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Nike appoints first VP of Diversity

29 Aug 2006

Nike, Inc. has appointed Donna DeBerry as its first vice president (VP) of Diversity. In this newly created role, Ms DeBerry will help to further integrate diversity into Nike's global business strategies and employer of choice practices. CEO Mark Parker commented, "Diversity is a competitive and comparative growth opportunity for us. Innovation is a core driver of Nike's growth. The best innovation comes from inclusive work environments that foster diverse ideas, nurture people with diverse talent and backgrounds, and create strong relationships with diverse communities. We look forward to Donna working with our teams globally to further integrate diversity into how we work and how we drive growth."

Ms DeBerry was most recently, CEO and founder of DRP International, a diversity and event management consultancy. She has worked with the Oprah Winfrey Show and on many other high-profile projects. Prior to founding DRP International, she was executive VP of Global Diversity and Corporate Affairs at Wyndham International Inc., one of the world's largest publicly traded hospitality companies. She has also worked with the National Football League and the US Olympic Committee.

Callaway Golf to exhibit at 2007 PGA Merchandise Show

29 Aug 2006

For the 24th consecutive year, Callaway Golf Company will exhibit at the annual PGA Merchandise Show and Convention set for January 2007 in Orlando, USA. In addition to product introductions and special events planned for golf professionals, retailers and media, Callaway Golf also will use the world's largest gathering of golf manufacturers to announce extended alliances with the PGA of America.

"We are pleased to continue our support of PGA professionals and the PGA of America by participating in the 2007 Show," said Joe Urzetta, Senior Vice President, US Sales.

BASF and ITCF see ionic liquids as the future for cellulose fibres

29 Aug 2006

“Cellulose fibres can be produced in an efficient and environmentally sustainable manner by using ionic liquids.” This was the conclusion drawn following studies by BASF and the Denkendorf Institute for Textile Chemistry and Chemical Fibers (ITCF).

Practical tests carried out jointly by BASF and the ITCF for more than a year are said to have shown that the efficiency of the production process can be greatly enhanced by the use of ionic liquids. This is said to be because in ionic liquids, cellulose shows clearly better results for dissolving behaviour and technically useful concentrations. “Cellulose fibres produced by means of ionic liquids already have properties comparable to those of conventionally made fibres,” said Dr Eric Uerdingen from the New Business Development team at BASF’s Intermediates division.

Around the globe, most cellulose fibres are currently manufactured from so-called dissolving pulp by means of the viscose process. Although this technology has been improved continuously in the past decades, it consumes more than two metric tons of chemical additives and considerable fresh water volumes per metric ton of cellulose fibre made, requiring major wastewater treatment efforts. In contrast to this, the ionic liquids used as solvent can be almost entirely recycled. This also applies to the water required in fibre spinning. In addition to this, additive consumption drops significantly.

Since late last year BASF has also been collaborating with the University of Alabama (UoA) in the United States. This collaborative endeavour focuses on fundamental cellulose processing research with a view to expanding the use of renewable resources.

Occurring at a volume of some 700 billion tons, cellulose is the earth’s most widespread natural organic chemical and, thus, highly important as a bio-renewable resource. Even out of the 40 billion tons nature renews every year, only 0.1 billion tons are used as feedstock for further processing.

A more intensive exploitation of cellulose as a bio-renewable feedstock has to date been prevented by the lack of a suitable solvent that can be used in chemical processes. Now, the use of ionic liquids for the first time permits a simple production of cellulose solutions at concentrations that are technically attractive. This new technology therefore opens up great potential for cellulose processing.

$50.8 million trade deficit in Brazilian textile sector

29 Aug 2006

The Brazilian Textile and Apparel Industry Association (ABIT) has reported that in July 2006 the local textile and apparel sector had a trade balance deficit of $49 million, the largest reported in the last 72 months. This deficit is said to be the result of a 5% drop in exports and a 70.5% rise in imports compared with the same month of 2005. In the first seven months of 2006, the sector recorded a deficit of $50.8 million compared with a surplus of $255.4 million in the same period of 2005.

In the same period of the current year, imports of textile goods and apparel increased 39.4% in value and 33.4% in volume compared with 2005.

Second FUTEX convention announced

29 Aug 2006

The second European Convention dedicated to technical textiles, FUTEX, will be held on January 10-11 in Lille, France. The meeting will bring together European players from the technical textiles industry including manufacturers, researchers, and academics that will focus on the theme of 'Extreme Textiles'.

Extreme textiles are an example of the progress and diversity of technical innovations achieved in the textile and fibre industries. Designed to withstand and protect from extreme conditions of heat, cold and pressure, these materials are the result of leading-edge scientific research and major industrial development. Their applications are widespread from thermal (oven) gloves to astronauts' clothes, via shockproof textiles for transport.

Launched in 2005 on the initiative of Marcq-en-Baroeul Town Hall and CLUBTEX, an association that for 17 years has brought together around sixty manufacturers specialising in technical textiles for industrial use, the first FUTEX Conference attracted over 220 professionals, a third of whom from abroad, and welcomed over 3,000 visitors to its 'Technical Textiles: Uses and Futures' exhibition which was open to the general public.

Cocona fabrics from TrapTek win 2006 IQ Award

29 Aug 2006

Cocona fabrics from TrapTek, LLC received the Commercial and Industrial 2006 award at the annual IQ Awards ceremonies conducted in Boulder, Colorado on August 17. A panel of seven judges selected Cocona fabric as the winner.

Cocona technology permanently embeds activated carbon, derived from coconut shells, into fibre and yarns to enhance the performance of fabrics. Garments exhibit a significant breakthrough by not only managing or wicking moisture (45% greater wickability), but also drying at unprecedented rates keeping wearers cool and dry. Additionally, these knits naturally trap odour and UV in the activated carbon pore structure, keeping the finished products fresh and lightweight with superior UPF qualities.

Twenty-four apparel brands (including Champion, Cutter and Buck, Cannondale, Marmot, Izod, Royal Robbins, Sierra Designs, GoLite, and Sporthill for Spring 2007) are now either using Cocona fabrics or have committed to launch Cocona products in the coming months. Cannondale cycling apparel is among the first and its Cocona apparel was selected one of Time Magazine's "Most Amazing Inventions'.

The IQ Awards were started in 2000 by the Boulder County Business Report to recognise companies and organisations that are developing the most innovative new products and services in Boulder County and surrounding areas.

Traptek's products are used in performance clothing, footwear, socks, fleece, pet beds, chemical warfare protection, homeland defence applications, and automotive products.

EU to decide on proposal for anti-dumping duties on leather shoes

30 Aug 2006

The European Commission has adopted a proposal for definitive anti-dumping duties on certain leather shoes from China and Vietnam. In light of its findings on both dumping and injury to EU producers, the European Commission has proposed a duty of 16.5% for China and 10% for Vietnam for certain leather shoes. The proposal will now passes to Member States, who have one month to consider it for adoption.

According to a statement from the European Commission, the proposal represents its best efforts to "reconcile the different economic interests at stake in Europe while carrying out its responsibilities and respecting its legal obligations and the facts determined by the Commission investigation."

EU spokesman for Trade Peter Power said, "This case is complex and highly sensitive. It affects a variety of economic interests in Europe and in different Member States. The Commission was asked to launch this investigation and did so in accordance with Community law. The investigation was both thorough and exhaustive."

DuPont to increase world-wide capacity for Nomex

30 Aug 2006

DuPont has announced a continuation of its investment strategy for high-performance fibres with a multi-product, multi-region expansion plan for its high- performance Nomex brand fibre. The company expects to invest more than $100 million in the three-part expansion that is scheduled to begin rolling out in phases later this year.

The expansion is comprised of several projects spanning Nomex ingredients, fibre and paper. Under the plans DuPont Chemical Solutions plans to construct a new isophthaloyl chloride (ICL) facility in Asturias, Spain. ICL is one of the principal ingredients used to manufacture Nomex. This new facility will also liberate additional existing capacity to be used for the production of ingredients for Kevlar. The existing Nomex site at Asturias plans to add new equipment to increase Nomex fibre manufacturing capacity there by more than 30%.

Nomex is an inherently flame-resistant, high-temperature fibre that will not melt, drip or support combustion in air. The fibre is used in protection for industrial workers against flash fire and electric arc hazards. It also is used in military gear such as flight suits and Combat Vehicle Crewmen coveralls.

Warnaco names new president of Calvin Klein Jeans

30 Aug 2006

US apparel company, The Warnaco Group, Inc., has appointed Patricia Royak as president of its Calvin Klein Jeans division. Ms Royak will oversee all aspects of design, development, merchandising, marketing and sales for the Calvin Klein Jeans brand in the United States and will report directly to Frank Tworecke, president of the Sportswear Group.

Ms Royak joins Warnaco with 25 years of apparel and accessories experience. She most recently served as vice president of Global Brand Marketing for Liz Claiborne Apparel and president, Liz Claiborne Europe. Previously, she spent 18 years at Levi Strauss & Company.

Warnaco designs and sells intimate apparel, menswear, jeanswear, swimwear, men's and women's sportswear and accessories under owned and licensed brands such as Speedo, Anne Cole, Ocean Pacific, Chaps, J. Lo by Jennifer Lopez, Nautica and Calvin Klein.

Berghaus makes management changes

30 Aug 2006

UK-based outdoor apparel and footwear brand Berghaus has made a number of management changes which see new appointments to both UK and international roles along with some internal moves.

Completing a recruitment process announced earlier in the year, the Sunderland-based company has appointed Michael Lockett as operations director, a role which will be pivotal as the brand expands globally.

Mr Lockett has extensive experience in the fashion and textiles industry and joins Berghaus from J Barbour and Sons Ltd.

Gerhard Dobrunz, previously responsible for sales management in Germany, Austria and Switzerland, will now be taking on the management of all European territories as European business manager. He will continue to report to international business director Pascal Perrigaud.

Lisa Marriner will be moving to take up the position of head of Customer Service and Sarah Wilson has been appointed as head of Marketing, making her appointment permanent after an eight-month period in post as maternity cover.

Previous Head of Marketing, Caroline Smith, will return part-time to Berghaus after her maternity leave to take up a new role as executive assistant, reporting directly to brand president Richard Cotter.

Elsewhere in the company, product director Lewis Grundy has decided to take a career break and leave the company.

New Balance wins lawsuit against Qiuzhi Footwear

30 Aug 2006

Global athletic footwear brand New Balance Athletic Shoe, Inc. has announced that it has won a significant trademark infringement lawsuit in China against Chinese footwear maker Qiuzhi Footwear. The court awarded New Balance a monetary award of RMB600,000 ($75,000) and ordered Qiuzhi to stop producing its ‘New Barlun’ athletic shoes after a three-year battle.

In 2002, New Balance discovered a group advertising itself as American New Barlun (Hong Kong) Limited conducting business in China and promoting a relationship with the “American New Balance” company. New had acquired trademarks which were similar to those of New Balance and combined them with packaging, advertising, and slogans also similar to the brand. New Barlun began selling franchises and opening

retail stores throughout China. New Balance took immediate action, working with China's Administration for Industry and Commerce with limited success. In 2003, New Balance discovered that New Barlun was a front established in Hong Kong by a Chinese company called Qiuzhi Footwear. New Balance then sued Qiuzhi in the court of Hangzhou.

After almost three years of litigation, the court held up New Balance's complaint and found Qiuzhi liable to New Balance for trademark infringement and unfair competition.

"Billions of dollars worth of counterfeit brand-name goods are discovered annually around the world, most of them originating in China," said Ed Haddad, vice president of Intellectual Property and Licensing at New Balance. "Brand owners must be vigilant against those who would capitalize on their goodwill and brand reputation. We applaud the Court's actions as a tremendous breakthrough in IP protection in China."

Li Ning posts significant improvement in results

30 Aug 2006

Chinese sports and footwear brand Li Ning has posted a significant rise in turnover for the six months ended 30 June. Turnover of the group surged by 24.2% to approximately RMB1.371 billion ($172.385 million). The growth in turnover has been attributed to the rapid expansion of the company's sales network, development of new products, enhancement in the supply chain management, distinguished brand positioning and improvement in sales efforts. Profit attributable to equity holders reached RMB129.939 billion representing an increase of 65.9% over that of the same period last year.

For the six months ended 30 June, the group developed and designed a number of new products for its five target sports goods series, namely running, basketball, soccer, tennis and fitness. These products were well received by the market and successfully boosted product sales. In addition, significant improvements in footwear product design, together with increasing number of medium-priced products and reinforced marketing efforts, led to a strong growth of 49.9% in Li-Ning brand footwear sales. In spite of keen competition from the aggressive expansion of overseas and domestic brands, an increase of sales growth of 23.3% was achieved for LI-NING brand apparel products, while sales of accessories increased by 28.3% as a result of optimisation of product strategy during the period.

Li Ning has its own branding, research and development, design, manufacturing, distribution and retail capabilities. The group's products include sports footwear, apparel and accessories for sport and leisure use primarily sold under its own 'Li-Ning' brand.

VF Corporation names new leadership team

31 Aug 2006

US apparel company VF Corporation has formed a new international leadership team as part of the company's ongoing initiative to enter new markets and accelerate revenue growth throughout Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia.

Karl Heinz Salzburger has been appointed to lead the new team in the newly created role of president of Europe, Middle East, Africa (EMEA) and Asia. Mr Salzburger was previously president of VF's Outdoor - International Coalition.

The other team members include Aidan O'Meara, president, VF Jeanswear-International Coalition; Topher Gaylord, president, Outdoor International;

Martin Berendsen, president, Action Sports International; Martino Scabbia Guerrini, president, Sportswear International; and Corrado Conti, vice president, Business Development.

VF Corporation's brands include Lee, Wrangler, Nautica, JanSport, Eastpak, The North Face, Vans, Reef, and Napapijri.

Sales rise at Zumiez

31 Aug 2006

US retailer of action sports related apparel, footwear, equipment and accessories, Zumiez Inc. has posted 36.4% higher net sales for the four-week period ended August 26. Sales reached $33.7 million compared with $24.7 million for the four-week period ended August 27, 2005. The company's comparable store sales increased 4.7% for the four-week period.

Zumiez currently operates 225 stores across the USA.

Growth in Chinese textile industry forecast to slow

31 Aug 2006

In a report released on August 25, The Chinese National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) stated that although the country's textile industry is set to further increase in the second half, growth within the sector is likely to slow, compared with the first six months of 2006.

The analysis published by NDRC reported that there are some issues affecting the textile industry at present, such as exports to EU and a slow down in the USA, increased cotton prices, etc., which are likely to have an impact on the industry.

The statistics published showed that in the period January to June, textile sales increased 23.7% year-on-year with textile and apparel exports increasing 24.5%.

Hartmarx acquires 'One Girl Who . . .' women's business

31 Aug 2006

US producer of business, casual and golf apparel Hartmarx Corporation has acquired the business of Sweater.com, Inc., including its "One Girl Who . . ." brand—a business that designs women's knitwear, tops and related products to leading specialty stores nationwide and directly through its Sweater.com website.

The terms of the transaction include a cash payment at closing of $12.4 million, subject to certain post-closing adjustments.

Hartmarx produces apparel under its own brands, including Hart Schaffner Marx, Hickey-Freeman, Palm Beach, Coppley, Cambridge, Keithmoor, Society Brand, Racquet Club, and Naturalife and holds certain exclusive rights under licensing agreements for brands such as Tommy Hilfiger, Ted Baker, Jack Nicklaus, and Perry Ellis.

FESI criticises EU proposal on footwear dumping

31 Aug 2006

The Federation of the European Sporting Goods Industry (FESI) has criticised the EU's proposal to apply anti-dumping duties on Chinese and Vietnamese footwear. In a statement FESI said that it regretted the European Commission's approval of a proposal for definitive anti-dumping duties on footwear imports as European Union member states had already rejected an identical proposal in early August.

"We hope that European governments will vote down this protectionist proposal in September," said Horst Widmann, president of FESI. "Most of them have understood that Europe should not sacrifice its competitiveness and the interest of consumers for the sake of shielding a handful of manufacturers from global competition.

"We have serious issues with the Commission's technical analysis. Most member states agree with us and that was an additional reason to say no to the measures."

"The proposed anti-dumping duties, if adopted, will translate into higher prices for European consumers," said Mr Widmann. "Definitive measures are certainly not in the Community's interest."

International Textile Group and Safety Components International to merge

31 Aug 2006

International Textile Group, Inc. and Safety Components International, Inc., have signed an agreement to combine the two companies through a merger. Both International Textile Group (ITG) and Safety Components International (SCI) are majority owned by affiliates of WL Ross & Co. LLC.

The resulting company will be named International Textile Group, Inc. SCI will form the basis of the combined company's new automotive safety components business unit. Wilbur Ross, Jr. will serve as chairman of the combined company. Joseph. Gorga, current president and CEO of ITG, will serve as president and CEO of the combined company. Stephen Duerk, who currently serves as president of SCI, will serve as president of the new business unit.

ITG is a provider of global textile solutions and distinguished market brands to apparel and interior furnishings customers worldwide. ITG was organised in March 2004 to combine the assets of Burlington Industries and Cone Mills.

It operates four business units: Cone Denim, Burlington WorldWide (apparel fabrics), Burlington House (interior fabrics) and Carlisle Finishing.

SCI is a supplier of automotive airbag fabric and cushions with operations in North America, Europe, China and South Africa. The company also manufactures value-added synthetic fabrics used in a variety of niche applications.

The combined company, to be headquartered in Greensboro, NC, will operate through five primary business units: Automotive Safety Components,

Cone Denim, Burlington WorldWide (apparel fabrics), Burlington House (interior fabrics) and Carlisle Finishing.

Dow to close manufacturing plants in Canada

1 Sept 2006

Dow Chemical Canada Inc. is to close two of its seven petrochemical production facilities currently in operation at its Alberta site. The reason given for the closures was a lack of competitiveness in the global market place. The closure of the two facilities, Chlor-Alkali and Ethylene Dichloride (EDC), will result in the loss of approximately 170 jobs at the site, comprising around 100 employees and 70 contractor positions. The two production facilities will shut down operations by October 31.

The two plants being closed began operations in the late 1970s. The Chlor-Alkali plant produces chlorine and

caustic soda, an essential ingredient used in many industrial operations including textiles, pulp and paper, and chemical processing.

Dow customers for these products will continue to be supplied from other facilities.

Jeff Johnston, president of Dow Canada's operations stated, "The decision to close these two plants was made only after all alternatives were examined in detail, including the potential sale and continued operation of the facilities by other companies, to protect job opportunities for our employees. Unfortunately, there were no other viable options."

VF establishes joint venture in India

1 Sept 2006

Global apparel company VF Corporation has agreed to establish a joint venture with Arvind Mills, Ltd. to design, market and distribute VF branded products in India. The joint venture, VF Arvind Brands Private Ltd., will initially encompass VF's Lee, Wrangler, Nautica, JanSport and Kipling brands, which were previously marketed under licensing and distribution agreements with Arvind Fashions, a subsidiary of Arvind Mills, Ltd. VF will own 60% of the joint venture, and Arvind Mills, Ltd. will own 40%.

Darshan Mehta has been named CEO of the new venture, which will be headquartered in Bangalore, India, and will have approximately 180 employees.

VF's wholesale business in India is approximately $40 million annually and is expected to grow more than 25% per year, excluding the addition of further VF brands.

Finish Line revises Q2 sales and earnings guidance

1 Sept 2006

American retailer of athletic apparel, footwear and accessories The Finish Line, Inc. has posted revised sales and earnings guidance for its second quarter ending August 26.

The company expects to report consolidated net sales in the range of $335 million to $339 million compared with $341.6 million reported for the second quarter ended August 27, 2005.

The company is revising second quarter earnings guidance due to the decrease in sales and pressure on product margins, as well as negative leverage on occupancy costs and selling, general and administrative expenses.

Chairman and CEO Alan Cohen said, "For the second quarter we have continued to experience significant weakness in women's performance running which was down double digits on a comparable store basis. The softgoods business also slowed in Q2 with comparable sales down double digits as well. Comparable sales for the quarter decreased 8% in June followed by an 11% decrease in July. August comparable sales are expected to be negative 3-5%."

Ciba silver-based antimicrobials achieve Oeko-Tex approval

1 Sept 2006

Switzerland-based Ciba Specialty Chemicals' range of silver-glass-based antimicrobials, Ciba IrgaguardB 7000, has gained approval from the Oeko-Tex Association in spinmelt applications for fibres and nonwovens used in items such as clothing, home textiles and bedding materials.

IrgaguardB 7000 antimicrobials are said to provide effective protection against a wide range of bacteria, mould and yeast. With their special glass matrix that allows controlled release of silver ions, the products are designed for use in polymers processed at up to 500°C and provide protection against light-induced discoloration. These properties make the antimicrobials especially suitable for thin items such as fibres for textiles, nonwovens, tapes and transparent applications.

The Oeko-Tex label is recognised in the textile industry as a standard of safety testing and inspection. Oeko-Tex Standard 100 was created in 1993 to address the increasing demand for garments and home textiles to be free from any substances that might pose a risk to human health as well as to provide a specific in-use quality standard.

AdvanSA increases polyester fibre prices

1 Sept 2006

European provider of customised solutions for all sectors of the polyester market AdvanSA has increased its prices for polyester fibres in the range of €0.15–€0.25/kg. The move comes as a result of a continued increase in the cost of raw materials for polyester which, according to the company, have risen by 25% since June. The company's price increases are in line with the rise in Western European Contract Prices for paraxylene and glycol in the third quarter of 2006.

According to Heinz Meierkord, vice president Marketing & Sales, "The situation for the purchase of raw materials has developed over the last weeks with continuous high volatility in a way that major parts of a polyester fibre portfolio are reaching levels of financial returns without any fixed cost contribution." Similar to situations like in

1995 the cost increases from crude oil need to reach final consumers now in order to keep a global industry healthy,'' he added.

Redcats acquires The Sportsman's Guide

1 Sept 2006

A wholly-owned subsidiary of home shopping company Redcats Group , Redcats USA, has completed the acquisition of The Sportsman's Guide, Inc., a US-based catalogue and online retailer of outdoor and sports gear, for $31 per share. Following the approval of the transaction by the board of directors of The Sportsman's Guide earlier in May and by the US antitrust authorities, The Sportsman's Guide's shareholders approved the proposed merger on August 25.

Redcats USA is a catalogue and online marketer of apparel and home products, operating in North America. Its primary brands include Chadwick's, Roaman's, and KingSize. The Sportsman's Guide is a direct marketer of outdoor gear and general merchandise, with a special emphasis on outdoor clothing, outdoor equipment, sporting goods, golf apparel and equipment and footwear.

Wellman increases polyester staple fibre price

1 Sept 2006

US manufacturer of polyester products, Wellman, Inc. has announced that, with effect from October 1 shipments, it will increase the price of its polyester staple fibre products by 5 cents/pound.

Joe Tucker, vice president, Fibers and Recycled Products Group, attributed the increase to the continued rise in petrochemical raw material costs, commenting, "There is continuing upward pressure on the cost of our raw materials, which have already surpassed levels recorded last year following the Gulf Coast hurricanes. We cannot absorb or offset these increases and need to work to maintain margins that allow us to continue to meet future customer needs."

Wellman's products include Fortrel brand polyester fibres and PermaClear and EcoClear brand PET (polyethylene terephthalate) packaging resins.

Huafeng Textile secures capital for growth

1 Sept 2006

China-based fabric processor Huafeng Textile International has secured HK$250 million ($32.14 million) in a round of funding to secure the further expansion of the company. The company is already in the process of acquiring a dyeing plant valued at HK$85 million and the construction of a new knitting plant.

"The new funds will allow us to add breadth and depth to our service offerings. Our primary objective is to utilise these funds to aggressively expand our operation," said chairman Cai. "Our goal this year is to boost sales and earnings by entering into new markets, launching a series of new products and further enhancing our production technologies. With an ever-increasing pipeline of new and existing customers in place and solid strategies for expansion underway, we are very optimistic about the company's future."

Established in Fujian Province in 1988, Huafeng has rapidly grown to be a sizeable fabrics processor providing services from fabrics bleaching and dyeing to setting and finishing. It is the largest fabric processor in Shishi City, Fujian province in China with an annual processing capacity of 91,000 tonnes of fabrics.

Apart from its fabric processing services, Huafeng has also ventured into cotton yarn spinning and has two major yarn spinning operations with an annual production capacity of 21,000 tonnes.