



## Company Origins

### The Story of Sergio Casalena

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*(An Introduction by Jim McEachern, Senior Executive Officer of the Board)*



#### **Sergio's story**

Mr. Casalena is a Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Company. He also has served as President of the Individualized Apparel Group. He began his career with the Company in 1980 as assistant vice president of manufacturing and design at the English American Tailoring Company. Mr. Casalena was promoted to President of the Individualized Apparel Group in 1994 and elected Chief Executive Officer of the Company in 1998.

Sergio was born January 4, 1946 in Palermo , Sicily . His father was a tailor and had a small suit manufacturing facility in Palermo . Sergio (and his brother, Elio) began to do small jobs for their father at an early age, so he had a very early foundation in the clothing/tailoring business. Sergio's first training in the design and grading of patterns came from watching his father.

When Sergio was ten years old the family moved from Palermo to Baltimore . At the time Sergio spoke very little English, so he had to learn English after arriving in the United States .

After finishing high school in Baltimore Sergio attended Siegels Design School in New York . Even though Siegels is closed now (because there is not much clothing manufacturing in the United States ), it was once a premier design school.

Sergio's first job was with Lebow Clothing, where his father also worked. Lebow was fashion oriented clothing company specializing in cashmere. In the early years of Tom James Company Lebow was still a highly regarded company producing high quality clothing.

The next thirteen years of Sergio's career were spent at Grief Clothing. Grief was a division of Genesco. At its peak Genesco had annual sales of close to \$2,000,000,000. While at Grief Sergio worked with Hughes Aircraft Company (a giant company back then) to develop a CAD system to make possible the laser cutting of patterns and clothing. The CAD system is necessary for a computer guided

laser cutting of any type of material including metal, leather, cloth or patterns.

Genesco had a very large shoe business, with many brands including Bostonian shoes. Sergio helped develop a water jet cutting system for leather which also required the CAD system. Sergio was also instrumental in developing the software required for the computer generated laser cutting while on assignment with Hughes Aircraft Company.

Sergio, while still at Grief worked with Ralph Lauren to develop the Chaps label (of men's clothing). While Sergio was at Grief they peaked with a production of about 5,000 suits per day.

After thirteen years at Grief Clothing Sergio went to Schoeneman Clothing for four years where he introduced the CAD system and laser cutter and was in charge of the Halston line, Halston was for many years a very good brand of men's clothing. Schoeneman's also produced about 5,000 suits daily. Their specialty was private label clothing.

In 1980 Mr. Hays hired Sergio for English American Tailoring Company. Tom James Company had become an English American account in 1966 and purchased English American in 1973.

By the time Sergio came to our company in 1980 there was no one else in the entire country who had the variety of skills and capability that Sergio had. He could have easily handled every step from selling a suit, taking the measurements, creating the pattern, cutting the fabric, doing all the sewing, and all the pressing and anything else including delivering and fitting the suit. He could also effectively handle every step of the manufacturing process.

Sergio had the experience of dealing successfully with customers, designers, retailers and management of large businesses. He had negotiation and manufacturing experience. He was well-prepared for the duties he would assume in our company.

The year before Sergio joined Tom James Company the total consolidated sales of the company were \$13,642,671, so 94% of our company growth came after Sergio joined us. He has made a valuable contribution to our growth.

As soon as Sergio joined English American he began improving the design of our clothing, created all the graded patterns and created the automated system for adjusting the patterns for different postures, shoulder slopes, etc. He also developed the devices for measuring our customers.

Sergio developed the Pyramid for our product alignment plus the "wraps" and "waterfall" presentations. He restructured our manufacturing facilities to increase efficiency and reduce manufacturing time. In 1981 I ask for Sergio's help with Individualized Shirts and before long we had ask him to take charge of all our manufacturing . . . then all of wholesale. If there is anyone in Tom James Company who could do every job in the company, it would be Sergio Casalena.

I'm very thankful for everyone who has helped build Tom James Company. I believe that Sergio may have been the "most valuable" team member during the past twenty-seven years for Tom James Company because of all the things he can do and has done. He has skills that are unique. No one

person will ever be able to replace him. Whenever Sergio retires it will take several people with their own unique skills to replace him.

Sergio gives credit to Tom James Company people for adding to and broadening his business and leadership experience.

Stephen R. Covey says,

“The leader's role is to provide direction through modeling and vision, to motivate through love and inspiration, to build a complementary team based on mutual respect, to be effectiveness-minded and focused on results rather than on methods, systems and procedures.”

**Sergio lives “the leader's role”.**

Sergio has developed a fabulous team at I.A.G. They provide us with the best products available anywhere. They have also created a very profitable business. I.A.G. accounts for a high percentage of the Tom James Company profits which increases the value of the Tom James Company stock, which makes possible the stock dividends, plus the Profit Sharing Plan and 401K Plan contributions.

It has been my privilege to know and work closely with Sergio since 1980. I have great admiration for him. I have never seen Sergio make a selfish decision. His decisions are made for the good of Tom James Company, Tom James Company people and Tom James Company customers.

Every human being is unique but ten thousand or ten million can all “buy into” and live the “leader's role” as stated by Covey. Mr. Casalena is one of those who have.