

BUSINESS PROBLEM

Showing loyalty and local spirit, four women from Slidell, Louisiana (30 minutes from New Orleans) made fleece boas for themselves in LSU's purple and gold school colors. When they wore them to LSU basketball games, the reaction was overwhelming – many other fans asked where they got them and how they could get some for themselves. The women identified an opportunity and decided to form a company – Sports Cessories.

SOLUTION

The partners knew that it would be impractical to try to make production quantities of the boas, so they needed to find a supplier able to provide relatively small quantities at a viable price. Fortunately, Lydia Roper had purchasing experience and began an Internet search to identify a possible source. She found the MFG.com online marketplace and quickly realized that it was just what she was looking for.

Roper submitted a request for quotes and identified a potential supplier in Shanghai. "There was a lot of dialog," Roper says. "They helped us a great deal in refining the requirements and coming up with the right order. We are very, very pleased with Apex (the supplier). They have gone out of their way to help us."

Sports Cessories also had to find a customs broker and navigate the importing process for the first time. "It has been a real learning experience," Roper says. Nevertheless, the first order was

*The MFG.com website
is easy to use and
extremely functional*

-MFG.com Benefit

placed and the first 1,000 boas in LSU colors have arrived.

"The biggest problem was finding an affordable vendor that would deal in these relatively small quantities (of 1,000)," Roper says. "We're just starting out so we can't afford bigger quantities than that – we're not sure of the demand and there isn't room to store them, anyway." Roper is pleased to report that the final price was very affordable. "We couldn't even buy the material for that price," she says.

Sports Cessories is already planning to branch out. "We'll be ordering boas in other school colors," she says. "both high schools and colleges, and distributing them through both wholesale and retail outlets." They are also planning to design, purchase and sell Mardi Gras throws. "They are ordinarily made of plain fabric," she says, "and these fleece throws will be a classier alternative."



Lydia Roper, co-founder of Sports Cessories, sourced fleece boas like this one through the MFG.com online marketplace. Roper was very pleased with the supplier she found on MFG.com and says “they have gone out of their way to help us.”

ABOUT SPORTS CESSORIES

With an initial product of fleece boas in LSU colors, Slidell, LA-based Sports Cessories plans to design and distribute team-color boas for local and regional high schools and colleges for sale through wholesale and retail outlets. Mardi Gras throws are also planned.

BENEFITS

- The MFG.com marketplace provides a vital link between a company that needs a product and many suppliers capable of producing that product – from all around the world
- Post one RFQ and receive proposals from multiple suppliers
- Suppliers are professional, dedicated, and helpful
- The MFG.com website is easy to use and extremely functional