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Business Week
12 Feb - 18 Feb

New hardgoods technology from Burton Snowboards

12 Feb 2007

Vermont-based snowboarding company Burton Snowboards introduced four new technological advancements in its snowboard hardgoods - the E.S.T. board-to-binding interface, the Speed Zone binding strap, Smooth Ride snowboard dampening technology and the Supreme Heat heated women's snowboard boot - at the Snowsports Industries of America (SIA) tradeshow in Las Vegas, Nevada, on January 22-25.
The E.S.T. board-to-binding system is said to provide riders with added board feel, cushioning and stance versatility for more control and precision on rough terrain. Its new SensoryBED replaces the rigid baseplate found on traditional bindings with a cushioned, removable platform to absorb impacts and vibrations.

Speed Zone is a new binding strap technology that is said to be more durable and powerful than traditional ratchet straps and allows riders to tighten the strap with one pull of a retractable handle.

Smooth Ride is a snowboard dampening technology that will make its debut on the 2008 T6 snowboard. It is designed to help riders to react more quickly and ride faster for longer with less impact on the body.

The Supreme Heat ladies' boot is reportedly the first integrated heated snowboard boot. The company partnered with footwear heating technology company Therm-ic to create the system, which comes equipped with a pre-wired heating system and no footbeds to modify or wires to attach. Powered by lithium-ion batteries, the boot can stay warm for up to 14 hours.

Oakley reports record annual sales

12 Feb 2007

Apparel and sunglasses company Oakley, Inc. has posted record net sales of $761.9 million for the full year ended December 31, an increase of 17.5% from the $648.1 million reported in the prior year. 2006 net income was $44.8 million including footwear restructuring charges of $2 million net.

The improved results were attributed to a greater focus on optics, enhanced brand development, restructured footwear, and the realignment of apparel and expansion of retail platforms.

2006 net optics sales totalled $552.9 million, up 18.9% from $465.1 million in the prior year. Net sales of apparel, footwear and accessories were up 5.6% to $156.7 million from $148.5 million in the prior year.

Total 2006 global wholesale net sales were $590.6 million, an 11.7% increase from $528.9 million in 2005.

Asics takes over operations in Brazil

12 Feb 2007

Kiyomi Wada, president of Asics Corporation, Seiho Gohashi, director of operations in the USA and Yoshiriho Okada, director and president of Asics Brazil, have announced that they have taken over all operations of the Asics brands in Brazil from licensee Calçados Azaléia.

Commenting on the move Yoshiriho Okada said, "The new situation is the result of the company's global strategy to eliminate the licences granted in various countries. Also, the growing market for running shoes in Brazil and the potential of this market led us to take this decision."

Turnover at Asics in Brazil exceeded $23 million in 2006, an increase of 42% over the 2005 figures.

Call for papers & speaking proposals at MCPC

12 Feb 2007

The biennial World Conference on Mass Customization & Personalization (MCPC) will take place at two separate venues in October.

Part One, the MCP Research & Innovation Conference, will be held on October 7-10, at the MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) Media Lab in Cambridge/Boston, USA, with an interdisciplinary focus on the new advancements in the field. Part Two, the MCP Business Seminar, will take place on October 11-12 at the HEC (Haute Études Commerciales) Business School in Montreal, Canada, with a focus on applying mass customisation and personalisation in a retail setting.

The organizers are now calling for submissions and speaking proposals based on:

Are all the necessary enabling technologies for footwear mass customisation available? Are they perceived as such and accepted by shoe companies?

What is still missing? What will have to come? Are

research efforts still required?

Are shoe companies moving towards mass customisation?

Are consumers aware of the benefits and the potential of MC?

Bring your own experience in shoe mass customisation

Is MC more Mass or more Customisation?

Papers can be full papers, with a maximum of 25 pages, which will be considered for the conference's Best Paper Award. Alternatively they can be extended abstracts of work in progress—approximately four to eight pages—including comments on the research question, the methodology, data and empirical methods used (if applicable) and a discussion of the results. The deadline for submissions is March 19.

AAFA welcomes reintroduction of legislation to extend the Berry amendment

12 Feb 2007

President and CEO of the American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA), Kevin Burke, has welcomed US congressman Robin Hayes' reintroduction of legislation to extend the same clothing and textile requirements of the Berry Amendment to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The Berry Agreement currently requires the Department of Defense to give preference in procurement to domestically produced, manufactured, or home grown products, most notably clothing, fabrics, food and specialty metals.

Commenting on the move Mr Burke said, "We appreciate that Congressman Hayes has reintroduced this bill, continuing his effort to strike the proper balance between strengthening US national security while also maintaining our international trade obligations and thus averting potential trade sanctions. We look forward to working with the Congressman on this legislation, continuing the effort that was begun last year when the bill was introduced in the 109th Congress."

AAFA represents over one hundred manufacturers and suppliers of clothing, footwear and individual equipment to the US military. AAFA's Government Contracts Committee (GCC) chairman Michael Mansh, president of Pennsylvania Apparel, LLC, added, "This legislation will provide additional opportunities for US domestic manufacturers of apparel and footwear, and their suppliers, to provide the DHS with uniforms. We appreciate Congressman Hayes' continued support for the Berry Amendment, and AAFA's government contractors will support this legislation in any way possible."

RadiciFibres expands bacteriostatic yarn line with Sanitized

12 Feb 2007

Italy-based RadiciFibres Fashion&Interiors will present a new bacteriostatic yarn line, Radilon Bacteriostatic SingleSix Dtex 78F68, with Sanitized Silver at Expofil in Paris on February 20-23.

The new Radilon Bacteriostatic SingleSix Dtex 78F68 textured yarns—which are said to be particularly well-suited for the hosiery and circular knitting sector—are available in semi-dull and full-dull lustres. The yarn has permanent bacteriostatic properties thanks to the incorporation of Sanitized silver nanoparticles in the PA6 matrix before spinning, which prevent the proliferation of bacteria and the build up of unpleasant odours in garments—even if washed frequently.

It is claimed that, because of its PA6 polymer matrix, Radilon Bacteriostatic SingleSix will not yellow; takes up dyes exceptionally well and offers excellent workability which results in garments that offer comfort, breathability, and maximum hygiene.

RadiciFibres Fashion&Interiors is part of the RadiciGroup, a multi-national company present in 15 countries. Its production focuses on the chemicals and plastics sector and the synthetic fibres chain. With around 45 production and sales units, the group employs some 5,000 employees worldwide.

Lenzing refutes rumours of a sale

12 Feb 2007

Karl Schmutzer, chairman of Austrian manufacturer of man-made cellulose fibres Lenzing AG, has vehemently denied rumours concerning the sale of Lenzing to a strategic investor, in particular the Indian Birla Group.

Mr Schmutzer stated, "As a member of the management of B & C Holding GmbH, which holds an 88% stake in Lenzing AG, making it the biggest individual shareholder, I am able to confirm that we did not and will not hold sales talks of any kind concerning our share in Lenzing, neither with any strategic investor nor with any equity fund."

He added, "The strategy decided by the bodies of our company at its formation continues to remain unchanged: We are long-term key shareholders of major companies quoted on the Vienna stock exchange and we are committed to securing the continuity and expansion of these companies in a sustainable way.

Lenzing is a prime example of how appropriate our strategy has been and of how successfully we as owners' representatives implemented this strategy, jointly

with staff and management. The investments made in the five years of our ownership caused the market capitalisation of the company to triple and jobs to be secured in a sustainable way."

He also suggested that the recurring rumours of a takeover are being spread by the company's competitors and advised the management board to consider taking legal action.

DyStar Econfidence programme focuses on organic cotton

13 Feb 2007

Growing consumer interest in organic products has prompted an increasing number of textile brands and retailers to develop and market lines of organic cotton textiles. Under its Econfidence programme, Germany-based supplier of products and services for the textile industry DyStar has co-operated with organisations such as the Institute for Market Ecology, which has been helping in the development and implementation of the Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS), and with Control Union Certifications, which licenses the Skal International Standard for Sustainable Textile Production, to obtain approval for dyes and pigments to be used on organic textiles.

It was one of the first companies to have its textile colorants approved for use with the GOTS standard and now has a comprehensive list of products including Sirius direct dyes, Indanthren vat dyes, Levafix, Remazol and Procion reactive dyes, Imperon pigments and DyStar Indigo Solution 40% that qualify for the GOTS standard.

Dr John Easton, of the company's Textile Services Marketing Unit said, "Although organic cotton is still only a niche within the global cotton market, it has gained an extremely high profile with retailers and consumers in Europe over the past twelve months."

New luxury skiwear items from Spyder

13 Feb 2007

US-based ski brand Spyder has launched new luxury products including the Puffy Jacket for women and the Fur and Leather Trimmed Jacket for men.

The Puffy jacket uses a waterproof coating and PrimaLoft Sport insulation to provide warmth and dryness and has a removable raccoon fur collar. The SLC pant is tailored specially for women with wider lower legs to allow room for ski boots.

For men, the fur and leather trimmed jacket is trimmed with sheared beaver fur, supple leather, and waterproof zips. X-static silver fibre technology in the liner conducts heat with anti-microbial properties, while PrimaLoft insulation provides lightweight warmth. The leather trimmed pant has the same performance materials.

Sponsor of the Austrian, US, and Canadian alpine national ski teams, Spyder has been producing performance outerwear since 1978.

International seminar to be held at Interstoff Asia Essential

13 Feb 2007

The next Interstoff Asia, to be held on March 14-16 in Hong Kong, will feature a seminar programme covering industry topics under three headings: design & trend, business strategy and technology.

Confirmed speakers and topics will include: "Fashion trends for spring/summer 2008 & 'Eco-Tech Venus'", by Yuko Watanabe of IS Planning Japan; "Ecological fashion in the 21st century", by Japanese speaker Masako Oka; "Bodywear colour futures for spring/summer 2008", by UK expert Paul McNicoll; "Selling private labels to the US market", by director of International Business Consulting, USA, Bruce Berton; "How Hong Kong manufacturers and exporters face the challenge of the increasing value of the RMB", by the Hong Kong Export Credit Insurance Corporation; "Sensitive skin - Tencel, the ecological solution", by Peter Krueger of Lenzing AG; "The main stream of textile development: fashion plus function", by Justin Huang of the Taiwan Textile Federation; and "Characteristics and development of seamless garments (fine gauge)", by Franky Chan of Chemtax Industrial, Hong Kong.

Visitors will also be able to attend the launch of two new initiatives—The 21st Century Wardrobe showcasing multi-functional textiles from Japan, Korea, Taiwan, France and Italy; and Trends in Eco-Textiles, that will highlight colour and style trends in environmentally-friendly fabrics.

Activewear boosts sales at Hibbett

13 Feb 2007

US-based sporting goods retailer Hibbett Sporting Goods, Inc. has posted a 25.1% sales increase for its fourth quarter ended February 3. Sales for the 14-week period totalled $151.2 million compared with $120.8 million for the comparable 13-week period in 2006.

For the 53-week fiscal year, net sales increased 16.3% to $512.1 million compared with $440.3 million for the 52-week period ended January 28, 2006.

Polo Ralph Lauren names new president, Asia region

13 Feb 2007

Polo Ralph Lauren Corporation has named Francois Delage as president, Asia Pacific, effective September 1. He will report to Scott Bowman, president of International Business Development.

Mr Delage's professional experience in the luxury industry includes a 16-year tenure within LVMH and, most recently, as president, Asia/Pacific for Louis Vuitton, based in Hong Kong.

Polo Ralph Lauren Corporation brand names include Polo by Ralph Lauren, Ralph Lauren Purple Label, Ralph Lauren, Black Label, Blue Label, Lauren by Ralph Lauren, Polo Jeans Co, RRL, RLX, Rugby, RL Childrenswear, Chaps, and Club Monaco.

Li & Fung acquires global sourcing operations of Tommy Hilfiger

13 Feb 2007

A wholly-owned subsidiary of Hong Kong-based Li & Fung Limited has entered into an asset purchase agreement to acquire the global sourcing operations of designer Tommy Hilfiger.

Since its inception as a menswear line, Tommy Hilfiger has developed across a growing number of product categories including womenswear, jeanswear and childrenswear. Its existing buying offices, which will be substantially integrated into the Li & Fung organisation, are located in Hong Kong, Taiwan, India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. The sourcing volume and unaudited adjusted earnings after tax attributable to the sourcing operations of Tommy Hilfiger for the year, ended March 31, were approximately $703 million and $31 million respectively.

The cash consideration for the purchase is approximately $247.8 million and will be financed by Li & Fung's internal cash reserves.

Commenting on the agreement group managing director of Li & Fung, William Fung, said, "Li & Fung has been on the lookout for acquisition opportunities that would further enhance its global diversification and maintain a much more balanced geographical mix of business. Our share placement executed last year has augmented our capacity for acquisitions and positioned us well to capture this opportunity."

Li & Fung is a buying agency for consumer goods, managing the supply chain for retailers and brands worldwide. The group services its customers globally through a sourcing network of over 70 offices in 40 countries and territories.

Womenswear proves popular at Helsinki International Fashion Fair

13 Feb 2007

Approximately 3,700 visitors attended the Helsinki International Fashion Fair, on January 28-29. 129 exhibitors from ten countries showcased apparel, footwear, leathergoods and accessories for autumn/winter 2007/08 at the event.

A survey conducted by TNS Gallup revealed that 79% of visitors came to see new womenswear collections, 37% for youth wear and 29% for menswear. Shoes, bags and wallets attracted 34% of visitors, while accessories were the main focus of interest for 32% of the show's visitors.

New PFOA-free Asahi Guard finishing agents

13 Feb 2007

In light of the upcoming ban on PFOA (Perfluoro Octanoid Acid) in products, UK-based supplier of dyes and chemicals for the textile industry LJ Specialities Ltd is now supplying the new E Series finishing agents from the Asahi Guard range. The PFOA-free water and oil repellent finishing agents are said to offer high performance properties in a more eco-friendly form and are suitable for treating cotton, synthetics and fibre mixtures.

Adidas and Intersport extend co-operation agreement

14 Feb 2007

Adidas and IIC (Intersport International Corporation) have extended their existing strategic co-operation—established in 2003—until 2012. Financial terms will not be disclosed.

Under the agreement adidas will offer a customised product range, such as football and running goods, for the 32 markets in which IIC operates. The two companies will also continue to conduct joint international marketing and event co-operation.

With retail sales totalling €7.7 billion ($10 billion) Intersport operates more than 4,800 affiliated sporting goods retail stores in 32 countries.

BlueStar acquires Rhodia's global silicone business

14 Feb 2007

Having completed the acquisition of specialty chemical company Rhodia's global silicones business, Beijing-based China National BlueStar Corporation has created a new $700 million silicones-focused entity called Bluestar Silicones.

The acquisition involved all silicone-related business activities, products, employees and manufacturing assets, including two North American production sites in Rock Hill, South Carolina, and Ventura, California.

Former president of Rhodia Silicones, Olivier de Clermont-Tonnerre, will serve as the new company's chief executive officer and the global business will be headquartered in Lyon, France. North American operations, headquartered in Cranbury, New Jersey, will be led by Mr J. Christopher York, who has been named president, Bluestar Silicones.

Product applications will include specialty elastomers and paper and textiles coatings.

Wiley X launches new outdoor eyewear

14 Feb 2007

US-based performance eyewear company Wiley X Eyewear recently launched its new P-17 eyewear collection for outdoor activities such as snowboarding, hiking, camping and sailing.

The frames, made from ANSI-certified, lightweight Triloid nylon, are said to offer added comfort and protection whilst the wrap-around style frame prevents light from entering from the sides of the eyewear. The eight-layer impact lenses, which provide 100% UVA and UVB protection, are treated with a scratch-resistant hardcoat and are said to be shatterproof.

EATP announces programme for 2007 conference

14 Feb 2007

EATP (the European Association for Textile Polyolefins) has announced the programme details for its annual Executive Seminar, to be held in Istanbul, Turkey, on May 7-8. The theme of the event is 'Challenges and opportunities in the changing world of polyolefin textiles'.

Introducing the programme, EATP director general, Colin Purvis, said,

"Turkey and the Middle East are currently the most dynamic regions of the world in polyolefin fibres and textiles. Large investments in production capacity are being made there and the local markets are developing in a dynamic way. What happens in these areas over the next decade will have a major impact on producers of polyolefin polymers, fibres and textiles throughout Europe."

There will be 17 presentations on key industry issues and activities from various companies and consultancies at the event. Highlights include an economic overview of Turkey from the head of the Turkish businessmen's association; a senior executive from Europe's largest polymer producer speaking on market developments; a consultant discussion of global feedstock and polymer trends; the views of a Turkish polymer producer on the development of the fibre and textile markets in Turkey; the CEO of an Egyptian polymer producer on Egypt as a market and supplier; developments in the European textile industry from the director general of Euratex; development of polyolefin nonwovens and other textiles in Iran; and innovation in chemical additives.

Last year's seminar in Berlin attracted almost 100 CEOs and senior executives from 16 countries in Europe, Asia and North America.

Structural changes at Bayer MaterialScience

14 Feb 2007

Bayer MaterialScience has redefined its organisational structure with effect from March 1. The management board at Bayer AG has decided to consolidate strategic and operational management of the subgroup in an Executive Committee comprising the four members of the current board and the Business Unit heads.

Chief executive officer of Bayer MaterialScience Patrick Thomas will now focus primarily on strategic issues and the positioning of the subgroup in the global market.

Board member Dr Tony Van Osselaer's responsibility for the 'Production & Technology' segment will be extended and renamed 'Industrial Operations'. The additional functions will include what is currently the Inorganic Basic Chemicals Business Unit, together with 'Procurement', 'Health, Safety, Environment, Quality', and 'Corporate Energy Policy & Reporting'. In addition to his duties as head of Industrial Operations, Mr Van Osselaer will also assume the role of labour director. Ian Paterson will continue to be responsible for the board function 'Marketing & Innovation'.

New members of the Executive Committee include head of the Polyurethanes Business Unit Peter Vanacker; head of the Polycarbonates Business Unit Dr Günter Hilken; head of the Coatings, Adhesives and Sealants Business Unit Dr Joachim Wolff; and head of the Thermoplastic Polyurethanes Business Unit Dr Tim Bielfeldt.

Professor Dr Gottfried Plumpe, currently chief

administration officer and labour director, is leaving the company by mutual agreement. His successor will be appointed at a later date.

X-Rite names new sales VP

14 Feb 2007

US-based colour measurement and colour management solutions provider X-Rite has appointed Tim Kardish as senior vice president for worldwide sales.

Prior to rejoining the company's core colour business, Mr Kardish served as president of the company's Labsphere subsidiary and before this he was X-Rite's director of sales.

Strong November growth for sporting goods

14 Feb 2007

In its Monthly Retail Trade Survey, the US Census Bureau has reported that preliminary sales from sporting goods stores were $2.8 billion in November, up 11.6% compared with $2.5 billion in November 2005. The increase follows a 10.5% increase in October. Sales for the first eleven months of 2006 totalled $30.4 billion, up 13.5% compared with the first eleven months of 2005.

Total sales for the 2005 calendar year were $31 billion, up 7.3% compared with 2004 sales. The 2005 overall retail growth represented the strongest increase since the 8.4% increase in 1999.

Sales in 2004 totalled $28.93 billion, up 6.5% versus 2003. Sporting goods store sales for 2003 were $27.17 billion, a 3.1% increase compared with 2002.

US firm invests $3 million in Indian textile company

14 Feb 2007

US equity firm Peterson Partners has invested $3 million in India-based textile company K.P.R. Mills Limited. Located in Coimbatore, K.P.R. has a global presence in the garment exporting industry including cotton yarn, fabric and knitted apparel. After a planned expansion, the company will be equipped with one of the largest cotton spinning capacities in the region with over 210,000 spindles and will double its existing apparel capacity to produce 30 million garments per year.

Eleksen presents new smart fabric solutions

15 Feb 2007

At this year's annual European event covering 2G and 3G technologies, the 3GSM World Congress in Barcelona, February 12-15, inventor and manufacturer of ElekTex smart fabric touchpads for consumer electronics, Eleksen Group plc, presented its new products and solutions combining a range of technologies including Bluetooth, USB and wearable LCD display solutions with ElekTex smart fabric touchpads.

The company showcased a range of ready-to-integrate solutions and wearable touchpad designs which can be integrated into apparel and soft-goods and accessories such as bags, briefcases and backpacks. These included the company's five-button Bluetooth mobile phone and iPod remote; its five-button ElekTex touchpads and controllers for iPod, SonyEricsson Walkman phones and volume controllers for any audio device; and its Advanced iPod controls with embedded LEDs.

214 new exhibitors to appear at Texworld

15 Feb 2007

Approximately 830 exhibitors will present their fabric collections for the spring/summer 2008 season at Texworld at Le Bourget, Paris, on February 20-23—214 of which are new to the event.

Highlights of the show will include Denimworld, a recent addition to the event, which will house a forum and specific area that focuses on youth; the International Wool Textile Organisation (IWTO) will host its 'Feature Wool' that offers three recent fashion graduates an opportunity to present their designs; and "Innovation Asia" in which Lenzing and its partners will present their latest products.

DuPont to hold safety seminars

15 Feb 2007

US chemical company DuPont has organised a series of seminars on safety clothing that protects against occupational risks such as intense heat and flame; harmful chemicals, dusts and fibres; biological agents; cut, abrasion and general grease and dirt. The company's Personal Protection team will offer advice on different types of safety clothing and guidance on how to wear it correctly in order to minimise risk.

The UK programme will include industry events, exhibitions, seminars and a live demonstration using the DuPont Thermoman. The company has also tailored a series of seminars specifically for Fire & Rescue Services, the Home Office Scientific Development

Branch and utility companies.

As well as providing safety advice, the company will also exhibit its protective clothing solutions including Tyvek, Tychem, Nomex, Kevlar and Proshield and its Sontara clean wipes.

A similar programme of events is scheduled across Europe, in Switzerland, France, Germany, Austria and Italy.

Levi Strauss posts improved results

15 Feb 2007

US-based jeans and casual wear manufacturer Levi Strauss & Co. has reported improved net income for its fourth quarter and fiscal year, ended November 26. Fourth quarter net revenues increased 4%, or $48 million, whilst net income increased 119%, or $52 million.

Fiscal year 2006 saw a slight decline in revenues, totalling $4.19 billion compared with $4.22 billion in 2005. This was said to reflect higher net revenues in the US Levi's US Dockers and Asia Pacific businesses, which were offset by lower net revenues in Europe and in the US Levi Strauss Signature businesses. Net income improved 53%, or $83 million, for the full year to reach $239 million compared with $156 million.

Hi-Tec's V-Lite sales soar

15 Feb 2007

UK-based footwear brand Hi-Tec has reported an 80% increase in European outdoor footwear forward orders, versus comparative figures for this time last year. This success has been attributed to the popularity of the brand's V-Lite collection, which was launched in 2006, plus the introduction of its "functional yet affordable" Base Elements range.

According to Hi-Tec, since the launch of the V-Lite range, the company has received "an overwhelming response from the European outdoor trade and an extraordinary rate of sell through of the light hiking collection". As a result of this success, the V-Lite collection has now been expanded into further product categories including multi-activity, trail running, and sandals.

Turkish textile plants use nanotechnology to reduce energy costs

15 Feb 2007

US-based provider of nanotechnology, Industrial Nanotech, Inc. has received an order worth more than $300,000 from its international distributor in Turkey for more than 4,000 gallons of Nansulate, the company's patented nanotechnology-based coating which provides thermal insulation and anti-corrosive properties.
"We have received a firm order from Kolorgen for three sea containers (equal to approximately 4,000 gallons) of Nansulate for its ongoing project at a major textile plant," said Francesca Crolley, vice president of Operations. "Their customer has realised such significant energy savings from the initial application of our product that they have elected to place a substantial additional order for Nansulate." She added, "Once the product is applied to the rest of this manufacturing facility, we expect that the energy savings of greater that 20% previously reported by other textile plants in Turkey can be realised."

Dr Vedat Bilgrin of Kolorgen, Ltd. agrees. "Today I was at the dyehouse (textile plant) in Trakya region where we used Nansulate for hot areas. So far, we have achieved about 10% energy saving at four to five coats [of Nansulate] on average. With more coverage, our customer is quite confident that much more (energy savings) is possible, and they have given me their approval to continue the project."

Commenting on the order, CEO of Industrial Nanotech, Stuart Burchill, said, "The success in Turkey will benefit our efforts in other areas of the world. In China, whose textile industry is at record setting production levels, our new distributor, Northstar Power Engineering, already has an enquiry for purchase of our product from a textile factory for 300 dyeing tanks with 120 square metres of surface area per machine. If this order is placed it would equate to at least 5,000 gallons of Nansulate."

Nansulate is a nanotechnology-based product line of coatings combining thermal insulation benefits, protection against corrosion and mould resistance.

VF's International Outdoor Coalition grows rapidly

16 Feb 2007

VF Corporation's Outdoor - International Coalition, which includes the Napapijri, The North Face, Eastpak, JanSport, Kipling, Nautica Europe, Reef and Vans brands, has continued to experience strong growth, with European sales of $650 million in 2006, a 25% increase over 2005. On a constant currency basis, International Outdoor Coalition sales grew by 23.7%, with a positive performance across all markets and brands.

The North Face in Europe reported a sales increase of 25%, with growth across all markets and product categories; Vans in Europe saw a 23% sales increase; Napapijri sales in Europe rose 25%; and Kipling sales rose 19%. The coalition also opened 11 owned stores and 43 partnership stores during the year.

VF Corporation is involved in outdoor products, intimate apparel, image apparel, sportswear and jeanswear. Its

principal brands include Lee, Wrangler, Riders, Rustler, Bestform, Nautica, John Varvatos, JanSport, Eastpak, The North Face, Vans, Reef, Lee Sport and Red Kap.

AgION hires new CFO

16 Feb 2007

Massachusetts-based provider of silver-based antimicrobial solutions AgION Technologies has appointed Paul Boyer as chief financial officer. Mr Boyer has more than 20 years management experience.

Prior to joining the company, he served as CFO and vice president, New Market Development at Solicore, Inc., a lithium polymer battery technology manufacturer. He has also held senior management roles at Britesmile, Dynatec and Mrs. Fields.

Everlast to launch pain relief bands

16 Feb 2007

Manufacturer and licensor of sporting goods, apparel and footwear Everlast Worldwide Inc. has signed a licence agreement with hosiery products company Bossong Mills Inc. to launch the ‘Everlast Pain Manager’, a graduated compression band for joint pain produced with Bossong’s carbon fibre technology. The new product will be distributed by Bossong and marketed under the Everlast brand name.

The technology, which is a blend of bi-component conductive carbon yarns that dissipate electrical charges, works with a unique knit of fabrics that massage the affected areas while helping to improve blood circulation for faster healing. The lightweight, breathable knit is said to offer comfort and support with increased stability to prevent further injury, whilst its tubular construction is said to provide controlled uniform compression to reduce swelling.

Ellesse recognised at GQ Global Style Awards

16 Feb 2007

Italian sportswear company Ellesse has been presented with the ‘Newcomer of the Year’ award at the GQ Global Sportstyle Awards in Munich for its new ski collection, which it will launch in autumn/winter 2007.

Although the company has operated in the sporting arena since 1959, it is new to the skiing sector.

Textiles strategy launched in Scotland

16 Feb 2007

A new strategy for the Scottish textiles industry has been launched, designed to position Scotland's textiles as a dynamic and innovative sector.

The strategy aims to build on Scotland's long history and reputation in producing high quality textiles, whilst reinforcing its strengths in design and innovation to enable it to compete in the international marketplace.

Developed by the industry, in partnership with trade unions and Scottish Enterprise's Scottish Textiles team, the strategy lays out a plan to increase the contribution the textiles industry will makes to the Scottish economy, by increasing the number of larger, more competitive companies, investing in research and development and building global brands.

The three main components of the strategy are to increase Scotland's international profile as a centre for design and technical textiles; improve collaboration between textiles companies and with other sectors to exploit opportunities; and strengthen the workforce that already exists.

Commenting on the plan, James Sugden, chairman of the Scottish Textiles Manufacturing Association, said, "The textiles industry in Scotland has moved a long way from the 1970s and 1980s. Investment in technology means that a mill is now a quiet, high tech environment, while an emphasis on design has meant that Scottish companies are working in specific niche and luxury markets and supplying some of the world's leading couture houses as well as developing already well known Scottish brands,” adding, "The high level of skills within the sector is also helping to fuel growth within the technical textiles sector, with some world leaders in medical and performance textiles based in Scotland.”

There are currently 450 textiles companies in Scotland, which are mainly located around the Scottish Borders, East Ayrshire, Angus and Renfrewshire. The sector has an annual turnover of £1.084 billion and export sales of £390 million and employs more than 17,000 people.

Speedo launches Fastskin FS-Pro

16 Feb 2007

Swimwear brand Speedo has launched the Fastskin FS-Pro swimsuit, which the company claims is the fastest and most powerful lightweight suit ever made. This newest addition to the brand's elite speed suits is a lightweight alternative to Speedo's Fastskin FSII suit, which was worn by 47 medal-winning swimmers at the 2004 Athens Olympics, including six-time Olympic gold medalist Michael Phelps, who also assisted in the research and development of the new suit.

Key features of the Fastskin FS-Pro are said to include lightweight and powerful stretch; superior compression; improved core stability; improved fit through computer modelling and engineering; lower surface friction drag at a fabric level; and lower overall passive drag.

The suit also features a new water-repellent fabric exclusive to Speedo—LZR Pulse—a lightweight fabric that is woven from chlorine resistant elastane and ultra fine nylon yarn. In tests, the suit proved to have the lowest water absorption rate of woven fabrics allowing for a lighter feel and greater speed in the water.

Athletes will wear the Fastskin FS-Pro at the 12th FINA World Championships in Melbourne, Australia, on March 17 - April 1.