

# Profile of Alpha Pro Tech: A Rising Star in the US Supply of Disposable Protective Products

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## Abstracts

Alpha Pro Tech is a producer of protective products made from fabrics. It was established in 1989, and has corporate offices in Canada and manufacturing and storage facilities in the USA. The company consists of three business units—Disposable Protective Apparel, Building Supply, and Infection Control. These units supply products for a wide range of markets, including cleanrooms, industrial safety manufacturing environments, health care facilities and building sites. In addition, the company supplies pet beds.

Financially, Alpha Pro Tech did exceptionally well in 2009—even though this was a year of global recession. Its sales rose by a remarkable 66.8% and its net income soared by a staggering 478.1%.

The company's success has been due in no small part to the fact that it manufactures face masks which have been approved by the US government as being effective against the H1N1 Influenza A pandemic—known commonly as “swine flu”. Another factor in its success is that it sources its raw materials from Asia, thus giving it a cost advantage over rivals who source from higher cost developed countries. That said, this sourcing policy proved to a weakness at the height of the swine flu panic when fabric supplies were swallowed up by local Asian manufacturers.

In March 2010 the company suffered a major setback when its largest distributor, VWR, announced that it was to become a competitor. However, Alpha Pro Tech has adopted a positive approach by making its products available through a broader distribution network.

For 2010 and beyond the challenge will be to find another “boom product” merely to

maintain sales, let alone maintain growth. Predicting such spikes in demand is difficult, and therefore the company has chosen to become a significant force in other areas—particularly the market for house-wrap and roofing underlay products for the construction industry. In these areas, the company has achieved notable success in growing its market share—despite the fact that it is operating in very competitive markets, and many of its rivals are much bigger and better resourced.

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