

outdoor**retailer**

Shining light

With an array of exciting product developments and an energetic, upbeat atmosphere, Outdoor Retailer Summer Market 2010 set the pace for a new season of inspiration. **Kathlyn Swantko** reports from Salt Lake City

While signs of caution regarding the economy remained, Outdoor Retailer Summer Market (ORSM) 2010 kicked off its summer on-site promotions in frenzied excitement not seen for the past few years.

"There is no denying the industry's

genuine enthusiasm and improved morale at this year's Summer Market," said Kenji Haroutunian, Outdoor Retailer group show director. "Product innovation, marketing collaborations, networking events and the hum of business were apparent from every aisle of the convention centre."

Attendees and exhibitors agreed that all

aspects of the show, along with nearly record participation from manufacturers and a double digit-increase on last year in the percentage of attending buyers and represented stores, set the stage for a busy and vibrant event.

Some of the highlights included the Design Center, a display of innovative fabric swatches submitted by exhibitors to drive more traffic to their booths; Project OR, a design competition between six US apparel design school contestants, whose assignment it was to use exhibitors' fabrics and materials to design and construct a garment from concept to prototype within 48 hours on the trade show floor; and Speed Dating, an opportunity for 20 product developers and designers to quickly meet, network, and hear about new innovations in a fun musical-chair type format.

Highlights from the show included:

Foam materials

Rogers Corporation, makers of PORON Performance Cushioning, announced a number of new product developments to add to its range of cushioning products.

The High Performance Foams Division of Rogers Corporation has teamed up with Falcon, the innovation leader for safety footwear, to develop a revolutionary soft, flexible, and conforming metatarsal guard that exceeds current safety footwear industry standards.

Dave Sherman, PORON Cushioning new business development manager, said: "Miners and firefighters alike test their limits on a daily basis, and need exceptional equipment they can rely on. It is in these extreme conditions where PORON materials will continually outlast and out-perform other cushioning and impact protection materials."

In another new development, taking note of a recent Gallup Study indicating that 70% of consumers are now using more than six products with antimicrobial protection, Rogers has responded by teaming up with Microban International, a leader in antimicrobial protection.

At Outdoor Retailer, Rogers announced



Activity in the ORSM '10 Design Center as attendees gather to check out the various fabric swatches from exhibitors.



Attendees reviewing fabric swatches from exhibiting suppliers in OR's Design Center.



Metatarsal guard for work boots, made from Rogers Corporation's PORON XRD high performance foam. The Extreme Impact Protection moulded shape offers built in grooves and channels for flexibility and to allow air and moisture to move freely.

that it is offering multiple PORON XRD Performance and Plus Materials infused with Microban antimicrobial product from the beginning stages of manufacturing. The protection provides consistent long-lasting cushioning comfort in places such as shoes, protective apparel and equipment, eliminating conditions where bacteria and developing odours can grow. The new protection won't wash off or wear away for the lifetime of the product, said the company.

● www.rogerscorp.com

ZoteFoams Inc used Outdoor Retailer to promote its extensive range of AZOTE group brand, which includes a variety of foams manufactured from differing base polymers, but uses the same unique nitrogen process route. The AZOTE brand includes nitrogen expanded polyolefin, cross-linked ethylene copolymer, and cross-linked polyethylene foam products. ZoteFoams was at Outdoor Retailer to generate new customers for its targeted sports, marine, and leisure and fitness applications.

In addition, ZoteFoams promoted its nitrogen-expanded white foams, which are engineered to be truly white, without the addition of chemical whitening agents. This whiteness is achieved through Zotefoams' use of a revolutionary pure nitrogen-gas solution technology. According to Mike Roedersheimer, regional sales manager for the company, the technology does not require the use of chemical-expansion agents during foam manufacturing. By using the nitrogen-gas solution technology, Zotefoams introduces no additives that can 'yellow' the foam resins, which results in the industry's 'whitest' foams.

● www.zotefoams.com

Plus Compound Technologies exhibited for the first time at ORSM '10, introducing its new PLUSfoam product, which is now available in footwear from New Balance. Plus Compound Technologies, based in Santa Barbara, California, produces components for manufacturers and finished goods for branded consumer product companies. The components are proprietary materials that are 100% recyclable.

The company offers a true cradle-to-cradle solution to manufacturers, in which the component foam can be made from various combinations of reclaimed consumer products, post manufacturing scrap, and virgin material. Plus compounds are well suited for a wide variety of applications, and can be readily used by brands and manufacturers as environmentally-friendly alternatives to EVA, PU and rubber.

"Products made with Plus materials can be sent directly back to us to be recycled and reused," explained Jason Stanson

New Balance footwear showing a combination of PLUSfoam's reclaimed consumer goods, manufacturing scrap, and virgin materials. The 100% recycled content/100% recyclable PLUSfoam products are fused together using only heat and pressure to create the unique, low impact, high-quality foam material.



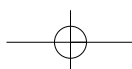
from the company. "This eliminates needless landfill waste, cuts down on the production of virgin material, and reduces Plus' carbon footprint dramatically. Our Plus Recycle Center accepts any product with a Plus foam component, and the material will be reprocessed and reused in the manufacturing of new material or products."

● www.plusfoam.com

Performance woven fabrics

Hyperbola is a Taiwan-based converter, known for its creativity in design and its leadership in providing high-end fabrics that are targeted towards the specific needs of the extreme sports and outdoor markets of snowboarding, skiing, water skiing, surfing, mountain climbing and jogging. The company emphasises innovation that also involves fashion elements in developing new fabrics for outdoor wear.

At Outdoor Retailer, Hyperbola promoted its soft shell three-layer construction, combining soft, stretch and high performance face textiles, membranes, and light knit fabrics; a High Tech two-layer fabric, combining soft and high performance face textiles; a Supreme two-layer to three-layer construction, combining the Hyperbola membrane bonded to a light knit fabric on one side and to a performance face textile on the other; and its Fancy and High Tech two-layer Hyperbola membrane bonded to a high performance textile. The company said all these speciality fabrics have a variety of performance characteristics including windproof, waterproof, breathable, and/or durable water repellency qualities.



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Jenny Cho, marketing manager at Hyperbola, said: "We are not just another brand supplier. We are very innovative in our printing, achieving a 4.5 grade in colour fastness. We have very close communication with our customers, and they are able to do a wide range of customised things with us. Many times we provide them with customised work that exceeds their expectations."

● www.hyperbola.com.tw

Technologies

Outlast Technologies, adding to its already broad adaptations for its Smart Fabric Technology, announced the launch of its latest innovative R&D development, a new Jockey line of men's and women's underwear and tops, which is the biggest launch for Jockey in the past 10 years.

The company also introduced its new Matrix Infusion Coating (MIC) as an application process where advanced formulations of Outlast mPCMs can be finely printed onto flat fabrics. This process provides a cost effective way to add the benefits of temperature regulation to fabrics already in its customer's product line. Outlast MIC is designed to be well-suited to the active, casual, and sportswear markets that use compression and polyester fabrics. However, MIC can be used on virtually

any fabric, including cotton and cellulosic-based fabrics.

"It is the perfect application for activewear," said Mark Hartmann, technical director. "It gives the temperature regulation benefits of Outlast Technology and the wicking capabilities of polyester. It's like having a backup system for any active need."

● www.outlast.com

PrimaLoft used ORSM to relaunch its PrimaLoft Eco product, now being made with an increased percentage of recycled material. PrimaLoft Eco is an environmentally-friendly insulation created for performance and comfort. The Eco insulation technology originally combined 50% recycled material with PrimaLoft virgin fibres to create a high loft, thermally efficient insulation, but has now increased the amount of recycled content to 70%. PrimaLoft's new blend will contain 30% virgin fibres and 70% recycled fibres produced from post-consumer products, to create a high loft performance insulation that is lightweight, warm, soft, compressible, and water-resistant.

"As a company with roots steeped in the outdoors, PrimaLoft is committed to innovating sustainable insulation that offers performance, quality and value,"



The Mountain Hardwear jacket is insulated with PrimaLoft ECO, an environmentally-friendly blend of 70% recycled and 30% virgin polyester fibres.

said Eileen Berner, sales and marketing director for PrimaLoft.

● www.primaloft.com

Green guidelines

An eco tool pilot programme for the outdoor industry has been launched

The European Outdoor Group and the Outdoor Industry Association have created an Eco Index pilot programme, which is open to all outdoor companies.

The Eco Index, a first for the outdoor industry, is designed to help companies benchmark and measure their environmental footprint, allowing them to identify areas for improvement and make informed sourcing and product life cycle decisions.

The European Outdoor Group's sustainability working group and the Outdoor Industry Association's eco working group held information sessions to introduce brands, designers and suppliers to the Beta Phase One version of the Eco Index at OutDoor in July and Outdoor Retailer in August to

encourage participation in the pilot testing programme.

Feedback will be gathered from pilot programme participants via the Eco Index website as well as through the webinar series, with the Phase One Index scheduled for formal release in early 2011.

In development since 2007, the Eco Index tool encompasses guidelines, performance indicators, footprint metrics and a comparative scoring system against a six-stage lifecycle approach.

The aim is to enhance transparency within the supply chain and allow for easy adoption of best business practices. The Eco Index framework is modular, so companies can start small and work their way through it as they are able based on their level of knowledge and resources.

Mark Held, secretary general of the European Outdoor Group, said: "The outdoor industry's success is inherently linked to the health of the planet, ensuring the continued existence of the places we hike and climb is vital. The industry has a responsibility to lead the move toward implementing more sustainable business practices that protect the livelihood of the industry and the environment.

"Suppliers, brands, and retailers alike are facing increasing pressure to reduce the impact of their products throughout the product life cycle. The Eco Index provides guidance, methodology, and tools for outdoor companies to assess their current practices and prioritise their efforts to implement more sustainable solutions.

● www.europeanoutdoorgroup.com