Business Week
13 Nov - 19 Nov

Kellwood to sell its New Campaign division to Polo Ralph Lauren

13 Nov 2006

Apparel and consumer soft goods company Kellwood Company is to sell its New Campaign division, which produces Polo, Ralph Lauren, Lauren, and Chaps belts and small leather goods, to Polo Ralph Lauren Corporation. The sale is expected to complete in April next year and Kellwood anticipates proceeds of approximately $9 million.

Given Kellwood's sale of the New Campaign business and the non-renewal of its IZOD women's sportswear license with Phillips Van Heusen, the company has adjusted its previously issued net sales and earnings guidance to exclude them. For the 2006 fiscal year, Kellwood's adjusted net sales from ongoing operations are expected to be in the range of $1.890 billion. Its 2005 fiscal year saw net sales reach $1.964 billion.

Aetrex launches copper sole socks

13 Nov 2006

Aetrex Worldwide, Inc. is launching a new copper sole sock designed to improve foot health.

Known for its antimicrobial properties, copper is currently used as a fungicide and bactericide treatment. According to the Aetrex, its new copper socks rejuvenate the skin to improve appearance, offer 99.9% prevention of bacteria and fungi to control odour, and wick away moisture to keep feet healthy, cool and dry. The line includes athletic, non-binding, dress/casual and compression support styles.

Third quarter sales up 56% for adidas Group

13 Nov 2006

Adidas Group sales for the third quarter of this year increased 56% on a currency-neutral basis, driven by the consolidation of the Reebok business segment and higher than expected adidas brand growth. Sales for the group, excluding Reebok, increased 14% on a currency-neutral basis, with double-digit sales increases in all regions except North America, which saw single-digit increases.

During the first nine months of this year, the group's sales increased 52% on a currency-neutral basis, strongly supported by the first-time consolidation of the Reebok business segment. Sales excluding Reebok increased 16% on a currency-neutral basis driven by double-digit growth in all regions.

UK university student creates stitch-free mountain bike sportswear

14 Nov 2006

A UK university student has designed a range of sportswear clothing for mountain bikers involving no stitching at all. Keith Sykes, who is studying for an MA in Performance Sportswear Design at the University of Derby, has created mountain bike wear that is entirely glued together using a special adhesive that bonds to different fabrics. Sykes believes the technique produces lighter weight garments using less material, and with a stronger seam that can be moulded into shapes.

The technique comprises overlapping the pieces, with adhesives then exposed to different temperatures, where they melt and then set to hold the fabric together. The high temperatures used mean that the material is not affected by household washing and is very strong. Pieces are also laser-cut before gluing, to prevent the edges fraying.

Sykes has been awarded a work placement in Switzerland with sporting goods and apparel company Scott to take his ideas forward.

Tagsys launches new tag for the textile laundry market

14 Nov 2006

US company Tagsys, provider of RFID (Radio Frequency Identification) systems and tags for end-to-end item-level tracking, has launched a new tag for the textile laundry market, which, the company claims, reads faster and lasts twice as long as its closest competitor. The Ario 370-DL can withstand an average of 400-500 cycles and can be used for more than a single garment throughout the tag's operating lifespan. A typical lifespan for a garment is less than 120 cycles or two to three years.

Measuring just 15.5mm in diameter at a thickness of 2.8mm, the tag is designed to be unobtrusive and can be hidden virtually anywhere on a garment or flat linen without interfering with the item's original design.

Alarming number of counterfeit seizures at EU borders

14 Nov 2006

Serious concerns have been raised about the extent of counterfeiting, following publication of the latest figures on counterfeit product seizures at EU borders in 2005. Based on data provided by of EU member states' customs authorities, in 2005, more than 75 million pirated or counterfeit items were seized. The majority of these were cigarettes (43%), followed by textile products and accessories (15%), CDs, DVDs and tapes (13%), and foodstuff, alcoholic and other drinks (7%).

Union des Fabricants (Unifab), the French anti counterfeiting association, said that counterfeiting has created a real parallel economy, paralysing innovation and stifling investment in the European brands industry to the detriment of EU employment. The organisation recommends that deepening co-operation both at EU and international level, and mobilising all institutions and concerned parties, is the only way to tackle the problem.

Arc'teryx opens first brand store in Montreal

14 Nov 2006

Arc'teryx Equipment Inc., designer and manufacturer of technical apparel, backpacks and climbing harnesses, has opened its first Arc'teryx retail store.

Located in Montreal, Canada, the 4,500 sq.ft flagship store marks the company's first venture into full-scale retail and showcases its largest product line anywhere.

The store has a top-end boutique-like atmosphere with an emphasis on the design aesthetic of the brand. Along with custom-built stainless steel floor merchandisers, it features interactive information kiosks where consumers can learn about products and check their availability by scanning a product barcode. The store also has a 40-foot wall displaying the entire Arc'teryx line of Gore-Tex products.

Slight drop in Pacific Sunwear's third quarter sales

14 Nov 2006

Third-quarter total sales for Pacific Sunwear of California, Inc. reached $375.4 million, down slightly from $377.5 million for the same third quarter in 2005. Same-store sales for the period decreased 6.7% compared to 2005.

Total sales for the first three quarters of the company's 2006 fiscal year were $989.0 million, an increase of 2.3% over $966.5 million for the equivalent period in 2005. Same-store sales decreased 4.9% for the comparable thirty-nine week period.

Nike named top US company for social responsibility reporting

14 Nov 2006

Nike has been named top US company and one of the world's top 10 in the current SustainAbility Global Reporters programme ranking. It earned the company widespread praise for setting a new level of transparency in the industry, including the Ceres-ACCA North American award for Sustainability reporting. Fortune magazine added the company to its annual "Best Companies to Work For" list, noting its compliance efforts and response to overseas manufacturing conditions, and the socially responsible investment community responded by placing Nike on the Calvert Social Index, Dow Jones Sustainability Indexes, KLD's Broad Market and Large Cap Social Indices, and FTSE4Good Index Series.

The SustainAbility Global Reporters programme surveys and ranks leading practice in corporate sustainability reporting, transparency and disclosure. Nike's ranking is based on its 2004 report, released in April 2005.

Rhodia's launches new softshell composite fabric

15 Nov 2006

Advantex One, a new softshell composite fabric developed by Rhodia Silicones in partnership with Salomon, has now been launched in retail stores selling the Salomon range of skiwear. Used by Salomon in its Sonic Shield and Advanced Shield premium range jackets and trousers, Advantex One is said to combine lightness and freedom of movement with long-lasting protection in harsh conditions. It features multi-directional stretch composite fabric and is resistant to abrasion and washing cycles. It also includes seamless, ultrasound welding technology for waterproofing.

GDS 2007 to feature three more areas

15 Nov 2006

The international shoe and leather fair GDS, held in Düsseldorf, Germany, will feature three new areas at the 2007 show–Prime Square, Concept 10 and Kidwalk.

Prime Square will host high quality brands presenting sophisticated shoe fashions; Concept 10 will offer a value for money package for exhibitors to include stand rental and furnishings, admission tickets for customers and inclusion of Concept 10 in GDS press releases and communication; and Kidwalk will provide a stronger focus

on children's items.

GDS will run concurrently with GLS, the leather goods fair, from March 9-11, 2007.

Bangladeshi exporters alarmed at port blockades

15 Nov 2006

Bangladeshi garment and leather exporters are feeling the impact of political protests, which are blocking ports and hampering export orders. The protests were called by the country's former Prime Minister, Begum Hasina Wajid, along with 13 political parties, whose demands include the removal of the chief election commissioner and the reform of the election commission.

Tipu Sultan, chairman of the Bangladesh Finished Leather, Leather Goods and Footwear Exporters' Association, said that with leather manufacturers exporting over half their products in the winter, and overseas buyers expressing concerns about shipment deadlines, the political crisis is having a detrimental effect on the industry.

Algo Group posts higher sales

15 Nov 2006

Canadian manufacturer and importer of fashion apparel and sportswear, Algo Group Inc., has reported that third quarter sales rose to $8.3 million compared with $7.5 million for the same period in 2005. Year-to-date sales to the end of September 2006 were $22.6 million, compared with $21.7 million for the same period in 2005.

Although ladies' fashion apparel sales decreased by $0.6 million to $1.8 million for the quarter, sportswear sales increased by $1 million to reach $5.7 million. Sales for the company's licensed brands segment increased to $0.6 million.

Lanxess' third quarter earnings increase 10.8%

15 Nov 2006

German-based Chemicals group Lanxess has posted a 10.8% increase in earnings for the third quarter. Earnings for the period reached €164 million, from the €148 million posted in the same quarter in 2005.

Mammut Sports Group to acquire lighting specialist Lucido

15 Nov 2006

Switzerland-based Mammut Sports Group AG is to acquire the Lucido brand from Invia Sportartikel Vertriebs GmbH of Eurasburg, Germany, January 1, 2007. Lucido provides high-quality LED head and hand lighting systems and Mammut will use its head lamp segment to complement its outdoor ranges. Lucido product management and development will transfer to the head office of the Mammut Sports Group, where further development is to be coordinated.

Lucido cool light was established by Thomas Strobl (Invia) in 1999. The name Lucido has a Latin origin and means "I give light". Its latest product, the TX1 head lamp, won the OutDoor Industry Award at OutDoor 2006.

Mammut Sports Group AG incorporates mountain sports equipper Mammut, sports footwear manufacturer Raichle, and Toko, the ski wax and cleaning product specialist. The group's portfolio encompasses mountaineering, climbing and snow apparel, sleeping bags, backpacks and climbing hardware – as well as ropes, avalanche rescue equipment, ski wax and ancillary tools and mountain boots.

Uniqlo opens New York flagship store

15 Nov 2006

Japanese apparel and casualwear retailer Uniqlo has celebrated the grand opening of its 36,000 sq. ft. global flagship store in New York's SoHo. There was a celebrity studded Grand Opening party and a traditional Japanese ribbon-cutting. The store will offer contemporary sportswear basics and accessories for women, men and children.

Derryck Draper Award 2006

15 Nov 2006

Derryck Draper was a man of many parts. Besides being editor of WSA for many years until his untimely death in late 2004, having joined the magazine's editorial team in 1996, he was devoted to the great outdoors and took part in a host of activities. He was also a very senior figure in UK Scout.

In 1980, he was a founding member of the British Outdoor Writers Guild, which has honoured his memory by naming an award after him, for the best and most innovative product. The award for 2006 went to the SteriPen, a UV-light emitting, hand-held, lightweight water purifier, manufactured by Hydro-Photon, Inc. of America. No doubt Derryck would be happy to know that

thirsty folk in harsh surroundings now have a way of quickly zapping water to destroy the DNA of water-borne viruses, protozoa and bacteria, such as Echovirus, Poliovirus & Hepatitis, Giardia, Cryptosporidium, E. coli, Salmonella, Straph & Strep, Cholera and Typhoid.

Positive Q3 results at Dick's Sporting Goods

15 Nov 2006

Dick's Sporting Goods, Inc. has reported improved sales and earnings results for the third quarter ended October 28. Net income for the third quarter was $7.8 million compared with prior year net income of $0.9 million. Net sales for the quarter increased by 22% to reach $708.3 million. Comparable store sales increased 8.9%.

Net income for the 39 weeks ended October 28 increased by 48% to $44.9 million compared with $30.3 million in the prior year. .Net sales for the period increased by 18% to $2,088 million, while comparable store sales increased 7.7%.

The company has also entered into a definitive merger agreement with Golf Galaxy. Under the terms of the agreement, each outstanding share of Golf Galaxy common stock will be converted into the right to receive $18.82 per share in cash, without interest.

Fox Creek Leather to move to new headquarters

16 Nov 2006

Independently-owned US motorcycle leather company Fox Creek Leather has moved to new headquarters following a year of high growth–led mainly by $2 million in website sales.

Based in Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains, the company has more than 7,000 new visitors to its website daily Previously run out of a barn where it was founded in 1986, family-owned Fox Creek has a reputation as one of only a handful of companies that outfit motorcycle riders with high quality American-made apparel, including jackets and chaps.

The new $400,000 facility is sited between New River, Grayson Highlands State Park and the Blue Ridge Mountain Music Center.

DuPont launches new line for electric arc protection

16 Nov 2006

DuPont Personal Protection, makers of DuPont, Nomex and protective apparel, has introduced DuPont Protera, a new line of inherently flame resistant fabrics specifically engineered to protect against electric arc hazards.

According to the company, garments made with Protera offer a high level of comfort compared with other flame-retardant (FR) treated cotton/nylon blend fabrics on the market today. The fabric is also said to be twice as strong as FR cotton/nylon blend fabrics and maintain its inherent thermal protection, even after 100 wash cycles. Furthermore, the company states that the fabric's flame resistance does not diminish through either laundering or bleaching and does not require special laundry processing.

Protera is produced in two weights, 6.5 and 8 ounces per square yard, and is available in medium blue, khaki and navy blue colours.

Performance Fibers expands production

16 Nov 2006

Performance Fibers has expanded its low-denier industrial (LDI) yarn facility in Bad Hersfeld, Germany. The company is making a multi-million dollar investment in modernised draw winder machinery that will expand the plant's capacity by more than 10%. The new line is expected to start up by the middle of next year.

The fine-denier, high-tenacity yarns are used in sewing, embroidery, outdoor fabric, awnings, banners, outdoor signs, flags, technical textiles and apparel.

G.U.B. Golf introduces new utility belt

16 Nov 2006

California-based golfing accessories company G.U.B. Golf LLC has released a new leather golf belt which allows the wearer to keep all their essential items—including tees, ball markers and gloves, etc.—handy without obstructing their swing. The belt has built-in leather slots that hold up to four golf tees. A magnetic window holds two metal ball markers, and a golf glove holder is also incorporated.

New Ethletic Fair Trade sports shoes

16 Nov 2006

UK-based Fair Deal Trading recently launched a new range of Fair Trade sports shoes. The Ethletic range of trainers are manufactured in Pakistan where a fair trade premium is paid to workers for each pair made. This means that the people, who in the past also helped the company to produce the world's first fair trade footballs, are paid fairly for their work. They also benefit from a range of social improvements from a free health scheme,

to micro-credit loans that enable them to start up businesses of their own.

The uppers are 100% cotton with a durable rubber sole, and the shoes are the first to be certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (whose stamp is engraved on every pair) as the rubber has been sourced from a sustainable plantation in Sri Lanka, where workers also benefit from a fair trade premium.

Foot Locker reports static Q3 results

17 Nov 2006

New York-based specialty athletic retailer Foot Locker, Inc., has reported fairly static financial results for its third quarter ended October 28.

Net income for the quarter was $65 million, in line with last year's results of $66 million. Last year's results reflected revisions in estimates to discontinued reserves and a favourable income tax settlement totalling $1 million that was included in discontinued operations.

Sales increased 1.6% to $1,430 million this year compared with $1,408 million in the year-ago period. Third quarter comparable-store sales decreased 0.3%.

During the third quarter, the company opened 57 new stores, remodelled/relocated 49 stores and closed 16 stores. At October 28, it operated 3,935 stores in 20 countries in North America, Europe and Australia. In addition, three Foot Locker franchised stores are currently operating in the Middle East.

Year-to-date net income was $138 million, compared with $168 million last year. Year-to-date sales increased 0.2% to $4,098 million compared with $4,089 million last year. Comparable-store sales decreased 0.4%.

The company has also announced that it plans to open a new retail format, which will be aimed at selling value-priced family footwear under the ‘Footquarters’ brand name. Approximately 30 stores will be opened during the spring season of 2007, with a further rapid expansion plan possible thereafter.

Texon launches Texon Coriumoda

17 Nov 2006

Global manufacturer of structural component solutions for the footwear, apparel and accessories industries, Texon International, has launched Texon Coriumoda–which is said to offer fashion designers a fully recyclable eco-leather material.

The material derives from the traditional Texon 484 cellulose material. It is treated with a patented tanning and dyeing process, which gives the material a high quality, leather look and feel, making it suitable for different applications, including clothing, footwear, coverings, finished products and jeans and garment labels.

The technology can be also used as a high quality foundation for the printing of both internal and external labels for clothing garments such as denim. It has high stitch strength, is abrasion resistant and is very flexible, providing a hardwearing and durable material solution.

Presented at the recent Lineapelle exhibition in Bologna, the product was selected by the committee of stylists for the Fashion Trends selection area, which displays innovative materials supplied by the exhibitors.

Roberto Rosettani, sales manager, Texon International, said, “Due to its technical and aesthetic properties this innovative product can be used as upper-lining material for casual and sports shoes as well as a solution for fashion accessories, bags and jeans labels.”

Ronaldinho unveils signature collection

17 Nov 2006

Famous Brazilian soccer player Ronaldinho launched a signature soccer collection with Nike, at an event held in Barcelona, Spain, on November 17.

The collection is Nike's first signature line introduced with a soccer athlete, joining the ranks of Michael Jordan, Tiger Woods and LeBron James to have his own signature product line with the brand.

The Ronaldinho collection includes a new boot, the Tiempo Ronaldinho, as well as ‘state-of-the-art’ equipment including a ball, shin guards and a sport-inspired bag.

The tri-coloured stitching on the collection is said to represent Ronaldinho's three major passions in life: yellow for family, sun, and Brazil; orange for samba, spice, and food; and red for the passion and joy he feels for life and soccer. Gold outlines the ‘10’ and stylised ‘R’ that mimics the start of his own signature.

Ronaldinho is a two-time FIFA Player of the Year and is currently in his fourth season with FC Barcelona.

L.L.Bean plans continued international expansion

17 Nov 2006

US-based developer and retailer of outdoor gear and apparel L.L.Bean, Inc., has announced the opening of two new retail stores in Japan, along with plans to explore expansion into other international markets.

The first of the two new stores in Japan will open in Tokyo on November 18, with the second, in Osaka, set to open on December 4.

L.L.Bean plans to open at least four Japanese stores per year, with sites for spring 2007 already under way: one in Niigata, on the western coast of Japan, and one in Sapporo. Both locations are particularly fitting for L.L.Bean, as Niigata boasts one of the highest annual snowfalls in the world.

The company has also expressed its intent to explore new international markets and recently named former general manager in charge of its Japan expansion, Zane Shatzer, as general manager of International New Market Development. Mr Shatzer–who has been with the company for 17 years–said, "We are actively searching out locations for retail development in Latin America and Asia. We are also looking to boost our presence in Canada…"

Optimer develops flame resistant version of Dri-release with FreshGuard

17 Nov 2006

Optimer Performance Fibers has developed a new flame resistant version of Dri-release with FreshGuard in response to the needs of the military serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Most military issue undergarments have been traditionally made of cotton. In Afghanistan, however, the military encountered a harsh environment where temperatures shifted rapidly between desert heat and extreme cold. Cotton garments retained moisture resulting in severe chills and even hypothermia.

Identifying the need for moisture wicking features in their 'first layer', many soldiers switched to polyester-based performance products. In Iraq, however, hazards were different. Flash fires from explosive devices could cause the polyester-based products to melt and drip onto skin.

The military began to search for a suitable fabric and this led to Safety Systems, a provider of tactical equipment and apparel to the military, contacting Optimer. The companies then worked together to find the right combination that would meet the military's needs.

"It took two years in development but the result is everything that Safety Systems asked for," said Beth Moore, managing director of operations at Optimer. "In addition to its typical moisture management capabilities the new Dri-release 'FR' (flame resistant) version is not only self extinguishing, it quickly turns to ash and, most definitely, does not melt or drip."

Safety Systems will market the new line of engineered, hybrid performance garments, using an exclusive flame-resistant variant of Dri-release under the dri-FIRE name.

As with all Dri-release products, dri-FIRE delivers accelerated moisture management yet feels like a natural fibre against the skin. Furthermore, with Optimer's FreshGuard ingredient in dri-FIRE, it will also help to keep personnel feeling fresh while in the field.

Dri-FIRE products will be sold directly through Safety Systems as well as through its distribution network. Short and long sleeve T-shirts, boxers and a long pant are available for autumn 2006 delivery in silk weight. Mid- and heavy weight versions along with a fleece jacket, vest and hat will be available in spring 2007. Dri-release is a patented blend of hydrophobic (water repelling) and hydrophilic (water accepting) fibres that accelerates the water release rate of wet fabric. Tests show it dries four times faster than cotton and is said to dry faster than any other performance fabric on the market – including 100% polyester. FreshGuard is an environmentally friendly odour neutraliser built directly into all Dri-release fabrics. Unlike many moisture management products, both the Dri-release and FreshGuard technologies are also permanent.

TNF athlete wins IAU 2006 World Championship

17 Nov 2006

The North Face (TNF) sponsored athlete Elisabeth Hawker has won the International Association of Ultra Runners IAU 2006 100km World Championship in Misari, Korea. With over 300 participants from more than 40 different countries, the event is said to be the most prestigious 100km running challenge in the world.

Ranked 19th in pre-race listings, Ms Hawker confessed, "It was a daunting responsibility, as well as an honour to be part of [Great Britain's] team. I was questioning my 'right' to be there with such a tough field."

When not winning the world's most difficult 100km race, Ms Hawker works full time at the British Antarctic Survey.