

# Aaron Sarfati, CEO of ContempoSuits.com, on How Trump-Era Tariffs Reshaped the Menswear Industry

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EINPresswire.com/ -- For more than three decades, China has been the backbone of the global menswear supply chain. From affordable men's suits to dress shirts and shoes, Chinese manufacturers have built a reputation for precision, scale, and efficiency. However, the Trump-era tariffs placed on Chinese imports disrupted an industry that had become dependent on this long-standing partnership.



Men's Shirt Factory in China

Aaron Sarfati, President and CEO of ContempoSuits.com, has had a front-row seat to the effects of these policy changes. As a leading online retailer specializing in men's suits, dress shoes, and hats, his business relies heavily on international manufacturing and steady supply chains.

"The Trump tariffs completely changed how the menswear industry operates," Sarfati explains. "Overnight, importers had to rethink their sourcing strategies. Many tried to shift production to other countries like India and Vietnam that were not affected by the tariffs as much, but it wasn't as simple as it sounded."

## Manufacturers Search for Alternatives to China

When tariffs on Chinese imports were enacted, manufacturers began exploring alternative countries such as Vietnam, Bangladesh, and India, places that offered lower labor costs and tariff advantages under new trade policies.

"On paper, it made sense," says Sarfati. "You could avoid the tariff increases by moving production to countries with more favorable trade terms. But the reality was that these regions didn't have the same infrastructure or experience producing high-quality menswear at a huge scale."

While these nations were eager to take on new business, many lacked the decades of investment that Chinese factories had already made. “China spent 30 years building state-of-the-art factories dedicated to suit manufacturing. They spent billions on all types of mass production machines that will only do one process of making a suit,” Sarfati notes. “For example, there are machines that only stamp out the pockets on the front of a suit jacket. Other countries just don’t have those machines and have to rely on more traditional methods. That level of skill and technology isn’t something that can be replicated overnight.”

### The Problem with Shifting Production

Moving production out of China introduced new challenges, chief among them, supply chain delays and quality control issues.

“Every time a manufacturer tried a new factory in another country, they ran into production delays, communication barriers, and issues with consistency,” Sarfati says. “That not only increased costs but also made it harder for importers to meet customer demand.”

Lead times that once took 45 to 60 days often stretched into 90 to 120 days. Shipping routes were less direct, ports were more congested, and factories were still learning to meet Western quality standards.

“These delays made it difficult for companies like ours to plan seasonal inventory,” Sarfati adds. “Menswear has to stay on trend, so a three-month delay can make a style irrelevant by the time it lands in the U.S. Since clothing is seasonal, a Manufacturer needs to get the goods into the states either before the season begins or a bit sooner. For example, if coats come in around Christmas, time, you are way too late. They needed to be in stores by Mid October at the latest.”

### Why Many Importers Are Staying Put

Despite the tariffs, many American importers, including ContempoSuits.com, have chosen to stay with their established Chinese suppliers.

“China’s manufacturing ecosystem is just too efficient to walk away from,” Sarfati explains. “They have decades of experience, advanced equipment, skilled labor, and a supply chain that runs like clockwork. Their ports are completely the best that there is. Even with the tariffs, the total cost of production and reliability often beats the alternatives.”

“We’ve tried to absorb as much as we can without passing all of it on to our customers,” says Sarfati. “That means tighter margins, but it also means keeping quality and consistency intact. Our customers rely on us for value, and we can’t compromise that by chasing cheaper but unreliable production.”

### The Long-Term Outlook for Menswear

According to Sarfati, the tariffs have forced the industry to make tough choices, but they’ve also

highlighted how dependent American retailers are on China's expertise.

"In many ways, these tariffs exposed how specialized China has become in menswear manufacturing," he says. "No other country can currently match their scale and precision when it comes to producing suits, shirts, and accessories efficiently."

He adds, "The hope is that trade relations improve and the tariffs are reduced, but until then, businesses like ours will continue to walk a fine line, balancing cost, quality, and customer expectations."

#### How ContempoSuits.com Is Adapting

Despite the headwinds, ContempoSuits.com has remained resilient. The company has focused on streamlining operations, building stronger vendor relationships, and carefully managing inventory levels to offset higher costs and slower supply chains.

"We're running a leaner, smarter operation than ever before," Sarfati explains. "We're prioritizing reliable supply, even if it means tighter margins. Our customers come to us for stylish, affordable menswear, and we're committed to delivering that."

#### Final Thoughts

The Trump-era tariffs reshaped the menswear industry in ways that are still being felt today. While manufacturers continue to explore alternative production hubs, China's dominance in quality menswear manufacturing remains unshaken.

Aaron Sarfati sums it up best:

"You can move production anywhere in the world, but you can't replace 30 years of experience and investment overnight. For now, China remains the cornerstone of the menswear industry, and adapting to that reality is the only way forward."

Through adaptability, strong supplier relationships, and strategic planning, ContempoSuits.com continues to weather the storm, proving that resilience and smart leadership can sustain a business even in turbulent economic times.

Aaron Sarfati

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