NEWS RELEASE

Supplier Spotlight: El Salvador's Valley Manufacturing is Going the Extra Mile to Keep Team Members Safe

10/7/2021

Knowing just how critical vaccination is to keeping people safe and healthy, the team at our El Salvador-based partner Valley Manufacturing did everything they could to support and protect our teammates and the communities where they live.

Whether it meant busing people to vaccination clinics or bringing the vaccine on-site, our partners went through a months-long process as El Salvador rolled out its vaccination plan.

Today, Valley Manufacturing proudly boasts a vaccination rate of more than 98 percent of its workforce. The team is scripting a happy ending to a story that began under a cloud of uncertainty.

Valley Manufacturing is responsible for production for many of DSG's divisions and brands including DSG store uniforms, Calia accessories, Alpine thermals, and Field & Stream fishing tops, just to name a few.

"COVID-19 brought hardship and suffering to many of our employees and their families," recalled Salvador Llort, Manager at Valley Manufacturing. "Not knowing how

to prevent or cure the virus created many fears among our employees, and every employee knew at least one person who got sick or died from the virus."

For many months, vaccines were not available in El Salvador, making it difficult for the country to curb the spread of COVID-19 and begin prevention efforts. Beginning earlier this year, donations of Pfizer and Moderna vaccines began arriving from the United States, prompting the Salvadoran government to start mass vaccination efforts across the country with a focus on "factory zones," like the one where Valley Manufacturing is located. That is when Llort saw an opportunity to help his teammates.

"Having protection that could reduce the symptoms of COVID-19 was a blessing we wanted to make available to all members of our team," said Llort. "We wanted to take initiative and help our teammates stay safe."

When initial vaccinations were made available for individuals ages 50+, Valley Manufacturing's HR Department, led by Manager Xiomara de Funes, helped with making online appointments for team members and coordinating transportation to and from appointments.

By the end of June 2021, vaccinations were made available for anyone ages 30+ years. Valley Manufacturing began organizing buses to and from vaccination appointments so that large groups of employees could receive the vaccine.

"We have seen a drastic reduction in the number of our teammates getting sick or having severe cases of COVID after being vaccinated," said Funes. "Being able to vaccinate our teammates in-house has made this process faster and smoother."

In July, vaccinations were extended to any individual over the age of 20, and Valley Manufacturing was able to start offering appointments on site for employees. As a result, a record 1,300 employees received the first dose of their vaccine at work in just one week.

Today, over 98% of Valley Manufacturing's 3,900 employees are fully vaccinated.

For Valley Manufacturing teammates, the decision to get vaccinated was a selfless one.

“I got vaccinated to protect my family and my co-workers,” said Evelyn del Carmen Montano de Lara, a Sample Sewing Room Operator at Valley Manufacturing and mother of two. “Now if I get COVID, it won’t be as severe. The vaccine makes me feel safe.”

In late September, the Salvadoran government announced that booster shots would begin to be made available for medical workers and senior citizens, and Llort’s team will continue to participate in the rollout of the boosters as they are made available to members of their team. In the meantime, Valley Manufacturing continues to help newly hired employees get vaccinated.

“We realized COVID-19 will be with us for a long time,” said Llort. “We will continue to promote vaccinations and prevention education. We will not let our guard down.”

Valley Manufacturing is just one of many of our suppliers doing tremendous work, even during unprecedented challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic, a trademark of all of our lines of business that Chris Bereznay, Vice President – Compliance, notes is one of the reasons we are partnered together in the first place.

“We applaud Valley Manufacturing’s effort to promote the COVID-19 vaccination and assist their teammates in securing the shot,” said Bereznay. “They are an outstanding example of why we are proud to work with suppliers whose values reflect our own, including a commitment to excellence in all areas of business and a people-first approach.”

Earlier this year, we highlighted our **Supplier Diversity efforts** and our work to ensure diversity in all aspects of our business. For more information on our commitment to supplier diversity, read our latest Purpose Playbook **here**.