Business Week
24th April - 30th April 06

Finish Line elects new director

24 April 2006

American retailer of athletic footwear, apparel and accessories The Finish Line, Inc. has elected Catherine Langham as a new director. Ms Langham will serve on the Audit Committee of the Board of Directors. She is the co-founder of the global logistics firm Langham and has over twenty years of experience in the logistics industry.

Under Armour unveils performance footwear line

24 April 2006

400 international exhibitors will take part in Interfilière Lyon from September 2-4 and will display winter collections for 2007/8.

Due to expansion work at Eurexpo, Interfilière will inaugurate a new layout and take over halls 2 and 4, where exhibitors will include fibre manufacturers, embroiderers, lacemakers, weavers, printers, trim specialists, machinery specialists and designers working in the fields of lingerie, ladieswear, menswear, childrenswear, beachwear, men's underwear, sportswear and designerwear.

Maier-Unitas to participate at IMB Cologne 2006

24 April 2006

Maier-Unitas will attend the IMB Cologne from May 10-13 and will exhibit machines and parts for ladieswear and menswear as well as technical textiles.

Maier will introduce new and optimised machine classes designed especially for the production of jackets and trousers.

The company will also present its blind stitch sewing machine for waistband felling. This new class 250-32 permits European and American fabrication - without any belt feed. Material passes through the sewing machine cleanly and, thanks to special sewing tools and an improved shape of the workplate, pockets and belt loops also pass through the machine without difficulty.

Woodworm signs new golf clothing deal

24 April 2006

According to media reports, West Sussex-based sports company Woodworm, best known for producing cricket bats, has received a seven-figure cash sum to enable it to expand into the world of golf.

Woodworm has used the money to sign a five-year clothing deal with three-time golf major winner Ernie Els, which will see the South African design his own range of Woodworm golf apparel.

Woodworm enjoyed 10% of the British cricket bat market last summer after agreeing long-term deals with Andrew Flintoff and Kevin Pietersen in the run-up to England's Ashes series win.

Clariant to open new application centre

24 April 2006

On June 21, Swiss chemical company Clariant will celebrate the official inauguration of its ASEAN Technical Application Centre (ATAC) in Shah Alam, Malaysia. The centre will offer support for customers and will focus on the requirements and process technologies in Asia. During the Open House' on June 22, visitors will be able to tour the new facility.

Eight technical consultants and laboratory assistants work at the centre, offering support to customers in the selection and proper application of colourants. They also provide training sessions for customers concerning properties and application possibilities for organic pigments.

The opening of the new centre will coincide with the Asian Pacific Coatings Show (APCS) which will be held at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre from June 20-22.

China's shoe exports fall in Q1

25 April 2006

According to reports, shoe exports in Shishi, an important export city in Fujian, totalled 29.1 million pairs valued at $52.29 million in the first quarter of 2006, down 15.8% in terms of volume but up 41.1% in value, compared with the same period in 2005.

A survey conducted by the Fujian Footwear Association revealed that many companies are worried about the

duties that have been imposed on shoes made in China and Vietnam and said that a decline in export quantities to the EU market was already evident. The rise in value of footwear exports was attributed to higher oil prices and labour costs as well as improvements in quality and design.

HaloSource and Gentex join forces

25 April 2006

US-based health science technology company HaloSource, Inc. and technical textiles manufacturer Gentex Corporation have agreed to collaborate in the development of technology focusing on protective chemical/biological apparel, strippable barriers, reactive coatings and air and water purification applications for the US Department of Defence and US Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

The agreement will capitalise on the benefits of HaloSource's HaloShield technology being incorporated into Gentex's Lifetex materials - Chemical Biological Defence textile systems, personal protective military overgarments, and law enforcement Rampart apparel - all designed to offer self-detoxifying protection to personnel facing life-threatening, life-saving situations.

HaloShield is a patented technology using common halogens - chlorine or bromine - to neutralise chemical and biological agents.

Nanotechnology in textiles already an $11 billion market

25 April 2006

A report has been released by nanotechnology research and technology information company Cientifica entitled "Nanotechnologies for the Textiles Market". The report claims that textile applications of nanotechnologies are already an $11 billion market, and will increase by a factor of ten by 2012.

The report draws on the views of experts from major textile producing nations such as China, India, Pakistan and Indonesia, in addition to the major markets of Europe, North America and Japan.

Containing over 70 tables and figures, the report covers apparel, home textiles, medical textiles, military textiles, sports textiles and other technical textiles and gives an analysis of current and projected applications of nanotechnologies to the textile industry, with cost benefit and pricing analysis, market forecasts, timelines, and company details for each of the six sectors.

The report predicts that the market for textiles making use of nanotechnologies will reach $13.6 billion by 2007, and will expand to $115 billion by 2012, while the value of nanomaterials supplied to the textile industry will reach $8.6 billion by 2012.

Unifi reduces losses

25 April 2006

Producer and processor of multi-filament polyester and nylon textured yarns and related raw materials Unifi, Inc. has posted operating results for its third quarter ended March 26.

Net income from continuing operations for the quarter saw a net loss of $1.3 million, equivalent to a net loss of $1.6 million for the same period in 2005. Net income for the third quarter, including discontinued operations, saw a net loss of $2.1 million, compared with a net loss of $1.9 million for the same period last year.

Net income from continuing operations for the first nine months of fiscal 2006 recorded a net loss of $9.5 million, which includes a total of $2.3 million in pre-tax impairment charges associated with the company's properties located in Mayodan, N.C., compared with a net loss of $7.3 million in 2005. Net income including discontinued operations, saw a net loss of $9 million, compared with a net loss of $32.2 million for the period in 2005, which includes charges associated with the closure of the company's facility in Ireland.

Adidas logo battle leads to court for Wimbledon

25 April 2006

According to media reports, sportswear brand adidas has filed legal proceeding against four major tennis organisations in an ongoing row over its logo. Adidas reportedly filed a law suit with regards to limitations placed on the size of logos that have been implemented at four grand slam tennis events: Wimbledon the US, the Australian and the French Opens, and the International Tennis Federation.

The company argues that the three stripes that are synonymous with the adidas brand are not a standard logo and should therefore be allowed however, thus far the new rules on the size of logos are still set to be implemented by the four tournaments involved.

Vietnamese trade delegation to visit Spain

25 April 2006

A Vietnamese trade delegation is scheduled to visit Spain in June under the Ministry of Trade’s 2006 trade promotion plan. It is envisaged that the seven-day visit will create opportunities for domestic enterprises to

market their products for export and to establish new investment contacts. It will help to promote key exports, including textiles and garments, as Spain is regarded as a potential export market for these products. The visit could give delegates the chance to establish suitable trade partners.

Bilateral trade between Vietnam and Spain reached $450 million last year, with $393 million coming from Vietnamese exports.

Groupe Bikini Village reports financial results

25 April 2006

Canadian swimwear retailer Groupe Bikini Village has reported a slight improvement in financial results for its fourth quarter and fiscal year ended January 28, 2006.

For the three-month period ended January 28, 2006, net sales from continuing operations, consisting of the Bikini Village and Ocean Bikini Village banners increased slightly to $9.5 million, compared with $9.3 million in the previous year. Comparable sales for the fourth quarter progressed by 2.3%.

For the year ended January 28, 2006, net sales from continuing operations were $37.6 million compared with sales of $33.0 million in the previous year, an increase of 14.1%. Comparable sales improved by 12.6%.

In addition, Leslie Glazerman, who has been acting as interim chief executive officer since August 2005, has been appointed president and chief executive officer effective March 1. Mr Glazerman joined the company in April 2005 as interim chief financial officer.

Meanwhile, Normand Legault has resigned as director of the company effective April 19.

EU welcomes WTO ruling on US anti-dumping violations

25 April 2006

The European Union has welcomed The Appellate Body of the WTO's decision to rule that the United States is in breach of its WTO obligations for using "zeroing" when calculating margins of dumping. "Zeroing" is a calculation methodology which consists of ignoring cases of "negative" dumping, i.e. where the export price exceeds normal value and therefore results in an artificial increase of the dumping liability of EU exporters. This decision upholds the earlier criticism of zeroing by the WTO in 2001.

EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson commended the WTO decision: "Today's ruling is a positive step in establishing a level playing field in transatlantic trade."

The Appellate Body condemnation concerns specific anti-dumping determinations in 31 cases, 15 original investigations and 16 administrative reviews, covering a wide range of products such as chemicals, steel, and ball bearings. In most cases, without "zeroing", the dumping margin may have even been negative and, therefore, no anti-dumping duty would have been imposed. Several hundred million dollars of trade volume is involved. Since its panel request in 2004, the European Commission has noted that the US has used zeroing in many other cases involving EU exporters, with the effect of inflating dumping margins.

The prohibition of zeroing thus applies to original investigations (leading to the imposition of the anti-dumping duty) as well as to investigations conducted after the imposition of the duty to revise its level, the so-called administrative reviews. According to an EU statement, if allowed to stand, a serious imbalance of rights and obligations between WTO members would have been created through opening a way out of the prohibition of zeroing for the US and other members which apply a retrospective system for the collection of anti-dumping duties.

The Appellate Body also concluded in respect of the original investigations that the United States was maintaining a methodology mandating the use of zeroing, which was then found WTO incompatible. There is no further possible appeal in this dispute and the United States will consequently have to not only revise the anti-dumping calculations in the 15 original investigations challenged by the EU, but also abandon its zeroing methodology in all of the anti-dumping original investigations.

Global Design Concepts and Travelway Group International join forces

26 April 2006

Montreal-based sports bag specialist Travelway Group International has teamed up with New York-based accessory company specialising in branded backpacks, handbags and small leather goods Global Design Concepts, Inc. to form a third and separate entity.

The partnership includes various private label and licensed brands including names such as Renwick and North West Passage.

The partnership will be highlighted at the 2006 Luggage, Leathergoods, Handbags and Accessories Show (LLHA) taking place at the Toronto Congress Centre on April 30-May 2.

Cipatex celebrates 42nd anniversary

26 April 2006

Brazilian producer of synthetic laminates Cipatex is celebrating its 42nd anniversary this month and has just been awarded the Inter Pares Assintecal/Copesul Award in the Social Responsibility Category for its relations with the Cerquilho community (São Paulo), its investment in education and social projects for impoverished children, and its environmental management. In the last fourteen years all Cipatex employees have completed a minimum of a high school education.

Cipatex operates in the plastics, chemical and nonwovens sectors and serves the footwear, bags and accessories, garments, and sports and leisure industries, both locally and internationally.

Staff change at Johnson Outdoors

26 April 2006

US-based marketer of outdoor recreation products Johnson Outdoors Inc. has announced that Jervis Perkins has resigned and will leave the company on May 5 to pursue other interests. Mr Perkins has been its chief operating officer (COO) since January 2003 and president and COO since December 2004.

Mongolian textile exports rise

26 April 2006

According to the National Statistics office of Mongolia, total international trade turnover reached $462.8 million in the first quarter, of which exports comprised $229.8 million and imports $233 million.

Compared with the same period in 2005, trade increased by 21.8% with imports rising by 36.5% and exports by 10.2%.

Compared with the first quarter in 2005, chemical & chemical industry products imports increased by $4.4 million, while textiles and textile articles increased by $2.1 million.

Compared with the same period in 2005, first quarter industrial output increased by 1.2% for the manufacture of textiles and wearing apparel, dressing and dyeing of fur, tanning, dressing of leather, production of furniture, manufacture of chemicals and chemical products and extraction of crude oil and natural gas divisions.

UK textile industry gets £4 million boost

26 April 2006

The University of Manchester's William Lee Innovation Centre has secured £4 million to launch a new project aimed at helping the UK textile industry regain its competitive edge over foreign markets.

The Knowledge 4 Innovation (K4I) project will seek to address the structural and economic impact of high-volume production overseas through technology and innovation.

K4I will focus on equipping small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with the skills and knowledge needed to help them utilise new technologies and develop a host of niche textile technologies for use in the medical, automotive and sports industries.

K4I will also develop training micro-modules and a digital web portal of multidisciplinary material which will act as a knowledge bank for textile companies. The project will also support textile SMEs by mentoring them through the technology innovation process.

K4I's work will be highlighted at the 'Technical Textiles: The Innovative Approach' conference at the Manchester Conference Centre (UK) on April 24-25.The project is funded by the European Union's European Social Fund.

FIDM graduate award presented by Gerber

26 April 2006

US-based manufacturer of integrated software and hardware automation systems for the sewn products and flexible materials industries Gerber Technology presented the Gerber WebPDM Achievement Award at the International Manufacturing & Product Development Advanced Study Programs graduate thesis presentation event.

This new award recognises the student who has made best use of Gerber's WebPDM in his/her thesis. It was presented to Christina Wong of Los Angeles for her work in developing a quality juniors denim collection.

The Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising's (FIDM) Advanced Study Program in International Manufacturing & Product Development is designed to equip students with the skills they need to compete in the global community of manufacturing and product development.

VF posts record Q1 results

27 April 2006

Branded apparel and sportswear manufacturer VF Corporation has posted record results for the first quarter of 2006.

Income rose 12% to $128.2 million from $114.7 million.

Total revenues increased 5% in the current quarter to $1,665.7 million, compared with $1,582.2 million in the 2005 quarter. Foreign currency translation negatively impacted revenues by approximately $30 million, or 2% in the 2006 quarter.

Each of VF's sportswear businesses, including the Nautica and John Varvatos, and Kipling brand sales in North America, achieved higher revenues in the first quarter. Nautica branded wholesale business, including men's sportswear, increased revenues in the quarter at a low single digit rate, with strong sales of spring product offerings partially offset by slightly lower revenues in Nautica brand retail stores.

As anticipated, operating income and operating margins declined in the quarter, due primarily to investments to support the upcoming launch of the Nautica brand's women's sportswear range and Nautica, Kipling and John Varvatos brands' retail store strategies.

New Outdoor Trade Show launched

27 April 2006

The new Outdoor Trade Show (OTS) will take place at Stoneleigh Park, near Coventry, UK, from October 4-6. According to the organisers, half of the available hall space has already been reserved and a great deal of further interest has been shown.

OTS is a new initiative led by six prominent suppliers in the outdoor market including AMG Group, Burton McCall, Gelert, Hi-Gear, Thatchreed and Wynnster. Other outdoor suppliers already supporting the show include Snugpak, Dalesman, Silva, Target Dry, Anatom, SealSkinz, Buff, Whitby, Lagenfeld, Cigman, Kestra Electroweld and TKC.

Under Armour reports Q1 results

27 April 2006

US–based developer, marketer and distributor of branded performance products Under Armour has posted much improved financial results for the first quarter ended March 31.

First quarter net income increased to $8.7 million compared with $2.5 million in 2005. Net revenue increased by 50.7% to $87.7 million in the first quarter compared with net revenue of $58.2 million in the first quarter of 2005. The company also posted $14.2 million in operating income for the quarter versus $4.9 million in the previous year.

First quarter net sales, which consist of Under Armour products sold globally other than through licensees, increased 50.3% to $85.3 million from $56.8 million in the same period of 2005.

The brand's moisture-wicking synthetic fabrics are engineered in different designs and styles to provide an alternative to traditional natural fibre products.

Lanxess opens compounding plant in China

27 April 2006

German chemical group Lanxess' Semi-Crystalline Products Business Unit has opened its first production site in Asia, located some 120 kilometres northwest of Shanghai. The compounding plant for the engineering plastics Durethan (polyamide) and Pocan (polyester) started production on April 27 at the site of Lanxess Wuxi Chemicals Ltd., and annual production of around 20,000 tons of plastic is envisaged in the first phase. The total investment is in the region of €20 million.

The company intends to add a further line at the plant and double its capacity in the near future.

Puma enters JV in Mexico

27 April 2006

German lifestyle company Puma has entered into an agreement in principle to establish a joint venture with Tavistock Mexico Holding S.A., a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Tavistock Group private investment company.

The venture, in which Puma will be the majority shareholder, is set to go into effect on July 1.

The aim of the partnership is to jointly explore the potential of the Puma brand in the Mexican market.

Cotton Incorporated debuts Engineered Fiber Selection software

27 April 2006

Cotton Incorporated presented its innovative Engineered Fiber selection (EFS) System software at the first EFS Conference held April 10-12 in Shanghai, China.

The EFS system is a high tech computer-based cotton management system that, through the use of High Volume Instrument (HVI) data, is said to provide optimised cotton purchasing, warehouse management and laydown selection solution. The EFS solution assists management analyse mill and end product cotton requirements to improve inventory management, spinning quality, and end product quality. It also provides electronic communication between and among mills and merchants.

Updated and improved continuously by Cotton Incorporated experts over the past two decades, the EFS system has now become a reliable electronic tool for cotton mills to increase the value-added of their cotton products through a better fibre management procedure.

Over the past 25 years, the EFS System programmes have grown in popularity and are currently used by nearly all cotton spinning mills in the US and a total of 30 mills in Europe, Canada, Mexico and Asia. In October of last year, Central Textile (HK) Limited became the first in China to adopt the MILLNet software.

Cotton Incorporated, funded by US growers of upland cotton and importers of cotton and cotton textile products, is the research and marketing company representing upland cotton.

High value in Italian exports to Pakistan

20 April 2006

Dr Marco Pintus, Italian trade commissioner in Pakistan, said that Italy exported textile, leather, leather chemicals, shoe accessories and other items worth €460 million to Pakistan in 2005 while exports from Islamabad to Milan stood at around €440 million.

According to Dr Pintus, Pakistan stands out as one of the main markets for Italian textile machinery and business volume to Pakistan was growing at the rate of 20%.

About 50 Italian textile machinery manufactures will exhibit or be represented at the upcoming IGATEX Pakistan 2006.

Ciba achieves strong Q1 sales growth

28 April 2006

Ciba Speciality Chemicals has reported first quarter sales of CHF1.645 million ($1.29 million) compared with CHF1.486 million in 2005, up 11% in Swiss francs and 5% in local currencies.

Volumes were 5% higher, supported by improved demand, most notably in the automotive and plastic industries and while the businesses most exposed to high raw material costs pushed through further price increases, overall sales prices for the quarter were flat.

All regions showed sales growth in local currencies, with sales in Asia up 13%, Europe 3% and the Americas 1%.

Coating Effects sales were CHF485 million, up 10% in Swiss francs and 5% in local currencies from CHF441 million in the first quarter of 2005.

Following the February 2006 announcement that a definitive agreement has been reached to sell the Textil Effects business to US chemical company Huntsman, the company stated that the separation process was well on track and closing is expected in the third quarter. The Textile Effects segment continues to perform operationally in accordance with expectations.

Asian competition affects Wellman results

28 April 2006

Manufacturer and marketer of polyester products Wellman, Inc. incurred a net loss of $16 million for the quarter ended March 31, compared with net earnings of $11.6 million for the same period in 2005.

Tom Duff, Wellman's chairman and chief executive officer stated that sales and earnings were adversely impacted by the surge in PET resin and polyester staple fibre imports that were caused by the increased raw material cost advantage enjoyed by Asian polyester producers compared with domestic producers during the latter part of 2005, primarily as a result of the Gulf Coast hurricanes. However, these imports continued into the first quarter due to advance purchases which reduced the demand for domestically produced polyester products.

The company believes it lost 25 million pounds of PET resin volume in the first quarter 2006 as a result of the increase in imports, adversely affecting operating results by approximately $9 million.

Sales volumes are expected to increase with the start of Wellman’s 300 million pound PET resin expansion at its Pearl River facility in the second quarter 2006.

Buckeye posts loss

28 April 2006

US–based manufacturer and marketer of specialty fibres and nonwoven materials Buckeye Technologies Inc. recorded a net loss of $0.8 million after tax in the quarter ended March 31, 2006. The company's results include $1.1 million after tax in restructuring and impairment expenses associated with the closure of its Glueckstadt, Germany, cotton linter pulp mill at the end of 2005.

During the same quarter of the prior year, the company

earned $4.1 million after tax.

Net sales in the first quarter were $181.4 million, slightly above the $180.9 million in the same quarter of 2005.

Chairman David Ferraro stated, "With our American facility beginning to produce saleable products, we are optimistic that the company's financial results will improve during April-June.'

Nike names new VP of global brand design

28 April 2006

Nike, Inc. has appointed global brand creative director Greg Hoffman as vice president of Nike's global brand design.

Mr Hoffman started with the company in 1992 as an intern and has held a variety of design positions, including brand design director for football and brand creative director of the USA region.

K2 reports positive first quarter results

28 April 2006

Branded consumer and sports products and footwear company K2 Inc. has posted net sales for the first quarter ended March 31, 2006 of $348.1 million, an increase of 9.4% over $318.3 million in the comparable period a year earlier. Adjusted net income for the first quarter was $5 million, compared with adjusted net income of $4 million in 2005.

Goose and PDD launch printed light source jacket

28 April 2006

UK apparel design consultancy, Goose, and product design consultancy, PDD, have unveiled a concept for a new sports jacket. The Illum jacket is based on cutting edge technology including electroluminescent ink and photovoltaic technology.

Aimed at improving safety for cyclists, the jacket consists of a self-charging, powered external ‘shell’ made up of individual fabric panels with properties selected to minimise weight and ensure the wearer remains cool, dry and visible. Illumination comes in the form of a series of electroluminescent surface graphics that fit logically around the anatomy.

Illum is activated by a soft-switch set into the cuff and powered by an integrated thin film battery that activates the lighting via a transparent, printable conductive layer. A further printable polymer forms a photovoltaic solar cell used to recharge the battery and ensure the jacket is self-sufficient.

PDD and Goose are currently speaking with possible production partners.

Puma beats expectations

28 April 2006

German sportswear and footwear company Puma AG has posted positive financial results for the first quarter of 2006, with global branded sales increasing more than 15%. Puma’s world-wide branded sales, which include consolidated and licence sales, rose 15.3% to €737 million or currency adjusted by 11.8%. Footwear sales improved 12.5%, apparel by 19.1% and accessories by almost 20%. Consolidated sales grew 29.5% (currency adjusted 25.4%) to €643 million.

Consolidated orders further improved and increased by 35% (currency adjusted 31.3%) to €1,097 million. This represents the 41st consecutive quarter of order increase.