

# SGB

ISSUE 1310  
MARCH 11, 2013

# WEEKLY

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Photo courtesy of The North Face

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ON THE COVER: Photo courtesy Moving Comfort

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## BY THE NUMBERS

**\$298.8 million**

**Adidas Group's** operating loss in the fourth quarter was €239 million (\$298.8 mm), as a result of goodwill impairment losses of €265 million (\$331.3 mm), which more than offset the positive effects of an increase in gross margin of 2.0 percentage points to 47.6 percent. Excluding goodwill impairment losses, operating profit amounted to €26 million (\$32.5 mm) compared to €18 million last year. Revenues grew 4 percent to €3.37 billion (\$4.21 bn) in Q4 of 2012 from €3.24 billion in 2011.

**12%**

Revenue at **Dorel Industries'** Recreational/Leisure segment, which owns Cannondale, Schwinn and other bike brands, increased 12.0 percent to \$225.6 million in the fourth quarter ended December 30, 2012 and broke \$900 million in the full fiscal year. Gross margin increased 200 basis points to 24.9 percent while operating margins grew 160 basis points to 7.3 percent.

**\$65 million**

**Nautilus, Inc.** reported sales for the fourth quarter of 2012 totaled \$65.0 million, an 8.4 percent increase compared to \$60.0 million in the same quarter of 2011. Net earnings vaulted to \$13.6 million, or 40 cents a share, from \$3.2 million, or 10 cents, a year ago. The earnings' gains reflect increased operating income from the company's Direct business.

**13.4%**

**Vail Resorts, Inc.** reported retail/rental revenues increased by \$9.9 million, or 13.4 percent in the second quarter ended January 31, due in large part to increases in rental revenue. The company also saw strong growth in retail sales generated from O2 Gearshop and increases at stores at its Tahoe resorts, which saw significantly better snowfall and weather conditions during the current year fiscal year compared with a year earlier.



## BROOKS TO PRESENT AT SOUTH BY SOUTHWEST

Brooks Running Company will present at South by Southwest Interactive Festival to share its philosophy of fostering an active workplace. In a session titled “Workplace Fitness Flexes the Mind,” Brooks Senior VP of Human Resources Anne Reeve will address the correlation between living the Brooks mission “to inspire everyone to run and be active” and increased employee engagement and productivity. She will share how Brooks fosters an environment that encourages employees to be active each day and positively impact the bottom line.

“A healthy workplace begins at the top, and we live our mission inside these walls every day,” said Reeve. “I see it come to life in many ways through employee-driven programs, including Friday-afternoon fun runs, fitness classes, sponsored sports teams and impromptu afternoon outings to test the latest footwear samples. It is this type of involvement that keeps employees fit, happy, and highly engaged, and our business benefits from it.”

Bringing the idea full circle, Brooks has also signed on as the official run partner of SXSW Interactive Festival. Brooks will host morning runs with the goal of helping SXSW attendees stay more alert, engaged and inspired during what can often be 10- to 12-hour days of breakouts, keynotes and networking. Austin community members are also invited to participate.



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## MOVERS & SHAKERS

**Prince Global Sports**, the manufacturer of global racquet sports equipment, footwear and apparel in tennis and squash, tabbed **Mike Ballardie** as CEO.

**Quiksilver, Inc.** appointed **Tom Hartge** as global head of footwear and **Kasey Mazzone** as global head of supply chain.

**Skins Compression** appointed **Johnny West** as the new general manager of North America.

**Seirus Innovation** named sporting goods industry veteran **Joe Urzetta** as its new VP of sales for the Snow Sports Division.

**Winston Rod Company** designated **Jeff Watt** as representative for Missouri, Kansas and Nebraska.

**Noble Biomaterials** appointed **Sean Kelly** as marketing director, advanced materials division. He will be responsible for building the X-Static brand in the sports, military, industrial and home business units.

**Pro Guide Direct** hired **Dominic Santarsiere** as director of business operations.



## INOV-8 ADDS OBSTACLE RACERS TO ATHLETES TEAM

Inov-8 selected a group of 37 athletes for this year's U.S. Team Inov-8 in 2013. The group includes crossfitters, trail runners, marathon and ultra-marathon runners, triathletes, and new this year, obstacle racers.

Old and new faces make up the list of athletes for 2013. Mark Lundblad, a nationally recognized ultra-runner for Team Inov-8 since 2004, and Ben Nephew, trail running for Inov-8 for 9 years as well, are the longest standing athletes on the team. Also returning this year are Derek Mohammed, Lisa Mikkelsen, Alex Nichols, Jim Johnson, Yassine Diboun, and Gary Gellin, among others. New athletes rounding out the team include obstacle racing champions Cody Moat and Margaret Schlachter, triathlete Guy Petruzzelli, CrossFitters Shane Farmer and Pat Barber.

Along with the announcement of the team, Inov-8 has launched the #committed blog, a home for the committed athlete. This new platform serves as a resource for elite and aspiring athletes, and offers inspiration, advice, training tips, and competition updates. With the goal of creating a community for the devoted athlete and passionate Inov-8 fan, Inov-8 created a place to bring all athletes together to share their commitment to their sport and learn from others doing the same.

*Editor's Note: For a full list of athletes and to learn more about Team Inov-8, visit the #committed blog at [teaminov8.wordpress.com](http://teaminov8.wordpress.com).*



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[Click to view the new Teva "Unfollow" campaign](#)

## TEVA UNVEILS GLOBAL TEVASPHERE CAMPAIGN

In its biggest marketing launch to date, Teva last week launched a new integrated marketing campaign, "Unfollow," supporting the debut of TevaSphere footwear, its collection of outdoor cross-trainers built with a first-of-its-kind spherical heel and pod-arch system.

Premiering across global channels, the "Unfollow" campaign launched online March 4 with a one-minute commercial that is a fast-paced musical montage of visual metaphors that embrace and celebrate TevaSphere's "Unfollow" philosophy. "Unfollow" is best understood as a choice to pursue an approach that differs from the norm, in search of a better, more compelling experience. The campaign is supported with digital media and print ads that will appear in outlets such as *Outside Magazine* and *Men's Journal*. Other elements include social, mobile, retail and an interactive product experience at [teva.com/tevasphere](http://teva.com/tevasphere).

Accompanying the launch, Teva will introduce a social media contest on March 11 to solicit images from their community via Instagram, Facebook and Twitter that capture what it means for them to "Unfollow." One U.S.-eligible winner will be announced in April. The winner will be awarded cash to take the "ultimate Unfollow trip of their dreams."

The lightweight TevaSphere design stands in stark contrast to bulkier, squared-off heels and over-cushioned

insoles of other athletic shoes. At the same time, it addresses the poor support found in "minimalist" footwear that encourages consumers to change their stride to adapt. Through its spherical heel and pod-arch system, TevaSphere delivers a more natural point of impact, efficient transition and superior stability on varied terrain. Structural minimalism, non-sew synthetics, flexible mesh and vibrant colorways define the versatile looks for the spring 2013 line.

"TevaSphere is an example of how breaking from convention leads to innovation," said Teva global marketing director Erika Brakken. "This campaign celebrates nonconformity by encouraging us all to take the lead, to choose adventure over routine, and discover how rewarding the unbeaten path can be. In short, to Unfollow."

The Tevasphere collection debuts in 17 countries worldwide through premier retail partners including Kathmandu in Australia and New Zealand, and Cotswolds in the United Kingdom. In the United States, Teva will be kicking off a retail promotion starting March 25 that encourages consumers to be active in the outdoors. For every pair of shoes sold at key retail accounts, Teva will give each customer a free one-month membership to an outdoor fitness class in their area. Retail partners include Paragon Sports in New York City, select Sport Chalet stores in Los Angeles and City Sports in Boston.



## CITY SPORTS SCORES NEW RETAIL LOCATIONS FOR 2013

Coinciding with the chain's 30th anniversary, City Sports plans to open two retail locations this spring in Chestnut Hill, MA and in New York's financial district.

The more than 9,200-square-foot store in the Chestnut Hill Shopping Center opening March 16, follows the redevelopment of the center in a project dubbed "The Street." The revamped store's footwear department will receive an upgrade with an in-store track and treadmill to test more than 300 styles. Other highlights include an enhanced product offering for youth and team sports, and a racquet sports department with full-time racquet stringing and demo services. The brand's signature women's offering showcases an updated pant wall and a comprehensive sports bra selection.

"We have always been embraced by the Chestnut Hill community, and we look forward to providing our customers an unparalleled shopping experience in this exciting new City Sports store at 'The Street,'" said City Sports President and CEO Edward Albertian.

In addition to the Chestnut Hill revamp, City Sports will open a new location at 50 Broadway in New York City at the end of March. At over 10,500-square-feet, the bi-level space will feature an open floor plan and many other details that nod to the building's origins as a bank. This store will mark City Sports' third location in New York City.

Founded in Boston in 1983, the company operates 21 metropolitan stores across the East Coast, with locations in Maryland, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont and Washington, D.C.



## SKECHERS PERFORMANCE WINS U.K.'S SPORTS FOOTWEAR BRAND OF THE YEAR

Skechers USA, Inc. announced that the Skechers Performance Division was named the Sports Footwear Brand of the Year at The Footwear Industry Awards in the U.K. This achievement follows a year when Skechers Performance received eight awards from major international running and fitness publications recognizing its innovative footwear product.

The annual event, held on February 17, during the Moda Footwear Show, was organized by Datateam Business Media with support from industry players including the British Footwear Association (BFA), the Independent Footwear Retailers Association (IFRA), the Society of Shoe Fitters (SSF) and Footwear Today. The group recognizes excellence at every level and Skechers won over a strong competitive field that included Nike, Hi-Tec, Clarks and Vibram. Skechers was also an overall nominee for Men's Footwear Brand of the Year.

Skechers has earned acclaim for its Skechers GOrun collection, featuring revolutionary technology that promotes a midfoot strike and GOimpulse sensors for a responsive experience. On the more casual side, Skechers GOwalk is the foundation for a collection of performance walking shoes and Skechers on-the-GO fuses performance technologies with design and style.

"It's always a great feeling to be recognized by our peers," began Michael Greenberg, president of Skechers, "especially when the recognition comes for a challenging field and our steps into the performance world began in 2011 with the launch of the Skechers Performance Division. We're extremely proud that our pioneering performance technology is being embraced by critics in the media, elite runners like Meb, and casual enthusiasts for the sport. We hope that as we leverage our innovations into a wider collection of performance product, more people around the globe will turn to Skechers for performance footwear built for running, walking, golfing, hiking and more."





## NIKE JOINS MICHELLE OBAMA IN BRINGING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY BACK TO SCHOOLS

Photo courtesy of Nike

Over the next five years, Nike, Inc. will invest \$50 million in the U.S. to increase the physical activity of kids in schools and communities as well as target advocacy efforts to inspire kids and draw additional resources to the effort. Nike, Inc. President and CEO Mark Parker joined First Lady Michelle Obama and U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan in Chicago to announce Nike's commitment to get kids moving.

Nike athletes Serena Williams, Bo Jackson, Allyson Felix, Gabby Douglas, Paul Rodriguez, Ashton Eaton, Colin Kaepernick and Sarah Reinertsen jumped, kicked, spun and danced with nearly 6,000 local Chicago school kids to help deliver the announcement.

The First Lady has championed physical activity since the 2010 launch of Let's Move! Active Schools, an initiative dedicated to improving child and family health.

"Today's announcement is part of Nike's long-term commitment to help our nation's youth lead more active and healthy lives," said Nike, Inc. President and CEO Mark Parker. "All kids deserve a chance to realize their full potential and we believe creating active schools will help kids do better in school and most importantly in life."

Let's Move! Active Schools is a concept designed to align and leverage collective resources to significantly boost the quality and quantity of physical activity in America's schools. This is a collective partnership effort and includes organizations such as The President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition; American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance; and the Alliance for a Healthier Generation.

Part of Nike's commitment will focus on Let's Move! Active Schools – a collaboration to bring physical activity back to America's schools. The program provides simple steps and tools to help schools create active environments to get students moving.

Let's Move! Active Schools will provide free resources to teachers, parents and administrators to enable communities to incorporate physical activity experiences before, during and after the school day. There will also be opportunities for schools to apply for grants that support Active Schools efforts, which will be funded by Childhood Obesity 180, GenYouth and others. Schools can learn more and apply for grants at Let's Move! Active Schools.

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Craig Heisner, president Newton Running, will oversee the marketing, branding and sales for all current product lines.

# NEWTON RUNNING APPOINTS CRAIG HEISNER AS PRESIDENT

By Thomas J. Ryan

Newton Running announced that Craig Heisner has been appointed president, effective immediately. Heisner brings to Newton Running a diverse perspective on the industry after more than 20 years of marketing and sales for leading athletic footwear and apparel brands, including New Balance, Reebok, and Brooks Sports.

He most recently served as VP of marketing, sales and product merchandising at Li-Ning, where he led the Chinese company's

introduction into the U.S. market. In the 1990's, Heisner was instrumental in the growth of the New Balance brand, serving as director for its running business unit. The business quintupled under his leadership. Previously, Heisner served as a global GM for running at Reebok before joining Brooks as CMO and head of product. While at Brooks, he led the strategic turnaround of the company, re-focusing the brand's efforts on performance running prior to the company's sale to Russell Corp.

At Boulder, CO-based Newton Running, Heisner will oversee the marketing, branding and sales for all current product lines. He will manage the sales and marketing departments at the company and will report directly to co-founder and CEO Jerry Lee. Heisner essentially replaces Keith Simmons, who joined Newton Running as president in January 2011 but left in early 2012.

"Craig's appointment underscores Newton Running's commitment to continually creating and marketing products that improve the sport of running," said Lee in a statement. "His proven success in the development and marketing of iconic athletic brands made him the perfect candidate to oversee the expansion of our current categories as well as contribute to future innovations."

In an interview with *SGB Weekly*, Heisner said he had been consulting with Newton Running since last fall and already has a good read into the opportunities for the brand.

"Obviously, the brand has done very well with significant growth year-over-year," said Heisner. "But it's still a very young brand, is very uniquely-positioned in the marketplace with an evolving consumer, and has a technology platform that aligns very well with what's happening from the natural motion standpoint. When you put that all together and look at the competitive landscape, it's a very unique opportunity."

He added, "If you don't have a strong point of view, it's hard for a brand to achieve. And Newton already has that strong point of view around the natural runner. Our plan is to try to leverage that."

Launched in 2007, Newton Running is sold in nearly 700 doors in the U.S. and 500 in Asia, Europe and Australia. Heisner also likes Newton Running's position inside the run specialty, a channel he describes as "doing quite well and still has a lot of upside to it."

Heisner said he plans to continue Newton Running's focus on the run specialty channel, which he believes "best represents our core customer." Stores can expect "an even greater and elevated concentration on their business from the marketing standpoint as well as from the sales field and customer service." With Newton Running's product lineup "fairly tight," the range is expected to broaden by fall 2013 into 2014 with strong innovations in the





Newton Running will build on its new three-year sponsorship deal, first announced in January, as the official footwear and run course sponsor of Ironman in the U.S.

works. Said Heisner, “Consumers should expect exciting new technologies built around our platform.”

Newton Running will also build on its new three-year sponsorship deal, first announced in January, as the official footwear and run course sponsor of Ironman in the U.S. Newton Running sold its first pair of shoes at the Oceanside 70.3 event in 2007 and triathletes were the first to embrace the brand’s technology. Said Heisner, “The tri market is very important to us and we’re very important to them. We see a lot of creative ways to help elevate Ironman and we think we can elevate the brand as well.”

“[Craig’s] proven success in the development and marketing of iconic athletic brands made him the perfect candidate to oversee the expansion of our current categories as well as contribute to future innovations.”

- Jerry Lee, CEO Newton Running

Beyond expanding marketing and its product range, Heisner plans to “take a lot of the pieces that are working and integrate them a little bit better” to build on the inroads Newton Running is making in the market. He’s particularly looking to build on the early successes coming from the hiring in December 2012 of Kirk Nichols as VP of sales. Nichols previously worked at Columbia Sportswear, Hi-Tec and LaCrosse Footwear.

Beyond Lee, the executive team includes co-founder Danny Abshire, who remains co-founder and head of product design and development. Ian Adamson also continues as head of the Newton School of Running, which is focused on the education of Newton Running retail staff on natural running principles, foot biomechanics and the design of Newton Running shoes. He also runs the Newton Running Coaching Certification Program. Stuart Johnson, who was hired

as the VP of marketing a year ago, left in October, and Heisner has assumed marketing responsibilities.

The hiring of Heisner and Nichols and other investments have been helped by the \$20 million acquisition of a minority stake in Newton Running by Fireman Capital Associates, the investment firm led by Reebok founder Paul Fireman. Heisner said he worked under Fireman at Reebok and Fireman did assist with the connections in helping him land the job.



Jerry Lee,  
CEO Newton  
Running

“With Kirk coming here, along with the entire existing staff, this is a strong team,” said Heisner. “It’s not my job to come here and change things. It’s more a matter of adding internal perspective from someone who’s been in business with brands that have competed against some of the major players. Hopefully I can impart some of that experience on the team. But this team is certainly passionate about running and the Newton brand and Kirk has adone amazing things in a short period of time. With our team, our innovation pipeline and our new Ironman relationship, our expectation is that we will only see continued success with the business.” ■



# THE WOMEN'S RUN OPPORTUNITY

Documented by the surge in women participating in races, the female runner has become not only a much bigger opportunity for run specialty stores but the core driver across the channel.

By Thomas J. Ryan





Photo courtesy of The North Face



Women's purchases now make up about two-thirds of sales in the running channel, up from about a third in the eighties, according to several run specialty shops. The numbers come in even higher on the apparel side. But the shift from largely catering to men hasn't come without its hurdles and many challenges continue across merchandising, product and service areas.

Mike Cosentino, owner, Big Peach Running Company, said the industry has seen a major shift from the "locker room" and "stack it high and watch it fly" attitude from run specialty's early days, spurred on by the mass arrival of women runners.



Mike Cosentino, owner, Big Peach Running Company

"The female runner wants an environment that is comfortable, welcoming and not intimidating," said Cosentino. "The store needs to be clean, well lit and professionally merchandised. Independent of selection and pricing, they're going to recognize the clean restrooms. And in the fitting room they're not going to notice the color of the garment as much as the lighting that's behind it. Men appreciate those things, too. They don't publicly state it, but given a choice they'll choose the same thing."

On the footwear side, Cosentino believes that the female consumer has driven the explosion of colors. And he said while Big Peach has been shuffling inventory among its doors to fill missing colorways in certain locations, he believes each store will have to carry a full range of colors in the future or lose a sale to the Internet. Said Cosentino, "Suggesting to try another model or brand doesn't recapture the sale to us. The customer is too smart for us to tell them the colors are not available when they can go online and see the whole collection on Amazon. You're just giving the customer permission to shop there."

Big Peach plans on going deeper in established lines to cover a full color range, and Cosentino suspects that may come at the expense of inventory room for newer brands.

On the apparel side, Cosentino believes the run specialty channel is "caught in the middle" of price points. He believes the cost structure



Photo courtesy Brooks

doesn't fit the \$9.99 T-shirt or \$14.99 Short that many runners find at other destinations. At the same time, the stores aren't seen as "cool enough" to fetch the premium prices found at a Lululemon or Athleta. He also said brands are recognizing that even though women may pay a premium for their shoes, that doesn't mean they'll do the same for apparel.

Cosentino said brands like Moving Comfort, Asics and The North Face are playing up fashionable touches after recognizing "great technical apparel that performs well isn't enough." At the same time, he lamented that run specialty overall has to "update our cool factor" to compete in the space.

At the store level, Big Peach is going wireless with associates using iPads at the shoe wall to show merchandise to shoppers, check inventory and check them out. Cosentino also said with consumers more educated than ever, his staff has become better armed with information.

"She has a lot of preconceived notions right before she ever walks in," said Cosentino. "And it's not only product knowledge, we're also giving advice around proper running room. We also have to know what races are coming up, where the personal training centers are that have yoga classes, and what the class times are. That kind of specialty knowledge wasn't needed five years ago but it's the new standard."

Like most Fleet Feet Sports, *Fleet Feet New Haven* skews heavily women at about 65 percent/35 percent. Owner Stephanie Blozy said with many more experienced runners, men more so than women tend to "know exactly what shoe they want" and will shop online for a discount. Women are more receptive to the education and guidance her staff provides in a non-intimidating environment.

"For a variety of reasons, it seems that more women are at the 'beginning stages' of exercise/running programs and need advice on proper gear," said Blozy. "Women are also less likely to pour over the latest Shoe Review/Guide or do Internet research on

shoes – rather, they seek out “human advice” and enjoy the interaction that shopping provides.”

The store offers more than 20 training programs a year, with about 90 percent catering to women. Added Blozy, “We love our training group participants because they need most everything and are open to seek out our advice. They become our store’s most loyal customers and best advertisers as they tell their friends, husbands and kids to come shop with us.”

On the footwear side, women are heavy buyers of traditional running shoes and cross trainers with a few coming specifically for minimal models. The bulk of it is racing flats and minimal shoe sales are from men although a few women do come in specifically for minimal shoes. Said Blozy, “We recommend some ‘minimal’ shoes for various running gaits and injury pattern as well as when women want a fun-colored pair of Kinvara’s or Free’s to use as a casual shoe.”

The store does well in sports bras, and carries over 15 different styles to provide many fit options. A “Sports Bra Fit Fest” held every few months will typically lead to the sale of 50 to 75 bras. Blozy credited marketing and discounts from brands like Moving Comfort and Enell in supporting the category, and she believes a successful bra-fitting experience often encourages the consumer to shop the rest of the store.



Owner Stephanie Blozy,  
Fleet Feet New Haven

Like many specialty run stores, however, apparel remains a challenge with the category declining in the past year. Eighty percent of its apparel business is women’s with men generally having minimal running apparel needs besides shorts.

Blozy said the rise of companies like Athleta, Title 9 and Lululemon has pointed to the sizeable crossover opportunity between women’s athletic apparel and casual apparel. And while she cites Nike and Brooks among the traditional footwear brands that have stepped up their game in apparel, many women are still choosing Lululemon in her market, despite their notably higher prices.

“Right now, the Lulu brand is hot and for women who want to be seen in the “in” apparel, there is no substitution,” said Blozy. “With that in mind, I wonder if I need to position myself as the go-to store for your everyday running/workout essentials?”

**A**t Runner’s Depot, which has five stores in Southern Florida, women’s contributes about 65 percent of sales. “I believe it will continue to grow as running is now something every woman can do,” said *Reneé Grant, founder and co-owner of*

*Runner’s Depot*, of the women’s run opportunity. “It is a confidence-booster and a social outlet.”

She believes vendors are doing a better job attacking the opportunity since she opened her first store in 2000, including making women-specific lasts for shoes as well as being more conscious of matching shoes to apparel.

At the store level, Runner’s Depot has brought in “larger, more intimate” dressing rooms with the space to accommodate strollers for running moms. The stores also have a dedicated bra section called the ‘Support Center.’ Added Grant, “Women want special attention.”

Women are drawn to the social side of running, and her stores focus a host of events around women, including Ladies’ Nights, Black Girls Run (BGR) as well as bra fittings.

“They are making the transition into running from other activities such as CrossFit, Zumba, etc.,” said Grant. “The social aspect of running and these other activities are very important to women.”

**A**t *Seattle’s Super Jock ‘n Jill*, women make up about 60 percent of the business. Owner *Chet James* expects the women’s side to be the primary driver of his business for years to come.

“The female consumer has always been more about customer service,” said James. “Since we are a customer service driven retailer, this match makes a lot of sense.”

As a whole, most of women’s business at Super Jock ‘n Jill, is driven by the recreational and fitness participant. James sees many using running or walking as a way to stay fit, release stress and stay active.

“Their ages range the whole spectrum, from young girls just being active, to women in their 20’s to 60’s,” said James. “Many of our female customers are using athletic footwear for work, travel, everyday activities and recovery from injuries. Women as a whole are looking for help in selecting their footwear, where men tend to be more independent. That’s possibly the biggest difference between the two genders. Having the sales staff aware of taking the time with both genders and responding to their individual needs seems to be the best response to answering their needs.”

At the store level, the biggest opportunity he sees is addressing the need for organized and established areas for women’s apparel and fitting areas.

“Sports bras being 25 percent of your apparel sales should be specific with a clear and defined area and some well thought out options,” said James. “However, like most specialized retail stores, the majority of the sales are centered towards footwear. Your apparel should be displayed well and stocked, rotated often and a customer service person available if possible. But because having a salesperson available for clothing isn’t always possible, having an area organized for self-help is essential.”

As far as product, James finds more challenges on the apparel side with many other places and brands where a women can find appropriate active clothing. He finds that women-specific brands, such as Lululemon, Moving Comfort, Oiselle, perform best with women, but he noted that Nike seems to have figured out the women’s market. Added James, “They’ve been able to stay current in colors, fit and style.”



Reneé Grant,  
founder and  
co-owner of  
Runner’s Depot





Overall, James said footwear vendors needed to do a better job being more creative in apparel. Said James, “They seem to always compete against each other’s product, so they end up looking the same. They need to take some risks to stand out and look, fit and feel different from each other. People crave unique choices that inspire them and their activities.”

**S**kinny Raven Sports in Anchorage just finished a reorganization of its store layout to better accommodate its female customers but has always tried to keep appearances fresh and interesting since women don’t want to walk in every two to three months and see the same thing. Owner John Clark finds women are more serious shoppers whereas men tend to want to get in and get out.



John Clark owner Skinny Raven Sports in Anchorage

“If your store doesn’t inspire women to shop while they are there then they’ll find places that they can,” said Clark.

Women’s commands the largest share at Skinny Raven, particularly since the main store features a lifestyle footwear and apparel section and the firm also has a women’s boutique across the street.

“All our in-store events are designed around women,” added Clark. “The energy it re-

quires to put on these types of events has high payoffs compared to anything we would do for men.”

Its group runs, fashion events and races geared toward women are complemented by an active social media push. The store has over 11,000 Facebook fans. Said Clark, “Nearly all our social media is focused on appealing to the female customer. They are the ones reading and engaging significantly.”

Clark finds vendors are doing a solid job addressing the different needs of women. Added Clark, “Obviously, Nike has been front and center with how they approach the female runner and their Nike Women’s marathon series is big. Now you see similar types of premium events across the country.”

Skinny Raven is also starting its own women’s-only half marathon this year. Still, Clark believes run specialty has been “slow in figuring out what the consumer wants and in getting those products in addition to the running products they need to have as well.”

A related challenge with the run specialty format is addressing the other general fitness needs of women. Dedicating the space and resources around an activity such as triathlon presents a similar challenge. He believes a store like Lululemon gains a natural advantage with its main focus on apparel.

“That’s not to say run specialty can’t be better, but we have many other areas we need to be good at and unfortunately we are really good at footwear so we’ll always suffer in comparison with apparel,” said Clark.

**A**t Urban Athletics, located on the Upper East Side in Manhattan, women’s makes up half of its business. At least in New York City, the major contributor to growth of women participants in running, at least in NYC, is the growth of charity organizations and their strategy to use running as a vehicle to fundraise. But that’s become more challenging with the recent downturn.

“Their supply has outgrown the demand at least here in NYC,” said Jerry Macari, Urban Athletics co-owner. “This is evident as many charities have been unable to apply their highly prized NYC marathon entries to fundraise when historically there were a premium. The poor economy has hurt these charities as well.”

Macari believes that the greater portion of women runners in his market are the beginner/recreational kind, whether they were inspired by a charity run or





Jerry Macari, Urban Athletics co-owner runs with his wife Cara

seeing running as a less expensive option than the gym to stay in shape. Said Macari, “In my opinion the driving force behind most women’s reason for running is weight control.”

On the product side, Macari believes vendors are doing a good job on the apparel side.

“It’s tough to argue against Nike’s success in this area despite the overwhelming popularity of Lululemon. Also, since there seems to be an unlimited number of choices on the apparel side, experienced and talented buyers can put together an apparel presentation to suit almost any female consumer,” said Macari. “On the other hand there is a limited choice of footwear brands to choose from and in turn a limited amount of styles. While the performance of the vast majority of footwear choices is actually outstanding in my view, the styling appeal to women is lacking to say the least. This is a priority for women more than men and is an even greater one for the beginner/recreational runner.”

**A**ndrea Johnson, co-founder of Blue Mile in Indianapolis, said while it seems stereotypical given the joke about men not wanting to ask for directions,

women generally are more open to seeking out advice at a specialty store while “many men will go to a big box store and figure it out themselves.”



Andrea Johnson, co-founder of Blue Mile

But with its founders having prior experience in the running industry and fully recognizing the opportunity, treating women “with equal respect” has been a mantra at Blue Mile since the first store opened in 2000. An uncluttered sales floor and clean bathrooms are a priority since women seem to notice these more than men. Blue Mile also tries to make sure women are “well represented” on their staff since some women are more comfortable being fit by other women. Johnson also noted that “you can find plenty of guys who do a great job of helping fit sports bras. It just takes the right personality.”

Still, Johnson said Blue Mile’s mission is to make the store environment comfortable for men as well.

“Women may appreciate it more but we also have men who are intimidated coming into a store like ours because they don’t think they’re really runners,” said Johnson. “They may be trying to adopt a healthy lifestyle or may be a little



Photo courtesy Oiselle

overweight and self-conscious. We try to treat everyone equally.”

On the product side, Johnson credits vendors for bringing in narrower heels for women and coming out with shoes with bunion windows which seems to be a greater problem among women. On the apparel side, Blue Mile has brought Lole and apparel from Moving Comfort to address the women’s runner’s desire to wear more fashionable merchandise. She sees core-running brands also recognizing that women are looking for “less-techy,” crossover apparel that can also be used for activities such as yoga and for casual occasions. Said Johnson, “It’s a lot more fashionable to be a runner than it was even 10 years ago. When I started running in the 80s, you were lucky to get a short and a t-shirt.”

Johnson said that while most run specialty stores have evolved from their traditional roots as the “jock shop,” it’s still a challenge to compete on the apparel side with an even-more specialized concept like Lululemon.

“Lululemon is a dynamic shopping experience,” related Johnson. “You walk in and you get drawn into the hype. Their staff is mostly women, and their stores are very clean and modern. If it offers any lessons for run specialty, it’s that we need to modernize our stores and make them look nice. Of course, Lululemon and Nike have the resources to pump into that but we have to find a way.”

**B**oulder Running Company puts a big emphasis on building relationships and creating better in-store experiences to cater to its burgeoning women’s customer base.

“She runs the gamut of being completely new to the scene, to being a multi-decade long runner with double-digit marathon



Photo courtesy The North Face

experience,” said *Amanda Charles, director of operations, apparel and accessories buyer*, of the wide range of women Boulder Running Company sees. “Regardless of her age, she is seen bringing her friends and family to the sport of running.”

Charles said women understand the importance of cross training for overall fitness and can be found at boot camp workouts, track workouts, hiking, Pilates, yoga and Zumba sessions. Said Charles, “Our team realizes this and enjoys the opportunity to discuss her various workouts that she does throughout her week. The social aspect of running continues to grow but is definitely stronger on the female side of the business.”

Daily fitness classes established over the past two years have helped drive traffic, along with weekly newsletters. Said Charles, “Weekly, casual fun runs have been a phenomenal way to interact with our running community and help encourage new runners into the sport.”

Charles’ best advice is to train male associates in the category of

sports bras and help them view it as a piece of equipment.

“This is a category that should be a key driver to your overall apparel business and is one that continues to be a focus from the initial buys all the way through checking back in with these customers as they come back to replace their shoes after 6 months,” said Charles. “The odds are high that if her shoes are that old, her bra is more than likely needing to be replaced. We have plans on structuring a bonus system specifically oriented to this department on a monthly basis in the near future.”

From a merchandising standpoint, the women’s area should be inviting with “great color and open spacing,” with accessories such as headbands, bags, wallets, hydration, recovery products incorporated into displays. Displaying by category is another option, such as statement wall of bras.

“Utilize your fitting rooms as silent salespeople to get them to think about categories that they might not necessarily be shopping for, create visual cues,” she added. “Hanging various bra sizes on hooks



may trigger someone to either try them on or begin a conversation on being properly fit.”

On the product side, complaints her stores typically hear from both genders are usually surrounding their favorite shoes “always changing.” Added Charles, “No brand escapes this complaint.”

In apparel, maintaining key styles for long enough periods has also been helpful in driving the in-store purchase decision. Said Charles, “The ability for a woman to enter a store, see a style that she is comfortable and familiar with merely in a new color is a fantastic opportunity to create a sale and increase your average transaction.”

Still, Charles said the success of Lululemon shows that run specialty still has a way to go in making female customers feel welcome when they enter the store and a trusted source for their apparel needs.

“Run specialty fully understands this on the footwear side but has not yet embraced the opportunities and potential that exist on the apparel and accessories side of the business,” said Charles.

**A**ndy Kimerling, owner of Westchester Road Runner, estimated that women’s sales represented only around 30 percent of his store’s sales when he founded the store in 1980 and now represents about 60 percent. Over that period, he credits the ongoing benefits of the passage of Title IX, which is celebrating its 40th anniversary, that has encouraged women to get active in sports earlier in life. He also believes that in most families, women, whether by embracing running or walking, appear to be driving to push toward healthy lifestyles.

He believes the much broader range of color across running styles has been driven by the women’s side, but now men are looking for greater color options as well, including some looking for certain color spikes to match their cross country uniform. This creates an inventory challenge when trying fit people if a store doesn’t have a steep stockroom to carry a wide range of colors. Inevitably, a shoe buyer will settle on three colors from a style but the shopper will want a fourth or fifth color. “They may have a great fit but they’ll reject a shoe just because of its color.”

On the apparel side, he doesn’t believe vendors are not doing as good a job as on the footwear side explaining the benefits, whether moisture-management, UV protection or just comfort. Many runners are choosing to train or race in a basic cotton t-shirt. Said Kimerling, “Shoes are more important but clothing plays a big role in the running experience too.”

He also said vendors have a tendency to push too many smalls or mediums. Said Kimerling, “We have a lot of women who are getting in shape or exercising for the first time. The cuts don’t recognize that. And women who are not in shape yet don’t want to wear something that body-hugging.”

At the store level, Kimerling conceded that he often finds it tough to find women associates with a deep-enough running background to qualify as experts for advice. Adding mirrors to dressing rooms and around the store, uncluttering racks, and brightening the store are some adjustments Westchester Road Runner has made over the years to better appeal to women shoppers. He said, “They’ll notice that also more than men will.”

Westchester Road Runner holds women’s-only runs once a week but is also conducting more clinics at local corporate offices, health clubs, and in local hospitals as part of its outreach efforts. He believes it’s becoming more essential for run specialty to reinforce its position as the place to go for advice around running.

“We have to do a better job convincing people that while their friends, the Internet blogger, or personal trainer might be well

intentioned, we’re the ones testing all the shoes months before they come out and they don’t fit people 52 weeks a year. We’re the place to go for information.”

**P**laymakers in Okemos, MI, recently created a men’s and women’s side to its store designed to keep gender specific product together and allow for multiple sales. A “boutique” area was also added in the back of the store to house lifestyle apparel and bra selections. The bra wall will receive particular emphasis in 2013.

“Little details and special touches to displays and fixtures appeal to women and make them feel special,” said Nikki Benedict, women’s active apparel buyer, Playmakers. “It is warm and stylish...chic and fashionable. A special space designed just for women.”

“Women comprise a significant portion of the business at Playmakers,” said Benedict. “Whether they are shopping for themselves or their families, they are the primary shoppers. We have customers who will come to the store on a regular basis just to “check out” what is new.”



Photo courtesy Moving Comfort

Many of the new female runners join “Team Playmakers,” which provides coaching, camaraderie and support to help assist runners of all levels achieve their goals, whether training for a 5K or a marathon. Added Benedict, “I have found most women begin running to get in shape and discover they have a real passion for it. A lot of the women runners we see compliment their training with yoga.”

Benedict believes the success of Lululemon is leading to more active apparel pieces that are becoming more feminine in design and more versatile in their function. She added, “Vendors have grabbed a hold of this concept and have made a stronger push to add value and to design their lines with the active, on-the-go woman in mind.” ■



# GIFTS FOR THE ACTIVE



Avoid the chocolates this year and let mom know you really love her by exploring some of these top-selling gift ideas for performance moms.

By Aaron H. Bible



*Gifts that keep on giving are so much better than ones that wilt away.*

Active moms know what they want, and their options for performance cuts, women-specific products, exciting colorways and ergonomics continue to increase. Women's fits and models, fashion-inspired designs, and trail-to-table functionality all continue to drive conversations at trade shows, including January's Outdoor Retailer Winter Market. Even performance fabrics like the new Gore-Tex Pro have a softer hand and broader applications than in years past.

Another sales-counter must-have that keeps coming out of the woodwork are the new protective and/or waterproof cases for smart phones. The LifeProof Frē Case for iPhone 5 is the thinnest, lightest, strongest everyday all-protective case. LifeProof delivers waterproof, dirt proof, snow proof and shock proof protection, giving you the freedom to go everywhere and do anything with all the amazing apps available these days. Available in five colorways, MSRP \$80.



LifeProof Frē Case for iPhone 5

Moms of all ages are demanding the same gear as men. Retailers have been cognizant for a while now of the actual purchasing power moms have, and selection has begun to reflect that. And while performance is certainly one of the top categories, more important is the every-day active mom, whose performance products cross over into work, into the gym, and into friend- or family-style outings each weekend. At Outdoor Retailer Winter Market, for Fall/Winter 2013, Keen launched its *Kanga Collection* - a new, cross-category collection including socks, bags and footwear designed for sophisticated and athletic women. Featuring fresh floral prints and vibrant hues, the Kanga Collection is designed to brighten up a visit to the yoga studio or the farmers market.

The Commuter market is also still trending with more moms on bikes, and that's where bag innovator *Timbuk2* got its start. The *Harriet Shoulder Bag* is an everyday bag that can be anything, go anywhere. It's generously sized with a side pocket that frees up the main compartment; but a zipper extension doubles the capacity when you need it. It has a printed liner and internal organizer pockets, MSRP \$60.



Timbuk2 Harriet Shoulder Bag

Also in top-selling bags of the performance nature, *Osprey Packs* has introduced their new line of women-specific hydration packs, the *Verve*, MSRP \$99, the *Raven*, MSRP \$119, and the *Mira*, MSRP \$149. These hydration packs have all the bells and whistles, come in three sizes each, and are built for day hiking, mountain biking, and trail running.



Osprey Packs Raven



Osprey Packs FlapJill Mini Series

For high-quality everyday-type bags, don't miss the *FlapJill Mini Series*. This messenger-style bag has a padded 10" sleeve, internal pockets, and adjustable padded strap, available in five trendy colors, MSRP \$59.

This Mother's Day, *Lilypond* has a few options for mom as well. The first is the *Silver Sky*, a reversible tote bag weighing less than a pound, with an interior and exterior made from waxed canvas, MSRP \$110. Another option is the smaller *Firefly*, featuring a secure zip-top closure to insure that everything in the bag stays in the bag, including your laptop, which can be placed in the padded 15-inch interior laptop sleeve, MSRP \$69.



Silver Sky



Firefly

LILYPOND



Isis Corsa Skort



Isis Forza Top



Isis Aurora Rain Shell



Isis Gemma Halter Dress



Columbia Sportswear Women's Trail Drier Windbreaker

Columbia Sportswear Sun Chill'd Hoodie



Kelty AirPitch Mach 4

morning run or an afternoon at the gym -this trending skort is all about performance. The Corsa features a wide, stretch waistband and lined gusset crotch for comfort and freedom of movement, MSRP \$59. Another great option is the Forza Top, perfect for workouts in all shapes and sizes. The *Forza Top* is a polyester/spandex blend that moves with the body while providing superior moisture management. Flatlock stitching eliminates chafing, MSRP \$45. A gift for the mom who has no issues battling the elements, the *Isis Aurora Rain Shell*, is a blend of rugged outdoor performance with feminine fit and styling. An adjustable hood with brim ensures a perfect fit while underarm zips help regulate temperature. With a performance fit and a flattering cut, the Aurora layers easily while complimenting an active outdoor lifestyle, MSRP \$129.

Extended travel is no longer a challenge with the *Gemma Halter Dress*. Featuring enough style for a night on the town yet informal enough for the beach, its an ideal travel companion. Made with a blend of cotton and spandex, built-in shelf bra, and elastic halter neckline, this dress is designed for easy care/easy wear performance. Wrinkle-resistant, the Gemma retains shape over the long haul and looks great right out of your luggage, MSRP \$65.

An essential outdoor piece from *Columbia Sportswear* is the *Women's Trail Drier Windbreaker*. It is ultralight and slightly translucent, very packable,

and features Omni-Wick EVAP technology to wick moisture away from the body during aerobic activities in windy conditions, MSRP \$90. For active days in warmer weather, go with the women's *Sun Chill'd Hoodie*. It's a stylish cover up featuring mesh side panels, elongated zipper and Omni-Freeze cooling technology, and boasts UPF 50 sun protection, MSRP \$65.

Not afraid to get her hands dirty? This year *Kelty* has the perfect gift for the mom who likes to spend time in the backcountry. The *Ignite DriDown 20° Sleeping Bag* boasts outstanding three-season performance. Light, warm, and dry in the presence of moisture, this two-pound, 12-ounce mummy bag features Kelty's DriDown hydrophobic insulation which allows the Ignite 20 to stay dry 10 times longer, retain 170 percent more loft when exposed to moisture and humidity, and dry 33 percent faster than untreated down. Available in regular, long, and women's specific sizes, MSRP \$199.

Kelty also has campsite comfort taken care of with its *AirPitch Mach 4* and *Mach 6 Tents*. By replacing traditional poles with inflatable AirPoles, these out-sized shelters pitch in under a minute with an included high-volume, dual-action floor pump. An integrated, fully vented rain fly further simplifies set-up while removable "sleep rooms" add versatility. Sleep rooms are fully enclosed with a large door and abundant mesh for convenience and comfort. When it's time to go home, just pull the plug and the AirPitch takes itself down. The Mach 4 weighs about 20 pounds and sized 120 x 108 x 74", MSRP \$399. The Mach 6 weighs in 27 pounds with dimensions of 180 x 108 x 76", MSRP \$499.

Also check out the *Betty SL 27°* sleeping bag, part of *Big Agnes'* women's traditional mummy series. These synthetic bags are built for the mom who likes to spend a lot of time in the backcountry or who wants a high-quality synthetic bag. Featuring the latest synthetic technology, Pinneco Core, these bags are engineered to keep mom warm, dry and comfortable with as little additional weight gain a synthetic bag could offer, MSRP \$200.



Big Agnes Betty SL 27°



X-1 Women's Momentum In-Ear Headphones



In accessories, the *Women's Momentum In-Ear Headphones* from X-1 are ultra-small, lightweight and designed for female athletes. The headphones are weatherproof, sweatproof and can withstand being rinsed off after a hard workout. The Momentum In-Ear headphones also feature a retro-reflective, tangle free cord for extra visibility and safety in low light conditions. Available in five colorways, MSRP \$50.

Outdoor Research Torque LS



Outdoor Research Torque SS Tee

For performance outerwear, the *Torque LS* and *SS Tee*, made of Polartec Power Dry fabric, are great gift options from *Outdoor Research*. The Torque Tee offers best-in-class moisture management fabric technology for aerobic pursuits in hot conditions. Polygiene Active Odor Control provides anti-microbial properties, while UPF 15 aids with sun protection. Fold-over cuffs on the long sleeve shirt offers warmth for mom's hands when it's cool in the morning, but are virtually unnoticeable when not in use. Exceptional fabric stretch, careful seam placement, trim fit and simple, clean design create a tee that works for every kind of aerobic adventure from a backcountry ultra-run to alpine approaches, MSRP \$69 Long-sleeve; MSRP \$59 short-sleeve.

Rab Myriad Jacket



From *Rab* comes the 12oz. *Myriad Jacket*. New, for spring 2013 this technical shell with performance for the harshest conditions and clean style for casual wear can provide mom with a great piece of outerwear. Rab employed what is currently the lightest version of Polartec NeoShell, the most breathable waterproof fabric on the market, with mechanical stretch for increased range of motion. The regular fit will accommodate layers without being too boxy, MSRP \$375.

Marmot Nabu Jacket



Similarly, *Marmot's* new *Nabu Jacket* is a fully featured, hooded softshell jacket made of Polartec NeoShell, the most breathable waterproof fabric on the market. With the new Polartec High Efficiency grid back, the Nabu Jacket is capable of accelerating the wicking process and provides increased warmth without weight. Meaning, this feature combined with the unprecedented level of air permeability provided by NeoShell can move moisture more effectively than other waterproof fabrics on the market, MSRP \$325.

The *Marquesas Hoody* from *Redington* has been very popular of late and the new Apricot color is sure to delight. The Marquesas Hoody takes sun protection one-step further with a crossover neck design connected to the hood and thumbholes in the elongated sleeves to protect the backs of hands. This super soft fabric is a must on any of mom's adventures this spring and summer, MSRP \$60.

Redington Marquesas Hoody



Redington RediBalance Crew

Made of the same great fabric, the *RediBalance Crew*, comes in both long and short-sleeve versions with a stylish crew neck design and raglan sleeves. The VersiSun technology incorporated into the fabric protects at a rating of UPF 30, and the VersiWich technology is moisture wicking and quick drying. The CastCut design has a gusset under the arms for reduced lift and to maximize mobility, MSRP \$55.

This Mother's Day go all out by putting together a *Honey Stinger* sample gift basket instead of the candies and chocolates. Honey Stinger, the leading manufacturer of honey-based nutritional products, has a number of new products you can turn into a unique gift basket. *Mocha Cherry Pro* is the first Honey Stinger Caffeinated Bar with 10g of protein and 30mg of caffeine. The new *Blueberry Buzz Energy Bar* has a light and crispy texture with a yogurt-coated bottom.



Honey Stinger Mocha Cherry Pro



Honey Stinger Blueberry Buzz Energy Bar

The Buzz Bar provides 5g of soy protein to fuel exercise or provide a healthy snack. *Stinger Waffles* are now available in honey, vanilla, strawberry, chocolate and lemon. Each individually wrapped waffle provides 160 calories of organic energy. The new gels are available in Vanilla, Fruit Smoothie and Acai Pomegranate, and each product is USDA-certified organic.



Honey Stinger Stinger Waffles



Newton Running offers a few performance gift options for the mom who likes to rack up the miles, the *Gravity Neutral Performance Trainer* and the *Terra Momentum All-Terrain Trainer* are great options for the road or trail running mom. Both shoes are ideal for daily run training that can also function as a shoe for the gym and other activities. On the technical side, these shoes are great for women who want to discover a natural running form. Gravity Neutral, MSRP \$175; Terra Momentum, MSRP \$149.

Newton Running  
Gravity Neutral  
Performance Trainer



Newton Running  
Terra Momentum  
All-Terrain Trainer



While you're shopping performance footwear, be sure to take a look at the *S-Works Road Shoe* from *Specialized* - said to be the most technologically advanced road cycling shoe Specialized has ever created. The S-Works has a new format developed through a decade of working closely with pro riders to give them a performance-enhancing fit. This new foot form combined with the adaptive-fit upper construction provides mom with a custom fit. An infinite degree of fine-tuning with the top dial of the Boa Closure System locks down the ankle and heel while the mid-foot dial snugs the arch and forefoot. Pressure points and hot spots vanish. Weighing just 210 grams, the S-works is the lightest mechanical-closure cycling shoe, MSRP \$400.

Specialized  
S-Works Road  
Shoe



In the paddlesports aisle, from *Bomber Gear* comes the women's *Blitz Splash Top*, which boasts a large neck opening made of tri-panel polyurethane coated nylon with a hook-and-loop neck closure system. Anatomically correct performance cut designed specifically for women, the Blitz Splash Top will keep mom's dry out on the water. With plenty of ventilation and Bombtech waterproof breathable fabric, mom can keep light water sprays off without

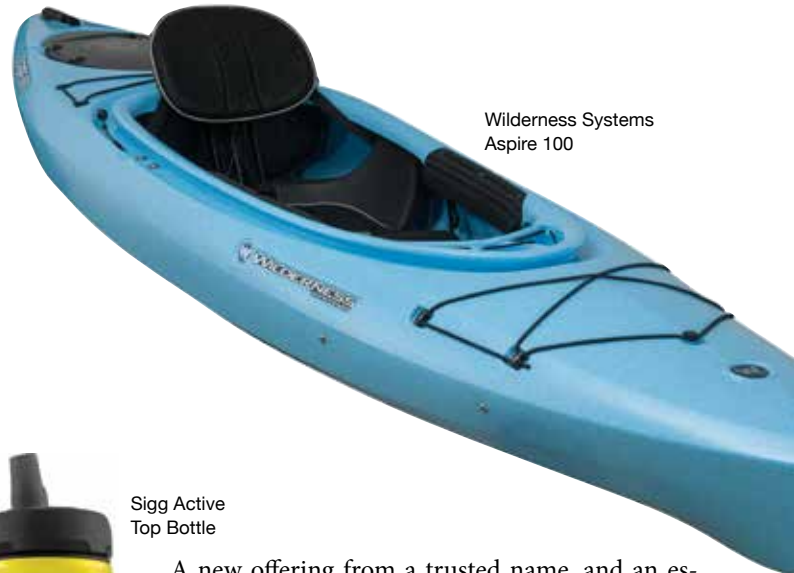
Bomber Gear  
Blitz Splash Top



feeling stuffed in a dry top. Also features a sleeve pocket on the long sleeve version, stitched and taped seams and cone-shaped cuffs with SlickSkin for added seal. Available in long and short-sleeve versions, MSRP Long-Sleeve \$99; Short-Sleeve \$89.

The all-new *Wilderness Systems Aspire 100* delivers the kind of high performance versatility in a kayak that handles easily on flat water but is equally equipped for slow moving water. Excellent for both novice and intermediate paddlers, the Aspire is easy to maneuver and is designed for many types of paddling destinations. The Aspire offers stability in rivers, lakes, and flat open water and is an excellent kayak for the beginner to intermediate paddlers looking for confidence, or the mom looking for the opportunity to expand her kayaking experience beyond flat water, MSRP \$699.

Wilderness Systems  
Aspire 100



Sigg Active  
Top Bottle



A new offering from a trusted name, and an essential for trail, for yoga and the office, the *Active Top Bottle* from Sigg has a rotary slide valve control system, implemented for the first time on a Sigg bottle, combined with an intelligent flow rate. It's equipped with an open, close, air and clean function that helps dictate what mode mom wants to be in. In the convenient "clean" mode, the top pops off ensuring safe and hygienic cleaning; in the "close" position, the bottle is leak-proof. The Active Top Bottle is lightweight, durable and BPA and phthalate free, MSRP \$23-\$29.

And perfect for hiking and yoga, *Stonewear Designs* recently introduced their *Sprinter Capri*, with quick-dry and moisture-wicking technology. The Capris comes from recycled plastic bottles, which is a Stonewear Design first. Reflective logos add safety and a front zipper pocket below the waist offers convenient storage space, MSRP \$67. ■



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## Jim Whitlow

Owner, DEKA Women's Performance Retail

Jim Whitlow founded DEKA Atlanta in 2007. After 16 years at the helm of Jeffrey Atlanta, Whitlow left the luxury-goods retailer to launch his own boutique concept. With a vision to combine his love of fitness and fashion, Whitlow aspired to create a unique environment that dresses a woman from workout to weekend. DEKA is Greek for "Ten," embodying the spirit of a woman who strives to be her personal best.

The retailer's mission is to be the premiere apparel destination for women who desire a unique wardrobe featuring both utility and style. The store is dedicated to empowering its staff and customers to live the best version of themselves as possible.

"DEKA is a very unique store," said Whitlow. "I'm proud to call it my own. We strive to create a work environment that is rooted in fun, encourages creativity and challenges our employees to reach their highest potential."

He recently opened a second location in Chicago on Michigan Avenue.

**What outdoor activity or sport was your favorite as a kid?** Running. I have a love for staying fit, and for fashion.

**What was your proudest athletic moment?** I still hold the Georgia half marathon record for ages 18 to 19 years old.

**What did you want to be when you grew up?** An architect.

**What was your first job?** Paperboy.

**What were you like as a young person that set the stage for your career?** I could sell anything!

**How did you get started in the outdoor/sports business?** I took my 16-year career in fashion and my love for working out and started a cool concept.

**Was there one person who served as your mentor?** Jeffrey Kalinsky, my boss at Jeffrey Atlanta, taught me to be an individual.

**What's the best job you ever had?** Lifeguard in Minnesota, Summer of 1987. I was the only guy with seven girls.

**What do you love about working at DEKA?** The dress code.

**What do you like most and least about your current position?** I make all the decisions.

**What are you trying to change?** Inventory control.

**What's your highest priority these days?** Remaining different.

**What sports or outdoor activities do you participate in now?** Running, soccer

**What's one thing that industry folks may be surprised to know about you?** I'm a single father of four.

**What's your favorite book?** *Wild at Heart*

**What's the best sports movie of all time?** Chariots of Fire. Need I say why?

**Who's the business person you most admire?** Steve Jobs. He was a true visionary.

**If money were no concern, what would you be doing?** Coaching kids.

**If you could have dinner with any three people in the world, who would they be?** Elvis, Daniel Tosh, and Vince Vaughn

**What is your advice to someone looking to work or grow his or her career in the sporting goods industry?** Work hard! Blaze your own trail. If you can't sell, don't start a business.



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