Business Week
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Nike names VP of Global Apparel

17 April 2006

Nike Inc. has named Roger Wyett as vice president of the Nike brand's approximately $4 billion global apparel business. He replaces Mindy Grossman, who has resigned to become CEO of Retailing at IAC/InterActiveCorp.

Mr Wyett brings more than 25 years of experience in the apparel industry, including seven years at Nike. He first joined Nike in 1994 and held a number of senior apparel roles in soccer and Nike Team Sports before leading Global Product Creation. Prior to joining Nike he worked in the apparel industry in Los Angeles for 14 years, including five years at Puma USA.

Nike offers a range of sport performance and sport culture apparel, including NikePro performance base layer apparel, Nike Sphere, and women's fitness dance product such as the Nike Speed Corset and Nike Groove Pant. The company's apparel business grew about 10% in fiscal 2005 to approximately $3.9 billion, representing about 32% of total Nike brand revenues.

Under Armour unveils performance footwear line

17 April 2006

US developer of branded performance products Under Armour has launched a new cleated footwear line. Slated for retail launch beginning on June 3, Under Armour Performance Footwear is said to offer moisture management and breathability; dual plate technology, designed to maximise agility and minimise weight; and progressive traction, with a built-in directional blade at the base of each stud.

Sharp Gain Profits Limited acquires Pony International

17 April 2006

Global Brand Marketing Inc., (GBMI) has sold its majority interest in Pony International, LLC to Sharp Gain Profits Limited, a member of the Symphony Holdings Group based in Hong Kong. In addition, the two other entities with interests in Pony, including The Firm Shoes, Inc. and Itochu International Inc., have sold their respective interests to Sharp Gain Profits Limited. Sharp Gain Profits Limited is now the sole owner of Pony International, LLC.

GBMI will consult with Sharp Gains Profits Limited under a management services contract and will assist with components of the transition for a limited period following the closing of the sale.

Wellco awarded military contract

17 April 2006

US manufacturer and developer of military footwear Wellco Enterprises, Inc. has been awarded a Department of Defence contract to supply the US Army with Extreme Cold Weather boots. The contract is for a one year period, with four one-year options which are exercisable at the government's discretion, with revenues estimated to range from a minimum of $177,930 to a maximum of $1,910,671 per year.

The base year of the contract has been exercised for a maximum amount of $1,697,452. Work will be performed at Wellco's plant in Waynesville, North Carolina and its plant Moka Shoe Corporation in Aguadilla, Puerto Rico.

Wellco specialises in the manufacture and development of military footwear and derives the majority of its revenues from the sale of military and tactical boots.

Extra space for Texworld première

18 April 2006

More than 110 companies have already confirmed their participation for the launch of Texworld USA scheduled for July 11-13 in New York. In response to the high demand, organiser Messe Frankfurt has increased the exhibition space available by 75%.

Colour-changing fabric

18 April 2006

Advanced new fibres are reportedly able to change colour using a concept similar to light-sensitive spectacle lenses which darken when exposed to sunlight.

The fibres, created from materials known as electrochromic polymers, change colour in response to an electric current. When voltage is applied, the polymers' electrons are raised to a higher energy level.

In this state the fibres absorb light of different wavelengths, and the colour changes.

To date, Gregory Sotzing, a professor of polymer and organic chemistry at the University of Connecticut and his colleagues have developed fibres that can turn from orange to blue and from red to blue. Eventually Sotzing aims to conquer the entire spectrum of visible colour. In theory these fibres and a small number of thin metal wires could be woven together in a crisscross pattern that resembles pixels. A small battery and controller attached to the wires could then change the electric field around each pixel of fibre, changing the colours to create a pattern that matches the wearer's environment.

In addition to changing colour when electricity is applied the polymers can also change colour in response to changes in the environment.

Therefore, the fibres could possibly be used as sensors in the food and security industries. For example, packaging could potentially change colour when an internal sensor detects rotten or contaminated food, or the sensors could change colour when the fibres detect harmful chemicals in the air. The fibres could also have applications for flexible displays, such as computer screens, that do not become distorted when pressed.

Eastman restructures

18th April 2006

US-based chemicals, fibres and plastics manufacturer Eastman Chemical Company has announced organisational changes. Under the new structure Eastman is now organised into two business groups, effective April 1, 2006. The chemicals and fibres business group will consist of the company's performance chemicals and intermediates; fibres and coatings, adhesives, specialty polymers and inks segments. The polymers business group will include the company's polymers and specialty plastics segments.

Turkey’s textile production falls

18th April 2006

An Industrial Production Index report issued by the Turkish Statistics Institute, states that Turkey’s manufacturing industry increased production by 4.8% in February. The largest output growth was seen in the leather tanning and dressing industry which rose 22%. Despite this, the textile industry saw the largest decrease in output, declining by 7.9%.

Huntsman forms Green Chemistry Strategic Business Unit

18th April 2006

Huntsman Corporation has formed a new strategic business unit for the enhancement of the company's Green Chemistry initiatives.

Huntsman has already initiated certain green, or sustainable, chemistry products such as propylene carbonate-based solvents that reduce toxicity in applications from agriculture to industrial cleaning agents, non-brominated flame retardants and catalysts that eliminate emissions from insulation foams.

Huntsman manufactures differentiated and commodity chemicals. Its operating companies manufacture basic products for a variety of global industries including chemicals, plastics, footwear, and textiles.

Use of silver nanoparticles is expanding rapidly

18th April 2006

According to research carried out by Bourne Research, silver nanoparticles are emerging as one of the fastest growing product categories in the nanotechnology industry. The market research firm has reported that the ability to produce particles of silver at the nanoscale is allowing companies to leverage its known antimicrobial properties as an effective means of infection control.

"Silver nanoparticles may very well become the next 'it' product, much like antibacterial soaps took the consumer sector by storm a decade ago," said Marlene Bourne, principal analyst with Bourne Research. "Of course, some are concerned that being too clean is perpetuating the rise of allergies and autoimmune diseases, but there are many applications where its use makes perfect sense."

Indian Oil Corporation to set up petrochemical hub with HSIDC

18th April 2006

Indian Oil Corporation Ltd. and the Haryana State Industrial Development Corporation (HSIDC) have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) at Chandigarh for the creation of a petrochemical hub at Panipat.

The project will use naphtha as feedstock and will comprise associated units and downstream polymer/chemical units such as dedicated HDPE (high density polyethylene), polypropylene and MEG (mono ethylene glycol). Further downstream projects such as poly-ethylene terephthalate (PET) are also being

considered.

According to a statement released by the Indian Oil Corporation, the project at Panipat will help to create a ‘world-class petrochemical hub', which will cater to the requirements of the northern region of India as well as other regions.

As a result of the agreement, HSIDC is acquiring 5,000 acres of land to set up the hub. It will also include the development of a civic infrastructure such as schools, hospitals, parks, etc, as the plant will require a huge skilled and unskilled workforce ranging from 10,000 to 20,000 during the construction period, which may span more than a decade.

Russell Corporation to be acquired

18 April 2006

US-based branded athletic and sporting goods company Russell Corporation is to be acquired by holding company Berkshire Hathaway. The acquisition, which is subject to stockholder and regulatory approval, is expected to close in the third quarter of 2006.

Jack Ward, chairman and chief executive officer, of Russell Athletic stated that the merger agreement will place Russell in a stronger financial position.

The company has also announced that Julio Barea, senior vice president and president/chief executive officer of Russelll Athletic’s Activewear division will retire with effect May 15.

Other restructuring has also taken place. Tony Lannuzzi, who has been in Russell's artwear business for 17 years, has been promoted to general manager of Artwear/Careerwear and Al Lopez, who joined Activewear as vice president of Activewear's mass retail channel in 2004, has been promoted to general manager for the mass retail business including the Jerzees brand, Mossy Oak and all Activewear operations in Mexico. Furthermore, Dean Riggs will return to the company on April 18 as corporate vice president of operations.

Bayer MaterialScience focuses on polyurethane at Simac

19 April 2006

Bayer MaterialScience AG is showcasing the group’s range of polyurethane raw materials and services for the shoe industry at Simac 2006 in Bologna, Italy. The focus will be on the company’s new classes of materials and technologies from its Bayflex Footwear brand, which brings together the company’s range of raw materials for polyurethane shoe soles.

The range of systems comprises Bayflex Safety for safety shoes, Bayflex Active for sports and leisure shoes, Bayflex Fashion for fashion shoes, and Bayflex Basics for basic raw materials.

It will also highlight its Bayflex Fashion polyether systems, which offer a diverse range of applications for lightweight insoles and shoe inserts. The products also offer a large degree of freedom in tailoring soles to individual feet. Another claimed advantage is that Bayflex Fashion can be used for in-shoe components, where low material weight is important alongside strength and quality.

Wolverine achieves record revenue

19 April 2006

Wolverine World Wide, Inc. has reported record revenue and earnings for its first quarter ended March 25, 2006, and announced an improved earnings outlook for the year. The company achieved revenue of $262.8 million, a 7.2% increase over the first quarter of 2005.

Wolverine World Wide markets branded casual, active lifestyle, work, outdoor sport and uniform footwear under brands such as Bates, Hush Puppies, Merrell, Sebago and Wolverine. The company is also the exclusive footwear licensee of other brands including CAT, Harley-Davidson, Patagonia and Stanley.

Chinese government backs footwear manufacturers

19 April 2006

According to local media reports, the Chinese Government has stated that it will support domestic footwear companies if they decide to take legal action against the European Commission over its decision to impose provisional anti-dumping duties on Chinese leather shoes. The tariffs came into effect on April 7, and have also been applied to footwear produced in Vietnam.

Kraton to expand operations in Asia Pacific

19 April 2006

Producer of styrenic block copolymers, used in a wide range of applications including footwear products, tapes and labels, Kraton Polymers LLC has revealed plans to expand its presence in the Asia Pacific region. The investment plans include a multi-functional customer service centre and a proprietary Kraton G manufacturing plant. It has also announced several new leadership positions.

The new customer service centre, to be located in China, is projected to be operational in the first quarter of 2007,

and will include both distribution capabilities and technical product support for customers in the region.

As part of its expansion strategy, Kraton is evaluating the construction of a 30,000 tpa hydrogenated SBC manufacturing facility in the region, which could be operational as early as 2009.

To support these expansion plans, the company has appointed James Dieter to the position of vice president of Sales and Marketing for Asia Pacific. Mr Dieter has been with Kraton since 1977 and has managed in each of Kraton's five end-use markets, most recently as North American manager for Adhesives, Sealants, and Coatings. In his new role, he will be responsible for overseeing Kraton's sales, marketing and business development efforts in the Asia Pacific region. Additionally, Bruce Toig has been appointed as director of Supply, Distribution and Customer Fulfilment for Asia Pacific. He has been with Kraton since 1976, most recently as North American Business manager for Compounding.

Kraton claims to be the world's largest producer of styrenic block copolymers, which are highly engineered synthetic elastomers that enhance the performance of products by delivering a variety of attributes, including greater flexibility, resilience, strength, durability and processability.

Cherokee proposes Mossimo acquisition

19 April 2006

Mossimo, Inc. has announced that it has received an unsolicited proposal from Cherokee Inc. to acquire all the outstanding shares of Mossimo, Inc. in cash and in Cherokee stock. Mossimo's board of directors will meet to evaluate the proposal, but a spokesman indicated that it is too early to determine whether the Cherokee letter constitutes a superior proposal as compared with the proposed merger of Mossimo with Iconix Brand Group, Inc. announced on April 3.

Founded in 1987, Mossimo designs men's, women's, and children's apparel, footwear and other fashion accessories such as jewellery, watches, handbags, and belts.

New North Face store opens in Italy

19 April 2006

UK-based supplier of technical outdoor apparel, equipment and footwear The North Face has opened a new flagship store in Arco, Trentino, Italy. This will be the brand's fourth store in Italy.

Hilly launches new sock with Dri-release wool

20 April 2006

Hilly Clothing Ltd. has launched its new Mono Skin Supreme Sock at the London Marathon Expo, being held April 19-22.

The sock, which incorporates new features and speciality fibres, is said to alleviate sweat problems. The main body uses 100% Dri-release wool allowing the sock to dry more quickly and keeping feet drier and more comfortable. Using a blend of natural and synthethic fibres, Dri-release pushes moisture to the outside of the sock, releasing water and perspiration.

Technical features are also found in the sock with cushioning and blister resistance using anti-friction fibre Profilen in the heel and toe. The key new design feature is the position of the flat toe construction. The usual upper seam, which can cause blisters, has been replaced by a flat seam construction under the toe area. Additional comfort features such as the arch grip section, 'Y' heel and use of Lycra are said to provide optimum fit.

Record attendance at Techtextil North America

20 April 2006

According to the organisers 4,081 visitors from 43 countries attended Techtextil North America, in Atlanta, GA, USA, with 329 exhibitors from 25 countries showcasing their latest innovations and developments.

The Techtextil-Symposium North America, which was held concurrently, also hosted a record number of attendees. The two-and-a-half day programme commenced with an address from Greg Rogowski, president and CEO of Performance Fibers, focusing on the future global marketplace of the industry.

Other popular session topics in the Symposium included technical textiles R&D at the university level, advanced nonwovens, developments in fibres, emerging technology, specialty applications, protection for law enforcement and military, and nanotechnology.

Brazilian footwear exports drop in Q1

20 April 2006

Brazilian shoe exports fell 4% in the first quarter of 2006 compared with the same period last year. According to statistics released by the Brazilian Association of Footwear Manufacturers (Abicalçados), 57.4 million pairs of shoes were exported compared with 60.1 million pairs in the first quarter of 2005. However, revenue from shoe exports rose 3% to $502 million, from the $489.4 million in the comparable period last year. This increase reflects

a 7% rise in the average price per pair, which reached $8.74 in this period.

First OutDoor Industry award to be presented

20 April 2006

A design competition will debut this year in conjunction with the OutDoor Friedrichshafen European trade fair (July 23-26)., The award will be presented for products that combine innovative technologies with suitable features and designs. The competition is open to all outdoor industry companies.

Online applications will be accepted until June 2 and the winners will be announced on July 23. The award-winning entries will be displayed in the entrance area at the OutDoor trade fair.

American Eagle Outfitters names new VP

20 April 2006

US-based designer, marketer and retailer of outerwear, accessories, footwear and swimwear American Eagle Outfitters, Inc. has promoted Joan Hilson to executive vice president, chief financial officer, American Eagle Brand. Ms Hilson was previously senior vice president, Finance, a position that she had held since joining the company in September 2005. In her new role, Ms Hilson will assume responsibility for all areas within corporate finance and accounting as well as for merchandise planning and allocation.

EU approves Andritz acquisition of Küsters

20 April 2006

The European Commission has cleared the proposed acquisition of Eduard Küsters Maschinenfabrik GmbH & Co KG, a German manufacturer of calendars used in paper and textiles manufacturing, by the Austrian producer of paper-manufacturing machinery Andritz GmbH. After investigation the Commission concluded that the transaction would not significantly impede effective competition in the EEA or any substantial part of it.

Salomon court hearing cancelled

20 April 2006

Germany-based sportswear and sports equipment company Salomon SA has had a petition from the Works Council, and subsequent court hearing cancelled and withdrawn.

The complaint from the Works Council concerned the company's alleged non-honouring of previous social plan commitments.

Pony names new president and COO

20 April 2006

Athletic footwear industry veteran Dave Edwards has been appointed president and COO of Pony International LLC. In transactions completed recently, Infinity Associates LLC and Symphony Holdings Ltd. acquired 100% of Pony.

Mr Edwards has spent 19 years in senior executive positions within the Nike organisation, including vice president of Nike International Ltd., vice president International/Managing Director Western Europe, director of Global Footwear and Apparel Operations, and president of Nike Sports Korea.

PrimaLoft appoints new sales representative

21 April 2006

Insulation for outdoor products brand PrimaLoft has appointed Kelly Mettler of Performance Squared Inc. as the company's new sales representative for Canada. Ms Mettler will be responsible for expanding the PrimaLoft brand in the Canadian outdoor and apparel markets.

Huntsman launches new polyether systems

21 April 2006

Huntsman Polyurethanes has launched a new family of water-blown, high quality polyether systems to help European footwear manufacturers overcome forthcoming product legislation.

From July 2006, European legislation will outlaw the production of footwear soles that contain environmentally harmful fluorinated hydrocarbons (HFC). These commonly used physical blowing agents, which have proven ozone depleting characteristics, will no longer be available for use.

Huntsman's now believes it has devised an environmentally sound substitute to HFCs through water-blown technology.

Based on Huntsman's established Suprasec prepolymers, the new products are suitable for use in the creation of unit soles, sockliners, and direct moulded footwear.

Huntsman Polyurethane's footwear team has also

developed a new elastomer that enables significant weight savings in the production of low density midsoles for use in industrial boots which can be processed on conventional direct-injection machinery.

Huntsman manufactures and markets differentiated and commodity chemicals for a variety of global industries including chemicals, plastics, textiles and footwear.

Lanxess increases prices for NBR and EPDM rubber

21 April 2006

German chemical company Lanxess's Technical Rubber Products (TRP) business unit has increased prices in the European market for its nitrile rubbers (NBR) KrynacR and PerbunanR and Buna EP (EPDM). Prices for the American market were also increased in March/April.

The price increases are as follows: for standard-grade NBR up to €120/$145 per metric ton, for special grades up to €180/$220 per metric ton and for EPDM €100/$176 per metric ton.

Record Q1 net sales for Oakley

21 April 2006

Performance apparel and accessories, prescription eyewear, footwear, watches and electronics producer Oakley has posted record financial results for its first quarter ended March 31, 2006.

Net sales increased 7%, to a first quarter record of $151.7 million compared with $141.8 million in the same period of 2005. Net income for the first quarter totalled $1.9 million, compared with net income of $10 million in 2005.

However, first quarter net sales of Oakley apparel, footwear and accessories totalled $36.8 million, a decline of 8% compared with net sales of $40.3 million in the first quarter of 2005.

EC meets textiles and clothing industry

21 April 2006

European Commission vice president Günter Verheugen, responsible for enterprise and industry policy, and Vladimír Špidla, commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs, will address the 'Managing change in the textiles and clothing industry' conference in Brussels on Tuesday April 25.

The conference will look at developing strategies to better anticipate and handle change at company, regional, national and European level and forms part of a series of concrete initiatives to improve the competitiveness of European industry while accompanying the process of structural change in which it is engaged.

Participants include textile and clothing trade associations and trade union representatives, Member States and Candidate Countries representatives with responsibilities for industry, textile and clothing manufacturers, chambers of commerce, supplier industries, training and research institutes, regional authorities and associations and EU institutions. Around 200,000 companies, mostly SMEs, operate in the EU's textiles and clothing industry, employing some 2.4 million people and with a turnover in excess of €207 billion. The sector accounts for 4% of total manufacturing value and occupies 8% of the industrial workforce in the EU.

Clothing, textiles and outdoor leisure firms amongst 2006 Queen's Awards Winners

21 April 2006

A number of firms from the clothing, textiles and outdoor leisure sector have been awarded a Queen's Award for Enterprise – said to be the UK's highest accolade for business-related success.

In total, Her Majesty The Queen Elaizabeth II announced a total of 145 Awards to coincide with her 80th Birthday - the highest total for 11 years. There are 90 awards for International Trade, 48 for Innovation and seven for Sustainable Development.

This year's winners from the clothing, textiles and outdoor leisure sectors include John Foster of England Ltd., Ardmel Automation Ltd., Berghaus Ltd., Fox Brothers & Co Ltd., Tilsatec, a Division of Sirdar Spinning Ltd. and Waterside Manufacturing Ltd t/a Englands.

Polyurethane resin demand soars

21 April 2006

According to a new study from Cleveland-based industry research firm The Freedonia Group, Inc., polyurethane resin demand in the US is projected to rise 2.8% annually to 7.6 billion pounds in 2009.

Flexible and rigid polyurethane foams will remain dominant, together accounting for nearly two-thirds of all polyurethane demand.

Demand for flexible polyurethane foam should increase 1.9 % annually to 2.6 billion pounds in 2009 and rigid polyurethane foam demand should grow at a 3.4% annual rate to 2.4 billion pounds in 2009.

DD GrassMaster selected for Arsenal's new Emirates stadium

21 April 2006

Designed and constructed by Hewitt Sportsturf, the pitch at Arsenal's new Emirates stadium will incorporate DD GrassMaster, a natural grass reinforcement system.

Already installed at six other Premiership clubs, including Liverpool and Tottenham Hotspur, DD GrassMaster seeks to ensure that the surface remains consistent all year round.

DD GrassMaster's computer-controlled machine injects over 20 million artificial grass fibres about 20cm deep into a natural grass pitch. As the roots of the grass grow, they intertwine with the artificial fibres, anchoring the grass roots to give a stable grass surface. Both UEFA and FIFA have approved the system for football games at the highest level.