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United Sports Brands Buys Nathan Sports

United Sports Brands remains on the move. The company has added a fifth business to its portfolio of sporting goods brands by buying a key run specialty vendor.



Jon Reichlin
Chairman, Nathan

Philadelphia-based Nathan Sports, a category leader in hydration systems and related accessories, is joining the United Sports Brands family that already includes McDavid, Shock Doctor, Cutters and XO Athletics. Financial terms of the transaction weren't disclosed. Nathan principal owner and chairman, Jon Reichlin, will be an investor in United Sports Brands and continue as a contributor to the Nathan brand. Nathan CEO Bridgit Lombard and CFO Tricia Papil will continue as consultants to support the transition to United Sports Brands. Lombard, who also owned a piece of Nathan, expects that transition to be quick. She said she should exit the

business in as little as 30 days.

Meanwhile, Nathan, which currently distributes its product range into 45 countries, will relocate its

Nathan is the most recent run specialty supplier to get snapped up by an industry conglomerate.

operations to Minnetonka, MN and California in phases starting next year. Nathan is the most recent run specialty supplier to get snapped up

by an industry conglomerate. In the past year, Iimplus has purchased Trigger Point and Balega and is said to be close to buying another run specialty vendor.

USB recently acquired McDavid and plans to beef up that company's efforts in the specialty category.

USB plans to open a 120,000 sq. ft. advance distribution center in Fountain Valley, CA and relocate its sales, marketing and product development teams there in early 2016. Meanwhile, Shock Doctor's Minnetonka, MN HQ will become home to all finance, customer service, operations and information technology operations. ■

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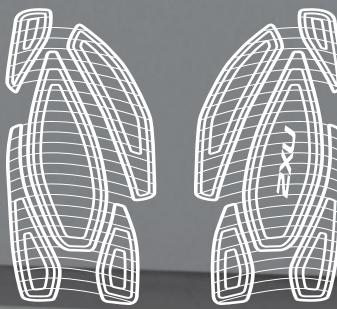
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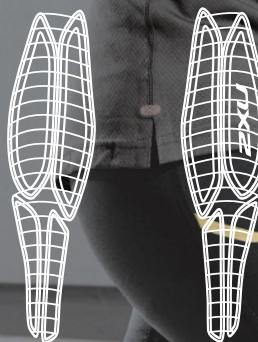
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Maximizing Gift Card Sales this Holiday Season



THE MERITS OF PLASTIC

By Daniel P. Smith

With the holiday season approaching, many running retailers are looking to close a rather challenging year for the industry with some positive vibes.

And with many forecasts calling for holiday spending to surpass the \$616 billion shoppers doled out last season, running retailers should be optimistic they can accomplish that objective. But for as much attention as shoes, socks, apparel and accessories receive, a running shop's holiday sales success might actually hinge on something far more mundane: plastic.

Formerly the hurried selections of procrastinating holiday shoppers or the default option for finicky friends or family members,

gift cards are no longer the present of last resort.

A 2014 survey from the National Retail Federation (NRF) found 62 percent of Americans placed gift cards atop their holiday wish list, the eighth consecutive year gift cards claimed the survey's top spot.

Driven by practicality, convenience and the opportunity for recipients to select their own gifts, total gift card spending approached \$32 billion last holiday season according to the NRF and the average holiday shopper spent nearly \$175 on gift cards. Euphemia Erikson, director of product marketing for First Data, a leading payment technology solutions provider, details five ways running retailers can drive gift card sales this holiday season:

1: Create holiday themed gift cards.

First Data research found that consumers value

Gift cards are no longer the present of last resort.



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Maximizing Gift Card Sales (continued)

Many shoppers turn to gift cards when stumped. This holds particularly true in running retail where size and fit remain so critical.

a visually appealing look when selecting a gift card to the point that cards with attributes – holographic or special shapes, for instance – carry a higher perceived value and are more likely to be purchased.

One interesting case study: Starbucks launched 100 different gift card designs last holiday season, eventually scoring \$1.1 billion in North American gift card sales. In fact, one in seven Americans received a Starbucks gift card last season and 2.5 million gift cards were activated on Christmas Eve alone, according to First Data.

“Special attributes like foil or sparkle, particularly around the holidays, help the gift card feel like more of a gift and capture the holiday spirit,” Erikson says.

2: Place cards throughout the store.

Though many shoppers

initially seek more tangible gifts during their holiday shopping excursions, many turn to gift cards when stumped. This holds particularly true in running retail where size and fit remain so critical.

Having gift cards positioned throughout the store – and at eye level where shoppers can easily take notice – can prevent customers from leaving empty handed and spotlight the much-desired alternative.

“It’s important to have a large stock of cards near checkout, but gift cards shouldn’t be hidden or out of sight,” Erikson says. “They should be available for everyone to see.”

3: Expand with multipacks.

Packaging a few holiday cards together makes purchasing gift cards easier and more convenient for customers and can also boost the average spend. Retailers might create multipacks in the most frequently requested denominations and perhaps even add a bonus card to encourage the purchase, something many retailers have done successfully in recent years.

The goal, Erikson says, is to get as many gift cards into the market as possible, which helps retailers build brand awareness, create customer loyalty, incentivize customers and drive foot traffic into brick-and-mortar locations.

“Gift cards are one of the few things we can guarantee will drive foot traffic and sales after the holiday season,” Erikson says, adding that gift cards’ average lift – the value gift card-toting customers spend

over and above the card value – is \$23. “That’s why selling one gift card is good, but three is even better.”

4: Wrap the card.

A tin case or packaging with a special message reflects the store’s quality and subtly transforms the gift card from a piece of plastic into a personal gift with a higher perceived value, Erikson notes.

As an alternative to carriers, retailers might bundle gift cards with existing inventory, such as combining gift cards with socks, a holiday ornament or pint glass. Stores can then place those bundled options at the point-of-sale or scatter them strategically around the store to bolster the average ticket and, in the case of branded gear like a pint glass, push the store’s name deeper into the marketplace.

5. Broadcast gift card availability.

These days, consumers anticipate all retail outlets offer gift cards, but visible reminders never hurt.

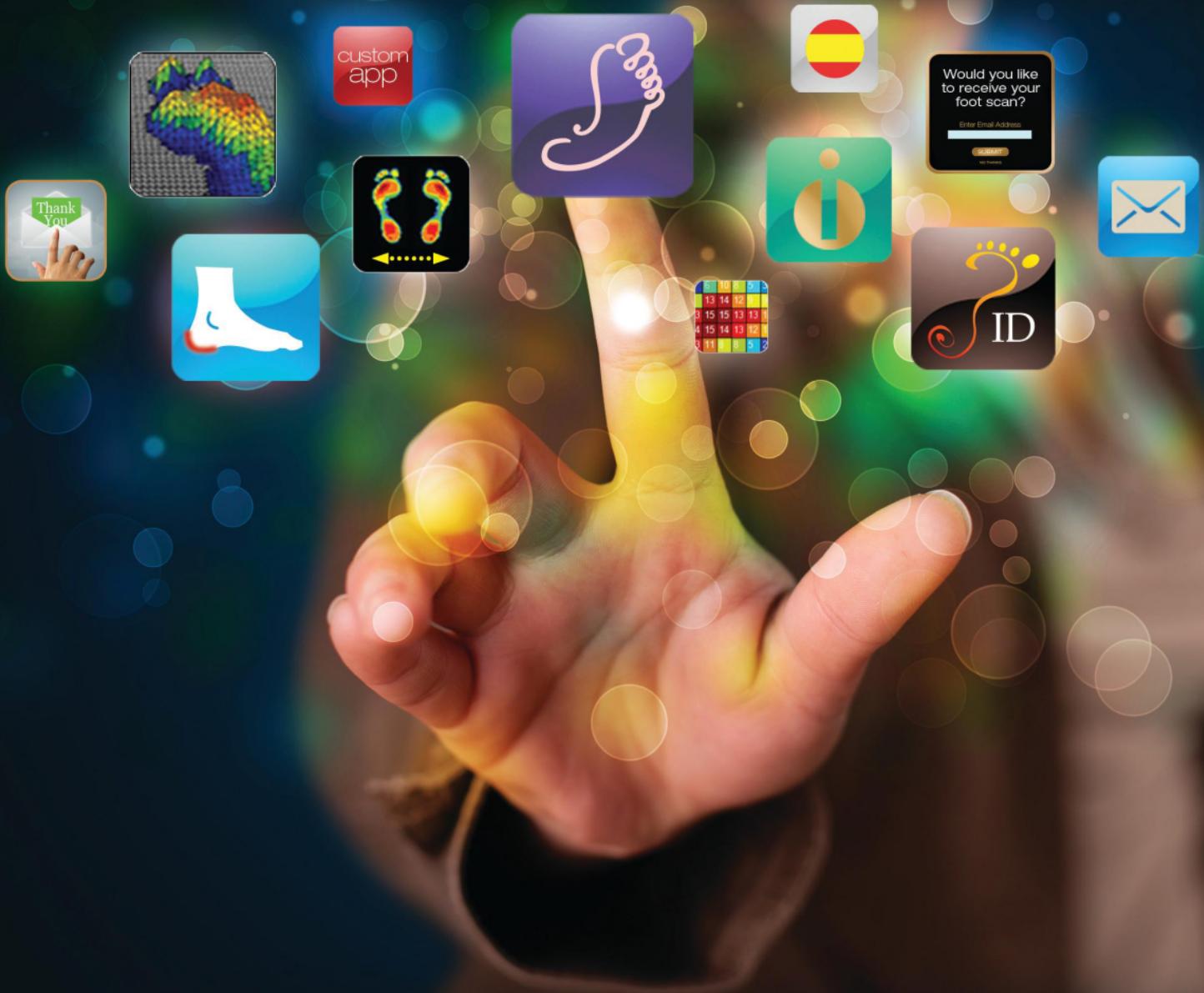
Erikson suggests retailers create clear, concise and large in-store signage that highlights the assortment, benefits or incentives associated with a gift card purchase, such as an additional \$10 gift card with the purchase of \$100 in gift cards. Retailers can then carry these messages outside on a sidewalk chalkboard or on yard signs adjacent to the street.

“Make sure people know you have gift cards because it will drive business today and through the first part of 2016,” Erikson reminds. ■

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Maximizing Gift Card Sales (continued)**E-Gifting Defined****Consumers are using their phones for everything. Offering an e-gifting option helps you stay ahead.**

Gift cards can come in different shapes, colors and sizes. But don't limit your gift card offerings just to the "old fashioned" kind.

A "virtual" gift card is not only an increasingly valid option, but is also one that some consumers prefer and seek out. Though plastic gift cards comprise well over 90 percent of current gift card sales in the U.S., virtual and mobile gift cards are climbing. Mobile gift cards are distributed via email or text and are easily printed, while virtual gift cards are contained entirely on the mobile phone.

Retailers who adapt to this evolving reality, First Data's Euphemia Erikson says, stand well positioned to achieve success given digital's increasing inroads in American society.

"Consumers are using their phones for everything, so offering an e-gifting option helps you stay ahead of the game," Erikson says, noting that costs for launching a virtual gift card program are less than most expect. First Data's program on its Clover POS system, for instance, starts as low as \$20 per month.

Erikson adds that shops can tie digital gift cards into marketing by creating novel designs and communicating directly with consumers. A store, for example, can remind a customer she has an unredeemed balance or offer her an exclusive promotion to prompt a visit.

"Benefits like these can't be overlooked," she says. ■

An advertisement for Balega running socks. The background is dark. On the left, a close-up of a lime green and grey running sock is shown. In the center, the Balega logo (a stylized 'B' with a dot) is followed by the brand name 'balega' in a large, white, lowercase sans-serif font. Below the name is the tagline 'best running socks ever' in a smaller, lime green font. To the right, a lime green and blue running sock is shown from a side angle. At the bottom right, the words 'Hidden Dry' and the website 'www.balega.com' are written in white. The bottom left contains a list of product features: 'hand linked toe seam', 'wicks moisture for dry feet', 'light weight running', and 'ultimate fit'. The hashtag '#balegabeststocksever' is also present.



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Perfect Timing

Epson Works with Meb Keflezighi on its Ronsense Collection.



Stan Brajer and Meb Keflezighi.

Meb, perhaps more than any other modern track and field athlete, has set himself up for life after competition with endorsement deals and strategic partnerships.

It was fall 2011 and Meb Keflezighi and Stan Brajer were in a car headed from Manhattan to a photo shoot at Liberty State Park in New Jersey. As is often the case when the two of them are together, they engaged in a passionate discussion about running. Brajer is a former 800 meter man who still coaches and Meb is...well he's Meb. As the two were deep in conversation, Brajer suddenly realized he had just driven past the exit for the park on the state's infamous Turnpike.

Meb said "Why don't you just make a U-turn?"

But Brajer, a New Jersey native knew that was impossible. He had to drive further and turn around using one of the Turnpike's "jug handle" turnarounds.

The photographer and his assistants were frantically calling as Brajer stepped on the gas and navigated the growing rush hour traffic. Finally, just as the sun was

coming up and the lighting was perfect for an iconic photo of Meb with the Statue of Liberty in the background, the pair pulled into the parking lot and sprinted to the shoot location.

The photo was taken and Brajer laughingly told the crew: "Hey don't worry, we have perfect timing."

Brajer and Meb are hoping the timing is perfect again as they embark on a new collaboration: establishing the Japanese technology company Epson as a player in the running business.

This spring, Epson, best known for its printers, introduced its first sports products in the United States, including The Ronsense running watch collection.

The Ronsense running watch collection features three models: The SF-810 which retails for \$349; the 710 which has an MSRP of \$279 and the 510, set to retail at \$249.

The 810 is Epson's State of the Art product and the device worn by Meb, who is a known data junkie. The 810 uses an optical light sensor to measure heart rate and therefore does not require a strap. The watch provides 35 different measurements including heart rate, time elapsed, distance, pace laps, intervals, speed and calories burned. The 810 (and the other watches) syncs up with Run Connect, a free app created by Epson and also syncs up with most major running apps including Map My Run, Strava and Runkeeper.

Meb has been wearing the watch during his training and during a recent visit in San Diego he demonstrated for us how it used Ronsense's proprietary software to sync up with his

smart phone to show his pace, mile by mile splits, heart rate and steps per mile during his last month of runs (in case you're wondering the numbers were remarkable consistent).

"Back when I ran at UCLA, I was always guessing at this information, but now I can see all the data down to a thousandth

Meb has been wearing the watch during his training and recently demonstrated for us how it uses Ronsense's proprietary software to sync up with his smart phone.

of a mile," says Keflezighi. He attributes his success to a consistent training program which has allowed him to remain at the top of his sport at age 40 when most other male marathoners are fading.

Meb's win at Boston in 2014 took place two weeks before his 39th birthday, making him the oldest winner of the Boston Marathon since at least 1930.

Keflezighi believes he can continue performing at a high level through the 2016 Olympics. But Meb, perhaps more than any other modern track and field athlete, has set himself up for life after competition with endorsement deals and strategic partnerships. Meb has endorsement deals with the following brands: Skechers; ElliptiGO; CEP, Power Bar, Ucan,

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Perfect Timing (continued)



"Epson has so many great resources, but in running Meb is the best asset we have."

STAN BRAJER, EPSON

Krave, Epson, Maui Jim, New York Athletic Club and T-Mobile.

"I couldn't do what I do without my sponsors," says Meb. "They support me financially, but also allow me to get the best out of myself." He often talks about how riding his ElliptiGO helped him train to win Boston in 2014 and how his Skechers shoes enable him to run without Orthotics.

He makes a compelling case for his Epson watch and wants to spread the word even if he does it one runner at a time. "This watch allows me to train smarter and it can do the same for runners of all levels."

Meb has already done several in-store appearances with Brajer on behalf of Epson at Fleet Feet Chicago and Luke's Locker in Dallas and will play a key role in the brand's marketing in 2016.

"Epson has so many great resources, but in running Meb is the best asset we have," says Brajer. "Technology has played a key role in the growth of running over the past 10 years, but it can go even further," says Brajer who joined Epson this year after stints at Garmin and Timex. "Epson can help runners connect with one another and in the process grow and even revolutionize the sport."

Brajer says this is a challenging but opportunistic time for sports technology brands like Epson. Many runners are using apps on their phones rather than buying watches. He also sees many runners wearing the new Apple watch. "Apple will bring consumers to the market who previously never would have worn a sport watch," he says. "They will make it cool to wear a wrist

device. And once consumers get accustomed to that, sports brands like us and running retailers have a great opportunity to sell them on what we offer."

Brajer and Keflezighi developed a strong relationship after the executive signed Meb to an endorsement deal at Garmin. "Stan cuts through the red-tape and keeps things moving forward and I appreciate that," Meb says.

Brajer sees Meb as a true partner, willing to engage and work with his sponsors offering product input, marketing ideas and making appearances. "Athlete-brand partnerships only really work when both are contributing," Brajer told *Running Insight*. "There's a reason Meb has 10 endorsement deals. He works hard for his partners and we all appreciate it." ■

An advertisement for PRO-TEC ATHLETICS. The top left features the PRO-TEC logo and the word "ATHLETICS". The main image shows a woman in a white tank top and black leggings performing a plank exercise on a blue Orb Deep Tissue Massage Ball. She is on a wooden floor in front of a brick wall with a large window. The text "The Orb Deep Tissue Massage Ball" is at the bottom.

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In Conversation: Saucony's Richie Woodworth



Saucony Triumph ISO 2 with EVERUN

Saucony president Richie Woodworth, 57, is approaching the decade marker on his industry run at Saucony. In a recent podcast interview with our sister publication *Inside Insight*, Woodworth shared his views on the brand's running business, the segment as a whole and what it takes to manage through change. Below are some excerpts from that conversation.

During his time at the Wolverine Worldwide-owned company, Woodworth has launched the brand's first apparel line in the U.S. and

spearheaded Saucony's Run For Good Foundation that works to combat childhood obesity. Prior to his industry career, which has included stops at Tommy Hilfiger and National Hockey League Enterprise, he was a member of the U.S. Ski Team.

On... the secret to managing through change.

"We have always been and still are on a mission. We have a consistency of purpose, a clarity around the focus on our business. We're here to empower runners. Running is a transformational kind of sport for a lot of people and it is very meaningful in their lives. And the clarity and focus we have is on elevating the running experience, making runners feel good about themselves—the run, the shoes, the equipment they use is really top of mind to us all of the time. That has been one of the secrets to managing through the change."

"Innovation is a core initiative that is foundational for us and will be for a long time. Running specialty as a trade channel is also foundational and will be with us for a long time."

On... taking Saucony to a higher level.

"For us, we have traditionally run a similar offense to a lot of sports brands and I think that is changing. And it's changing pretty dramatically for Saucony. And I think it's needed. There is a new world order out there with regards to Millennials, consumer preferences and what running means to people. And we're addressing that in many different ways from

PODCAST

Listen to the full *Inside Insight* interview with Richie Woodworth: insideinsight.com/podcasts.html



both products to the way we communicate and engage with the consumer. From the marketing side of things, it's a way to be modern...

There are new ways to communicate and engage. We treat consumer engagement as a higher priority than a transaction. Anyone can provide a transaction on a one-time basis. We want to do it time after time and develop a relationship with our consumer, with our runner. And that's a different way to think about the marketing side of things. It starts with product, obviously...We need to be able to scale product from the consumer that is the elite athlete, like a Molly Huddle, for us, all the way to a fitness, or even a lifestyle running shoe...When we think about the athlete, he or shoe is part of our family. Between Ben True and Molly (Huddle), they represent the best of what Saucony is."

On... the brand's focus on elevating the running experience.

"Innovate-to-Elevate is a great little buzzword and we like it a lot. It speaks to the relentless focus we have on elevating the running experience. We have what I would consider to be a very strong culture of innovation, and I think the representative examples of that are what we have done and accomplished. We were one of the first companies in the industry to talk about geometries and how geometries affect runners. We



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In Conversation: Saucony's Richie Woodworth (continued)

"Between an entry-level, \$50-\$60 shoe and that \$150 retail shoe, there is a real war going on. I think the consumer is looking for versatility."

RICHIE WOODWORTH
SAUCONY

talked about the full gait cycle, not just the contact time on the ground. That's important. We look at innovation, sort of holistically across all of our brand."

"We look at different aspects of fit, dynamic fit, one that moves again through the strides since running is not a static thing. You can fit your foot well when you're seated, but when it's mile 10 on your long Sunday morning run, you have to make sure your foot is held stable, but

bringing to market."

On... the brand's new Everun technology.

"We talk about it as this continuous cushioning story. What we mean by that is that it's a completely resilient material. Foam-based technology that gives you 83 percent energy return, if you will, and allows a runner to be efficient and a little less foot sore during those long runs...Also, we don't think

make sure you have technology, innovation, performance in your shoes that really make them stand out and be different...Saucony has that with our ISO series of products, the Triumph, Hurricane, for example.

"Beyond that or below that, there is a scurry of activity in building running shoes and athleisure products in the running market and being able to have versatility in price points. It's a little bit of bifurcation. \$140, \$150 retail shoe if you have a great story to tell, innovation that you're bringing to market. But between an entry-level, \$50-60 shoe and that \$150 retail shoe, there is a real war going on. And it has allowed people to look at running as a category a little bit differently. I think the consumer is looking for versatility. They want to be able to run in the shoe for the two days a week that they run, but with it raining today, a lot of those running shoe customers are probably going to the gym, or a yoga class or studio. And they need to be able to bring shoes or buy shoes that are able to cross boundaries. We have a great shoe called the Kineta (\$75 retail) that we sent to a bunch of athletes, including Clara Santucci, who was running the Pittsburgh Marathon. She received the shoes and went for a run in them, then she went on to win the race in a \$75 shoe. That's what I'm talking about. A shoe with running DNA, but the ability to also be versatile. For us, we have the ability to look at the market differently...For the fitness consumer looking for versatility, we're addressing that need with a group of products called, 'Life on the Run'." ■



Saucony Kineta Relay

also that the shoe moves with you on those long runs. That's an important component of innovation that we have changed. And we have others. We have innovation coming with a new cushioning and construction method we call EVERUN. Again, it's not innovation for innovation sake. We look at innovation holistically across all of our brand...We try to innovate in marketing by building a relationship through social media, through engagement. New ways to talk and listen to our consumers. Obviously, the most prominent one is through the product stories that we're

of it (EVERUN) as strictly a cushioning technology or a foam-based technology, I should say... We have also developed a new construction method for running shoes. The goal of this was to get this new material closer to the foot. So we generated a new way of doing that called top-sole construction. The purpose is to get it very close to the foot so that one can feel it, the energy return and resiliency..."

On... building shoes at different price points and for different consumers.

"If you're going to [sell] a \$150 shoe, you have to really

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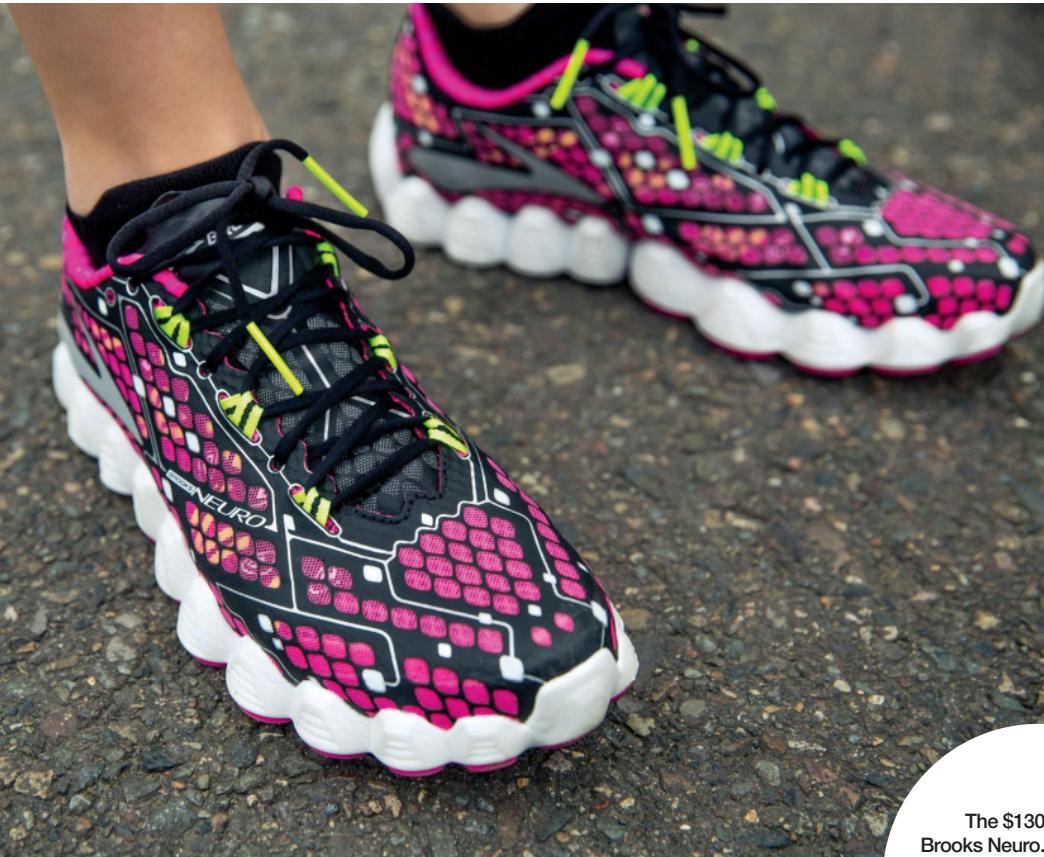


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Brooks Debuts Stride Signature



The \$130
Brooks Neuro.

By Jennifer Ernst Beaudry

Brooks is looking to shake up the shoe wall for Spring '16 with a new way of classifying shoes that the Seattle-based running brand says gives its consumers more control over their running experience.

"The shoe wall has become overwhelming for many of us — there are hundreds of running shoes and really only two significant ways of categorizing them currently, by

amount of support and usage," said Carson Caprara, senior manager of global product line management for the brand. "There are so many other factors that contribute to how a shoe rides and the experience you have in it, and we want to talk about those experiences with runners."

Dubbed "Stride Signature," the new classification system was born out of research started in 2012 on the biomechanics of running and specifically on the role the knees and joints play in each individual's natural

running gait. It marries that information on what shoes support what kinds of runners best with individual preferences to look at shoes across two axes. The first is how much ground contact a given runner wants, the "float" versus "feel" categories the brand introduced in 2011 with the debut of its PureProject line. The newer, second set quantifies cushioning, from plush to responsive.

"Runners tend to be evenly divided by preference toward a more compliant and forgiving ride — plush — versus a more firm and springy ride — responsive," Caprara said. "By merging the float vs. feel with the responsive versus plush spectrums, we get four unique experiences that the runner can choose from."

Brooks is calling the resulting four new quadrants Cushion Me (lots underfoot and plush cushioning), Energize Me (lots underfoot and responsive cushioning), Connect Me (more ground feel and plush cushioning) and Propel Me (more ground feel and responsive cushioning), and starting with the spring season, all of their offerings will be classified that way on their website. For example, the \$130 Neuro, a spring launch, falls under Propel Me, with bouncy cushioning and a lot of ground feel. The Adrenaline GTS 16, on the other hand, lands in Cushion Me, with a softer ride and more underfoot.

A shoe finder guide on the site invites users to do a few at-home evaluations of their form and their preferences to match them with shoes in the same

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Brooks Debuts Stride Signature (continued)



categories. The company has also launched an app, currently in use at the brand's flagship store at its HQ. "Our ultimate goal is to bring the science behind Stride Signature from the lab to the runner as quickly and accurately as possible," Caprara said.

Kris Hartner, owner of Naperville Running Co. in Naperville, IL, said the new classification system (Hartner is one of several store owners who have been giving feedback on the project as it has been developed) gives store owners another way to talk to consumers about the kind of

experience they want and fits into the way a lot of runners and store owners have started looking at fit.

But, he cautioned, any changes to the more standard ways of talking about and fitting shoes need to be streamlined enough to fit into the customer conversation with ease.

"I don't think anyone wants to sign up for a more complicated fitting process, least of all consumers," he said. "But I really like that they're looking at [the running experience] and trying to figure out a way to talk about it," he said. ■

"Our goal is to bring the science behind Stride Signature from the lab to the runner."

CARSON CAPRARA, BROOKS

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Newton Restructures

Newton Running recently underwent a restructuring, letting go some office staff including its CFO, and sales reps. The company said the changes were made “to align the company’s overhead with revenues.”

According to a report on competitor.com, Newton let go of 14 people from its Boulder, CO headquarters and its sales and tech rep force around the U.S., leaving it with a full-time staff of about 25 people.

Newton president Craig Heisner told Competitor.com “We’re not going away and the business is certainly not folding. We’re shipping product. We didn’t terminate our entire sales force or the organization here in Boulder. It’s really about focusing our efforts and getting

costs in line with revenues and continuing to do the great things we’ve been doing.”

Heisner told Competitor.com that Newton will continue to support its key specialty retail partners across the country, but he said it will also make an effort to re-focus on its best-performing regions. The company is also in the process of securing new manufacturing facilities in East Asia, Heisner said, adding that the delivery of its 2016 line of shoes—which includes a major update to its flagship Gravity model—will be on schedule and unchanged.

Newton Running made a big splash when running gait guru Danny Abshire and investor Jerry Lee launched its first line of lightweight running shoes based on a unique forefoot lug technology

The brand made huge headway in its first six years, but its revenue plateaued amid slower growth and increased competition in the marketplace.

aimed at putting more energy return into a runner’s stride. Since its inception, Newton has made one of its primary objectives to help runners run more efficiently with better form. Newton gained traction as an upstart running brand at a time when lightweight, minimalist shoes and a sport-wide re-examination of running form went mainstream in about

2008. Along the way, the brand developed a passionate core customer base among triathletes and runners, perhaps unlike any other current brand.

Amid a handful of challenges that have thwarted the brand’s growth, Boston-based Fireman Capital Partners, one of Newton’s principal shareholders since 2013, has taken more control of the brand in recent months. The company made huge headway in its first six years with its brightly colored running shoes featuring Action/Reaction Technology and its stated ambition of helping runners improve their running mechanics, but its revenue plateaued amid slower growth, distribution and manufacturing challenges and increased competition in the marketplace. ■

Newton Gravity IV Trainer



pairup

promotion dramatically boosts sock sales.

Feetures! Pair Up promotion, which challenged associates to "sell a pair of socks with every pair of shoes" during the month of September, produced dramatic results. Seventy stores reached the 1:1 goal, participating stores increased their sock sales by an average of 12.5% and over 60% of all participating stores increased their ratio for the month!

"The promotion demonstrates there is a huge opportunity to boost sock sales when it becomes a focus in the store."

— Joe Gaither, Director of Marketing, Feetures!

"Pair Up was a brilliant idea and a fun program that helped our staff get into the habit of offering socks and educating our customer base on the benefits of technical fibers. It really helped increase our sock sales too!"

— James McCanne, Sock Star Healdsburg Running Co.

"We were very happy with the Pair Up program, the resources provided were great, and it was simple and easy for staff to understand and turn into real results"

— Charlotte Walsh, Owner Charles River Running Company

Our Sock Stars rocked Pair Up!



Each participating store had an Associate coordinating the Pair Up program who was designated as that store's Sock Star. These Sock Stars, from all across the country, were instrumental to the success of the program!

Congratulations to the winner of our Ultimate Grand Prize — **Jason Toney of 1st Place Sports – Town Center in Jacksonville, Florida!** As his Grand Prize, Jason has chosen the trip for two to the New York City Marathon. The stores that were entered in the drawing **for the Ultimate Grand Prize** are listed below. These stores had either the highest sock-to-shoe ratio for the month of September or the greatest increase in their ratio for their region. Great job by all!

West

On Your Marks – Eagle, ID
Fleet Feet Chico – Chico, CA

South

Fleet Feet Baton Rouge – Baton Rouge, LA
1st Place Sports Town Center – Jacksonville, FL

Northeast

A Running Start – West Reading, PA
Foot Solutions – Reading, PA

Midwest

The Human Race – Orland Park, IL
Runners Forum – Avon, IN

Thank you to those of you that participated in Pair Up! We look forward to an even better program in 2016!



Spotlight on Some Special NYC Style

Every year one of our favorite things about the New York City Marathon is seeing some of the special edition NYC shoes on display. This year was no different as marathon sponsor ASICS, and several other brands showed off some “special” styles.



ASICS
GEL-Kayano
NYC 22



Skechers
Performance
GOrun Ride
5 NYC



Brooks
Bright Lights,
Big City
Adrenaline
GTS 16



Saucony
Kinvara 6
NYC



New Balance
Vazee Pace
NYC

Note the NYC details on the heel.



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...And a Few NYC Marathon Snapshots

Scenes from the Marathon Expo and Around New York City this Past Weekend.



Women's champ Mary Keitany won the 45th New York City Marathon wearing adidas adizero Adios Boost 2 shoes. She finished with a time of 2:24:25.



Shirt at the JackRabbit booth.



A jacket in the Saucony booth.



An image from Times Square via the @ASICS America twitter stream.



NYC Skyline shirt by ASICS.



NYC Marathon jacket from ASICS.



New Balance campaign on display.



NYC-themed shirt from Newton.

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Bankrupt Quiksilver Will Sell Ampla Assets

Brand's Specialized Running Shoe Has a Carbon Fiber Plate in its Sole.



The Ampla Fly shoe has never made it to retail.

Two former Quiksilver senior executives are lined up to purchase the assets of Ampla, the running shoe brand developed by the now bankrupt Huntington Beach, CA company in early 2013. Proposed buyers of Ampla are Rob Colby, the former Americas' president for Quiksilver who helped develop it, and Charles Exon, Quiksilver's former chief legal officer.

Documents filed by Andrew Bruenjes, Quiksilver's CFO for the Americas region, support the sale to the duo after August interest in the Ampla assets by two other parties, brand capital firm Breakaway and Rhone Athletic Apparel, failed to net a bid. The proposed company buying

the Ampla assets, for which Colby is CEO, entered into a purchase agreement on Oct. 26. The proposed purchase price is \$200,000.

The history of Ampla dates

Quiksilver abandoned the development project and opted not to sell the Ampla products.

back nearly three years when Colby and other Quiksilver employees and consultants developed a running shoe with a carbon fiber plate in the sole

designed to maximize the efficient use of force while running. After Quiksilver filed several trademark applications related to the Ampla name and logo and obtained rights to certain patents, the company had one of its contract manufacturers produce 2,000 pairs. Eventually, however, Quiksilver abandoned the development project and opted not to sell the Ampla products due, in part, to "the tangential relationship to the Company's core business," according to court documents.

On the Ampla website (amplasport.com), one can find information about the brand's first product, the Ampla Fly running shoe, which has yet to make it to retail. ■

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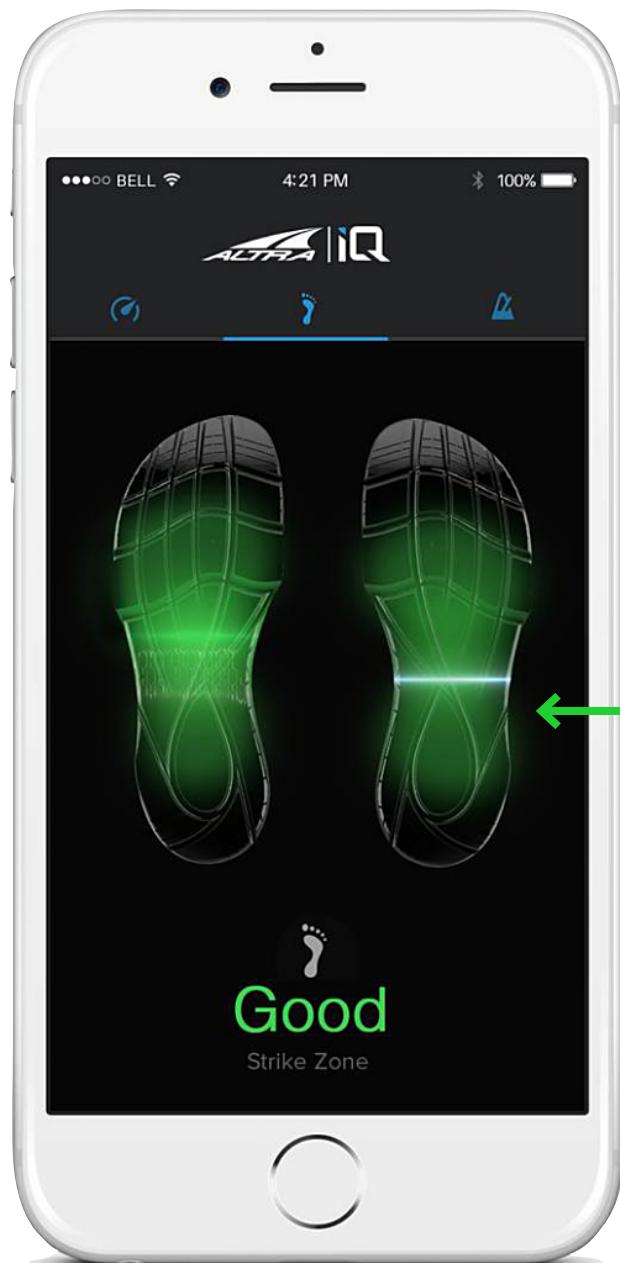


THE TRIBUTE
// ANATOMIC SHAPE
// NEUTRAL PLATFORM
// 7.2 OZ (M9), 6.1 OZ (W7)

 **topo**
athletic

Altra IQ Set to Launch in Spring

In March, Altra will launch the Altra IQ, a \$199 running shoe that is able to collect data about your stride as you run, via a razor-thin, multi-sensor system embedded in the shoe's midsole. The sensor, which uses Bluetooth technology to connect to an App or a fitness watch, is able to track exactly where you're striking on your foot, and provide individual analysis and real-time coaching on the run. The Altra IQ shoe also features the brand's signature FootShape toe box, Zero Drop sole and proprietary A-Bound cushioning. The Altra IQ shoe, powered by iFit, is built on the same last as Altra's new Impulse shoe. ■



How it Works:

A flexible multi-sensor system runs the length of the midsole. An algorithm measures the comparative position of multiple sensors, and calculates the position and movement of each foot through space. It measures: running cadence; ground contact time; foot strike zone; left foot vs. right foot favoring; foot-specific pressure; pace; time; and distance.



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THE RUNNING EVENT

Dec. 1-4, 2015
Austin Convention Center

1. ElliptiGO in action; 2. Spartan Race; 3. TRX Training; 4. Inov-8.

The Running Event's new Experiential Zone just became more hands-on.

TRX Training, leaders in suspension training, and Inov-8, whose products celebrate the grit and glory of the committed athlete, have announced plans to join Spartan Race and ElliptiGO in Hall 5 of the Austin Convention Center, Dec. 2 to 4, 2015. This will be an opportunity for the hundreds of

retailers attending the 10th annual conference and trade show to experience how non-traditional fitness activities are driving a new fitness audience into specialty retail.

The TRX Suspension Training bodyweight exercise develops strength, balance, flexibility and core stability simultaneously. It uses the TRX Suspension Trainer, a highly portable performance training tool that leverages gravity and the user's body weight.



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RUNNING INSIGHT

The Experiential Zone at TRE

Representatives of TRX will show retailers how to integrate into their store programming simple and highly effective mobility, flexibility, stability and strength exercises. TRX Suspension Training is used for simple and time efficient workouts that lead to more durable and resilient runners.

Inov-8, makers of lightweight, minimal and functional shoes, clothing, packs and accessories, will help retailers learn about various types of training in the Inov-8 training zone. Dr. Jordan Metzl, sports medicine physician and 13-time Ironman finisher, and author of *Running Strong, The Sports Doctor's Complete Guide to Injury-Free Running for Life*, will share his workout routine. Experience CrossFit basics or come practice massage and mobility techniques to loosen up tight hips and hamstrings.

Spartan Race founder and CEO Joe De Sena will deliver a keynote presentation on Wednesday, Dec. 2 from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. titled, "Growing Beyond Traditional Running," moderated by Mark Sullivan, executive editor of *Running Insight*.

The new TRE Experiential Zone, adjacent to the main hall of the Austin Convention Center, will feature a custom-designed indoor Spartan Race course for all registered TRE attendees to try for themselves. Scheduled heats will be held from the afternoon of Dec. 2 through mid-day Dec. 4.

TRX Training and ElliptiGO demonstrations, combining the best of running, cycling and the elliptical

trainer, will run concurrently, according to Troy Leonard, show director.

"We're inviting every attendee to explore how obstacle course racing (OCR), suspension training, boot camps and elliptical cycling can boost their bottom lines, not to mention their own health and welfare," Leonard said.

Other TRE 2015 News

- Olympian Jeff Galloway will announce his endorsement of the BFF Miracle Body Buffer and will appear in booth 247 during the TRE trade show. Galloway ran with Steve Prefontaine, Bill Rodgers, Frank Shorter, and Amby Burfoot. He has become one of the nation's leading running coaches and authors), and writes a monthly page in *Runner's World*. His Atlanta running store, Phidippides, established in 1973, was among the very first of the running specialty stores.
- Men's Health Radio will report directly from the floor of the show each day. Speakers, exhibitors and attendees will be interviewed from the Men's Health Radio broadcast booth to capture the excitement of the show and the sport for listeners worldwide. This nationally syndicated weekend radio show is heard terrestrially on 52 radio stations around the U.S. and is also available in podcast form on all major digital audio platforms including iTunes, iHeartRadio and TuneIn. The podcasts are also available on the Men's Health website at MensHealth.com/radio. ■



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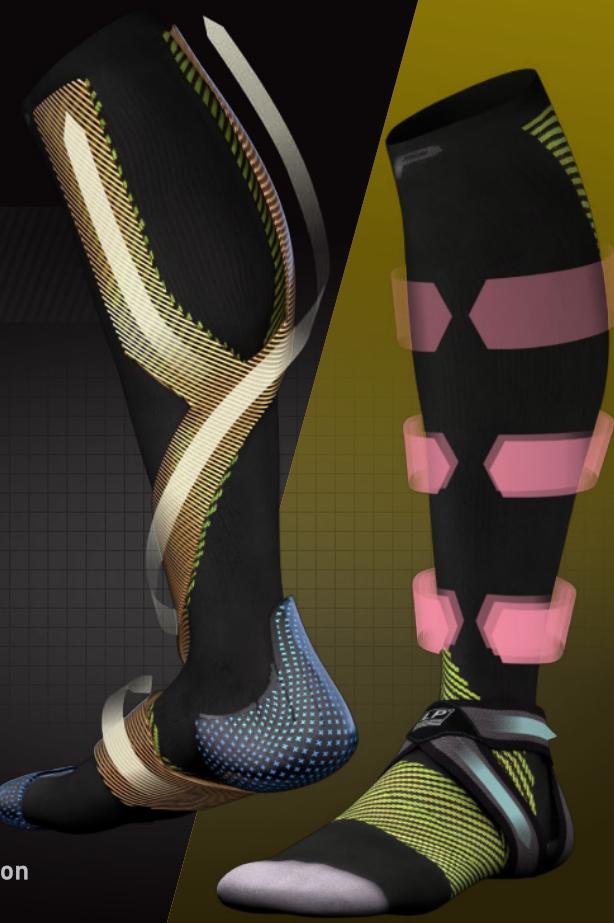
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Running Shorts



Participants at the SKECHERS Pier to Pier Friendship Walk.

SKECHERS Walk Raises Over \$1.4 Million

The SKECHERS Foundation announced that it reached a new donation record for the 2015 SKECHERS Pier to Pier Friendship Walk – surpassing this year's \$1.2 million goal to raise more than \$1.4 million for children with special needs and education. Co-sponsored by Nickelodeon, the Walk drew more than 12,000 participants, and continues to reach new attendance and donation highs annually since its 2009 launch.

"The wave of support that climbs year after year in honor of our kids is incredible," said Michael Greenberg, president

of SKECHERS. "When we started the SKECHERS Pier to Pier Friendship Walk seven years ago, 1,800 of us hit the beach to raise \$220,000 – and since then, our walkers have grown six-fold – with more than \$5.5 million donated over the years, all dedicated to enrich and inspire our children."

Celebrities at the event included boxing legend Sugar Ray Leonard, TV personality Brooke Burke-Charvet, fitness expert Denise Austin, and Hall of Fame baseball manager Tommy Lasorda.

The SKECHERS Pier to Pier Friendship Walk supports The Friendship Circle, an organization that assists children

The Walk drew more than 12,000 participants, and continues to reach new attendance and donation highs.

with special needs and their families through one-on-one peer mentoring and social recreational programming – as well as funding education foundations to retain vital academic programs, maintain smaller class sizes, improve libraries, and upgrade school technology.

In addition to presenting

sponsor Nickelodeon, other sponsors included Wells Fargo, Steel Sports, South Bay Vein and Laser Group, The Claudette and Ethan Rickett Care Foundation, Ross, Zappos.com, Tour de Pier, DIRECTV, United Legwear & Underwear Co., Body Glove, Kids Foot Locker, JAKKS Pacific, Marshalls, Cushman & Wakefield, Caskey & Caskey, Siltanen & Partners Advertising, Continental Development, Northrop Grumman, Equinox and Chevron.

SmartWool Names Dane Howell VP of North America Wholesale Sales and Marketing

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Running Shorts (continued)

SmartWool as Vice President, North America Wholesale Sales and Marketing. Howell has a background in sales strategy, e-commerce, and in-store presence. Most recently, Dane was the Commercial Sales Manager for Oakley Inc.'s Tactical/ Outdoor division. His responsibilities included ongoing management of sales and marketing programs aimed to grow the business in a healthy and profitable manner. In 2009, Dane acted as Global Brand Manager for Oakley Government sales division.

In his role at SmartWool, Howell will lead the sales and marketing teams for the U.S. Wholesale region.

SmartWool has also named Waypoint Outdoor, a Seattle-based sales agency, to handle sales in the Northwest. Founded in 1997, Waypoint has a history of successful brand development in footwear, apparel and hardgoods. The group also represents Suunto, Arc'teryx, Keen, Klean Kanteen and Vasque.

Runner's Depot Celebrates 15th Anniversary

Runner's Depot opened its doors in 2000 with an 1,100 square foot store in Davie, FL. Since that time, Runner's Depot has grown into a five store group serving the South Florida market with weekly runs, clinics and training groups. Runner's Depot also produces five races annually and sponsors many others.

The store officially celebrated its anniversary in early October with an expo featuring many of its key vendors and the release of its new modern logo. "This was a day to give back to our customers who have brought us to where we are today," said founder Renee Grant.

Trinamic from NB

New Balance's new Trinamic Collection for 2016 aims to take performance compression apparel to the next level. With thoughtful design to movement and broad purpose



and appeal, the Trinamic Collection will include a variety of tops and bottoms for men and women.

The Trinamic Collection features NB FLEXx, a pinnacle 3D stretch technology that enhances comfort, supports dynamic movement, and provides an adaptive fit. Additionally a smoother fiber provides a softer, more comfortable feel against the body. Strategically placed laser-cut perforation patterns, inspired by Data to Design thermal imaging, optimizes breathability and adds to the overall design and modern aesthetic of the garments.

Implus Footcare Files Patent Suit

Implus Footcare filed a federal lawsuit against SportingDoc of Brooklyn, NY earlier this month in North Carolina, alleging patent infringement and unfair or deceptive practices. The complaint contends that SportingDoc's Fladora Deep Tissue Massage Roller infringes on a patent that was filed for by Implus subsidiary, Trigger Point Technologies, in Jan. 2010 and issued in April of this year. The patent, according to the complaint, covers a "multi-

New Balance Trinamic Apparel launches this spring.

density hollow core massage roller that effectively addresses tender and painful conditions... and which can be used as a core workout or strengthening apparatus." According to the complaint, Implus and Trigger Point have made and sold more than one million GRID Rollers incorporating the patent and spent more than \$1 million on advertising and marketing the product in 2014.

Scott Sports Acquires Dolomite Footwear

Tecnica Group S.p.A. is selling its Dolomite footwear business to Switzerland-based Scott S.A. for an undisclosed figure. The Italian company purchased Dolomite in 1998. The brand currently sells technical mountaineering, backpacking, hiking and trail running shoes, and will reportedly generate FY15 revenues of approximately \$20.5 million. It was founded as a mountaineering footwear brand in 1897.



Florida-based retailer Runner's Depot is celebrating its 15 year anniversary.

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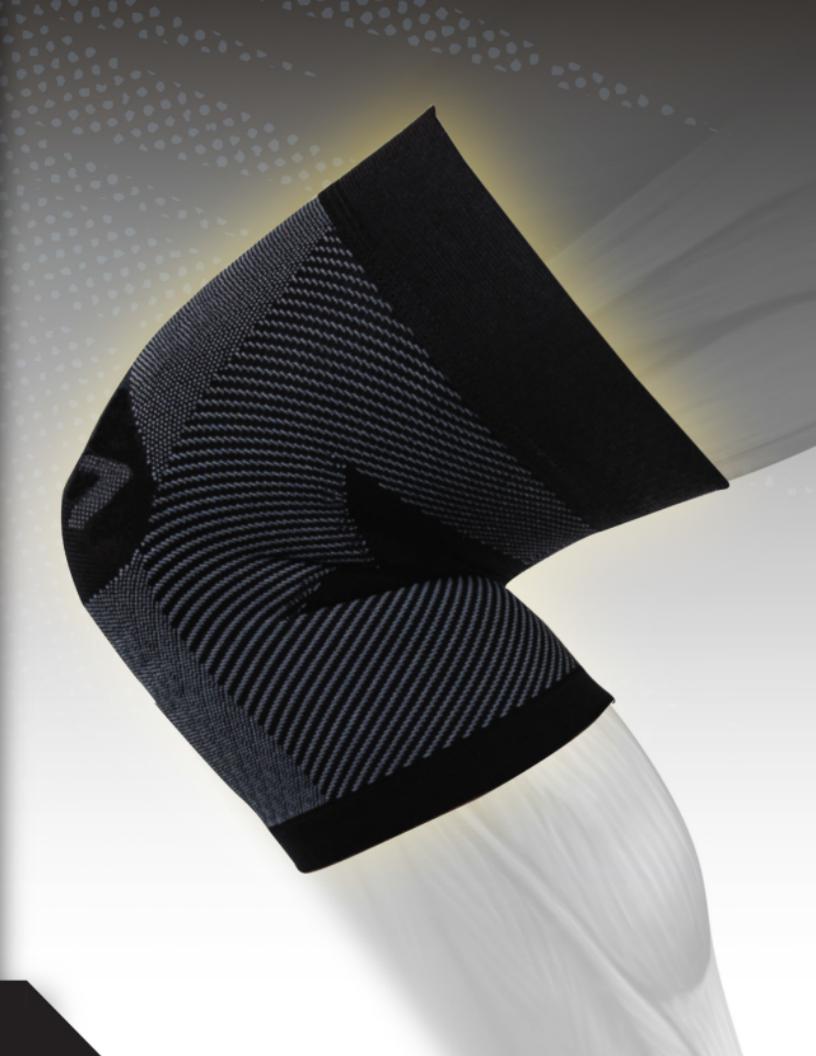
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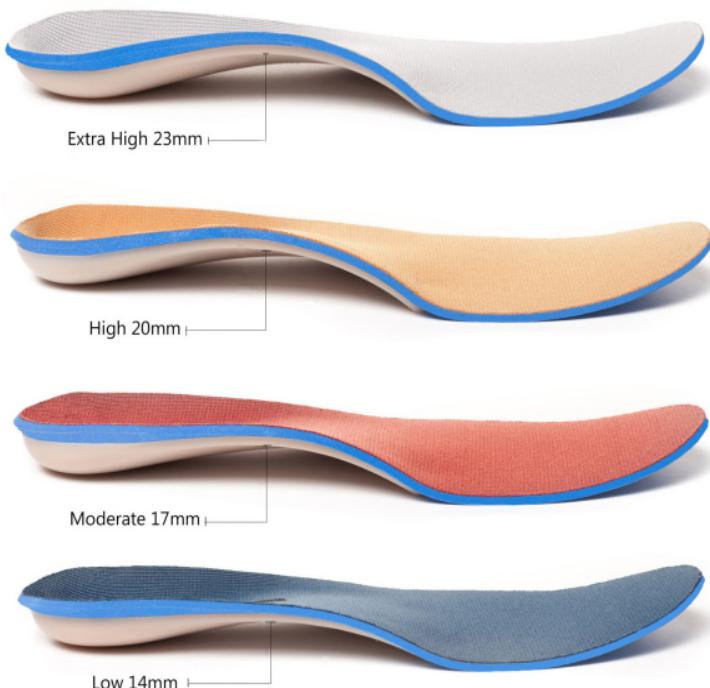
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Running Shorts (continued)



Insoles by Tread Labs.

Chaco Sandals Founder Debuts New Line of Orthotic Insoles

Mark Paigen, the founder and original designer of Chaco sandals, has launched Tread Labs - a new line of orthotic insoles. Paigen is banking on cracking the market, saying the insoles have two features that differentiate them from what's currently on the market.

The insoles feature multiple contours, which he says will match the shape of any foot. The insoles are offered in dozens of sizes and arch heights "because everyone is not the middle of the bell curve," according to Paigen. "High arches or low, wide feet or narrow, the sizing system delivers an individualized fit."

The Tread Labs insoles will

also be marketed with a Free Home Try-On - "The customer receives a selection of arch heights to wear test - for free. Satisfaction is guaranteed - before the purchase is made," according to Paigen.

Paigen started Chaco Sandals in 1989 and developed a line of footwear with a pronounced footbed contour and simple, functional design. Originally built for river guides, the sandals grew a cult-like following due to their aggressive arch support and bomber construction. The original Z/1 design is still selling well today, decades later.

Tread Labs orthotic insoles are priced at \$75 (shipping is free) and offer a heightened level of support and guaranteed satisfaction. Tread Labs

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Running Shorts (continued)

currently distributes direct to consumer on-line with plans to expand into specialty retail in the next year.

Adidas Hosts NYC Energy Run

Last week, in the lead up to the NYC Marathon, Adidas held an exclusive 5K called the NYC Energy Run which placed a focus on fun and unexpected happenings. For example, participants ran through the New Museum after dark where they sprinted up the stairs while street drummers cheered them on up to the Skyroom; found themselves running on stage at The Box, an exclusive cabaret-style theater, singing as part of a Springsteen cover band to a live audience; stopped at Sara T. Roosevelt Track where



Adidas Energy Run

participants raced two-time NCAA Steeplechase champion Leah O'Conner and two-time NCAA 800M champion Robby Andrews; crashed a crowded dining room in the trendy NYC restaurant Bacaro; ran up ten

flights of stairs to a rooftop where a lit track guided their scenic run past breathtaking views of the Manhattan and Brooklyn Bridges; and ended in an after party with entertainment by DJ Neil Armstrong in South Street Seaport at the Boost Experience by adidas, an interactive mobile exhibit.

The event, a mix of pop culture and running, was part of the brand's continued promotion of its "Energy Running" movement, which aims to focus on the "energetic" and fun aspects of being a runner. The idea behind the movement is that the new breed of runner is bound together by a love for challenge, achievement and community.

out clean.

"In testing, we actually had white versions made and we had them run through mud and you just spray it down and it completely comes out clean and dry," says Westin Galloway, product specialist, running footwear at ASICS America.

The shoe (MSRP \$180) has a techy lug pattern, too, and a heel clutch system integrated into its midsole for stability and support, making it good on flat trail or on up and downs.

"It's a high-end trail shoe," says Galloway. "It puts us in that market on a little bit of a different level." ■

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ASICS Comes Clean

The GEL-FujiEndurance trail shoe from ASICS, coming in 2016, has more than just a traction and trail story, it also features a new patented PlasmaGuard technology that ensures no matter how muddy the shoes get they'll come clean easily. Without sacrificing breathability and flexibility you can literally dip this shoe in mud and the upper will come



ASICS GEL-FujiEndurance

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Specialty Retail Research Sports Manufacturers **Sports Marketing**
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