

Getting the right fit with Supply Chain

We recently met with Austen Buchan (Managing Director, Mo&Co) to hear how they are working with their customers to ensure there is a range of suitably fitting PPE for all.

Hi Austin, thanks for speaking with us today. We contacted you today to discuss PPE, and I'm sure this isn't going to be surprising to hear, but we hear from a lot of women that struggle to find PPE that fits correctly, myself included. What I am really interested to find out is, if I called up asking for a women's size 12 overalls, would you stock them?

Hi Sarah, the quick answer is yes. We've had a full range of women's PPE for several years now ranging from XXS to XL, rather than numerical numbering, with a man's size S equating to a woman's size L. We also hold a range in red and orange, as these are the most in demand for our industry, but we could obtain blue if that's required, we would just need a bit more notice. SO yes, if you called us up, we would have overalls for you.

OK that's great to hear! I've worked in companies before where ladies' sizes are on offer, but once I request them in my size or a size bigger they don't typically have them available and I have to go up a size again. Are you unique in your offering, or is this something your competitors are also offering?

Well, 8 years ago we probably were, but we're certainly not unique in this offering, however we typically hold a larger range. We won a contract around 7-8 years ago with a key customer, and their reason for moving was their supply didn't hold enough of a range of women's PPE. We decided this was a growth opportunity for our business. We looked into possible manufacturers and found a manufacturer that supplied PPE to companies in Sweden and therefore it was very little effort for them to add to their manufacturing for us. Since then, we've worked closely with this customer, expanded the range and also conducted a number of fit trials over the years.

OK, so you're still a head of the curve and carving new paths with some of the fit trials, we'll circle back so I can hear more about that! As part of the inclusive offshore working project, I came into this project thinking the industry has a PPE supply problem in this industry. I mentioned earlier, pretty much the majority of women that we talk to say they can't find PPE to fit correctly, and I've spent a lot of time thinking what we can do to change this, and how we could bring change. From what you've said, the issue sounds like it's somewhere else in the chain. Would you agree, and where do you think that is?

Yes, I can only talk for us, but we certainly have the stock available. I think it could be people buying from companies perhaps don't know what's available for them, or they don't know to ask. We try work with our customers so they can be fully aware of the offering.

You mentioned fit trials, are you able to tell us more?

Yes, one of our customers we've worked with a lot over the years and recently we've been fit-trialling 2-piece PPE, which is suitable for everyone but particularly women. It's not just as

simple as 2-piece overalls, it comes with additional clothing requirements that needs to be considered.

How was the solution received by the stakeholders?

So far, the feedback is good. The trials are still ongoing, and we're just trying to get further feedback before we take the next steps.

Thank you for speaking with us today, Austen!