Business Week

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Unifi to consider new strategies

21 October 2005

US producer and processor of multi-filament polyester and nylon textured yarns Unifi, Inc. has announced that its board of directors is exploring strategic alternatives to improve shareholder value based upon its view of existing and future market conditions.

The board has instructed management to study a broad array of alternatives that would include growing the business by expanding within the textile industry, including into low-cost locations around the world, expanding in non-textile related businesses, the potential merger or sale of the company, and the restructuring of the company's outstanding indebtedness, all in an effort to take advantage of the further consolidation and integration of the textile industry.

Oakley posts record results

21 October 2005

Oakley, Inc. has announced that that net sales increased 15.6%, net income grew 31.6% and earnings per share increased 29.4% in its third quarter ended September 30, 2005 compared with the same period in 2004. Net sales grew to a quarterly record of $173.4 million compared with $150 million in the third quarter of 2004. Net income for the third quarter totalled $15.0 million compared with net income of $11.4 million earned in the third quarter of 2004.

"Our strong third quarter results were fuelled by the new Crosshair, Gascan and Bottlecap sunglass styles which generated significantly greater sales than last year's new introductions. During the quarter we also successfully launched Razrwire, the second product in our innovative electronics family," said Link Newcomb, Oakley chief operating officer.

Newcomb concluded, "We enter the final quarter of the year poised for the holiday introduction of Thump 2, an appealing new style complementary to Thump with greater memory... Additionally, as a result of the strategic initiative to release our new sunglass products to the market earlier, we expect to introduce select 2006 styles in limited quantities beginning in November this year."

Oakley offers a full range of products including performance apparel and accessories, prescription eyewear, footwear, watches and electronics in more than 100 countries.

Pakistan’s sporting goods exports fall 17%

21 October 2005

Pakistan’s exports of sporting goods fell by 17.53% in August from $26.454 million recorded in July to $21.816 million. It exported $13.907 million worth of footballs, $1.335 million worth of gloves and other sporting goods worth

$6.574 million compared with $12.702 million, $1.917 million and $11.835 million respectively in July. Although football exports did increase by 9.49%, exports of gloves and other goods dropped by 30.36% and 44.45% respectively.

Atlas highlights Storelight filter system at IFAI

21 October 2005

Quality control and quality assurance testing company, Atlas, will introduce several new innovations at this year’s IFAI, such as their StoreLight filter system that simulates indoor store lighting to enable manufacturers to test their textile’s resistance to fading.

Atlas offers a complete line of material testing instrumentation, including weathering

instruments, textile test products and analytical instruments.

The IFAI Expo 2005 trade show for the specialty fabrics industry will be held in San Antonio, Texas, USA on October 27-29. 450 suppliers will exhibit their latest products, services, trends and technologies at the event organised by the Industrial Fabrics Association International (IFAI).

Supply chain review predicts increase in RFID technology

21 October 2005

ProLogis, a global provider of distribution facilities and services, has released the latest edition of its Supply Chain Review entitled, "RFID – Lessons Learned" which is based on interviews conducted with 31 supply chain leaders and describes their preparations or strategies for dealing with radio frequency identification (RFID) technology as well as the lessons that they have learned.

Leonard Sahling, head of the ProLogis Research Group, noted, "To date, the high cost of RFID tags and readers has generally outweighed the potential benefits. But technological breakthroughs announced during the past few months have reduced these costs by about a third. Within the next year or so, we expect to see a sharp acceleration in the number of companies that have purchased state-of-the-art RFID systems and incorporated them into their supply chain operations."

He continued, "Industry leaders emphasised that one of the key lessons learned is that companies cannot afford to ignore RFID. If they wait until the bugs have all been fixed, they run the risk of falling behind and ending up at a competitive disadvantage once RFID technology takes off and becomes the industry standard."

Clashes at Bangladeshi textile factory leave 100 injured

20 October 2005

Around 100 people have been injured after workers at a textile factory near the Bangladeshi capital Dhaka went on a rampage. Witnesses alleged that police had no choice but to use batons and tear gas to calm the problem down.

The Hindu, a Bangladeshi newspaper, reported that trouble broke out between factory workers and security guards after two workers were detained for not carrying identity cards at the Sinha Textiles in nearby Narayanganj district. It said traffic was brought to a standstill for more than five hours.

Five of the injured had bullet wounds, witnesses and reports said. But the factory's owner Anisur Rahman Sinha said an amicable settlement would be found.

Quiksilver reaffirms Q4 and fiscal 2005 guidance; updates fiscal 2006

20 October 2005

Quiksilver, Inc., which designs, produces and distributes a mix of sports products, has reaffirmed its guidance for the fourth quarter and fiscal year ending October 31, 2005, and has updated its outlook for the fiscal year ending October 31, 2006.

For the fourth quarter of fiscal 2005, the company continues to expect revenues between $582 million and $592 million. For fiscal 2005, it has reaffirmed its outlook of revenues between $1.73 billion and $1.74 billion, and for fiscal 2006, the company expects to report revenues ranging from $2.25 billion and $2.27 billion. Quiksilver announced that its financial expectations for fiscal 2005 represent sales and earnings increases of over 35% and 25%, respectively.

However, some factors are leading the company to moderate its current view on fiscal 2006. First, the company has taken aggressive steps to more rapidly integrate Rossignol while other components will be completed and announced later in 2006, and second, the strengthening dollar and higher

than anticipated interest expense are also expected to impact results.

Research and Markets add Fibres Fabrics Briefing

19 October 2005

Research and Markets has announced the addition of Fibres Fabrics Briefing 2005 to their offering

Thanks to technology, creative applications and high consumer expectations, the percentage of clothing on the market with performance attributes is set to increase from 25% to 50% over the next few years. With increasing amounts of information available, consumers are more knowledgeable about, and more interested in, fabric technology and performance benefits than ever before. Style and comfort will no longer be sacrificed for function, nor are consumers willing to trade one feature for another.

The latest briefing offers some important innovations in a variety of categories from smart and intelligent textiles to recreational and sports performance offerings, as well as pin-pointing future products, concerns and expectations for this growing sector.

Everlast Worldwide introduce neoprene and elasticized joint braces and wraps

19 October 2005

Everlast Worldwide Inc., a manufacturer, marketer and licensor of sporting goods and apparel under the Everlast brand name, has expanded its relationship with M&M Fitness Equipment, Inc. by signing a licensing agreement for the launch of Everlast-branded neoprene and elasticized joint braces and wraps for sports and exercise use as well as for use in recovering from sports-related injuries. The new products are expected to be available by the first quarter of next year.

. Jill Group appoints executive VP / chief marketing officer

19 October 2005

The J. Jill Group, Inc., a multi-channel specialty retailer of women's apparel, including accessories and footwear, has appointed Lisa Bayne to the position of executive vice president / chief marketing officer effective October 31, 2005. She will report to Gordon R. Cooke, president and chief executive officer.

Ms. Bayne joins J. Jill from The Gymboree Corporation, a specialty retailer of apparel and accessories for children and women.

Wacker and Dymatic set up silicone joint venture in China

19 October 2005

Wacker-Chemie GmbH and Dymatic Chemicals Inc. have set up a joint venture in Shunde, China, for the manufacture and marketing of silicone products used primarily in the textile, leather and fibre industries. The joint venture, operating as Wacker Dymatic Silicones Shunde Co. Ltd., aims to provide the Chinese market with silicone emulsions and process auxiliaries ideally suited to local needs. Business operations are scheduled to start before the end of this year.

Dr. Christoph von Plotho, president of Wacker Silicones, says: China is an extremely important market for us. China’s textile industry has become the largest producer worldwide. Market experts anticipate further growth of 15 to 20 % for 2005. The demand for silicone products in this sector is developing at a similar rate.”

Dymatic’s extensive distribution network will allow Wacker to penetrate China’s textile, leather and fibre markets far more quickly than would have been possible alone, and in return, the partnership will give Dymatic access to state-of-the-art silicone products.

Silicones are often essential both for conferring certain properties in the production of textiles, leather and fibres, and for ensuring that the production processes themselves run smoothly. As finishing agents, silicones generate the highly prized

soft hand of textiles and increase water repellency. Foam-control emulsions are highly effective process auxiliaries, as used for instance in wastewater treatment.

German-based Wacker Silicones offers one-stop solutions for products, services and strategies in the silicones field. Dymatic Chemicals, Inc., headquartered in Shunde, Guangdong province, is a Chinese supplier of process auxiliaries and finishing agents based on silicones and organic chemicals.

Swift Galey enters in to joint venture with Lucky Textile Group

19 October 2005

Swift Galey is entering into a joint venture with Lucky Textile Group, an established weaving, dyeing, finishing, and printing company located in Jiangsu Province, China. Swift Galey will partner with Lucky in its existing state-of-the-art dyeing and finishing facility in Yixing City, China. The partners will also construct a manufacturing facility to produce premium denim in Yixing. The joint venture will be known as Swift Galey Lucky.

Financial details were not disclosed and both joint ventures are subject to approval by the Chinese government. They are expected to be finalised by year end.

The twill and poplin dyeing and finishing manufacturing facility will have a capacity of 70 million yards per year. It will provide an immediate solution for customers seeking Swift Galey quality sportswear and uniform fabrics in China.

Swift Galey is the leading global supplier of denim, khaki, and corduroy fabrics for the apparel, uniform, and home furnishings markets. Lucky Textile Group is a family-owned company, which has been operating weaving, dyeing, and finishing facilities in Jiangsu Province, China for more than 30 years.

LaCrosse Footwear to expand into new corporate headquarters

18 October 2005

LaCrosse Footwear, Inc., a provider of branded work and outdoor footwear for expert users, has signed a long-term operating lease for a new 145,000 square foot building in Portland to house its corporate headquarters and the distribution centre for its Danner products. Construction is due to begin in November, with an expected move-in date of June 1, 2006.

"In recent years, we have expanded our business and outgrown our current headquarters and Danner distribution centre," said Joseph. P. Schneider, president and CEO. "As we move forward, the new facility will allow us to efficiently meet the logistical challenges facing a growing company…..In our search for a new home we explored a number of possibilities and concluded that a location within the City of Portland was the best option for the company and our employees."

The North Face unveils “pong-proof pants”

18 October 2005

The North Face, manufacturer of outdoor apparel, has announced they will be launching Pong-proof pants”, which it claims can be worn multiple times without being washed.

The lightweight pants have silver containing fibres woven in to them, which works to prevent bacteria multiplying, as well as resisting microbes and mildew from forming.

The pants are designed for serious athletes and explorers who need undergarments that will stay fresh when the wearer is taking part in gruelling physical activities. They should be comfortable and durable enough for an Everest attempt when there would be no laundry facilities at hand.

The North Face boss Keith Byrne added: "The fact they resist odour build-up is sure to appeal to blokes everywhere who may be slightly challenged in the washing-machine department."

Interactive Wear selects austriamicrosystems' multimedia chips for wearable electronics applications

18 October 2005

Interactive Wear AG, a management-buyout from Infineon Technologies AG and a leading company in the field of wearable electronics, and austriamicrosystems AG, a leading supplier of high performance analog ICs, will expand their close cooperation, which had already started under Infineon.

Within the scope of a first joint project, Interactive Wear was granted access, as a European pilot customer, to the new multimedia chip AS3525m which has recently been introduced to the market by austriamicrosystems. Interactive Wear will employ the powerful single chip music player IC for the MP3, WMA, Ogg Vorbis and AAC audio formats to build a platform for its future wearable embedded systems in the entertainment and body monitoring fields. In return, Interactive Wear will assist austriamicrosystems in the integration of Bluetooth in austriamicrosystems' MP3 reference design.

Wearable electronics refers to the functional, robust and fit-for-everyday-use implementation of microelectronics systems in innovative textiles or clothing (Smart Clothes). Ultra-compact low power chips in innovative packaging, attached to the textile fabrics and interconnected by thin conductors woven into the fabric enable the integration of electronic functions in garments.

Increase in international visitor numbers at Texworld

18 October 2005

At Texworld, the Paris-based international trade fair for garment textiles which took place from 19 – 22 September, 18,595 trade visitors from more than 100 countries attended, totalling seven percent more than in the autumn of the year. 618 exhibitors from 40 countries participated in the fair.

The majority of visitors came from Europe, with 55 % hailing from the EU and 15 % from Eastern Europe (primarily Turkey). 11.2 % came from Asia and 10.8 % from the Americas.

Rocky Shoes & Boots to supply U.S. Military

18 October 2005

Rocky Shoes & Boots, Inc. has received an order to fulfil a contract to the US military to produce "Hot Weather" boots for approximately $30 million. Shipment of the boots is expected to begin in the fourth quarter of fiscal 2005 with an estimated completion date of December 2006.

The company also reported preliminary results for the third quarter ended September 30, 2005. Based on current, un-audited financial results, Rocky expects to report net sales of approximately $94 million. For the fiscal year ending December 31, 2005, the company now expects to report net sales in the range of $294 million to $296 million.

Mike Brooks, chairman and CEO, said, "Our core outdoor footwear business was negatively impacted during the third quarter, primarily due to warm, dry weather in several of our major markets, as well as weak consumer confidence and a challenging retail environment. With that said, we are confident about our product offering and merchandising strategy for the Rocky brand and we remain focused on expanding our leadership status in the industry."

Rocky Shoes & Boots, Inc. designs, manufactures and markets outdoor, work, duty and western footwear, as well as branded apparel and accessories, under the brands Rocky, Gates, Georgia Boot, Lehigh, Durango and Dickies.

Reliance wins 2005 ASTD 'BEST Award' for training and development

17 October 2005

Indian petrochemical company Reliance Industries Limited's Hazira manufacturing division has won the '2005 ASTD BEST Award' from the American Society for Training & Development Award (ASTD). BEST organisations are those that achieve enterprise wide success through learning by creating, supporting and championing learning opportunities for results and a learning culture.

According to Tony Bingham, ASTD's president and CEO, "The 2005 ASTD BEST Award winners set the standard of excellence for exceptional practices in employee learning and development." Bingham continued, "The winning organisations understand how to leverage employee learning with other critical business functions to achieve maximum impact, efficiency, and performance across the enterprise."

Reliance is the first petrochemicals company from India to have won this award. It is also the first petrochemicals company from Asia and second petrochemicals company, after Dow Chemicals globally. RIL - Hazira Unit was ranked 13th amongst the '2005 ASTD BEST Award' winners.

Reliance is India's largest private sector company.

Ciba launches system for dyeing polyester/elastane blends at ITMA

17 October 2005

Swiss specialty chemicals company, Ciba, has launched a new system, Terasil W–EL, for dyeing polyester/elastane blends at ITMA ASIA in Singapore.

Terasil W–EL disperse dyes are said to offer outstanding performance with reliable processing; high fastness and excellent dyeing reproducibility; and allow processing at lower temperatures which preserves the fibre properties.

The dyes have been especially designed for dyeing polyester blends with elastane and are said to combine excellent fastness with maximum reliability in processing at lower dyeing temperatures.

Polyester/elastane blends are growing in popularity, especially for sportswear, but processing them can be a challenge," says Peter Otto, global head of marketing at Ciba's Textile Effects Segment. Terasil W–EL dyes are applied in a way that minimises problems such as loss of stretch, fabric snagging and uneven appearance."

ILO to host talks on global textile and clothing trade

17 October 2005

Business, labour, and government leaders from key textile and clothing producing and consuming countries are to gather in Geneva October 24-26 under aegis of the International Labour Office (ILO) for wide-ranging talks on the future of the industry in the wake of last year's phase-out of the Multifibre Arrangement (MFA).

The meeting will bring leaders from the concerned parties who produce, buy and sell textiles and clothing together for the first time since the MFA phase-out to examine what has happened since then. Participants will discuss strategic and policy responses that concern more than 40 million workers worldwide and hundreds of thousands of enterprises in the $350 billion global clothing and textile sector.

"In the post-MFA environment, businesses and workers in the textile and clothing sector are under enormous pressure to produce the right product, at the right price, at the right time and under the right conditions", said Juan Somavia, director-general of the ILO. "This meeting will discuss the elements involved in fashioning new strategic and policy responses throughout the global supply chain."

A new study prepared by the ILO for the meeting says that despite widespread concern that the lifting of global textile and clothing quotas in January 2005 would be a labour and trade catastrophe for many developing countries, the results thus far of

the phasing out of the MFA have been a mixed bag.

CBR Pakistan implements zero-rating on natural gas consumption for textiles industry

17 October 2005

The Central Board of Revenue (CBR) in Pakistan announced on October 15 that a zero-rating facility has been implemented on natural gas consumption for five major export-oriented industries: textiles, sports goods, leather, carpets, and surgical goods. This follows the CBR's earlier decision to make the industries involved form payments for electricity consumption. These measures have been taken in an attempt to increase exports to the desired level in the minimum possible time. The measure will help the export-oriented industries to save resources, meet the maximum export orders, and expand their markets.

According to a government statement, the zero-rating on gas will be available to 1,098 registered manufacturers engaged in the manufacture of textile products, leather items, carpets, sporting goods and surgical instruments.