

Going Local Has Gone From Theory to Reality at Suuchi Inc.

By: Arthur Friedman

Suuchi Ramesh, CEO and Founder of Suuchi Inc., has grown her U.S.-based full-package technology and vertical manufacturing factory from five employees in 2016 to 130 today.

How? With speed and efficiency.

From the North Bergen, N.J. facility, Suuchi Inc. is able to produce replenishment orders ranging from 100 pieces to thousands in just five days thanks to a vertical operation. The company designs, samples, produces, ships and handles logistics for a wide array of apparel categories and fabrics, as well as some soft accessories, with plans to expand into leather goods and shoes.

“My goal was to work toward the reshoring of apparel manufacturing,” she told the Textile Talks audience at Texworld USA Tuesday. “We saw a huge opportunity based on the way the industry was changing and the need for quick turn and shortening the supply chain.”

Suuchi was part of Local Loft at Texworld, which was a collaboration between Fashionindex and Texworld USA to highlight what’s happening “in their own backyards.”

Local Loft spotlighted 12 companies: Aetna, the cut-and-sew shirt factory out of Baltimore; Suuchi; Mountain Meadow, offering sweater and custom knitwear from Wyoming-grown wool. Also in Local Loft were NYC apparel factories Vishal and MCM Enterprises, product development and tech services Suite Creative and Nightwear Studios, and domestic zipper company AGH. Other suppliers in Local Loft included Whispering Spirit, which hand-crafts alpaca fiber and Solid Stone, offering domestic digital printing, cutting and sewing.

Operating on the theory that a rigid supply chain no longer works, Ramesh developed a four-point strategy for Suuchi Inc. to disrupt the sector. In line with that, the other aim for Suuchi Inc. was to create a local community of manufacturers that address the last mile of the supply chain by manufacturing locally to the heart of the industry in New York City.

For the first step in the strategy, the woman-owned, mostly women-operated company connects clients to a “smart shop floor” using propriety technology called the “Suuchi Grid,” giving them real time access to the production process. The Suuchi Grid begins with data because, as Ramesh puts it, “prediction is the new commodity.” By using predictive consumer analytics, “you can navigate future decisions across the supply chain,” Ramesh said.

The next step is “shipping, then shopping is the future,” which turns what’s been the traditional model for manufacturing on its head. The model here mimics Amazon, which, according to Ramesh, “can tell you what you want before you know it.” By using data analysis and historical

buying patterns, companies can plan raw material purchasing and production planning more efficiently before going to market with something the consumer may not want.

Building in transparency that can monetize a company's methods as selling point, is the third point in Ramesh's strategy. Citing Everlane as an example, Ramesh said tracking technology can help companies transform their brands so their customers can see exactly where their clothes, and the components they contain, are coming from.

"You can charge for that as part of your story," she said.

Rounding out the four points is last mile manufacturing, which Ramesh said is "trillion dollar gold."

"Made in America makes business sense now in order to have the quick turn and rapid response capability that companies like Amazon and Walmart demand, you have to be as close as possible to where the product is being purchased," Ramesh explained.

To drive these points forward in hopes that they permeate the industry, Ramesh also launched Suuchi University as a model set up to give advanced training to the local community.