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# Home Textiles <sup>Today</sup>

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## Wearbest Embracing New Markets

**NEW YORK** — Wearbest Sil-Tex Mills has weathered the recession by pivoting to a new strategy and embracing new markets.

“We have at the same time prudently cut and prudently invested,” said Irwin Gasner, president of the fourth-generation, family-owned fabric manufacturer. “The result has been explosive growth in placements in the past two years.”

Wearbest still produces most of its goods at its plant in Garfield, N.J.

The longtime manufacturer for the residential market has found growth in the health, hospitality, indoor/outdoor and casual furniture sectors. While the number of Wearbest employees does not match the pre-globalization tally, the company is now up to 90 employees.

“We rebuilt back from the bottom,” said Gasner.

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Ari Gasner, left, and Irwin Gasner of Wearbest.

## Wearbest Growth

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“The beginning of 2010, that’s when we started to see the plan gaining traction.”

Even the residential business is showing improvement, he said.

“Since upholstery fabrics at the mid- to high-end are so expensive, no one can afford to buy the level of in-

ventory an Asian mill would require,” he explained.

Wearbest is addressing the situation by offering short runs, proprietary design, a commitment to resolving problems and “manic turn-around time.”

The mill’s Bella-Dura high performance fabric, launched about six years ago, has expanded into contract and healthcare as well as the casual market. Wearbest has also developed performance fabrics for the health-

care market.

“We did not add capacity,” said Gasner. “We invested in material to develop new products rather than hardware.”

Next up, Wearbest plans to sign an agreement with a group that will work with its design studio on “a new and creative aesthetic” for the Bella-Dura line.

“We aren’t just a sleepy little mill in New Jersey,” said Gasner. **HTT**



Bella Dura high performance fabrics have been expanded from residential into the contract, healthcare and casual living segments.