled. “She was always encouraging me to take materials and turn them into my own creations. She was the spark my imagination needed and today I can visualize how to create almost anything a customer wants, along with the fabric to bring the creation to life.”



A family business, Boat Covers Unlimited produces custom boat covers, mooring covers and Bimini tops – and all custom work is done by hand.



For example, customers often ask her to help outfit the right Bimini tops for their boats, whether it's for cruising on Lake Norman or Lake Hickory, 45 miles to the northwest. That, she says, is an easy answer – Sunbrella® Supreme. A waterproof exterior marine fabric, it features Sunbrella canvas on the exterior face and a special Sunbrella flocking on the reverse side. The result? A waterproof Sunbrella canvas with a soft headliner underneath.

Brand recognition for Sunbrella, which Boat Covers Unlimited uses exclusively, plays a critical role in the success of the company, as does the support it receives from Trivantage®, Glen Raven's distribution subsidiary. Trivantage provides the fabrics the company needs, as well as keeps the Millers abreast of evolving customer tastes.

"The harshest of marine environments – sun, water, wind – are no match for Sunbrella marine fabrics," said Richard Miller, Carolyn's husband and business partner. "The fabrics breathe, which releases heat and moisture, and protect boaters from the elements, which can extend the boating season."

He also noted the fabric's availability in a range of colors and patterns as a selling point for customers interested in the freshest looks, including the pattern Silica and canvas in Marine Blue, which is one of the hottest colors of 2016.

"We trust Trivantage to help us navigate evolving customer tastes in terms of colors, styles and patterns," Richard Miller said. "They counsel us regularly and are always suggesting new tools and approaches to build our business."

Though her grandmother passed away a dozen or so years ago at age 94, Carolyn Miller continues to draw inspiration from her teachings. Boat Covers Unlimited employs eight associates and every member of the team sews – some after learning the craft from Miller.

"The art of sewing is part of my DNA," she said. "After I sewed my first boat cover as a teenager, I told my grandmother, 'This is what I want to do.' I'm still sewing and teaching the next generation of sewing enthusiasts, and I couldn't be happier."





Lawrence Fabric and Metal Structures has evolved since its founding in 1941 as a fabricator of truck covers.



FOR 75 YEARS AND COUNTING,

LAWRENCE FABRIC AND METAL STRUCTURES TURNS IDEAS INTO REALITIES

When a customer recently asked Lawrence Fabric and Metal Structures to build a 15-foot guitar for display, the company, which has operated in the St. Louis region for 75 years, didn't shy away from the challenge.

"We're willing to do just about anything," said Dave Bess, vice president. "We never say the word 'only' – we only do awnings, or we only do industrial fabrication. We are always willing to take on new challenges; we are the ones who help customers make their innovative ideas a reality."

Founded as Lawrence Canvas Products by Arthur and Dorothy Lawrence in 1941 and sold to Bob Helmsing in 1977, the company originally fabricated truck covers and truck seat upholstery as well as tote bags and a range of products made of canvas.

"Back in the day, canvas was used as a generic word for anything fabric," explained Jerry Grimaud, the company's former president. "We were listed in the phone book under 'canvas' and a number of people would call us up and ask if we could make canvas awnings. That's how we got into the awning business in the early 1980s."

At the time, there were only two types of canvas typically used for awnings – Pee Gee and Calabana. Developed in 1961, Sunbrella® fabric was still the new kid on the block when Grimaud started working with the company.



JERRY GRIMAUD: ENTRUSTING THE FUTURE OF THE COMPANY TO THE EMPLOYEES

Jerry Grimaud, former president and sole owner of Lawrence Fabric and Metal Structures, began his career with the company in 1979. His job wasn't glamorous – he swept the floors, cut fabrics, set grommets with a mallet on a wood block and installed over-the-road truck tarps. Because he had taken a mechanical drawing class in high school, he soon became the company draftsman and designed awnings for more than 15 years.

He became a salesman and later bought in as a partner in the company. In 2005, he became the sole owner when he purchased the company from Bob Helmsing. In 2015, Grimaud announced he would step down from his post, and that he would sell the company to his employees as an employee stock ownership plan (ESOP).

"I realized I needed an exit plan and selling to a private equity firm or to another company or individual could have resulted in huge management changes," Grimaud explained. "Led by President Mike Bowman and Vice President Dave Bess, our management team will continue the culture of independence we've created and the ESOP will keep it intact. It will also allow us to reward our long-term employees by setting them up for retirement."

"We discovered quickly that Sunbrella® was the best fabric to use on awnings because of its fade- and mildew-resistant properties," Grimaud explained. "At the time, Sunbrella was only manufactured as a 31-inch width, and all of our formulas for awning frames were based on the width of Sunbrella fabric."

Lawrence Fabric and Metal Structures has always had a strong partnership with Glen Raven – they primarily use Sunbrella, the Sunbrella Graphics System and Firesist® fabrics – but it wasn't until the mid-2000s that the partnership was truly solidified in Grimaud's eyes. A new iteration of a Glen Raven fabric that Grimaud had installed on many customers' awnings was recalled. "This was when I learned the true value system of Glen Raven," said Grimaud. "They stood behind every awning that we put up using the fabric and took care of us on every warranty issue we had. They didn't shy away from the issue and we respect companies like that. They basically won me as a customer for life."

Over a period of eight years starting in the early 1980s, the company grew in leaps and bounds. First, it expanded from 8,000 to 20,000-square-foot in order to meet the demands of its growing residential awning business, and later added 26,000 square feet to house its new welding department. Two additional buildings, one 8,000-square-foot and the other 10,000-square-foot, were purchased as the company expanded into contract work, tent rental and commercial awnings and canopies.

"We started our welding department with one stick welder, using cold drawn steel to manufacture our awning frames," explained Grimaud. "Just like Henry Ford said, our customers had their choice of colors for framework– black or black. As we moved into the 1990s, we found that aluminum was an easier metal to work with and so we changed our process."

One of the defining characteristics of Lawrence Fabric and Metal Structures is its ability to weather any storm and come out ahead. By 2004, the company had eliminated its residential awning program in favor of commercial work. However, during the recession, commercial work slowed and residential work picked back up. It wasn't until August 2015 that the company decided to eliminate its residential awning business for the second time. Though the work is constantly changing, Grimaud and Bess attribute much of the company's success to the employees and their willingness to embrace change.



For this project, the customer wanted to emulate the Eiffel Tower trussing for a stage presentation at a one-night charity event. Salesman, Jim Knoche, suggested using Sunbrella cut on an automated CNC cutting table. The fabric was stretched and attached to a fixed structure. There was an open hem in the bottom for a pipe to weight the fabric; the top was attached to the existing structure via grommets.

"Whenever there are new products and processes available, we really promote them," said Bess. "I think that's been the biggest part of our company's innovation. Jerry and Bob [Helmsing] have always said, 'if there's a more efficient way to do something, let's do it.' We've also established a culture and built a team that really embraces change. I think the greatest strength we have is the talent of our employees and the ambition that they have to do something new and exciting. That has helped our growth more than anything."

In 1996, the company moved into their current location in a 68,200-square-foot building and changed its name to Lawrence Fabric Structures to better reflect the range of products the company offered. In 2010, the company changed its name again to Lawrence Fabric and Metal Structures to reflect its growing expertise in metal shade structures.

"Metal awnings are a big trend right now," said Grimaud. "But fabric awnings have lived through the ups and downs in this industry and will always be around. In fact, we have one restaurant that changes its awning fabric every couple of years just to give it a new and refreshed look."

"As a company, we are always trying to figure out how to give our customers exactly what they ask for," Grimaud continued. "It all comes back to our basic business strategy, which is to provide a good solution to our customers with great products and a fair price. If we live by that we're going to succeed, even in an ever-changing market."

Though the market is constantly changing, Lawrence Fabric and Metal Structures is willing to change with it, and sports a can-do attitude when it comes to the future. With the slogan, "Your Imagination is Our Vision," and 75 years of success behind them, the future is looking rosy.

"We're becoming more regional to support our future growth," Bess said. "There are so many opportunities in markets outside of St. Louis where we can help smaller companies by building the structures that they don't have the capacity to do on their own, or partnering with them to take on large projects. That way, they can then learn from us and continue to grow as well. There's a saying, 'a rising tide lifts all boats' – in the end, we become a better company and they become a better company."

On the web at lawrencefabric.com



FROM TABLECLOTHS TO TACTICAL MILITARY GEAR,

MARTEX PRESIDENT TRANSFORMS THE MEXICAN TEXTILE INDUSTRY



Founded in 1926 and based in Mexico, Martex is a family-owned, industry-leading manufacturer of specialized textiles for military, sportswear and automotive applications. The great-grandson of the founder of the company and current CEO, Santiago Martí, explains how the enterprise got started and how he joined it.

“When the Mexican Revolution began, my great-grandfather, who owned a significant site of land, fled the country and went to Cuba. My grandfather was studying at Notre Dame University at the time, but my great-grandfather needed my grandfather to return to Mexico and find a job to help support the family. My great-grandfather had a friend who was an owner of a textile company and my grandfather asked him for a job. He was granted the position of loom operator where he began his knowledge of fabrics.

“My grandfather got into the textile business for himself when he purchased two old loom machines from the owner of the company and started producing silk. My father was the ninth of 13 children, and among his siblings, he was the one most interested in textiles. He began working alongside my grandfather when he was only 19 or 20 years old and helped transform the company into a flourishing business.

“Like my grandfather, my father also had the idea that his children should work from an early age. When I was 13, my father bought 100 Picanol looms and sent me to Ypres, Belgium to learn how to install and operate them. The next year, we purchased jet-dyeing machines from Italy and I traveled there to learn how to operate those as well. When I was 15, I went to Spain, where I was trained how to control the looms and machinery.

“At 17, I left my father’s business and launched my own industrial laundry business. However, three years later, my father had asked me to come back to the company to help him run it. So I sold my laundry company, and rejoined the family business as its leader. Because I had learned about textiles from a very young age, it became one of my passions. But it also implied a lot of work.”

When Santiago Martí took over the company from his father in 2008, the company specialized in the manufacture of tablecloths and curtains. However, the now professional engineer had spent two formative and life-changing years at a military school in the United States. With a passion for innovative textiles for military and sportswear applications, Santiago once more transformed the company his grandfather had founded.

Martex currently operates out of three factories, all located in Mexico, and specializes in the manufacturing of innovative textiles with the latest technology, integrated for both tactical and ballistic military applications, as well as cutting-edge sportswear and fabrics that incorporate antibacterial, UV protection and anti-mosquito technology.

"The major trends within our industry are these specialized products made mostly out of nylon or polyester (some of which are purchased from Glen Raven) such as the soccer uniforms we manufacture for the professional leagues in Mexico, Europe and South America, or bullet-proof vests and jackets for the Mexican military," Santiago said. "The focus of our company is to be competitive and innovative, so we are always investing in research and development."

In fact, Martex invests approximately 1.5 to 2 million dollars per year in R&D across its various business units.

"We are constantly attending all major shows and meeting with companies to find out what they are developing, and we strive to partner with companies that share our values," Santiago said. "My father used to do business with Mr. Allen Gant (Glen Raven CEO) and now I work closely with the Glen Raven management team. We have been able to build a strong relationship over 25 years because we share values and a sustainable and innovative vision for the industry, which aside from inspiring us has also made us strong partners.



"Glen Raven has never treated us as a one-deal-company," Santiago added, "but treats us as a partner and has invested in our relationship by looking for the most competitive prices with the best possible attention to us as clients."

"The focus of our company is to be competitive and innovative, so we are always investing in research and development."

SANTIAGO MARTÍ
CEO of Martex

Aside from providing the garment industry with fabric designed under the strictest safety standards while considering the technological needs of the finished product,

Martex has also succeeded in establishing a socially responsible business. At its cut-and-sew facility, Martex employs more than 2,800 people from 27 communities, to whom the company provides free transportation to and from their communities, an eating facility with complimentary meals and an in-house doctor.

"This relieves a lot of stress for our workers, because bus schedules are not the most convenient here," Santiago explained. "It also allows us to start work on time and provides a more stable work environment for our employees, which helps us stay competitive in the global marketplace."

On the web at www.martex.com.mx





GLEN RAVEN ASIA

ACCELERATING GROWTH OF
SUNBRELLA® FABRICS IN ASIA





HUA LI



Glen Raven Asia (GRA) represents Glen Raven, Inc.'s commitment to providing quality performance fabrics for China and all of Asia. The primary mission of the manufacturing, marketing, sourcing and product development center in Suzhou, China is the manufacture of Sunbrella® fabrics for furniture makers with plants in China. The facility is also a focal point for Glen Raven's sourcing throughout the region.

One of the most important goals for GRA is to accelerate the growth of domestic Asian markets through the ready availability of Sunbrella fabrics. Sunbrella fabrics produced at GRA are used for casual or outdoor furniture, awnings, convertible tops and graphic media. Many of GRA's customers are North American-based companies with manufacturing operations in China, while others are domestic Asian companies serving the Pacific Rim, Europe and North America.

Hua Li is general manager of Glen Raven Asia. He joined Glen Raven in 2005 and was a member of the team that designed, built and launched the 190,000-square-foot manufacturing facility. In a recent interview, Li discussed the global objectives of GRA and how growth opportunities in China and across Asia remain positive in a global economy that knows no borders.

WHAT IS THE GLOBAL OBJECTIVE OF GLEN RAVEN ASIA?

We have identified three primary objectives for GRA: provide logistical convenience for our major retail customers locally; grow the China domestic market and domestic markets

of adjacent countries in Asia; and provide sourcing capabilities and opportunities to the global Glen Raven family.

WHAT ARE YOUR BUSINESS PRIORITIES?

There is a growing domestic Asian market for shade products, making it critical that we continue to build the Sunbrella brand here. As a result, our business priorities emphasize building the infrastructure necessary to grow domestic markets for shade products and focusing on opportunities in residential – especially high-end residential – commercial and hospitality. We are also focused on building the Sunbrella and Dickson brands of performance fabrics.



WHAT ARE THE MAJOR TRENDS IN INDOOR AND OUTDOOR TEXTILES IN ASIA TODAY?

China continues to be an emerging nation of consumers. The demand for consumer goods, especially luxury goods such as indoor and outdoor textiles, keeps growing year after year due to surging economic

growth and increases in the number of high net worth individuals and families. Chinese consumers accounted for 46 percent of global luxury goods consumption in 2015, and this consumption is valued at \$116.8 billion. The trend for China consumers will continue to be brand driven, and the key to Glen Raven's growth in Asia markets over the long term is by building our brand image.

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER THE COMPANY'S GREATEST STRENGTHS?

Our greatest strength as a company is our ability to utilize the power of innovation to grow smartly and stay ahead of the competition. Our global presence is also a significant strength, as our proximity to Asia customers ensures that the same product/color/quality can be produced locally and delivered on a timely basis. No other competitor of ours is able to achieve this accomplishment.

DESCRIBE THE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF THE SUZHOU FACILITY IN TERMS OF REACHING ASIAN MARKETS.

The strategic importance of the Glen Raven Asia business center in the Suzhou Singapore Industrial Park cannot be overstated. GRA is strategically located within the world's largest nation of consumers. Our presence locally results in quick-to-market product availability as well as production, warehouse and trade capabilities with cost efficiencies in mind for Asian markets. Our facility in Suzhou also allows GRA to facilitate our subsidiaries' products and services in reaching Chinese and Asian markets.



WHAT CAN WE EXPECT FROM GLEN RAVEN ASIA IN THE SHORT- AND LONG TERM?

In the short term, we are focused on building the infrastructure required to bridge the gap between high-end consumers and quality products such as Sunbrella. We are also focused on educating designers, architects, specifiers, outdoor manufacturers, retailers and consumers on the emerging outdoor lifestyle/culture in China.

Over the longer term, branding is the key to our success. China remains the world's leading growth story, representing opportunities for increased global commerce. With a growing population in the middle class and an increasing number of high net worth individuals, the demand for leading branded products from the West is expected to increase. We must continue to build our brand recognition in China and Asian markets.

GROWTH OUTLOOK REMAINS POSITIVE FOR CHINA

The growth outlook in China remains positive as a middle class of 300 million people fuels the expansion of domestic spending in the emerging nation of consumers. According to Hua Li, general manager of Glen Raven Asia, through 2018, the overall Chinese economy is projected to grow 7 percent annually with an average rate of more than 8 percent in domestic consumption.

“The middle class in China is becoming a class of consumers with growing demand for quality products and services,” Li said. “There has been a surge in internet shopping, along with predictions of rapid growth for finance, tourism, information technology and green industries, including shading.”

For example, China has the world's fastest growth infrastructure, with 90 million new housing units built in the past 15 years, which is enough to accommodate the total population of Germany, France and the United Kingdom combined.

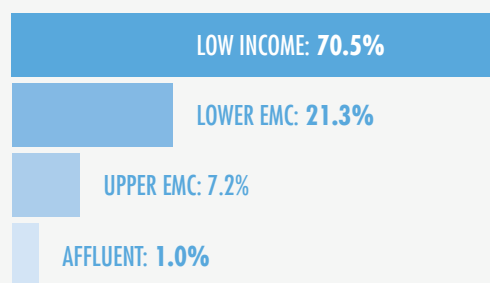
In addition to encouraging consumption, government policy in China is focused on promoting green and low carbon emission, energy savings and sun protection. Increased urbanization is a key driver for growth. China's urban population increased from 40 percent in 2005 to 51 percent in 2011 and more than 200 million Chinese farmers are expected to become urbanities by 2020.

“Asian markets are projected to be among the fastest growing in the world for many years to come, and we will be an active participant in that growth,” Li said. “Our work in China will ultimately benefit all Glen Raven customers as we develop new markets and new business opportunities that can benefit our trade partners.”

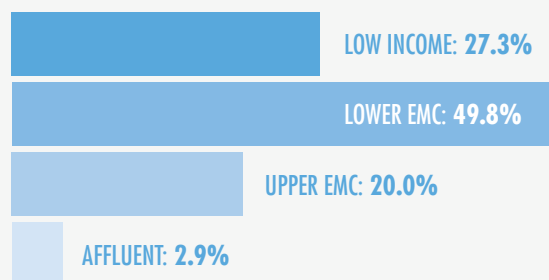
CHINA'S EMERGING MIDDLE CLASS*

Income group projected to increase from 125 million in 2012 to 356 million by 2020

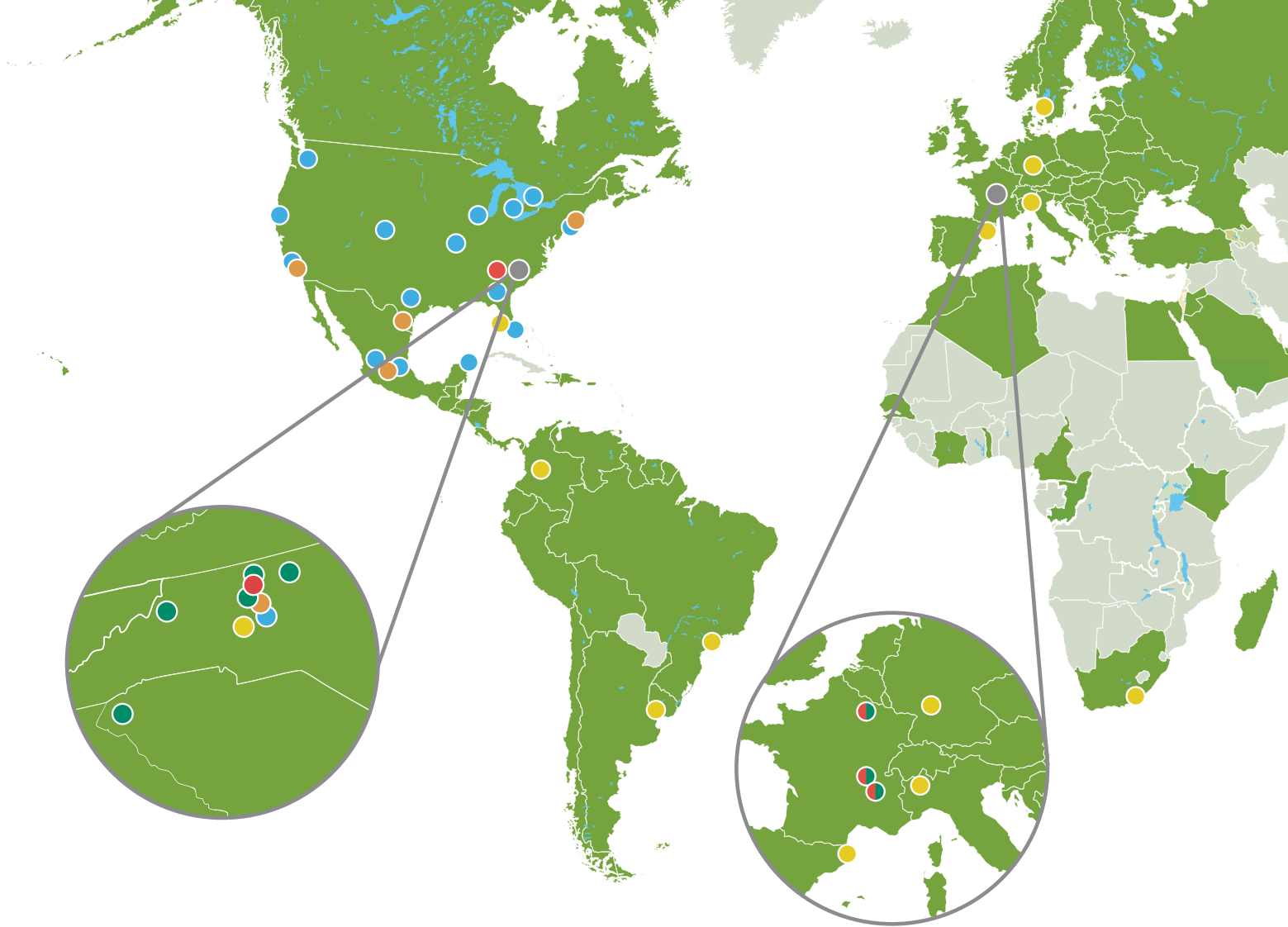
2012



2020



* Source: ZenithOptimedia



GLEN RAVEN GLOBAL LOCATIONS

GLEN RAVEN, INC.

- Corporate Office
Glen Raven, NC
336.227.6211

GLEN RAVEN CUSTOM FABRICS

- Corporate Office
Glen Raven, NC
336.227.6211
- Anderson Plant
Anderson, SC
864.224.1671
- Burlington Plant
Burlington, NC
336.227.6211
- Norlina Plant
Norlina, NC
252.456.4141
- High Point Showroom
High Point, NC
336.886.5720

GLEN RAVEN TECHNICAL FABRICS

- Corporate Office
Glen Raven, NC
336.227.6211

- Burnsville Facility
Burnsville, NC
828.682.2142
- Park Avenue Facility
Glen Raven, NC
336.229.5576

TRIVANTAGE

- Corporate Office
Glen Raven, NC
336.227.6211
- Consolidated Distribution Center
Mebane, NC
877.540.6803
- Texas Distribution Center
Irving, TX
800.786.7610
- Washington Distribution Center
Tukwila, WA
800.213.1465
- Southern California Distribution Center
City of Industry, CA
800.841.0555
- Northern California Distribution Center
Hayward, CA
800.786.7607

- Colorado Distribution Center
Denver, CO
800.786.7609
- Florida Distribution Center
Miami, FL
800.786.7605
- Georgia Distribution Center
Lithia Springs, GA
800.786.7606
- Illinois Distribution Center
Elmhurst, IL
800.786.7608
- Ohio Distribution Center
Middleburg Heights, OH
800.786.7601
- Missouri Distribution Center
Maryland Heights, MO
800.786.7603
- New Jersey Distribution Center
Somerset, NJ
800.786.7602

TRICAN CORPORATION

- Mississauga, ON
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TUNALI TEC

- Tunali Tec Cuernavaca
Jiutepec, Morelos
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- Tunali Tec Guadalajara
Guadalajara, Jalisco
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- Tunali Tec Cancun
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- Corporate
- Manufacturing
- Corporate/Manufacturing
- Distribution
- Sales/Service
- Logistics
- Countries Sold Into

- Sales Office
Barcelona, Spain
34.93.635.42.00

DICKSON COATINGS

- Dickson PTL
Dagneux, France
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- Dickson Saint Clair
Saint Clair de la Tour, France
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STRATA SYSTEMS

- Corporate Office
Cumming, GA
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STRATA GEOSYSTEMS (INDIA)

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- Daman Plant
Bhimpore, Daman
91.260.222.1060

- Hyderabad Sales Office
Hyderabad
91.9949.361.706

- Gurgaon Sales Office
Gurgaon, Haryana
91.9871.102.146

GEO SOLUÇÕES (A STRATA COMPANY)

- São Paulo, Brazil
11.3803.9509

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- Sales Office
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- Northern Pacific Rim Sales Office
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- Vietnam Sales Office
Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
84.8.38.27.72.01
- Indonesia Sales Office
Jakarta, Indonesia
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- South Pacific Rim Sales Office
New South Wales, Australia
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- South Africa Sales Office
Port Elizabeth, South Africa
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- Central America Sales Office
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- Thailand Sales Office
Bangkok, Thailand
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- Mexico Sales Office
Mexico City, Mexico
011.525.55.561.9448
- New Jersey Terminal
Avenel, NJ
800.729.0081
- California Terminal
City of Industry, CA
800.729.0081
- Texas Terminal
Laredo, TX
800.729.0081