



Jeff Baldassari, President and CEO, U.S. Rubber

Jeff Baldassari is a purpose-driven leader whose commitment to his employees' success and to advancing sustainability goals has spurred impressive growth for U.S. Rubber, a California manufacturer of fitness flooring and acoustical underlayment that gives discarded tires a second life and provides employment to a second-chance workforce.

Since joining U.S. Rubber as general manager in April 2019 and becoming CEO in June 2020, Baldassari has assembled a top-notch management team that drove a 100% jump in sales and caused the team to grow 106% during the first two years of the pandemic.

He is proudest of his efforts to reinvigorate U.S. Rubber's second-chance hiring program, which he dubbed Bounce Back! About 66% of the company's current employees are formerly incarcerated people now living productive, crime-free lives. Baldassari sees huge talent reserves in this often-overlooked workforce and has invested in helping team members develop the personal skills they need to succeed, including contracting with a psychologist to work confidentially with employees. He believes the Bounce Back! program offers a competitive advantage as many U.S. companies face labor shortages, especially in California's Inland Empire, where competition for manufacturing and logistics workers is fierce.

On the environmental side, Baldassari has worked to reduce U.S. Rubber's footprint beyond its diversion of discarded tires from local landfills and obtaining independent verification of sustainability metrics. He oversaw LEED point qualifications for U.S. Rubber products (up to six points in two categories) and commissioned product life-cycle analyses to uncover opportunities to further reduce the company's carbon footprint.

Baldassari was an early adopter of sustainability in manufacturing. Prior to joining U.S. Rubber, he spent 16 years as CEO with The Taylor Companies, an Ohio- and California-based furniture maker, where his work to embed sustainability practices into the business model received national recognition. He went on to work as a consultant, advising C-suite executives at Fortune 1000 companies on creating situational awareness of vendor overspend. However, Baldassari missed manufacturing and the feeling of bringing a team together to build something great, so the position with U.S. Rubber was just the opportunity he needed.

A passionate source on both sustainable business practices and second-chance hiring, Baldassari can speak to overcoming sustainability challenges in manufacturing, separating real sustainability metrics from marketing hype and the keys to effectively managing a second-chance workforce. He can also discuss effective leadership strategies for facilitating team development and connectivity, motivation and shared success.