

A COMMON THREAD



Halftime Adjustments

I love to watch college football, particularly SEC football. More times than I can count, I have seen teams dominate the first half of the game, only to be beaten in the second half. What happened? The opposing team adjusted at halftime. They saw something that their opponent was doing, and when they had the team together in the locker room, they made some changes that shut that offense down, or exploited a weakness in the defense. Last night, Angela and I watched our niece play varsity basketball for the Ft. Payne Wildcats. Approaching halftime, the Wildcats were trailing by ten, and losing momentum. In the second half, they turned it on, and eventually won by 18 points, a 28-point

swing! What happened? They adjusted at halftime. Most times, these halftime adjustments don't require a complete change of direction but an adjustment, a tweaking of the game plan in place.

As the leaders of our businesses, we must often step away from the day-to-day to assess our situations. Is our plan working? Are we accomplishing our goals? Are we going about this the right way? Or, do we need to adjust at halftime? Frankly at the pace that business moves today, these assessments are coming at us more and more frequently. If we are doing our jobs, we are constantly answering these questions. Unfortunately, we don't have a halftime during which everything stops for a while to let us plan and adjust. Most of our changes are on-the-field adjustments that we must judge for effectiveness even as we are implementing them.

In November, the THA Board of Directors hosted a Strategic Planning Session for our Association. This two-day session was

well attended, but more than that, it was well participated in. Each and every participant offered valuable input and insight. We addressed some pretty basic questions like: Who are we, and who should we be? What do we want to be? How do we get there? What should THA look like looking forward to our second century? Discussing these and other questions, we were able to boil our focus down to three basic questions: How do we serve our membership? How do we regain the position of being the "go-to" entity for hosiery? What does it take to gain maximum hosiery participation?

As we worked through these questions, and the underlying question of "How do we do that?" the Board began to put some mechanisms in place to address meeting these and other needs. The result was the formation of several new work groups and committees to tackle these issues and propose action plans. We don't necessarily need a new game plan, but maybe a halftime adjustment. We've done a lot of things right through the years. What we need is a return to some basics, a tweaking of our plan, and a full utilization of our strengths. The work is just beginning. The result will be an Association that, more than ever, gives its membership value and bang for the buck.

Thanks to all who made the sacrifice to participate in this endeavor. As I mentioned in my last column, there won't be any plaques on the wall commemorating your efforts. However, left behind will be the results of your work: a better, stronger Hosiery Association.

Until next time,

Jon Shugart