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**Novel Coronavirus Needs Novel Partnerships**

*Experienced American Brands Tackle the Challenges of Coronavirus through Collaboration*

- Manufacturer Sontara® out of Nashville, Tenn., and global sports performance brand Under Armour headquartered in Baltimore, Md., have partnered on innovation solutions to produce much needed personal protective equipment including face masks and isolation gowns.
- More than 50 Under Armour teammates came together to innovate a new mask design in just one week.
- Sontara® has seen a 65% increase in production and hired 67 new employees since March to keep pace with global demand for medical fabrics by distributors and companies like Under Armour.
- Under Armour is supporting healthcare and related organizations, housing/community agencies and human services based across the state of Maryland with the production and supplying of much needed personal protective equipment.

NASHVILLE, Tennessee - Take one agile and innovative sports performance brand, one established expert in medical-grade fabric production, one shortage of personal protective equipment for American healthcare workers and a huge passion for helping people and you get the powerful collaboration and collective spirit of ingenuity that has made the Under Armour and Sontara® partnership so impactful.

One month ago, news outlets from around the U.S. began to despair over the insufficient supply of protective apparel for front-line healthcare workers. In came reports of nurses wearing trash bags as a last resort, while the office of the Surgeon General released a video on how to create a makeshift mask out of a T-shirt and hair ties.

Sontara®, a brand of Jacob Holm nonwovens headquartered in Switzerland with American production facilities in greater Nashville, Tennessee, has been creating medical-grade fabrics for more than 45 years. In the last month, they have seen a multifold increase in demand for healthcare fabrics, requiring a 65% increase in production in March over their 2019 projections and leading to the hiring of 67 new production employees. Says CEO Martin Mikkelsen, "This situation is unprecedented. However, for Jacob Holm as a company, the only way forward is to lean in to what we know and use the full force of our experience to help contain the spread of COVID-19 and make a positive impact on the well-being of our communities." As proof of this effort, two of Jacob Holm's five manufacturing sites reported record production volumes last month. Yet, Jacob Holm production is limited to nonwoven fabrics, which then need to be converted to the products healthcare workers use.

When called upon by local healthcare systems in its home state of Maryland, the response by Under Armour employees was decisive. Says Randy Harward, SVP of Advanced Material and Manufacturing Innovation at Under Armour, "More than 50 Under Armour teammates from materials scientists to footwear and apparel designers from laboratories in Baltimore and Portland quickly came together in search of solutions."

Just one week later, Under Armour and Jacob Holm had found their way to partnership, leveraging their individual strengths and coming to a quick understanding of what it would take to create a no-sew protective mask that could be produced quickly and at scale and while acting as a barrier for the wearer. Under Armour is now converting Sontara® material into its one piece, no sew mask design. The mask acts as a first level of defense, reducing virus laden moisture and droplet spread

**Sontara.**

from the wearer, and preventing face touching by the wearer. This is a critical need as we all work to reduce the spread of COVID-19. As Sontara® and Under Armour have demonstrated, it's through working together that we will make an impact.

Given the unprecedented need, Under Armour is donating its time, design, facilities, equipment and process to make supplies for the purpose of helping to stop the spread of COVID-19. Under Armour is also making its mask design and method available to other manufacturers, and the expectation is that any manufacturer that chooses to use Under Armour's face mask plan and method should do so for the betterment of the community, rather than for profit, while taking all advisable steps to protect their employees' health and safety. To date, Under Armour have used nonwoven material to produce and supply more than 1.1 million face masks and nearly 20,000 isolation gowns to its partners.

Concurrently, Sontara® has increased mask and gown production partnerships across the U.S. and Europe and has donated the equivalent material of well over a million masks through Spain and France. In addition, they have made donations of disinfectant wipes and meals to emergency personnel within the local communities of their production sites.

To protect against community spread and propel community morale, it is imperative that we work together, taking what is great, special and achievable by each of us and letting our indomitable determination drive us toward shared success. This is the true power of the American spirit.

**About Jacob Holm:** Founded in 1794, Jacob Holm is a leading manufacturer of spunlace nonwovens with global production facilities and sales and service support worldwide. Using proprietary technology for high-demand applications, Jacob Holm products offer unique features ideal for the cleaning requirements of the quality-conscious user. For more information, visit [jacob-holm.com](http://jacob-holm.com) .

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