

# Overcoming challenges with resilience



**Karen Menting**  
VP of HR



**John Nims**  
President and CEO of  
U.S. Cotton (Subsidiary  
of Parkdale Mills)

## Quick facts

 **Company:** Parkdale Mills

 **Industry:** Manufacturing

 **Headquarters:** Gastonia, North Carolina

 **Employees:** 3,500

 **Award:** ADP® Meeting of the Minds 2021 Client Award for Resiliency at Work

Parkdale Mills is the world leader of spun yarn and fiber innovation. Based in Gastonia, North Carolina, they produce 18 million pounds of fiber yarn per week for clothing brands, military apparel, home textiles, carpeting and other products. When the global health event hit in 2020 and the demand for production decreased by about 75 percent, the team at Parkdale Mills was determined to find a way to maintain operations and keep their people employed. Learn how they were able to show resiliency and overcome this challenge, turning it into a heroic initiative their whole company would be proud of.

## Why ADP

**Karen:** One of the reasons we decided to go with ADP back in 2017 was not for the business we have, but for the business we want. The tools ADP provides us serve as an enabler for us to be more strategic. We now have the statistics and modules that provide us the real-time information we're looking for right at our fingertips. It makes my role a lot easier to focus on what matters most — our people.

## Overcoming challenging times

**Karen:** 2020 was possibly the craziest year in our lives. In addition to a global pandemic, we saw the dramatic downturn in the economy, civil unrest, fires, earthquakes, hurricanes and even a presidential election. One or more of these events really touched all of us in one way or another. Survival was a crucial order of business for us. We tried to keep our facilities open as long as we could. But we, like other companies, felt the shock of the pandemic. With the shutdown of many retail stores, it also directly affected the demand of cotton apparel. We were forced to shut down many facilities because of the downturn and thousands of associates had to be furloughed because of these unprecedented times.

Learn more about  
Parkdale Mills at  
[parkdalemills.com](https://www.parkdalemills.com)

  
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for People®



“In times of crisis, that’s when you really know who you can trust, who you can rely on. I can say today that ADP was, and still is, one of our truest and strongest partners.”

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**Karen:** But then, the White House reached out to our CEO, Andy Warlick, expressing the need for PPE, particularly face masks and isolation gowns. Within two and a half days, Parkdale had a commitment of 600 million face masks. Imagine, this PPE project allowed thousands of textiles and supply chain workers to come back to work. This was real, and we didn’t have time to dwell. We had a commitment to protect our associates and their health and deliver on our promise to the American people — and we were able to deliver.

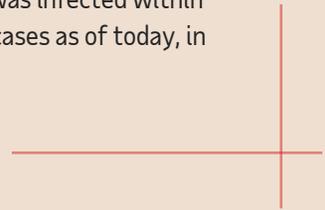
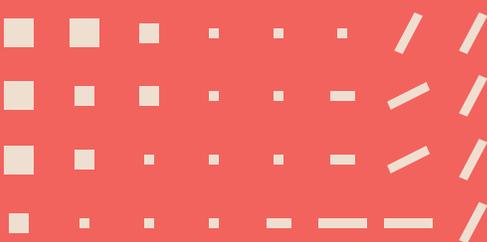
### ADP’s help through the global health event

**Karen:** We relied heavily on support from ADP and their consistent stream of communications regarding COVID-19. The Employer Preparedness Toolkit helped us navigate the overall effect on the workforce. It also helped us understand the latest legislative updates to the ever-changing COVID landscape. The COVID Employee Communications Toolkit is the tool I’ve really used the most. Having all this information right at our fingertips was crucial and it enabled us to focus on the unique challenges and opportunities, as well as the health and safety of our associates. We also leveraged Eye on Washington because it was important to learn and understand if our associates were able to benefit from everything that was included in the CARES Act.

I particularly trusted the information that was being provided to us through ADP. It gave me an opportunity to work out in the field, take care of our people and continue strategizing. We received a lot of information from many sources, but for me, the most credible information was what was provided to us through ADP.

**John:** Once we realized the pandemic was here, we needed to adapt how we operated. We did everything that was recommended, because we were really worried that if COVID occurred in our plant, it would spread rapidly. We kept everyone six feet apart, we removed half the seating in our canteens, we required face masks, we put up partitions in our breakrooms. We already required hand sanitizing because of being in consumer products, so that was easy, but we took a lot more care in placing more containers of hand sanitizer out on the production floor. We limited any outside people from coming in so if we had a case, we could do some contact tracing. We put portable toilets outside so truck drivers didn’t have to enter the building. We hired additional cleaning staff so they could sanitize anything that might be touched.

Because of our efforts, we were able to keep the virus out of our largest plant in Cleveland to a great degree. We never had more than five or six people positive at any given time, and as far as we know, no one was infected within the plant — it all came from the outside. And we have no cases as of today, in manufacturing or in our offices.



## Partnering with ADP Recruitment Process Outsourcing (ADP RPO®)

**John:** We had to add 32 jobs within the last year or two to get up to full scale and produce the amount of COVID swabs that we needed. That wasn't easy to do. We decided to do more direct hiring and less temporary hiring, and we utilized ADP to do a lot of our recruiting for us. That's working well, and we're very, very, very pleased with the results. Once we started doing more direct hire and utilizing ADP RPO, our retention rate significantly improved. Previously, we'd hire two or three people for one job and then sort through them, or they would quit or not show up. ADP RPO provided us with a lot of support, and utilizing that offering was the best thing to happen to us all year long as far as hiring goes.

### The power of teamwork

**Karen:** It was a very interesting moment in our history when our CEO received that phone call from the White House. It was his responsibility to form a coalition with other companies we had good relationships with. As that coalition was being formed and they designed what the supply chain would look like, it was amazing to see the interaction amongst companies coming together as one, thinking about the sense of urgency and how to provide the American people what they needed in a timely manner. It was a very successful project, and it was a team effort.

Parkdale is very proud. We are honored to be part of such a wonderful and historic moment in times of need, but we also appreciate the partnership that was generated to be able to deliver on our promise.

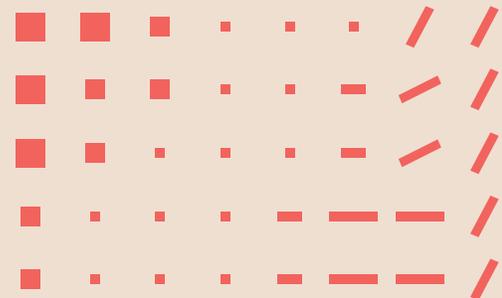
**John:** It was a bit of a challenge in the beginning, but what was most encouraging was that our people really felt like they were a part of the fix for this virus. They were very proud of what they were doing. They liked seeing newspaper articles in Cleveland about their factory. People actually started making their own tee shirts and face masks stating that they were on the COVID team. So, it gave a sense of pride for these people to work in that area. I'm most proud of our employees because they continued to come to work, knowing that what we were doing was important for the country.

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## Partnership with ADP

**Karen:** We've cultivated a very rich relationship with ADP. It's a relationship of trust and respect. We have high caliber individuals that partner shoulder to shoulder with us, and we rely heavily on these resources. ADP is an extension of who we are at Parkdale. They're a partner we can rely on at any given time.

ADP has been there for us every time we've needed them, and I know they will continue partnering with us in the future. The pandemic helped us confirm that partnership we have been fostering with them throughout the years, and it really strengthened that relationship we already had. In times of crisis, that's when you know who you can trust, who you can rely on. I can say today that ADP was, and still is, one of our truest and strongest partners.

## Resiliency

**John:** The advice I'd have for another company struggling during this time would be to stay close to your people, communicate with your people and tell them that business will return, so please stick with us and know we're going to take care of you. Things will change, they will get better. We're seeing some evidence of that now, and I think it's going to continue to get better.

**Karen:** For me, the word 'resiliency' is really woven into the fabric of our culture. I believe we've placed our associates' wellbeing and the broader social good ahead of everything else. With everything that we've done and all of the initiatives we worked on together — whether it be the COVID We Care packages we deliver to all of our associates, making time to give back to the community, ensuring we had a safe work environment for all of our associates at the plants ... there were so many things that really define us as who we are. We've always been and always will be a very resilient company.

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