

case 1-229-142  
June 3, 2019

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## The Empowerment Plan (D): Supply Chain Management at a Manufacturing Nonprofit

This case is part of a series of four integrated cases about The Empowerment Plan (TEP), a Detroit-based nonprofit working to break the cycle of homelessness through training, employment, and job placement. Founded in 2012 by Veronika Scott, TEP recruited employees through homeless shelters and provided them with training, education, and full-time employment manufacturing sleeping bag coats. The specially designed coats were distributed free of charge to the homeless population.

TEP employed people from the homeless population to produce weather resistant coats for the homeless. The coats included an expandable “foot bag,” so that it could be used as a sleeping bag by the homeless recipients. The coat was also designed to easily fold and be carried like a messenger bag across the shoulders.

Manufacturing the coats required five key raw materials:<sup>1</sup>

1. **Outer shell.** The outer shell of the coat needed to be durable and water resistant. It was made of 600-denier polyester. Denier, similar to thread count in bed sheets, quantified the thickness of the weaving of the fibers in the material.
2. **Insulation.** The insulation could be made with a wide variety of materials and provided the warmth of the coat. The insulation’s effectiveness was measured by looking at its Clo rating, the ability of the material to resist heat flow. The insulation was affixed to the lining prior to being sewn onto the outer shell.
3. **Lining.** The lining of the coat was the inner part which touched the wearer. As it had contact with the wearer, it had to be made of a fabric which was comfortable and easy to wear.
4. **Fasteners.** Velcro fasteners were used to attach the foot bag to the coat and allow the wearer to close the coat when needed. Plastic buckles were used to allow the wearer to fold the coat and wear it like a bag.
5. **Thread.** Thread was used to sew components of the coat together.

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*Published by WDI Publishing, a division of the William Davidson Institute (WDI) at the University of Michigan.*

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