

THE LEADING TRADE MAGAZINE FOR UK SPORTS RETAILERS, MANUFACTURERS AND DISTRIBUTORS

# Sports

## Insight

ABC

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THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE FEDERATION OF SPORTS AND PLAY ASSOCIATIONS

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## ABC Certification



Sports Insight has a current ABC certified circulation of 5,211 (audit period July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006). The Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC) is an independent audit watchdog that verifies magazines' circulation figures, providing accurate and comparable data for advertisers.

ABC Certification demonstrates a media owner's integrity, in their willingness to be audited and to conform to industry standards.

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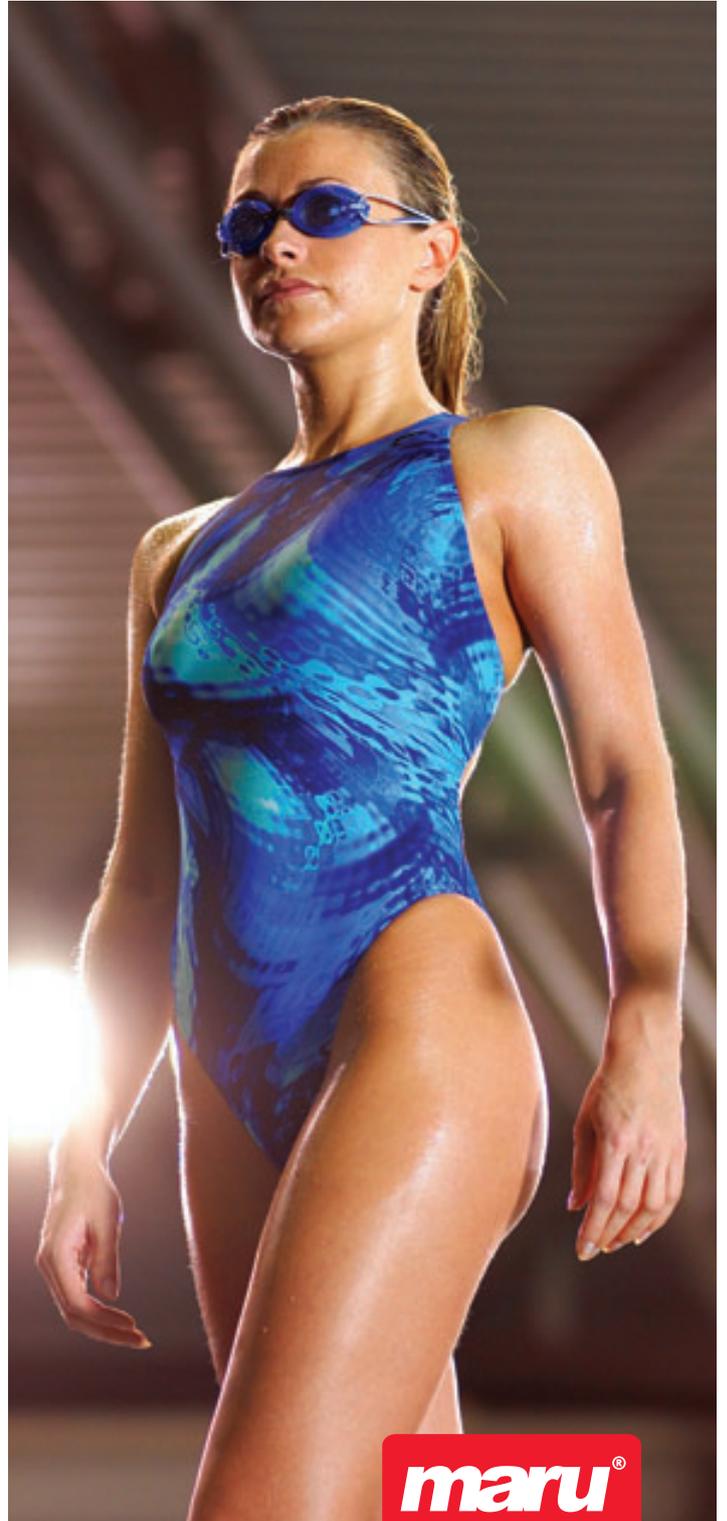
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## Sport Industry Awards open for entries



The Sport Industry Awards 2007, the annual celebration of commercial excellence in UK sport, has now opened for entries and is inviting brands and agencies to enter the much anticipated 'Best Marketing of a Sport Product' category.

Chaired by BBC sports presenter John Inverdale, entries will be judged by a panel of some of the most respected names in the business world of sport.

Replacing the 'Best Designed Sport Kit' category of previous years, this new award will be looking for a well-communicated and executed marketing campaign involving an innovative, well-designed product that has demonstrated commercial success in its strategy from conception through to roll out.

Entries should effectively illustrate the branding of the product and its use of media, and must include the packaging and point of sale material. Please ensure all entry information is submitted before the deadline of December 8, 2006 to avoid any disappointment.

Last year Aqua Sphere fought off the likes of Asics, Gilbert Rugby, Prince, Puma UK and Woodworm to pick up the 'Best Designed Sport Kit' Award for its innovative Eagle swimming goggle.

The winners of the 2007 awards will be announced on March 29 at Old Billingsgate, London in an event that will once again attract over 1,200 key players from the sport industry.

For further information and terms of how to enter the Sport Industry Awards 2007 visit [www.sportindustry.biz](http://www.sportindustry.biz) or call 020 7240 7702.



## OTS is a success

The 2006 Outdoor Trade Show has proved a big success, according to organiser MCS, with 621 visitors attending the three-day event.

Throughout OTS, Hall 1 of Stoneleigh Park was a hive of activity, with buyers browsing the many products on show, including the launch of many brand new items.

Alasdair Scobbie and Marta Williams of MCS were pleased with the outcome of the first OTS, commenting: "We really didn't know what to expect with visitor attendance, but 621 over the three days is a great result, with most exhibitors very pleased with the quality of visitors who attended.

"Every effort has been made to market the show effectively and it was great to reap the rewards of everyone's hard work. It is obvious that the trade needs an autumn show and, following the success of this year's show and feedback from both exhibitors and visitors, we are already planning a bigger and better OTS in 2007."

Plans for next year's show are already taking place. The event is moving to the bigger Hall 2 of Stoneleigh Park, which has an additional 1,500 square metres of space. OTS 2007 will take place on October 3-5.

For more information visit [www.outdoortradeshows.com](http://www.outdoortradeshows.com)

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## NPD LAUNCHES FOOTWEAR TRACKING SERVICE

The NPD Group has launched a new electronic point of sale service for sports footwear in Great Britain as part of its Sports Tracking Europe Service.

Based on sales data provided to NPD by key retailers, including JJB, JD, Foot Locker and Decathlon, the new service provides a detailed market view of the participating retailers for the industry.

Information such as sales trends at market and category level, manufacturer market shares, plus top-selling models are all available. Data is delivered monthly, approximately three weeks after the end of each month.

The service enables both manufacturers and retailers to measure their position within the market, identify market shifts, track item performance, determine range gaps by price point versus competition and observe manufacturer performance and key business drivers.

For more information call 01932 355580 or email [jez\\_fraser-hook@npd.com](mailto:jez_fraser-hook@npd.com)

"Becks hasn't changed since I've known him - he's always been a flash, Cockney git."

Ryan Giggs



## SilentManager celebrates 4 millionth customer

SilentManager, the fantasy games specialist, has opened its virtual doors to customer number four million.

Since 2002 the Brighton-based company has amassed an impressive list of brands and media partners - NTL and Microsoft are just two of the companies that have used SilentManager's 'white label' sports games as part of successful marketing strategies.

And, according to the company, an increasing amount of sports businesses are turning to the medium of fantasy sports games to maximise their media spend.

Says Jon Trigg, managing director and co-founder of SilentManager: "We have helped over 100 companies including Guinness and Gillette (rugby), Volvo (golf) and Allianz (F1) to directly market their products and services using our Fantasy Sports Game as a platform for them to speak from.

"In six years we have generated four million consumers that have volunteered their personal information to us. How many other marketing initiatives can say that?"

SilentManager has partnered with Adidas; Manchester United and Vodafone; o2; Chelsea sponsor Samsung; Fulham partner LG Electronics; and Heineken in order to help them interact with fans.

According to a recent survey by Google, surfing the web has topped watching TV as the favourite pastime in the UK - a key factor in the success of SilentManager.

"This is just the tip of the iceberg," says Trigg. "The internet is a powerful tool that can enable businesses of any size to get recognition and brand exposure in a public forum, and the game is a light-hearted and effective way of getting to know their audience. 2006 has been a big year for us, especially with the World Cup."

SilentManager ran over 40 fantasy football games during the tournament in 12 different languages for companies such as MSN, GAME, NTL, Microsoft and Adidas. Next year it will be hosting the first Official Cheltenham Festival Fantasy Horseracing Game and will be working with international partners in the cricket and rugby world cups.

For more information call Graham Harris or Jennifer Wallace on 01273 682277 or email [Graham.Harris@silentmanager.co.uk](mailto:Graham.Harris@silentmanager.co.uk)

## Transfer Market

...Dunlop Slazenger International Group has made **Mat Shuker** (pictured) UK Promotions Manager for Carlton Badminton...**Jacques Lemasson** is the new Manager of the Racing and R&D Departments at snowsport brand **Dynastar**...**AMG Group Ltd** has appointed **Dave**

**Snowdon** as Sales & Marketing Director for the company's three international footwear brands, **UGG Australia**, **Simple** and **Teva**...**Stefan Reschke** has taken on the newly created position of **ispo International Exhibition Director** within the ispo Group and will be responsible for ispo Russia and ispo china...**Derek Mapp** has begun his tenure as the new chairman of **Sport England**. Mapp's appointment runs until October 2010 and he succeeds Lord Patrick Carter, who held the position since 2002...**The Welsh Rugby Union Group** has announced that **Roger Lewis** will succeed David Moffett as its group chief executive...**Nike** has appointed **Simon**

**Pestridge** to the role of Marketing Director for UK and Ireland...**Silva** has appointed **Simon Baynes** as a sales agent for Silva, Lowrance & Eagle, Origo and Oregon Scientific... sports sales and marketing company **Goodform** has appointed **Scott Ellis** as its new Sales and Marketing Director...**BBC Sport's** presenters **Manish Bhasin** and **Rishi Persad** have been announced as the new faces of the BBC's cricket highlights coverage. Bhasin, presenter of Football Focus, will present coverage of the Ashes and Cricket World Cup highlights, while Persad, presenter and reporter of the BBC's horse racing coverage, will present highlights of the one-day international series and provide reports for the Cricket World Cup programmes...



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# WHAT'S NEWS

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## SHOPLIFTING UP 70% SINCE 2000

Crime cost retailers £2.1 billion last year and £13.62 billion since 2000, according to The British Retail Consortium's 2006 Retail Crime Survey. Over the same period the number of shoplifting incidents rose 70 per cent, despite the industry investing more than £4.3 billion in crime prevention.

As the number of shoplifting incidents increases so too does the threat of violence against staff, says the BRC. Sixty per cent of violent incidents that happen in stores occur when staff attempt to detain criminals or protect property from theft.

The BRC is calling on the Government to reject proposals that would see prison removed as a penalty for shoplifting, even for the worst repeat offenders. The organisation also believes the police should make retail crime a higher priority.

"The huge increase in the number of shoplifting incidents is extremely worrying," says BRC Director General Kevin Hawkins. "It is

having a very serious financial impact and is putting the safety and wellbeing of staff and customers at risk.

"Soft penalties and poor enforcement are to blame. Retailers are spending millions of pounds on their own crime prevention, as well as contributing £4.5 billion a year in business rates. They are entitled to the support of government and police, but at the moment they are not getting it."

The BRC report shows crime has a proportionately bigger impact on small and medium-sized retailers than their larger counterparts. The survey reveals that 15 per cent of retailers in this category have been forced to close their businesses for a period of time as a result of crime.

Says Hawkins: "The Government's failure to plan prison capacity is no excuse for giving a licence to steal. Anyone who believes only violent crime matters is seriously misguided."

"The thieves responsible for the majority of retail crime are well organised and efficient. On average, they make off with £149-worth of goods each time they steal."

## VALUATION REPORT

Industry analyst Plimsoll Publishing has produced a report looking at the valuations of the UK's largest 100 sports and leisurewear companies.

Overall, values are on the up, rising one per cent in the period of the review.

54 of the companies included have seen their values increase by 25 per cent.

But not all brands valued in the study have prospered - 46 of the companies have seen their value fall, with an average 23 per cent drop. And 12 of the largest UK sports and leisurewear companies saw

their values plummet by 50 per cent in the review period.

The 260-page study includes an assessment of each of the 100 companies' strengths and weaknesses. Copies cost £500 from Plimsoll: 01642 626400/[www.plimsoll.co.uk](http://www.plimsoll.co.uk)

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## HI-TEC MAKES 'FREE ORDER' OFFER

You could get your HI-TEC order for free at this year's STAG show, which takes place at Heythrop Park Hotel & Country Club in Oxfordshire on November 19-20.

Open to all STAG members, simply place your order at the show to be entered into the free draw, the winner of which will be drawn at random during the last few hours of the event.

One of 85 suppliers exhibiting at the show, HI-TEC will be showing its new V-Lite Collection.

## M AND M BEEFS UP BOTHAM CHARITY WALK

M and M Direct, the online retailer of discount sports and fashion clothing, teamed up with cricket legend Ian Botham's 'Beefy Bowls Out Teenage Cancer' charity fundraising walk that took in an epic 17 cities in nine days.

The company provided all the branded clothing for Beefy's support crew and donation collection team as they travelled the UK raising funds as they went.

The walk started in Belfast on October 9 and ended in London on October 17 and in several cities along the way M and M Direct staff joined the fundraising campaign. The company also featured a Crew Blog on its website, Keeping M and M customers up to date with the progress of the walk.

The event was in aid of Leukaemia Research and the Teenage Cancer Trust and to date has raised over £400,000.

"We were delighted to be involved in such a huge fundraising effort, especially given our own links with Teenage Cancer Trust," says Nick Begy, M and M Direct's Marketing Director.

"We are really pleased many of our customers got into the spirit of things, following the walk via the Crew Blog or by donating money."



## "Who could forget Malcolm Devon?"

England committee chairman Ted Dexter forgets fast bowler Devon Malcolm



## Puma launches AFC

Puma has launched The Association of Football Coaches, an independent association supported by Puma that will help today's coaches and teachers produce the players and teams of tomorrow.

"We are very pleased to be able to support The Association of Football Coaches because it gives us the opportunity to continue contributing directly to grass roots football," says Richard Callaway, Teamsports Marketing Manager at Puma.

"Anyone can join the scheme, as it is not restricted to coaches with previous qualifications, including teachers, youth team coaches, managers and all those individuals coaching football."

In the first year, each coach that joins the scheme will receive a free branded tracksuit, access to six coaching seminars per year featuring Puma football players and coaches and regular updates on coaching drills and activities.

Says Phil Darren, AFC Director of Coaching: "As well as trying to develop the skill and technique of players, all the games and practices that we will offer to members are designed to be fun and to give variety to training. If young players enjoy training they will want to come back for more."

**For more information visit**  
[www.associationoffootballcoaches.com](http://www.associationoffootballcoaches.com)

## Sports Shorts

...**Vango** has developed a national sales promotion (pictured) that will run from February-August 2007 to support the company's new range of tents, rucsacs, sleeping bags and accessories within high street, national, regional and specialist stores...**Zoggs** has supplied swimming kit to the celebrity players on Sky One's The Match. The third series of the programme includes the celebrity team taking part in a water polo game and aqua fitness exercises...**The Square Mile Sport Awards** on December 7 will feature some of the sporting heroes of the year. A panel of legends including Will Greenwood, Sir Matthew Pinsent, Tim Henman, Kevin Pietersen, Sam Torrance and Graeme Le Saux have put together a shortlist recognising the year's sporting greats...Research published by **Sport England** has revealed how Sport Action Zone initiatives have helped two of England's most deprived communities buck trends by getting active...**The US swimming team** has confirmed it will be sending a squad to the **FINA World Championships** to be held in Manchester in 2008. USA Swimming will hold trials in December 2007, where the team destined for the event (April 9-13) will be decided...**Scottish Rugby** has announced **Greaves Sports** is to be its official retail and merchandising partner. Greaves Sports, a family-run retailer since 1930, will take over the running of the Scottish Rugby store at Murrayfield, the Scottish Rugby retail website and will stock Scottish Rugby's retail products in its Glasgow stores...**Scottish Premier League teams** have made a collective profit of £2.8 million for the first time in more than a decade...**The FA** is targeting grassroots football to boost the future of the game in the run-up to the 2012 Olympics with a consultation strategy called 'Your Game, Your Say'...**TiredandTested.com**, the new sports social networking website, has been launched. With a similar template to MySpace, the new online entity will act as a community site for sports enthusiasts...**The ITF and the Grand Slam Committee** have announced an agreement with Adidas, Nike and Puma creating a common standard on the use of manufacturer's identification on tennis apparel for ITF and Grand Slam tournaments...**JD Sports'** pre-tax profits for the last six months has come in at £3.2 million, against a £2.6 million loss a year ago, with sales up four per cent. The company has converted all the Allsports stores it acquired last year to the JD Sports brand...



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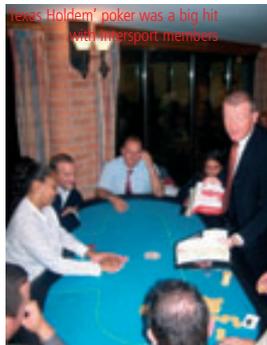
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## REYDON'S WINS THIRD CONSECUTIVE INTERSPORT AWARD



Texas Hold'em poker was a big hit with Intersport members

A well-supported Intersport gala dinner and supplier awards evening saw Reydon Sports make it 'three in row' when it was voted by members as Best Overall Supplier and Best Hardware Supplier for the third consecutive year.

Other award winners included Asics, voted Best Footwear Supplier; Nike, which took the Best Show Brand and Best Apparel Supplier prizes; and Fred Perry, which won the Best Up and Coming Brand for 2006 accolade, having joined Intersport's supplier list within the last 12 months.

Of Reydon's success, David Salter, the company's sales director, said: "We are absolutely over the moon to have won both these awards for the last three years and would like to thank members for their votes and support.

"It's all down to team effort and we have a fantastic team here at Reydon Sports. We look forward to an ongoing mutually beneficial trading relationship with Intersport members and will be working towards collecting the award for the fourth time running next year."

As well as a lively evening of 'Texas Hold'em' poker in the company of celebrity guests courtesy of Unicorn Products, Intersport suppliers helped the raffle raise almost £1,000 for a number of charities.

The star prize of the evening was generously donated by Intersport member Olympus Guernsey in celebration of the store's 30th anniversary and 20 years of group membership. The lucky winner will enjoy an all-expenses paid two-night trip to Guernsey for two people to watch the inter-island Muratti Vase football Final between Guernsey and Jersey in May 2007.

## WORLD'S BIGGEST ADIDAS STORE OPENS IN PARIS

Adidas has opened the company's biggest 'Sport Performance' store in the world on the Champs-Elysées in Paris.

The two-storey 1,750 square metre outlet will feature the widest selection of sports products in France.

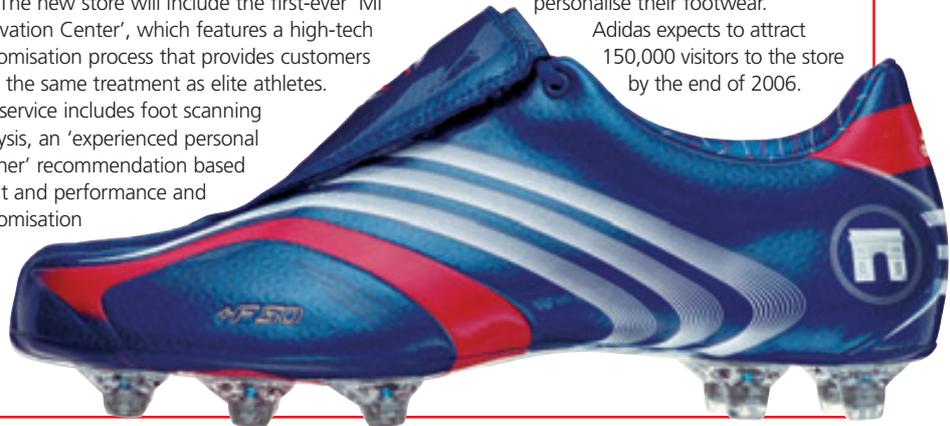
"The Champs-Elysées is a global destination that boasts arguably one of the best line-ups of retail shops in the world," says Erich Stamminger, President and CEO of the Adidas brand. "Adidas is the leading brand in the French market and opening the world's largest Adidas store there is a great place to showcase and highlight the breadth

and depth of the Adidas brand."

The new store will include the first-ever 'Mi Innovation Center', which features a high-tech customisation process that provides customers with the same treatment as elite athletes. The service includes foot scanning analysis, an 'experienced personal partner' recommendation based on fit and performance and customisation

options, allowing customers to design and personalise their footwear.

Adidas expects to attract 150,000 visitors to the store by the end of 2006.



## Sponsorship News

...Liverpool's **Harry Kewell** has turned his back on a potential million-dollar boot deal with Adidas to join **Nomis**. Says Simon Skirrow, founder of Nomis and former boss of adidas' World Soccer Division: "It's a huge coup for Nomis to sign someone of Harry Kewell's status. He's a huge star both in Australia and the UK and to have him on board wearing our boots is a fantastic endorsement of our products." ...Carnegie World Club Champions **Bradford Bulls** has announced that **KooGa** will be the

team's kit supplier for the next four years. The deal covers all items of teamwear and leisurewear. The new Bulls kit will be launched on November 18...**Adidas** and the **Mexican Football Federation (FMF)** have entered a preliminary understanding for a long-term partnership until 2014, which comes into effect from January 10, 2007. Both partners will work together to promote football at all levels. Adidas will supply all national teams of the FMF, including the U-17 team, the current FIFA World Champions in their category...**Zoggs** has linked up with **Charlton Athletic** to become involved with the football club's community scheme. The 'Charlton Challenge' offers a chance to combine swimming with the nation's favourite sport in a 'Kick and Swim' programme, demonstrating to young people the benefits that swimming can bring to their lives and to their football...**Netball New Zealand** has announced a two-year sponsorship deal with **Gilbert**, which will see the company become match ball sponsor from January 2007. Gilbert has also been appointed official ball sponsor for the World Netball Championships in Fiji in July 2007...

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CRAFT

**"What other problems do you have besides being unemployed, a moron and a dork?"**  
John McEnroe to a spectator

## PROFITS DOWN AT JJB

JJB Sports has announced it will be focusing on its 'Serious About Sport' campaign in a bid to protect future profits.

While revenue increased 12.1 per cent to £381.6 million compared to 2005, the retailer posted a 22.9 per cent reduction in profit after taxation compared to last year in its interim results for the 26 weeks to July 30. Net profit before taxation increased by half a per cent.

Says Roger Lane-Smith, JJB's non-executive chairman: "Although we are encouraged by the revenue improvement and the marginal increase in pre-tax profit, difficult trading conditions continue to challenge the margin. This is most evident in the sale of replica kit, where the World Cup boosted sales but these sales were subject to intense competition on pricing.

"JJB is focusing on its 'Serious About Sport' strategy to differentiate itself from other retailers and to protect its margins by improving the quality of its stores and products. I am pleased to report that we are gaining support from the major brands in this approach.

"The Leisure Division also continues to grow and I am very happy to report both increased profitability and membership numbers.

"Looking forward, the latest trading results give us confidence for a satisfactory outcome to the current accounting period. However, the retail sector continues to be highly competitive and Christmas will be an important trading period for us."

## Diary Dates

### STAG BUYING SHOW IN ASSOCIATION WITH SPORTS INSIGHT

NOVEMBER 19-20, 2006

Heythrop Park Hotel & Country Club, Oxfordshire  
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### SLIDE

FEBRUARY 18-20

G-Mex Centre, Manchester

### ISPO RUSSIA WINTER

FEBRUARY 19-22, 2007

Crocus Center, Moscow

### ISPO CHINA WINTER

MARCH 14-17, 2007

Beijing National Agricultural Exhibition

### ISPO SUMMER

JULY 8-10, 2007

New Munich Trade Fair Centre

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OCTOBER 3-5, 2007

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# Kit Stop

Essential stock for your shop



## Dartboard cabinets and cabinet sets - the perfect year-round gift

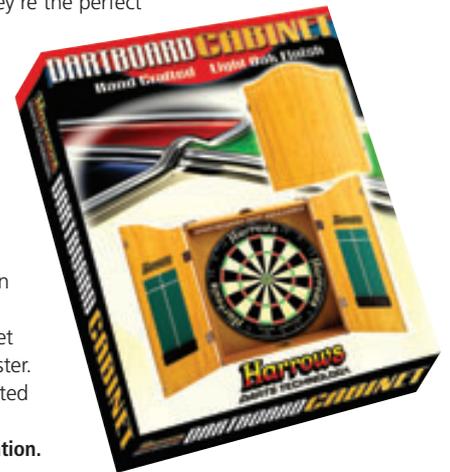
The Harrows Cabinets - which do not include a dartboard - feature a light oak finish and include scoreboards, dart holders and reinforced corner brackets. They come complete with a mounting bracket for hanging a bristle dartboard, but can also be used for other types of board (including paper/flock/electronic), and their discreet appearance mean they're the perfect accompaniment to any games or recreation room.

Harrows' Dartboard and Cabinet complete Family Game Set gives the player the chance to

enjoy instant dart sport action, as it includes everything they need to create their own home darts entertainment zone.

The set includes an 18"x11" paper coil dartboard with bonus target game on the reverse, 6x18g solid brass darts with replaceable flights, two chalks and a duster. The contents are packed within a rosewood finish cabinet, which features gold screen-printed Ship Inn graphics.

Call the Harrows Hotline 01992 300300 or email [sales@harrows-darts.com](mailto:sales@harrows-darts.com) for more information.

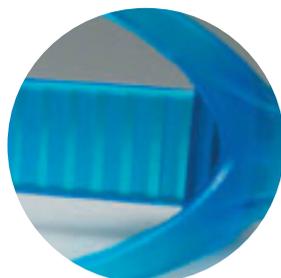
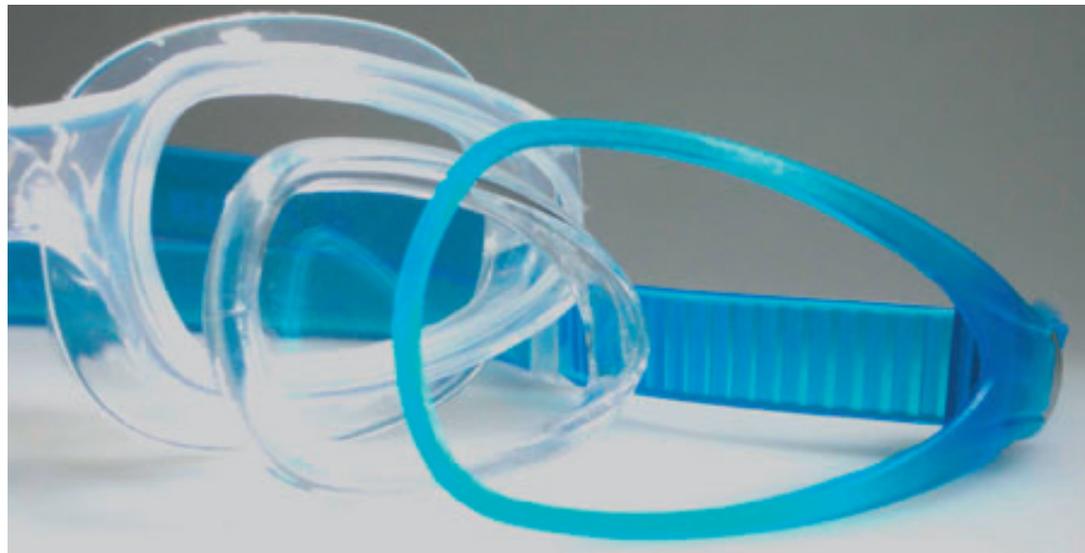


## Available now to pre-order - groundbreaking prescription swimming goggle lenses

Available now to pre-order, the groundbreaking prescription lenses for Aqua Sphere's award-winning Eagle goggle allow swimmers to customise their goggles without visiting an optician.

Anti-fog and scratch resistant, customers simply purchase the lenses individually in half-step increments from -1.5 to -6.0 diopters and fit them to their Eagle goggles for superb underwater vision.

For more information on how to make the most of your swim kit sales, call 01254 278873 or visit [www.aquasphereswim.com](http://www.aquasphereswim.com)



2006 Show Exhibitor





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### **Puma v-Konstrukt II**

The v-Konstrukt II is a perfect evolution of its predecessor. The ultra-thin full grain leather and the Puma AptoLast provide a glove-like and comfortable fit, conforming to the natural shape of the foot and making the most of a player's energy.

The Dynamic Flex Guard provides protection when and where required. The anatomically-proven stud positioning provides excellent grip with embedded full height DuoCell offering optimal cushioning support when running.

**Puma: 01372 360 255. [www.puma.com](http://www.puma.com)**



# **Kit Stop**

**Essential stock for your shop**



### **Maru launches new styles for 2007**

Maru is launching new styles and colourways across its ranges for spring/summer 2007. The 'pop' colours of mango, blue, lilac and green feature heavily in the 2007 collection, which is guaranteed to prove as popular as ever with consumers.

The Aqua Classic range lives up to its reputation, perfectly designed for fit and comfort and featuring improved bust support, with the flatteringly shaped Piped Low Leg Nova available in the new colour of navy and cream.

In addition, Maru's Aquasport range, with its Pacer fabric developed for its durable, chlorine-proof finish and built-in fabric memory, is crammed with new styles, designs and colours, including the Verve Pacer Vault Back, a high leg suit available in black/blue or black/cerise.

Influenced by the adult range, the Maru kid's line continues the vibrant colour theme with additions such as the Butterfly Tankini, featuring detailed embroidery available in orange and turquoise.

Completing the 2007 line up is an extensive range of equipment, including goggles, sports bags and swim hats designed to suit every swimmer's needs.

**To find out more contact Maru Swimwear on 0115 985 1212 or email [sales@maruswimwear.co.uk](mailto:sales@maruswimwear.co.uk)**



**2006 Show Exhibitor**



### Bridgedale's new running range

Bridgedale is launching a new running 'Fast and Light' range for spring/summer 2007 that features classic WoolFusion® properties, but with new technology and a new-look, modern pack design.

The range features men's and women's socks in the X-Hale design, socks with an aggressive and dynamic style suitable for road running with specific padding zones and targeted areas of ventilation.

The 'Fast and Light' range also features products in a new Ventum style, which are asymmetric (left/right) and are made with the anti-microbial, anti-bacterial yarn Be Fresh. The Ventum range will suit runners who favour longer distances such as half marathons and off-road events.

For further information call Burton McCall on 0116 234 4611/4622 or visit [www.bridgedale.com](http://www.bridgedale.com)



### Techtrail PulseWare

PulseWare by Techtrail is a range of four heart rate monitor watches that allow you to leave the chest strap behind, thanks to the development of Pulsetouch technology. This technology outputs an

immediate ECG-accurate reading with the touch of two buttons and contact with the wrist.

The PulseWare line consists of four models designed for a variety of activities and uses. Consistent throughout the collection, PulseWare watches will output beats per minute while offering quick access to time, chronograph and calorie functions.

The Mini and Max use only Pulsetouch technology, whereas the Duo and Solo can also utilise chest strap transmitter technology for strenuous endurance exercise where a constant ECG accurate reading can be given. RRP £69.99 to £99.99.

Call 0116 234 4611 or visit [www.techtrail.com](http://www.techtrail.com)

### Sigg Special Touch drinks bottles

The Special Touch bottles, from Sigg's Sports World range, are designed with the user in mind. The easy-grip outer coating is great for active people on the move, perspiring palms or glove wearers.

The patented activebottle top on each Special Touch bottle enables the user to release the flow of liquid using the mouth, making it easier to drink from the bottle when on the move.

Available in five vibrant colours, the Special Touch bottles have an inner coating resistant to fruit acids and isotonic drinks, meaning there's no taste transfer between drink types. RRP £13.99.

Call Burton McCall on 0116 234 4611 or visit [www.sigg.ch](http://www.sigg.ch)



### Holey Soles

The popularity of these brightly coloured clog-like shoes looks set to continue with Canadian brand, Holey Soles - and not just among the fashion conscious. They're ideal outdoor and watersports footwear for many reasons.

Originally designed as a watersports clog, Holey Soles are made from a robust EVA resin and rubber compound. They're lightweight, they float, the non-slip tread means you're safe on wet surfaces and the massaging footbed will stimulate blood flow in the feet of any weary sports person.

Available in a variety of colours and sizes, from children's to adults XXL, each pair comes with a no-quibble warranty. RRP of £18.99 for juniors and £28.99 for adult shoes.

Call Burton McCall for details on 0116 234 4611/4622 or visit [www.holeysoles.com](http://www.holeysoles.com)



# Kit Stop

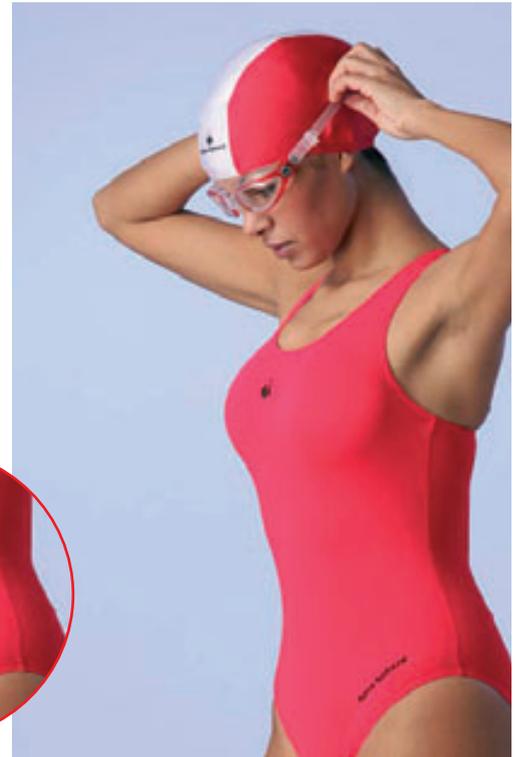
Essential stock for your shop

## New performance swimwear from swim kit guru

Rounding off a huge year for Aqua Sphere, the label has announced that its new line of performance swimwear is available to pre-order.

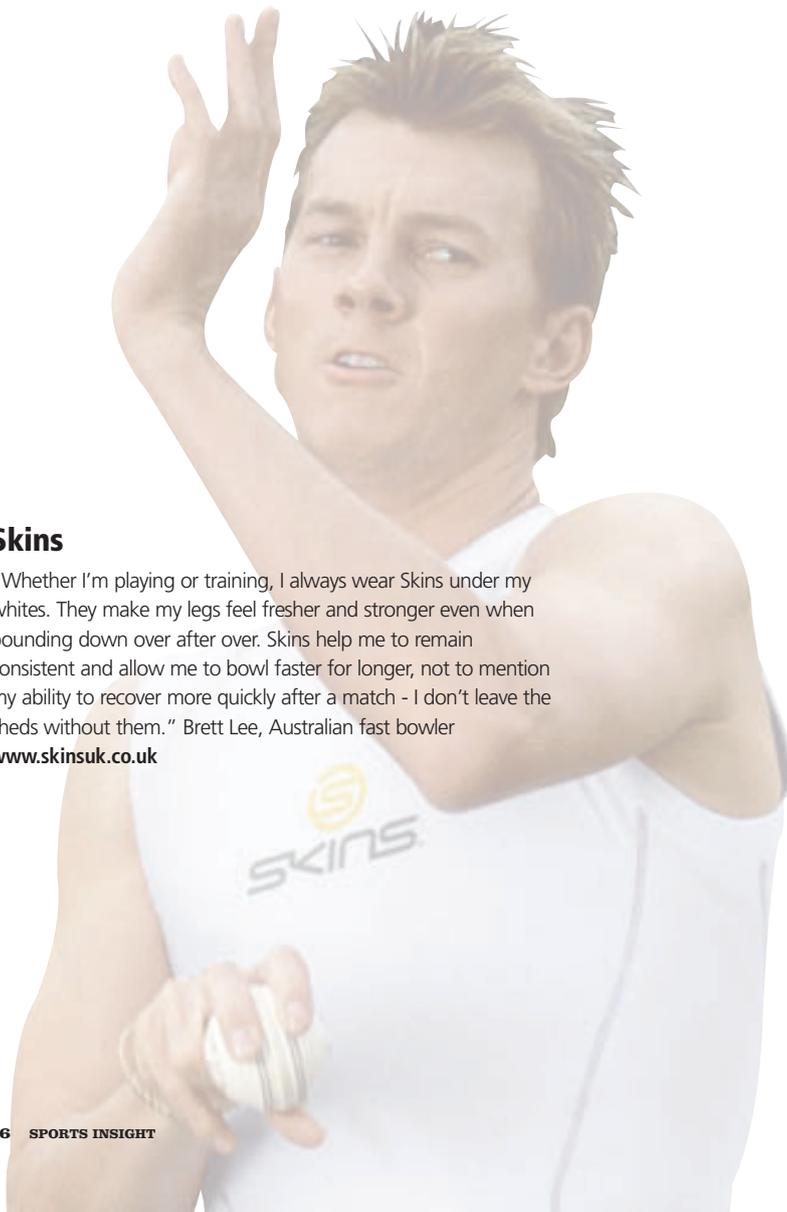
This superb Italian-designed range is a natural extension to Aqua Sphere's proven swim equipment portfolio and delivers high quality chlorine resistant swimwear for fitness and recreational swimmers.

**Stepping up Aqua Sphere's ambition to become the UK's definitive high quality one-stop swim shop, for more information call 01254 278873 or visit [www.aquasphereswim.com](http://www.aquasphereswim.com)**



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"Whether I'm playing or training, I always wear Skins under my whites. They make my legs feel fresher and stronger even when pounding down over after over. Skins help me to remain consistent and allow me to bowl faster for longer, not to mention my ability to recover more quickly after a match - I don't leave the sheds without them." Brett Lee, Australian fast bowler  
[www.skinsuk.co.uk](http://www.skinsuk.co.uk)





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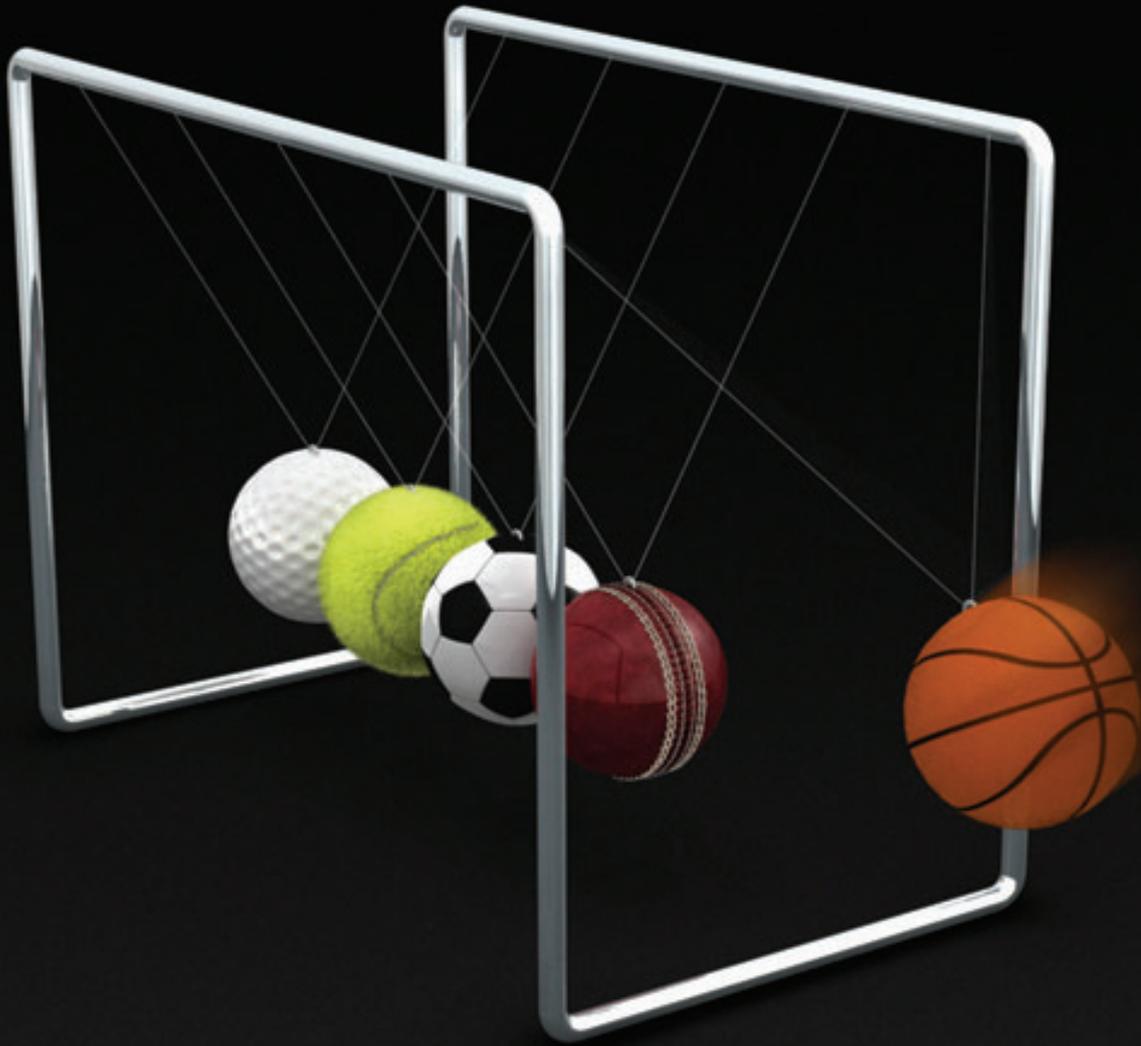


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# Passion for swimming

Born in Australia in 1992, Zoggs is now a one-stop swim shop brand



Zoggs is an Australian brand focused on swimmers of all levels and ages. Born in 1992 in Sydney, it was the first brand to offer UV protection and split yoke straps on all goggles, regardless of price.

Zoggs has strengthened its UK team to meet the growing demand for its products. The sales support team has been increased and refocused to capitalise on the growth the brand has enjoyed over the last 10 years. Four field managers, four merchandisers and three agents form the framework of the Zoggs UK sales force.

While Zoggs has traditionally been known as an innovative goggle and swim equipment brand, the past few seasons has seen swimwear significantly add to the overall offer. The objective of becoming a 'one-stop swim shop brand' has been achieved with an unrivalled range of products across all swimming categories.

## New products

Innovation is very much a byword at Zoggs. The company's aim is to become the international brand of choice for those who swim for recreation or fitness through innovative and functional products.

The revolutionary Predator Wiro-frame™ goggle is a versatile one-piece goggle incorporating ultra-soft silicone gaskets and a new Bio-tech™



frame. They also come with CLT™ and Fogbuster™ impregnated Anti-fog lenses with UV400 maximum sun protection.

The Odyssey goggle represents the latest in computer profiled technology - its larger fitting frame is designed to allow maximum wearer comfort and enhance peripheral vision.

The Ratchet Quick-fit strap system offers the latest in advanced dual action design. The frame features modern styling that is accentuated through a high gloss pearlescent finish for visual appeal. Ideal for performance swimming and triathletes, this is a truly radical goggle.

Also available is the Lap-Pro™, the first-ever swimmer's watch.

Designed by swimmers for swimmers, Lap-Pro™ has been engineered to record swimming sessions in the water. Featuring a design registered 'Tap-pad' watch face, Lap-Pro™ allows the swimmer to record each lap swum over a designated training session, after which a full summary of laps swum, laps split, time and average speed are provided.

## Marketing

Swimming is an all-year-round activity, and with an estimated seven million people swimming at least once a week maintaining a strong swim product offer year-round is essential.

Key is maintaining a strong visual presence and well merchandised product offer that comprises all the key lines that fitness and recreational swimmers are looking for. Goggles, caps, basic training aids and personal care products are all frequently demanded.

Zoggs offers a 'one-stop swim shop' to support this demand and a dedicated field sales team is available to assist with product training and merchandising support.

The company also offers a full point of purchase/POS/promotional programme to support retail partners comprising retail units and in-store promotional and product displays. The stunning Australian imagery shown throughout range brochures is utilised to produce eye-catching posters and showcards, along with the ever-popular 'goggle keyrings' available for

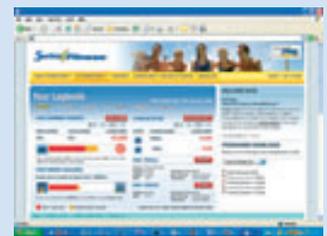
consumer giveaways.

Eye catching retail bags are also available for consumers purchasing Zoggs products.

For more information on Zoggs products and services call 01276 489089 or visit [www.zoggs.com](http://www.zoggs.com)



## SWIM4FITNESS™



Swim4Fitness™ is a free-to-use fitness training programme for recreational and fitness swimmers operated through [www.swim4fitness.com](http://www.swim4fitness.com)

It is the only swimming programme written entirely in easy-to-understand language and offered free of charge to the consumer. It's split into four levels, ensuring programmes are available for all types of swimmers, from beginners to triathletes.

Registered Swim4Fitness™ members gain access to level-specific sessions, tips and techniques on swimming as well as information on training aids and how to use them correctly.

Swim4Fitness™ registration cards are inserted into all adult Zoggs products and are an ideal way to add value to your swim offer. Promotional items such as keyrings, pens and hats are freely available from Zoggs to support promotion of Swim4Fitness™ in-store.

For more information on Swim4Fitness™ visit [www.swim4fitness.com](http://www.swim4fitness.com) or call Kim Blondell on 01276 486512.



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# What's Hot

## J&R Sports' range of products

Richard Birchwood, commercial director of J&R Sports, talks us through the offering



### Can you give us some background on the brand?

J&R Sports was formed in 1998 by John and Richard Birchwood. It was initially involved solely in the skate and skateboard distribution business, selling mainly its own brands to independent sports and specialist retailers. Since then, the company has progressed to selling a much more extensive product portfolio.

### What areas do you selling your products in?

Predominately in the independent sports sector, but also specialist retailers, toy retailers and through online dealers also.

However, independent sports retail is a sector where we are still looking to grow our distribution channels and increase our customer base by offering both quality products that give the retailer good margins and a first-class service.

### How are you looking to progress your dealer network?

Obviously through the adverts and editorial we frequently run with Sports Insight! On from there, we have a very strong web presence and, through our in-house IT team, we develop websites aimed at the trade through our main site, [www.jandrsports.co.uk](http://www.jandrsports.co.uk), and aimed at the product end-user through brand-specific sites such as [www.themicro.co.uk](http://www.themicro.co.uk)

We often find that new customers are unsure of adding new products as they think they will have to heavily invest in stock, but with us we would rather build new customers slowly with smaller amounts of product to get them started.

Generally, we don't have minimum order quantities, so getting new retailers started is very easy, and

for the retailer it generally requires minimal investment.

### What are your hottest products at present?

Fortunately for us, quite a number of lines are hot at present. Firstly, we are seeing a growth in sales of scooters and kickboards, which is a sector that has been steadily growing over the past year or so and has always been very strong for us.

We currently have the two top brands available, with Micro, as the original brand, being the market leader and continuing to grow in a number of different sectors. Also hot is our new J&R Table Sports range, which currently features three new models for pool, snooker and football, all featuring a rolling folding leg system that allows the tables to be stored easily and effortlessly when not in use.

Finally, we have recently taken on the distribution for Poweriser, the jumping stilts that are currently very, very popular. Sales are growing and will continue to grow up to and beyond Christmas.

### Scooters are still selling, then?

Yes, and they are increasing in sales. The Micro scooter is now a product that a very large percentage of children will own in their life and some retailers, especially the cycle dealers, feel that scooters are now more popular with children than cycles.

This is very promising for the future of Micro, and with the appeal of the product to such a varied age range the future continues to look promising.

### Why has Micro sold so well?

Firstly, the quality, which is without doubt the best available. Also, having the number-one brand helps but also having a wide range and variety of models covering all areas allows retailers to target

specific price points, but also have scooters that cover everyone's requirements.

### What are the key features and benefits of Micro?

Micro has a range of four scooters and two kickboards, and has a planned launch of a further two models next year. All the models in the range not only comply with but exceed both the current regulations for scooters and can not only be sold to children from four years upwards but still be suitable for teenagers, as a commuting vehicle or for street use.

The scooters are also being used more and more by children to get to and from school, and then either folded and carried home by their parents or actually ridden home.

### How is Micro marketed?

Through store demonstration models, a strong internet presence through our Micro site, which includes videos and competitions and TV promotions, but overall the brand name is also the generic name for the product.

### What is the most effective way a retailer can market your products?

The best way is demonstration. Selling Micro for retailers is very easy as the brand is recognised, but having models in-store for demonstration is essential.

Allowing the consumer to feel the quality of the product is equally important.

For further details regarding J&R Sports' product portfolio and services visit

[www.jandrsports.co.uk](http://www.jandrsports.co.uk)

For details of the Micro Scooter range visit

[www.themicro.co.uk](http://www.themicro.co.uk)

Alternatively call J&R Sports

on 0151 523 0500 or email

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# FSPA update

The latest news from The Play Providers Association and further success for Golf Europe



Leisure Industry Week was a resounding success for the Play Providers Association, helping to boost both the profile of the organisation and the play industry as a whole.

The Play Providers Association was first introduced at Leisure Industry Week 2005 with the aim of promoting, developing and protecting the interests of all businesses engaged in providing enclosed play facilities. There has been a lot of effort put into the Play Providers Association throughout 2006, which has enabled the organisation to establish itself in the industry.

## Seminars

There were three seminars held at LIW for the play industry, and all three were very successful with over 80 people in attendance at each one. The seminars provided attendees with information on Starting Up a Family Entertainment Centre - potential pitfalls (Tracey Bancroft and Janice Dunphy), Managing Risk in Indoor Play areas (Nick Balmforth) and The Future of Indoor Play in The UK (Iain Westwater and the PPA Panel).

In the run-up to and during LIW the PPA's membership figure increased and is now approaching 50. This is a great achievement for the association and hopefully this growth will continue into 2007 and beyond so that more benefits and services can be offered to members to help improve standards in the play industry.

## Start-Up Guide

LIW also saw the launch of the PPA's new and exclusive Start-Up Guide, which features in-depth case studies on key topics, market information and advice from members about setting



up an indoor play centre.

Some of the topics in the guide include creating a business plan, marketing strategy, planning permission, industry standards and a code of practice, finance, insurance, staff training and recruitment, health and safety and risk assessments.

Priced £100, all of this combined provides exclusive information in one easy-to-use guide for those that are new to the indoor play industry.

For more information on the Start-Up Guide and the PPA contact Ben Prince on 02476 414999 ext 205 or email [ben@sportsandplay.com](mailto:ben@sportsandplay.com)

## Golf Europe

Despite a change in scheduling, this year's Golf Europe proved to be a great success for UK exhibitors, according to the British Golf Industry Association.

Fourteen companies took advantage of the UK Trade & Investment export grant available for this event and feedback from those exhibiting within the British Pavilion in Hall C1 has been very positive. The show's organiser announced a slight decline in visitor numbers, probably due to the event running over a weekend, although the quality of those attending was high.

Says Paul Williams, Sales Director of Asbri Golf, which exhibited within the British Pavilion: "This has been the best trade show we have exhibited at by

far. We generated a considerable number of quality enquiries and met key distribution companies in the industry. We are already working with some of these companies to introduce our brand and products into other areas of the European market."

Another company pleased with the quality of visitors was 2 Thumb Grip Limited. Says Managing director, Philip Gazeley: "Although the number of visitors seemed lower than last year, we did feel that the quality and number of enquiries was to a high standard and have noted that these seemed to be from further around the globe."

The event was also a success for Phil Aitken of Jaxx Golf, who says: "Exhibiting at Golf Europe certainly helped us in reintroducing the PowerBilt brand into the mainstream golf market. I'm always impressed by the consistent quality of the visitors and venue."

For the first time Golf Europe ran alongside Fairway, the specialist congress for golf course construction. This amalgamation created the largest business platform for golf in Europe, with over 6,300 visitors recorded.

Almost 60 per cent of visitors came from outside Germany, with a large contingent from eastern Europe. David Wells, chairman of the BGIA, commented: "Golf Europe has always been an important event in the golf industry calendar, but in the past few years the international profile of the show has been significantly increased.

"It is the opportunity to meet potential customers from across Europe and further afield which makes this such a good event for UK companies. We hope that UK Trade & Investment will continue to consider Golf Europe a 'core' event for our industry." **51**



## ISPO WINTER

Limited space is still available if you want to exhibit with the British group at ispo winter 2007.



Grants of up to £1,800 have been made available by UKTI for eligible companies applying through the FSPA. Being a member of the British group will give companies a much greater presence at Europe's largest sporting goods trade fair.

For more information and to obtain an application pack contact Luke Chadbourne on 02476 414999 ext 204 or email [luke@sportsandplay.com](mailto:luke@sportsandplay.com)



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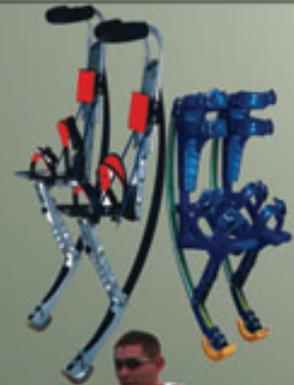
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### PRO-JUMP STILTS DEALERS REQUIRED



Thanks to the Zurich ad on TV that featured people bouncing around on springy stilts, sales have taken a massive leap for UK Good Deals Limited.

The original hand made items may have cost around £750, but mass produced stilts retail at £139 for youths and £175 for adults through UK Good Deals, either online at [www.pro-jump.co.uk](http://www.pro-jump.co.uk) or by calling the company on 01772 792600.



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## NEW Lion Super Carbo Bat

### ITTF APPROVED

This technologically advanced bat has a carbon fibre inlay which offers a larger sweet spot. Other features include: Concave handle; Aggressor 2mm sponge; Carbon UD; Wood Koto/Kiri.

## NEW Lion Super Dynamo Bat

### ITTF APPROVED

Made with a technologically advanced wood inlays this will create a dynamic effect for the aggressive player. Other features include: Concave handle; Aggressor 2mm sponge; Wood Limba/Kiri

## STIGA Titanium Bat

### ITTF APPROVED

This is the ultimate bat for the direct power-hitting player who concentrates primarily on pure speed, rather than spin.

## STIGA 3 Star Optimum Balls

### THE OPTIMUM SPHERE

A table tennis ball designed as a perfect sphere takes the game to its highest competitive level. Exclusively adopted by The British National League, this ball is the product of intensive research, displaying a unique quality in its stability, weight and roundness that has been well received by world class players. ITTF approved. Our hardest ball for your strongest shots!

## LION Tournament 3 Star

### ITTF APPROVED

Value for money competition ball.

## PREMIUM Compact Table

### ITTF APPROVED

This model is ready assembled for playing. The World Class table with the unique and safe Super Compact System. 25mm top.



# A show set to grow

The STAG Annual Buying Show 2006, in association with Sports Insight, looks like being bigger and better than last year's event

The annual STAG Buying Show will take place at Heythrop Park Golf and Country Club in Enstone near Chipping Norton, Oxfordshire, on November 19-20.

STAG is very keen to emphasise the 'buying' part of the show, as the organisation feels that this has been the key to the successful growth of the event over the last few years.

The buying group works hard promoting the show in this manner and STAG suppliers and retailers play their part in making it work. Suppliers put together special show deals and incentives and retailers come to the show specifically to take advantage of them.

## Success

Last year's show was a huge success, with suppliers and retailers alike all enjoying the benefits an event like this brings.

Apart from the obvious benefits, the show serves the purpose of bringing the trade together. Occasions like these are few and far between these days, and it was refreshing, to say the least, to see so many key figures in the industry taking part from a business and social perspective last year.

The planning of this year's show started as soon as the last stand had been dismantled on November 21, 2005. In fact, many suppliers confirmed their attendance at the 2006 event so early that it was fully booked by March.

But why does it take so long to organise? The success of the show is

in the detail, and to get all the components right takes time.

STAG not only arranges the show but also circulates the details of all attending retailers to the suppliers - and vice versa - weeks before the event. It also sets up special show offers, books accommodation for all attendees, puts on a show party and pays for the accommodation and food for each of the STAG retailers.

STAG has seen an increase in supplier bookings from 75 to 85 this year, and the retailers attending over the two days will reach 200.

Virtually all the suppliers from last year's show are exhibiting again and a few new faces will be there for the first time. These include Samsonite, Rieker, Burton McCall and Vasyli.

## Business services

There will also be a greater presence of STAG's business services, with stands being taken by Replan, Top to Toe, Bank of Scotland, DJB Sales and KCC Global Communications.

STAG has put a lot of emphasis on helping to improve retailer's margins and overall business, and having companies such as the above attending the show gives retailers the opportunity to consider this area of their business, whilst listening to case studies of how these organisations have benefited other STAG retailers.

The successful format of the show will remain the same and take place over two days - Sunday and Monday - with set-up on the

Saturday. Suppliers like the fact that their sales people are only off the road for one day, while retailers can attend the show and only have one day away from their businesses.

Opening times are from 9am-6pm on the Sunday and 9am-5pm on the Monday, with the show party for 500 guests taking place on the Sunday evening.

## Show guide

STAG has further improved this year's event by producing a show guide, which will enable all retailers to find where key suppliers are located. It also provides an advertising opportunity for suppliers, as they've all been given the chance to take a page in the guide, which will also become a point of reference for retailers in the future as each supplier's contact details are included in the publication.

So where does the show go from here? The answer is quite simple - the STAG Buying Show will continue to grow. Grow in the number of retailers and suppliers attending. Grow in the opportunities to increase business. Grow in the key events calendar for suppliers and retailers alike. Can you afford not to be involved?

For more information call 01793 715406. 



ABOVE: Key suppliers such as New Balance can be located in the new show guide

BELOW: Big-name brands such as Puma will be exhibiting at the event



# Crime shouldn't pay

Kevin Hawkins, Director General of the British Retail Consortium, outlines the findings of the organisation's latest Retail Crime Survey



ABOVE: Kevin Hawkins: "Stealing from shops is the main point of entry into other forms of crime"

The recent consultative paper from the Sentencing Advisory Panel - and in particular the proposal to remove even the possibility of a custodial sentence for repeat offenders - has angered our industry as nothing else has done in recent years.

To me the depressing thing is that this panel could even propose the removal of custodial sentences as an option for serious discussion highlights yet again the continuing perception in some quarters that retail crime is a relatively trivial offence that doesn't really hurt anyone.

## Reality

The reality is very different. Stealing from shops is not only the single most common form of crime in the UK, it's also the main point of entry into other forms of crime. As one retailer recently observed: "The problem with shop crime is not draconian penalties, but the fact that it is so easy to start offending and the system is so unwilling to intervene. To make a crime free of

consequences will create more problems in the longer term, even if it will keep a few people out of prison in the short term."

Quite so. It's also far too easy for people who are abusing drugs to feed their habit by stealing from shops. A Home Office report back in 1998 suggested that as many as 80 per cent of shoplifters were involved in and possibly driven by drug abuse.

It may well be the case that many of these shoplifters need drug counselling, a stable family environment, a chat with a Conservative Shadow Minister and so on. But there is no reason why these services can't be provided under our existing legal framework. Why is it necessary to scrap even the possibility of a custodial sentence as well? What message does that send to all those repeat offenders who drive many of the statistics that appear in our survey?

The other point about the panel's consultative paper is that it was based on an analysis of the tiny

minority of offences that go through the courts. The BRC survey, however, tells much more of the real story of what's going on in our shops and this year's findings suggest that in several respects the situation is continuing to deteriorate.

I would like to highlight those findings that I think are particularly significant.

First, retailers continue to lose an average of £1.5 billion in sales values to retail crime every year. When you add to this the £700 million of capital and revenue that retailers on average invest in anti-crime measures every year, it takes the total annual cost of crime to over £2 billion. So the total cost of crime to our industry now adds up to over £13 billion since the year 2000.

Customer theft now accounts for over half of all losses from retail crime. And the number of recorded incidents involving customers reached a six-year peak of 3,800 last year, which is 70 per cent up on six years ago. But that still left at least

twice as many instances of customer theft that went unrecorded or undetected.

## Under-reporting

On the positive side, the reported levels of violence, verbal abuse and threats are all down on the previous year and if that represents a real change, then it's clearly welcome. However, one explanation for this decline could be that retail staff are simply becoming more used to these forms of anti-social behaviour and are not recording them as much as they once did.

This underlines yet again the general problem of under-reporting. As you know, many retailers don't report a lot of incidents because they don't think the police will be interested. These tend to be instances of low-value shop theft and damage, as well as threats of violence and abuse. A Government survey published last year on commercial victimisation conceded that less than half of the retailers in the survey had reported their last offence of theft.

A falling trend in the figures, therefore, may tell us nothing about what's really happening. Everyone knows that we are nowhere near resolving the problem of anti-social behaviour in retail stores and shopping centres. The key flashpoints for violence, threats and abuse are often the attempts by retail staff to stop thieves leaving the store, or their refusal to serve alcohol or cigarettes to people they believe are under age. These are exactly the circumstances in which retailers need support from both the police and the criminal justice system, but such support is all too rarely in evidence.

Our survey yet again reveals an overwhelming level of dissatisfaction among retailers with the attitude of the police to retail crime. In their defence, the police would argue that their resources are already overstretched in dealing with those types of crime for which there are specific targets and where progress can be measured. But other than shop theft, there are no business-specific offences that have performance indicators. Filling this gap obviously has to be a priority for the Government.

Moving away from high volume offences, at the other end of the scale are organised crime and fraud. Feedback from our larger members suggests that police forces are reluctant to investigate any commercial crime

that cuts across the jurisdiction of other police forces unless it involves over £100,000.

Even where major retailers do much of the legwork and present thoroughly investigated cases, the police only seem interested in those offences that take place within their own boundaries. As the plan to merge police forces has now been kicked into touch, we can only hope that the creation of the National Police Improvement Agency will encourage more cross-border cooperation, and the Home Office anticipates some development on this issue by next spring.

## Penalties

My last point concerns the penalties for first-time offenders. I think it's essential that we have an effective deterrent at this level so that those who might otherwise be tempted don't succumb to retail theft.

Two years ago fixed penalty notices were introduced to fill this gap, but the feedback we're getting is that their application in practice has not been consistent across police boundaries, so we believe the time has come for a review of their effectiveness. If there isn't an effective penalty for first-time offences then second, third and fourth offences are likely to follow.

There are, however, two practical initiatives that do seem to be having a positive effect on the ground.

First, there's our BRC initiative Action Against Business Crime, which has now established over 200 local crime reduction partnerships. These partnerships are having a measurable impact on crime and in some areas recorded shop theft offences have been reduced by anything between 10 per cent and 37 per cent.

AABC has also introduced the National Business Information System, an online database of business crime and offenders that is freely accessible to partnerships, police and other agencies. Further progress has unfortunately been delayed for several months this year due to uncertainties about the future funding of AABC. However, after a great deal of lobbying by ourselves, the Home Office has finally come up with a grant that will keep AABC afloat for the next 12-18 months, by which time it should be self-financing.

Second, there's ShopWatch. This is another example of a successful partnership programme between retailers and local police. This

programme was originally developed by the Metropolitan Police for Oxford Street and it's now been adopted by retailers and police in a few other cities as well as other areas of London. Not every retailer can afford either to release staff for training as a Special Constable or to lose the time they would spend on duty, but those who can afford it should find that it pays off.



## Government help

So what, specifically, do we want from the Government? By all means let's have a review of sentencing policy for shop theft, including the penalty notices - but with the aim of developing a more effective deterrent, not freeing up prison space.

We need specific measurements of business and retail crime in every police area, so reduction targets can be developed for police forces.

We need to find some way of encouraging victims of retail crime to report these offences, so we can really capture the full extent of the problem.

We know that local partnerships between retailers and the police - whether through AABC or schemes like ShopWatch - seem to be effective. So it would be helpful if the Home Office made a longer-term commitment to encouraging more of them. Verbal support is welcome - financial support speaks louder.

Police forces need to be incentivised to cooperate across their territorial boundaries so these investigations can be successfully concluded.

And, finally, it would be very helpful if Ministers could say loudly and frequently that violence and anti-social behaviour is as unacceptable in a retail environment as it is anywhere else, proclaim a policy of zero tolerance and develop, with the retail industry, a set of penalties which reflect this principle.

That's the British Retail Consortium's agenda - and I hope you'll give it your fullest support. **51**

**ABOVE:** ShopWatch is a successful partnership programme between retailers and local police  
Credit:  
[www.shopwatch.info](http://www.shopwatch.info)

# How to **win** the price war

Tony James shows you how to make the most of a price-cutting strategy



**Whether we like it or not, price wars with rival retailers are a fact of business life - and if you're not actually in a battle with a competitor at the moment, you probably will be soon.**

"The truth is that over 60 per cent of customers consider price first when making a retail purchase," says consultant Scott Davis, founder and boss of Strategic Marketing Decisions. "So obviously price cuts can be a major sales aid. They can also be a short cut to the bankruptcy court."

## Alternatives

So don't forget that when you cut prices there's always financial risk involved - the losses caused by the 1992 US airline price war were greater than the combined profits made by the entire industry since it started. So it makes good sense to also consider a few alternatives. For instance:

- Increasing marketing efforts to contact prospective customers using low-cost phone calls or direct mail.
- Using loss-leader strategies in the hope of attracting increased business.
- Contacting larger businesses that have more work than they can handle and suggesting that you become an outsource vendor.

But if you come to the conclusion that price cutting is the only effective way to increase your market share, there's some hard thinking to be done to make sure that you make the most of your price-cutting strategy- and don't go broke in the process.

First, take a hard look at your costs, including not only what you pay for goods but salaries, advertising, debt servicing and all other fixed costs. This is your bottom line - your break-even point.

Then look at your cash reserves. Can you operate at or below break-

even for a month or two, or even longer? Establish a timeline for your price reductions, plus contingency plans in case losses become more than projected.

When cutting prices make sure everyone knows about it. Step up marketing and include this vital information:

- Samples of discounted prices, using the biggest reductions as examples.
- A statement that this isn't a closing-down sale.
- Assurance that your products are as good if not better than your competitors and that customer service is the best to be had.
- Money-back guarantees without argument.

As you gain price war customers, give them every reason to keep buying from you, even if price concessions have to end. Provide exceptional service. Follow up sales to check customer satisfaction. Stock the best possible products - customers won't keep coming back for lower prices on inferior items.

Advises retail consultant Jeffrey Moses of the National Federation of Independent Business: "No one expects price cuts to last forever. Depending on your type of business, you may have to raise prices slowly or you can announce that discounted prices will end on a specific date.

"Customers who came to you based on price may be tempted to go back to their original supplier when your prices start to rise. To counter this you need to provide better customer service than your competitors and offer prices that are at least somewhat discounted.

"Hopefully, the increased size of your customer base after the price cutting campaign will support your reduced margins and give you greater overall profitability. After all, that was the object of the exercise."

## Expert advice

So how do you give yourself the best chance of winning the price war? Here are some expert tips:

- Suss out the opposition. You can't

**ABOVE:** Over 60 per cent of customers consider price first when making a retail purchase

plan a successful price war strategy until you know exactly what you're up against.

■ For in-depth information on a competitor that is a limited company contact Companies House or scan the Kompass Company Directory in your local library.

■ Surf rivals' websites to see what they're offering and at what price. Study the trade press to discover exactly what the market is, if it's growing, static or in danger of decline.

■ And why not pose as a potential customer and ask rivals for brochures and price lists? All's fair in love and price war.

From your investigations, produce a dossier that answers these questions:

**1.** How is your product or service better than your competition's? How do prices compare?

**2.** Will your proposed prices give you a profitable mark-up if sales don't reach their forecasted levels?

**3.** Realistically, is there room for another competitor in the market - whatever prices you charge?

■ How will rivals respond when you declare price war? Consultants warn that lowering your prices is not an automatic advantage because it can be copied easily and immediately by the opposition.

Customers may be happy at first because they will get better deals, but they might be resentful when prices inevitably return to normal levels and all companies involved in the price war will suffer.

So rivals will often look for other ways of holding on to business without going into direct price-cutting confrontation. For instance, when Encyclopedia Britannica found it was losing sales to rival reference works, the company didn't immediately drop its prices.

## **"If entering a price war it's vital to anticipate which rivals will respond, and how"**

Instead it made a dramatic change of strategy and turned to the internet. It now offers free access to information on its massive web databases and derives its revenues from banner advertising, not consumers.

Says retail consultant Mark Bergen: "If you are entering a price war it's vital to anticipate which of your rivals will respond, and how. Try to predict how competitors will set their prices by tracking historical patterns and understanding what has

triggered price changes in the past.

"Keep a close eye on what rivals are doing. Any acquisition of new technology, information systems or distribution channels or alliances with other players in the field should set your alarm bells ringing."

■ Encourage impulse buying. Did you know that only three out of every 10 people visiting your store know in advance exactly what they want - but another three will probably spend money with you if you have something that takes their fancy?

It's called impulse buying, but, in fact, most spur-of-the-moment purchasing is not accidental, according to the latest psychological studies, and largely depends on answers to these questions:

**1.** Where are the goods situated?

**2.** Do they boost a customer's self-image?

**3.** Are they easy to buy and is credit readily available?

It has been discovered that the first two or three metres up a shopping aisle are 'dead space' so far as impulse buying is concerned, and should be used for routine essentials.

Studies have shown that unencumbered aisles also encourage impulse buys. When one sports store put in what the trade calls 'hot spots' - areas through which customers have to pass on their way to other departments - impulse sales of goods displayed there increased by 500 per cent.

■ Offer service and satisfaction. A London University study recently showed that keeping prices as low as possible is not always the most profitable policy. Offering complete satisfaction or no-risk guarantees can often be more cost-effective than price reductions and discounts when it comes to boosting sales.

The costs associated with refunding or replacing a product are usually less than the lost revenue caused by price discounting - and can boost customer goodwill more effectively, too.

And according to London Business School research, for every retail enterprise that fails because its prices are too high, two will come to grief because they don't charge enough.

■ Link a price cut to something else. For instance, why not turn a price cut into a quality discount: "The price is



X, but if you buy three you can have them for Y each."

It's also worth considering using a price cut as part of a deal to sell complementary products or to trade a price reduction for a commitment: "The price is Y, but if you make us your preferred supplier for 12 months you can have them for X."

■ Cut prices on carefully selected products. Supermarkets are doing this all the time - they proudly announce price cuts on staples like bread or milk, but leave the vast majority of prices unchanged. As a result, they appear to have cut prices by more than they actually have.

Consultants say that the best products for this strategy are:

**1.** High-profile goods that attract customer attention.

**2.** High-margin products that still make you money after a price cut.

**3.** Slow-selling products. Whatever you make on them will be a bonus.

■ Offer tempting extras. Instead of actually cutting prices, boost sales by including extras that have a high value to the customer but a low cost to you.

That's what McDonald's did when faced with stiff competition from rivals. By bundling in a drink and fries with a burger it created 'value meals'. Price-conscious customers could then buy bundled value meals - often spending more money, but happy that they were getting better value.

Clearly the strategy works - McDonald's still uses it. So what 'bargain bundles' could you create to make your existing prices seem more attractive to customers?

■ Psych up the opposition by making sure that your competitors know that your variable costs are very low. Let them know that you have the capacity to supply their customers as well as your own - an article or a letter to the trade press often does the trick.

Make sure they know that if they cut their prices you could use these factors to steal their customers by dropping your prices even further. Says Mark Bergen: "This implicit threat has won many price wars before they have even started - if competitors seriously believe they can't win, they very often won't even try."

**ABOVE:** When cutting prices make sure everyone knows about it

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# Growing

Not all businesses want or need to expand to remain profitable in the long term, says Dave Howell

# pains

The latest figures from the Small Business Service show a 1.4 per cent increase in the number of small businesses trading between 2004 and 2005. This equates to 4.3 million enterprises in the UK.

99.3 per cent are small businesses that are defined as having between 0-49 employees. The micro-business still reigns supreme in the UK, with little sign of growth or expansion a key characteristic of the small business owner.

## Myth

For many business owners, expansion is the furthest thing from their minds. But as Fraser Mackay, Head of Commercial Marketing at Barclays Bank, says, sometimes growth can suddenly happen and take a business by surprise: "The idea that all businesses must expand to survive is a myth.

"We bank a fairly sizeable number of businesses that are, in effect, income replacement or lifestyle businesses. These types of businesses exist really to pay for the lifestyle of the owner/proprietor. I would say it is probably a minority of businesses that are actively looking to expand/grow. In some instances, businesses will grow beyond their expectations very quickly. These businesses are often at risk of 'overtrading' and running out of cash so need to manage their cash flow very carefully."

The view that all businesses must expand to survive is also dispelled by Matthew Knowles, a spokesman for the Federation of Small Businesses, who

says: "It is a myth, definitely. Many of our members are happy just the way they are.

"In our 2006 members' survey - which received just under 19,000 responses, making it the largest survey of its kind in the UK - 24 per cent said they wanted to stay the same size.

"Because every single business is different in some respect, there may well be firms that do have to keep growing to keep going. But every business will reach optimum size at some point. The trick is to know when that is. No-one can tell the business when that's happened - they have to work it out for themselves."

Even though you may have no firm plans to expand your business in the medium to long term, market factors and how these evolve may force some changes onto your business.

Says Stephen Rostron, Business Development Manager at Sussex Enterprise: "Expand - not necessarily - but be prepared to evolve or change, definitely. Also, profitability can be a factor in a business' decision to expand. If costs are rising, then the revenue available to cover those costs must increase. This can certainly be from expansion, ie increased turnover. It can also be from increased profitability on existing turnover, or of course a combination of the two."

David Ripley from Business Link in Sussex echoes this point: "Many small businesses do not expand in the conventional way. We can all think of

shops and tradesmen who happily continue in business for many years.

"Clearly all businesses suffer from rising costs, as we all do at home, so it is important to expand income to cover these costs. Equally, it is always important to keep up to date with your customers and modify the goods and services sold to suit their changing tastes and needs."

## Manageable growth

A growing business can be an inevitable consequence of success, but Fraser Mackay says that growth must be handled carefully to avoid common pitfalls: "The major trap is that businesses fail to differentiate between profit and cash. They expand quickly, their sales increase rapidly and show a healthy profit. But they don't realise that if sales are on credit, then creditors may need paying before the money is received from debtors.

"Also, stock holdings may need to be higher to support higher sales volumes - this takes cash to fund. The other trap is that businesses can expand beyond the point where one person can get their hands round the whole business and maintain a hands-on approach to managing the business.

"Where this happens, often the

different areas of the business become uncoordinated and things can get pretty chaotic. The result is often insufficient volume of material produced to sell, or too much product produced that can't be sold."

Keeping a business small can mean that it is much easier to manage overall. If you do intend to expand, either as part of a structured plan or need to expand because of a change in your market, the growth must be handled so you don't become a slave to your business, as Stephen Rostron explains: "For small businesses time is precious and normally a scarce resource. The effect of this is that small business owners tend to spend all their time working in their business, rather than on their business."

Any expansion you do undertake will often mean more employees or even taking on new business partners. Micro-business owners are usually not happy giving even a small percentage of their businesses away, but as Richard Wilson, Head of Business Policy at the Institute of Directors, explains, working with new people is often an inevitable consequence of growth.

"I think that if you want to be effective in achieving an expansion of your business, then you're going to need to work with other people," he says. "That means possibly diluting

If you are in business to support a lifestyle that you have adopted, then keeping your business small could be essential so you can continue to manage it yourself. But keep an eye on how your business is running. It is easy to suddenly have explosive growth you either didn't plan for or don't want. Look at your key performance indicators, as these will show you how your profits are being eroded by costs, and also how your market is performing.

Many small businesses move to the internet and see a huge upswing in their turnover, which at first glance looks like a positive trend, but you must be able to support this growth. Will your suppliers give you extended payment terms, for instance? Is your logistical set up able to cope with the challenge of this new market? Before you make any major changes to your business, think through their consequences in great detail.

Not everyone wants to be the next Richard Branson or Alan Sugar. Many small businesses exist and are profitable simply because they are small and don't expose themselves to risks that could have a negative effect on their commercial viability.

This doesn't mean that you should ignore a business opportunity when it presents itself, but you should look carefully at how any changes you

"Look at what you would do if things don't go quite right. Don't stint on working capital. Make sure you talk to all partners involved about the benefits, implications and risks. Talk to your Business Link - our people have been there before and can help."

If you conclude that expansion is the logical option, then you have a number of choices. Again, this is where careful planning will save you time, money and stress.

Expansion into larger premises, acquiring another business or even franchising your existing business are all possible options. Ensure you take professional advice at every stage of your expansion programme. But above all else, prepare a detailed business plan. Ensure it includes full costing, cash flow analysis and your objectives for the expansion. And set yourself measurable targets so you can clearly see if your expansion plans stay on track. **SI**

**BELOW:** Careful planning will save you time, money and stress

## "Take professional advice at every stage of your expansion programme"

your ownership of the business by allowing someone else to have an equity stake in your organisation.

"It might mean diluting your control, in the sense that you have to share issues with your management team. Don't be too proud to look for advice. In many ways you can achieve more by working with others."

Often, growth will simply mean updating your existing business systems to cope with the new demands your market and customers are placing on it. This isn't growth per se, but improving the efficiency of your existing business infrastructure. Don't implement a large expansion plan when all you really need to do is improve the efficiency of your business systems.

### Expand or die?

Is expansion a business imperative that all enterprises should strive to attain? This will largely depend on not only the type of business you are in, but ultimately what your own ambitions are.

make - including expansion - would have on you and your core business. As Fraser Mackay says, planning is often ignored as small businesses grow: "Not always, but generally, not enough businesses carry out any meaningful 'what if' analysis."

Expansion should be approached with all the care of any new project you initiate in your business. As David Ripley warns, plan carefully: "The biggest concerns in any expansion are a lack of planning, lack of resources and clarity of thought.

"It is essential first of all to understand why expansion is needed - what is the motivator for the business owner? If this isn't clear then think again, mull it over with friends and colleagues and seek impartial advice from your Business Link."

"Take time to look at what you have, what you want to have and what the options are for getting from one to the other," says Stephen Rostron. "Work out what you need to deliver each of those options and what the optimum route is.





# Jim Fixxed it

Since The Complete Book of Running was published nearly 30 years ago, millions of people worldwide have woken up to the benefits of this form of exercise

The running segment is the lifeblood of many an independent sports retailer. Since New Yorker Jim Fixx popularised jogging in 1977 with his million-selling book, *The Complete Book of Running*, people around the world have woken up to the benefits of regular running.

As well as helping you to lose weight, running has a number of psychological benefits. It can relieve depression and stress, slow the ageing process and can even help to fight certain diseases.

## Treadmill

And as winter approaches and pounding the pavements in the morning or evening becomes less attractive, runners can easily swap the road for the treadmill at their local gym. According to the Fitness Industry Association's 2006 State of the

UK Fitness Industry Report, almost 90 per cent of the UK population live within two miles of a private health club or public health facility.

Furthermore, this research has revealed that UK consumers now have a choice, on average, of seven private health clubs within two miles of where they live and two public health and fitness facilities.

A Mintel marketing intelligence report has revealed that there are now more than four million members of private health and fitness clubs, equating to around nine per cent of the adult population, while the average club has more than 1,500 members and gross annual sales in excess of £750,000.

The proliferation of running and marathon events - many of which raise millions for UK charities - has also fuelled running's resurgence. Take the Flora London Marathon as an example. At its full participant capacity of 46,500 every year, there was a record 98,500 UK ballot applications in 2005; 572,174 people have completed the 26.2 mile race since its inception in 1981; and every year the event attracts around one million spectators.

And while one of running's attractions is its relative low cost of entry, constantly evolving technologies in both shoes and apparel mean there's always something new to offer customers.

## Technical boundaries

Every season the likes of Asics, New Balance, Saucony and Mizuno launch a

range of products in this sector that continue to push technical boundaries. Add complementary products such as socks from companies such as Bridgedale and Hilly, wristwatches and GPS systems, sunglasses and supports and you can quickly see the repeat-custom appeal for retailers.

Take the Nike+ range as an example. In September the global sports conglomerate reported that over one million miles - equivalent to circling the world more than 40 times - have been logged by Nike+ runners in the 10 weeks after the Nike and Apple line's launch.

The Nike+ iPod Sport Kit is a wireless system that allows Nike+ enabled footwear to communicate with an iPod nano, Apple's diminutive music/multimedia device. Data on time, distance, calories burned and pace can be stored on the nano and downloaded to [nikeplus.com](http://nikeplus.com), a website where runners can track their own progress and challenge other runners.

"Nikeplus.com is fast becoming the world's biggest online running community," says Trevor Edwards, Nike's chief marketing officer. "Nike+ is a new running experience, a new way to train, a new way to connect with other runners and a new way to bring music and sport together like never before.

"A million miles in 10 weeks is just the beginning. We're looking forward to the billionth mile."

As are the retailers ready and willing to assist the UK's army of runners looking to get the best out of their exercise regimes. **SI**

## SECTOR STATS

- 12.2 per cent of the adult population have run or jogged in the last 12 months
- In the UK, amongst those who have purchased sports shoes in the last year, 49 per cent will use them for running or jogging
- Men are more likely to participate in running or jogging in Europe than women (16 per cent compared to 10 per cent)
- Of those who go running in the UK, almost 58 per cent will run twice a month or more
- People with a high interest in running are more likely to seek adventure and risk than the general public





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Brooks is a specialist running company and its shoes and apparel can be found at specialist running stores. Check website for details or phone customer services on 01903 817009



2006 Show Exhibitor

## **Grid Phoenix 2** A STAG exclusive running shoe from Saucony

As requested by Ward Robertson and Ricky Chandler, Saucony has produced a technical running shoe exclusive to STAG members.

Offering top-end Saucony technologies Grid, HRC cushioning and a supportive, yet unobtrusive medial post, the Grid Phoenix 2 has great looks and functionality.

STAG has negotiated an improved margin on this product for all orders placed before the conclusion of the STAG show, which takes place on November 19-20. **All members have been sent product specification and pricing details, but for further information call Saucony on 023 9282 3664, visit [www.saucony.co.uk/phoenix2](http://www.saucony.co.uk/phoenix2) or contact Joy Carson at STAG.**



# Running & Athletics



## **Wave Rider 10**

Mizuno Running - the new Wave Rider 10, featuring Wave Technology, is available from December 2006.

For more details contact Mizuno on 0800 328 0180 or visit [www.mizunoeurope.com](http://www.mizunoeurope.com)



www.sportindustry.biz



2006 Show Exhibitor

### Wave Inspire 3

Mizuno Running - the new Wave Inspire 3, featuring Wave Technology, is available from December 2006.

For more details contact Mizuno on 0800 328 0180 or visit

[www.mizunoeurope.com](http://www.mizunoeurope.com)



2006 Show Exhibitor



### Our high performance REFLECTS on your performance

Besides being one of the leading suppliers of technical performance running/sports socks, HILLY Clothing Limited offers a comprehensive range of accessories, including bottle carriers, caps and an extensive line of neoprene accessories for carrying a mobile phone, gels, money, iPod, etc.

As the dark and cold nights rapidly approach, the company's range of reflective products is a must for runners who need to enhance their night-time visibility. The range includes gilets, jackets, bibs, long sleeved t-shirts, gloves and hats, is very competitively priced and offers key design features. For further information call HILLY on 0161 366 8207.

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# Striding-Rite into 2007

Saucony's commitment to the retailer base on which its success has been built remains as strong as ever



In the 12 months since the Stride-Rite Corporation purchased Saucony, the changes to the company in the UK have been occurring behind the scenes, rather than changing the long-established business model.

The UK success story has been built on technical product and providing an in-stock, on-time business capable of delivering within 24 hours to its account base of specialist sports retailers.

As of December 2006, the investment from the half-billion dollar parent company will begin to show in the form of major new product development and significant promotional support.

## ProGrid

As a company founded on innovation, Saucony will be making another considerable leap forward with the introduction of ProGrid in its top-end shoes. ProGrid is an evolution of the patented Grid system, which is the only cushioning technology to simultaneously provide stability.

Still presented in the Grid configuration, ProGrid utilises a blend of foams and rubbers to increase impact absorption, durability and responsiveness to maintain the stability properties present in all Saucony shoes.

ProGrid will debut in December 2006 in the top-of-the-range cushioning

shoe, the Triumph 4. The new shoe has seen the highest-ever level of forward orders and is supported by a major marketing initiative, including the worldwide launch at six stores in the UK on December 1.

## Higher profile

Above the line advertising in running, fitness and lifestyle titles, alongside a PR campaign with national and regional newspapers, will give the technology, the shoe and the company a higher profile in the months and years to come. ProGrid will also be introduced into the top-selling Omni model and the flagship Hurricane early in 2007.

## Loyal to the sport

Whilst this front-line activity continues, Saucony is remaining true to its roots and continues to move forward using the methodology that has seen phenomenal growth in the last decade.

Further recruitment has taken place to ensure service remains at the standards previously set and Saucony has renewed its investments in grass-roots sport with partnerships with the English National Cross Country Association and IronMan UK, among others. Saucony has also been supporting Alistair Brownlee, who recently won the World Junior Triathlon title in Rimini, Italy.

The relaunch of Saucony Apparel for spring/summer 2006 and the development of the Saucony FuelBelt line-up have positioned the company as the complete specialist running brand offering footwear, apparel and accessories. Forward bookings for spring 2007 clothing hit record numbers on the back of two successful sell-through seasons for the new-look technical range.

## STAG exclusive

Another first is the exclusive package put together for the STAG buying group. The Grid Phoenix 2 shoe has been designed to the criteria put together by Ward Roberson and Ricky Chandler at STAG and will be presented at the STAG show in November, offering a commercially attractive, technical shoe at an appropriate price point with strong margins.

Saucony's commitment to the retailer base on which its success has been built remains as strong as ever. For more information on Saucony UK visit [saucony.co.uk](http://saucony.co.uk) or call 023 9282 3664. See pages 38-39 for more details on the exclusive STAG Phoenix 2 offer. **51**

**SAUCONY**  
loyal to the sport



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# BrandCo Management Ltd

**is the Official Licensee for England Rugby, England Cricket, Irish Rugby, Ulster Rugby, Leinster Rugby and Cricket World Cup 2007**

The ranges we offer are aimed at Supporters who want easy to wear, good value, quality products of their favourite Teams and events and are all 100% Official with a full Official Licensed branding package easily visible to the consumer.

All products under our Official licenses earn money for the sports involved and help develop the game unlike unofficial products which in an increasingly ethical consumer market is a great selling point.

All of our products are stock backed and there is an opportunity for sales pre Christmas on Rugby ranges and into 2007 on Rugby and Cricket programmes, in a year when both the Cricket and Rugby World Cups will be played.



**BrandCo**  
management Ltd



**For full information on our ranges and to arrange a visit by our sales Agents please contact us on 01908 487542 or email [sales@brandcomanagement.co.uk](mailto:sales@brandcomanagement.co.uk)**



2006 Show Exhibitor

### Puma rugby

Using its sponsorship of the Samoan national rugby team, Puma goes into 2007 with a collection that reflects the Samoa style and culture and brings a fun 'beach rugby' feel to the company's performance rugby products.

The v-Konstrukt H8 is a professional rugby boot for use on soft natural surfaces with outstanding results in wet conditions. The boot offers maximum comfort combined with excellent stability and support.

Puma: 01372 360255.



# Rugby

## GILBERT's synergie match ball

This year's Autumn Internationals Series will see the launch of the new match ball from GILBERT. The very latest in ball technology, the synergie will be the Official Match Ball of the 2007 Rugby World Cup.

Incorporating a multi matrix 3D grip pattern, the ball's surface offers the ultimate balance between grip and aerodynamics. Reaction laminate construction and a figure-of-8 bladder with patented Truflight both ensure optimum performance.

The ball has been developed and engineered by using computational fluid dynamics and working with some of the world's best players. It will be available to retailers from January 1, 2007.

For more information on GILBERT's range of products call 0845 66 1823 or visit [www.gilbertrugby.com](http://www.gilbertrugby.com)





2006 Show Exhibitor

### Timaru

Mizuno Rugby - this boot is for any player serious about their rugby.

For more details contact

Mizuno on 0800 328 0180

or visit [www.mizunoeurope.com](http://www.mizunoeurope.com)



### KooGa Rugby - Teamwear

KooGa Rugby continues to work hard to offer the best possible rugby apparel and equipment for all levels of rugby players.

Grassroots players can now enjoy the very same high quality

KooGa match products worn by the likes of NEC Harlequins, Ospreys, Glasgow and Fiji thanks to the newly launched Teamwear range.

Teamwear is a new range of technical rugby apparel and equipment for 2006/07. The items include jackets, tracksuits, match shirts, shorts, rain and sub suits and everything else modern rugby clubs need to look and feel the part.

Constantly striving to be at the cutting edge in terms of design, comfort, science and innovation in its products, the KooGa design team has worked together with its professional clubs and international rugby federations to develop a new and revolutionary concept in match shirts - available in the Teamwear range.

The shirts contain Evaporex, a unique lightweight polythermal fabric designed to wick away perspiration, creating the ideal body climate. The shirts also have vented panels and a neck and collar construction that are tough and exceptionally durable.

**KooGa Teamwear is offered exclusively through specialist Teamwear retailers.**

**If you would like to stock it contact KooGa on 08708 474 788.**



2006 Show Exhibitor

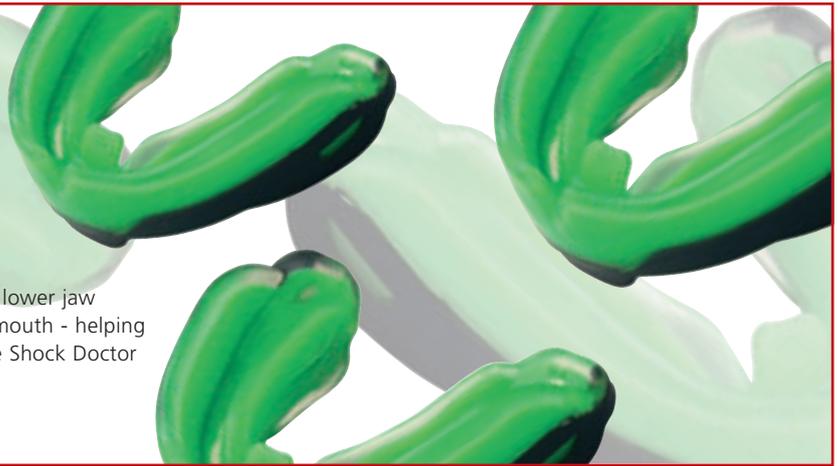
### Shock Doctor mouthguards

Shock Doctor mouthguards from Hy-Pro offer ultimate protection and on-pitch performance to rugby players of all ages.

Packed with technology, the patented semi-rigid designs, such as the Power Ultra guard, provide a perfect fit, offering lower jaw stability in a compact size for easier breathing and speaking.

If that's not enough, it's MORA enhanced, so when fitted and worn correctly, the Ultra design positions the lower jaw down and forward, with the tongue in the roof of the mouth - helping to increase strength and performance. All designs in the Shock Doctor range come with a dental warranty.

For more information visit [www.hy-pro.co.uk](http://www.hy-pro.co.uk) or call 01582 6700 100






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Call Phil Lynch or Susan Cooper on 01772 338899 to make an appointment with your local Kukri Sales Manager.




KUKRI – A SPORTSWEAR REVOLUTION

### Allsport Medical Rugby First Aid Kit

Allsport Medical, a leading UK supplier of sports injury treatment and prevention products, has launched a new Rugby First Aid Kit - a lightweight, compact and portable kit stocked to deal with common injuries sustained by players.

With the success of England's rugby team in the last World Cup, there has never been a greater level of interest in the sport, particularly among younger people for whom appropriate first aid treatment kits are essential.

The Allsport Medical Rugby First Aid Kit provides a comprehensive first aid solution for all contact field sports participants, both adult and children, including dressings and bandages, cold packs, strapping, spray bottles, plasters and resuscitation devices.

For more information contact Allsport Medical on 020 8203 1441 or email [sales@allsportmedical.co.uk](mailto:sales@allsportmedical.co.uk)



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# Rugby Training Equipment

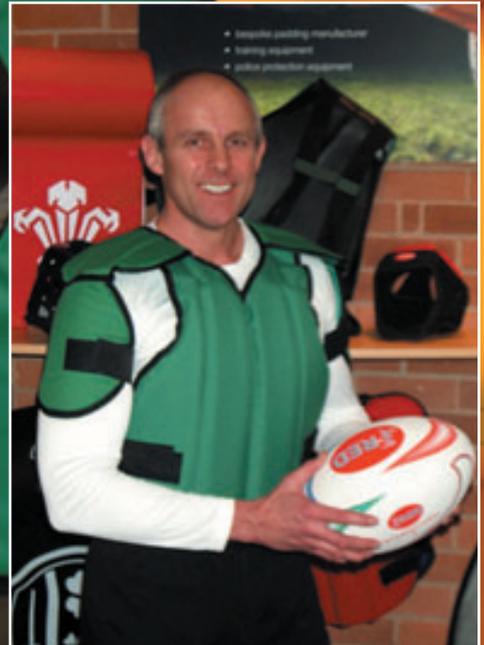
**GNG Sport is the UK's leading manufacturer of branded rugby training equipment.**

Sport attracts big brands due to its healthy image and vast marketing potential. However, for branded product to be effective it has to be as good as the brand it represents.

GNG Sport has been manufacturing and developing the best quality rugby training equipment for the trade for over 10 years, and the company's achievements in this area have been recognised with an ISO 9002 accreditation. Not that GNG Sport is solely rugby focused; it has supplied post protection for netball, basketball and tennis, martial arts pads and it's even made shields for football clubs including Chelsea and Manchester City.

Wherever there is a need for quality robust foam-filled products, GNG Sport can get your name across it.

**For further information call  
Neal Spencer on 01924 400501 or  
email [sports@gng-group.co.uk](mailto:sports@gng-group.co.uk)**



# Football

## Sells goalkeeper products

Sells, the goalkeeping specialist, is pleased to confirm the signings of several new endorsees to add to its impressive coverage in the Premiership, Championship and SPL.

Antti Niemi, Fulham, Maik Taylor, Birmingham City and Northern Ireland, Tim Krul, Newcastle United, Neil Sullivan, Leeds United, Shane Supple, Ipswich Town and Marlon Beresford, Luton Town will increase Sells' player portfolio to over 25 per cent of the Premiership and 60 per cent of the Championship.

In the SPL Craig Gordon, the Heart of Midlothian and Scotland goalkeeper, leads the company's strong presence in Scotland.

Overseas, Sells Goalkeeper products are now available in over 20 countries, with subsidiaries in the USA and the Netherlands.

The new Sells 2007 product range will further establish the brand as the number one specialist goalkeeping supplier. The collection features four gloves series - Wrap, Guard, Contour and Total Contact - which are all coordinated with new technical apparel, luggage and equipment.

For more information call 01924 299547 or email [info@sellsgoalkeeperproducts.com](mailto:info@sellsgoalkeeperproducts.com)



## HO Soccer

HO Soccer might be a new specialist goalkeeper company in the UK, but it's a leading brand in both Spain and Portugal.

This company realises that a goalkeeper's needs are specific and that each keeper aspires to achieve the best possible performance during every match or training session.



2006 Show Exhibitor



By working with many respected goalkeeping coaches and more than 200 professional keepers - including Quim of Benfica and Portugal, Helton of Porto and Molina of Deportivo La Coruna - HO Soccer has combined its passion and knowledge of the game with leading-edge technology and the best materials to offer a comprehensive collection of goalkeeper products.

The 2007/08 HO Goalkeeper range will include top-level professional gloves and clothing, together with mid-priced, entry-level and junior products.

From the professional category, the flagship Kontrol glove (RRP £49.99) offers a superb combination of support, superior fit and comfort.

Available at the STAG show, for more information call 01823 325332 or email [sales@ho-soccer.co.uk](mailto:sales@ho-soccer.co.uk)



**: keep it real**

*Pablo Ribadeneira, Argentina National Team*

We look forward to seeing you on our stand at the STAG Show to see our new 2007 range of goalkeeping products.

For further information please contact:  
 BF Sports • Bob Fidler • 24 Westworth Drive • Bramhall • Stockport  
 Cheshire SK7 2LQ • Tel/Fax: 0161-439-4383 • e-mail: b.fidler@reusch.com

**reusch**  
www.reusch.com



2006 Show Exhibitor

### New ranges from Reusch

2007 will see Reusch return to what it does best - goalkeeping.

The teamsport items have been dropped, and the focus of a goalkeeping specialist is to develop the best goalkeeping products on the market. New ranges will be available at the beginning of 2007.

Goalkeeper gloves will have new more comfortable cuts and fit, new latex materials for better grip, new cosmetics for better appearance and new technical features for better all-round performance. Apparel will see new products offering better performance, fit and value for money.



2006 Show Exhibitor

### Rucanor football

Rucanor has a large and comprehensive selection of footballs and football-related products available from stock throughout the year, and has now added to the range with a kid's moulded sole boot with velcro fastening.

This model will initially only be available in limited quantities for delivery from the end of December, but forward bookings will be taken for delivery next June/July, along with a planned screw-in version.

Available in sizes 28-39 (screw-in will be 30-39) and with an SRP of between £14.99 and £19.99, giving a minimum double-up on the trade price, these are set to be winners in the back-to-school market.

**For further information on these or any other products from the Rucanor range call the Sales Hotline Number: 0845 2300147.**

## IN SEASON FOOTBALL

### Nomis Spark

Worn by Harry Kewell, the Nomis Spark (RRP £120) offers enhanced comfort, performance and injury prevention levels.

The sole plate is based on running shoe design to give improved stability, cushioning and fit, while the redesigned stud pattern improves ground grip, freedom of movement and reduces the risk of injury.

Nomis claims that the Spark offers up to 16 times more grip in the dry than other leather boots, while the 'Nomud' technology on the outsole significantly reduces the amount of grass, mud and dirt that collects during normal game play.

**Nomis: 01244 681007.**



# Football

### Puma v1.06 ball

Puma's v1.06 ball delivers more speed, further distance and improved control.

The new panel shape guarantees the roundest, most technically advanced ball to date. Based on verified geometrical principals, Puma has developed a new system using only 24 individually shaped panels. All panels have round edges and are pre-shaped in accordance with the new Concept 45° construction formula. As a result, tension is minimised, guaranteeing a rounder shape when the ball is inflated.

The Dimple II CW-System gives the v1.06 the flight characteristics of a golf ball - consistency, control and straight trajectory. As is the case with a golf ball, the dimples ensure less drag and an improved ascent, compared to a regular 'flat' surface.

**Puma: 01372 360255.**



# PUMA

# Hit the net with Goalband

A new product hits the football accessories market this month which its makers claim will transform the beautiful game and increase the number of goals scored at every level.

It is an accuracy enhancing heading band knitted in stretchable material with silicon wave strips inside and out to provide a threefold increase in grip compared with the forehead when heading a football.

Goalband is worn comfortably around the head, and is proven to deliver excellent results following extensive testing with Sheffield United's academy players at Sheffield Hallam University - one of the players even offered to pay £20 to get his hands on one he thought it was so good.

The heading band has proved to be particularly useful when coaching young players how to head the ball as it gives the juniors the confidence to open their eyes and meet the ball decisively with their forehead.

Although the product will improve accuracy and control on directed headers, it is the psychological benefits that it induces which make the heading band a particularly good coaching aid for youngsters. This point was proven when the former Coventry City FC player David Busst used the heading band at his junior coaching sessions with great success.

The product retails at £5.99 and provides margins of up to 40%, depending upon volumes ordered. It is available in a variety of sizes to cater for footballers of all ages and genders. It can be branded with club logos, but that adds £1 to the retail price.

For more information, visit the website at [www.goalband.co.uk](http://www.goalband.co.uk), or call the sales enquiry line on **01926 428682**.

***"It's not about making chances, it's about taking chances"***

**Vaughan Lovelock  
Product Inventor.**

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**PLACEMENT**

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[www.goalband.co.uk](http://www.goalband.co.uk)

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Brochure

# Bowls



## Shading it

**Balmoral Knitwear is putting the colour into bowls.**

Need a short run of bowls garments? Balmoral Knitwear can supply a range of coloured bowls waistcoats in 12 colours, with no minimum order.

"Bowls clothing is no longer just white," says the company's Mike Carden.

"Regulations used to insist that bowlers wear white clothing at all competitions. This has changed, and increasingly teams are choosing their own colours to wear.

"That can present a challenge for a club looking for, say, ladies' waistcoats in emerald green or pink."

Balmoral Knitwear stocks the most popular shades - royal blue, light blue, navy, red and bottle green. In addition, the company manufactures 12 other shades four times a year - including emerald green and pink - allowing it to supply customers with any quantity necessary.

A similar arrangement applies to ribbed drop-needle white knitwear.

**For more information call 01563 820213.**



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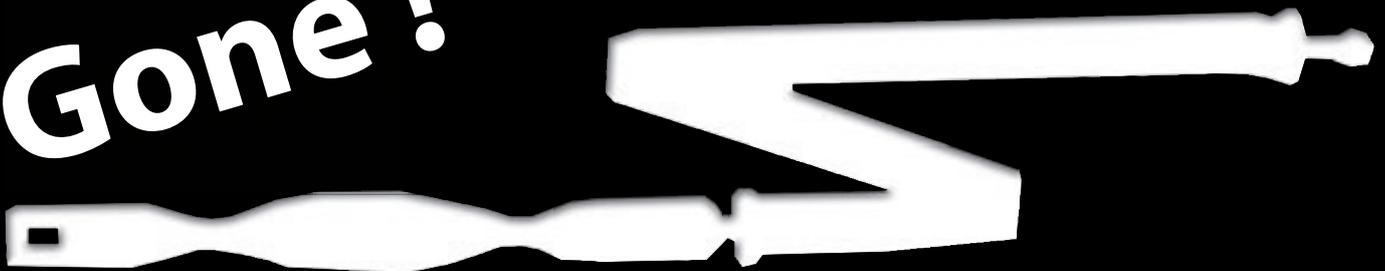
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Stick:  
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36.5", 37.5", 38"  
L, M, H  
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Cross Turf (Ladies)  
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Stick:  
Pro Tekk 550  
Lilac Or Black  
36.5", 37.5", 38"  
L, M, H  
M.R.R.P. £90.00



Shoe:  
Turf Force  
Orange  
Sizes 4-13 (Inc ½ Sizes)  
M.R.R.P. £59.99



Stick:  
Teun de Nooijer  
Orange  
36.5", 37.5", 38"  
L, M  
M.R.R.P. £125.00



Stick:  
Terra Maxx 6  
Yellow Or Pink  
36.5", 37.5", 38"  
L, M, H  
M.R.R.P. £150.00



Shoe:  
Turf Gripper  
Black/Yellow  
Sizes 4-13 (Inc ½ Sizes)  
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Stick:  
Terra Maxx 7  
Pink Or Black  
36.5", 37.5", 38"  
L, M, H  
M.R.R.P. £160.00



Shoe:  
Turf Innovator  
Grey  
Sizes 4-12 (Inc ½ Sizes)  
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Stick:  
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Blue  
36.5", 37.5", 38"  
L, M, H  
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Pink  
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## Community spirit

Online communities are now powerful selling tools that can generate a steady stream of revenue for your business, says Dave Howell

At first sight online communities don't seem the most commercial of propositions. But if your website can offer a mechanism that fosters a community, it can instantly become an essential place to not only visit to exchange views and opinions, but also to buy goods and services.

Communities on the internet began around 1980 with the arrival of Usenet. Developed as a way for groups of people to communicate with each other about a common subject, Usenet became massively popular.

With the arrival of the internet and the world wide web, online communities exploded. Today, the blog has become not only a place for individuals to communicate on a global scale, but also for businesses to gain a closer relationship with their customers.

### Social software

Today online communities are massive business in their own right. Many of the world's best-known brands have developed communities on their websites that they actively use to promote their goods or services.

"It's definitely a case of horses for courses," says Dan Wilson, Community Manager of eBay UK. "For some businesses, an online community may not be relevant. So it pays to think of it in terms of what the community element of a website is for.

"I'd say there are two major benefits. Firstly, it keeps people coming back to your site. If your online community offers something to the participants that makes them willingly come your way and spend time on your site, that's solid gold and gets you easy traffic and a willing audience.

"And that brings us to the second hard-nosed benefit - once they're with you, you can communicate with them. However, overbearing marketing techniques put participants off."

Businesses like AOL and eBay rely on the members of their communities for the very existence of their businesses, but every major brand now supports its customers with more than just new goods or services. Lifestyle brands such as sports manufacturers are a good example.

The launch of the Reebok 'I am what I am' TV campaign invited customers to the Reebok website to create their own adverts. This allowed the company to make an intimate connection with potential customers.

Businesses today know that they have to look more closely at who their customers are, and what they want

from the brands they buy. And as a retailer, you can also use your online community to foster a closer relationship with your customers.

Even using a simple HTML newsletter can enable you to build a community for the price of sending an email. Denise Cox, Newsletter Specialist at Newsweaver, describes how to handle the newsletters you send out: "Customer-controlled content is a real buzzword in the industry now, and it is an excellent way to make email campaigns better segmented and in turn better targeted.

"By letting the subscriber choose what's relevant to them, you are better placed to be relevant, interesting and engaging - and always welcome in the inbox. Let the subscriber decide how often and what they want to receive from you. Offer the flexibility to pick areas of interest, frequency, etc. Allow readers the ability to change their selections with each mailing - and ensure it's easy to do."

## Tools

There is a massive amount of software to choose from to suit every need and pocket when setting up a chatroom, forum or blogs. Thinkofit ([www.thinkofit.com/webconf/forums.off.htm](http://www.thinkofit.com/webconf/forums.off.htm)) offers communications resources, including links to every type of chatroom and messageboard software you can install on your own site.

An excellent off-the-shelf solution comes from Ikonboard ([www.ikonboard.com](http://www.ikonboard.com)). This package is a free download and, once installed, doesn't attract any hosting fees.

Chatrooms can often foster a stronger sense of community than other forms of online communication because of their immediacy. Realchat ([www.realchat.com](http://www.realchat.com)) offers a package that can be installed on any hardware platform. The basic software costs \$495, with the Enterprise Edition offering extra features such as moderated chats, and allows the chatroom to carry banner adverts and other forms of branding.

How sophisticated you want to make the community will be determined by what your aims are for your website. These days one of the easiest ways of speaking directly to your visitors is via a blog.

The first of these diary-like websites began to appear in 1998. They have seen rapid development and today you are spoilt for choice when it comes to which application to use for your blog. Sites like Blogger ([www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com)), WordPress

(<http://wordpress.org>), b2evolution ([www.b2evolution.net](http://www.b2evolution.net)) and Movable Type ([www.sixapart.com/movabletype](http://www.sixapart.com/movabletype)) offer a simple-to-use interface that can get your blog up and running in minutes.

"Different community facilities have different attractions," says Dan Wilson. "But I think simplicity and clarity work best. The other thing that will need thinking about is moderation, or how you protect your own brand from damage. This need not be onerous, but it is often overlooked.

"Number one tip - it's not going to happen overnight. Online communities develop and grow if there is something to bring people in, interest them and keep them coming back. Companies also need to spend time nurturing them to ensure they are growing and developing. However, it's worth the time and effort, because what you end up with is highly valuable - valued customers who can spread your messages for you. You can't buy that."

Creating a community on your website gives you a captive audience. If you then interrogate the information that your community contains, this is gold dust to your business. You can use this information to improve your community and your business as a whole. But remember, above all treat your community members with respect. If you do this they will become long-term customers. **51**

## CHECKLIST

1 Don't host a community just for a new revenue stream. Use it to build a relationship with your customers.

2 Keep in regular contact via email, but don't spam members.

3 Send tailored newsletters or emails to relevant sections of your community.

Only offer them products or services you know they will be interested in.

4 Be careful if you sell your email addresses to a third party - you may receive negative feedback that could damage your site and business.

5 Don't begin emailing your community as soon as you have members' email addresses.

Take some time to understand who these people are and what they want from you. User profiling is important.

6 Organise face-to-face events and get to know members of your community first hand. This builds brand loyalty and promotes trust.

7 Online communities develop and grow if there is something to bring people in, interest them and keep them coming back.

## CHOOSE YOUR COMMUNITY

### Internet Relay Chat (IRC)

IRC was created in 1988 by Jarkko 'WiZ' Oikarinen. The system is ideal for communication between members of a community as it allows instant interaction between a large number of users. Read more about IRC and see it in action at [www.irc.org](http://www.irc.org)

### Chatrooms

These share many of the traits of IRC and forums, in that each of these systems uses a 'virtual room' where the interactions take place. Chatrooms are usually moderated and some even

allow graphics instead of plain text to be used in the messages posted.

### Weblogs

The term 'weblog' was coined by Jorn Barger in December 1997, with the shorter version 'blog' being used by Peter Merholz two years later. The first hosted blogs were developed by Pyra, which gave the world Blogger ([www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com)) and was bought by Google in 2004. Blogs now cover every conceivable subject and are used by governments, individuals and businesses alike.

### Forums

This is the general term used to describe a host of online communities. Sometimes known as message or discussion boards, they are the most common form of online community.

New discussions or 'threads' can be started by anyone, which can lead to other threads beginning as the discussion progresses. Most forums are text-based, but one of the largest is Gaia Online ([www.gaiaonline.com](http://www.gaiaonline.com)), which uses 3D characters or avatars to represent members of the community.

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**RIGHT:** Chris Barling: "You need to make sure that your shipping can shape up"



For many retailers the Christmas season is vital to profitability for the whole year. So here's my advice about the special requirements of Yuletide retailing online:

### **Make sure you can handle the increase in traffic**

If there is anything worse than having no orders, it's having more than you can deal with, and then having to refund your customers' money.

On average, ecommerce sites see a rise in orders of 30 per cent in the Christmas period, although obviously this varies greatly.

So if your sales are seasonally affected, make sure all your systems can cope with at least that level of increase. This includes having extra staff for getting orders out in time. And if you are planning any special promotions, allow for even more.

### **Keep control of your store**

In peak periods your stock position can change really quickly. You need to be able to respond immediately. You don't necessarily want a web developer setting the priorities for what products are online.

Only you really know your business. There again, you may want to change prices or specially promote slow-moving stock, or substitute products when you get alternative supplies. You need to be able to add, modify and delete things yourself, at any time, day or night.

### **Cater for last minute shoppers**

Christmas shoppers fall into two camps - those who buy in September and

# Pain-free profit

## Chris Barling, CEO of ecommerce supplier Actinic, provides 10 tips for a Happy eChristmas

those who buy after December 20.

You need to make sure that your shipping can shape up. Make clear what is the last day when customers can order for delivery by Christmas. Ideally, put this on the header or footer of every page in your store.

Once the deadline has passed, change your message to make it clear that orders can't be fulfilled in time.

### **Help customers who are in a rush**

Most online shoppers are in a hurry. When they come to your site, make the key information they will need as obvious as possible, particularly any special information relating to Christmas.

Most of all, you must have a lightning-fast search capability. This should be able to match both by category and price range. Your ecommerce product must integrate the two - search engines may be fine for text-based searching, but they're very poor when you want a gift that costs less than £10 for, say, your eight-year-old niece.

### **Delivering the goods**

Make sure your logistics supplier can cope. It may be worth considering a courier for the peak period or Special Delivery.

If deliveries do require a signature or won't fit through the letterbox, this often means that the parcel is returned to the depot until the customer arranges to collect it, which rather defeats the convenience of buying online.

So give customers the opportunity to have a delivery to their work address to avoid delays.

### **Use upsell to maximise your opportunity**

Many gifts don't stand alone, they need other items to go with them. What's the use of a DVD player without any

DVDs, or a PS2 without any games?

But in the hurry of Christmas shopping such things can be easily forgotten. So explicitly offer related items with your products wherever relevant.

### **Use seasonal promotions**

Find creative ideas to support the season of good cheer. Add a festive page design, put likely presents and links to gift packs on your home page, offer a gift-wrapping service and stock Christmas-themed items.

Depending on what you sell, an email or letter to past customers with a special offer might produce a result.

People buying presents can be susceptible to offers like 'buy two and get one free'. You can steal a march on competitors who don't offer the same value.

### **Thank your regulars**

Remember that all-important 'thank-you' Christmas card to all your regular customers. Perhaps it's gimmicky, but as a customer I like it when I get remembered. Or better still, you could add a 'present' of a discount during January.

### **Test your marketing ideas now**

Whatever you are thinking of doing to market your site in the run-up to Christmas, run some small-scale tests now and monitor the results. Then you can find out what works best and refine it to maximise the results.

And if search engines are important for traffic, make sure you put extra effort into your optimisation in plenty of time.

### **Advertise January sales**

You may also want to start your January sales with appropriate delivery dates. Give the 'value shoppers' who held off at Christmas a chance to clear all your dead stock for you. **51**

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# Under the counter

A sideways look at the world of independent retailing

**'Merry Christmas, but no more clicking metal balls, please.'** I had written this heartfelt message on five greetings cards when I was caught by my wife and sternly told to stop such nonsense.

"Just tell me," she asked, "why you are always determined to be such a misery at this time of year?" "Every self-employed person," I replied, "knows the answer to that."

I opened a drawer in the counter to display the serried ranks of matador sword paper knives, a paperweight made of dried seaweed, paperclip holders shaped like peapods, a Rio Ferdinand pencil sharpener, a pokerwork plaque of the 23rd psalm - and four sets of clicking metal balls.

"This lot's from last year," I said. "Do you really think I need any more? Have a heart, woman!"

## Cutting

To be honest, that's what I nearly said. The exact words, if I remember, were more like: "Okay dear, I'll write them again." But that can be pretty cutting if it's said right.

Why people feel compelled to buy the self-employed crap presents for the office and shop is something more suited to a social science seminar than this humble column, but the fact remains that they do.

Just what they think we get up to on half-closing day with clicking metal balls, swinging wooden parrots and pencils topped with small rubber pigs is a subject we can hardly discuss in a respectable business magazine.

Mildly object to being given yet another chromium-plated acrobat committing suicide down a ladder, or the fourth out-of-date World Cup mousemat, and you're told that men are impossible to buy presents for.

Oh yes? I can't see many of us sending back a bottle of 10-year-old malt, a tasteful Rolex, a pair of Cup Final tickets or the keys to a Mercedes SLK 320. Can you?

My friend Gary understands. "I'm dreading this Christmas," he said over a pint in the local the other evening. An artificial inseminator in the dairy industry, he's known in the district as 'the bull in the bowler hat'.

Last Christmas he received three cards addressed to 'The man who puts his hand up cows' bottoms', and says the postman still won't look him in the eye.

Gary's previous Christmas presents

include animal-noise coffee mugs, a flock of sheep-shaped candles, sparkly fluorescent rubber gloves and a singing fish on a plastic plinth.

## Top 10

My contribution to the top 10 unwanted Christmas gifts was:

- Clicking metal balls (naturally)
- Anything that flashes or shrieks
- Replicas of Tony Blair made of reconstituted coal dust
- Lava lamps
- Squidgy-ball stress relievers
- Puzzles promising hours of fun
- Paperweights labelled 'big deal' and 'little deal'
- Whoopee cushions
- Dinosaur-shaped floppy disk holders
- French maid's apron

Invariably, the most unwelcome presents come from my young nephew Neville, whose last year's gift was a stainless steel puzzle based on Schrodinger's atomic wave mechanics theory. I think it is, but I haven't yet mastered the knack of opening the box.

The bad news is that there's now a major industry devoted to executive toys designed to drive you mad with either rage or boredom. My internet search engine turned up 521,000 hits at the last count and I've no doubt Neville's been logging on to most of them.

The ingenuity of executive toy designers has surely reached new heights of inanity this year. So brace yourself to receive such time wasters as zero-gravity water balloons, electrostatic waterfalls, light-powered horizontal windmills, inflatable dartboards, programmable ouija boards and friction-powered dancing frogs.

My guess is that Neville will be torn between the plastic replicated hornet farm and a set of flip-up cards



of the world's top 100 kickboxers. If anyone asks, I'd rather like a new black tie for funerals.

But slowly the worms are turning. Gary and I have decided to pool our unwanted gifts from previous years and recycle them to our nearest and dearest this Christmas.

For a start, Gary's wife, a psychiatric nurse, will get my Taiwan-made tap-dancing parrot which sings, "This is the way to Amarillo" in a voice just slightly reminiscent of Lesley Garrett.

I haven't quite decided what is most suitable for little Neville, although the dancing frog in West Bromwich Albion strip is current favourite. But I can't wait to see my wife's reaction to the French maid's apron. It should really brighten up the day.

I have to say that the only vestiges of sanity revolve around my Christmas arrangements with my loyal assistant Norman. He hates Christmas so much that he once asked if he could come in on Christmas afternoon and start the stocktaking.

I expect our Christmas arrangements to be pretty much as usual. Norman will give me the unopened Christmas card I first gave him in 1994 and I will give him one I first received in 1992. Every year we just change the names on the envelopes. The thought is there, without any expense or inconvenience being involved.

Perhaps you'd like to try it next year. 51



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