

Brother International Dealer in “Growth Mode” Adds 5th Location in California’s High Desert

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To George Moore, a third-generation sewing machine dealer offering the Brother International Corporation line of sewing and embroidery machinery in his family’s four Southern California stores, running a successful dealership is not complicated. He works hard for repeat business and he always shows the top-of-the-line machines, but he also pays attention.

For example, 40-year-old Moore, who is president of the extensive Moore’s Dealer Network, says he noticed a lot of customers driving long distances from the high desert area to attend classes and buy products at his Riverside, Calif., store and at the Moore’s booths at the Los Angeles County Fair. He began to consider a new location and used a time-tested business research method—the rumor mill—to check out the concept. He leaked a few words about a possible new location, perhaps in Apple Valley, and waited for the response.

“As soon as I let the rumor out, the responses came flooding in,” he says. “It was obvious this was the right area.”

The new location, Moore’s of Apple Valley, mirrors the successful format of the family’s four other stores. In addition to Brother sewing and embroidery machinery, the inventory also includes two other brands of machines, notions, software and fabric, mostly quilting cottons. Approximately 25 percent of the 3,300-square-foot store is devoted to classroom and teaching space. The new store had a soft opening in mid-December and was poised to hold its grand opening sometime in February.

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The Moore family sewing stronghold actually started 57 years ago in Portland, Ore., where Ed and James Moore, George’s grandfather and father, had a sewing machine dealership. The business expanded to Washington, with stores in Tacoma and Puyallup. In 1983, the Moore family moved south and started up in Mission Viejo, Calif. The family dealership has grown to include locations in various parts of Southern California, including Huntington Beach, Orange and Riverside. The stores also sell ceiling

fans and vacuums. Moore himself has been running the stores since 1994 and recently assumed full ownership. According to Judy Fredenburgh, Moore’s event coordinator and the Apple Valley store manager, the new store is a perfect example of taking action when the numbers make sense. For years, the high desert surrounding Apple Valley had been sparsely populated and attracted little attention other than from travelers. “It used to be that ‘little place on the way to Vegas,’” recalls Fredenburgh.

In the past four years, though, the population base has probably tripled to more than one million residents, attracted by lower housing prices and the temperate high desert climate. A segment of that population—40- to 50-year-old quilters and sewers—has been quite vocal with Moore’s management about their needs. It’s a sewing area waiting to be served.

Fredenburgh herself has lived in the Apple Valley area for nearly 20 years and while commuting daily to work in the Riverside store—approximately 35 hours per week—had visions of helping the dealership expand into her home territory. “I am so excited! I have been waiting to be up here,” she says. “I’m going to have 35 more hours for sewing!”

There’s one distinction for the Apple Valley location, though. It will offer on-site repair and service for both sewing machines and vacuums, something the other Moore’s stores centralize at the Mission Viejo location. That means faster turnaround for Apple Valley repair/service customers.

Moore says the success of his family’s expanding dealership network has a great deal to do with solid sales practices, such as always showing a customer a top-of-the-line machine. Says Moore, “I believe if you show a top model, you’ll sell a top model. Well, maybe not always, but if you don’t show it, you certainly won’t sell it.”

Moore’s customers are predominantly quilters, but he says the majority of sales are top-of-the-line machines, including embroidery. That’s not a leap of logic. You might be a quilter, he says, but it doesn’t make sense to do that with less than top-end machines, which always include embroidery.

According to Moore, the multi-store dealership’s biggest strength is the feeling of family that exists among the customers and 65 staff members. Losing sight of that would be devastating, he says. “I’ve got customers who’ve been buying products from me since I was a teenager. Our customers feel like they are part of the family and we communicate that.”

Moore says the careful attention to customer relationships is also something he values in his dealership relationship with Brother. The company knows its biggest asset is its dealers. It works hard to make sure dealers are taken care of with on-time deliveries, easy-to-work-with corporate staff and strong sales support.

“The product is great, but I wouldn’t sell it without the company’s strong support,” states Moore.

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