RISE TO THE CHALLENGE: SCIESSENT AND WOOLRICH

Outdoor clothing brand Woolrich launched a collection of baselayer garments equipped with Agion Active anti-odour functionality at the start of 2011. The relationship between the two companies is working so well that a new collection of anti-odour shirts for spring 2012 has followed.

Silver lining

Sciessent, maker of Agion Active odour elimination technology, has announced that the range of garments equipped with the technology is expanding for spring 2012. Following a successful launch of a baselayer programme earlier this year, 180-year-old outdoor clothing company Woolrich is now introducing the men's Destination, Territory and Tidal shirts and the women's poly-merino Henley line for its spring 2012 collections, with Agion Active once again incorporated.

"Agion Active performs better than any other anti-odour solution that we've tested and its performance was key in the success of our initial baselayer launch," said Brent Hollowell, Woolrich's vice-president of marketing, at the time of the launch of the shirts. "As more outdoor enthusiasts continue to become savvy about performance features, odour elimination tops their list of demands. By offering Agion Active, we can give our customers the classic style and comfort they've come to except from Woolrich, with the added benefit of a high-tech odour eliminator that ensures freshness."

When we sweat, bacteria on the skin can break down lipids in the moisture to produce bad odour.

Lisa F. Young/Shutterstock

After the successful introduction of Agion Active to baselayer garments earlier this year, outdoor apparel brand Woolrich has kept up its partnership with Sciessent to use the technology in men's and women's shirts for spring 2012.

Woolrich

Sciessent explains that Agion Active features a dual-action technology that provides antimicrobial product protection and "industrial-strength" odour elimination, but also controls vapour-based odours. Silver ion antimicrobial technology stops propagation of odour-causing bacteria on the fabric, while its secret ingredient, a natural, proprietary odour-trapping solution (based on minerals), captures molecules from ambient odours and releases them in the wash. It continues to perform for the life of a garment such as the new Woolrich shirts, with the odour absorber regenerating with each wash. Applied at the finishing stage, the technology is long lasting, performing to 50-plus washes.

Authentic clothes

"We are excited to expand our partnership with Woolrich, one of the most authentic and respected brands in the outdoor industry," said Paul Ford, chief executive of Sciessent at the time of the announcement. "We are thrilled to play a part in Woolrich's successful foray into high performance apparel."

The Destination comes in polo and T-shirt forms, each made from 100% polyester with a double-knit construction. They have side vents and will be available in six different colours. The Territory is also available as a T-shirt or a polo shirt, but this time, the fabric mix is 50% polyester and 50% merino wool. They have a zip pocket and are available in four colours. For women, the Henley has the same 50-50 polyester-merino mix, with fitted elbow-length sleeves and a sweat patch on the back.

All these models will benefit from the work Agion Active does to combat odour caused by bacteria breaking down lipids in human sweat from passing through or remaining in a garment's fabric and reaching the nose of wearers and those around them. Odours from the environment (tobacco may be one that many people are familiar with) also fail to remain in the fabric thanks to the action of the technology.

Sensory perception

Confirming the thoughts of Mr Hollowell, Sciessent says recent consumer studies it has seen show that outdoor enthusiasts regard odour-control as being just as important an attribute in their clothing as colour, design or fit and it has worked with Minnesota-based testing house and research centre St Croix Sensory, an authority on how odour is formed and how people react to it, to keep its understanding of issues around odour as close to cutting-edge as possible. It has set up a special website called, bluntly, stinkatnothing.com to explain the science behind its Agion Active technology, attracting more than half a million visitors in one year. The site offers people a free T-shirt to try out and a tribute section includes comments from people who have taken this offer up. Jan Sikora from the Czech Republic says he wore the T-shirt non-stop during a three-day bouldering and rock climbing trip to Frýdek-Místek in the east of his home country. Even on the third day, he says neither he nor his companions could detect any odour. Michael Krieger, a cycling and ice hockey enthusiast from Canada, says he wore his T-shirt for three successive mountain-bike rides and left it in his gym bag for a night before washing it and could still detect no odour. He may be

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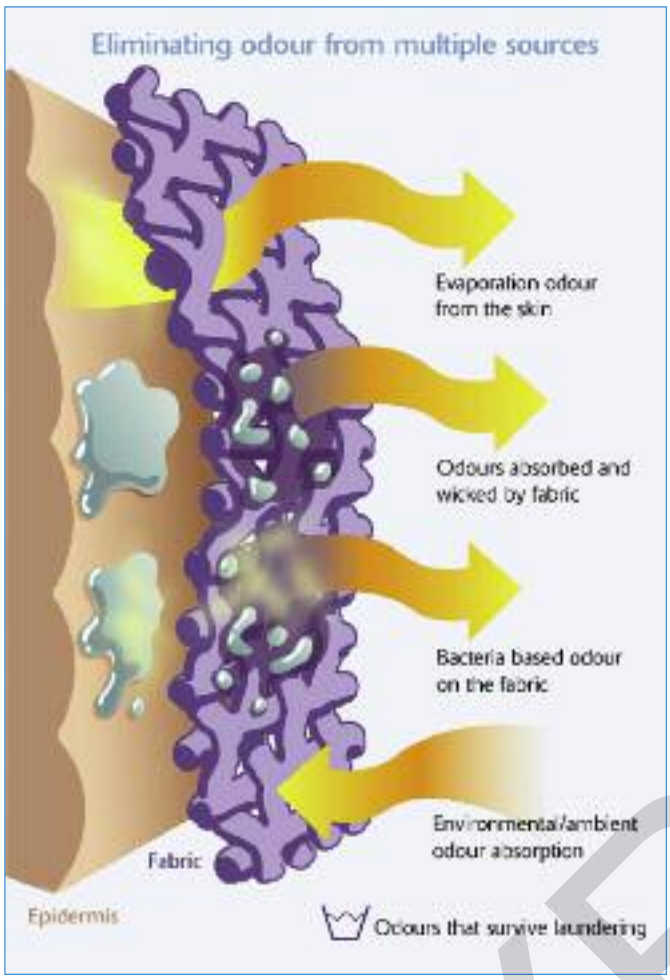


Agion Active combats odour on and around the fabric.
Sciessent

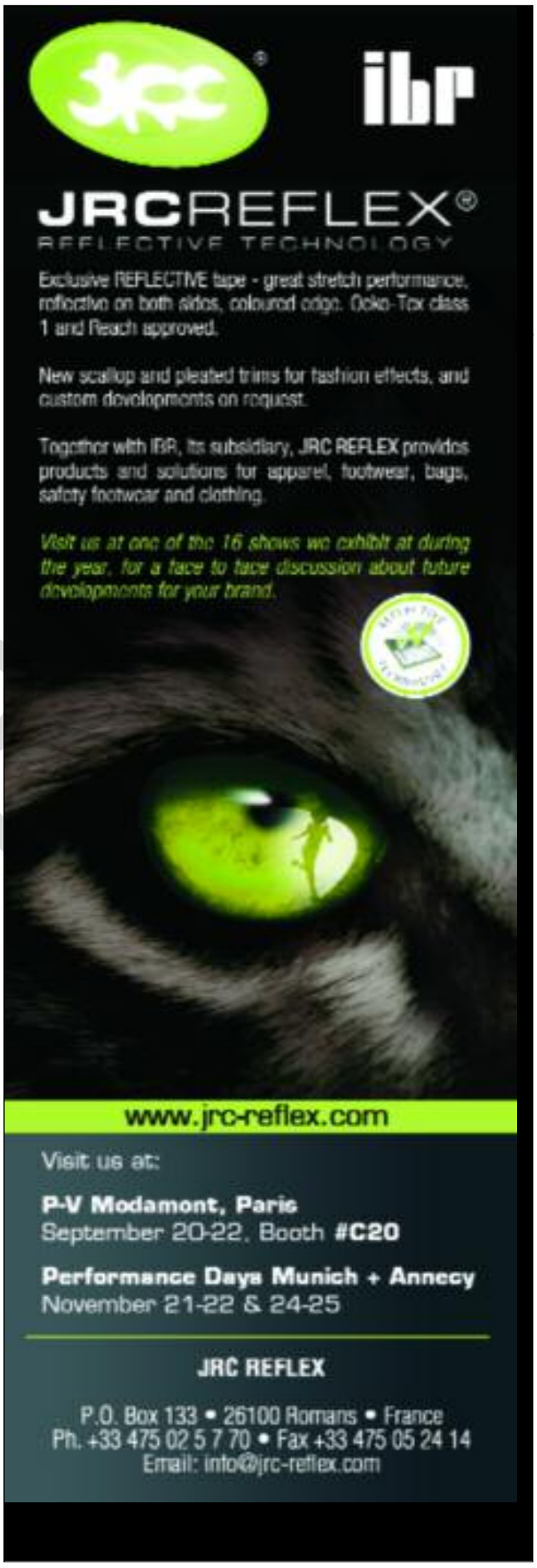
particularly interested in a recent development in which Sciessent, working with sports brand Reebok, will put Agion Active into training and official match gear for North America's National Hockey League.

Most valuable gear

Partner Woolrich has done something similar, putting onto Youtube videos of experienced backpacker Sheri Propster talking about her experience of wearing one of the baselayer garments in merino-polyester equipped with Agion Active on a long hike, the Approach Trail Loop. She voted it her 'Most Valuable Gear' of the trip, saying: "Most likely the best feature this shirt has going for it is the fact that it incorporates technology that stops and eliminates odours on and around the fabric. I've not taken the shirt off for a single second. We've walked over 17 miles and there are no bad odours coming from the shirt."

With reactions like this, Woolrich and Sciessent will both be keen to hear what wearers think of the extension of their partnership into shirts.

"Our retailers were buzzing about Agion Active in the baselayer collection before we even shipped," says Brian Mangione, Woolrich executive vice-president. "We expect to carry that success throughout our spring line and that more of our customers will start demanding Agion Active once they've experienced it for themselves. We look forward to sales success and penetration throughout the market."



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