

*Needle News provides information on markets, technical aspects, quality issues and much more. We hope you look forward to receiving this bi-annual publication.*

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## THE MAIN/TECHNICAL POINT

### Twisted Blade Needle Design

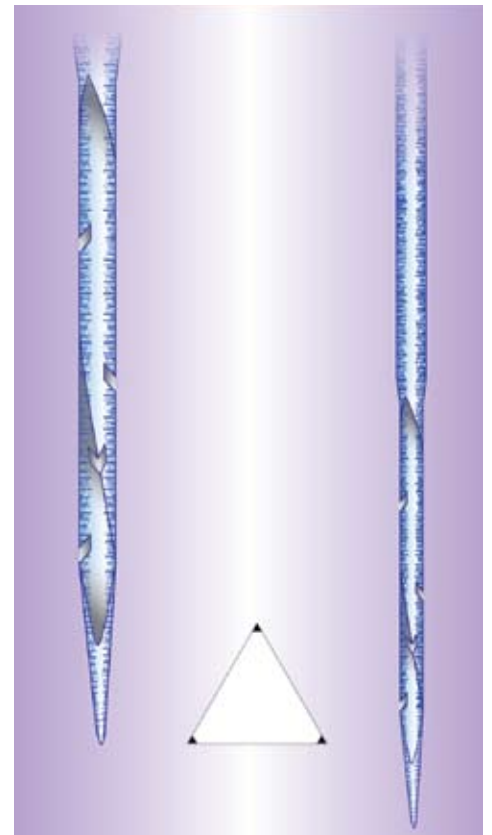
Foster Needle has always valued its reputation as the Industry Innovator. The "Foster Formed Barb", the "Pinch Blade" and the "Star Blade" are just some of the Foster Needle developments that have helped our customers improve quality and enhance production rates. It is in this spirit Foster Needle began researching the Twisted Needle.

The Twisted Needle has been manufactured and tested on 36, 38 and 40 gauge standard needles as well as Star Blade and Pinch Blade styles. Preliminary evaluations show positive results in areas of needling efficiency, product compaction and aesthetics. Initial trials were made running side-by-side comparisons of a standard needle versus a twisted equivalent. In each case the Twisted Needle transferred more fiber, and at increased depth of penetration the differences were more substantial. In each case, the appearance of the felt was not sacrificed, and in some cases improved.

Foster Needle has also been supplying two felt manufacturers for more than one year with the twisted style needle. Initially this was done on a trial basis. In both cases we have received multiple repeat orders after the initial trial stages. Both customers report improved physical properties. No changes were noted in the strength (needle breakage) of the needle.

One customer is producing technical felt and the other synthetic leather.

We urge all Foster Needle customers to think about how this needle design could enhance your needling process and ultimately improve your manufacturing capabilities and the products you offer. Don't hesitate to contact your Foster salesman/agent who can provide samples and added information about this new exciting product.



# THE AGENT POINT

## South African Representation



The firm Supertrade CC has been successfully representing Foster Needle in South Africa since 1979. With over 30 years of continuous felting needle sales, Supertrade is Foster Needle's longest serving representative!

The firm was started by Roy Valentine, who had learned the textile industry and the business of representing international firms in earlier employment. In 1979 the needle punch industry in South Africa, and all nonwovens in South Africa, was very much in its infancy. Applications were

concentrated on the production of underfelt and some carpeting. Felting needle sales were dominated by the firms Torrington and Singer. Nobody had yet heard of Foster Needle. As time moved forward the South African needle punch applications widened to match other modern economies around the world. The number of firms employing the improving technology grew virtually each year. Today the needle punch industry in South Africa produces all ranges of products: filtration media, geotextiles, geosynthetic clay lines, ceramic fiber insulation, carpeting, all types of automotive interior fabrics, blankets, underfelt, duvet/comforter liners, glass fabrics, medical fabrics, and numerous others.

Supertrade became the leading supplier not only of felting needles, but also needle

looms and accessories needed by the industry. Roy Valentine, with the assistance of regular visits from Foster Needle, is known throughout the SA industry as "THE" expert in needles and related applications. Foster Needle, with the professional representation of Supertrade, has come to supply 70 percent of the market in South Africa.

With the increased workload of all the success, Roy's son, Earl Valentine, a civil engineering graduate of the University of London, joined the business in 2004. His input has been invaluable in continuing the success of Supertrade, as has the assistance of Sue Bennet.

The attention of the world puts Africa as an emerging economic giant. And South Africa is regarded as the powerhouse of sub-Saharan Africa, making the future very promising!

As Earl phases in and Roy Valentine phases out, and with the continued association with suppliers such as Foster Needle, Supertrade goes forward to a rewarding future for all concerned.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Filtration 2010**  
November 30-  
December 2  
Philadelphia, PA

**Techtextil America**  
March 15-17, 2011  
Las Vegas, NV

**INDEX 2011**  
April 12-15, 2011  
Geneva, Switzerland

**Techtextil Frankfurt**  
May 24-26, 2011  
Germany

**"ITMA" 2011**  
September 22-29,  
2011  
Barcelona, Spain

**"SINCE" 2011**  
October 12-14, 2011  
Shanghai, China

**NT&TT Expo**  
October 26-28, 2011  
Sao Paulo, Brazil

## Foster Needle Company Mission Statement

Foster Needle is and will continue to be the world leader in the production and sale of world quality felting needles by providing customers the best value and service, generating profits that protect and enrich Foster Needle's future, caring for the development and well being of all our employees.

# THE CUSTOMER POINT

## NonWoven Solutions - Lifetime of Experience

NWS was formed in May 2007 by a group of investor partners who saw a distinct void in the nonwovens supply chain that could only be filled with a new production line, and thus a new company. The 'void' was a strategically located manufacturer of very clean, very uniform needle punched nonwovens centrally located in the United States.

Gerald Leineberg, Joe Leineberg, Tom Leineberg, Frank Porto and Steve Brown joined forces to create the new company, aptly named NonWoven Solutions, LLC. These five men bring a lifetime of experience in nonwovens, in fact over 135 years, as part of the many resources of NWS. The line has been built inside a new 50,000-square-foot building in Lakemoor, Illinois. The line has been specified with the latest technology available. This includes various Foster Needle specified needles to further enhance

the various product ranges being produced. NonWoven Solutions, LLC has committed to run only white synthetic fibers in denier ranges from 1d-15d. NWS will operate the line according to GMP medical grade standards.

NWS maintains inventory of most basic fiber styles and can make custom orders and engineered fabrics with a very short notice. NWS also provides a great deal of technical expertise and product development in support of basic fabric production. They often work side by side with customers to develop a fabric based on price point or performance criteria. All testing is performed in accordance with ASTM and IST standards along with critical requirements for skin contact, as well as long term packaging stability.



In addition to basic needle punch nonwoven processing, the plant has been further equipped with flame singeing, calendaring, precision slitting in both roll-to-roll and single-knife cycle. Off-line needling for multi-layer composites and high density felts from layers can also be produced.

Congratulations to NWS on the growth they have experienced since starting up the new line. Everyone at Foster looks forward to working with NWS well into the future as they enhance their position as a leader in the market.

# THE EMPLOYEE POINT

## Meet Robin Bowen

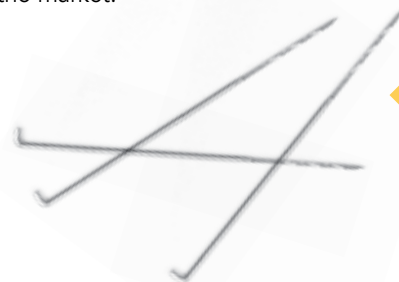
Robin started working for Foster Needle in 1976 as a production machine operator. In 1977, Robin was promoted to second shift supervisor in the swaging production area. He remained in that position until 1986, when he was promoted to manufacturing area manager – hardening/inspection/packaging. In 2001, he took over the position of warehouse/distribution manager. This position covers all Foster Needle shipping/receiving, and monthly/year-end inventories.

As a manager, Robin plays an important role in quality and customer satisfaction. Millions of needles a week, both foreign and domestic orders, flow through Robin's area. The goal of his area – "zero shipping mistakes" – has been achieved year after year. This ensures

customers receive their orders on time and in perfect condition. Robin has a degree in supervisory management, which over the years has resulted in many time-saving and quality improvements for the company.

Robin is an excellent example of the employees at Foster Needle. He has worked for the company for 33 years, and during this time has elevated himself to an important part of Foster Needle's management team.

Robin was born and raised in Manitowoc and has lived here all his life. He has been married to his wife Bonnie (who also works at Foster Needle) for 32 years, and has three children. In his free time, Robin enjoys auto racing and traveling throughout the country.



## Customer Focus – Needle Wear

Customers tend to look at value from four perspectives:

- Price of the product
- Quality of the product
- Degree of innovation offered by the product
- Service provided to customers.

The quality of products continues to improve universally and competitors can develop the ability to duplicate even the most complex of those products. Innovation attracts consumers, but no sooner do we see one innovation, another company comes along and will try to duplicate.

Let's talk about just one of the four perspectives listed. Service provided to customers. Foster Needle is the leader in providing additional service to our customers. A service of Foster Needle you may not be aware of is our needle wear evaluation program.

The ability to reproduce a uniform quality product on a continuous production basis depends

greatly on the consistent efficiency of the needles used in order to effectively interlock fibers. As the needles are being utilized, over a period of time the barb angle will start to wear away to the point where there is insufficient fiber transportation to effectively interlock fibers and produce the desired physical properties in the web.

Foster Needle provides a service of evaluating used needles from the customer to determine needle life based on the specific application. This service allows customers to know precisely when to change out worn needles in order to keep both process and product consistent. If you feel this service would be useful to your process and product, please feel free to contact any of our sales team by phone, 920-682-6314, or contact us by e-mail at [www.fosterneedleusa.com](http://www.fosterneedleusa.com). There is a green icon on top right of the screen that when clicked on with your mouse pointer, will open up the contact screen, making it easy for you to tell us what service you would like, and how we can help you, the customer.

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