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Local entrepreneur Russ Fearon saw an opportunity in the Canadian fashion industry and went for it. Throat Threads Apparel Inc. is one of the country's fastest-growing companies.

A successful business by design

Throat Threads Apparel knows all about high-end labels

BY ANITA GATTO • Special to The Post

There is no such thing as a typical day at Throat Threads Apparel Inc. in Burlington.

When you are one of Canada's fastest-growing companies — as stated in *Profit Magazine* in 2003 and 2004 — there is always something exhilarating happening.

Delivering high-end labels to some of Canada's most prestigious stores and local retail havens, Russ Fearon has never been afraid to follow his instincts.

It began in 1993 with his first project in fashion, Throat Threads Ties. The innovative idea of a casual tie and catching the attention of more than 170 high-end and medium retailers across Canada, Fearon started climbing the commercial ladder. However, it wasn't until 1995 while attending the MAGIC apparel show in Las Vegas, Nevada, Fearon started to see where he was headed.

"Mervyn Mandelbaum, the president of Superba Inc. who deals with many high-end labels including Tommy Hilfiger, was at the Superba Inc. booth, so I decided to introduce myself," recalled

Fearon., who has great respect for Mandelbaum.

What started off as a promotion of his own company to Superba Inc.'s president ended with the realization that other brands out there hadn't reached the Canadian market.

Throat Threads Apparel Inc. began to import lines that Canadian fashion had been deprived of for years, Tommy Hilfiger apparel, Swiss Army, which Fearon scouted in Germany, Nat Nast, DKNY, Timberland and Fearon's own high school friends Chip and Pepper. Throat Threads Apparel Inc. became an expert in marketing, sales and distribution of each label — making Fearon's business an ideal solution for foreign companies wanting to have Canadian sales.

Today, the company is built on the success of the brands. However it is the atmosphere of the workplace and the decisions being made by the team that is keeping them ahead of the game, Fearon says.

"Our key to success has been our choices of not only the labels but the people we work with," he said. "Working with people who have integrity and honesty is just as important as what they are selling."

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