



Introducing
ACG NJ's 2020 Corporate Growth Award Honoree

An Interview with
Mitch Cahn
President
Unionwear

*Conducted by Sally Glick, Past President, ACG New Jersey
Principal of the Firm and Chief Growth Strategist, SobelCo*



This story begins in 1992 when Mitch Cahn formed the New Jersey Headwear Corp. after acquiring the assets of London Cap Company, an 80-year old Jersey City baseball cap contractor in a foreclosure auction.

With a primary focus on serving unions, the company's initial historical niche industries were anchored in promotional gear for unions that had to buy made-in-USA products, including those used for domestic political campaigns, military, homeland security, post office, and the state and federal government.

On day one the company opened its doors with six sewers, but after landing contracts to produce caps for major corporations, including Polo Ralph Lauren, Izod, Gant, Barneys, and a number of skateboard and Hip Hop lines, the company quickly grew to 35 machine operators.

In 2020 there are now 175 employees manufacturing out of a 70,000 square foot facility in Newark, New Jersey.

Today, their vision of "Custom Gear, Made Right Here, 25 Years" speaks to their success as they have become the leading manufacturer of union-made-in-the-USA hats, bags and binders for the promotional, fashion, and uniform markets.

There are several key facets that the company's leadership points to with pride:

- *A commitment to local manufacturing:* Local factories energize the economy and invigorate the community by creating jobs, supporting families, and recycling dollars.
- *Sustainability built on the loyalty of clients and employees:* Valuing internal relationships leads to high morale, low turnover, lower costs and high quality products. External relationships ensure the continued growth and profitability of the company.
- *Investments in continuous improvement:* As an outcome of a culture of improvement and innovation, the company encourages resourcefulness, agility, and adaptability. Adhering to this philosophy has also created niche opportunities for Unionwear enabling them to expand successfully into small batch manufacturing, lightning fast product development and deliveries, medical packaging, travel gear, safety products, and work wear. Now exchange rates and shipping headaches have made local manufacturing attractive again, even for labor intensive hats and bags.

- *A commitment to an international approach supported by technology:* With nearly 100,000 “Made in USA” SKUs appearing on their website, Unionwear is able to compete globally with importers by emphasizing small batch, quick turn manufacturing. The updated website also allows the company to sell custom-made products (with logos), making it convenient for B2B customers to visualize their orders.

The company has held tight to a commitment to innovation and ingenuity. As such, in 2016 they received the Raymond Hopp Lifetime Achievement Award for Excellence in Manufacturing at the annual NJ Manufacturing Awards sponsored by NJ Biz and NJMEP.

But while so much changed in the face of the 2020 Coronavirus pandemic, the leadership team at Unionwear held fast to its legacy for innovation and local commitment.

Always willing to assume an unorthodox approach, Unionwear has once again demonstrated how nimble the organization is by pivoting to produce new products essential to the fight against the coronavirus.

With this in mind Unionwear has transitioned production to Medical PPE and is presently manufacturing Reusable Isolation Gowns and Clear Plastic Face Shields for health care facilities, government agencies, corporations, and consumers.

Mitch was recently featured on **ACG's GrowthTV**, in an interview with ACG President, Thomas Bohn. Mitch shared how he transitioned his business during this pandemic, converting Unionwear's operations to help make face shields to be used in the fight against the Corona Virus. [Click here](#) to view this interview.

We look forward to seeing you next May at The Palace at Somerset Park, Somerset, NJ, for networking, plated breakfast, panel presentations featuring our Corporate Growth Award Honorees, and Keynote with our Corporate Lifetime Achievement Award Honoree, Church & Dwight Co., Inc.

ACG NJ 2020 Corporate Growth Conference & Awards

NEW DATE: Thursday, May 6, 2021

7:30 AM - 12:00 PM

The Palace at Somerset Park, Somerset, NJ