

SG&B

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MARCH 24, 2014

WEEKLY

THE WEEKLY DIGITAL MAGAZINE FOR THE SPORTING GOODS INDUSTRY





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COVER: Photo courtesy Jonathan of Guest Etc. and Lululemon.
Model wearing the Lululemon Scuba Hoodie *Stretch.

MOVERS
& SHAKERS

Billabong appointed of **Mark Weber**, who formerly worked for Hurley and Raen Optics, as VP, global merchandising and design, men's.

Herschel Supply Company, the maker of backpacks, bags, travel goods and accessories, named **Jon Warren** as its design director. He had been head of design lifestyle for Vans.

Herbert Hainer, Adidas' CEO, will become the new president and business chairman of German soccer club **Bayern Munich**, after the resignation of Uli Hoeness.

Iconix Brand Group promoted **Seth Horowitz** to COO and appointed **Jeff Lupinacci** as CFO.

Karhu North America promoted **Jordan Kinley** to national sales manager.

Mike Wallenfels resigned as CEO of **Timbuk2**, but will continue to work with Timbuk2's board of directors and senior management team through the end of March. Timbuk2 Chairman **Ken Pucker** will act as CEO with the support of COO **Tony Meneghetti** and the senior management team while a search is conducted for Wallenfels' replacement.

NW Alpine, manufacturer of American-made alpine climbing apparel, appointed **John Campbell** as national sales manager. He previously worked for Cloudveil and Macpac.

Oboz appointed **Josh Wise** as its new marketing coordinator and graphic designer.

Sequential Brands Group appointed **Jameel Spencer** as chief marketing officer. Spencer will continue to work with longtime clients Shawn Carter Enterprises and Sean "Diddy" Combs under his own agency Brand Matter.

Wolverine World Wide hired **Martin Shobo** as the global product line manager for the Wolverine brand's Lifestyle and Heritage product categories, where he will oversee development and strategic direction for the Wolverine 1000 Mile and No. 1883 footwear collections.



Photo courtesy Deckers

DECKERS OUTDOOR

OPENS FIRST "BRAND SHOWCASE" STORE

Deckers Outdoor Corp. announced the grand opening of its inaugural Brand Showcase store at the company's new state-of-the-art headquarters in Goleta, CA. The 8,000-square-foot store will feature the company's seven footwear brands - Ugg Australia, Sanuk, Hoka One One, Teva, Tsubo, Ahnu and Mozo - all under one roof.

In addition to the rich array of offerings, which includes more than 1,000 SKUs, customers have the option to pick up their purchased product in-store or ship overnight, free of charge. The efficient retail model underscores the company's consumer-centric growth strategy that includes the introduction of compelling products and engaging store experiences.

The flagship store delivers an elevated environment for Deckers brands to display their core heritage footwear, as well as seasonally significant product, while serving as an innovation lab to continually test new technologies and merchandising approaches, aimed at further improving the omni-channel customer experience. A station inside the store houses eight iPods where shoppers can order out-of-stock items online and ship them free of charge. A large touchscreen monitor installed in the wall allows shoppers to customize boots, slippers and other items.

The location will also speed the ability of Deckers to obtain direct feedback from customers in an interactive retail environment to gain better insights into how footwear, apparel and accessories are displayed, marketed, and delivered to consumers.

"Our new store will serve as the showcase for all of Deckers' brands and our expression of next generation retail. With the launch of this 'innovation lab,' we're better able to listen to customers' feedback, make product and service adjustments more efficiently, and heighten the overall customer experience," explained Dave Powers, president of omni-channel for Deckers. "Shop in store using iPads, customize your product, order online, ship direct to your home free of charge or pick up in store. Whatever the preference, our goal is to align our capabilities to customer demand and help drive customer loyalty."

On track to be certified as LEED Silver for the store's sustainable design elements, the 8,000 plus square-foot location incorporates a blend of unique, varied materials, including walnut, hot rolled steel, exposed concrete, and gloss white laminate. The interior and exterior material reflects the diverse range of footwear and related products that Deckers offers.

Situated in a highly visible location with convenient proximity to local roadways and area attractions, the Brand Showcase store is set to become a major destination for residents and visitors to the Santa Barbara area.

Approximately 30 full-time, part-time and seasonal employees are expected to be employed as a result of the store opening. Beyond commerce and economic development, Deckers plans to utilize the store to support the local Santa Barbara community through special events and charitable initiatives.

The company's new headquarters next-door measures 180,000 square feet. Formerly, the company had been operating from four separate locations throughout the area.



Photo courtesy Singer

SINGER LAUNCHES NO-PINK WOMEN'S BOXING BRAND

Jennie Walker, an up-and-coming singer, has launched JennieGirl, a new line of boxing apparel and equipment for women.

The JennieGirl brand was born out of Walker's personal transformation at the boxing gym. She lost 30 pounds working with her personal trainer, a former Olympic boxer from Guyana, John Douglas, in an effort to get in shape for her music career. During her sessions at the gym, she felt there was no interesting boxing apparel or equipment just for women.

"Most major boxing companies all had the requisite 'breast cancer awareness pink' option to their apparel and gear, but I did not like pink," said Walker. "And, the women's breast cancer movement had done such a good job marketing their cause, it was hard to look at pink hand wraps and boxing gloves and not think of the underlying disease. I wanted an alternative. I wanted to wear something that reminded me I was strong, resilient, passionate, fearless, focused and dedicated. Something that captured my personal transformation at the gym."

The range will include boxing gloves, hand wraps and sleeveless hoodies with boxing boots, bags, headgear and bandanas on the way.

"I knew I could bring something special to the women's boxing marketplace with my JennieGirl brand," said Walker. "First rule of the brand - no pink! Black, a favorite color of New Yorker's and a personal favorite, would be the color base from which all else would flow. Red, the color of passion, would be the branching out point and White, the color of renewal, would symbolize a fresh start."

The line will be officially launched at the world famous Gleason's Gym in Brooklyn, NY, during an all women's boxing clinic April 17-19, 2014. Legends as Jake LaMotta, Muhammad Ali, Mike Tyson and Roberto Duran are among the 131 World Champions who have trained inside the gym's hallowed walls.

Bruce Silverglade, president of Gleason's Gym, said, "JennieGirl is a great new way for the women of Gleason's to look good wearing new fashionable clothing and to train hard in new fashionable equipment."

Along with items from her new boxing line, Walker will be unveiling to the public her first collaboration with historic boxing belt company, Sartonk. The JennieGirl/Sartonk collaboration will create unique boxing inspired belts for women. Most visible of Sartonk's works are the WBA, IBF, WBO and IBO belt designs.

Sartonk Founder and President, Edward S. Majian, added, "JennieGirl Brand makes the statement that women's boxing apparel can be, at once, empowering and stylish. We're proud to help make that statement."

Walker, originally from Texas, was a 2011 top 10 winner in the British Airways Face of Opportunity Small Business Competition, with a pitch for her small business around her ASCAP affiliated music publishing company, and debut album release. Walker used the British Airways in-flight entertainment platform to launch her album, "Night Flight to London" internationally in late 2011.

SHOCK DOCTOR ACQUIRED BY BREGAL PARTNERS

Shock Doctor, Inc., known for their mouthguards, has been acquired by Bregal Partners, a middle market New York-based private equity firm. Bregal's investment is in partnership with Shock Doctor Sports' management. Financial terms were not disclosed.

The new partnership with Bregal creates a platform from which Shock Doctor, which also owns Cutters Gloves, can fuel growth and increase its role as a significant player in the global performance and protective sports equipment market.

"We have had an amazing investment partnership over the last six years with Norwest Equity Partners, and now as we look forward to our next phase of growth, our entire Shock Doctor team is thrilled to partner with Bregal Partners," said Shock Doctor Sports Chief Executive Officer, Tony Armand. "Bregal brings a unique blend of consumer and healthcare investment experience that will undoubtedly help us achieve our growth objectives and continued success."

Bregal Co-Founder and Managing Partner, Robert Bergmann, added, "We see a great opportunity for Shock Doctor to continue to revolutionize the \$9 billion global market for performance and protective equipment with new, innovative, and distinctive products. Beyond entering new categories, the Company should also benefit from overall market growth and an ability to acquire other industry participants."

BY THE NUMBERS

FLAT

Same-store sales at **DSW** were flat in the fourth quarter, impacted by 3.0 percent decline in its core women's non-athletic segment. Athletic was down mid-single-digits with weakness in running due to the prolonged winter season. Earnings, adjusted to exclude non-recurring items, slid 8.6 percent to \$28.7 million, or 31 cents, on flat comparable-store sales.

(1.8%)

Famous Footwear's fourth-quarter comps declined 1.8 percent. Sales were impacted by severe winter weather, which led to a 5.1 percent decline in running shoe sales while helping drive boot sales ahead 7.5 percent. Operating earnings fell 38.8 percent to \$12.1 million. Gross margins improved to 45.5 percent of sales from 44.0 percent, benefiting from the reduction of BOGO promotions during the holiday shopping season.

+2.0%

Comparable store sales at **Pacific Sunwear** of California increased 2.0 percent in the fourth quarter, marking the eighth straight quarter of positive comparable store sales. The surf-themed retailer posted a loss from continuing operations of \$22.0 million, or 32 cents a share, for the period, similar to the year-ago quarter.

(2.5%)

Shoe Carnival's comparable store sales decreased 2.5 percent in the fourth quarter as unfavorable weather led to significant declines in traffic and sales in December and January. Earnings tumbled 81.4 percent to \$598,000, or 3 cents a share.

(4.9%)

Tilly's, the action sports chain, reported comparable store sales fell 4.9 percent in the fourth quarter. Earnings slumped 24.2 percent to \$18.1 million, or 65 cents per share.



Jordan Flight Runner

JORDAN BRAND INTRODUCES FIRST RUNNING SHOE

For the first time since Air Jordan 1 was released in 1985, the Jordan brand has introduced its first running shoe. The Jordan Flight Runner shares some of the same technology in Nike running shoes, including increased heel support and cushioning.

“The Jordan Flight Runner combines ultra-supportive Dynamic Fit technology and Nike Zoom cushioning,” according to a press release. “Providing the ultimate ride for training and conditioning, the Jordan Flight Runner helps prepare top-flight athletes of any sport. This versatile running shoe features an advanced heat-and-pressure fusion process - creating a strong, lightweight bond. Fused mesh in the forefoot provides ventilation, while the welded shroud creates a sleek, streamlined look. With an emphasis on heel support and responsive cushioning, the Jordan Flight Runner helps keep the foot in place on landing and provides comfortable stability for bigger, stronger athletes.”

The Jordan Flight Runner debuted on the feet of Jordan Brand's NCAA teams - University of North Carolina, Georgetown University, Marquette University, and University of California at Berkeley - before the selections of the NCAA March Madness basketball tournament.

The Jordan Flight Runner will be available at select retail stores and Jordan.com on May 1 for a suggested retail price of \$110. The Jordan Brand previously released a running and training hybrid shoe called the Jordan Trunner.



REESE'S TO DELIVER BASKETBALL COLLECTION

The Reese's brand announced it is launching Reese's Fan Edition

Printed Cups, a new line of peanut butter cups with basketball designs printed on them. This is the first time the Reese's brand will use edible printing technology for its peanut butter cups, which will be available in 10 different designs

“We are very excited to introduce this new printing technology for Reese's college basketball fans, just in time for NCAA March Madness,” said John Maitrejean, senior manager, Reese's brand. “The basketball-related designs complement our role as the official candy partner of the NCAA and title sponsor of the Reese's College All-Star Game. This is new and exciting territory for us and one that holds a lot of promise for our fans.”

There are 10 cup designs with imagery including jerseys, basketballs, brackets, and basketball terminology such as, “Double Team,” “Nothing But Net” and “Dual Threat.” The Fan Edition packaging will also feature the NCAA logo as well as a basketball player silhouette.

Reese's printed cup technology prints white, edible ink (in words or images) directly onto the peanut butter cup and has no effect on the taste of the product. Reese's Fan Edition printed cups will be available in standard two-cup bars and will retail for \$0.79. The printed cups were distributed to select Target and Walgreens stores beginning in mid-February and will be available into March throughout the NCAA Division I Men's and Women's Basketball Championships.

The Reese's brand is the official candy partner of the NCAA and the title sponsor of the National Association of Basketball Coaches' Reese's College All-Star Game, which features the top Division I senior basketball student-athletes from around the country and is played the weekend of the NCAA Men's Final Four.



Photo courtesy Nike

NIKE'S

Q3 EXCEEDS STREET TARGETS, FUTURES AHEAD 14 PERCENT

Nike, Inc. reported earnings rose 3.5 percent in the third quarter, to \$685 million, or 76 cents a share. Revenues advanced 12.7 percent to \$6.97 billion, growing 14 percent on a currency-neutral (C-N) basis for the Nike Brand and 16 percent for Converse.

Results handily topped Wall Street's consensus estimates that called for EPS of 72 cents a share on nearly \$6.7 billion in revenue.

Nike said that despite the negative impact of changes in foreign exchange rates, the EPS gain reflects higher revenues driven by strong demand for both Nike and Converse, gross margin expansion, a lower tax rate and slightly lower average share count, partially offset by the impact of higher SG&A investments in brands and business capabilities.

In the North America market, sales rose 12 percent to \$23.07 billion while operating earnings in the region gained 11 percent to \$726 million. On a C-N basis, C-N revenue gains were also seen in Western Europe, up 19 percent; Central and Western Europe, 22 percent; Emerging Markets, 19 percent; and Japan, 10 percent. The bottom line was especially helped by operating profit gains of 54 percent in Western Europe and 23 percent in Central and Eastern Europe.

As of the end of the quarter, worldwide futures orders for Nike Brand were ahead 14 percent higher on a C-N basis, led by gains of 30 percent in Western Europe and 24 percent in Emerging Markets. North America's futures were ahead 9 percent.

"Our strong Q3 results demonstrate our relentless focus on delivering innovations that resonate with consumers," said Mark Parker, president and CEO. "Despite macroeconomic challenges, Nike delivers consistent results because we focus on the biggest opportunities for growth while we manage risk across our diverse global portfolio. This is how we continue to drive long-term value for our shareholders."

WINTER

SPRING

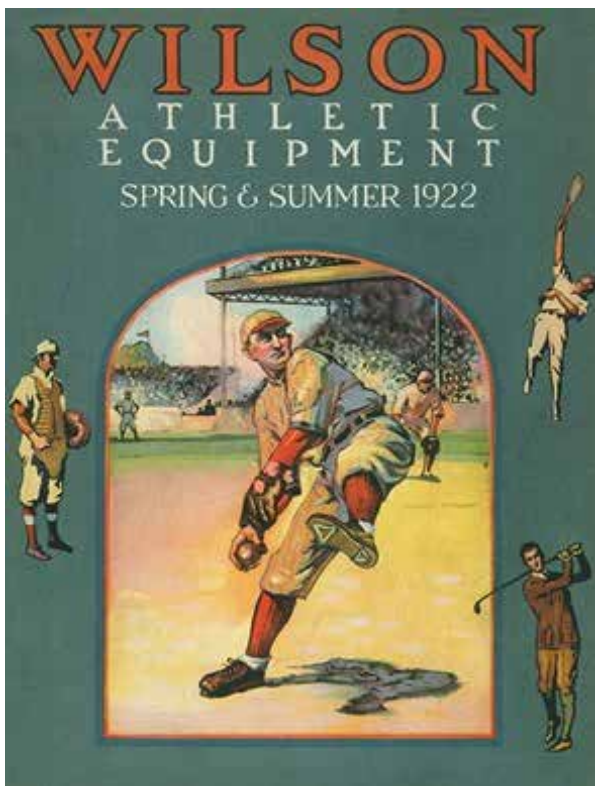
SUMMER

FALL

ALL-SEASONS ACCESSORIES FOR
YEAR-ROUND PROFIT

COGLAN'S

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WILSON SPORTING GOODS CO.

CELEBRATES 100 YEARS

Wilson Sporting Goods Co. is celebrating a Century of Sport with the launch of its "100 Venues in 100 Days" contest. Wilson is inviting fans to commemorate this century of accomplishment with a chance to win daily prizes and the Grand Prize trip to the 2014 US Open Tennis Tournament in New York City.

"Wilson celebrates athletes at every level, from the backyard to the professional player," said Tom Gruger, VP of marketing for Wilson. "To kick off our 100th year, we will celebrate our partnership with these athletes as we look forward to the next century of champions."

Fans and sports enthusiasts can play by identifying sporting venues for 100 days through June 24, 2014. Each day a new sporting venue will be featured with new prizes available including an official Wilson Super Bowl game ball, a Wilson A2000 baseball glove or a premium Wilson tennis racket, with the Grand Prize opportunity to win a trip to the U.S. Open Tennis Tournament.

Wilson tapped Pollinate, a Portland-based advertising agency, to bring the campaign to life.

"Wilson asked us to create an experience for sports enthusiasts to enjoy the deep heritage Wilson has in inspiring and shaping the game of tennis, golf, baseball American football and basketball among other sports," said Levi Patterson, co-founder of Pollinate. "Fans can now be a part of the journey, decade by decade, to experience the true love Wilson has for sports over the past 100 years and to have a chance to win their big ticket to the U.S. Open tennis grand slam event."

More details are available at wilson.com/100.

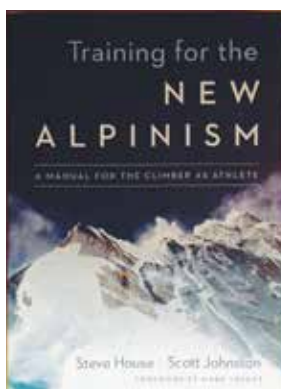
CONGRATULATIONS

WILSON
ON

100
YEARS!

From

 SPORTSONESOURCE



PATAGONIA BOOKS PRESENTS

*TRAINING FOR THE NEW ALPINISM:
A MANUAL FOR THE CLIMBER AS
ATHLETE*

World class climber and Patagonia ambassador Steve House and elite Nordic skiing coach Scott Johnston have pioneered a groundbreaking athletic training approach to mountaineering in their new book *Training for the New Alpinism: A Manual for the Climber as Athlete* published by Patagonia Books.

The book is designed for all readers and delivers detailed instruction on how to plan and execute training tailored to individual circumstances.

Chapters cover endurance and strength training theory and methodology, application and planning, nutrition, altitude adaptation, mental fitness and assessing your goals and your strengths. The book also features inspiring essays by world-renowned climbers.

Climbing and bouldering as a workout is increasing in popularity as are the number of climbing and bouldering gyms throughout the U.S. The Outdoor Industry Association puts total participation in the sport at 4.7 million to 6.9 million people as of 2011.

The program outlined in the book will appeal to climbers and aspiring climbers worldwide.

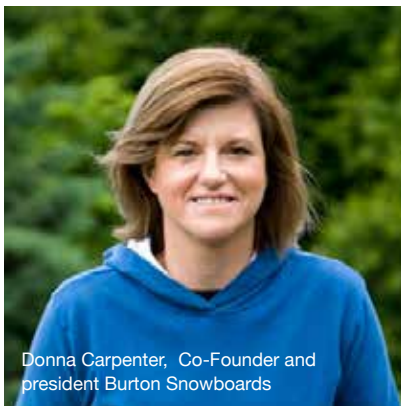


GIVING BACK

CHILL ON THE HILL

Through the Chill Foundation, Burton Snowboards Co-Owner and President Donna Carpenter uses snowboarding to provide thousands of at-risk kids not only the joy of snowboarding but life lessons and a window to new possibilities.

By Charlie Lunan



Donna Carpenter, Co-Founder and president Burton Snowboards

Since its founding in Burlington, VT in 1995 by Burton Snowboards' President Donna Carpenter and her husband and Burton Snowboards Founder & CEO Jake Burton, The Chill Foundation has used a six-week snowboarding program to teach more than 17,500 at-risk youth about patience, persistence, responsibility, courage, respect and pride. Today, the Chill Foundation is run from Burton's headquarters in Burlington, VT by an executive director and staff of six that serves about 1,200 kids a year in 13 cities.

with kids from the city to the mountain and I could physically see them change as we crossed the bridge out of Manhattan. I could see their faces soften and their eyes open up. More recently, we just had a Chill fundraiser at the Burton U.S. Open and I brought in one of our kids who spoke about how though he had grown up in Denver, the idea of going to a mountain had never crossed his mind. Then he talked about respect and how he had never really learned what respect was until he went snowboarding, which taught him that respect means that when someone falls you help them and how he now can see the importance of being respectful to his teachers and his mother.

What goal is the Foundation working toward now? We are moving toward a model of having full-time coordinators in each market. Denver, Los Angeles and New York have full time coordinators and the program is now supporting itself in two cities. We are looking to roll that model out to five more cities by next season. It's a much better model because it allows you to build relationships with schools, social service agencies, and donors in each community.

What advice can you offer to other executives considering launching a foundation? The key is to find a great executive director with background in social services. You also need to get out of this mentality that it's a non-profit. Don't think you have to run it on a shoestring. What would you expect from your business if you ran it on a shoestring? You'd expect shoestring results. Run it like a business. Get it out there and throw the big fundraisers. Spend money on marketing the non-profit and educating your rep force. No one is going to put on your gravestone that you did a good job keeping overtime down.

SGB caught up with Carpenter last week after she returned from the Burton U.S. Open Snowboarding Championships in Vail, CO to find out why the Foundation has grown so much and what its plans are for the future.

What inspired you and Jake to create The Chill Foundation? When we started Burton Snowboards, we had to go to ski areas and demonstrate how to ride and how the boards worked. One of the first groups that really took a risk with us were teenagers. They were the ones that really gave us a shot and got us going. So we thought that's the group we really want to give back to and we can give them the gift of snowboarding.

How do you know that the Foundation's work is making a difference? I knew just from participating in the first program in Burlington. I was a little naïve about the issues in Burlington and how much these kids really needed. I remember asking a boy while riding up the chairlift if he knew one of the other boys that he was being friendly with and he said, 'No, not really. Our mothers are in prison together.' That's when I realized that just to get them out for a few hours to play in the snow without those burdens was having a positive impact. Later, when we started in New York City, I rode the bus

MADE IN THE USA

AN AMERICAN CAMPING CLASSIC

With today's focus on small spaces and mobile living, the classic Teardrop-style trailer is back in vogue even though it's been around for more than fifty years. Since then, there have been countless innovative variations on the basic shape, style, and functionality of its core design.

Today Teardrops represent one of the cheapest and easiest do-it-yourself portable building styles around and people continue to customize them in all kinds of creative ways.

One of today's most notable contemporary makers of custom Teardrops is John Davis and his Silver Tears Campers

in Roanoke, VA. Davis designs and manufactures custom Teardrops. While the standard features are impressive, the potential to customize is limitless.

Light enough to be pulled by a small car, they make for a great long weekender and as green as green gets - maybe even greener than a tent.

According to Davis, "Silver Tears Campers expands the personal statement into a road epic....you'll travel light, but smart, with everything you need, and nothing you don't." silvertearscampers.com



Photo courtesy Silver Tears Campers

A Little History



Teardrop Camping Trailers were born out of a desire for people to have a simple but affordable way to explore the country without having to "rough it".

The Teardrop proved to be the perfect compromise between a tent and a full-sized trailer. The sleeping compartment offered a cozy, dry place to relax and the built-in kitchen out back, a trademark of the teardrop design, was handy and complete.

There were many homebuilt and kit manufactured Teardrops made from in the 1930s not long after the advent of mainstream, mass-produced

automobiles with its heyday coming in the late 1940s.

Most original designs focused on simplicity – streamlined shape, lightweight materials and a plan that called for standard dimensional plywood sizes (4 by 8 feet). Since the Teardrop was all about thrift and maximizing the use of limited interior square footage, the resulting cabin was reserved for, at most, sleeping quarters for two with some storage, while cooking, lounging and other related activities were relegated to the outdoors by necessity.



SHARPEN YOUR PERSPECTIVE



Access the weekly sales landscape of the outdoor industry and be outfitted with data to guide your company's strategic decisions with OIA VantagePoint™: The only weekly retail point-of-sale reporting platform exclusively for the active outdoor lifestyle industry. We swiftly deliver critical trend and detailed business data to brands and retailers.

START SEEING CLEARLY



WOMEN IN SHOOTING SPORTS

When it comes to shooting, hunting and gun ownership the women's market just keeps growing.

By William F. Kendy

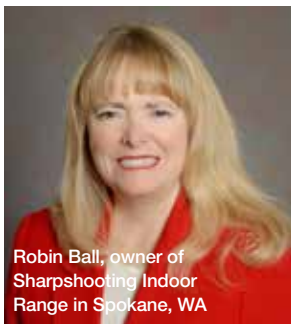


A National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) study released in August 2013 found that 37 percent of all new target shooters are female compared to 22 percent of established target shooters and that one in five began shooting in the last five years. That figure dovetails with the surge in firearm background checks and resultant sales in the same period of time.

While the entrance of females into the shooting and hunting realm can't alone justify the booming sales that the industry has been experiencing for the past five or six years, it is a significant chunk of the business. Any firearms retailer or range who ignores the expanding female market is throwing away money.

"If mom is happy the whole family is happy," said Robin Ball, owner of Sharpshooting Indoor Range in Spokane, WA. "If mom shoots and hunts, there is a good chance the family will shoot and hunt and if she likes it, she will share her experiences with all of her friends. And most of the time, mom controls the checkbook."

"There are women who are single mothers or married who are looking for activities to get their families involved in," said Linda Powell, director, media relations for firearm manufacturer O.F. Mossberg & Sons, Inc. "If you get mom involved then they will most likely bring most of her family with her."



Robin Ball, owner of Sharpshooting Indoor Range in Spokane, WA

"A large number of women who are buying and learning how to use firearms are doing so because they are concerned about personal and home security," said Powell. "Then there is the segment of women who are age 40 and above and are coming into their own. They have discretionary income and are looking for hobbies to be involved in with their spouses and friends."

"The self defense aspect is probably the impetuous for most women getting into shooting sports," said Powell. "But then they find out that it is fun and they go and recruit their friends and just have a ladies night out. It is similar to the bridge clubs that women had during the day when their men were working."

"When it comes to the hunting side, I think that there are a lot of moms out there who are becoming involved because of the economy and it is a way to help feed the family and it is organic," added Powell.



Linda Powell, director, media relations for firearm manufacturer O.F. Mossberg & Sons, Inc.

“The trend for women and guns has been happening for years. Women are more independent and they want to take control and stop being so dependent on their husbands,” said Kate Krueger, owner of Derby Guns in Scottsdale, AZ and host of the Talking Guns radio show. “They started to realize the importance of having personal protection and there are more places for them to shoot and participate today than when I first got involved in the shooting sports.”

Olympian and firearms instructor Gabriela (Gabby) Franco feels that American women aren't afraid to try new things and a big part of it is based on curiosity and, because of all of the media coverage of shootings, they are more aware of the importance of being able to defend themselves in their homes and when they are out in public.



Olympian and firearm's instructor Gabriela (Gabby) Franco

“As a firearms instructor I speak to a lot of women who are not afraid to try new things and they think that if their husbands or boyfriends shoot, they can to,” said Franco.

“Shooting and hunting are things that families can do together and it is very much lifestyle and camaraderie things for women,” said Randi Rogers, a competitive shooter and sales and marketing manager for holster company Comp-Tac.

“Women today have more time to shoot and be in the outdoors and we're not relegated to just staying home, raising families, cooking and cleaning,” said Rogers.

Selling to Women...or Any New Customer

Nobody likes to be intimidated or felt stupid and that is true for all new customers, male or female. Shooting, firearms and hunting has traditionally been a stalwart of men and walking in the door of a gunshop can be intimidating for a woman.

While there are still holdouts in the industry of stores that are “Men Caves” most of today's firearm retailers recognize the importance of being clean, well organized, merchandised, and customer friendly. Who wants to do business at a store that needs painting, has potholes in the parking lot, trash lying around, no security lighting and is inviting to enter? And if that theme is carried inside, customers will shop someplace else.

When it comes to women, lighting, smell, cleanliness and a safe, comfortable, open environment are key factors...especially clean restrooms.

Effective retail selling revolves around a number of steps and they are the same for both men and women. For “newbie” customers salespeople need to ramp up their efforts on “meeting and greeting” customers, asking questions to probe for needs,

carefully listening and tailoring the products they present to those needs, especially for customers who are brand new to shooting and hunting.

“A store or range has to have a welcoming environment, greet customers in a friendly and reassuring way and offer to help them determine and ask the questions and listen to find what they want,” said Powell. “For ladies it is a real plus to have a female salesperson just because women tend to be more comfortable with another woman and her questions may not seem so stupid.”

“Salespeople need to remember that all customers, including women, are not the same and one size doesn't fit all,” said Powell. “It takes courage for women to walk into a gun store and most of them will have done their research, talk to other women and come into the store to hold and handle the product. Shopping for women is an experience.”

Julie Golob is a national and world champion shooter, Captain of Team Smith & Wesson and author of *Shoot: Your Guide to Shooting and Competition*. She agrees with Powell that retailers need to work to make sure the product is the right fit.

“I think the dealer needs to understand that there is no one size fits all for women when it comes to guns, gear and even how you approach the client,” said Golob. “Customer service and listening to each customers' needs should be a high priority, no matter if that customer is a man or a woman.”

“Becoming a resource is also critical in developing a relationship. Establishing your store as a go-to resource for women to get answers on guns, gear, training and shooting sports helps make women feel more comfortable in the retail environment,” said Golob. “It also helps develop a relationship and trust. Women are more likely to share their experience with friends, family and other women when they have a positive experience.”

“Salespeople selling to women need to focus on what they want to use the firearm for and remember that women are typically a one gun owner,” said Ball. “What's their focus? Are they looking for a firearm for home defense or is it a conceal and carry firearm? If it is a carry gun, they need to find the right blend of size and weight.”

What Are Women Buying?

For a long time the concept in the firearms industry was to take an existing product and “pink it and shrink it”. While there is still a lot of products on the marketplace that have pinked and shrunked, manufacturers are beginning to develop products especially designed for women and men of smaller stature.

Contrary to popular belief, all women don't like pink and want to be shown the same products that are presented to men. Of those that do like pink, they are very fussy about what shade of pink they do like and may have preferences for other colors, like purple. Still Ball said that she sells a sizeable amount of pink merchandise.



Julie Golob is a national and world champion shooter, Captain of Team Smith & Wesson and author of *Shoot: Your Guide to Shooting and Competition*.



Gabriela (Gabby) Franco

“We carry and sell a fair amount of pink firearms and we manage to sell everything pink that comes in the store,” said Ball. “Pink or purple does catch customer’s eyes and it helps soften the image of the industry.”

“I’ve learned from my own personal experience that having a pink or purple firearm or knife means that my husband won’t claim it and leaves it alone,” added Ball.

“Manufacturers are coming up with firearms that incorporate features important for women,” said Ball. “For example, the Ruger LC380 semi-automatic handgun has a lighter spring in the recoil system and the slide opens super easily, which is important for women who are just developing dexterity and don’t have great hand strength.”

Mossberg offers a number of shotguns and rifles that are geared towards women. Its latest offering is the Flex line.

“The Flex System includes stocks, retail pads and fore-ends that can be interchanged without tools to accommodate different users or applications,” said Powell. “We offer it in a 12 and 20-gauge pump shotgun, and a semi-automatic and bolt action .22 rifle.”

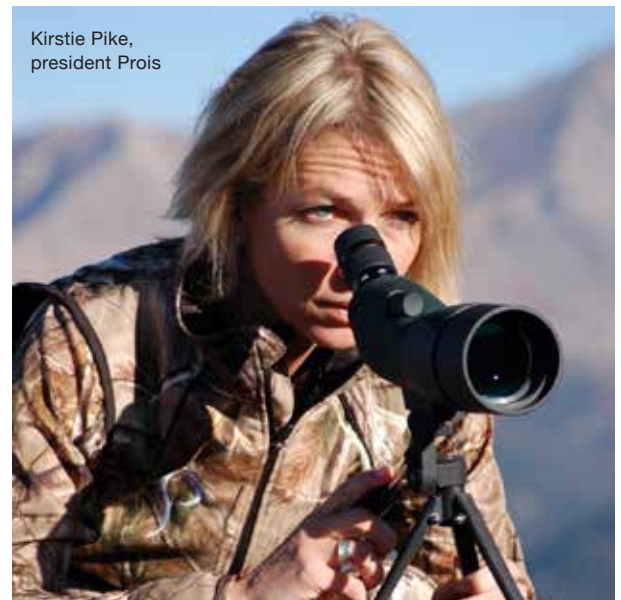
“Retailers need to carry products that are adjustable to accommodate the female, kids and senior markets,” said Rogers. “Comp-Tac produces a holster called the International and it features a modular mounting system that drops and allows for more room and comfort.”

Golob advises retailers to concentrate on fit and features and could care less about pink or purple.

“When I look at a firearm I look for features that will help me be a better shooter. One of the reasons I love the Smith & Wesson M&P pistol line is because it has three different options for grip size,” said Golob. “I have small hands and the small back

“Both shooting and hunting are becoming very trendy and cool for women and they want to look good and feel comfortable”

- Kirstie Pike
President
Prois Hunting Apparel



Kirstie Pike,
president Prois

strap not only allows me to get the full pad of my trigger finger on the face of the trigger for consistent trigger pull, it also allows me easy access to the magazine release and offers easily accessible controls.”

“Personally I could care less what color the gun is and it’s more important to be able to become proficient with it,” said Golob. “That doesn’t just go for firearms either. We’re seeing a lot of gear designed with women in mind as well. Adjustable holster systems from companies like Safariland account for a variety of body shapes. Women now have options for comfortable and rugged camo. There are several boutique women’s clothing companies like Prois Hunting Apparel for Women that have full lines designed by women hunters for women hunters.”

“It is not the pink that defines the woman...it is the product itself. Female gear must be fit to a woman on all fronts...not just downsized from a male product” said Prois President Kirstie Pike. “I realize that this comes as a surprise, but we are made entirely different from men. Who knew?”

“Both shooting and hunting are becoming very trendy and cool for women and they want to look good and feel comfortable,” said Pike. Women are selective shoppers and are willing to spend the money on quality clothing that fits well.” ■

A photograph of a person wearing a tan sweater, dark brown pants, and black boots, standing in a field of tall grass. A light-colored dog is sitting next to the person, looking to the right. The background is a soft-focus landscape with trees.

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LULU DOLLARS UP FOR GRABS

While Lululemon Athletica, Inc. is still trying to recover from a disastrous 2013, it can't be denied that its controversial founder reshaped the way women's athletic apparel is designed, marketed and sold

By Charlie Lunan

Photos courtesy Lululemon

Athletic apparel brands are focusing on women more keenly than ever this year in a race to win market share before Lululemon Athletica, Inc. recovers from its disastrous yoga pant recall and public relations foibles of a year ago.

In mid-January, maker of the coveted Wunder Under and Groove yoga pants lowered its revenue and earnings guidance for the fourth quarter ended February 3 and predicted comp store sales would decline rather than be flat. At an investor conference that same week, newly installed CEO Laurent Potdevin said market research showed that brand loyalty among Lululemon remained very high. Unconvinced investors, however, pushed down the company's stock a new 52-week low by February amid doubts that the company can resume its outsized growth amid growing competition from The Gap, VF Corp. and Under Armour.

In June, Under Armour told investors that it expected to double its sales to women to \$1 billion by 2016 – a credible goal given that the company met its 2009 goal of doubling sales to \$500 million in 2012.

“There is so much white space for us to define,” said Leanne Fremar, the senior vice president and executive creative director that UA hired in late 2012 to help take its women's apparel business to the next level. “We are in the very early days of a movement, a shift that will redefine what the

generation of women will wear every day. And Under Armour's position to do it chicer, cooler, better and faster than anyone else.”

The Gap more than doubled the store count at Athleta, the yoga inspired women's activewear brand it acquired in 2007, to 65 in 2013 and announced plans to add another 30 Athleta stores in 2014. “It looks like Athleta is on its path to becoming the fourth iconic brand within Gap, Inc.'s portfolio,” said The Gap Chairman and CEO Glenn K. Murphy to investors in late February. “That's something to celebrate in a business that has six brands, including three that are iconic.”

VF Corp., meanwhile, is opening up wholesale accounts for its Lucy brand and expanding The North Face's line of yoga and running apparel for women.



Laurent Potdevin CEO, Lululemon

The End of Pink and Shrink

No matter what your opinion of Lululemon founder Chip Wilson, the fact is that many women feel he changed the business of designing, making and retailing women's athletic apparel for the better.

Wilson got his idea for Lululemon while learning yoga in the late 1990s. He noticed that most of the women in his classes still wore baggy cotton clothing. Noting the growing number of women participating in sports, he began mocking up yoga pants made from the technical fabrics he had come to know during 20 years in the action sports industry.



Chip Wilson Lululemon founder

He started giving away prototypes to yoga and fitness instructors to get their input and quickly earned a strong demand among fit, active women for apparel that could deliver performance, fit and style. When Wilson opened a store near the beach in Vancouver, British Columbia in 1998 sales took off as women embraced the brand's feminine design aesthetic.

Before opening new stores, Lululemon dispatched sales people into a market to recruit local yoga and fitness instructors. In exchange for listening to a presentation on the company's apparel line, attendees were given gift cards and invited to apply for a position as brand ambassadors. That program provided instructors in-store promotions and free gear in exchange for them agreeing to wear Lululemon gear while teaching and hosting the occasional free class at a Lululemon store.

To keep control over the customer experience, Wilson adopted a vertical business model that gave Lululemon complete control over retail pricing and merchandizing. This allowed the company to intentionally under stock stores with new print tops and other high demand items to create a sense of scarcity that would keep customers coming back.

For Women, Gear Is Like Makeup

The company's success, however, derives largely from its flattering designs and luon, a propriety fabric renowned among many women for its silky texture, endurance and unmatched ability to sculpt the derriere.

Elizabeth Sturgis, 35, discovered the brand in 2009 when Lululemon invited her along with other fitness instructors in Philadelphia to a product presentation. Sturgis had always shopped for her fitness gear at off-price stores like TJ Maxx or Marshall's to stretch her modest income as a fitness instructor, but she used the gift card Lululemon gave her after attending the event to buy a pair of their pants and has been a loyal customer and brand advocate ever since.

Sturgis attributes women's strong allegiance to the brand to how its apparel makes women feel.

"Gear is like makeup for women. When you have something on you that makes you feel good, you are better able to approach whatever it is you are doing. When clothing stays in place, you feel more confident. That is something Lululemon has really figured out. They make you look good with clothes that make you feel feminine, but also strong."

Lululemon's brand became so strong that to this day, it requires customers return its



products with tags attached within 14 days of purchase. Rather than risk missing out on Lululemon's latest tops, however, women simply began offering their returns on eBay or in chat rooms sponsored by blogs such as Lululemon Addict and Lulumum.

In the fourth quarter of 2009, when many retailers were still resorting to steep markdowns to move inventory, Lululemon increased its comp store sales by 29 percent and came within 20 basis points of its precession gross margin.

Customer loyalty also helped Lululemon sustain growth despite Wilson's penchant for making remarks that many find offensive. Over the years he has been lambasted for being an acolyte of author Ayn Rand and suggesting that birth control contributed to higher divorce rates which in turn spurred the women's self-improvement movement that had enabled Lululemon's rapid growth. In the early 2000s, he caught flak after telling an audience at a sustainability conference that third world children should be allowed to work in factories to help their families pull themselves out of poverty. When Wilson stepped down as CEO in 2007 many speculated it was under pressure from investors anxious over what he might say next.

Sheer Disaster

What finally tripped Lululemon, however, was its supply chain. On March 18, 2013, the company disclosed that it was pulling pants

representing 17 percent of its bottoms' sales from shelves after discovering the luon fabric used to make them was too sheer. The company invited customers to return the pants for a full refund, but when women arrived at some stores, they were asked to bend over so store employees could determine whether the pants they wore qualified for the return. By early April, Lululemon had lowered its earnings guidance for the quarter, apologized for its handling of the return, pledged to bolster its quality control process and fired its chief product officer. In June, the company announced CEO Christine Day would step down as soon as her replacement could be found.

By November, Lululemon began selling retrofitted versions of the recalled pants as the "Second Chance Pant" for \$92. Hangtags explained that Lululemon had added mesh panels and a luon fabric panel across the back of the pants "to give you the coverage you need in Down Dog." But as the pants hit store shelves, Wilson committed another public relations blunder when, in an interview with Bloomberg TV about another venture, he responded to the host's questions about new reports that the luon pants were pilling. He responded that the luon pants "don't work for some women's bodies...It's really about the rubbing through the thighs, how much pressure is there."



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Yoga Studio Defects

The remarks resulted in a week of jokes by late night television hosts, including Steven Colbert, who aired a blistering 5-minute segment that lampooned Wilson.

For Lululemon brand ambassadors John and Diana Vitarelli, the Colbert segment provided one more reason to sever their ties with the brand. In a lengthy blog post with the headline “We Don’t Care What You Wear,” Diana Vitarelli admitted she and her husband had long had qualms about their modest agreement with Lululemon and the growing corporatization of yoga.

“My overall feeling is plainly that they should keep to their business in their stores and stay out of Yoga studios and stop trying to subtly advertise in those studios by giving the teachers who stand in front of the rooms free clothing,” she wrote.

Wilson resigned as chairman of Lululemon December 10, the same day the company named Laurent Potdevin as its new CEO.

Lulu Dollars Up For Grabs

With more than \$1 billion in sales and new running, cycling and men’s lines, Lululemon’s future rests more with pleasing customers than yoga instructors. On blogs such as luluaddicts.com and lulumum.com, some of those customers were questioning their allegiance to the brand.

On a message board at luluaddict.com, a woman who claimed she spent \$200 a week at Lululemon, said she would simply live off the stash of gear she had accumulated until the company fixed its problems. Others, who said they had long resented the company’s return policy, said they had had enough and would spend their “lulu dollars” on other brands such as Nike, Under Armour, prAna and Split59. More claimed they would defect when reports emerged that Lululemon would stop selling to anyone it found reselling their returns on eBay. Still others argued Lululemon’s core customers were more status conscious than socially conscious and unlikely to defect to brands that could be bought at Dick’s Sporting Goods or the local department store.

At an investor presentation in January, Potdevin said market research still showed the company’s customer loyalty was off the charts.

In Charlotte, Elizabeth Sturgis remains enthusiastic about the brand. She noted that while she does get a pro deal discount on Lululemon gear, she never participated in the company’s brand ambassador program. While aware of last year’s recall, she was not affected because she never bought any of the pants using the defective luon fabric. She said she was unaware of the controversy swirling around Wilson and has seen no backlash against the brand among the women she teaches in her aerial fitness classes at the Flex and Fit fitness studio in downtown Charlotte. When asked in March whether she will continue using and recommending Lululemon, she did not hesitate.

“Absolutely,” she said. “I know what I like and I stick with what I like; what works. And I love a redemption story and I think most people do. They’ve done a great job at recovering from the recall with their Second Chance Pant. The fact that they have a sense of humor and are ready to learn from their mistake and move on is great.” ■

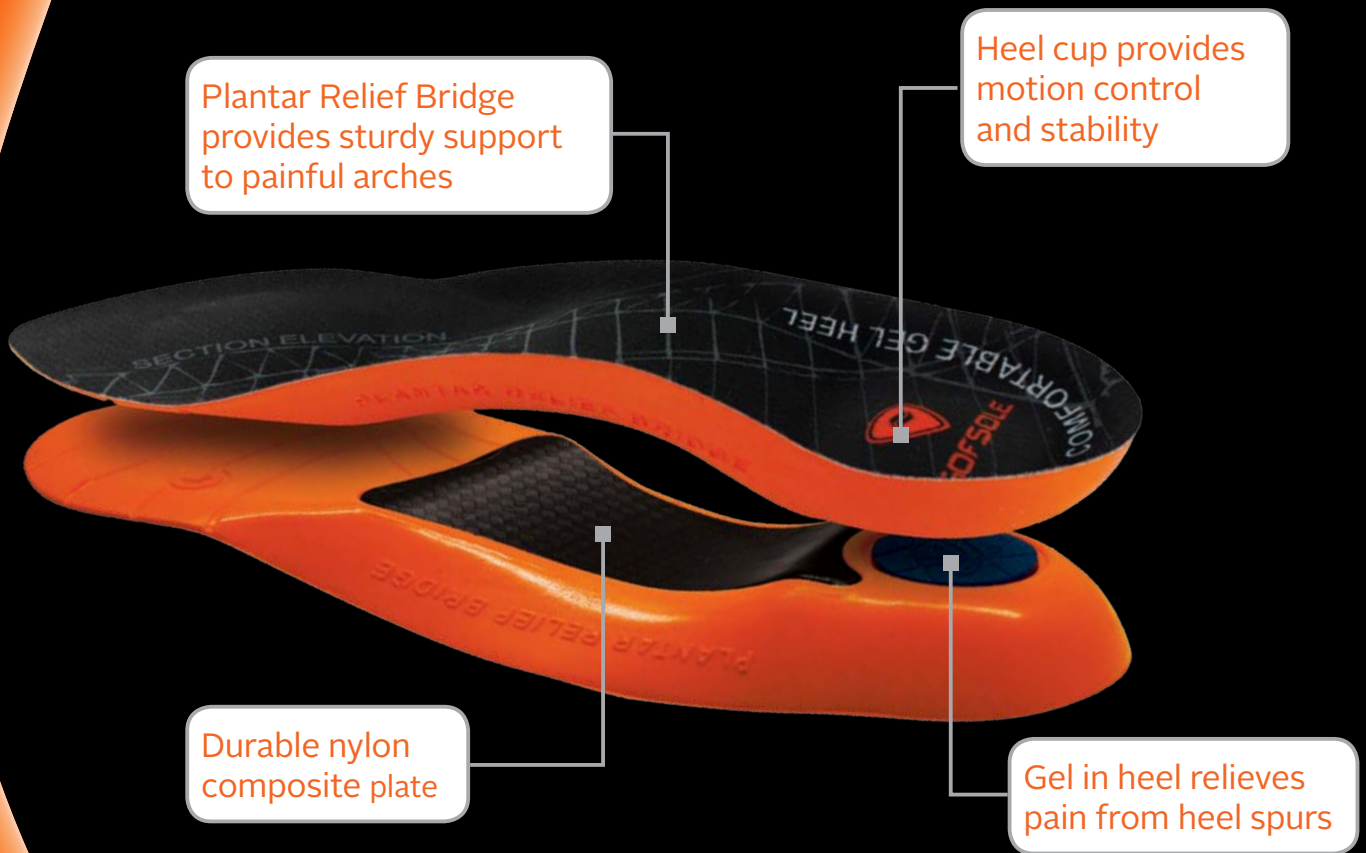
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CALENDAR

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MARCH

- 25-27 ASI Long Beach
Long Beach, CA
- 27-30 ASA-ICAST Fred Hall Shows
San Diego, CA

APRIL

- 7-8 SFIA Litigation & Risk
Management Summit
Phoenix, AZ
- 22 SFIA/NFHS/NCAA Rules
Committee Meeting
Indianapolis, IN
- 27-30 N.S.G.A. Mgmt. Conference
Indian Wells, CA

JUNE

- 11-12 Atlanta Shoe Market
Atlanta, GA
- 17-19 Licensing International Expo
Las Vegas, NV
- 26-28 Sports, Inc. Summer Team Dealer Show
Nashville, TN

JULY

- 8-11 NBS Summer Market
Austin, TX
- 10-13 European Outdoor Trade Fair
Friedrichshafen, Germany
- 15-17 ASI Chicago
Chicago, IL
- 18-20 A.D.A. Spring Show
Reno, Nevada

AUGUST

- 6-9 Outdoor Retailer Summer Market
Salt Lake City, UT
- 14-16 Sports Inc. Outdoor Show
Nashville, TN

SEPTEMBER

- 3-8 NBS Fall Semi - Annual Market
Fort Worth, TX
- 4-6 Imprinted Sportswear Show (ISS)
Orlando, FL
- 10-12 Interbike International Trade Expo
Las Vegas, NV
- 16-17 SFIA Industry Leaders Summit
Chicago, IL

OCTOBER

- 7-9 OIA Rendezvous
Asheville, NC

NOVEMBER

- 15-16 A.D.A. Fall Show
Palm Springs, CA
- 23-25 Sports, Inc. Fall Team Dealer Show
Las Vegas, NV

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f. 203.426.1087
nssf.org

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f 847.391.9827
nsga.org

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t 817.788.0034
f 817.788.8542
nbs.com

Outdoor Industry Association
4909 Pearl East Circle / Suite 300
Boulder, CO 80301
t 303.444.3353
f 303.444.3284
outdoorindustry.org

Sports & Fitness Industry Association
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Silver Spring, MD 20910
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f 301.495.6322
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