Industry concerns covered at Prime Source Forum

06 Apr 2007

Some 37 industry leaders and specialists from the USA , Europe and Asia shared their experiences and recommendations with more than 320 delegates from 23 countries and regions at the Prime Source Forum held in Hong Kong Last week.

Themes included global supply chain challenges; concerns over threatened protectionist measures; environmental and social responsibility issues; and the difficulties ahead, even while technical developments and educational initiatives offer potential stability.

Outlast launches Supplier Certification

06 Apr 2007

US-based producer of temperature regulating technology Outlast Technologies has launched a new Supplier Certification portal, powered by TEXbase, designed to facilitate fast and easy communication between Outlast's internal labs and supply chain partners around the globe.

Commenting on the launch Greg Roda, chief operating officer, stated, "Today's textile marketplace is largely driven by innovation and speed to market. The extent to which Outlast can improve communication and collaboration throughout our supply chain directly effects time-to-market and ultimately the purchasing decisions of our downstream customers," adding, "With over fifty supply chain partners around the globe and new product introductions every year, our certification process needed to be reworked."

TEXbase builds and deploys easy to implement web-based, textile data management applications that streamline business processes and are said to deliver a strong return on investment.

TenCate completes acquisition of Mattex Leisure Industries

06 Apr 2007

Dutch specialty chemical company Royal Ten Cate has completed its acquisition of the artificial grass activities of Dubai-based Mattex Leisure Industries. The necessary licences have been issued by the Dubai government and the acquisition cost amounted to $178 million.

The Mattex artificial grass activities will be taken over by a new company: TenCate Thiolon Middle East LLC, which will be wholly integrated into the TenCate Grass Group. The company expects the acquisition to have a significantly positive effect on sales.

DuPont helps to protect military history

06 Apr 2007

Manufacturer of protective clothing solutions DuPont has teamed up with Contamination Control Apparel Ltd. to donate 4,600 garment covers made from DuPont Tyvek to The Royal Air Force Museum so that it can protect its collection of RAF and military uniforms.

The uniforms range from First World War flying suits to present day ceremonial robes and aircrew coveralls. Notable uniforms include those worn by Winston Churchill, King George VI and Lord Trenchard (the founding father of the RAF).

4,626 visitors at Yarn Expo Spring

06 Apr 2007

Yarn and fibre show event Yarn Expo Spring 2007, which took place in Beijing on March 22 - 24 2007, attracted some 4,626 visitors from 45 countries. More than 100 companies exhibited at the event including 13 international companies from eight countries.

Ocean Lanka receives fair trade certificate

05 Apr 2007

Some of the great names of football history will present Ocean Lanka (Private) Limited a joint venture subsidiary of Fountain Set (Holdings) Limited, has become the first Sri Lankan knitted fabric manufacturer to qualify for fair trade accreditation from Flo-Cert GmbH, the international certification body for Fairtrade Labelling Organizations International (FLO).

Fairtrade Certification guarantees certified cotton growers a minimum price plus a further premium to be used for community development projects, thus enabling cotton growers a viable livelihood for their efforts. In turn consumers can easily identify products with the Fairtrade

Certification Mark that guarantees a fair price for farmers in developing countries.

Commenting on the certification, deputy general manager of Ocean Lanka, Simon Weston, said, "Previously there was no Fairtrade fabric mill in Sri Lanka to supply Fairtrade accredited retailers in the EU and the USA . Currently, Ocean Lanka sources cotton and yarn from Indian and West African Fairtrade farmers and we have always been committed to ethical trading initiatives. Providing an ethical trading environment is important to long term business and is in the spirit of the mill's and Fountain Set's corporate principles. Now with the accreditation, Ocean Lanka is an even more attractive circular knitted fabric sourcing supplier and can benefit from additional new business opportunities.

Established in 1996 by three investment partners, the Fountain Set Group, the Brandix Group and the Hirdaramani Group, Ocean Lanka runs a fabric knitting and dyeing plant in Biyagama , Sri Lanka.

Growth in nonwovens and technical textiles at ITMA

05 Apr 2007

Significantly higher numbers of exhibitors of machinery and accessories for manufacturing nonwovens and technical textiles will take part in ITMA 2007 on September 13-20, in Munich , Germany .

Some 64 exhibitors for nonwovens production will occupy an area in two halls that will be 50% larger than at the last event held in Birmingham in 2003. For technical textiles, there will be machines, accessories and technologies in all trade fair halls ranging from fibre manufacturing to making-up, reflecting the increasing significance of nonwovens and technical textiles in the global market. Production of nonwovens increased 13% to almost one million tons in China in 2006, and increased by about 5% to 1.5 million tons in Europe . By the year 2010, global production will reach almost seven million tons with annual growth rates of between 6% and 10% (depending on the region and type of nonwovens).
Woven fabrics and other textiles (e.g., braided or warp knitted) also profit from the quantity of the globally growing market for technical areas of use. The world market for technical filament yarn (polyester and polyamide) is set to double to 3.6 million tons in the period 2000 to 2010.

Puma inks sponsorship deal with Namibia

05 Apr 2007

German sports brand Puma has increased its African footprint with the signing of a sponsorship deal with the Namibian Football Association (NFA). Under the agreement, Puma will supply Namibia 's national team, the Brave Warriors, with the brand's latest v-Series technical apparel and footwear through the 2010 World Cup in South Africa .

Commenting on the deal Jochen Zeitz of Puma said, "This association underlines Puma's commitment to African Football and specifically to the growth and development of Football in Namibia . We look forward to a long and mutually beneficial relationship with the NFA." Other African teams sponsored by Puma include the Ivory Coast , Ghana , Cameroon , Egypt , Tunisia , Senegal , Togo , Morocco , Mozambique , Angola and Botswana.

Reebok relocates European headquarters

05 Apr 2007

Following a 'Go-To-Market Excellence' study concluded earlier this year, Reebok has decided to relocate it European headquarters (EHQ) to Amsterdam , The Netherlands, from its current base in Bolton , UK . The move is aimed at centralising the brand's European leadership team and managing its regional priorities more effectively.

Commenting on the decision, president and CEO, Paul Harrington, stated, "Relocating our EHQ to Amsterdam will help strengthen our presence throughout Europe and improve our range merchandising function for the entire region," adding, "This move will also allow us to improve our focus on the traditional markets on the continent and emerging markets like Eastern Europe and Russia."

A temporary location in Amsterdam will open this summer, with a permanent location expected to be available at the end of the year. Several global and European functions such as Apparel Design, Apparel Development and Apparel Operations will remain at Reebok's current office in Bolton.

Greater demand for higher-end fabrics at Intertextile Beijing

05 Apr 2007

The number of visitors at apparel, fabrics and accessories trade fair Intertextile Beijing increased 10% this year to 19,000. One fifth of buyers at the event, which took place on March 22-24 in Beijing , came from 76 countries overseas.

Many of the 893 exhibitors found that higher-end textiles were in demand, supporting economic predictions that a more affluent and fashion-conscious society in China

would fuel demand for higher quality—and higher priced—textiles and apparel. The show featured high-end to mass market textiles and accessories for menswear, womenswear, children's clothes, swimwear and lingerie.

Cherokee signs licensing agreement with Comercial Mexicana

05 Apr 2007

Cherokee Inc. has entered into an international licensing agreement for its Cherokee brand with Mexican retailer Comercial Mexicana. The multi-year deal covers a range of categories including men's, women's, and children's clothing, footwear, and accessories.

US-based Cherokee Inc. licenses and manages a variety of brands including Cherokee, Sideout, Carole Little.

Reebok files patent infringement action against Nike

04 Apr 2007

Reebok International Ltd. has filed a lawsuit against Nike, Inc. in the US District Court for the Eastern District of Texas, claiming that Nike infringed on a patent arising from Reebok's collapsible shoe technology.

The complaint identifies several Nike men's and women's shoes—including 11 different Nike shoes marketed under the Free, Free Flex, Free Zen & Now, Free Trainer, and Free Trail product names—that infringe upon Reebok's flexible sole technology, which allows shoes to be collapsed for travel or for packaging.

The suit alleges that despite Reebok's patent protection, Nike "willfully and intentionally" developed shoes that use Reebok's technology.

DAK Americas raises polyester staple fibre prices

04 Apr 2007

Due to an increase in global polyester raw material cost, DAK Americas LLC will increase prices for all polyester staple fibre products by $.03 per pound, effective April 15.

Dryarn hits the bottle

04 Apr 2007

Better known in the sportswear world through its collaborations with Slam, The North Face, Briko, and Oroblu, Dryarn has moved into a new sphere… wine.

Soul Satèn 2000, a special wine, from what is said to have been an exceptional year, was presented for the first time at Vinitaly in Verona, Italy, on March 29 to April 2, dressed from 'neck to bottom' in Dryarn. The wine bottle was presented in a an innovative 'gown', designed by Contadi Castaldi using Dryarn, which is said to keep the wine at an ideal serving temperature for about two hours without the use of ice.

The Dryarn 'gown' is woven to reproduce the movement of the bubbles and protect the bottle from drastic changes in temperature through its insulating capacity as well as providing a secure and resistant slip-proof grip to keep the bottle safe from bumps, and to protect it from light, mould and humidity.

Puma enter Volvo Ocean Race 2008/2009

04 Apr 2007

German sportswear brand Puma has announced that it will enter the Volvo Ocean Race 2008/09 with its own boat and will also be the official supplier and official licensee of replica merchandise for the offshore ocean race. The race, known as the 'Everest of sailing', will begin in October 2008 in Alicante, Spain, and will end in June 2009 in the Baltic.

The Puma team will be skippered by US-born Ken Read who has twice helmed America 's Cup programmes in 2000 and 2003. He has been named 'United States Rolex Yachtsman of the Year' twice and has over 40 World, North American and National Championships to his credit.

Puma's entry into sailing extends the brand's focus on premium lifestyle sports—a category Puma forged through its Formula 1 partnerships, motor sports collaborations such as Ducati, and the launch of a Sportlifestyle golf collection in 2006. It expects to launch the first sailing collection in mid 2008.

Sales rise at Big Dog Holdings

04 Apr 2007

Developer and retailer of branded footwear, apparel and consumer goods, Big Dog Holdings, Inc. has posted double-digit sales increases for the fourth quarter and full year ended December 31.

Consolidated net sales for the fourth quarter improved 22.2% to reach $72.6 million, compared with $59.4 million in the same quarter of the prior year. Some $13.2 million of this increase was attributed to additional new stores opened during the period, the Steve's Shoes, Inc. acquisition on January 31, 2006, and a comparative

store sales increase of 5.8%.

For the full year, consolidated net sales were $218.6 million, a 22.1% increase, compared with the $179.1 million reported for 2005. Comparable retail store sales increased 3% for the year.

Big Dog Holdings, Inc. consists of Big Dogs and The Walking Company. Big Dogs develops, and retails branded, lifestyle consumer products including activewear, casual sportswear, accessories and gifts. The Walking Company is a specialty retailer of comfort shoes and accessories including brands such as ECCO, Mephisto, Dansko and Merrell.

Eschler supplies Luna Rossa team

04 Apr 2007

Swiss knit fabrics specialist Christian Eschler AG, which first supplied performance clothing to the Luna Rossa Challenge Italian sailing team in 1999, will continue to provide the crew with apparel for the Louis Vuitton Cup. The company will supply specially laminated jackets, as have been worn by the team in previous competitions, and Eschler has also produced new fast-drying, anti-bacterial and comfortable mesh fabrics for t-shirts, which can be used both as a base layer and as a single outwear layer. The fabric is designed to draw moisture away from the skin to the surface to prevent discomfort.

Leather and apparel top ISM manufacturing report

04 Apr 2007

According to the Institute for Supply Management's (ISM) Report On Business, apparel, leather and allied products was the fastest growing industry in the USA in March. Other categories reporting positive growth included plastics and rubber products, chemical products and textile mills.

The PMI registered 50.9% in March, a decrease of 1.4 percentage points compared with February's seasonally adjusted reading of 52.3%. However, a reading above 50% indicates that the manufacturing economy is generally expanding.

In March, the ISM Prices Index registered 65.5%, indicating that manufacturers are paying higher prices on average compared with February. While 36% of respondents reported paying higher prices and 5% reported paying lower prices, 59% of supply executives reported paying the same prices as in the preceding month.

Huntsman Textile Effects unveils new trade names

03 Apr 2007

Nine months after acquiring the Textile Effects business from Switzerland 's Ciba Specialty Chemicals, US chemicals company Huntsman has launched new trade names and product ranges.

Part of the acquisition deal required Huntsman to change trade names associated with the former company and the new owner has used this opportunity to streamline the list, reducing the number of names and simplifying identification.

As of July 1, a number of products will be marketed under new brands including the company's flagship product Cibacron, which will now be marketed under the Novacron trade name. Both old and new names will coexist during a transition period from April 2 to June 30, to allow for adjustment.

VF acquires TNF branded business in China

03 Apr 2007

Branded lifestyle apparel company VF Corporation has acquired The North Face's (TNF) branded business in China from its licensee, Korea-based Youngone Corporation. VF will now assume responsibility for continuing the brand's growth in China , with the potential for $40 million in revenues within five years. In addition to its wholesale business, The North Face brand also has one freestanding retail store in Beijing .

General manager - The North Face Asia/Pacific, Frank Cancelloni, will oversee the brand in China which will operate from sales offices in Shanghai , Beijing and Guangzhou .

Meanwhile, VF has also announced that it has completed the sale of its global intimate apparel business to Fruit of the Loom, Inc., a subsidiary of Berkshire Hathaway, Inc. Proceeds of the sale will consist of a $350 million purchase price, plus adjustment for working capital changes. The intimate apparel business includes brands such as Vanity Fair, Lily of France, Vassarette, Bestform, Curvation, Lou, Gemma and Belcor.

VF Corporation's product categories cover jeanswear, outdoor products, image apparel and sportswear. Its brands include Wrangler, Lee, Rustler, The North Face, Vans, Reef, Napapijri, Kipling, Nautica, JanSport, Eastpak, and Eagle Creek.

AWI/AWS merger delayed

03 Apr 2007

The merger of Australian Wool Services (AWS) and Australian Wool Innovation (AWI) has been delayed following a statement form Australian Minister for Agriculture, Peter McGauran, that the decision on government support for the integration of the two companies

has not yet been made. The AWI/AWS Integration Steering Committee put a proposal to the minister in January, asking for a response by the end of March.

Commenting on the delay, AWS chairman, Barry Walker, said, “In December we reached agreement with the IWS Pension Fund Trustees which cleared the way on the largest hurdle, the IWS Pension Fund liability,” adding, “Since then we have provided all the information that the minister and his department have sought and answered every question. However, analysis of the issues has been more complex and more time consuming than the minister’s staff could have assumed and the proposal remains with the minister for his decision.”

Pacific Brands completes Yakka acquisition

03 Apr 2007

Australian apparel company Pacific Brands Limited has completed its previously announced purchase of workwear and outerwear company Yakka. The total consideration payable will not be determined until the finalisation of the completion accounts.

Founded in the 1930s, Yakka distributes industrial and corporate workwear and casual wear in Australia and New Zealand .

Pacific Brands markets recognised brands such as Clarks (children's), Dunlop, Everlast, Grosby, Holeproof, Hush Puppies, KingGee, Mossimo, Mooks, Sheridan and Slazenger across Australia and New Zealand.

Improved sales at Gander Mountain

03 Apr 2007

Hunting, camping, marine and outdoor products retailer Gander Mountain Company has reported improved sales for its fourth quarter and fiscal year ended February 3. The fourth quarter included 14 weeks compared with 13 weeks for the 2005 quarter, whilst the full year included 53 weeks compared with 52 weeks in 2005.

For the fourth quarter, sales increased 16.4% to $326.9 million. Net income was $15.3 million compared with $22.2 million in the fourth quarter of 2005. Income included a pre-tax non-cash charge of $9 million.

For the full year, sales totalled $911.4 million, an increase of 13.3% over 2005.

The company reported a net loss of $13.2 million compared with a net loss of $13.3 million in 2005.

New intermediates brochure from BASF

03 Apr 2007

‘Be Part of Innovation’ is the title of a new brochure issued by the Intermediates division of German chemical company BASF. The 24-page publication offers information in both German and English about the strategic focus of the division, combined with a short introduction to its business areas: amines, diols, polyalcohols, acids and specialties. It provides product names as well as a range of industries that use its intermediates and includes two double pages on the division’s activities in NAFTA and Asia/Pacific. Information about quality management, responsible care and sustainable development, global supply chain and information management are also featured.

The brochure can be downloaded from the company’s website.

Among other applications, intermediates are used as starting materials for textile fibres, coatings and plastics. In 2006, the division had a workforce of 2,600 employees and generated global sales of more than €2.3 billion.

Revenues rise 46% at Weiqiao Textile

02 Apr 2007

Said to be the largest cotton textile producer in China , Weiqiao Textile has reported significantly improved results for the full-year ended December 31.

Net profit increased 35.7% to yuan 1.68 billion ($0.22 billion), whilst revenue grew 46% to yuan19.82 billion.

In 2006, the group’s production volume of cotton yarn increased 33.8% to 882,000 tons, grey fabric production grew 13.4% to 1,634,000,000 metres and denim increased 41.1% to 175,000,000 metres.

Commenting on the group’s performance, Ms Zhang Hongxia, chairman, said, “In 2006, the group worked to enhance its marketing effort. As a result, the utilisation rate of our production facilities was further improved. We also focused on continuously upgrading our production facilities and technology in order to provide the markets with more high-end products. Such efforts proved effective as we reached record-high revenues and net profits since our listing.”

Successful relocation for ispo china

02 Apr 2007

The decision to move ispo china winter 07 to Beijing appears to have been a wise move. The event, held on March 14-17, attracted 300 exhibitors from 20 countries and 12,059 visitors, compared with the 11,098 recorded at the ispo china winter 06 event held in Shanghai last

year.

Fila Korea closes acquisition

02 Apr 2007

Fila Korea Ltd. has completed its acquisition of the global Fila footwear and apparel business from Sport Brands International Ltd. (SBI) for an undisclosed purchase price.

The transaction was structured as a sale of SBI's subsidiary, Fila Luxembourg, which holds the rights to the worldwide use of the brands and trademarks of Fila. SBI will retain ownership of Cloudveil Mountain Works, Inc. and Motionwear, Inc.

New board member at Delta Apparel

02 Apr 2007

Marketer, manufacturer and distributor of branded and private label activewear Delta Apparel, Inc. has elected Elizabeth Gatewood to its board of directors.

Dr Gatewood is the director of the University Office of Entrepreneurship & Liberal Arts at Wake Forest University , a position she has held since 2004. She is also a co-founder of the 'Diana' project, a research study of women business owners and equity capital access.

Results exceed expectations at The Wet Seal

02 Apr 2007

California-based specialty retailer The Wet Seal, Inc. has posted positive results for its fourth quarter and full year ended February 3.

Net sales for the 14 weeks were $166.4 million, compared with $141.4 million for the 13 weeks ended January 28, 2006. Net loss for the fourth quarter was $5.7 million and operating income for the quarter totalled $4.8 million.

Net sales for the 53 weeks were $564.3 million compared with $500.8 million for the 52 weeks ended January 28, 2006. For the year, the company reported a net loss of $12.8 million and operating income of $15 million.

SkinScan develops 'Invisible' clothes

02 Apr 2007

US textile company SkinScan has developed the technology to produce almost invisible clothing, and is now in discussions with various members of the fashion industry in order to market it.

The technology involves a patented process invented by Jerold Kritchman & Company which captures and transfers an individual's skin tone onto fabric. Using data storage on the Internet, a person's 'colour profile' can be retrieved from almost anywhere in the world and used to design and manufacture different products, each customised to the individual.

New Tour AD Quattro Tech shaft from Graphite Design

02 Apr 2007

US-based golf club shaft manufacturer Graphite Design has launched its Tour AD Quattro Tech high-performance shaft with a four-axis construction to provide stability and high-launch, low-spin shots.

Originally introduced in Japan and now available in the United States, it comes in five flexes and four weight categories ranging from 54g to 87g and is suitable for use in drivers and fairway woods. Its low kick point promotes a high ball flight with minimal spin, producing maximum distance.

Utilising low-resin, ultra-high-modulus materials, it is constructed with fibres lining the shaft surface at four different angles. This structure is said to produce superior stability through impact, especially at high swing speeds. Features include .335" parallel tip diameter and 2.95" parallel tip length, 47" overall length, and torque ranging from 2.8º to 5.5º.

Polo Ralph Lauren buys out Polo.com

02 Apr 2007

US apparel company Polo Ralph Lauren Corporation has bought out the 50% ownership interest of Ralph Lauren Media, LLC held by NBC-Lauren Media Holdings, Inc. and ValueVision Media, Inc. giving the brand full ownership of Polo.com for a cash transaction of $175 million.

Ralph Lauren Media was created seven years ago as a joint venture with 50% ownership by Polo Ralph Lauren Corporation, 37.5% by NBC subsidiaries and 12.5% by ValueVision to develop Polo Ralph Lauren branded media projects across multiple platforms.

Polo.com attracts more than 2.2 million visitors per month, with traffic increasing by more than 30% in the last year.