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Business Week

6th June 05 – 12th June 05

L.L.Bean to use PrimaLoft insulation in ASC programme

10 June 2005

L.L. Bean has opted to use PrimaLoftR-Insulation TechnologyT for the new American Skiing Company (ASC) outerwear programme that it was recently awarded.

Beginning this autumn, outerwear will be supplied to all on-mountain personnel at all ASC resorts that include Sunday River and Sugarloaf in Maine, Attitash in New Hampshire, Killington, Pico Mountain and Mount Snow in Vermont, The Canyons in Utah, and Steamboat in Colorado.

L.L. Bean product developers and designers worked with ASC's staff to develop an on-mountain uniform. As a result, the L.L. Bean team designed three jackets - one shell and two insulated with different weights of PrimaLoft.

Similar versions of the ASC jackets will be available to L.L. Bean customers this autumn as part of the Gore-Tex/PrimaLoft Mountain Pro Series.

PrimaLoftR - Insulation TechnologyT, is manufactured by Albany International Corporation at its facilities in the US, Italy and China and is featured in outerwear, sleeping bags, gloves, footwear and bedding.

First Inline Summit at ispo summer 05

10 June 2005

The manufacturers and brands of the inline industry will come together for the first time at ispo summer 05 (July 3 to 5, 2005) to present traders and associations with the many aspects of inline sports in the hope of providing the industry with new stimuli.

The areas covered will be Nordic Fitness and Fitness Skating, and speed and night skating. In addition to this, the largest inline event in the world, the Munich Blade Night, will start from the trade fair grounds. The Blade Night attracts between 15,000 and 20,000 skaters onto Munich’s streets every Monday evening in the summer months and will is set to provide a gigantic stimulus to the inline segment at ispo summer 05.

ECCO golf shoes range introduced in the UK

10 June 2005

ECCO Oxford, an online retailer of ECCO shoes, has introduced the new ECCO golf classic shoes for men in the UK. The performance leather shoe features a high tech outsole with enhanced lateral torque that is said to improve stability throughout the entire golf swing. To enhance traction the shoe is also fitted with Eclipse cleats from Trisport and Fast Twist insert system.

With a vegetable tanned leather comfort fibre system (CFS) inlay sole featuring shock absorbing PU, providing a healthy, the shoe is said to offer a comfortable and cool environment.

EU Trade Commissioner visits China for further talks on textiles

10 June 2005

EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson arrived in Shanghai on June 10 to meet his Chinese counterpart, Minister of Commerce Bo Xilai, to discuss Chinese textiles imports to the EU.

Continuing the recent intensive dialogue on textiles, the Commissioner will hold talks with Minister Bo Xilai with a view to finding a solution to deal with the market situation in the EU following the elimination of the quota system on January 1, 2005. In a speech earlier this week, the Commissioner rejected a return to the quota system for textiles, stating that his policy is based on the need to “manage change and adjustment, rather than to manage trade” – preferably through a negotiated agreement.

Hohenstein develops prototype with spacer knits

10 June 2005

Within a current research project, the Hohenstein Institutes have developed a prototype of an outdoor jacket using spacer knits for thermal insulation and have tested its physiological properties in comparison with standard commercial materials such as fleece and nonwovens.

According to the researchers, the laboratory test revealed that spacer knits offered advantages when liquid perspiration has to be transported and dried quickly - primarily for strenuous physical activities. They are therefore seen as being particularly well-suited to sportswear as well as for work wear.

However, the study also deduced that under "normal" wear conditions with moderate production of perspiration, fleece material proved to be superior to the spacer knits in respect to thermal insulation and breathability. However, if clothing is compressed by external influences related to wear (e.g. by a rucksack), the 3D spacers that were used demonstrated better thermal insulation properties thanks to their high elasticity under compression.

Foot Locker makes management changes

10 June 2005

Foot Locker, Inc., the New York-based specialty athletic retailer, has named Keith Daly as president and CEO of its Foot Locker Europe division. The company also announced that it has promoted Marla Anderson to president and CEO of its Lady Foot Locker division, replacing Mr. Daly.

Keith Daly will report to Matthew D. Serra, chairman and CEO of Foot Locker, Inc. and Marla Anderson will report to Rick Mina, president and CEO of Foot Locker, Inc., USA. Both management changes are effective immediately.

As of April 30, 2005, the company operated 492 stores in 14 countries in Europe. As of the same date, Lady Foot Locker operated 555 stores in the United States.

SATRA plans first Asia ‘clinics’

10 June 2005

UK-based SATRA is planning to hold its first ‘safety footwear clinics’ in China later this month.

Peter Doughty, SATRA’s specialist in safety footwear testing and certification, is set to meet manufacturers seeking more information on the latest European Union safety footwear standards. He will hold sessions at the SATRA representative office in Dongguan City from June 20-23 and at the Holiday Inn in Zhuhai from June 24-25.
"We have acted in response to the many enquiries we received at the recent Asia Pacific Leather Fair," says SATRA deputy chief executive Richard Turner.

"It was clear that many wanted to know as soon possible the full implications of the standards as they affect all safety footwear destined for the European market."

Peter Doughty has 15 years of experience in safety footwear. He heads up the SATRA team which carries out thousands of tests each year. The team CE marks a wide range of safety products each year and has already issued almost 3,000 CE certificates.

Jules Coventry teams up with Zeal Optics

10 June 2005

Ancillotti UK MTB rider Jules Coventry has teamed up with Zeal Optics, makers of sports eyewear for athletes, and will use Zeal goggles throughout the rest of the 2005 season.

Coventry consistently finished in the top 25 in the 2004 UCI World Cup Series. She also finished fourth overall in the British National Series and took the English Championship title.

For 2005 her race commitments are centred on the UCI World Cup Series, Masters European Championships, British Masters Championships and the British National Series.

Sports licensed product sales fall slightly

10 June 2005

According to SGMA International's Sports Licensing White Paper (2005 edition), 2004 sales of sports licensed products in the United States were $12.6 billion, down slightly from $12.7 billion in 2003.

According to the report, the strengths of sports licensed product sales were in apparel (33% of all sales), accessories, sporting goods, video games/software, and publishing. The popularity of these items overseas is continuing to grow, especially for the NBA. Sales of MLB merchandise also grew for the seventh consecutive year. Sales of NFL merchandise rose by a double-digit rate in 2004.

Meanwhile, SGMA International has announced will hold a webinar on June 15 and 22 entitled "Protecting Your Products with Trademarks and Patents", part of its executive web seminar series, focusing on intellectual property issues.
The third instalment of the SGMA Executive Webinar Series will focus on the key legal issues to navigate when taking product to market and maintaining brand integrity, explaining intensive and cost-effective exploration into the complexities of intellectual property rights.

European worries over Chinese exports spread to footwear

09 June 2005

After months of intensive discussions related to the rise in Chinese textile imports since the ending of WTO quotas at the beginning of the year, it seems that the European footwear industry is now predicting a similar situation in its own industry. European manufacturers are now calling for safeguards in order to protect the European industry.

At the Annual Assembly of European Footwear Manufacturers, which recently took place in Elche, Spain, Rossano Soldini, ANCI President said, "The time has come for the European Commission to listen to the arguments of the footwear industry.
"An historical decision was made today," said Rossano Soldini, president of the National Association of Italian Footwear Manufacturers. "As proposed by ANCI, the 15 national footwear federations of Europe voted unanimously to stage a demonstration in Brussels at E.U. headquarters. On June 15 we will symbolically hand over the keys to our companies to the EU Commissioner.

"We believe the time has come for the EU to listen to the arguments of the footwear industry, which is in crisis throughout Europe primarily due to the invasion of Chinese products, and to take urgent measures necessary to defend an important part of industry not only in Italy, but also in Europe."

The European Commission has said that for the first four months of this year six categories of shoe imports from China into the EU increased by an average of 700%. However, in response to this the Chinese Customs Leather Association has claimed

that the true increase is 2.8% in terms of volume and 30.8% in terms of value.

Milano Unica brings four shows together

09 June 2005

Italy's textile shows – Ideabiella, Ideacomo, Moda In and Shirt Avenue –are to be held together for the first time as Milano Unica September 13 – 16, 2005, in Milan at the Portello. Each show is to retain its individual character and will last the full four days.

The show is to be launched at The British Academy, London, on June 20, 2005, presented in conjunction with Moda in Trends Presentations. It will showcase new fabric and accessory directions for autumn/winter 2006/07.

ITGLWF condemns retailer over response to factory disaster

09 June 2005

The world's second largest retailer, Carrefour, has been accused of failing to take adequate steps to ensure worker safety in the wake of the Spectrum factory disaster in Savar in Bangladesh which left 83 workers dead and well over 100 workers are still missing.

Neil Kearney, general secretary of the International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation (ITGLWF) said, "Late last year, Spectrum Sweaters received a large Carrefour order. Spectrum is part of the Shahriyar Group, a regular Carrefour supplier which was audited in 2002 and was given a 'good' rating. Carrefour has been unable to explain how it could possibly consider that conditions at Spectrum were satisfactory.

"It wasn't just that the company built a four-storey building on a swamp and then added another five floors without bothering to seek planning permission. There were many other issues too. The company's record on health and safety and working hours was appalling. One worker had died and another had been seriously injured in recent workplace accidents. When the factory collapsed at around one in the morning, hundreds of workers, including some as young as 15, were working late to complete an urgent order. And on the morning of the accident, workers detected cracks in the walls but were told to keep working.

It is unforgivable that not only did Carrefour fail to notice these problems, but that it has not bothered to learn lessons from the Savar incident in order to ensure worker safety in its supply chain."

UK student develops electrical re-charge bag

09 June 2005

Andrew Prince, A final year student in Product Design at Nottingham Trent University, UK, has developed a bag that re-charges personal electronic devises such as mobile phones, digital cameras, ipods, and other portable players.

The Wired Charge Bag has been designed using induction charging technology that allows a safe electrical charge to pass from a charging wall into the battery unit of each devise.

Three electrical devises can be used a time and the front of the bag glows when the charge is complete. The bag has been produced using a black three layer Gore-Tex fabric.

Oakley opens London store

09 June 2005

Oakley, Inc. has announced the opening of a flagship O Store located in the Covent Garden area of London. This latest addition to the company's expanding domestic and international retail presence will be owned and operated by Oakley's wholly owned subsidiary, Oakley U.K. Ltd.

"The UK represents a very important international market and the London O Store provides the ideal place to showcase our international brand and full range of product offerings," commented Oakley chief operating officer Link Newcomb.

Mike Prendergast leaves Columbia Sportswear Company

08 June 2005

Columbia Sportswear Company has announced the resignation of Mike Prendergast as president of Sorel Division, effective immediately.
"Mike has made meaningful contributions to Sorel in the short time he has been associated with the organization. He has sharpened Sorel's strategic focus and expanded and developed the sales team, and we thank him for his input" commented Tim Boyle, president and CEO.

Columbia Sportswear Company is a provider of active outdoor apparel and footwear. Its Sorel division specialises in utilitarian footwear and apparel for outdoor industrial and recreational use.

ICSA and AAFA to co-sponsor radio frequency identification study

08 June 2005

The Voluntary Interindustry Commerce Standards Association (VICS) and American Apparel and Footwear Association (AAFA) will co-sponsor a study on radio frequency identification (RFID) technology use. The study will be conducted and summarized by Kurt Salmon Associates (KSA) and will probe retailers, suppliers, transportation companies, and technology firms to determine performance implications of RFID adoption.

"We will define the best approach apparel and footwear companies should take in the adoption of RFID technology across their value chain based on four factors: business impact, technical feasibility and cost, retail format, and merchandise category," said KSA Principal Stephen Bogart.

"KSA will use its global experience in RFID planning and implementation, deep industry knowledge, and detailed business impact data from previous work as the foundation for the study," said Bogart.

A white paper will be developed based on the study's findings and will be available to the industry in early fall.

LaCrosse Footwear among top Northwest 100

08 June 2005

LaCrosse Footwear, Inc., provider of branded work and outdoor footwear, has been named the fifth strongest performing company in the Pacific Northwest by the Seattle Times.

The newspaper analyzed Northwest companies based on key performance indicators over the past two years, including return on equity, sales per employee and operating profitability.

"We are very pleased to be ranked among the top performing companies in the Northwest," said Joseph P. Schneider, CEO of LaCrosse Footwear. We are pleased with our progress and excited about the future."

Vibram’s VSM technology performs on race track

07 June 2005

According to Vibram, maker and marketer of safety and workwear footwear, its VSM Technology “sole + slider” system, launched several months ago, is proving popular with Supermotard racers.

The system is said to show adaptability to different tracks, racing styles and boots thanks to the interchangeable sliders. Three kits are currently available: for dry and wet tracks and for extreme and mixed conditions.

Peter Öttl, KTM tester, says the racing version “offers the ideal balance between grip and slide” allowing him to “guide the bike even better during slides, but avoid taking excessive risks."

Giorgio Uberti, KTM Trophy racer said: "The Dry kit has become indispensable! I can now press my foot down on the track over long

distances. Fatigue is reduced, I am more competitive and safety is improved."

Schoeller and Ciba Specialty Chemicals join forces to expand 3XDRY

07 June 2005

Schoeller Technologies AG, subsidiary of Schoeller Textil AG, and Ciba Specialty Chemicals AG have announced their cooperation in the areas of branding/marketing and support/sales for the Feelgood Technology 3XDRY.

Ciba will be managing consultancy, sales of the related product range and quality control world-wide for the moisture management system. Schoeller, which developed the system in 2001, will focus on branding, marketing and patent matters.

Hans-Jürgen Hübner, CEO of Schoeller Technologies AG, said “Our finishing technology has developed very successfully and is increasingly entering markets and regions which lie outside of our own target segment,” explains Hans-Jürgen Hübner.

3XDRY is used primarily for business wear, sportswear, leisurewear and workwear by such manufacturers as Alberto, Brax, Dockers, Globus, Daniel Hechter, Mammut, Timberland, Vaude or workfashion.com. The technology is currently being applied in Switzerland, Turkey, India, China and Taiwan.

Patagonia and WWW team up to produce footwear line

07 June 2005

Patagonia, Inc. and Wolverine World Wide, Inc.'s Merrell footwear brand have entered into a long-term global license agreement to produce environmentally friendly Patagonia footwear.

The first product line is expected at retail in spring 2007 in over 32 Patagonia stores in the US, Europe and Japan, in Patagonia's distribution network and in premium footwear and outdoor specialty stores. Under the agreement, Merrell will design, manufacture and market performance footwear under the Patagonia name with rights to other Patagonia brands including Water Girl, clothing and swimwear for women, and Lotus Designs, white-water paddling gear.

"Merrell and Patagonia are kindred spirits in a rapidly changing world," said Jacques Lavertue, president of Wolverine's Outdoor Group. "For many years, Patagonia and Merrell have shared the same space in the hearts and minds of true outdoor enthusiasts around the globe. We have great respect for Patagonia's position as a true leader and innovator in technical outdoor apparel, and its long time commitment to the environment. While technically this is a licensing agreement, both management teams view this as the beginning of a long-term partnership. We are pleased that Patagonia footwear has found a home in Wolverine World Wide's Outdoor Group."

Patagonia designs and markets performance and lifestyle outerwear and apparel and has pioneered the development of environmentally-conscious and innovative outdoor performance products and manufacturing techniques.

Wolverine World Wide, Inc. is a marketer of casual, active lifestyle, work, outdoor sport, after- sport, and uniform footwear. Merrell is its leading reference brand for outdoor performance footwear marketed in over 135 countries around the world.

PTC acquires Actavis to strengthen retail, footwear and apparel portfolio

07 June 2005

Product Development Company (PTS), provider of product lifecycle management (PLM) software solutions to companies worldwide, has announced the signing of an agreement to acquire Aptavis Technologies Corporation, a solution provider of industry-specific Windchill-based technology and expertise. The acquisition is expected to close by the end of June 2005. Financial terms have not been disclosed.

“Retail, Footwear and Apparel companies operate in a highly distributed, competitive environment and therefore share some common business challenges with discrete manufacturing companies,” said Jim Heppelmann, executive vice president and chief product officer of PTC. “However, retail, footwear and apparel companies require a specialized solution to meet the unique requirements of their industry. Several point solutions have emerged, but these offerings lack the power and scalability of the Windchill platform. The Windchill-based solution from Aptavis is a natural fit as we make true enterprise PLM a reality for the first time in this industry.”

PTC’s solution for this market includes seasonal calendaring, line board, product specifications, materials and colour management as well as sourcing, costing, quality control and vendor collaboration. It is designed to manage the process of developing merchandise across a complex global value chain and has been adopted by brands such as Fila, Lands’ End, Limited Brands, Liz Claiborne Inc., Lost Arrow, Nike Apparel, Redcats, Reebok, and Sara Lee.

WSA to launch Footwear & Accessories Business Conference

07 June 2005

The World Shoe Association (WSA) has announced the launch of the Footwear & Accessories Business Conference at the upcoming WSA Show to be held in Las Vegas on August 4-7, 2005. Offered for the first time, the seminars are designed to deliver expert insights on topics crucial to retail buyers in the increasingly competitive footwear and accessories market.

"We're offering up just what the attendees told us they wanted when we surveyed them after the last two shows: more discussion and education around trends to help guide their business and purchasing decisions for this WSA Show and beyond," said Sally Matteson, WSA's director of content and publishing. "The seminars are designed to be smart, focused, informative and fun, equipping attendees with the kind of knowledge they should expect from the industry's largest forum."

WSA will present a total of eight sessions including three "Trend Lunches:"
1. Passport to Europe: Women's Trends for 2006 - Thursday, August 4, 12:30-1:30
Speaker: Maria Clifford, MLC Consulting

2. Opportunities and Insights in Women's Footwear - Friday, August 5, 12:30-1:30
Speaker: Marshal Cohen, Chief Industry Analyst, The NPD Group

3. Colour and Trends for Spring/Summer 2006 - Saturday, August 6, 12:30-1:30
Speaker: Fran Sude, Design Options

Additional sessions will include: Assessing and Solving Footwear Quality Issues, Build Your Business with Customer Loyalty, Improving Profitability with Inventory Management, Employee Theft: What You Don't Know Can Hurt You, Open to Buy Planning: "How Much Should I Buy."

Interactive Wear buys Infineon’s wearable electronics business

07 June 2005

Munich-based Infineon Technologies AG has sold its wearable electronics activities to Interactive Wear AGiG of Wessling, Germany, in a restructuring drive designed at strengthening its core business activities in the provision of semiconductor and system solutions to the automotive, industrial and multimarket sectors. The sale price has not been disclosed.

Infineon, led by Makus Strecker, a specialist in sensor technology, had conducted research on the integration of electronic functions into textiles and developed this technology into marketable products. All Intellectual Property rights, including patents and licences, together with software, hardware and customer base are now officially part of Interactive Wear.

Andreas Rőpert will assume the role of chief executive officer and Ms Awa Garlinska will chair the supervisory board. Dr Stefan Jung,

the former head of Infineon's activities in the field, has also been appointed to the board and Interactive Wear is to appoint several members of Infineon's technical team

BASF introduces flame-retardant textile coatings

07 June 2005

BASF has added its new flame-retardant formulations to its Lurapret range for textile coatings designed for industrial and home textiles including furnishing fabrics and upholstery for streetcars. The coatings can also slow down or even prevent the spread of fire, helping protect people from burns.

The latest coatings have been developed in cooperation with the German chemical company Schill + Seilacher, manufacturers of flame-retardants. The ready-to-use solutions are said to reduce development times and increase product efficiency. The Lurapret range is water-based and protects textiles from the effects of weather and mechanical stress.

Oakley adds Greg Trojan and Colombe Nicholas to its board

06 June 2005

Oakley, Inc., manufacturer of premium performance apparel and accessories, has announced that on June 3, 2005, Greg Trojan and Colombe Nicholas were added to the company's Board of Directors.
Mr Trojan currently serves as the CEO of House of Blues (HOB) Entertainment and its divisions, including House of Blues Music/Restaurant Venues. Ms Nicholas, former president and CEO of The Anne Klein Company and Giorgio Armani Fashion Corp, is currently a consultant with Finaco Global Consulting.

"Throughout Greg's and Colombe's careers, they have each demonstrated outstanding leadership capabilities in strategic vision, tactical execution and financial management for a diverse stable of companies," commented chairman and CEO Jim Jannard. "Greg's significant brand management experience will contribute to the future growth of Oakley as we strive to meet ever-changing market and economic conditions, and maximize shareholder value."

The addition of Mr. Trojan and Ms Nicholas, who each qualify as independent directors under the listing standards of the New York Stock Exchange, Inc. and the company's corporate governance guidelines, brings Oakley's Board of Directors to seven members. Trojan will serve on the Compensation and Stock Option and Nominating and Corporate Governance Committees. Ms Nicholas will serve on the Audit and Nominating and Corporate Governance Committees.

Peter Mandelson speaks on EU-China textiles concerns

06 June 2005

In a speech to textile producers in Florence, Italy, on June 6, EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson set out the rationale for his position on rising Chinese textile exports. He argued for a policy that braces EU producers for change while allowing China to benefit from textile liberalisation.

Rejecting a return to the quota system for textiles, Mandelson argued that his policy is based on the need to "manage change and adjustment, rather than to manage trade." He stressed that he is "hopeful" that the EU and China can negotiate "a solution that is mutually acceptable to both sides" while recalling that the EU reserves the right under the Textiles Specific Safeguard Clause to take action to provide its industry with "breathing space".

Mandelson said: "I want to re-iterate my commitment to ensuring that the EU textile and leather industries will be in a position to meet the challenges and difficulties presented to them. Do not think for one moment that I am not aware of your concerns. I spend an enormous amount of my time on these issues. I will continue to do so until I am satisfied that the current problems are eased to the best of our ability."

Philadelphia University to offer textile engineering technology course

06 June 2005

Philadelphia University, which has a long history in textile design and engineering, has added a new Bachelor of Science qualification in Textile Engineering Technology to its list of teaching programmes.

The new four-year degree, which will be starting this autumn, will emphasise problem-solving based on an understanding of textile product and process, along with a strong foundation in the business of running a textile/apparel firm, including product sourcing.

"The Textile Engineering Technology programme will give students the tools to successfully manage textile businesses around the world," said David Brookstein, Sc.D., Dean of Philadelphia University's School of Engineering and Textiles.