



Quality Certification Alliance

Quality and Safety. Delivered.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact:

Lisa Horn, CAS

214-674-8400

lisa_k_horn@hotmail.com

Company Contact:

D E Fenton

206-448-6271

dfenton@qcalliance.org

TOWEL SPECIALTIES ACHIEVES QCA ACCREDITATION

The company has now met the rigorous qualifications to receive the promotional products industry's only certification dedicated to product quality, product safety, supply chain security, social accountability and environmental stewardship.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS (October 10, 2012) – The Quality Certification Alliance (QCA), the promotional product industry's only independent, not-for-profit organization dedicated to helping companies provide safe products, has awarded QCA Accreditation to Baltimore, Maryland-based Towel Specialties.

“As a supplier catering to many Fortune 500 companies protecting their brands, we are continuously being asked to provide both proof of product safety as well as social and environmental compliance,” said Eric Weinstein, Towel Specialties president. “When we learned of QCA, we realized that the process of achieving QCA Accreditation would help us address the rapidly increasing demands of our customers.”

To achieve QCA Accreditation, Towel Specialties began by endorsing a self-certification and completing a rigorous self-assessment, and then the company submitted its headquarters and supply base to multiple third-party audits. Then the QCA board used a scorecard representing the performance of the company and its supply chain on the third-party audits as the foundation for granting accreditation.

While Weinstein said the company has always had a strong focus on quality and customer satisfaction with practices in place to address client concerns, there was a bit of a surprise when the process for QCA Certification began. “We initially believed that the process of achieving QCA Accreditation would be relatively simple, but we found it to be quite the opposite!” he said. “The process revealed that there were numerous holes in what we believed were best practices. By identifying and addressing these holes, we have become a stronger company. With QCA requiring ongoing re-certification, we will continuously improve our practices.”

D E Fenton, QCA executive director – compliance, said that Towel Specialties began the QCA Accreditation Process recognizing the market had changed and the company's management team wanted to work with an organization that not only understood the



Quality Certification Alliance

Quality and Safety. Delivered.

promotional products industry, but also had express experience developing compliance processes for manufacturing. “Towel Specialties’ customers are demanding a partner with a sophisticated understanding of how to better serve them with promotional merchandise that meets product safety and quality standards as well as social compliance needs,” she said. “The company’s enthusiasm for process improvement combined with a collaborative effort both internally and with its supply base were the driving factors behind the successful accreditation.”

It’s this kind of process improvement that is a hallmark of QCA Accreditation. Although Towel Specialties had previously performed product quality audits, Weinstein noted they were typically done once the product reached the company’s warehouse. “Now, we employ a statistical sampling method both at the factory and in house to ensure product quality,” he said. “And this is just one example of improvements we made. We also formalized our new product development process to insure the highest level of quality from the very beginning by significantly improving the communications between Towel Specialties and its factories.

“We have always strived to be a leader in the promotional products marketplace, and achieving QCA Accreditation is a reflection of this goal,” Weinstein continued. “The end result is we enhanced both our reputation and our ability to ensure the highest level of quality and service in our product category.”

For more information about QCA Accreditation and to inquire about the process and benefits received, e-mail dfenton@qcalliance.org.

About QCA:

Chicago, Illinois-based Quality Certification Alliance is an independent, accreditation organization whose mission is to elevate the standards by which industry firms that import and/or manufacture promotional products provide consistently safe, high-quality, socially compliant and environmentally conscientious merchandise. QCA Accreditation is granted to companies who complete an independent third-party audit and comply with stringent standards, which are based upon a combination of state and national laws, international standards and industry-accepted best practices that are recognized for their strength and effectiveness by QCA Accredited companies, the promotional products industry and end-user clients.

QCA was formed in July 2008, and today 22 companies have met the rigorous qualifications to achieve QCA Accreditation—BAG MAKERS, Inc.; Barton Nelson, Inc.; BDA Inc.; Bodek and Rhodes; Broder Bros.; Bullet Line LLC; Cutter & Buck; Dard Products, Inc.; Design Resources Inc./Caps Direct; Garyline; Gemline; Gordon Sinclair; Hit Promotional Products; Jetline; JournalBooks/TimePlanner Calendars; Leed’s; Logomark, Inc.; MMI; Prime Resources Corp.; SnugZ USA; and Sweda Company LLC,



Quality Certification Alliance

Quality and Safety. Delivered.

Towel Specialties—with others soon to complete the process.

In May 2012, the QCA Distributor Advocacy Council Charter was created to formalize the relationship the organization has with distributors who understand the value compliance programs have in building stronger relationships with suppliers, creating competitive advantage in the marketplace and building loyalty with their end-buyer clients. It is currently comprised of 15 companies, which represent more than \$800 million in annual promotional products sales.

D E (Denise) Fenton serves as executive director – compliance.

For more information, visit www.qcalliance.org.

###