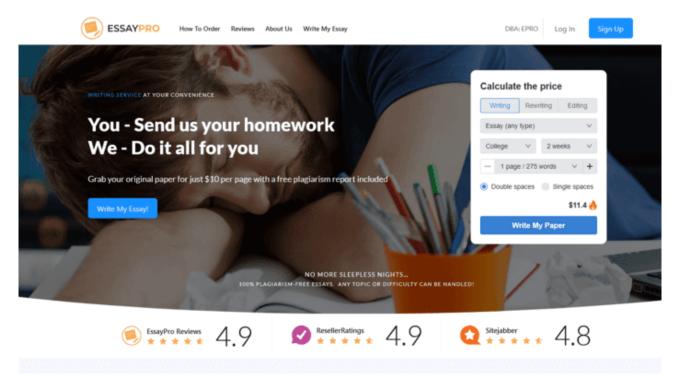
Springs Industries Inc.



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Springs Industries Inc.

Springs Industries Inc. is a \$2.2 billion textile company that is headquartered in Fort Mill, South Carolina. Springs Industries focuses its efforts into the production of the home furnishings market, and operates under well-known brand names such as Wamsutta, Springmaid, Disney, LizAt Home and Bill Blass. Their home furnishings segment account's for nearly 82% of the company's revenue, and remains one of the leading producers of bedding, bath and other home furnishing products in the United States (McFarlan, pg. 1, 1997). In 1995, Springs acquired several additional companies in which they could facilitate the introduction of new and complementary products that would provide them with a distinct set of product offerings. However, integrating these new companies into the existing operating environment would pose significant challenges. "Presenting one face the customer" was of the utmost importance to Springs and fusing the "back-office, administrative, and marketing efforts of its acquisitions" would present numerous complexities (McFarlan, pg. 1, 1997).

Knowledge Building

The home furnishing market which Springs competes in is extremely volatile. In the home furnishings market, earnings are directly related to fast and <u>flexible</u> product development, short production cycles, and ability to replenish stock <u>supplies</u> quickly. Recently, Springs industry rival WestPoint Stevens was making waves in the marketplace from the payoff of their heavy investments the past five years into technologies that increased their current capacity 12%. To further stress the need for Springs to re-work their existing structure, one must first understand that in this industry it is critical to present a strong product lineup because retailers increasingly wish to purchase from fewer suppliers. This is evidences by another competitor of Springs, Pillowtex, in recent times acquired additional smaller companies which will allow the expansion of their

current offerings, and position them to compete directly with Springs in the existing home furnishing market (McFarlan, pp. 1-3, 1997). Wanting to remain competitive and on top of their respective market, in 1997 Springs Inc. hired up and coming executive Crandall Bowles to lead them into the new millennium. Bowles top priority was to direct her efforts on the company's information systems and determine both the breadth of expenditures and the pace of innovation necessary in order to increase profit by guickening the pace of its application of new technology and sources of information to marketing, customer service, and inventory management (McFarlan, pp 1-2, 1997). Springs deals specifically with large retailers, the likes of Wal-Mart, Kmart and Target. These companies demand that suppliers manage their existing inventories according to current purchasing trends, which are identified though the collection of Point of Sale (POS) data and the use analytical sophisticated Information Technologies (IT).

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