Business Week
26 Feb - 04 Mar

Innovation examined at Innov_ex 07

26 Feb 2007

The annual innovation conference for the outdoor sports industry Innov_ex 07—sponsored by WSA magazine—will take place at Lancaster University Management School, UK, on September 26. The theme this year will be ‘What is Innovation?’
The subjects debated will include ‘Innovation is a key driver of the competitiveness of firms and nations, but what does it mean for the outdoor trade?’ ‘What are the implications of new technologies for the trade?’ and ‘Do customers understand innovations?’

A combination of research papers and interactive panels from academics and outdoor specialists will address these questions.

Harold MacNeill passes away

26 Feb 2007

H. Harold MacNeill, founder of the MacNeill Engineering Co. died on January 5, he was 99 years old.

Having been established in 1931, the company manufactures spikes and cleats for the athletic footwear industry, supplying spikes and cleats for golf, baseball, soccer and track under the ‘Champ brand name.

Mr McNeill, who remained active in the business until his death, also authored a book "A Century of Change: My Story" which he published in 1998.

He is survived by four children, including Harris MacNeill, who is still involved with the company, nine grandsons, two great-grandsons, and one great-great-grandson.

Adidas names new divisional heads

26 Feb 2007

Adidas has appointed Bernd Wahler as chief marketing officer Sport Performance and Hermann Deininger as chief marketing of Sport Heritage/Sport Style. Both executives will report directly to Erich Stamminger, the brand’s president and CEO.

Bernd Wahler, who formerly worked at adidas, will rejoin the company to lead the Sport Performance division, which includes the adidas Innovation Team (a.I.T.), Product Design, Product Marketing and Retail functions, as well as co-ordinating the respective brand marketing functions. Mr Wahler left adidas in 1998 to become CEO of Swiss luxury brand Bally. In 2004, he founded the sports and marketing agency Sportsgeist, working exclusively for adidas and Porsche Design.

Having worked at adidas for 22 years, Hermann Deininger will lead the Sport Heritage/Sport Style division, which includes the respective Product Design, Product Marketing and Retail Concept teams of the Sport Heritage and Sport Style divisions, as well as co-ordinating of the respective brand marketing and entertainment performance functions.

In addition to these two new appointments, Michael Riehl, who leads Global Sports Relations, will assume several cross-functional brand responsibilities, including Licensee Management, Marketing Co-operations, Brand PR and the Adi Dassler Fund. He has held senior management positions as managing director adidas Germany, head of Global Sports Marketing and head of Global Sports Relations.

Berghaus boots hit the catwalk at London Fashion Week

26 Feb 2007

Highlighting the increasing trend for functional fashion, UK-based Berghaus’ Moreno GTX Boots featured on the catwalk at the recent London Fashion Week. The boots were used as part of designer label bërubë’s presentation of its autumn/winter 2007 collection.

The casual Moreno boots, more usually worn by outdoor enthusiasts, were incorporated into the show to set off bërubë’s new range of clothing and accessories with draping designs, opulent, formal fabrics and high-shine detailing.

Commenting on the decision to include Berghaus boots into the presentation fashion stylist, Mary Fellowes, said, “I am really into the outdoors myself and when I was approached to do the styling for the bërubë show I took inspiration from a recent trip to Scotland where I literally lived in my Berghaus boots.”

She added, “All of my colleagues in the fashion press have gone mad for the boots as it really has not been seen on the catwalk before—and that is fashion at its best when there is genuinely some new ideas and innovation.”

Bayer MaterialScience makes new appointment

26 Feb 2007

Dr Axel Steiger-Bagel has been appointed chief administration officer (CAO) of Germany-based polymer manufacturer Bayer Material Science AG, effective March 1. He will also become a member of the management board and executive committee of the Bayer subgroup. Dr Steiger-Bagel succeeds Professor Dr Gottfried Plumpe who is leaving the company by mutual consent.

True Religion appoints new women's sportswear designer

26 Feb 2007

US-based lifestyle brand True Religion Apparel, Inc. has appointed Caius Olowu as senior designer for the women's sportswear line. Mr Olowu has worked for several premium labels including Hugo Boss, John Richmond, New Balance Japan, Diamond Geezer and Levi's Europe and most recently, he served as senior womenswear designer for CMQ Japan, a leading womenswear brand.

True Religion designs, manufactures and markets True Religion Apparel products. Its products are sold in department stores and boutiques in 50 countries including the USA, Canada, Germany, the UK, France, Spain, Scandinavia, Greece, Italy, Mexico, South America, Australia, South Africa, the Middle East, Korea, Japan, and China.

Wellman reports record FY results

26 Feb 2007

US-based manufacturer of polyester products Wellman, Inc. has reported sales of $324.5 million for the fourth quarter and record sales of $1.3 billion for the full year ended December 31. Net loss from continuing operations attributable to common stockholders for the quarter was $25.6 million compared with $47.2 million for the comparable prior year quarter. For the full year 2006, the company posted a net loss of $98.1 million, down from $72.7 million in 2005.

The company also announced that it has decided to dispose of its European PET resins business.

Commenting on the decision, chairman and CEO, Tom Duff, stated, "In light of our 2006 results, we have made the strategic decision to focus on our chemical-based PET resin and polyester fibre businesses. This will allow us to capitalise on our two world-class facilities which utilise some of the latest technology to produce high quality, value-added products. We have restructured our management group functionally which will allow us to operate in a more efficient and cost effective manner. In the fourth quarter 2006, we decided to dispose of our European PET resins business and reflected those results and the expected loss on disposal in discontinued operations. We are exploring strategic alternatives for our European fibres business and our Engineering Resins business."

Wellman's polyester products include Fortrel brand polyester fibre and PermaClear brand PET (polyethylene terephthalate) packaging resin.

Lanxess staff rewarded for improvement ideas

26 Feb 2007

Over the past year, German chemicals group Lanxess has paid out approximately €900,000 in bonuses to reward employees for their improvement suggestions. In total, 2,256 suggestions were submitted by the workforce to the company's 'ideas office', 1,367 of which were rewarded with a bonus. The submissions largely concentrated on improving procedures and processes, increasing occupational safety and promoting environmental protection.

As a result of employees' suggestions, the company was able to save around €3.3 million in 2006.

All employees in Germany are able to submit ideas via the intranet and bonuses are allocated depending on the level of benefit provided by the suggested change. The highest individual bonus was awarded to an employee at the Leverkusen site of the company's subsidiary, Saltigo, who received approximately €23,000 for his suggestion for increasing efficiency in a plant producing oryzalin, an active ingredient for crop protection products. As a result of this optimisation, the capacity of the plant was increased by 12%.

Record results at Everlast

26 Feb 2007

Sporting goods manufacturer Everlast Worldwide Inc. has reported record revenues for its fiscal fourth quarter and year, ended December 31.

Fourth quarter net revenues increased 32% to $18.7 million compared with $14.1 million in the same period in 2005. Net licensing revenues for the fourth quarter were $3.3 million versus $3.1 million in the same quarter last year, however, licensing revenues were impacted by the company's decision not to renew its previous footwear licence, as well as an increase in licensing commissions resulting from the litigation settlement which required it to pay commissions to a former agent in 2006. These two factors negatively impacted licensing revenues by approximately $400,000. The increase in licensing

revenue was driven by strong athletic lifestyle product sales in both South Korea and the UK and strong expansion in Hand-Exercise distribution worldwide. Revenues from sporting goods for the fourth quarter were a record $15.4 million, up 40% from $11 million in the year-ago period.

For the full year, net revenues increased 20% to $51.9 million, versus $43.3 million in 2005. Net licensing revenues for the year were $12.3 million, versus $12 million the previous year. The growth in licensing was a result of the emergence of several new licensees in the UK and South Korea as well as new market penetration from historically strong licensees in Italy, Brazil and Chile. Revenues from sporting goods for the year were up 27% to a record $39.6 million versus $31.3 million in 2005.

The company has increased its guidance for fiscal 2007, anticipating net revenues in the range of $56 million to $58 million compared with its prior guidance of $53 million to $55 million and earnings in the range of $11.3 million to $11.7 million versus the prior range of $10.4 million to $10.8 million.

Nike and Payless debut new footwear collection

27 Feb 2007

Soccer players Brandi Chastain and Hope Solo and volleyball player Logan Tom have helped to launch the new performance footwear and accessories brand, Tailwind for women. Three-time Olympic medallist and World Cup player Brandi Chastain was heavily involved in the brand development process and footwear design At athletic footwear and apparel company Exeter Brands Group LLC, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Nike, Inc., which developed the new shoe with the help of Nike's Sports Research Laboratory.

The shoes, which will be sold at selected Payless Shoe Source stores, come in a variety of colours and feature a honeycomb gel ‘G-Zone’ that compresses on impact.

Gap to close Forth & Towne stores

27 Feb 2007

Clothing and accessories retailer Gap Inc. is to close its Forth & Towne store concept stores after an 18-month pilot that began in August 2005.

While the company was encouraged by its initial performance, it has concluded that the concept was not demonstrating enough potential to deliver an acceptable long-term return on investment.

The company plans to close its 19 Forth & Towne stores by the end of June 2007 and anticipates pre-tax expenses associated with the closure will be approximately $40 million.

The closure will impact approximately 550 employees and the company is looking at ways to redeploy employees to positions across its other brands where feasible.

New DoD contract for Wellco

27 Feb 2007

Military footwear manufacturer Wellco Enterprises, Inc. has been awarded a Department of Defense (DoD) contract to supply the US Navy with Safety Flight Deck boots. The contract is for a one-year period, with four one-year options to be decided at the government’s discretion.

Revenues from the contract are estimated to range from a minimum of $3.1 million to a maximum of $7.3 million per year. The first delivery order for the new product has been issued for 38,000 pairs and manufacturing will take place at the company’s plant in Waynesville, North Carolina, and at its Moka Shoe Corporation plant in Aguadilla, Puerto Rico.

Eurozone clothing and footwear sales fall again

27 Feb 2007

The Bloomberg Eurozone Retail Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) for the Eurozone reports that February sales at 49.8 represent an improvement on the marked fall in sales seen in January, when the PMI hit a 23-month low of 47.9.

The fall in month-on-month sales largely reflected a steep sales drop in Germany for the second successive month, attributed primarily to the ongoing impact of January's increase in sales tax. However, the drop in German sales was less severe than that seen in January (an index of 45, up from 43.9).

Meanwhile, in Italy the index fell from 50.6 to 50.4 as consumers remained cautious in the face of political and economic uncertainty, but by contrast, sales growth picked up significantly in France, accelerating for the first time in four months and showing the strongest growth of the three countries for the first time since last October (the index rose from 50.3 in January to 54.7).

The clothing & footwear and automotive sectors both saw a decline in sales compared with February 2006.

Management change at Lanxess

27 Feb 2007

German chemical company Lanxess has appointed Luis López-Remón as head of its rubber chemicals business, effective March 1. He previously served as head of the Textile Processing Chemicals business unit, which the company divested at the end of 2006.

Mr López-Remón will succeed Rainer van Roessel, who was appointed to the company's management board on January 1. Dr van Roessel will continue to hold the positions of managing director of Lanxess N.V. and country representative for Belgium.

Positive results at Cabela's

27 Feb 2007

Nebraska-based hunting, fishing and outdoor gear outfitter Cabela's Incorporated has reported revenue increases for its fourth quarter and full year, ended December 30.

Total revenue for the fourth quarter increased 15.6% to reach $781 million from $675.4 million posted in the comparable 2005 quarter. Net income increased 25.5% to $53.4 million compared with $42.5 million.

Total revenue for 2006 increased 14.7% to a record $2.06 billion, compared with $1.8 billion in 2005, whilst net income increased 18.2% to $85.8 million from $72.6 million in fiscal 2005.

Tencel tested on sensitive skin

27 Feb 2007

The ever-increasing number of people now suffering from sensitive skin and allergies, combined with growing concerns about environmental pollution has provoked a greater interest in alternatives to conventional textile materials which provide comfort and protection for the skin. In response to this increasing demand, Austria-based Lenzing has conducted a study using its Tencel fibre at the University of Heidelberg in Germany, to ascertain whether the naturally pure fibre can offer benefits to people with sensitive skin.

The company tested the fibre's skin-calming effect of on a study group of 30 patients who suffer from neurodermatitis and psoriasis, using commercially available apparel with Tencel. The results were convincing as 90% of the patients tested indicated that Tencel stood out because of its excellent skin compatibility, 93% indicated that Tencel felt smooth and cool, and 89% stated that it offered excellent heat regulation. The properties of Tencel make it well-suited for people with sensitive skin as textiles produced with the fibre are gentle thanks to its smooth fibre surface as well as feeling cooler, absorbing more moisture and reducing bacterial growth. Another important aspect is the purity of the fibre, which does not contain pesticides or agricultural chemicals. Furthermore, up to 99.5% of the solvent applied in processing Tencel is recovered and does not remain in the fibre.

In order to consider regional and climatic differences and living conditions Tencel is now conducting similar tests in the USA, Japan and Korea, the results of which are expected to be finalised this year.

Brooks Sports signs contract for Lawson M3 applications

27 Feb 2007

Seattle-based performance running footwear, apparel and accessories designer Brooks Sports, Inc. has signed a multi-suite contract with Minnesota-based software and service solutions provider Lawson Software for Lawson M3 enterprise software applications. Under the contract, the company will implement Lawson Business Intelligence, Supply Chain Management and e-Procurement application suites to provide functionality specifically designed for fashion and apparel manufacturers.

Focus on natural fibres at Yarn Expo Spring

27 Feb 2007

There will be a strong focus on natural fibres at this year's Yarn Expo Spring, which will be held concurrently with Intertextile Beijing in Beijing on March 22-24. Fibres and yarns such as cotton, wool, silk and linen/ramie will be highlighted at the show as well as regenerated and synthetic fibres, specialty products, elastic, fancy and blended yarns.

As China's per capita fibre consumption almost doubled between 2000 and 2005, from 7.5 kg to 14 kg and yarn imports grew 6% in 2006 compared, the show's organisers are expecting large numbers of visitors to the show, which attracted almost 5,000 attendees in 2006.

Stella McCartney designs travel collections for LeSportsac

28 Feb 2007

Designer Stella McCartney is to partner with handbag manufacturer LeSportsac to design a series of limited edition travel bags, luggage and baby accessories collections. The first collection is set to launch in spring 2008.

The lines will focus on travel accessories with an emphasis on baby care for modern women who want to combine style and luxury with functionality.

Revenues rise at Warnaco

28 Feb 2007

New York-based apparel company The Warnaco Group, Inc. has posted higher revenues for its fourth quarter and full year, ended December 30.

During the fourth quarter, net revenues increased 35.6% to $480.6 million compared with $354.5 million in the same quarter of 2005. Net income was $18.9 million compared with $6.9 million in the prior year quarter.

For the full year, net revenues increased 23.8% to $1.83 billion from $1.48 billion in 2005. Income totalled $73.6 million compared with $55.5 million.

2007 net revenues are expected to grow in the mid-single digits over 2006 levels.

Excluding results from the acquired Calvin Klein Jeans and related businesses in Europe and Asia (CKJEA), net revenues for the quarter and year increased by 11.9% and 2.5% to $396.7 million and $1.5 billion, respectively.

Skechers sues Asics

28 Feb 2007

Lifestyle footwear company Skechers USA, Inc. has filed a lawsuit against Asics Corporation and Asics America Corporation for alleged trade libel, unfair competition and tortious interference with prospective economic advantage and economic business relations. The company is seeking injunctive relief preventing Asics from engaging in further unlawful acts, surrender of Asics' profits, attorneys' fees and $100 million in punitive damages. It is also seeking a declaration that none of its designs infringe upon Asics' trademarks.

"We believe that Asics has engaged in a campaign of unfair competition and trade libel against Skechers by improperly issuing press releases and filing a lawsuit to disseminate false public information about Skechers," said Philip Paccione, general counsel of Skechers.

This lawsuit is in response to an Asics' lawsuit and press release asserting that certain Skechers designs infringed Asics' trademark.

Deckers Outdoor posts record results

28 Feb 2007

Deckers Outdoor Corporation has posted record results for the fourth quarter and full year ended December 31. For the fourth quarter, net sales increased 36.7% to $124.4 million from $91 million for the comparable period in the prior year, well surpassing the company's forecast of $110 million.

For the full year, net sales increased 15% to $304.4 million compared with $264.8 million in 2005 again beating the forecasts of $290 million by a large margin.

The company's Teva Brand posted net sales of $13 million for the fourth quarter, an increase of 15.5% compared with the $11.3 million reported for the same period in 2005, whilst UGG Brand net sales increased 40.1% to $109.9 million versus $78.5 million. Simple Brand net sales increased 18.8% to $1.5 million for the fourth quarter compared with $1.2 million for the same period in the prior year.

Keri golf and Lija awarded 'Best of Show' honours

28 Feb 2007

Golf brands keri golf and Lija were both presented with awards by Golfing magazine at the 2007 PGA Merchandise Show.

Bag and accessories company keri golf was chosen from among more than 1,250 vendors as one of the top soft goods exhibitors. The company premiered its spring 2007 collection of totes, headcovers, cart, stand and junior bags at the show.

Golf and sportswear designer Lija also received a 'Best of Show' honour from the magazine at the event. The company debuted its autumn 2007 collections, featuring jewel-tone colours with both technical and traditional fabrics.

Record US sporting goods sales

28 Feb 2007

In its Monthly Retail Trade Survey, the US Census Bureau reported that preliminary sales from sporting goods stores reached $4.65 billion for December, up 9.7% from $4.23 billion in December 2005. The increase follows an 11% increase in November. Sales for the full year 2006 reached $35.04 billion, up 12.9% over 2005, a record high and the strongest growth reported for ten years.

New fashion solutions at Lectra World 2007

28 Feb 2007

France-based developer of software and CAD/CAM equipment Lectra launched its new line of value-added solutions developed for fashion professionals (apparel, footwear and accessories) in Bordeaux on February 5-6. 400 guests from 30 countries attended Lectra World 2007 including designers such as Benetton, Christian Dior, Clarks, Dolce & Gabbana, Hugo Boss, Kenzo Jeans, Louis Vuitton, Nike, and Yves Saint Laurent.

During the event, the company presented its most recent solutions through a series of interactive workshops held at its newly-inaugurated International Conference Centre in Bordeaux-Cestas, France.

New solutions included the new generation of Vector automated multi-ply cutting systems which are designed to optimise the use of technological equipment in terms of productivity and quality, reduce costs and improve process flexibility and reliability; the new Power service solutions which were developed to improve the overall performance of production systems; the Kaledo system, which stores models, styles, components and materials as well as subsequent modifications; the Modaris 3D Fit which provides simulation and visualisation of three-dimensional models in a broad range of colours and materials and enables precise fitting control as well as style validation thus reducing the number of physical prototypes required and facilitating communication both within the company and between brands and their subcontractors; the Easy Grading automated grading application, which accelerates and simplifies grading activities for fashion companies, producing time savings of up to 70%.

Shenzhen manufacturers to come together at Intertextile Pavilion

28 Feb 2007

The Intertextile Pavilion in Shenzhen, China, is set to bring together fabric and apparel producers makers in one of China's key manufacturing and clothing design regions on July 12-14.

More than 3,000 apparel manufacturers are based in the Shenzhen area, which together produce clothing under approximately 800 brands.

New qualification for retailers proposed

1 Mar 2007

Employers in the UK’s apparel, footwear and textiles sectors are being urged to consider a brand new qualification for young entrants into the retail industry.

Chief executive of Skillfast-UK Linda Florance has called on businesses to join a working group in order to develop the content of the Specialised Diploma in Retail, which will be a combined vocational and academic route into the industry for 14- to 19-year-olds, stating, "We need leading employers from apparel, footwear or textiles, to help us shape the diploma so that it truly reflects the employment needs of the retail sector.”

SATRA expands fade and weather resistance testing

1 Mar 2007

New investments totalling almost £100,000 are enabling UK-based technology centre SATRA to expand its ability to test a range of materials for their resistance to fading and weathering. These materials include leather, textiles, coated fabrics, rubber and plastics commonly used in the footwear, leathergoods, furniture, marine, aerospace and automotive industries.

As part of the investment an air-cooled xenotester will be installed to replace the centre’s current machinery which incorporates a xenon arc lamp which emits ultra violet rays to replicate sunlight and evaluate materials for colour change and fading. It can also subject products to extremes of humidity and heat.

A newly-purchased weatherometer will undertake much the same tasks as the xenotester but has a larger test chamber to accommodate sizeable test samples. In addition, being watercooled, it complies with the test standards specified by the automotive industry for a wide range of colourfastness and weathering procedures. The equipment, which replicates intensive sunlight, is also capable of carrying out testing on plastics, rubbers and coated fabrics, textiles and leather, as might be used in upholstery, at elevated temperatures (90ºC) over a range of relative humidities.

FLA accredits Puma

1 Mar 2007

The Fair Labor Association (FLA) has accredited the labour compliance programme of Germany-based sports apparel and footwear brand Puma in recognition of its commitment to creating a positive environment for its workers.

Accreditation by the FLA signifies that the company is in substantial compliance with FLA requirements to implement a workplace code of conduct in factories that manufacture the company’s products. To earn accreditation, a company must undergo a performance review over a two-to-three year implementation period. This review is based on independent factory monitoring and verification reports of supplier facilities, as well as

auditing of the required monitoring protocols, training programmes, and auditing systems.

Commenting on Puma's accreditation FLA president and CEO, Auret van Heerden, said "Puma has worked very hard to establish a workplace standards programme that complies with FLA's requirements and this is a strong indication of its commitment to producing a product made under positive labour conditions."

The FLA is a non-profit organisation which holds companies accountable to the Fair Labor Association Workplace Code of Conduct, which bans forced labour, child labour, harassment, abuse, and discrimination, and requires that companies promote health and safety, freedom of association and collective bargaining, payment of wages and benefits, and appropriate compensation for overtime.

Rayonier names new president and CEO

1 Mar 2007

US-based forest products and performance fibre producer Rayonier has appointed Lee Thomas as president and CEO, effective March 1. A member of Rayonier's board of directors since June 2006, Mr Thomas was president and chief operating officer of Georgia-Pacific Corp. from 2002 until his retirement at the end of 2005, following the company's acquisition by Koch Industries. Prior to Georgia-Pacific, he was chairman and CEO of Law Companies Environmental Group Inc. from 1989-1993 and administrator of the US Environmental Protection Agency from 1985-1989.

Mr Thomas succeeds Lee Nutter, who had previously announced his plans to retire.

Rayonier is an international forest products involved in timber, real estate and performance fibres, which produces high-value specialty cellulose fibres.

VF Imagewear acquires Majestic Athletic

1 Mar 2007

VF Imagewear, Inc., a subsidiary of VF Corporation has acquired substantially all of the assets of Majestic Athletic, a US-based provider of sports licensed apparel and branded team uniforms for Major League Baseball. Under the agreement Majestic's headquarters and manufacturing operations will remain in their current location in Bangor, Pennsylvania, and will become part of VF Imagewear's Activewear division, based in Tampa, Florida, and Faust Capobianco IV, president of Majestic will lead the entire baseball business as vice president/general manager, reporting to Rick Becker, vice president Sales & Marketing, VF Imagewear, Activewear division. Nicole Capobianco will also remain at the company and oversee all Major League Baseball outfitting activities.

Commenting on the acquisition chairman and CEO of VF Corporation, Mackey McDonald, said, "The acquisition of Majestic Athletic provides us a terrific opportunity to grow VF's presence in the authentic sports apparel category," adding that along with its earlier purchase of Eagle Creek, Inc. in January, these acquisitions should add approximately $180 million to VF's revenues in 2007.

Majestic Athletic designs and manufactures team uniforms, performance apparel, outerwear and licensed athletic wear. The company is licensed by Major League Baseball and currently holds on-field uniform rights for all 30 Major League Baseball Clubs, in addition to exclusively supplying each club with on-field MLB Authentic Collection outerwear, batting practice jerseys, t-shirts, shorts and fleece. It is also licensed by the Major League Baseball Players' Association, National Basketball Association, National Hockey League and US colleges and universities to provide a variety of apparel products.

XFit Lycra denim studio at Milan Fashion Week

2 Mar 2007

Integrated fibres and polymers company Invista hosted an XFit Lycra Denim Studio at Milano Moda Donna, held on February 17-25. Designers and brands such as Marithé + François Girbaud, Love Therapy by Elio Fiorucci, Lab Pal Zileri, Tim Van Steenbergen, Lee Cooper, Serfontaine, Zac Posen, were represented all at the studio.

XFit Lycra technology is a patented denim cross-weave technology exclusively licensed to Invista which is said to offer a better fit and more comfortable garments thanks to its multi-direction stretch.

ComforTrust uses bluesign standard fabrics

2 Mar 2007

Swiss outdoor apparel company ComforTrust AG, based in Frauenfeld, claims to be the first company to manufacture its whole collection from bluesign-certified fabrics, all of which are produced by Christian Eschler AG. All other components and accessories used by the company also comply with the standard.

Developed in Switzerland, the bluesign standard focuses on consumer safety, environmental and other health and safety issues within the textile production chain such as air and water emissions and occupational health and resource management.

All of the company's apparel items, which include underwear, workwear, military apparel, and active sportswear, are marked with the bluesign safety label.

Awards presented at Slide 2007

2 Mar 2007

New products for autumn/winter 2007/08 were unveiled at snowsports and outdoor fashion exhibition Slide 2007, held in Manchester, UK, on February 18-21, and numerous products were recognised at the Slide Awards, which took place at the end of the first day.

The winner in the Hardware Category was Marker Duke Binding; in the Software Category, Thirty Two Snowboards Boot Camp Jacket was the winner; and Black Diamond Sensei Glove was presented with an award in the Accessories Category. The Tom Spurway award for Best Stand at the show went to Vans.

Continued growth at Première Vision Pluriel

2 Mar 2007

The five salons at Première Vision Pluriel—Expofil, Première Vision, Le Cuir à Paris, Indigo and Mod'Amont—held in Paris last week, all registered positive visitor results, in both quantity and quality. Expofil and Première Vision alone registered nearly 47,800 visits, a rise of more than 3% over the February 2006 session, with international visitors representing over 75% of the total.

Polo Ralph Lauren renews contract with Luke Donald

2 Mar 2007

Professional golfer Luke Donald has signed a new multi-year contract with apparel company Polo Ralph Lauren. He will continue to act as a representative worldwide with a focus on RLX Golf.

The company has been the exclusive apparel sponsor of Mr Donald, who is currently ranked number 10 in the 2007 Official World Golf Rankings, since 2002. In 2006, he won the Honda Classic and, in 2005, he won the Target World Challenge.

Breathe-O-Prene features in award winning New Balance shoes

2 Mar 2007

New Balance recently walked away with the “Most Comfortable Walking Shoe” award in the Best of Fitness 2007 issue of Health Magazine for its WW792 shoes, which feature Breathe-O-Prene insoles.

Developed by Accumed, the Breathe-O-Prene insole is said to offer low compression, great shock absorption, breathability, and moisture wicking which is well-suited to athletic footwear thanks to its lightweight flexibility combined with its anti-microbial properties.

Breathe-O-Prene is also used by brands such as 3M NexCare Orthopedic, Etonic, Norcross, and Under Armour.

Reebok celebrates 25th anniversary of the Freestyle

2 Mar 2007

Having enjoyed huge success following its launch in the 1980s, Reebok’s Freestyle women’s athletic shoe is celebrating its 25th anniversary. Having remained one of the brand’s best selling shoes, the company marked the occasion with the launch of a new 25th anniversary Freestyle collection at a "Freestyle Forever" event held in New York on March 1.

As well as debuting a new 25 Candles Freestyle design, the 2007 collection also features six limited-edition styles varying from authentic ‘bringbacks’ to modern-day artist collaborations.

Commenting on the Freestyle’s success, Reebok's chief marketing officer, Uli Becker, said, "Reebok is passionate about debuting the 25th Anniversary Freestyle Collection because the shoe represents our history as the brand that pioneered the women's fitness movement and started the high-top fashion trend." One of the first athletic shoes created especially for women, the Freestyle made up more than half of Reebok’s sales in 1984.