

AMERICAN TEXTILE COMPANY

WHATEVER YOUR CHOICE OF BEDDING, ODDS ARE GOOD THAT AN AMERICAN TEXTILE COMPANY PRODUCT WAS PART OF LAST NIGHT'S SLEEP.



The Pittsburgh-based company manufactures products ranging from mattress and pillow protectors to pillows and comforters. With well-known brands like AllerEase, Sealy, and Tempur-Pedic, its products are used by millions of people every night and are available from retailers like Walmart, Target, Kohl's, Amazon, and Bed Bath & Beyond. And if you've bought a store-brand mattress or pillow protector, chances are you purchased a product manufactured and distributed by American Textile.

Founded in 1925 by five brothers from Pittsburgh's Squirrel Hill neighborhood, American Textile was initially headquartered in downtown Pittsburgh. As the business grew, it moved to Lawrenceville, where it operated for over 70 years. In 2003, continued growth led the company to Duquesne, where a new headquarters was built on the site of a former steel mill.

American Textile has experienced annual growth of nearly 15 percent

since the early 2000s. That's remarkable for a textile manufacturer headquartered just a few miles down the Monongahela River from Pittsburgh. Over the course of its more than 90 years in business, American Textile has grown to more than 1,000 employees, with hundreds who call the Pittsburgh region home.

How does a textile company generate such an impressive record of growth? By constantly seeking new innovations, being open to new opportunities, and investing in customers, employees, and the communities in which it operates.

When the company opened its doors, many people protected their mattresses by placing towels and blankets beneath their sheets. Recognizing the market opportunity, American Textile began manufacturing sturdier, better-fitting mattress covers. Pillow covers followed, along with ironing-board and sewing-machine covers. When the United States entered World War II,

the company heeded the call to put its abilities and resources to use for the war effort, manufacturing flags, elastic buckles for gas masks, and disposable bags used in airplanes.

By the 1980s, the portfolio had grown far beyond bedding materials to include furniture covers, plastic tablecloths, and housewares. The company made the crucial decision to focus on the core of its business: pillow and mattress protectors. By eliminating peripheral businesses, American Textile positioned itself as the go-to supplier of pillow and mattress protectors to every retailer in the country. Focusing on a smaller number of items allowed the company to concentrate resources, becoming true experts that could add value and insight to the buying experience for customers.

Perhaps no product line symbolizes American Textile's embrace of focused innovation better than AllerEase, a line of allergen-barrier bedding that uses specially woven fabrics to block allergens from collecting in bedding. This technology replaced hot, noisy vinyl covers that made sleeping



LEFT: AMERICAN TEXTILE'S LAWRENCEVILLE HEADQUARTERS ON 49TH STREET. THE COMPANY MOVED TO DUQUESNE IN 2003.

BELOW: THE DUQUESNE HEADQUARTERS.

In turn, this has fueled the company's continued growth, creating jobs and opportunities everywhere it operates.

In recent years, American Textile has executed a strategy of growth through diversification. Expanding beyond its foundation in store brands and AllerEase, the company partnered with mattress-maker Sealy in 2013 to introduce mattress protectors, sheets, and other bedding categories under the trusted Sealy brand. In 2017, a similar deal with mattress manufacturer Tempur-Pedic expanded its growing portfolio of national brands.

These partnerships allow American Textile to draw on the credibility of nationally known brands when launching innovative new fabrics and products, and this segment of the

uncomfortable. The company has driven broad consumer awareness working with allergists, retailers, and the media to help allergy sufferers understand AllerEase's benefits, and it is now American Textile's best seller.

The success of AllerEase demonstrated the potential of considering new fabric technologies, and the company continually integrates the latest innovation into its products. Recently, it has used specialty fabrics more commonly seen in high-end apparel and sportswear to bring temperature regulation and other benefits to the bedding category.

A different kind of opportunity sparked American Textile's entry into pillow manufacturing. In 2003, a major American pillow manufacturer went out of business. One of American Textile's largest customers suggested that the company fill the void in the market by getting into the pillow business. In just one year, pillows manufactured by American Textile hit store shelves and today the company is the second largest pillow manufacturer in the United States.

With the addition of pillow manufacturing to its business, the

company opened facilities in Salt Lake City, Dallas, and Tifton, Georgia, in order to more cost effectively deliver pillow orders across the nation.

That establishment of strategic centers for manufacturing and distribution echoed a similar move made more than a decade earlier, when the company took advantage of globally competitive labor rates to expand internationally. Today, the company's domestic and global supply chain allows it to deliver quality and value with exceptional service levels.





LEFT TO RIGHT: REID RUTTENBERG AND JACK OUELLETTE.



REID RUTTENBERG (CENTER) WITH FORMER PITTSBURGH MAYOR RICHARD CALIGUIRI (RIGHT) AND CUSTOMER LEFTY KITTINGER (LEFT)

company's business is a significant and growing part of its portfolio. In 2012, the branded business accounted for about 15 percent of company revenue, but has quickly grown to represent over half.

Beyond its retail business, the company today supplies bedding to the hospitality and health care markets. In addition, its growing Amerifill Division manufactures pillows and other products for companies around the world.

While innovation and an openness to new opportunities have driven much of American Textile's growth, steady leadership has been its foundation. It was led in its early years by the five founding brothers. In 1959,

Reid Ruttenberg, son of founder Charles, joined the business. He initially travelled the country learning the customers and the operation, eventually running the business for decades. In 1974, a young West Point graduate and Vietnam pilot named Jack Ouellette joined Ruttenberg, and their decades long partnership drove enormous growth and change in the business. Ouellette's mentorship of Ruttenberg's sons, Lance and Blake, also helped prepare the next generation of family leadership.

Today, Lance Ruttenberg, CEO, and Blake Ruttenberg, executive vice president of sales, marketing, and product development, are quick to define the company as one whose philosophy has long emphasized

creating and fostering a "business family."

"It's about our business first," says Blake Ruttenberg. "We focus on customers and our employees. The business is bigger than us, and we believe every employee has valuable contributions to make." It's a philosophy that shows in the company's longstanding emphasis on treating customers well and taking care of employees as if they were family.

This philosophy of caring also fuels American Textile's philanthropy strategy, which is focused on investments in the children and communities in which it operates. A donation to the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh Foundation supports the creation of "distraction therapy" rooms with

activities and images from underwater adventures to treehouses. These prevent patient anxiety and reduce the need for sedation, which ultimately improves patient care and safety.

"We are honored to partner with Children's Hospital to ensure that kids from across this region in need of medical care have the benefit of distraction therapy and can possibly be made more comfortable during a difficult time," says CEO Lance Ruttenberg.

American Textile has also been a strong supporter of The Pittsburgh Promise, a nonprofit organization

whose mission is to help create a public school system with graduates prepared for higher education and a commitment to their community. The Promise offers a college or trade school scholarship to every graduating senior of a Pittsburgh Public High School.

"American Textile supports The Pittsburgh Promise because we believe education can transform a life and a region," says Blake Ruttenberg. "Over 7,000 students have received a scholarship. By supporting The Pittsburgh Promise, we change the lives of students today and prepare the leaders of tomorrow."

As the company reflects on its past and develops those who are helping fuel the company's remarkable growth, it is focused squarely on a future of continued innovation and opportunity. "Standing still is not an option. Aggressively seeking and carefully developing new opportunities has fueled our success, and we don't believe for a minute that our work is ever done," says Lance Ruttenberg. "Our employees, customers, and communities all contribute to and benefit from our success, and we are committed to building that over the long term."



REID RUTTENBERG WITH SONS BLAKE (LEFT) AND LANCE (RIGHT) IN THE EARLY 1990s.



LEFT TO RIGHT: BLAKE AND LANCE RUTTENBERG.