

Company helps fill holes in supply chain

From Mirror staff reports

DUNCANSVILLE — When supply chain issues throw a curveball at major retailers, a local company has been stepping up to the plate for over 35 years to solve their problems.

Quality Corrections and Inspections, with locations in Duncansville and Henderson, Nevada, has worked on products the baseball industry might rely on such as backpacks, apparel and footwear.

QCI is a crisis management service business, helping businesses deal with disruptive situations that affect inventories within their supply chain.

Jeff Leake, who specializes in business development for the company, said they once had a baseball backpack project where the straps and webbing on the straps had to be reinforced with stronger stitching to ensure that the bag could better withstand the weight of at least two dozen baseballs.

"Some time ago, our team also engaged on a project on a shipment of license garments, which was unfortunately labeled with an incorrect league logo that needed to be corrected," he said.

These types of problems crop up often, and QCI has answered the call for a number of major retailers, not just ones associated with the baseball industry.

In addition to the general apparel and footwear products, the company has also worked on a wide range of merchandise types, including belts, wallets, handbags, hats, umbrellas, furniture, toys, luggage, kitchen and bath fixtures, small kitchen appliances and promotional products.



Courtesy photo

A worker at Quality Corrections and Inspections refinishes a shoe at one of the company's locations based in Duncansville and in Henderson, Nevada.

Inventory availability is a key component of a retailers' business success and undertaking product rework when necessary is a tool to protect a company's potential to make sales, Leake said.

"As you can imagine, importing a product from overseas can be a very complex process," he said.

A variety of issues in the supply chain goods movement process including product sourcing, production, shipping and handling processes can impact inventory.

"Companies regularly face supply chain disrup-

tions, and they are a fact of life in businesses, especially as it relates to imports," Leake said.

Company origins

Quality Corrections and Inspections originated in the early 1980s when Ron and Doris Burk formed a company called Quality Casuals, a footwear manufacturer located in Duncansville.

As the footwear industry started trending toward importing more products from overseas, they saw a need to address the issue of shipments arriving state-

side in need of rework due to production errors or minor defects.

Drawing on their footwear expertise, the Burks pivoted their business strategy to solving the issues footwear companies were experiencing with imported products, said Mark Shaw, Global Operations Manager.

As a result, in 1986, Quality Corrections and Inspections was founded.

Since then, the company has focused on high-volume repair and inspection services for the footwear, apparel, accessories and consumer goods industries.

"It made sense to start the

business in Duncansville at the time," Shaw said, noting that Pennsylvania was a hub for the footwear industry in the early 1980s. The Duncansville location was ideal, with its proximity to key East Coast ports where many inbound shipments arrived from overseas factories.

Leake said for nearly 40 years, QCI has been the "go-to" company for many of the top brands.

"We quickly, cost effectively, and with the highest craftsmanship, correct quality issues that unfortunately occur within the supply chain," he said.

Go West

As the demand for rework services increased, so did the need for a location on the West Coast.

In 2003, Henderson, Nevada, became a second home for the rapidly growing business.

"Ron and Doris' son, Randy, relocated to Nevada to help run the new location," Shaw said.

Their son is now the executive vice president for the company.

"Establishing the West Coast location was a good decision that allowed us to grow," Randy Burk said.

He said over the past 20 years, import volumes have doubled in that region.

"The growth in the West Coast imports, combined with our existing customer base that had needs for our services in the West, provided the company with an impressive national footprint to service customers across the U.S.," Burk said.

The two locations perform the same type of services for importers, retailers, manufacturers, distribution centers and direct-to-consumer businesses, Shaw said, adding that the Nevada location was specifically chosen to meet the demands of West Coast clients and serve the Los Angeles, Long Beach and Seattle ports.

Case studies

Today, in addition to providing inspection, repair and rework, QCI also offers businesses an array of value-added or outsourcing services — repackaging, sorting, kitting and floor-ready services such as "point-of-purchase" display assembly.

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Courtesy photo

A worker at one of Quality Corrections and Inspections' factories based in Duncansville and in Henderson, Nevada, sews a piece of clothing.

SUPPLY: Unique projects regularly

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"Our company is regularly presented with unique projects every week," Burk said.

Companies come across a variety of unforeseen problems and opportunities that can result in the need to do a product rework, Burk said.

"We have developed a strategic approach to each project situation and tailor our creative problem-solving services to meet our customer's exact needs," he said.

At one point, 85,000 pairs of shoes ordered by a major retailer arrived at various distribution centers with mold on them.

The retailer sent QCI a batch of sample pairs for analysis, and the company's problem-solving team tackled the mold problem, which minimized both time and cost for the retailer.

All of the distribution cen-

ters then sent their shoes to the nearest QCI facility, where team members began the process of mold remediation, cleaning and sanitization.

Between the Pennsylvania and Nevada locations, about 10,000 pairs of shoes were restored each day.

In the span of just a few weeks, the entire inventory of shoes was restored.

QCI's website provides case studies that represent a small sampling of the diversity of products and projects they have performed, like mending 80,000 sandals with loose straps or tackling even more intricate issues like blooming on shoes from Asia.

Blooming occurs on leather shoes and appears as white marks. The team at QCI removed the marks and the shoes were refinished with an inhibitor to prevent

future occurrences.

But QCI's problem solving isn't limited to footwear. When children's sleepwear arrived with a strong odor of garlic from being shipped in a shared container, QCI treated the products in an ozone chamber, from which they emerged completely odor-free.

Even leather ottomans with broken or loose legs have found a renewed life as a result of QCI's interventions, minimizing losses for the retailer.

No matter the instance, QCI's team in both the Pennsylvania and Nevada locations are able to collaborate with all the parties involved to restore items to their prime condition.

"There isn't a day that goes by when we don't talk to someone new regarding an issue in need of a solution," Leake said.