

Clothing: Brazil's Soccer Babies Go to Europe

Contributed by Geovana Pagel
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In 1986 businessman José Adolfo Queiroz started producing clothes and accessories for babies using the colors and logos of football teams in the city of Artur Nogueira, in the interior of the southeastern Brazilian state of São Paulo.

Today, they are licensed by 17 of the main soccer clubs in the country. At the end of 2005, the businessman received an invitation to exhibit his products at the office established by the Brazilian Export and Investment Promotion Agency (Apex), in Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates.

"We received the invitation in December, when we were moving our factory to a new address. We therefore decided to analyze the proposal this year," explained Queiroz. "We already export to Europe and are greatly interested in winning new markets," guaranteed the businessman.

The company products have already been presenting significant results on the foreign market. In 1998, during a trip to the United States and Europe, the businessman discovered that there was a niche for his product.

After entering into a consortium, Two Colors, supported by the Apex at the beginning of de 2003, he closed his first foreign deal with German football club Hansa Rostock.

After that came Mainz, also from Germany, RCZ, from Switzerland, and the Italian Inter Milan. In 2004, the company established an agreement with a distributor in Milan who has 16 of its own stores in the main airports in Italy, and is negotiating with another two Italian clubs, Milan and Roma.

The businessman stated that before entering the foreign market he studied the potential customers and modified the product to consumers in other countries.

"We invest in the improvement of the quality and finishing of our products so as to answer the demands of the foreign market. This also helped sell on the domestic market. In two years our revenues tripled," he commemorates.

In 2005 Torcida Baby - Baby Fan exported 15,000 products. The estimate for 2006, the year of the World Cup, is to send 40,000 items abroad.

"Our dream is to continue supplying the domestic market and expand our production so as to supply the foreign demand," stated the businessman.

When the number of orders started growing, the businessman noticed that it was time to invest in new installations. At the end of last year, the new building was completed and the company moved from their 300 square-meter unit to a new 1,200 square-meter unit.

Today, average monthly production is between 45,000 and 50,000 items. The factory generates around 60 direct jobs. Baby Fan produces various other options of clothes and accessories for babies, among them bibs, baseball caps, trousers, tennis shoes, slippers, football boots, sandals and jumpsuits.

To children up to the age of eight, they produce swimming trunks, bathing suits, tracksuits, T-shirts and jackets.

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