



# Melissa Mangold

## Casco Manufacturing Solutions

### Casco Creates Exceptional Soft Goods While Providing Jobs for Those Who Need Them

Some of the best things Melissa Mangold likes about living and working in Cincinnati are its Ohio River beauty, variety of world-class culture, sports and entertainment—and good old Midwest affordability.

Add to that the connection she feels to family—her family of origin and her workforce family of nearly 50 at Casco Manufacturing Solutions.

Mangold, president and CEO of the 60-year-old soft goods manufacturing company, says everything starts with a bit of fabric. Whether that fabric is radio-frequency, seam-welded polyurethane, or the invisible fabric connecting a diverse workforce family that genuinely cares for each team member, what drives Mangold forward in her business is her commitment to do good work and provide jobs for those who need them.

Casco is a third-generation, family-owned and certified, woman-owned manufacturer of soft goods for

healthcare, the outdoors, government, custom orders, and private labels. It sews hospital mattresses, stretcher pads and covers for some of the largest and most respected hospital bed companies in the world. Casco also manufactures C-Matt™ Replacement mattresses and covers and other products distributed under the Casco name.

When Mangold took over Casco's reins in 2002, the company focused on creating a manufacturing niche of high-quality products and ethical, impeccable customer service. Mangold's goal was simple: Casco didn't have to be the biggest, but it would be successful if it was the best.

Mangold recognizes the need to innovate to grow her business. When the economy tanked in 2008, her primary focus was to survive. And survive Casco did, while larger manufacturers failed.

"In 2008, we looked inward," says Mangold. "We streamlined internal

processes and cut expenses. But never once did we consider going offshore."

Being a patriotic and ethical company making products in America is directly correlated to Mangold's desire to treat everyone fairly and respectfully—whether they are employees, customers or vendors. Ethics permeate her organization, from its hiring practices to its product pricing and quality control.

Born in Cincinnati and raised Roman Catholic, Melissa attended Cincinnati Catholic elementary and high school. She and her three sisters and brother grew up in a household that embraced the Golden Rule of doing "unto others as you would have them do unto you."

A middle child, Mangold was observant and sensitive to others' needs. One day, her mentally-handicapped brother was lying on the sidewalk outside the family home. Five boys on bikes rode past him and one rode right over her brother. She

was outraged by the injustice of that action and has since developed strong opinions about our moral responsibility to care compassionately for others.

Mangold graduated with a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of Cincinnati in 1982, and joined Casco in 1990, assuming the presidency when her father retired from the business. Her philosophy of hiring and management is a reflection of her compassion for others, especially the underserved.

"The majority of jobs at Casco consist of front office, dock workers and industrial sewing operators," says Mangold. "The latter two groups don't require a formal education. Because the majority of jobs Casco provides are mostly skilled labor, just about anyone who can pass a drug test, has a minimal command of English and wants to work can get a job here."

As a result, Casco's workforce is as diverse as the United Nations. In addition to American citizens, Casco employees hail from Guatemala, Mexico, Cambodia and Viet Nam, where some worked in industrial sewing jobs in their home countries. Casco also hires graduates of Talbert House, a greater Cincinnati social services agency which helps the homeless, underserved and addicted recover and become integrated back into society.

Casco will hire and train nearly anyone as an industrial sewing operator: legal immigrants, ex-felons, recovering addicts and alcoholics.

"Creating jobs for people gives them an opportunity to lead responsible, useful lives as they provide for their families and loved ones," says Mangold.

She is proud of Casco's caring, inclusive culture and its commitment to manufacture and deliver exceptional soft goods. Everything Casco manufactures is made in the U.S.A.

"We're who we say we are, and we take pride in that," says Mangold. "We try to treat everyone with respect, from sewing operators to management to customers. We don't pad pricing and

offer discounts later. We don't substitute materials in our products; we don't believe it's ethical."

Mangold's commitment to its staff and production workers is paying off in profits. Casco has seen upward revenue growth, particularly over the past three years.

"We have a strong foundation from which to grow and our mission is to

do just that," she says. "My philosophy is that we put our best foot forward and let the chips fall where they may. The end result is, we succeed in a tough industry and sleep well at night." ☺

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