



WALKING THE TALK

Texstyle Australia's reputation as a leading supplier of window furnishing fabrics is underpinned by a unique product and service proposition that consistently delivers what it promises, writes Belinda Smart.

NICK BRICE, national sales manager of Texstyle Australia, contends the company's philosophy is a simple one;

"We don't want to be the biggest; we just want to be the best."

Of course the statement is deceptively simple and is one that many companies might aspire to, without necessarily achieving. In Texstyle's case however, it rings true. Feedback from the company's Australia-wide customer base provides a resounding endorsement that the company lives up to its philosophy.

"Watson Blinds and Awnings were approached by Texstyle with a supply proposal five years ago and since that time our relationship has gone from strength to strength," confirms Ray Watson, managing director of Watson Blind and Awnings (ACT). "They are now our major supplier of roller and sunscreen fabrics with a comprehensive range that satisfies our customer requirements."

"The service they provide to us is excellent. We never have out-of-stock situations and rarely have quality issues, which enables us to provide excellent lead times and product for our clients."

"The staff at Texstyle are constantly keeping us up to date with product development and actively involve us, seeking our knowledge as the end user."

"Watson Blinds and Awnings made a decision that our company wanted to align ourselves with a limited number of major suppliers within our industry. To this end our relationship with Texstyle has provided us with a fabric supplier that is progressive, innovative and supportive. We feel that we receive that good old fashioned personal touch from a group of dedicated staff."

Since its establishment in 1996, that personal touch has always been an important part of Texstyle's organisational culture, Brice confirms. "Everyone is committed to complete customer satisfaction, ensuring that the supply chain relationship is as good as it can possibly be."

A flat organisational structure and "open door" policy concerning all staff members' opinions and ideas are central to this ethos. These factors result in a fast, nimble decision making process, he adds. "We don't get bogged down in meetings but have frequent conference calls in which we address issues and make decisions."

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Central to the company's strategy has been the development of ongoing relationships with customers in key geographical areas who can support Texstyle across the entire range, with a strong focus on those that can buy volume or demonstrate the ability to grow into a volume account.

"Because of the way we choose our customers there is a level of exclusivity that we can offer," says Brice. "We want to sell to the best possible accounts, not everyone, and we think we have built a very good and loyal customer base through this policy."

Texstyle also has a flexible approach to sales, with a number of options regarding stock holding and payment terms which makes them unique in the industry. The company also offers a five year warranty on all fabrics and a no-fuss returns policy.

"If the fabric is not fit for purpose, we don't argue, we take it back."

Image Blinds (QLD) director Joe Turner says Texstyle's commitment to service plays a strong role in Image Blinds' preferred supplier relationship with the company. ▶

"With roller blinds leading the window covering market today, Texstyle has studied the Australian market well and has provided a range of fabrics that meets our customers' demands, from translucent to blackout to sunscreen."

"Australian consumers demand service today so they require their products to be installed as soon as possible. Texstyle provides that service and in fact are very efficient in their order fulfilment. Texstyle offers full back-up support with any problems you may have and excels in support for you and your customers." ▶

PREMIUM PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Over the years, Texstyle has also built solid relationships with its suppliers. When selecting a manufacturer for its fabrics, technical capability, plant and equipment are key factors, driven by the company's commitment to providing a quality product. Texstyle will even go as far as providing financial assistance and expertise to develop new fabrics, says Texstyle's Richard Macalister.

"With one manufacturer it has taken 18 months of hard work and they are just about to ship the first container. "We had to change the weaver, the dye house and the chemical supplier to get the product we required," Macalister confirms.

Texstyle representatives in key offshore hubs such as Taiwan and China also play a key role in ensuring the delivery of quality product. "In Taiwan Texstyle's product development specialist Vee Chang has been with the company for the last six years and plays an extremely important role in product development, order scheduling, quality control and shipping. Vee was educated at Ohio State University, USA, speaks five languages and has an excellent technical knowledge."

Texstyle is the exclusive distributor in Australia and New Zealand for emerging sun screen manufacturing giant Aplus, which has garnered Greenguard, Oeko-Tex and listings on Ecospecifier and is now one of the largest Polyester/PVC manufacturers in the world.

"After selling 30 per cent of the company when they listed on the Shanghai stock exchange around 12 months ago, Aplus is now diversifying into other fabric areas, so customers should 'watch this space'."

Meanwhile Texstyle recently employed Merri Cranswick as in-house textile designer. With a degree in textile design from RMIT, she will play a key role in enhancing the company's product offer by developing exclusive designs to suit individual client requirements. ▶

EXPORT GROWTH

Macalister confirms Texstyle has been successful in exporting to a number of overseas markets. The company regularly attends overseas trade shows and undertakes overseas market visits.

"At the recent R+T show in Stuttgart, Texstyle teamed with Acmeda to showcase its new fabrics and received phenomenal feedback. Texstyle also released at R+T, MetroTech, their new high performance, halogen free, flame retardant fabric which has been specified in some major hotel projects in Asia including the recently opened Grande Centre Point Hotel in Bangkok." ▶

STOCK MANAGEMENT

One of the important factors in the company's success is its approach to stock management, Nick Brice confirms. "Texstyle is known for carrying huge stock and last year in the run up to Christmas had virtually no stock outages, giving customers confidence to sell year-round regardless of the size of project."

Dave Farren of Jaleigh Blinds (VIC) confirms his company has worked with Texstyle for over a decade and credits Texstyle both for the breadth of its fabric range and its service.

"Put simply, Texstyle makes everything very easy. Their stock levels are by far the best of any supplier we've ever worked with. With many suppliers if a product is out of stock you need to wait about six weeks, but with Texstyle it's typically one week. Also if there are any issues or problems with a product, they fix it up immediately, no questions asked."

"Texstyle offer it all; great product and great service. The staff really know what they're doing and have an impressive level of expertise. It's impossible to provide a single example of Texstyle providing outstanding service because they do that every time." ◀