



The Value of Brand Reputation: A Case Study

“There is deep pride and accountability in the Westex® brand. Milliken stands behind its FR fabric—and we do, too.”

– Tarek Shahla, Rasco Chief Operating Officer & General Counsel

A lot has changed in the 30 years that Rasco has been supplying flame resistant (FR) garments for the electric utilities and oil and gas industries. Initially guided by offering the lowest price point, Rasco sourced fabric for its FR apparel from overseas markets, but they found the dependability of generic FR fabric left much to be desired. In 2018, they re-evaluated their FR fabric options, and decided to emphasize the company’s alignment with the reputation, reliability, and future opportunities made possible by its partnership with the leading American-made FR fabric brand Westex® by Milliken—the FR textiles business of global manufacturer Milliken & Company.

“We made a decision to reinforce our relationship with Westex®, an American-

made FR fabric brand with a trusted reputation, for good reason. It was a beneficial move for our business, and more importantly, for our customers,” Shahla said.

Rasco wasn’t new to the Westex® brand—the company offered a selection of Westex® fabrics in the 1990s but increased its generic fabric offerings to appeal to cost-conscious customers. Even with seemingly competitive pricing of overseas generic fabric, customers kept asking for Westex® fabrics by name. The brand’s reputation as the leading FR fabric manufacturer stood out to customers, and the vast array of Westex® aramid, cotton-rich, and blend fabrics—all with guaranteed FR properties for the life of the garment—offer proven FR fabrics to suit their individual needs.

A visit to the Milliken & Company global headquarters in Spartanburg, South Carolina, reinforced a critical benefit of the Westex® brand: unparalleled research and development capabilities underpinning six decades of expertise. To the California-based Rasco team, the dynamic spirit on Milliken's campus was akin to Silicon Valley—instilling trust and respect in the Westex® brand. "The sheer breadth of innovation that comes from Milliken is unbelievable," Shahla explained. "When a customer comes to Rasco for an FR fabric recommendation, we endorse Westex® branded fabrics, because they offer excellent quality and performance."



Innovative Fabric for Better FR Apparel

An important attribute of Westex® by Milliken is the range of innovative fabrics that uniquely combine look, feel, and

function to solve industry challenges. Coined the performance fabric of FR, Westex® DH features a unique woven blend for outstanding breathability and optimized moisture wicking to keep workers cooler, drier, and more comfortable. Westex® DH is NFPA 2112 certified, meets NFPA 70E category 2 protection, and is ANSI 107 certified, making it an excellent choice for both arc flash and flash fire protection.

"We're excited to position Westex® DH and the new Westex® DH Air™ as important parts of Rasco's product offering, because they provide customers with incredible performance at an excellent value," Shahla explained.

With Westex® DH and the new Westex® DH Air™, it is easy to see the benefits of partnering with a trusted FR fabric manufacturer to make adopting everyday FR apparel a streamlined solution for arc flash and flash fire safety:

- Breathability and moisture-wicking to keep workers cool and dry on the job;
- A range of colors and high-visibility options to support branding opportunities;
- Easy care and maintenance to encourage investments in an everyday FR program;
- Branded reliability that has been market proven to protect workers; and
- Third-party verification with specific performance details to understand the exact protection customers receive.

"The industry is looking for alternatives to stiff handed aramid fabrics, and Westex® DH and Westex® DH Air™ are the perfect answer to this market shift," said Tom

Moore, National Market Director of the Westex by Milliken business.

Rasco currently offers multiple garments made with Westex® DH performance FR fabric to the North American market, including the Rasco contractor coverall, premium coverall with reflective trim, Rasco performance FR shirt & pants, and the Rasco uniform shirt. Recently, Rasco added the new Westex® DH Air™, a lightweight, Category 2 fabric to its performance garment line.

Real Value in Partnership

“The FR expertise and trusted reputation that comes with Westex® by Milliken elevates the Rasco brand. Our partnership makes it easier to have conversations with new customers. Handing them FR apparel made with the Westex® brand means handing them daily FR apparel that prioritizes safety without sacrificing comfort.” - Tarek Shahla, Rasco Chief Operating Officer & General Counsel

The vast selection of Westex® cotton, aramid, and blend fabrics has also opened up new markets for Rasco to serve. Rasco can now provide FR garments with guaranteed protection for the lifetime of the garment to industrial laundries and large refineries, in addition to their current customer base of distributors. Further, the Westex® by Milliken team has also provided additional support to Rasco and its customers about updates to NFPA 70E and NFPA 2112. The benefit: Rasco’s customers are informed about and prepared to achieve compliance with the latest industry regulations.

The value of partnering with Westex® by

Milliken is seen not only in educational support and resources, but also in its ongoing technical expertise. Its parent company Milliken draws on more than 150 years of expert textile legacy, driven by research and design capabilities, to move the needle on textile innovations. With PhDs and leading scientists, Westex® brand fabrics draw on a deep bench of experience and scientific understanding to produce the fabrics trusted within the market right here in the U.S.

For Rasco, the possibilities of their partnership with Westex® by Milliken are just beginning. “Milliken is a pioneer at its core,” Shahla summarized. “It inspires us to think differently about what we can achieve together to help keep the oil and gas and electric utility industries safe on the job, every day.”

