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GEOX Case Study

The TÜV SÜD footwear mark on all Geox footwear products is giving the company an important advantage in the highly competitive market for athletic and leisure footwear.

Business challenges

Twenty-five years ago, a wine entrepreneur named Mario Moretti Polegato was looking for a way to keep cool in the hot Nevada desert. In a moment of inspiration, he pierced the rubber soles of his shoes to allow air to more freely circulate around his feet. From that simple idea, Moretti Polegato created Geox, the global urban and leisure footwear and apparel company based in Montebelluna, Italy, that today enjoys worldwide turnover of nearly 1 billion euros annually.

“Geox” is a combination of “geo” for earth and “x” for technology. As befitting its name, Geox uses advanced material technologies and processes to produce footwear and apparel products that both breathe and remain waterproof at the same time. As a result, Geox provides consumers with quality, high-performance products that are also comfortable to wear. The strength of the company product offerings is reflected in their universal appeal, with Geox footwear and apparel products sold in over 110 countries around the world.

An essential element of the Geox strategy is its rigorous commitment to the quality and safety of its products. However, the challenge of consistently delivering on this commitment has increased over time, as the effort to meet consumer demand has required the company to expand its supply chain as well as the number of material suppliers and manufacturers involved in production.

This dynamic required Geox to implement more rigorous quality control systems and oversight to ensure that its footwear products continue to meet all applicable safety requirements as well as the company’s own exacting specifications, regardless of where they are produced.

OVERVIEW

Client name	GEOX s.p.a. (aka, the Geox Group)
Industry	Casual lifestyle footwear and apparel
Profile	Global company specialising in the application of advanced material technologies and processes to provide consumers with safe and comfortable footwear.
Business challenges	Assuring the chemical safety of their entire footwear line, regardless of where the product is produced.
Our solution	The TÜV SÜD footwear mark, which verifies compliance with applicable chemical safety requirements as well as other chemical safety considerations.
Business benefits	Testing for chemical safety beyond compliance increases customer confidence in the safety of Geox footwear, strengthening the company’s competitive position.

TÜV SÜD's solutions

The relationship between Geox and TÜV SÜD dates back to 2007, when the company was working with multiple testing and certification bodies to achieve compliance with regulations in the many national markets where its products were being sold. Over time, TÜV SÜD's involvement in addressing the company's compliance challenges increased, finally resulting in TÜV SÜD's being appointed as Geox's exclusive product testing and certification body in 2011. So, when Geox executives determined that the company needed to make a corporate-wide commitment to the quality and safety of all of its footwear products, they turned to TÜV SÜD.

Geox's goal was monumental—to certify 95 percent of the company's more than 6000 different models of footwear. Equally important, Geox wanted to set the market standard for the chemical safety of its footwear, and not just meet but exceed the requirements of applicable chemical safety regulations. To address all aspects of this ambitious agenda, TÜV SÜD test engineers embarked on a multi-year initiative to individually test representative samples of each model in the company's footwear product line-up. In conducting its testing TÜV SÜD engineers utilised a comprehensive testing matrix, evaluating accessible and non-accessible parts and components for each tested sample for concentration levels of more than 15 different chemicals and chemical types.

As a result of this focused and concerted effort, TÜV SÜD completed sample testing of every current model of Geox footwear by early 2015. Beginning with the fall/winter 2016 season, every pair of Geox footwear placed on the market anywhere in the world will be accompanied by a hangtag featuring TÜV SÜD's footwear certification mark. With TÜV SÜD's further assistance, Geox has also implemented a programme of due diligence control (pick up of the shoes in warehouse), evaluating approximately 1 percent of all models of adult shoes, and 2 percent of all children's shoes. The company estimates that it will conduct more than 2 million tests each year to verify the chemical safety of its footwear products.

Business benefits

For Geox, the partnership with TÜV SÜD has been an essential element of the company's successful effort to achieve certification for its entire footwear product line. "With the help of TÜV SÜD, we were able to construct a realistic testing plan that enabled us to realize our goal of full chemical safety certification within less than two

years," says Fabio Sartori, (Chief Operating Officer). "And TÜV SÜD's testing protocol not only assured us of compliance with chemical safety regulations in every market, it increased the overall safety and quality of our products, giving us a significant competitive advantage with both retailers and customers. We wouldn't have achieved these outcomes without their help and guidance."

As the first footwear brand to bear TÜV SÜD's footwear certification mark, Geox's commitment to "safety beyond compliance" is just another example of the innovative approach that has characterized the company since its beginnings. Through its focus on innovative technology and its commitment to sustainable practices, Geox has embraced a vision of the future in which consumers have access to advanced, high-quality products that are also safe to use and safe for the environment. As a proud partner in this effort, TÜV SÜD continues to work side-by-side with Geox, exploring new ways to help make this vision a reality.

As this case study illustrates, success in today's competitive markets requires not only compliance with applicable regulatory requirements but also a commitment to safety beyond compliance. TÜV SÜD has the experience and technical expertise to provide testing, certification and audit solutions that support your organisation's values, while helping to make your businesses more successful at the same time.

Add value. Inspire trust.

TÜV SÜD is a trusted partner of choice for safety, security and sustainability solutions. It specialises in testing, certification, auditing and advisory services. Since 1866, the company has remained committed to its founding principle of enabling progress by protecting people, the environment and assets from technology-related risks. Through 24,000 employees across 1,000 locations, it adds tangible value to customers and partners by enabling market access and managing risks. By anticipating technological developments and facilitating change, TÜV SÜD inspires trust in the physical and digital world to create a safer and more sustainable future.