Business Week

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AAFA announces staff reorganisation

23 May 2005

President and CEO of The American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA), Kevin M. Burke, has announced the reorganisation of staff at the association.

Mary Howell, previously director of program development, has been promoted to vice president of industry relations; Joan McNeal, previously director of membership, has been promoted to vice president of membership development; and Fawn Evenson, vice president of AAFA and president of the footwear division, will now head up global initiatives.

“As I look toward the future of AAFA, I want to continue to establish AAFA as a growing and changing organisation. As we had to re-align our staff, programmes and objectives in the past, I believe it is time to do so again so that we remain fresh, creative and forward thinking,” Burke stated.

The AAFA is the national trade association representing apparel, footwear and other sewn products companies, and their suppliers, including several dozen US textile companies.

BASF chairman awarded by Korean government

23 May 2005

Dr. Jürgen Hambrecht, chairman of the Board of Executive Directors of BASF Aktiengesellschaft, was awarded the Sungrye Medal by the government of the Republic of Korea on May 20, 2005. This is the highest award for diplomatic service merit bestowed by Korea on industry representatives.

The award ceremony in Berlin took place in the presence of Kwon Youngmin, the Korean ambassador to Germany; Dr. Andreas Kreimeyer, BASF board member responsible for the Asia region; and Chong-Kwang Kim, Chairman of BASF Company Ltd in South Korea.

The award was given in recognition of BASF’s long-term presence in Korea, which began with the opening of a sales office in Seoul in 1954, as well as Hambrecht’s personal contribution towards strengthening commercial ties between the two countries. Between 1995 and 1999, Hambrecht was initially president of BASF’s East Asia division and subsequently board member responsible for the Asia Pacific region.

“I am deeply honoured to receive this award. Korea plays an important and successful role in our strategy of expanding our operations in the Asia Pacific region,” said Hambrecht. “Thanks to our continued investment in Korea, even during the economic crisis in the late 1990s, we have built up a strong position in this key market.”

BASF currently operates production facilities at six sites in Korea in Yeosu, Ulsan, Gunsan and Ansan. It has a workforce of more than 1,100 employees, and posted sales of €1.1 billion in 2004.

Pakistan exports rise 15%

23 May 2005

Pakistani exports registered growth of 15.28% in the first 10 months of the fiscal year (July-April) to reach $11.529 billion compared with $10.001 billion for the same

period in 2004. It seems that the country is now set to reach $14 billion target set for the current fiscal year. April's exports alone registered an increase of 18.79% at $1.301 billion, compared with $1.095 billion during the same period the last year.

However, despite this positive news, Pakistan's total trade deficit rose by 141.52% in the same 10 months. Official figures released by the Federal Bureau of Statistics (FBS) showed that the trade deficit stood at $4.842 billion during the 10 months versus $2.005 billion in the same period the last year.

Monthly statistics showed that the deficit increased by 45.71% to $601 5 million in April 2005 on a year-on-year basis, however, compared with the previous month, March, the deficit actually declined by 23.49%

The rise in the deficit has been attributed to an increase in imports of machinery, particularly textile machinery.

First round of Australia, China FTA negotiations begin

23 May 2005

Australian Trade Minister Mark Vaile announced that the first round of China - Australia FTA negotiations began in Sydney on May 23.

The launch coincides with an address by the chairman of China's National People's Congress, Mr Wu Bangguo to senior Australian and Chinese business representatives at the China-Australia Economic and Trade Cooperation Forum. "Today marks an historic period in our bilateral relationship. China is one of the fastest growing economies in the world and Australia is extremely well placed to take full advantage of this significant export opportunity," Vaile said.

"As from today, senior trade officials will map the way forward for the negotiations operating on the principle that they will be comprehensive, covering goods, services and investment, and be completed as a single undertaking," Mr Vaile said.

EU will not reinstate quotas on China

23 May 2005

Following the US Senate's decision last week to impose limits on the import of certain Chinese textile imports, European trade commissioner Peter Mandelson has stated that Europe will not impose limits.

Speaking at the World Economic Forum in Jordan, Mr Mandelson said that, despite the problems faced by European manufacturers, imposing quotas was not a solution to the problem, as a long term strategy is required to deal with the open market that has existed since January 1 this year.

China has already agreed to raise export taxes on 74 products starting June 1st. This will lead to price increases and hopefully increase the competitiveness within the textile markets.

Columbia Sportswear to open new UK office

23 May 2005

Columbia Sportswear in the UK and Ireland has announced plans to move to the south of the country to be closer to key customers. Columbia Sportswear International AG, will relocate its UK and Ireland head office from Sunderland to a new Reading Office in June 2005.

"We are very pleased to be setting up a new office in Reading," said Paul Hayes, regional sales manager for the UK and Ireland. "The new site provides a central location that will allow us to be much closer to our key customers and all aspects of our business functions; further strengthening our relationships within the outdoor industry. Working alongside our European teams we are centralising all efforts to promote and support the brand in the UK and Ireland."

Columbia Sportswear International, AG is a wholly owned subsidiary of Columbia Sportswear Company. The company designs, sources, markets and distributes active outdoor apparel and footwear.

Outlast technology moves into tailored clothing

23 May 2005

Israeli Manufacturer of men's and women's tailored clothing, Bagir Ltd., is introducing a new collection of hi-tech wool blend tailored clothing that adjusts to a wearer's body heat, maintaining a comfort level whether the surroundings are hot or cold. The fabric - which has been designed by Bagir's sister company Polgat Textiles Ltd. - combines Outlast's Smart Fabric Technology with wool.

Offer Gilboa, Bagir's CEO stated, "For the first time ever, the fabric combination of cutting-edge technology with a natural fibre such as wool provides the ultimate blend of comfort, quality and performance in tailored clothing. Not only is the outside shell of the suit performance driven, the lining also provides this high tech capability. Polgat Textiles Ltd, has exclusive rights to use this ground-breaking fabric making it the only fabric company in the world to utilise this unique fabrication and technology." The collection of tailored suits will be retailed under the "Stays Cool" label.

Zumiez reports 34.4% sales increase in Q1

23 May 2005

Action sports related apparel, footwear, equipment and accessories retailer, Zumiez (pronounced "zoomies,") Inc., has reported positive results for the first quarter ended April 30, 2005, with a total net sales increase of 34.4% to $33.4 million from $24.8 million reported in the prior year. Comparable store sales increased 12.1% compared with 8.3% in the first quarter of fiscal 2004.

Rick Brooks, president and CEO of Zumiez, stated "Our solid first quarter performance represents a great way to start the new fiscal year. We achieved strong operating gains driven by new store openings, comparable store sales increases, and operating margin expansion. We believe these results are a testament to the strength of our retail concept and underscore our ability to effectively reach our core consumer."

On May 5, 2005, the company completed an initial public offering of 3,593,750 shares of common stock at a price to the public of $18.00 per share.
For fiscal 2005, the company plans to open 35 new stores. In the first quarter, Zumiez opened six new stores and is on plan for store openings for the remainder of the year.

Zumiez stores cater to young men and women between ages 12-24, focusing on skateboarding, surfing, snowboarding, motocross and BMX.

Yue Yuen revenues rise 16.5% in April

24 May 2005

The world's largest sports and athletic footwear manufacturer, Hong Kong-based Yue Yuen has reported an increase of 16.5% in revenues to reach $282 million for April 2005 compared with the same period in 2004. The year-to-date revenues reached US$1,013.4 million.

Johnson family awarded

24 May 2005

The Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University, USA has awarded this year's Kellogg Award for Special Contributions to Family Business to the Samuel C. Johnson family of Racine, Wisconsin for more than a century of leadership in the field of family business.

The Samuel C. Johnson Family of Enterprises spans five generations and owns businesses in four different markets including outdoor recreational products company; consumer products; institutional products and services; and financial services.

Together their enterprises employ over 26,000 people in more than 110 countries worldwide, and have combined annual revenues of nearly $9 billion.

Euro-zone industrial new orders down by 0.5% in March

24 May 2005

According to Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Communities, the new orders index in the euro-zone industrial fell by 0.5% in March 2005 compared with February 2005, whilst in the EU25 new orders decreased by 2.1% in March 2005. On a year-on-year basis industrial new orders fell by 0.7% compared with March 2004 in the euro-zone, although they actually increased by 0.1% in the EU25.

Manufacturing of textiles and textile products fell by 4.1% in the euro-zone and 2.1% in the EU25. Machinery and equipment declined by 4.2% in the euro-zone but increased by 0.8% in the EU25.

Donaldson Membranes to highlight Tetratex at Techtextil

24 May 2005

Donaldson Membranes will demonstrate a range of its Tetratex ePTFE membrane products at Techtextil in Frankfurt, June 7-9.

Performance fabrics will take the spotlight to illustrate how Tetratex ePTFE laminates are both waterproof and breathable and, when used in garments, provide the wearer with superior comfort and durability. These materials cover a wide variety of markets, including fire fighting; medical; military; recreational and workwear, such as police and postal workers.

Manufactured from 100% PTFE Polymer resin, Tetratex membranes are chemically inert and thermally stable up to 325ºC. The filtration membranes exhibit on average more than 100 million pores per cm^2.

Study on global market for performance apparel published

24 May 2005

Dublin-based research group, Research and Markets, has added a new title to its catalogue, Global Market Review of Performance Apparel - Forecasts To 2010. The report outlines the market, provides product and fabric reviews, and profiles the major players, namely DuPont, WL Gore & Associates, Sympatex Technologies, Natura, Klopman, Polartec and Sioen. It also looks to the future, forecasting the market, performance and growth to 2010.

The study includes the topics: Why is performance important?; The market; Performance apparel, product review; Performance apparel, and fabric review.

Polo Ralph Lauren to acquire footwear licensee

24 May 2005

Polo Ralph Lauren Corporation has announced that it has signed a definitive agreement to purchase Ralph Lauren Footwear Co., Inc., its global licensee for footwear for men, women and children that is currently a wholly owned subsidiary of Reebok International Ltd.

"We are very excited about the development of a global luxury accessories business and this acquisition moves us closer to that goal. We are assembling the right businesses and people to build our accessories into an important part of our future," said Ralph Lauren, chairman and CEO of the company.

The purchase of Ralph Lauren Footwear is a cash transaction of approximately $110 million, subject to closing adjustments and is subject to review under the customary closing conditions.

Sporting goods sales set to reach $50 billion

24 May 2005

According to the latest consumer study carried out by America's National Sporting Goods Association (NGSA), retail sales of sporting goods, which reached $48.9 billion in 2004, are expected to grow another 2% in 2005, For 2005, sales of athletic and sports equipment, shoes and clothing are forecast to reach $50 billion.

In 2004, athletic and sport clothing rose 6%, to reach $11.2 billion. Footwear showed a 2% gain to reach $14.75 billion in 2004 versus $14.45 billion the previous year. Equipment also showed a 2% gain. Sales of sports equipment were $22.9 billion in 2004 versus $22.4 billion in 2003.

Sales of all sporting goods (clothing, footwear and equipment) rose 3%, after being virtually unchanged in 2003. Sales reached $48.9 billion in 2004 versus $47.4 billion in 2003.

“The Sporting Goods Market in 2005” is a NSGA consumer study that projects purchases of sporting goods products based on a survey of 100,000 US households. The study is available for $235 for retailer/dealer members of the Association and free to manufacturers and sustaining members.

DuPont to sell Sorona fabrics on-line

25 May 2005

DuPont has added Sorona to the FAST website, allowing fabric buyers, apparel designers and brand houses to access and request fabric samples made with the company's most flexible fibre on-line. The service, launched in summer of 2004, is said to cut lead times and speed development.

"Leading-edge fabrics made with Sorona allow makers of swimwear, intimate apparel and active wear to overcome the limitations of nylon and polyester by combining comfort-stretch, performance and easy care with unprecedented softness” said Dawson Winch, global product and marketing manager, DuPont Sorona business.
The Sorona business team has implemented the new marketing option for more than 20 DuPont partner mills that manufacture and market fabrics made with Sorona. Many of the licensees and their mill customers now featured on FAST are located in the Asia Pacific region.

Duty abolished on Hong Kong textiles

25 May 2005

Textiles and clothing originating from Hong Kong and undergoing outward processing on the Mainland are to be exempted from export duties, according to an agreement signed at the Joint Steering Committee meeting of CEPA (Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement) recently held in Beijing.

The decision has been welcomed by Secretary for Commerce, Industry and Technology John Tsang who believes it will help eliminate adverse impact to Hong Kong’s textile and clothing exports.

The automatic export licensing measure applied on exports to Hong Kong will also be dispensed with.

Picanol introduces OMNIplus 800 airjet weaving machine

25 May 2005

Picanol, a Belgian manufacturer of airjet weaving machines and a supplier of 2,600 weaving mills worldwide, has launched OMNIplus 800. The machine is said to offer a new standard in weaving with properties that include higher performance, immediate fabric quality and full modularity.

The new machine is said to offer higher performance by the optimisation of insertion parameters and thanks to the ultra-short drive train and the balanced, robust construction. Minimal downtime, higher fabric quality achieved through quick and easy settings and full modularity are the other features of the machine.

New dates added to Fitsystem workshops

25 May 2005

Due to a higher than anticipated response from outdoor retailers, a new date has been added to the June 2005 workshops for the Phil Oren Fitsystem in the UK.

Now in its 11th year, the goal of the FitSystem is to improve standards within professional footwear fitting – which is said to create happier, healthier customers and greater sales. It offers professional training to retailers in order to allow them to offer

their customers a precise and professional fitting service.

The workshops have also had great support from trade sponsors which for 2005 include Bite Orthosport, Brannock Device, Bridgedale, DryGuy, Gabel, Lowa, Nikwax, Smartwool, Superfeet, SGB Outdoor and W.L. Gore & Associates (UK).
The workshos will run between June 16 to 20 in Crawley in the South of England and June 22 to 26 in Edinburgh.

Sympatex expands in Eastern Europe

25 May 2005

Due to an increasing demand for quality performance products in countries such as the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Poland, Sympatex Technologies has decided to expand its sales structure in the East European countries.

According to Sympatex, growth in these markets has been fuelled by the expansion of the EU and as a result the company has increased its marketing expenditure and structure in these countries in order to promote its product range and those of its local brand partners.

In 2004 Sympatex reported an increase turnover of 300%, with high-profile domestic partners such as Alpine Pro, Humi Outdoor, Alp-VHR and Mons and Trek. The company expects a significant increase for 2005.

O'Neill and Eleksen unveil first integrated solar backpack

25 May 2005

Eleksen Ltd and O'Neill Europe have unveiled the much anticipated H2 series of wearable electronics that consists of three technologically advanced items: what is claimed to be the world's first Integrated Solar Backpack with communication and entertainment functionalities, an Entertainment Backpack, and a second-generation Communication and Entertainment Jacket (formerly known as the HUB). All of the products are the result of O'Neill's designs and Eleksen's intelligent and interactive fabric switching technology.

The solar communication and entertainment backpack incorporates two flexible solar panels and a Bluetooth module. In optimum light conditions, the solar cells provide charge to the user's iPod, mobile phone and Bluetooth module via a USB recharging system. Power from the solar cells travels through conductive fabric layers within the backpack, to the integrated communication and entertainment systems. The smart technology can also identify which appliance is in most need of the extra power and allocate the charge accordingly.

For hands-free calling, a microphone is built-in to the left shoulder strap and a universal headphone is incorporated in the chest pocket. When the user receives a call on their mobile the iPod transmission is automatically interrupted; pausing the music until the call is finished. The Bluetooth module also allows for voice recognition dialling.

The iPod and Bluetooth module is stored in a discreet protective and water resistant casing in the back of the pack. Once installed, the iPod can be controlled via a fabric control panel located on the packs left shoulder strap. This means that the user can control volume, skip and pause tracks by touching their strap.

M&S profits fall 19%

25 May 2005

UK retailer Marks and Spencer (M&S) has reported profit fall of 19% for the financial year ended April 2, 2005.
UK retail sales decreased 1.7% to £7,034.7 million ($12.9 billion) from £7,159.8 million ($13 billion), whilst international retail sales were £675.6 million ($1.2 billion), up 1.6% from last year's £665.0 million ($1.2 billion).Combined retail sales were down 1.5% on the year and operating profit fell 13.8%.

Arc'Teryx wins Polartec Apex Award

25 May 2005

Arc'Teryx has won the 2005 Polartec Apex Design Awards for the best Polartec product

in North America with its new Fugitive Hoody. The award goes to the best Polartec-based garments that will be available to consumers in autumn 2005. The item was selected based on the style, function, and fit of the garment as well as its innovative and appropriate use of Polartec fabric in its design.

The mountain-inspired garment uses Polartec Hardface technology – a textile that utilises a surface-fusion polymer application to create a fleece with a soft and fuzzy interior and smooth exterior face. The coated fibres are said to offer durability and great weather protection, with a high level of thermo regulation.

Diadora & Damiano Cunego sign sponsorship deal

25 May 2005

Italian sportswear brand Diadora has signed a sponsorship agreement with cyclist Damiano Cunego, leader of the Team Lampre-Caffita. It will last until the end of 2007, with Cunego using the company's highly personalised materials designed to enhance his technical and athletic skills.

The winner of the 2004 Giro d'Italia will be wearing his Pro Racer Carbons, shoes designed specifically to fit his feet as well as Hidden Power technical underwear.

Good news for sailors

25 May 2005

Yachts are becoming Poland's flagship export product and the country's most recognisable brand, according to Polish Boots Industry Association Polskie Jachty (Polish Yachts). Producers such as French Jeanneau or Marine Power Europe have in recent years come to rely on the Polish skilled and cheap workforce.

The total value of yachts, recreational boats and rowing boats exported in 2002 amounted to PLN 236.6 million ($71.5 million). A year later the figure rose to PLN 414.6 million ($125.4 million) and exports kept growing – reaching almost PLN 463.9 million ($140.3 million) at the end of 2004. The bulk of the boats are sold to European countries such as France and Germany, receiving approximately 23% and 17% of Polish boat exports respectively. Russia has also become a major market.

Microencapsulation fragrance system for textiles wins award

26 May 2005

International Flavors & Fragrances Inc. (IFF) was recently awarded the 2005 FiFi Award, one of the highest honours in the fragrance industry, for "Technological Breakthrough of the Year" with its Sensory Perception technology - a microencapsulation delivery system for textiles that allows fragrance or active ingredients, such as aloe vera or vitamin E, to be released from clothing, sheets, or other textiles over a period of time.

In partnership with IFF, Invista has created its Lycra Body Care, a line of textile finishes for its Lycra brand offering microencapsulated benefits. The technology has also been endorsed by Woolmark Development International Ltd.

Interfilière to welcome 21 new exhibitors

26 May 2005

Interfilière which will open its doors from September 3-5, 2005 in Lyon, France will welcome 395 international exhibitors, including 21 newcomers, at the show which covers some 26,000 m2.The exhibitors will come from Europe and around the world with some travelling from as far as Brazil and China to participate in the event.

EU deadline on Chinese textiles set

26 May 2005

Following talks between Chinese and EU officials on May 25, the EU has said that it is optimistic of an agreement over Chinese imports of t-shirts and flax yarn being found by the end of May. EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson will continue informal talks with Chinese Vice Minister of Commerce,

Gao Hucheng, until May 31 in the hope that there will be no need to launch formal consultations with China on the two categories of textile products that are causing concern in the EU.

However, if the talks fail to resolve the issue, the EU will be able to launch formal talks and could impose quotas on the items being discussed. The EU is also currently investigating another seven categories of textile imports from China.

US researchers use nanotechnology for chemical protection

26 May 2005

Researchers at North Carolina State University are using the latest breakthroughs in nanotechnology to develop layers of smart textiles that will keep first responders and the military safe.

Dr Juan Hinestroza at the Department of Textile Engineering, Chemistry and Science, NC State, and researchers at the University of Puerto Rico, have pioneered a method to develop chemical-resistant textiles by attaching nanolayers to natural fibres. These are only 20 nanometers (20 billionths of a metre) thick and made of different polymers that can control what passes through the layer. The process is called selective transport.

There are said to be multiple potential uses for this technology such as gloves coated with arthritis drugs, military uniforms coated with antibacterial layers, antibacterial sheets for submarine bunks, comfortable protective clothing against several chemical and biological warfare agents.

IFAI announces keynote speaker

26 May 2005

The Industrial Fabrics Association International (IFAI) has announced that Doug Lipp, an internationally acclaimed expert on customer service, leadership and diversity, will be the keynote speaker for IFAI Expo 2005 in San Antonio.

Lipp, former head of training at Disney Studio's Walt Disney University, will provide insight into companies that expand globally or provide products to culturally diverse customers and the problems they face.

Author of The Changing Face of Today's Customer, which addresses how businesses can be more responsive to the growing number of foreign national customers and employees, Lipp will offer an evaluation of global and US customer service, leadership, and cultural diversity that affect businesses in the US and abroad.

Japan's footwear imports increase

26 May 2005

According to Japanese customs statistics, Japan's shoe imports increased by 12% to $588 million and imports from China increased by 11.95% to $388 million in the first two months of 2005 (January and February).

For 2004, Japan's total shoe imports reached to $3.26 billion, an increase of 6.31% from 2003. The number of shoes imported increased to 519 million pairs, up 6.38% on the prior year.

However, although imports from China accounted for around 90% of the total volume of footwear imports, in terms of value, Chinese imports accounted for only 70%. The average unit price of shoes imported into Japan in 2004 was $8.66, whilst the average price of those imported from China was around $6.77.

President of Teva resigns

26 May 2005

Deckers Outdoor Corporation has announced that Robert Orlando, president of Teva, has left the company effective May 24, 2005 in order to pursue other interests. The company is currently seeking a successor, but in the meantime, Angel Martinez, Deckers' president and CEO, has assumed all of his responsibilities.

Chairman of the Board, Doug Otto, stated, "I would like to personally thank Bob for his

significant contributions over the years and wish him well in his future endeavours. Teva remains one of the most recognised performance brands in the outdoor industry and we are committed to fully capitalising on our leadership position in the market."

Deckers Outdoor designs and markets, functional and fashion-oriented footwear for high performance outdoor activities and everyday casual use. The company's products are sold under the Teva, Simple and Ugg brand names.

OptiTex launches advanced converters for CAD

27 May 2005

US developer of CAD/CAM solutions for sewn products and other related industries, OptiTex USA, Inc. has released its latest pattern and marker converters for the CAD/CAM industry.

This latest update product allows companies to convert and open their pattern files in Optitex's 3D software, without having to correct or re-create the information needed. "The biggest issue for CAD/CAM users is the ability to share production files with any overseas or local manufacturer regardless of the software or version of software. OptiTex Converters offer the perfect solution, without missing information. Customers can convert grading, variation grading, mirrored pieces, notch types, and even markers," said Julia Shaw, OptiTex's support/project manager.

The new Advanced Converters are said to be able to convert Lectra files (mdl OR .vet, .iba), the ability to convert Gerber files (all versions including Markers), Microdynamic Files (.d, .g, .syn, .ann, .m), and Investronica (.ZONA, .EXP, .PGS).

New clog to aid post-athletic recovery

27 May 2005

After three years of research and development, a husband-and-wife team of podiatrists has come up with what they believe to be a way to improve foot health. Drs. Ian Yu and Heather Bui (DPM) have launched a range of podiatric clogs and accessories, Capsoles, which have been designed for pre- and post-sport use and for those with special medical needs, including arthritis, diabetes, osteoporosis and vascular disease.

The lightweight, slip-on clogs feature a protective toe box, a breathable moisture management system and a removable EVA insole that can be altered to fit almost any foot type; Capsoles can also accommodate custom orthotics and has a proprietary cavity designed to accommodate a graphite plate, typically used for managing stress fractures and other forefoot injuries. Increased arch support, an anti-slip sole, an optional hook-and-loop back strap, and a foot bed that provides dynamic shock absorption and cushioning while resisting compression are said to give the wearer greater comfort and safety.

"Capsoles podiatric clogs offer a smart alternative to après sport shoes like flip-flops," said Yu. "We have gone a step beyond ordinary shoe technology in developing our products. I think people will find there just isn't another at-home orthotic shoe or post-workout shoe out there that offers the unique combination of style and function that defines Capsoles."

IDC launches new RFID system

27 May 2005

UK-based IDC has introduced an RFID (radio frequency identification) system Simplitrak which employs read/write tags that can be embedded into products at their point of manufacture. This facility is said to enable manufacturers to provide full product tracking and traceability, and to guard against counterfeit products and components entering their supply chain. It also equips quality assurance (QA) departments with the means to provide customers with processing data for compliance to set procedures and policies.

"We see tremendous potential for this system as a profit improver in all areas of manufacturing, handling, distribution and commerce," says Kevin Buckley, Managing Director of IDC Simplicon. "The ability for companies to have tracking and tracing of all

their products in real time means total efficiency in supply chain asset management and greater visibility of assets generally. In addition, by placing uniquely coded and customised RFID tags on containers, pallets, cartons or individual items - physical goods can be, in effect, digitised, enabling easier assimilation into Internet-based e-commerce business systems."

When being processed prior to shipment, each carton passes a tag reader, which transmits a complete list of its contents for display on a PC. The PC checks the actual contents of the carton against the known manifest for the carton ID to produce a Pass or Fail result. If the carton passes then the carton ID is written to a datablock on each tag, which is locked. Other datablocks can also be written with hand held RF terminals during QA checks etc. In this way all of the garments can be checked at each stage of their journey from manufacture to lorry, lorry to distribution centre and distribution centre to store.

Chinese textile machinery selling well

27 May 2005

According to China's Ministry of Commerce, the demand for textile machinery has been on the rise since the end of textile quotas, largely due to orders from EU and USA.

The popularity of the machinery is attributed to lower prices and short delivery times of two to four months. Quality of textile machinery from China is as good as that from Europe but at a more favourable price.

As Indian domestic machinery manufacturers take longer to supply it, textile factories in India have been importing the machines from China in large numbers.

CMAI pushes for Chinese-styled labour law

27 May 2005

The Clothing Manufacturers Association of India (CMAI) wants the Chinese labour model to be implemented in the Indian garment industry and has urged for amendments to the existing labour laws in the country.

The organisation has recommended implementation of annual contracts for employees in the garment industry that would restrict activities of trade unions in the industry. It also suggests the government should allow the industries to terminate 3% of the total workforce to maintain efficiency standards in the industry.

Other recommendations include a well-defined exit policy for entrepreneurs intending to close their businesses. Factory owners should also be allowed to extend working hours from 48 hours per week to 60 hours, CMAI says.

Milliken introduces triple-action fabric technology

27 May 2005

Milliken & Company has introduced StainSmart Comfort Zone, a new triple-action fabric technology designed to have the benefits of stain repel, stain release and moisture wicking in polyesters and poly/cotton blends.

StainSmart Comfort Zone is an evolution of Milliken's core dual-action stain repel-and-release fabric technology, StainSmart. It extends the current capabilities by adding a third performance feature, wicking, through a patent-pending finishing process.

The outside, or face of the fabric, repels liquid-based spills, thus preventing most stains. The inside, or back of the fabric, wicks perspiration away from the body providing comfort for the consumer.

The entire fabric contains a "releasing" technology that works on tough, ground-in stains that penetrate fabric, such as salad dressing, by allowing these stains to wash out during normal laundering, making it ideal for numerous apparel and uniform applications.

StainSmart technology is available in a wide range of fabrics for the high-performance active apparel; casual menswear and

womenswear; workwear; military, medical and school uniforms; hospitality; and healthcare and military lodging markets.

Sportswear counterfeits high on Gieschen's list

27 May 2005

Canada based Gieschen Consultancy has released a report on worldwide counterfeit enforcement activity (investigations, raids, seizures, arrests, charges, convictions, sentences, civil litigation, public announcements) for the month of April 2005, according to which there had been more than 250 incidents worth $3,000,045,753,460 across 42 countries.

The top countries pursuing counterfeiters and pirates, at over $1.0 million, include the Philippines, USA, UAE, UK, South Korea, Saudi Arabia, China, Australia, Russia, Bangladesh, South Africa and Thailand. The most popular items to counterfeit include clothing and accessories (in fifth place) with 9 incidents worth $5.6 million. The top brands counterfeited include Nike and adidas.

Glen Gieschen, managing director of Gieschen Consultancy stated "Based on the types of bogus items seized, it is clear the manufacturing operations have not been affected by past raids and are increasing their capacity to meet a growing demand. Specifically, phoney copyright and trademarked products are expanding through innovative marketing and distribution channels such as Internet retail and auctions, mail order, and spam operations."

Silk exporters counter Indian anti-dumping duties

27 May 2005

Some 20 out of 100 top Chinese silk exporters, accounting for 80% of China's silk fabric exports, are to fight an Indian anti-dumping case worth $180 million.

Representatives of the Chinese companies and lawyers from three legal firms attended a meeting in Hangzhou to discuss ways to counter the anti-dumping case against Chinese silk in India.

China's Chamber of Commerce is to investigate whether the exports damaged the Indian industry which claims the exporters are selling at a lower than normal cost causing disruption.

Scottish textile industry warned

27 May 2005

Scotland's textile industry was told innovate or die during the second Scottish Textiles Conference, convened by Scottish Enterprise in Edinburgh. Delegates ranging form traditional garment makers to manufacturers of hi-tech synthetics heard these are the only two options in an increasingly competitive and fast-moving global market.

James Sugden, managing director of Johnstons of Elgin and Chairman of the Scottish Textile Manufacturers' Association, said the industry has much creative talent but has to address the changing markets and better utilise its workforce.
Kirsty Scott, manager of Scottish Textiles said: "Design innovation is often about trends and concepts. That's got to be underpinned by ways of thinking about how organisations are structured. We can't compete on price and we can't compete on production, so we need to be very much customer-led to hold our own in our niche markets."

However, the results of a Scotland-wide survey of the textiles industry reveal that 42% of companies have experienced increases in turnover, margins and productivity. Levels of innovation and decision-making are also high with 83% of those surveyed making all design, product development and manufacturing and production decisions in Scotland.

Vietnam’s exports to USA soar

27 May 2005

According to recent official figures, Vietnam’s footwear exports to the USA rose by 30% to $111.9 million in the first quarter. The country’s footwear exports are also on the recovery in countries like Spain, with an increase of 19% to $19.39 million, and in Italy a rise of 13% to $36.51 million.

Trade experts expect US exports to rise even further with restrictions being imposed on Chinese imports and the surging currency in Brazil which is limiting this traditional footwear supplier to the country. There has, however, been a drop in exports to Germany, of 27.65%, and to France, of 25%.

Ashworth announces record revenues

28 May 2005

American designer of men's and women's golf-inspired garments Ashworth, Inc. has reported record net revenues of $64.7 million, an increase of 18% compared with the $54.7 million reported in the same quarter last year. However, net income for the second quarter dropped to $4.8 million compared with $5.7 million in 2004. This was said to be due to sluggish golf sales and higher than anticipated operating expenses associated with a new embroidery and distribution centre.

The company also revised its guidance for the full fiscal year ended October 31, 2005. Revenues are expected to be between $207 and $212 million compared with its previous guidance of $207 to $215 million.