

RAVEN

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Allen E. Gant, Jr.
CEO AND CHAIRMAN

Dear Readers,

One of the most exciting aspects of the Sunbrella® brand is the way in which our partners continue to push our fibers and fabrics into creative new applications.

On the cover is a scene from the LongHouse Reserve on Long Island that has been decorated with Sunbrella fabrics throughout. The LongHouse Reserve is the 16-acre estate of acclaimed textiles designer Jack Lenor Larsen, who opens the property each year to visitors from spring through October. One of the most memorable features this year is a 32-foot tall sculpture made of Sunbrella fabrics.

Sheila Hicks, an internationally recognized textile artist, has also brought Sunbrella into creative interpretations this year through inspiring installations at the Whitney Museum in New York City; the Palais de Tokyo Museum of Modern Art in Paris, France; and Art Basel in Basel, Switzerland. And, Dransfield & Ross, an artisanal home décor company, recently launched "Sunbrella Performance Art," a collection made with Sunbrella fabrics that includes Amish quilts, jewelry, decorative pillows and laminated plates and serving trays.

In this issue of the Raven, we continue to profile some of our most innovative customers, including Commercial Sewing, Inc. of Torrington, Conn. CSI has applied innovation to every aspect of its business of crafting covers for personal watercraft and boats. Also from the marine industry is the story of West Coast Canvas, a Lodi, Calif. marine fabricator that illustrates the value of reinvention in the face of ever-changing markets.

Another customer we are pleased to profile is Capitol Awning, which serves the metropolitan New York market. During its long history, Capitol Awning has provided awnings and other shade structures for the region's most iconic locations. From an international perspective, we are including a profile of Toldos Pastor, a Spanish company that is a valued customer of Dickson Coating in France and serving markets as diverse as energy and transportation.

Long-term trade partnerships are essential to everyone, and there is no better example than Glen Raven and Sunbury Textile Mills. We recently celebrated our 20-year partnership of creating high-end Sunbrella fabrics for the nation's leading decorative jobbers.

We hope you will enjoy insights related to innovation in two articles in this issue. The "Future of Shade" is a global competition that we sponsor to encourage creative thinking around new generations of shade structures, and we're featuring a question-and-answer interview with Justin Ferrell, director of fellowships for the d.school at Stanford University and an expert on "design thinking."

Our goal for the Raven magazine is to encourage innovative thinking by everyone. Let's never stop discovering new opportunities to make the world a better place.

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WEST COAST CANVAS PROVES VALUE OF REINVENTION

The ability of a business to reinvent itself with changing times is a strategic fundamental often championed but seldom achieved. An exception is West Coast Canvas of Lodi, Calif., which went into the recession as one type of business and re-emerged with a fresh new focus.

"With the recession, we hit a brick wall starting in 2008, and we thought the world was coming to an end," said Curt Page, owner of West Coast Canvas. "But, while I was attending a boat show at the Marin Yacht Club in July 2010, I saw people smiling and happy; these were large boat owners. Driving home that night I realized I had it totally wrong and we had to refocus the business on larger boats."



Page began to network with yacht clubs and large boat owners in the affluent San Francisco Bay area, which is connected to Lodi by the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta in the northern portion of California's Central Valley. Work began to pick up, and he had found his opportunity for re-invention: West Coast Canvas would focus on boats of 40 feet and larger and become a go-to resource for major renovations for affluent yacht owners in the San Francisco Bay area.

"We had always worked on larger boats, but we began to really focus on this niche and how we could do more than just small projects such as replacing windows," he said. "I began to spend time with the key people and market our business in a personal way – commodores, port captains, yacht clubs. I got to know them and showed them what we can do, and the business grew. We also improved our website and ran targeted small space ads."

The ability to change and adapt has been part of the West Coast Canvas DNA from the company's founding. Page was 19 years old in 1981 when he began working with a canvas shop and was assigned to manage a satellite location. After only six months, the owner decided he no longer wanted the second location, and Page was offered an opportunity to buy out the business.

In the early days, West Coast Canvas focused on basic marine canvas work, including biminis and boat covers for small fishing boats and runabouts. Page added new services based on customers' needs – upholstery, cushions, carpet, wood trim and electrical. His strategy has been to hire craftspeople, cross-train his staff and encourage everyone to learn together.

"The word 'no' is not in my vocabulary," he said. "I've tried to identify my customers' needs and we've added services so we can now do a total refit for a boat owner. There's no need for them to go anywhere else. We can do it all here."



CURT PAGE
Owner, West Coast Canvas

On the web at www.westcoastcanvas.com.



As a comprehensive resource, West Coast Canvas is a leader in major yacht upfits, specializing in customizing, repairing and restoring larger boats both inside and out. Product offerings include biminis, covers, enclosures, on-deck cushions, interior upholstery, headliners, curtains, electronic gear, wood flooring and cabinetry.

Page remains hands-on in working with customers in design, planning and service while networking throughout the Bay area and with his industry partners. Among trusted advisors and supply chain partners are Eric Christensen, west coast marketing representative with Glen Raven Custom Fabrics, Brian Holian, western regional sales manager with Trivantage, and Mike Price, Trivantage account representative.

"Curt is successful because he's willing to shift gears so his business adapts to the ever changing economic conditions of Northern California," Holian said. "Curt has surrounded himself with key trusted employees who produce the highest quality of craftsmanship and deliver top notch customer service."

In addition to a leadership position in the marine market, West Coast Canvas also has a residential awning and upholstery service that represents about 10 percent of the business.

"My marine business is based on relationships, and we get a lot of repeat business from our boat customers," Page said. "These same boat owners are also customers for our fixed and retractable awnings, umbrellas and cushions for high-end casual furniture. I've always believed why go looking for new customers when you have existing customers that you can do more for."

While Page would never want to relive the challenges of the recession, he says his business is stronger today as a result.

"We came out of the recession more efficient and with a better focus," he said. "My outlook continues to be expansive with more training and hiring for the future."

