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Musto sold to UK equity firm

30 Jul 2007

Reports indicate that UK-based performance apparel and footwear company Musto is to sell a majority stake to London-based investment company Phoenix Equity Partners for approximately £10 million ($20.3 million).

Musto was founded by experienced sailor Keith Musto and produces outdoor wear and equipment for sailing, equestrian, shooting and casual use. Products range from backless deck shoes to breathable jackets to anti-frostbite gloves.

Its owners will retain a 30% stake in the company.

Berghaus declared a ‘Superbrand’

30 Jul 2007

UK-based outdoor brand Berghaus has been awarded Superbrand status by the Superbrands organisation. A panel of the branding body's experts chose the company from a list of potential candidates identified in a consumer survey, which included firms from a range of sectors.

This follows the company’s first ever cinema campaign at the end of 2006, featuring sponsored climber Leo Houlding. This helped to raise Berghaus’ profile and that of the outdoor apparel, footwear and equipment industry as a whole.

In September it will open its first dedicated flagship store in the MetroCentre and will also enter the Japanese market for the first time.

New patent for TrapTek

30 Jul 2007

US-based developer of polymer and film processes TrapTek, LLC, has been awarded a patent for keeping particles active in fibres, films, and coatings. The United States Patent and Trademark Office issued Patent #7,247,374 on July 24 and this is the third of several patents sought by the company.

Starting with activated carbon derived from recycled coconut shells, TrapTek has launched a series of coatings, fibres, yarns and fabrics under the Cocona brand utilising the patent. This technology permanently embeds activated carbon particles into fibres to provide an evaporative cooling effect while also capturing UV light and odours.

The company’s research team was led by Dr Gregory Haggquist, one of its founders, who has over 20 years research experience.

Over 40 brands in North America and Europe have been licensed to use Cocona fabrics and yarns, including Cutter and Buck, New Balance, Cannondale, Oakley, Perry Ellis and Eddie Bauer.

Bayer returns to Khimia 2007

30 Jul 2007

Germany-based chemical producer Bayer MaterialScience is to showcase new innovations and solutions at chemistry trade fair Khimia, which will be held in Moscow from September 3-7. Product applications include the footwear, sports and leisure and automotive industries.

Its polyurethanes, polycarbonates, coatings, adhesives, sealants and thermoplastic polyurethanes business units will be showing a number of exhibits under the ‘VisionWorks’ banner in Hall 2.1.

Sports products include raw materials for bonding soles and starting materials for the textile coating of soccer boots as well as thermoplastic polyurethanes that offer scratch-resistant properties as a transparent upper material for ski boots.

Silmo coincides with Rugby World Cup

30 Jul 2007

Paris will be in major sporting mode this autumn as it hosts both international optics and eyewear exhibition Silmo and the Rugby World Cup.

The world’s great rugby nations will be battling it out in the sixth Rugby World Cup from September 7 to October 20.

Silmo, which takes place October 19-22, will show the final on a big screen at the event and is celebrating its 40th year as a trade show. The Silmo d’Or award will also be presented at the fair.

Ath-leisure footwear a hit at WSA show

31 Jul 2007

The ath-leisure shoe—athletic footwear focusing on comfort and style—will be a prominent feature at the footwear and accessories trade event WSA Show, which is being held in Las Vegas, ending August 1.

According to consultants at US market research firm the NPD Group, ath-leisure and running shoes are the top two sellers in athletic footwear. “Consumers are telling us that style and comfort, not performance, are the keys here,” reported NPD analyst Marshal Cohen.

For spring/summer 2008 stripes, stitching, mixed fabrics and colour—especially metallics and bright colours such as hot pink, yellow, mandarin orange and royal blue—continue to be prevalent at the show.

Companies exhibiting in this category include Baby Phat, Hush Puppies, Skins Pop 72, PF Flyers and Bical.

Record export figures for Bangladesh in 2006/07

31 Jul 2007

According to Bangladesh’s Export Promotion Bureau, the country’s total exports increased 16% to a record $12.18 billion in fiscal 2006/07 (July to June) compared with $10.5 billion in the previous year.

Officials attributed the success to remarkable performances from the woven garments, home textiles and leather sectors.

The country's footwear exports grew 42% to $135.94 million for the year compared with $95.44 million the previous year and were 20.3% over the export target of $113 million. Exporters said that the sector was reaping the benefits of antidumping imposed on leather shoes from China and Vietnam.

Finished leather exports were up 3.4% to $266.08 million compared with $257.3 million the previous year but fell short of the sector’s $290 million export target.

iPath appoints new team manager

31 Jul 2007

American skateboarding shoe and apparel manufacturer iPath Footwear, Inc. has appointed Dave Smith as team manager, effective immediately.

Having worked at many prominent brands such as Transworld Skateboarding, Vans, New Deal and Popwar, iPath believes Mr Smith has the relevant experience for this role. He will be based in California.

SCS certifies Unifi’s recycled yarns

31 Jul 2007

North Carolina-based multi-filament polyester and nylon textured yarns producer Unifi, Inc. has had its Repreve polyester yarns independently certified for 100% recycled content by third-party auditor, certifier and standards developer Scientific Certification Systems (SCS).

These yarns can be used for apparel and hosiery, home furnishings and for the automotive sector.

O’Neill captures all the action with its H4 Campack

31 Jul 2007

California-based manufacturer of wetsuits, sports apparel and accessories O’Neill has introduced the H4 Campack, one of seven pieces from its fourth generation wearable electronics line.

The new pack, designed to be used as a snowboard backpack, includes a media player and an external camera lens. The wearer can start and stop recording by pressing a button on the left shoulder strap. The media player, which is secreted in the top pocket, can record all footage captured by the goggle strap or helmet mounted camera lens. The files are sent directly to a memory card and the user can review footage on the slopes or on a PC.

A snowboard can be attached horizontally to the backpack, which can also accommodate a hydrating camelback system for all-day hiking expeditions.

Italian production and price increases offset by textiles sector

31 Jul 2007

The results of a survey involving 900 Venetian companies have revealed that the second quarter has been a

positive one, with overall production up 2.8% compared with the same quarter in 2006.

Almost all sectors showed positive growth, including food, chemicals and electrical goods. Despite this, textile production fell 3.4%, while footwear dropped 1.2% and leather fell 6.2%. Despite an overall increase of 0.4% for the export sector, textile exports fell 1.3% and leather exports dropped 3.7%.

Similar trends were reflected across Italy. June producer prices for leather goods prices fell 0.3% and other declines have been recorded for other manufacturing products, including furniture. However, for the first six months of 2007, overall producer prices rose 3.5%.

Preliminary ISTAT (Italian National Statistical Institute) figures for July show a 0.2% price increase compared with June and a 1.6% increase compared with July 2006.

Q2 losses at Huntsman

01 Aug 2007

US-based chemicals company Huntsman, Inc. has posted revenues of $2.5 billion for the three-month period ended June 30 compared with $2.4 billion for the same period in 2006. Revenues increased in its polyurethanes segment due to higher average selling prices and higher sales volumes and in its materials and effects segment, primarily due to the acquisition of its textile effects business in June 2006. Revenues also increased in the company's performance products segment, due primarily to higher average selling prices and in its pigments segment due to higher sales volumes. Meanwhile, revenues decreased in its base chemicals segment.

Despite revenue increases, the company has reported second quarter net loss of $83.9 million compared with a prior-year profit of $262.9 million. Adjusted net income fell 5.1% to $76.1 million from $80.2 million.

On July 12 it entered into a definitive merger agreement with Hexion Specialty Chemicals, Inc. following which Hexion is to acquire all of the company's common stock for $28 per share in cash. The total transaction is valued at $10.6 billion including the assumption of debt. Furthermore, on June 22, the company signed an amended and restated agreement with Flint Hills Resources through which it expects to close on the sale of its North American polymers business on or about August 1.

Tiso and Berghaus to support Scottish mountain rescue

01 Aug 2007

Scotland's largest outdoor specialist retailer Tiso has teamed up with UK-based outdoor performance brand Berghaus in a promotion scheme designed to raise funds for Mountain Rescue teams across Scotland. In September the two companies will donate 5% of sales revenue from key products to the 31 official teams in the country.

Tiso is Berghaus' biggest customer in Scotland and sells technical products from across its range. The promotion is important as it coincides with the new autumn/winter range and is traditionally one of the busiest sales months of the year.

Mountain Rescue in Scotland is carried out on a voluntary basis by members of the various teams, coordinated by the Mountain Rescue Committee of Scotland, a charity that relies on the generosity of individuals and organisations. Every year, volunteers in the teams from across Scotland attend around 500 incidents.

New trend forecasts revealed at Interstoff Asia Essential

01 Aug 2007

The Directions Trend Committee will unveil its colour, fabric and print forecasts for autumn/winter 2008 at Interstoff Asia Essential Autumn 2007, which will take place from October 3-5 in Hong Kong.

The committee comprises four trend-forecasting agencies: Nelly Rodi Agency (Paris), Elementi Moda (Milan), Here & There (New York) and Sachiko Inoue (Tokyo). These four companies have worked together for Interstoff Asia, providing trend forecasts and visual displays since 1998. The team will be led by Nelly Rodi of France for the upcoming edition.

"Autumn/winter 2008 announces a season full of contrasts, playing with opposites and combining contradictory references," said Ms Rodi. She said that fabrics for the season will be inspired by mineral surfaces, with metallic aspects and 'moonstone-like' surfaces, inspired by high-technology.

The three trend themes, 'Ice Eco', 'Bobo Craft' and 'Techno Fiction' will be illustrated in a vivid display using exhibitor fabrics at the exhibition. The team will also speak at onsite seminars to provide further detail on forthcoming colours, yarns, fabrics, knits, prints and patterns.

More than 220 exhibitors and 8,700 buyers attended the spring edition of the fair.

Football cleats boost Q2 growth at Under Armour

01 Aug 2007

Under Armour, Inc. has posted a 50.7% revenue increase for its second quarter ended June 30. Revenues totalled $120.5 million compared with $80 million in the second quarter of 2006. Net income increased 135.6% to $5.7 million compared with the prior-year period.

Apparel revenues rose 53.4% with the Compression and Training categories continuing to drive revenue growth across the apparel business. Expanded product assortments for golf and football also contributed to the apparel segment. Footwear revenues, largely benefiting from increased sales of football cleats, increased 28.9% to $20.1 million for the quarter.

The company now expects annual net revenues in the range of $580 million to $590 million, an increase of 35-37% compared 2006, and income in the range of $79 million to $81 million, an increase of 38-41% over 2006.

Q2 sales up 19% at BASF

01 Aug 2007

Germany-based chemicals producer BASF has reported sales of €14.7 billion ($20.1 billion) for the second quarter of 2007, up 19% year-on-year. Cumulative sales for the first half of the year totalled €29.3 billion, 18% higher than in the same period of 2006.

Second quarter sales in the chemicals segment climbed 50% due to higher sales volumes and prices and the contribution from the acquired catalysts business. Sales grew 37% in the performance products segment.

Sales increased in all regions during the first half with strongest growth in percentage terms seen in South America, Africa, the Middle East and Asia.

In Europe, companies posted total sales of €17.4 billion in the first half, an increase of 14%.

The company expects global economic growth to be approximately 3.5% for full-year 2007, with large variations from region to region.

ispo Group to suspend Russian event after this year

02 Aug 2007

The fifth edition of ispo Russia will go ahead as planned from September 6 to 8 in Moscow, but the organisers have announced that they will suspend the event after that.

The ispo Group made the announcement today, saying "the special conditions of the Russian market" had made the move necessary. It added: "The high concentration of importers and vertical distributors, as well as order mechanisms and timing are harming the implementation of a strict trade fair concept."

The group went on to say that it could re-introduce ispo Russia in the future, but that "further development and restructuring of the industry" there would have to take place first.

Textile and apparel profits to grow by 35%, China claims

02 Aug 2007

China's national textile and apparel council (CNTAC) has released figures that project a 35% increase in profits from the sector this year.

A statement estimates turnover for the sector of $397.4 billion for 2007, which is a 20% increase on last year. But the council believes this will yield profits of $14.8 billion, 35% higher than in 2006.

An increase in the amount of textile and apparel exports will be the main source of the extra profit, CNTAC believes.

Jones move away from sportswear to continue

02 Aug 2007

Clothing retail firm Jones Apparel Group is to focus on its core brands as part of efforts to reverse company fortunes. New chief executive, Wesley Card, said in presenting the company's results for the first half of 2007 that his management team would continue to move away from sports.

He said: "I firmly believe there is opportunity for Jones in our core brands. These are Jones New York, Anne Klein and Nine West, as well as our denim family of brands, including Gloria Vanderbilt."

He also announced that the sale of its luxury fashion retail brand Barney's will go ahead, but perhaps not to Istithmar, the Dubai equity firm with which Jones agreed a price of $825 million in June.

It has emerged that Japanese company, Fast Retailing,

has offered $900 million for Barney's. Mr Card said he would be prepared to accept the higher offer, even though it would mean going back on the June deal and paying Istithmar a "termination fee" of $22.7 million.

Casual footwear boost for Timberland

03 Aug 2007

Footwear and apparel brand Timberland has posted poor second-quarter results, a net loss of $19.2 million. This compares with a loss of $16.6 million for the same period last year.

The company said a downturn in its boots and children's footwear sales was one of the principal contributors to the result, but it also mentioned the European Commission's anti-dumping measures on imports of leather footwear from China and Vietnam as one of the obstacles it has faced in recent times.

At the same time, it acknowledged that the global market is highly competitive in view of changing consumer trends.

Chief executive, Jeffrey Swartz, said he wanted Timberland to focus future product development efforts on creating "more relevant products that better reflect the needs of key consumer groups".

VF and Mitsui start joint-venture in Japan

03 Aug 2007

VF Corporation will no longer have to rely on a distributor to sell its Napapijri sportswear brand in Japan. The company has set up a new joint-venture operation with Mitsui to market and distribute the outdoor-inspired products in the Japanese market.

The companies will open new retail outlets and increase the brand's presence in department stores.

Bikini relief for big women

03 Aug 2007

Australian swimwear brand Zoggs is partnering with specialist lingerie manufacturer Bravissimo to launch a new range of swimsuits for larger women.

The companies say that conventional swimsuits are designed to fit women with B-C bra sizes. The new range, called Bondi, will offer a fashionable look for women who wear bras with D-size cups and above (Bravissimo's specialism), without flattening their bust and without underwiring.

The range includes swimsuits, tankinis and bikinis, and is made from Zoggs' chlorine-resistant CR25 fabric, which has a sun-protection rating of UPF50+. The tankinis and bikinis come with a choice of bottoms, either short or hipster brief.

There are three colour combinations to choose from too: royal and sky blue, teal and aqua, and chocolate with turquoise.

It will be June 2008 before the Bondi range goes on general release, but it will be on show at a variety of trade events between now and next summer.