Business Week

Wal-Mart honoured by Black Enterprise magazine

17 June 2005

Wal-Mart Stores Inc has been named one of “The 30 Best Companies for Diversity” by Black Enterprise magazine which recognises companies with significant representation by ethnic minorities in corporate procurement, boards, senior management, and the total workforce.

Key areas considered in the selection process included: percentage of total procurement dollars spent with companies owned by African Americans and members of other ethnic minority groups; the percentage of these ethnic minority groups represented on their corporate boards, in senior management positions and in the total workforce.

Wal-Mart was recently ranked among the top 50 companies for diversity in the USA for 2005 by Diversity Inc. Magazine and was named one of the top corporations for multicultural business opportunities in 2004 by DiversityBusiness.com.

Nautilus acquires Pearl iZUMi

17 June 2005

US-based manufacturer of health and fitness products and apparel, Nautilus, Inc., has agreed to acquire all of the outstanding stock of privately-owned Pearl iZUMi USA, a provider of high-performance fitness apparel and footwear for cyclists, runners and fitness enthusiasts, for $68-million in cash and about $6 million in assumed debt.

Established in 1951 in Japan and first distributed in the USA in 1981, Pearl iZUMi products are sold through 2,600 independent bike dealers and 600 running-focused specialty retailers worldwide. Pearl iZUMi also operates nine retail outlet stores in the USA.

Pearl iZUMi has increased sales by 15% annually since 2001 as demand for high-performance fitness apparel continues to grow. In 2004, the company generated annual sales of approximately $49 million.

Nautilus’ brand portfolio includes Nautilus, Bowflex, Schwinn fitness, StairMaster and Trimline. The company was formed in 1986 and had sales of $524 million in 2004.

Uniqlo to open three US stores

17 June 2005

Uniqlo, Japan's leading apparel retailer and one of the top ten apparel retailers worldwide, has announced plans to expand into the United States.

The US launch will begin with three stores opening in New Jersey malls this autumn.
"Casual clothing originates in the United States, and it has been a dream of mine to compete in this market since founding the company," said Tadashi Yanai, chairman and chief executive officer of Uniqlo. "The US market is the largest market in the world. To continue to grow in the global marketplace and be a worldwide leader, we must prosper in the United States."

Once the three pilot stores are stable and profitable, the company plans to rapidly expand throughout the United States. By 2010, Uniqlo hopes to achieve $1 billion in US sales and will grow accordingly to reach this goal.

Uniqlo opened its first shop in Hiroshima in 1984. Since then, the apparel retailer has become an integral component of Japanese culture, appealing to male and female consumers of all ages. There are now more than 680 stores across Japan, China and the United Kingdom.

Ciba Specialty Chemicals launches e polymer for ultrafine coatings

17 June 2005

Swiss specialty chemicals company, Ciba, launched Ciba DicrylanPGS at Techtextil/Avantex In Frankfurt. The new ultrafine coating is said to be a versatile polymer for coating items such as clothing, tents, boat covers, shoes, rucksacks and

self-adhesive decorative materials. It is also suitable for embossing effects for signage and logos.

The product is said to have high resistance to hydrolysis, and thus to weathering and UV degradation. DicrylanPGS can, in combination with other products, also be used to replace solvent-based applications and PVC, in particular for military fabrics.

Ciba has also expanded its polymer dispersion offer for textile applications with the introduction of an entirely new range of products, Ciba DicrylanTA, for industrial and construction coatings as well as for sports, transportation, home and medical textiles.

Veltex to acquire 50% of John Daly Enterprises

17 June 2005

Veltex Corporation, a manufacturing, import and distribution company for apparel and accessories, has announced that it has signed a Letter of Intent to acquire 50% of John Daly Enterprises worldwide (excluding the USA). Veltex will have licensing rights to John Daly's branded products and, upon conclusion of the Letter of Intent, expects to immediately expand its global distribution footprint by licensing, distributing and marketing Daly's golf products and non-golf novelty products in Australia, Japan, Germany, Canada, England, South Africa, Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway and other countries.

John Daly is a popular and respected professional golfer, having been named the 1990 PGA Tour Rookie of the Year, becoming the youngest active player on the PGA tour with two major championship titles and only the fourth American to win two majors before his 30th birthday. He is world renowned for his unparalleled power off the tee and is nicknamed "The Lion" by his many friends.

John Daly Enterprises sells a variety of "Lion" brand golf products including men's and women's golf apparel, golf accessories, and golf memorabilia, as well as an assortment of non-golf novelty products.

Techtextil and Avantex 2005 report positive mood

17 June 2005

Techtextil and Avantex were held together for the first time this year in Frankfurt, Germany, June 6-9, and it seems the partnership proved to a successful one. 'Focusing on Innovation' and 'Face your Visions - Discover the Future of Clothing', 1,117 exhibitors presented their latest products, developments and trends from the fields of technical textiles and innovative garment textiles.

Of this total, 1,075 companies from 47 countries exhibited at Techtextil. 42 exhibitors from eleven countries presented 'intelligent textiles' at Avantex. With around 22,656 visitors from 70 countries, Techtextil and Avantex registered an increase of 11% over the last events.

In addition to the actual exhibition, two symposiums were run attracting a large number of participants. In around 120 lectures, top international speakers discussed the latest developments in the textile sector.

The next Techtextil and Avantex trade fairs in Frankfurt will be held June 12-14, 2007.

SATRA honours staff

17 June 2005

Two presentations were made to members of staff who have reached milestones in their SATRA careers as part of SATRA’s Annual General Meeting on June 14, 2005.

Alan Wykes, photographer and image setter, received a clock and barometer to mark his 40th year of service at SATRA. Since joining the technology centre straight from school in 1964, as an assistant in the printing and photography services section, Alan has worked in a variety of roles.

Also reaching a service milestone was Sue Baddiley, for which she was presented with a digital camera. Sue started at SATRA 25 years ago in 1979 as a clerk typist in the technical services office and now manages SATRA's member client database.

Japan-Bangla Group to produce yarn and textile from bamboo

16 June 2005

Japan-Bangla Group has unveiled plans to establish mills in the northern region of Bangladesh for the manufacturing of yarn and textile utilising bamboo as raw material.

The group’s six-member delegation recently visited future mill sites and checked the availability of bamboo in Bogra, Rangpur and Lalmonirhat

districts.

The yarn manufactured in the mills will be exported to Europe, USA and other countries, but will also be utilised in readymade garment units in the country.

The group says it has technology to grow bamboo in six months and that the project would provide work for local farmers.

OSA develops new fabric for apparel

16 June 2005

Fountain Set (Holdings) Limited, manufacturer of knitted fabrics, and Ocean Star Apparel, Inc. have developed a new premium cotton fabric – Endura.

Created via a multi-process technique, premium cotton fibres will undergo spinning and enhanced knitting, dyeing and finishing processes. Apparel made with the fabric is said to be ultra-soft and extra-durable, retaining its appearance and colour after multiple washes. Hang tags will be included on apparel made with Endura Premium Cotton to communicate the products features to consumers, an add-on to the brand's own packaging.

Due to its performance qualities, the company expects the fibre to become an alternative to long staple cotton. OSA will continue to work with Fountain Set on fabric innovations and other performance fabrics.

EU to probe exports of Chinese safety shoes

16 June 2005

European Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson is to launch an investigation into Chinese exports of safety shoes following complaints of European shoe makers' groups that some shoes are being dumped on the European market.

The probe into exports of safety shoes with reinforced toes will check individual companies for unfair practices. Due to its meticulous nature, it is expected to last up to nine months. European footwear producers are hoping for an accelerated action as the industry is dwindling day by day in the face of Chinese competition.

Shoe producing countries hit the hardest include Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece, Poland and France. The number of jobs in the sector dropped to 290,129 in 2004 from 405,270 in 1998, according to the Confederation of the European Footwear Industry.

Pacific Sunwear announces retirement of Tim Harmon

16 June 2005

US specialty retailer of casual apparel, accessories and footwear Pacific Sunwear of California Inc. has announced that Tim Harmon will be retiring from the company after almost 14 years of service, most recently as president and chief merchandising officer.

Meanwhile, the company has named Reenie Benziger as executive vice president of merchandising for the company's PacSun division.

Prior to joining Pacific Sunwear, Benziger held various merchandising positions with Gap and its related divisions. Her 17 years at the Gap included, most recently, the position of senior vice president merchandising and planning for Gap Europe and senior vice president kids and baby merchandising for Old Navy.

Textronics spins off from INVISTA

16 June 2005

Textronics Inc., a new electro-textile materials and system integration company, has secured investor financing and announced its spin-off from INVISTA, one of the world's largest integrated fibre, resin and intermediates company. The new venture was formed through NGEN Partners, a venture capital firm specialising in materials businesses, SAS Investors, Unilever Technology Ventures, and INVISTA.

"The convergence of electronics and textile science is opening up exciting new markets for fabrics that conduct, illuminate, sense and warm," said Stacey Burr, chief executive officer of Textronics. "With a strong technology portfolio and powerful backing, we are well placed to play a leading role in exploiting this potential. Our goal is to integrate electronics in ways that make textiles the 'provider' rather than the 'container' of new functionality."

According to Burr, the infusion of capital will enable Textronics to expand its workforce, accelerate development of patented technologies, and drive commercialisation of promising applications in the apparel, home, transportation and industrial textiles sectors.

"The time is right to transfer our investment in electro-textiles to a dedicated entrepreneurial

company," said Jim DiAndreth, INVISTA director of corporate technology. In addition to acquiring INVISTA's electro-textile intellectual property assets, the new company will receive transitional support from INVISTA including access to its textile development facilities.

AMG Outdoor secures contract extension with Teva

16 June 2005

AMG Outdoor has secured a three-year extension to its existing contract with sports footwear brand Teva.

In 2002, AMG was appointed exclusive distributor of Teva in the UK and Ireland, extending AMG's International brand portfolio. A new Teva sales team was developed to promote the brand through specialist sports and lifestyle retail outlets and to drive sales forward.

The initial three-year contract, which was due to expire this year, has now been extended to 2008. During the three-year period, AMG has increased sales by over 200% and has successfully launched Teva's new "closed toe" footwear range to the outdoor market, increasing the profile of the brand in the UK.

Looking ahead: Research and Development on Textiles and Clothing

15 June 2005

At a meeting of the High Level Group on Textiles and Clothing, Janez Potocnik, European Commissioner for Science and Research, admitted that the European Textile and Clothing industry is facing tough challenges.

During a speech, Janez said: "As the Communication on "Textiles and Clothing after 2005" and the "Vision 2030 Document" testify, the way forward for the sector is through transforming the European textile sector from a resource intensive to a knowledge intensive, highly innovative sector with high added value products and services.

"Being one of the oldest sectors in the history of industrial development, the Textiles and Clothing industry is often referred, as a "traditional industry", and a sector belonging to the so-called "old economy". This couldn't be further from the truth. The industry has made tremendous efforts in the last years to invest in new productive assets, to streamline operations and to intensify their innovation activities. This has allowed the European Textiles and Clothing Industry to fight back and preserve its leading edge in the global market place, and I believe that the EU textile industry can thrive if it continues to invest in new production processes and materials, in innovative design and manufacturing systems and in training and skills."

The Communication on "Textiles and Clothing after 2005" goes in the right direction when recommending three distinct actions for research and innovation: the support of flagship projects with the aim to develop break-through technologies; support for research to facilitate high added value textile products; and the setting up of the European Technology Platform to facilitate the modernisation of the sector and the move away from traditional products like commodity fibres, filaments and fabrics towards speciality products manufactured by flexible high technology, knowledge based processes."

With a strong commitment from the stakeholders, the Commission will continue to support the research initiatives of the Sector and in particular the Technology Platform.

It has worked closely with DG Enterprise and Industry to facilitate the transformation of European industry and will continue to do so.

Bemis picks marketing company

15 June 2005

Bemis Worldwide has picked The True North Brand Group for its marketing communications efforts. Bemis Worldwide is recognised throughout the world for providing adhesives coatings and specialty films for a myriad of industries. Its Sewfree advanced adhesive technology replaces sewing by bonding a garment together through adhesives heat and pressure.

Lija named one of Canada's fastest growing companies

15 June 2005

Linda Hipp, designer of women's golf and active apparel, has announced that her company, Lija, has been placed on PROFIT 100 rankings of Canada's Fastest Growing Companies by PROFIT: Your Guide to Business Success.

Lija is the only apparel line to appear on the prestigious list that includes all economic and

industrial sectors. The company placed No. 56 based on a reported 950% increase in revenues.

“This recognition is a wonderful affirmation of the hard work we’ve put in since starting seven years ago,” says Hipp. “We are excited about continuing to expand our market reach, opening more accounts and building on our success.”

“We’re happy to welcome the 2005 PROFIT 100 winners to the most prestigious group of entrepreneurial business in Canada,” says Ian Portsmouth, Editor of PROFIT.

Lija apparel is worn by numerous LPGA Tour players, including Jill McGill. The company recently began selling into the UK, Australian and Japanese markets.

Women choose cardio in fitness equipment purchases

15 June 2005

Women are more likely to purchase equipment that focuses on cardiovascular well being, while men are more likely to purchase exercise equipment that stresses muscular development/toning, according to a recent NSGA report “The Sporting Goods Market in 2005.”

Women led purchases of motorized treadmills (62% vs. 30%), elliptical/cross trainers (60% vs. 37%) and stationary exercise bicycles (52% vs. 37%). The remaining equipment purchases were described as “for household use.” Males were the dominant purchasers of free weights/weight sets (64% vs. 29%) and led females in the purchase of multi-purpose home gyms (47% vs. 40%). In the previous year’s study, males were also the dominant purchasers of weight benches (85% vs. 12%).

Exercise equipment represented $5.0 billion of the $22.9 billion athletic and sports equipment market reported for 2004. Treadmills continue to be the piece of exercise equipment with the largest sales volume. In 2004, sales of treadmills reached $2.82 billion and 4.4 million units at an average price of $635 per piece.

For 2005, NSGA projects a 2% increase in sales of training equipment, reaching $5.11 billion.

India Initiative takes place in Poland

15 June 2005

The Indo Polish Chamber of Commerce & Industry (IPCCI) and the All India Association of Industries (AIAI) have organised ‘India Initiative 2005’, a trade exhibition at the Palace of Culture and Science in Warsaw, Poland, from 16-18 June 2005.

‘India Initiative 2005’ has been organised with the support of the Indian Embassy in Poland, Embassy of Poland in India and Industry Ministry of Maharashtra. Its objective is to project India’s strength as an important global player in the international market and also to create awareness in this niche market that India has yet to explore.

Indian companies attending the event come from the sectors of textiles, home furnishings, handicrafts, jewellery, steel, IT, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, tea, paper products, leather, handloom, automotive parts and agricultural products.

Poland’s EU membership has opened up new horizons for trade and India believes it will benefit from Poland’s central location and recently adopted common customs tariff and GSP. Legal and technical details will be discussed at the seminars organised alongside the event.

Bilateral trade between Poland and India increased to $401 million in 2004 from $306 million in 2003.

IWTO announces details of the World Wool Award 2006

14 June 2005

The International Wool Textile Organisation (IWTO) has announced the opening for entries to the prestigious 2006 World Wool Award, designed to celebrate wool’s natural performance properties and versatility, stimulate future designs and product development innovations, and communicate marketing and promotional ideas for wool products.

The project is open to young people, students, trainees and young professionals from textile/ fashion universities, academies and schools, companies and institutes. The prize will be awarded in three categories of: Fashion & Design, Marketing & Promotion and Concept & Innovation.

The winner in each category will be promoted on the IWTO website for one year and each will be invited to participate in the IWTO Annual Congress 2006, to be held in Cairo, Egypt.

Detailed information about the 2006 World Wool Award and application forms are available on www.iwto.org.

Quiksilver launches largest surf shop in Europe

14 June 2005

Quiksilver Inc, provider of clothing and accessories for the surfing community, has announced the launch of its new Quiksilver Boardriders Club in Anglet, France, on June 15.

At over 7,500 square feet, the store will become the largest surf shop in Europe. In addition to carrying a variety of Quiksilver products and apparel, the location also includes a number of other facilities including an indoor skate park, a DJ booth, a board shaper's workshop, a café and a restaurant.

"The launch of the new retail concept in Anglet symbolises another turning point in Quiksilver's worldwide development," said Pierre Agnes, President, Quiksilver Europe. "This experience allows us to express the fullness of our brands by offering new services in an exciting and unique setting."

World cotton output to reach 106.2 m in 2005-06

14 June 2005

Cotton USA Inc. has published estimates for the world cotton production in 2005-06. The report says it will reach 106.2 million, approximately 13.4 million bales less from 2004-05.

World mill use is expected to reach 111.5 million bales during the specified period, 3.5 million bales above the '04-05 world mill use. World ending stocks are to level 44.1 million bales. World production is likely to reach 119.6 million bales, up by 290,000 bales from the May report.

US mill use is estimated at 5.8 million bales, down by 500,000 bales from the '04-05 crop. US exports are expected to rise by 2 million bales from '04-05 to 15 million bales.

US sports apparel spending up

14 June 2005

More than $55 billion a year is being spent in the USA on sports apparel and athletic footwear, according to SGMA International's Sports Apparel & Athletic Footwear: Market Facts and Trends, a report that lists market size estimates, consumer spending patterns, key trends and popular products/styles for the sports apparel and athletic footwear markets.

US spending on sports apparel and athletic footwear is on the rise. In 2004, sports apparel retail sales were $38.8 billion - up from $37.0 billion in 2003. Athletic footwear sales at retail rose from $15.9 billion in 2003 to $16.4 billion in 2004.

Women outspend men for sports apparel, but men outspend women for active sports apparel, i.e. clothing purchased with the intention to use it in active sports or exercise.

The 12-to-24-year-old market represented nearly 40% of all consumer sports apparel purchases in 2004.

T-shirts and running shoes remain as the top two categories for sports apparel and athletic footwear, respectively.

The top three reasons why people buy certain pairs of athletic footwear remain comfort, price and style.

Roughly 33% of all athletic footwear purchased in the US is for sports and fitness activities.

Auge and Acropoli Impex to produce a clothing line

14 June 2005

Cuban textile company Auge and the Italian Acropoli Impex S.A have signed an agreement to jointly manufacture garments for the global market. The clothing line 'Minas' will feature women's intimates, a wide array of bathing suits for the Spanish market, knitted pullovers, lycra items and jerseys.

Shining light in the market

13 June 2005

With 85% of its production being exported, maintaining contact with international customers while seeking fresh clients at the same time is seen as a priority by a French company specialising in reflective technology. As an indication of just how seriously the company, JRC Reflex, sees its mission of working in partnership with its customers, this year will see the company displaying its talents at 12 different shows across Europe, including

TechTextil in Frankfurt, Outdoor in Friedrichshafen as well as Munich Fabric Start, Tissu Premier in Lille, Mod'Amont in Paris and Lineapelle in Bologna.

The shows are an essential marketing tool to allow the company to exhibit its innovative collection as it takes on board the challenges it is set by the market. JRC believes in providing different and appropriate solutions and so manufactures two different lines of glass bead and prismatic products. For instance, it offers 100% PU reflective film as an option to PVC and produces tapes and piping that stretch, are washable, dry cleanable, and meet Oekotex class 1.

This flexibility opens up a myriad of possibilities for using reflective materials from sportswear to labels to embossing. JRC has also recently developed a means of adding reflective piping or trim to garments and other items, thus offering the consumer the protection of reflectivity without having to wear a fully reflective garment.

DuPont's Science Officer awarded by Chemical Heritage Foundation

13 June 2005

DuPont Senior Vice President and Chief Science & Technology Officer, Thomas M. Connelly Jr., has been presented with the 2005 "Award for Executive Excellence" by the Chemical Heritage Foundation.

The award is given annually to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution in the field of commercial development and marketing in the chemical and allied industries.

Chairman of the CDMA Awards Committee Dr. Larry Drum said, "With extensive experience at every level of technology innovation, in Europe, the Pacific Rim, and the United States, Dr. Connelly has consistently demonstrated strategic thinking, innovation and superior technology management vital to DuPont as well as to the chemical industry."

Dr Connelly has been recognised for leading the company towards products based on renewable resources. Under his guidance, DuPont has built on its core strengths in polymer science, chemistry, math, physics and engineering, while broadening its technology scope and shifting from the traditional petrochemical-based businesses.

He graduated from Princeton University with degrees in chemical engineering and economics. As a Winston Churchill Scholar, he received his doctorate in chemical engineering from the University of Cambridge in 1977, and subsequently joined DuPont as a research engineer in the Elastomer Chemicals Department.

Hilary Duff becomes the face of Candie's

13 June 2005

Candie's, Inc., has revealed its autumn television and print advertising campaigns will feature Hilary Duff, a music, film and television phenomenon.

"Hilary embodies the fun, trendy spirit of the Candie's brand as well as the fashion and family focus of the Kohl's brand," said Kevin Mansell, Kohl's President.

The campaign was created by the company's in-house marketing team and shot and directed by the Moshe Brakha. The television commercial is a fast paced, music driven spot.

In the coming months, Hilary Duff will be integrated into the marketing launch of Candie's at Kohl's.

Polo Ralph Lauren reports Q4 and FY2005 results

13 June 2005

Polo Ralph Lauren Corporation has reported net income of $23.4 million for the fourth quarter of Fiscal 2005 compared with $76.4 million for the fourth quarter of Fiscal 2004. For Fiscal Year 2005, net income was $190.4 million compared with $169.2 million in the previous year.

Net revenues for the fourth quarter increased 10.2% to $902.2 million compared with $818.8 million in the fourth quarter last year. Wholesale revenues were $543.0 million, up 10.0% over last year.

"Our results for Fiscal Year 2005 underscore the strength of our unique business, which continues to deliver strong growth and profitability," said Ralph Lauren, chairman and CEO. "We are successful because we remain consistent to our vision. Our company has never been stronger and we continue to be a leader across all products, regions and customer segments."

Consoltex names new head of Outerwear

13 June 2005

Canadian manufacturer of woven fabrics, Consoltex Inc., has appointed Mr. Sirio De Luca as president of its Outerwear Fabrics Division.

In his new role, Mr. De Luca will lead the global sales and business development effort of the company's Outerwear Division, its short and long-term profitability as well as its growth strategy. He will also be responsible for ensuring the division is well positioned to anticipate and meet the dynamic and changing business needs of its customers as well as growing its market share.

Mr. De Luca joins Consoltex with over 18 years of strategic, operational and general management experience with North American-based global textile corporations. Most recently, Mr. De Luca was vice president and general manager of PGI/DIFCO Performance Fabrics. Prior to this, he was vice president sales/marketing and development of Dominion Textile's industrial fabrics division. Mr. De Luca holds a Bachelor of Commerce degree from McGill University in Montreal.

Marcel Thibault, President and CEO at Consoltex, said, "We are extremely fortunate to have Sirio joining the Consoltex team. We have always been impressed with his knowledge of the textile industry. We believe his broad experience will contribute to the growth of our company as we continue to develop innovative textile solutions serving an ever-expanding range of technical applications."

Consoltex produces fabrics for a wide variety of markets including military.

EU, China agree textile deal

13 June 2005

The EU and China have agreed a deal that will manage the growth of Chinese textile imports to the EU until 2008. The agreement on 10 product categories of concern limits the rate of imports while allowing fair and reasonable growth for Chinese exports. By finding a wide and balanced agreement, the EU and China ensure a period of adjustment textile industries in the EU and developing countries.

The European Commission and the Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China held consultations on the export of certain Chinese textile and clothing products to the European Union until the end of the year 2008 in Shanghai, China on June 10, 2005.

It was agreed that Chinese textile exports to the EU in 10 categories of concern will be limited to agreed growth levels until the end of 2007. This agreement will cover 10 of the 35 categories of Chinese imports liberalised on January 1, 2005: pullovers, men's trousers, blouses, t-shirts, dresses, bras, flax yarn, cotton fabrics, bed linen, and table and kitchen linen. It covers the categories of serious concern, including most of the categories identified by the European Textile Association Euratex and the two categories for which the EU had already launched formal WTO consultations with the Chinese: t-shirts and flax yarn.

The EU agrees to end the ongoing investigations concerning these product categories. The agreement limits growth in imports in the 10 categories to between 8 and 12.5% per year for 2005, 2006 and 2007.