Business Week
5 Feb - 11 Feb

Superfeet launches ‘Orange’ insole at ispo

5 Feb 2007

Insole manufacturer Superfeet has unveiled its new ‘Orange’ insole to the European market at ispo, currently being held in Munich, Germany.

Designed for men who participate in high impact and endurance activities, the insole is the company’s first male-specific product. It follows the introduction of the women-specific Berry insole last year.

The Orange and Berry insoles combine high-density foam with an Agion anti-microbial top cover and a forefoot shock pad, which are well-suited for sports and work footwear. Agion is an environmentally-friendly system for textiles and fabrics that reduces bacteria and helps to prevent foot odour.

EU and US unite in anti-counterfeiting drive

5 Feb 2007

Officials from the European Commission and US government have met in Geneva to review progress in the crackdown on counterfeiting and piracy. EU and US authorities are expanding their efforts to combat the increasing economic damage and the health and safety hazards posed by fake products. Customs officials from both regions are jointly targeting consignments of shipments suspected to be containing counterfeit goods.

EU Commissioner Peter Mandelson, responsible for trade policy, said, "Protection of intellectual property rights is vital for European competitiveness and part of our defence against dangerous fakes. Europe’s joint work with the US sends a clear signal to the intellectual property pirates that we won’t tolerate counterfeiting."

Under the strategy, International Property Rights (IPR) experts in Brussels and Washington have established regular contact with embassies in key countries where problems arise, such as China and Russia. The G8 and the OECD have also backed a renewed campaign to tackle intellectual property theft and the two governments are working together to ensure that these campaigns will have positive results. They have also joined forces to provide training and technical assistance to countries in South America, Asia and Eastern Europe relating to the protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights.

18,500 buyers expected at Texworld

5 Feb 2007

800 exhibitors from 42 countries will participate at the Texworld’s first show at its new venue, the Paris Le Bourget Exhibition Centre, on February 19-22. 18,500 international buyers have registered for the event which will present textile collections for spring/summer 2008.

WTO to hold presentation at Prime Source

5 Feb 2007

One of the senior advisors to director-general Pascal Lamy at the World Trade Organization's headquarters in Geneva, Stuart Harbinson, will deliver a presentation at the ‘Trade Matters’ session during the next Prime Source Forum to be held on March 29-30 in Hong Kong.

The presentation will follow an opening address by Liz Claiborne's Paul Charron who will initiate two days of discussions between organisations regarding the future of the apparel industry in the wake of newly imposed protectionist measures and ways in which it can take advantage of free trade agreements and other incentives designed to encourage trade.

The Prime Source Forum is organised by APLF Ltd. and is endorsed by The American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA), Foreign Trade Association in Brussels (FTA), The United States Association of Importers of Textile & Apparel (USA-ITA) and supported by the Textile Council of Hong Kong.

Record attendance at Volvo SportsDesign Forum

5 Feb 2007

"Personal Design", was the theme of the sixth Volvo SportsDesign Forum, held in Munich on February 3, and proved very successful attracting a record 900 plus attendees.

The forum, which was opened by Andrej Kupetz, CEO of the German Design Council, presented the background, history, potential and challenges of Personal Design looking at the latest trend for products that are individually tailored to the wishes and needs of individual consumers, but still manufactured on an industrial scale.

Other speakers included Stefano Natoli, who offered an insight into NIKEiD; Formula One driver David Coulthard who spoke about the meticulous attention to every detail of the cockpit and chassis, how his race suit can play a

role in victory or defeat; Quiksilver's Gary Wall who discussed the brand's shift from surf to snow; Steve Wozniak, co-founder of Apple; Reinhard Pascher of sports marketing agency Pascher & Heinz; Patagonia vice president Rick Ridgeway; Stefan Johansson (studio design chief of Volvo Cars Corporation), and Timm Fenton (vice design Chief of Tumi),

The forum was followed by the Volvo SportsDesign Awards for contributions to Personal Design which attracted a record 334 entries. Awards were presented to Frency`s Outdoor wear (category Active Wear), NIKEiD/Nike+ (category Foot & Headwear), Infactory aXbo Alarm Clock (category Accessories), Taylor Made r7 Superquad (category Outdoor Equipment), Edelwiser (category Ski Equipment), Elan (category Board Equipment), BMC pro machine (category Wheelers) and 360° Be Unique (category Concepts).

Gap names new brand president

5 Feb 2007

Clothing and accessories company Gap Inc. has appointed president of Banana Republic, Marka Hansen, as president of Gap North America, effective immediately. She succeeds Cynthia Harriss who has resigned from the company.

Ms. Hansen began her career with the company in 1987 as a merchandise manager for Banana Republic. She joined Gap's International division in 1993 as vice president of merchandising and was promoted to senior vice president in 1995. She briefly led Gap Inc.'s Human Resources organisation beginning in 2000, before being promoted to executive vice president of Gap adult merchandising in 2002. Ms. Hansen became president of Banana Republic in 2003.

Adidas focuses on combat sports at ispo

5 Feb 2007

Adidas has unveiled its latest innovations in combat sports at ispo 2007 in Munich, with a stand dedicated entirely to boxing and martial arts.

Officially launched last December, the adidas Boxing Equipment range is the result of two years of development and includes known adidas technologies such as ClimaCool as well as some totally new innovations.

Soft Punch Technology is a thin layer of gel inside a moulded foam structure which is said to provide reinforced protection for the metacarpus, reducing the risk of hand injuries and repetitive strain injuries during training sessions.

Aero Punch Technology includes a moulded foam structure which is said to better distribute shock waves and therefore reduce the risk of RSI.

Strap up Technic is a new system for fitting boxing gloves that uses Velcro for more rapid and precise adjustments.

The new range also has a 'Lady' line for female boxers and fitness enthusiasts and a children's line for physical education.

Adidas has also launched a new '2 in 1' kimono, designed for growing children.

According to adidas, parents often buy their children kimonos that are two sizes larger in order to avoid outgrowing them too quickly, but this leads to children wearing baggy kimonos until they grow. Adidas has introduced a temporary row of stitching inside the sleeves and at the hem of the pants to make it possible to enlarge the kimono as the child grows. The model is available for Karate and Judo outfits.

Coolmax with wool launched at Pitti Filati

5 Feb 2007

Together with Invista, AdvanSA unveiled its latest innovation at last week's Pitti Filati held in Italy—Coolmax with Australian Merino wool.

AdvanSA has developed a special qualifying polyester staple fibre in lengths that are compatible with traditional woollen fibre processing to create Coolmax fabrics in a true wool blend.

The soft and lightweight fabrics made from wool with Coolmax are machine washable and have proven physiological benefits, that, depending on customer's needs, can be applied to a whole new range of clothing styles for leisure and ready-to-wear as well as for sportswear, intimate apparel and corporate wear.

Furthermore as the fabrics are lightweight, the seasonality of wool garments can extended into spring and even summer applications.

Record visitor numbers at OR Winter Market

6 Feb 2007

Organisers of the Outdoor Retailer Winter Market, held in Salt Lake City from January 27-30, have reported a record 17,973 total attendees, up 24% compared with the 2006 event. It attracted 5,602 buyers, up 14% from 2006.

A total of 815 exhibitors were present, including 274 new exhibitors and 152 expanded booth presentations, such as those run by Merrell, Snowpeak, Keen and Crocs.

Sustainability was the hot topic at the show, with a selection of ‘green’ products, new recycled-paper show badges, sustainability seminars and industry awards. It kicked off with the Outdoor Industry Association (OIA) Industry Breakfast featuring dean of the Sustainable MBA Program at the Bainbridge Graduate Institute Jill Bamburg. She praised the outdoor industry for its commitment to sustainable business practices and urged the 620 attendees to look at new steps towards sustainability in the future.

The Outdoor Industry Association (OIA) also sponsored the Carbon Neutral Challenge that ran throughout the show, with the goal of attracting 10% of the attendees to offset the carbon emissions caused by their travelling to the show. Several companies including GoLite, Outdoor Retailer, Timberland and Merrell agreed to do this.

The show also highlighted growth in a number of outdoor segments including telemark skiing, Nordic skiing, performance lifestyle apparel, footwear and paddlesports. Outdoor Retailer Summer Market will be held from August 9-12.

Sales rise at Under Armour

6 Feb 2007

Branded US performance apparel and footwear company Under Armour Inc. has posted a 55% increase in revenue for its fourth quarter, ended December 31.

Revenues totalled $135.3 million compared with $87.3 million in the comparable period in 2005.

Apparel revenues accounted for $35.6 million of the year-on-year increase whilst footwear revenues reached $9.3 million largely driven by a new range of baseball and softball cleats.

Net income improved 69.4% to $11.9 million, compared with $7 million for the same period in 2005. Apparel revenues increased 43.2% over the prior year and the Compression and Training categories continued to drive revenue growth.

Net revenues for the full year increased 53.2% to $430.7 million from $281.1 million in 2005. Net income increased 97.7% to $39 million compared with $19.7 million in the prior year. Apparel revenues grew 42.5% and the footwear launch contributed $26.9 million to net revenues for the full year.

Lenzing teams up with the Austrian Skiing Association

6 Feb 2007

Austria-based manufacturer of man-made cellulose fibres The Lenzing Group is presenting a co-operation project with the Austrian Skiing Association at ispo in Munich, Germany on February 4-7. Together with the Technologiezentrum Ski- und Alpinsport, University of Innsbruck, work is being conducted on future research projects to examine the influence of Tencel in sports textiles.

New innovations at Première Vision Pluriel

6 Feb 2007

The five salons under Première Vision Pluriel—Expofil (yarns and fibres), Première Vision (fabrics), Le Cuir à Paris (leather), Indigo (textile design) and Mod’Amont (accessories)—will take place February 20-23 in Paris.

A new category ‘CreativeVision’has been added to the show, for both confirmed and emerging designers to enhance the existing categories of ‘BusinessVision’, for buyers, and ‘ActiveVision’, for visitors. The new group will include winners of fashion competitions, students, and recent graduates from international fashion schools.

The event will also see the launch of Club Première Vision which will bring together around 100 buyers and regular visitors from the apparel design, manufacturing and distribution sectors to exchange ideas.

London Olympics 2012 to invite tenders

6 Feb 2007

The Organising Committee of the London Olympic Games and Paralympic Games has released two new Tier One sponsorship categories for the London 2012 Games. An invitation to tender will shortly be issued for the two new categories – sportswear and airlines.

The announcement was made by London 2012 commercial director Chris Townsend in an address to ‘The Power of the Games - 2012 Sponsorship Opportunities’ conference in London.

“The Games provide the chance for organisations to achieve unique market differentiation, increased sales and productivity, new customers, improved community relationships, better staff recruitment and retention, and more,” said Mr Townsend.

Under the terms of the new Invitation to tenders, companies in the sportswear sector will be asked to submit final bids to become a London 2012 domestic partner. Bids will be evaluated and any clarification sought before Games organisers enter into a period of exclusive negotiation with the selected companies.

Lower innerwear sales at Hanesbrands

6 Feb 2007

Intimate apparel, outerwear and hosiery company Hanesbrands Inc. has reported lower sales for the quarter and six-month transition period ended December 30.

During the six-month transition period, a result of the company changing its fiscal year end from June to December, the company only operated for approximately a third of the time as a division of Sara Lee Corporation and began operating as an independent publicly-traded company on September 5.

Total net sales in the December quarter were $1.13 billion, a 4.3% decrease from $1.18 billion in the prior year quarter. Net sales for the six-month period decreased by 3% to $2.25 billion. The December quarter net sales decrease was primarily a result of weakness in the innerwear segment and the intentional discontinuance of low-margin product lines in the outerwear segment.

Net income for the six-month period was $74.1 million, down 60.7% from $188.6 million a year ago.

New schedule for Techtextil Rossija

6 Feb 2007

Techtextil Rossija has rescheduled for its 2007 event in order to run concurrently with Telogreyka, an exhibition for uniforms, special and corporate clothing, specialist footwear, protection facilities, materials, sewing machinery and accessories. The two events will now take place in Moscow on May 29-31 and will also coincide with 'International Industrial Week', consisting of nine international exhibitions.

It is anticipated that the three fairs will attract a large number of trade visitors, buyers and manufacturers from Moscow, Russia and other CIS countries.

Techtextil Rossija will cover 4,000m² and will host more than 100 exhibitors.

Eschler forms Asian joint venture

7 Feb 2007

Having managed Thailand-based producer of embroidery materials, Thaiknit, since 2001, Swiss knitwear company Christian Eschler AG has now extended its Asian business through a joint venture with the Thai family Yeh (Tong Siang Co. Ltd. and Penn Asia Co Ltd.) under the company name Esto Asia Co. Ltd. The new company, located at the Tong Siang site north-west of Bangkok, will manufacture laminates, bondings and membrane technology (based on hotmelt-technology with engraving rollers).

CEO Peter Eschler hopes the new venture will boost growth in the advancing Asian market as the products manufactured in Thailand will be sold to Eschler's Asian customers. The company will continue to serve the European market from its Swiss locations in Bühler and Münchwilen.

Gruppo Tessile Abati elects new board director

7 Feb 2007

Italian textile company Gruppo Tessile Abati has elected Ezio Mazzoleni to the board of directors of Abafil/Tecnofilati.

Mr Mazzoleni, who worked for Cotonificio di Lombardia and Noyfil Gruppo Radici, was technical director at Gruppo Mario Boselli for 21 years.

Gruppo Tessile Abati has operated in the international textile market for more than 30 years. It runs four companies in Italy (Abafil Srl, Tecnofilati Srl, Indas Srl and Zoetex Srl) as well as one in Romania (Daurette) and has an annual turnover of approximately €90 million. It is involved in the research, production and marketing of specialised and technical yarns.

Lija launches new autumn collections

7 Feb 2007

Golf and sportswear designer Lija has unveiled four new collections for autumn 2007 featuring rich, jewel-tone colours and detailed prints in both technical and traditional fabrics across nearly 200 pieces.

The ladies' collections combine textured technical fabrics, warm up suits and puffy outerwear. Creative details including multi-coloured buttons, snaps, colour blocking and stitch lines which combine glamour with technical features such as moisture management, UV protection and water-resistance.

Hyosung increases spandex capacity

7 Feb 2007

Korean spandex producer Hyosung Corporation has acquired Tongkook's spandex facility in Zhuhai, China, which will add an additional 6,000 tons to the company's spandex manufacturing capacity. With additional expansion in Korea and China, production will be increased from 54,000 tons in 2005 to 65,000 tons in 2007.

Hyosung has expanded its spandex capacity in response to the recent rise in demand. According to industry reports, the second half of 2006 saw a reversal of the global supply/demand balance for spandex resulting in significant supply shortages due to asset shutdowns, raw material shortages and product mix (denier) shifts.

Delta Apparel posts record sales

7 Feb 2007

Casual and athletic wear specialist Delta Apparel, Inc. has reported record sales for its second quarter ended December 30. The results include the operations of FunTees, which was acquired October 2.

Net sales for the three-month period increased 26.4% to a second quarter record of $72.9 million compared with $57.7 million in the prior-year period. The increase was primarily attributed to the addition of FunTees, which led to a 65.2% sales increase in the activewear segment, and strong sales in the Soffe apparel business, which achieved a 22.3% sales increase in this period. On a less positive note, net income for the quarter fell to $0.6 million from $2.4 million in the corresponding period last year.

For the third quarter ended March 31, sales are expected to be in the range of $84 to $88 million compared with sales of $69.4 million in the prior year quarter.

New exhibitors at Expofil

7 Feb 2007

42 exhibitors have registered for Expofil—to be held on February 20-23 in Paris— including newcomers Belgian polyester yarns producer Assoc Textiles, Hong Kong cotton-based top-dyed blends for knitting company Huafu Group—which will present its environmentally-friendly Eco Concept line—and Turkish producer of cotton-blend open-end yarns for flat-bed and circular knitting firm Kale Iplik.

The focus of the show will be on yarns that are eco-friendly, such as organic cotton and vegetable fibres, fair trade fibres and yarns offering special properties such as anti-bacterial, anti-UV, easy-care and technological functions.

Berghaus launches Infinity Light for women

7 Feb 2007

UK-based outdoor brand Berghaus has added the Infinity Light Jacket for women to its established Infinity range. The new insulated pull-on jacket is windproof, shower resistant and weighs only 324g thanks to its PrimaLoft filling. It also features a Pertex outer which is lightweight, windproof and features a water repellent finish, full-length zip with inner baffle, insulated handwarmer pockets, lined collar, Lycra bound cuffs, and a drawcord hem.

Nike announces ambitious growth strategies

7 Feb 2007

Nike, Inc. has announced ambitious long-term strategies to drive global growth and market leadership of its brands, aiming to lift revenue to $23 billion by fiscal 2011 from the $15 billion reported in fiscal 2006.

The company plans to achieve this significant increase through focusing on product innovation and brand leadership, and elevating its retail presence through targeting further geographic expansion and deepening market penetration in its existing regions.

Leading up to 2011, Nike brand will create new footwear, apparel and equipment products in six core categories: running, basketball, football (soccer), women’s fitness, men’s training and sport culture. These categories are expected to drive over 75% of the forecast growth.

The company will also work towards growth in the US, UK, Japan and China—four key markets that account for 61% of Nike brand revenues—as well as investing in countries such as Russia, India and Brazil, each of which has the potential to become a billion-dollar market.

Umbro launches new England kit and matchball

8 Feb 2007

In spite of the new design being leaked before its official launch, UK-based sportswear manufacturer Umbro has unveiled the new 2007 collection of performance products for the England football team which features new 'Control' technologies in the new home kit, football and performance footwear. These products are now available for purchase.

The new England Home Kit, including the X Boot Destroyer, and England X Ball II will be used during the friendly between England and Spain, on February 7.

The shirts incorporate the company’s Climate Control Technology, integrating a new fabric called 'Trilogy'; a three-stage thermodynamic performance material, tested at Loughborough University's sport science department. The fabric is designed to control the microclimate between the skin and the fabric thus helping to regulate the body's temperature. It is also said to control vapour, moisture and heat.

EU clears proposed sale of Eddie Bauer

8 Feb 2007

American casual sportswear and outdoor accessories retailer Eddie Bauer Holdings, Inc. has announced that its proposed sale to Eddie B Holding Corp.—owned by affiliates of Sun Capital Partners, Inc. and Golden Gate Capital—has been cleared by the European Commission.

The company's board of directors unanimously determined that the proposed sale is in the best interests of Eddie Bauer stockholders and recommended that stockholders vote in favour of the adoption of the merger agreement at a meeting to be held on February 8.

The company has entered into a definitive agreement for the sale of Eddie Bauer to Eddie B Holding Corp. for $9.25 per share in cash and the transaction is expected to close in the first quarter of 2007.

Timberland signs workwear licensing agreement with Block Corporation

8 Feb 2007

Footwear, apparel and outdoor gear producer The Timberland Company has signed a licensing agreement with workwear developer Block Corporation. Through this collaboration, Timberland Pro, a division of the company, will expand its presence in the workwear apparel sector in both the United States and Canada. Under the agreement, Block will drive development and distribution of a Timberland Pro line of men's workwear apparel.

The apparel line will include long-sleeved woven and knit shirts, performance outerwear and trousers. Performance benefits will include comfort, moisture and heat management, high-visibility elements and innovative fabric technologies.

The autumn 2007 Pro apparel collection will be introduced at the Magic Show in Las Vegas, which will take place on February 13-16.

New board members at Polo Ralph Lauren

8 Feb 2007

Polo Ralph Lauren Corporation has elected executive vice president and co-chief financial officer of Comcast Corporation, John Alchin, and executive vice president of Polo Ralph Lauren, Jackwyn Nemerov, to the company's board of directors, effective immediately. This brings the number of directors to eleven.

Prior to joining Comcast in 1990, Mr Alchin was a managing director of Toronto Dominion Bank. He is currently a board member of BNY Hamilton Funds and for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southeastern Pennsylvania.

Ms Nemerov has been an executive vice president at Polo Ralph Lauren since September 2004. Before joining Polo Ralph Lauren in 2004, she worked at Jones Apparel Group where she held a variety of executive positions including president and chief operating officer.

Skechers denies trademark infringement allegations

8 Feb 2007

US footwear designer and developer Skechers USA, Inc. has issued a strong denial of the trademark infringement, unfair competition, trademark dilution and false advertising claims filed against the company by Asics America Corporation and Asics Corporation (Japan) on January 26, in California. Asics filed the suit in the district court alleging that several Skechers styles bear a stripe design similar to an Asics stripe design.

"We believe that this lawsuit is completely without merit and will vigorously defend ourselves and our customers against such baseless allegations," said Philip Paccione, general counsel and executive vice president of Skechers. "Our stripe design does not look like the Asics trademark; in fact, on the shoes in issue, our differences are patently obvious. Our designs use one horizontal stripe while Asics uses two horizontal lines—a prominent feature of the Asics trademark. In addition, our designs do not mimic the curves and contours of Asics' design. There are many differences."

Based in California, Skechers USA designs, develops and markets footwear for men, women and children under the Skechers name and seven other brand names.

Mammut launches vest with Dow Corning protection system

8 Feb 2007

Swiss sports apparel maker Mammut launched a new protective ski vest at ispo, featuring Dow Corning's Active Protection System—a 'smart' impact protection textile. The Nirvana protection vest, incorporates Dow Corning's patented fabric, treated with a specially formulated silicone coating, which remains soft and flexible under normal conditions, but becomes instantly rigid when struck by high-impact force, thus protecting the wearer from injury. Once the impact is over, the material immediately becomes flexible again.

According to Sem Hediger, innovation and technology manager at Mammut, the vest protects skiers and snowboarders from impact injury without hindering their freedom of movement and performance.

Because it is a textile, the material offers a combination of features particularly suitable for use in high-performance protective apparel and equipment. It is breathable and flexible for comfort and freedom of movement; it can be stitched directly into garments, eliminating the need to insert and remove components; it is less bulky than hard armour, allowing for many design possibilities; and it can be layered, so the garment can be customised to provide increased levels of protection for specific areas.

Puma partners Moroccan national football team

8 Feb 2007

Puma and the Moroccan Royal Football Federation – Fédération Royale Marocaine de Football (FRMF) have signed a long-term partnership that will make Puma the official supplier to the Moroccan national team, Lions de l'Atlas (Atlas Lions). Under the agreement, Puma will supply all on-field, sideline, training and representation apparel and equipment to the men's 'A', 'B', 'U21' and U19 national teams, as well as the women's 'A' national team beyond the 2010 World Cup.

Jochen Zeitz, Puma's CEO and chairman, stated, "Morocco has a great football tradition and we are proud to be able to associate ourselves with one of the dominant forces in African football."

Timberland posts mixed results

8 Feb 2007

Footwear, apparel and accessories firm The Timberland Company has reported fourth-quarter net income of $38.3 million, significantly lower than the $46.9 million reported in the prior year quarter. For the full year, net income was $106.4 million compared with $164.6 million.

On a more positive note, fourth quarter revenue increased 4.9% as declines in boots and kids' sales were offset by gains in new brands (including SmartWool), Timberland Pro series, outdoor performance footwear and Timberland apparel and accessories.

International revenue increased by 17.4%, supported by strong growth in Europe, Asia and Canada. US revenues decreased by 1%, due to unseasonably warm weather trends which added to anticipated pressures on boots and children's sales.

Fourth quarter results reflected global gains in apparel and accessories revenue, which offset modest declines in global footwear sales. Apparel and accessories revenue expanded 26.1% to $130.1 million. Global footwear revenue fell 0.9% to $354.2 million as declines in boots and children's sales offset gains in Timberland Pro series, outdoor performance and casual footwear.

Meanwhile, the company announced that it has entered into a new five-year licensing agreement with apparel and neckwear company Phillips-Van Heusen for the design, sourcing and marketing of apparel in North America under the Timberland brand, beginning with the autumn 2008 line. The company will continue to design, source and market apparel for its European and Asian operations through its London-based design centre. Excluded from the agreement with Phillips-Van Heusen are Timberland Outdoor Performance apparel, which Timberland will continue to design, source and market worldwide, as well as Timberland Pro apparel, which licensed by Block Corporation in the US and Canada.

Royal Air Force launches clothing collection

9 Feb 2007

March 2007 will see the launch in the UK of an official Royal Air Force (RAF) clothing collection for both men and women. The line is supported by England rugby veterans and pilots Rory and Tony Underwood, and the world's 'fastest man on land', Wing Commander Andy Green. A percentage of the money raised by the licensing of the clothes will support The Royal Air Force Museum, helping to preserve the history and heritage of the RAF.

The 40-piece men's range and the 10-piece ladies' range will feature the RAF trademark roundel or other RAF insignia and will include polo shirts, jackets and jeans.

RAF Group Captain Andy Turner said, "Our goal is to raise awareness of the Royal Air Force as it is important that the public understands what we do on their behalf. The added benefit is that the proceeds of this merchandising initiative will go to the RAF Museum."

Zumiez CFO resigns

9 Feb 2007

Action sports apparel, footwear, equipment and accessories company Zumiez Inc. has announced that chief financial officer, Brenda Morris, will leave the company for personal reasons, effective early April 2007.

The company is currently seeking a replacement.

Creora showcases new ranges at ispo

9 Feb 2007

Elastane brand creora, developed by Korean company Hyosung Corporation, showcased its latest developments for sports and fitness at ispo winter, held in Munich on February 4-7.

In its Core Being range, the company highlighted H-450 which offers added comfort and support to sport fabrics with both natural fibres such as soya, wood and bamboo, and synthetics such as Modal. It also showcased C-400, which is suited for blends with natural fibres in seamless garments.

In the Performance Pace category, creora presented H-350 which provides stretch, improved wash fastness and quick drying benefits, seamless garments with zonal power stretch and soft micromesh inserts using C400, and fabrics combining creora and Hyosung's Aerosilver which offer stretch with permanent moisture control and anti-bacterial performance.

In its Pleasure Factor range, the company blended H-350 with high-tech synthetics to offer lightness, comfort, quick drying and wash-fastness, H-100D for intense blacks and heather effects, and C-400 for seamless garments. Further performance benefits added with Hyosung's Askin for UV protection, and windproof softness were also presented.

In the Extreme sport trend, creora showcased its H-350 blended with Aerocool, Askin and Aerosilver from Hyosung for improved wash fastness and quick drying.

BETA Conference to take place at Cheltenham

9 Feb 2007

The British Equestrian Trade Association (BETA) will hold the 2007 BETA Conference & Autumn Exhibition at Cheltenham Racecourse on October 14-15.

Organisers hope that holding the event at one of the UK's best known race courses will build on the success of last year's exhibition in Harrogate.

European sales boost Polo Ralph Lauren results

9 Feb 2007

Luxury lifestyle products producer Polo Ralph Lauren Corporation has posted a net income totalling $111 million for its third quarter, 22% higher than the $91 million reported in the prior year period. Wholesale sales increased 18% to $536 million compared with $454 million.

Excluding the effect of the Polo Jeans acquisition, revenues increased 5%, thanks to increased sales in Europe and domestic sales gains in Lauren and Chaps for women and children.

Net revenues for the quarter increased 15% to $1.14 billion compared with $996 million in the prior year period. Excluding the impact of the Polo Jeans acquisition, net revenues increased by 10%.

For the first nine months, net income increased 33% to $328 million from $246 million in the same period last year and net revenues increased 18% to $3.26 billion from $2.77 billion. Excluding the impact of the Polo Jeans and footwear acquisitions, net revenues increased 12%. Wholesale sales were up 23% to $1.69 billion compared with $1.37 billion. Excluding the effect of the Polo Jeans and footwear acquisitions, revenues increased by 11%, primarily through increased sales in Europe as well as domestic sales gains in Lauren and Chaps for women and children as well as in the men's business.

Wellco to be sold to private investment firms

9 Feb 2007

San Francisco-based private equity investment firm, Golden Gate Capital, and Boston-based boutique investment firm, Integrity Brands, have signed a definitive agreement to acquire US military boot manufacturer Wellco Enterprises, Inc. in an all-cash transaction valued at $14 per share—a 33% premium to the stock's most recent closing price. The agreement received unanimous approval from a committee of independent directors at Wellco and its board of directors.

According to the company, along with the continued guidance of its existing management team, the transaction will offer Wellco the flexibility and financial support necessary to continue the growth of its military business while pursuing a variety of new growth initiatives.

"We at Wellco are excited about the opportunity to work in partnership with Golden Gate Capital and Integrity Brands to expand Wellco's reach within the armed forces and beyond," said Lee Ferguson, Wellco president and CEO.

Wellco manufactures military and rugged footwear, and is among the small number of US footwear manufacturers who supply the US military. Its products include military combat boots—including the hot weather boot, temperate weather boot, and the anti-personnel mine boot—as well as similar military-style boots for civilian consumers. The company also sells specialised machinery and materials, and renders technical assistance and other services to licensees for the manufacture of footwear. Founded in 1941, Wellco primarily sells its products to the US government through the Defense Supply Center of Philadelphia.

Uruguay blocks apparel and footwear imports from Argentina

9 Feb 2007

The Uruguayan President, Dr Tabaré Vázquez, has

signed a decree imposing special import duties on Argentinean products, including footwear and apparel, which are produced in provinces where industrial promotion regimes are in force. It is estimated that sales of approximately $52.5 million could be lost as a result of this action.

The duties not only apply to goods produced in the Argentinean provinces of La Rioja, San Luis, Catamarca and San Juan, but also to any companies that have production facilities in these areas. Therefore companies with plants in the affected provinces and elsewhere will be forced to pay duties on all of their goods exported to Uruguay. .

The decree states that although the two countries are members of the Mercosur free trade area, there are “other commitments” in Uruguay that need to be protected.

The duties will either be equal to or lower than the Global Customs Tariff, which is approximately 18% but varies depending on the product.

SATRA to hold restricted substances seminars in China

9 Feb 2007

UK-based technology centre SATRA will hold a series of seminars in China in April to explain how to manage the issues of restricted substances in footwear and other consumer products.

John Hubbard, from SATRA’s chemical and analytical technologies group, will cover the implications of the ever-increasing legislation regarding these substances and how this has a significant impact on the materials used in the manufacture of a wide range of consumer products.

He will also highlight the dangers of these substances which can be found in materials such as textiles, leather, plastics and rubber and explain how they can cause harm when ingested or inhaled, as well as having a negative impact on the environment.

Substances which are currently restricted—such as chrome VI, pentachlorophenol (PCP), azo dyestuffs, formaldehyde, organotins and transition metals such as lead and cadmium—and those that could potentially be restricted in the future, will be reviewed as well as appropriate tests and analysis techniques.

The seminars will run at various venues during the week beginning April 23.

Senior management changes at Timberland

9 Feb 2007

Having just reported less than positive results, The Timberland Company has now announced the departure of two senior management executives.

The company’s chief operating officer, Ken Pucker, and chief financial officer, Brian McKeon, will both leave. Mr Pucker will leave on March 31, whilst Mr McKeon will remain with Timberland as CFO until the end of the first quarter, before taking up a new post as CFO of Iron Mountain Incorporated. The company is currently seeking a replacement.

Wearable technologies prove a hit at ispo

9 Feb 2007

Ispo winter 07, which took place at the New Munich Trade Fair Centre on February 4-7, recorded a 5% increase in trade visitors, totalling approximately 64,000 compared with 61,087 in 2006. International participation was high with a 65% share of foreign visitors and an 84% share of foreign exhibitors. The visitor share from Eastern Europe and Russia showed particularly high growth. Over 20% more visitors were counted from the Netherlands and the UK, 14% more from Switzerland, 11% more from the Czech Republic, 7% more from Italy and 6% more from Austria.

Textile and shoe retailers received the greatest purchasing interest with 50% of visitors at this year’s event interested in obtaining information about the current range of offers for textiles—from functional clothing to sport-oriented fashion—compared with 40% last year. 22% of visitors expressed interest in the ski sector, 10% for the board sector, 9% for outdoor hardware and 9% for fitness and running.

1,970 exhibitors presented their products and fashion collections for winter 2007/08, up from 1,633 in 2006. Wearable technologies and ispo Best Ager as well as the ispo Award winners and next generation projects were very popular. 50 awards were presented to fashion, hardware and footwear suppliers as well as to designers this winter.

More than 900 people attended the Volvo SportsDesign Forum, which preceded ispo and over 1,000 participated at the Sport Sponsoring Congress of the European Sponsoring Market in St Gallen.