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Every year as Marathon Monday in Boston approaches, running brands step up with some Beantown energy in limited edition Boston-inspired footwear styles. Featured marathon sponsor Adidas leads the way. This year, a 2017 Boston Marathon limited edition adizero adios (as seen on the cover of this issue) will be available exclusively for \$170 at the Boston Marathon RunBase and Expo. Pairs featuring classic B.A.A. blue and yellow are emblazoned with the official 2017 logo and marathon inspired design elements BOS and 26.2 on the heel. Marathon apparel is also available on adidas.com. Another standout style comes from Saucony. The brand salutes its hometown of Boston with the Limited Edition Boston Freedom ISO, inspired by the city's historic Freedom Trail that passes landmarks significant to the American Revolution. Turn the page to see more Boston style. ■



Nike Zoom Flyknit Streak (Boston)

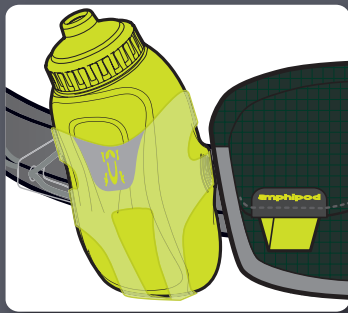
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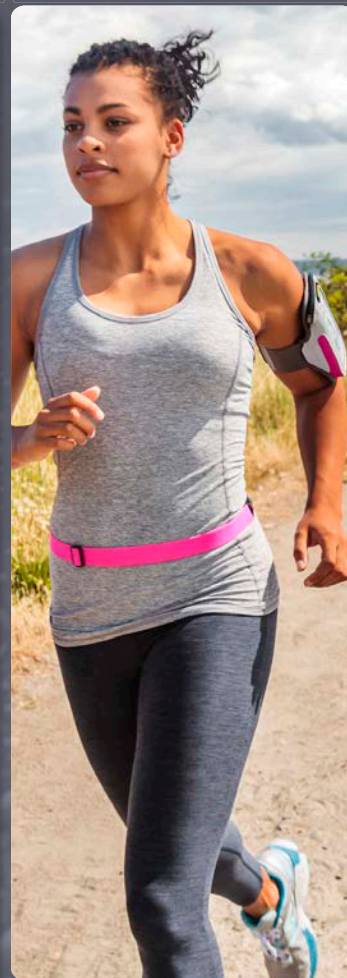


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**MADE IN
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Technology Keeps Insoles On Their Toes (and Heels)

3-D Scanning and Printing Amps Up the Competition in Custom Market.

By Nancy A. Ruhling



Powerstep's Endurance, \$33.95, is a slim, athletic insole cushioned with PORON padding at high-impact areas, the heel and forefoot. It has an external shell for flexible support and is water-resistant.

In the last couple of years, insoles have proven that they are in it for the long run.

Although they are not standard equipment – yet – they are on their way to becoming a necessary accessory for runners as well as run-specialty shops.

These over-the-counter products, initially offered as a more affordable alternative to medical orthotics, are positioning themselves solidly in the custom market.

New technology, notably 3-D imaging and printing, is driving the change at a rapid pace. And several brands are stepping in to create a new breed of bespoke insoles that are as easy on the feet as they are on the wallet.

One of the more comprehensive custom approaches is being undertaken by Superfeet.

In partnership with Hewlett Packard and two

other companies, the brand has created a system that selects and matches specific shoe styles and sizes with its 3-D printed insoles to provide the customer with the best fit of each.

“We have a 3-D HP Tiger 500-micron-resolution scanner, the highest resolution 3-D one on the market,” says Matt Gooch, Superfeet research and product marketing manager. “It measures the foot of the customer for length, width and volume via a 3-D point cloud model that is generated from the scan. We have a proprietary X-ray-based scanner similar in size and structure to what you would see at the airport to scan luggage that we are using to scan shoes from key brands that run-specialty retailers sell. We assess and measure the internal dimensions and fit of each shoe so we can build a 3-D model and create a database.”



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Technology Keeps Insoles On Their Toes (continued)



BLUPRINT's Cloud Imprint, \$79.99, features Fit Pods that release a proprietary liquid that fills in the gaps between the bottom of the foot and shoe when pressure is applied. It molds to the foot in fewer than three minutes.



CurrexSole's RUNPRO, \$49.95, is one of the brand's sport-specific styles designed to work with the motion patterns of the activity and footwear. It features a zero-mm drop with a dynamic design.



Lynco Speed Orthotics, \$59.95, feature the brand's ExoFoam layer to promote high-energy return, a lightweight base for maximum performance and an anti-microbial film. The arch support is strategically placed to help biomechanically align the body and help prevent common injuries like plantar fasciitis, arch pain and metatarsalgia.



Superfeet's RUN Women's Comfort Max, \$49.95, is designed with women-specific dimensions to help reduce fatigue while gaining efficiency. It personalizes the shoe to the foot, and its EVOLyte carbon fiber cap and AeroSpring Dual Comfort Foam provide comfort and optimal energy transfer from foot strike to toe off. The brand's RUN Pain Relief, \$59.95, stabilizes the foot to minimize repetitive stress.

Based on the data, a recommendation for footwear and Superfeet 3-D printed insoles is made.

With the TrueForm3D Platform, which won four awards at the Outdoor Retailer show, retailers buy or lease the foot scanner.

"The retail associate is able to toggle between sizes of a given shoe and show the consumer an image that illustrates how different sizes would fit differently," he says. "They also can explain how the insole works with the movement of the foot. It's a great visual for the customer to understand the fit process. It also provides an in-store profile of the customer and can be refined with each new shoe purchase."

The data inputs allow Superfeet to fit each 3-D printed insole to each foot.

"Each insole is individually tuned for torsional rigidity and stiffness in five key zones all based on the movement patterns of the consumer and how they load their feet," Gooch says. "This could be similar or quite different for the left and right foot."

The results, he points out, are comprehensive but not instantaneous.

"There's a one- to two-week turnaround to get the custom insole," he says. "But we are working on making it faster. And the insole is more costly than over-the-counter insoles – it's about \$150 – but it's less costly than custom medical orthotics."

Gooch says that the process will

"revolutionize" not only the insole industry but also the shoe industry when it is launched in key channels in Q2 of 2017.

"It's a non-inventory sale, so it disrupts retail and manufacturing," he says. "The retailer pays only when the customer orders it, and the manufacturer makes it per order."

Gooch says Superfeet, which launched off-the-shelf footwear in spring 2016, will create custom footwear that coordinates with the 3-D printed custom insoles.

By Q4 of 2017 and Q1 of 2018, he says, "we will create a custom piece of footwear for each foot by making a custom last and building a custom shoe around it."

Wiivv has added a smartphone app



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Technology Keeps Insoles On Their Toes (continued)



Spenco's Total Support Insoles, \$39.99, feature the brand's patented 3-POD Modulation System in which pods of various hardnesses are sited beneath key areas of the foot. The insoles – Original, MAX (above) and Thin — carry the American Podiatric Medical Association Seal of Acceptance and are unconditionally guaranteed for one year.



SOLE's Met Pad, \$50, has the brand's award-winning signature supportive shape as well as built-in metatarsal pads. Made of environmentally sustainable cork and available in thin, medium and thick styles, the heat- and wear-moldable insole is moisture-wicking, shock absorbing and odor reducing.



Sof Sole's Airr Orthotic, \$29.99, combines encapsulated shock-absorbing air chambers called Skydex with a reinforced stability plate in the arch for support and comfort.



Kneed Footwear's Kneed2Run, \$49, is a flexible and supportive insole that features transitional-density EVA and PORON Performance Cushioning. Its biomechanical shape is designed to fit within the space running-shoe sock liners take up.

to the 3-D printing equation. It creates custom insoles by mapping photos of the feet at more than 200 points and using patent-pending technology to convert the 2-D images into a 3-D printable file. The insoles are made at a factory in San Diego, California, and shipped within seven days.

“We began partnering with bricks-and-mortar retailers last year,” says Shamil Hargovan, co-founder and CEO. “Retailers benefit because Wiivv are a no-risk, no-inventory, high-quality, high-performance product that offers a much higher profit margin than regular stock insoles. Wiivv handles all the shipping logistics, returns, exchanges and customer-service inquiries.”

Like Superfeet, Wiivv also is

entering the footwear market. In March, it launched a recovery sandal for runners that it says is the world's first custom footwear designed and 3-D printed to fit the foot.

“This is the biggest leap in footwear since foam,” Hargovan says.

Three-D foot-scanning continues to play a key role for Aetrex, which, in 2002, pioneered bringing that technology to stores.

Its newest system, Albert, features 18 digital cameras, 96 infrared receptors and 5,184 gold-plated sensors that assesses pronation and instantly recommend the optimal Aetrex insoles for the customer.

“Never before have devices captured so much data and information about one's

feet, which in turn enables the consumer to make much more educated decisions about footwear and orthotics,” says Evan Schwartz, president of Aetrex. “Working in tandem with Aetrex's Lynco orthotic lines, the overall scanning process is tied to a unique business model that's proven to have tremendous impact to a retailer's bottom line.”

Albert, which will be in several hundred stores by the end of summer, is leased to retailers. The monthly fee is based on units sold.

FootBalance, whose insoles are custom-molded in store, is another early adopter.

“Three-D printing technology is not there yet to answer today's online consumer demands,” says Jani Hurme,

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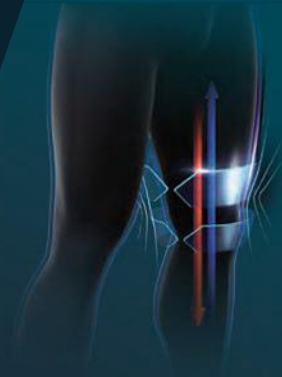


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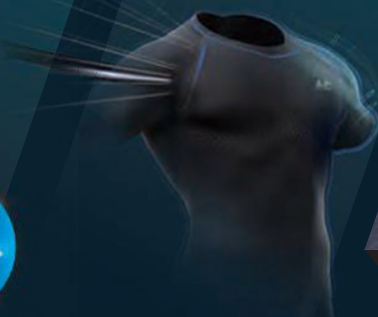


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Technology Keeps Insoles On Their Toes (continued)



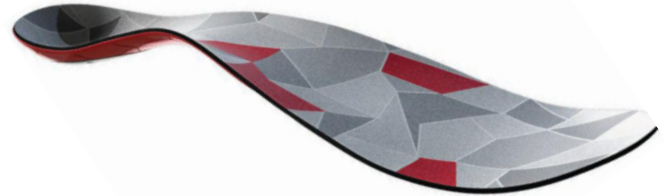
Heel That Pain's Heel Seats, \$24.95, are patented and a clinically proven treatment for plantar fasciitis and spurs.



FootBalance's Max Custom Insole, \$80 to \$100, is molded in the store in fewer than 10 minutes for a custom fit. It features D-200 silver ions and is high-abrasion, moisture-wicking and anti-microbial. It offers support for low-impact activities and has a stiffer core to give support for wearers with pronation.



New Balance's Ultra Support 3810, \$45, has a carbon-fiber external heel, a rigid arch support, an extra deep heel cup and ABSORB cushioning in the heel and forefoot.



Wiivv's Full-Length Custom Fit 3D Printed Insole, \$89, is biomechanically designed and 3-D printed to match the contours of the foot via a smartphone app. Designed for runners, it relieves plantar fasciitis, pain and fatigue.

country manager – North America. “However, we can proudly say that at FootBalance we have the first technology globally that enables us to 3-D scan molded insoles and produce exactly the same one in less than 10 minutes by using a multi-material 3-D manufacturing unit.”

In addition to Superfeet, FootBalance, Aetrex and Wiivv, other brands are exploring the possibilities of 3-D technology.

“At New Balance, we are looking at a variety of options,” says Steve Sheridan, senior vice president of sales for Hickory Brands. “As 3-D becomes more affordable and the benefits are a better cost/value

relationship, we will be prepared to be at the forefront of that movement.”

Although Evan Wert, president of Icebug USA, sees 3-D printing as a “strong wave” of the future, he says that there are a lot of issues that have to be worked out before it is a viable option.

“Right now, the cost is high, and the machines are very slow,” he says. “And there is the issue of how one is interpreting the data to create the device. Was the foot correctly placed in the scanner? Is it really ‘custom’ or does the machine ‘pick’ a pre-determined shape that is closest to the foot? Also, determining what should be ‘custom’ needs to look at how the foot interacts

with the ground, the shoe it’s in and what activity the person is using it for. I think we are still a long way from this technology being used to its fullest and used correctly.”

He points out that Ortolab AB, the Swedish company Icebug works with to develop its insoles, uses scanners and digital milling in its custom orthotics.

“We continue to work with them to see what we can take from that and offer the best ‘ready-to-wear’ insole,” Wert says. “Technology does play a role in the fit process, but it is still important to have the ‘human’ element to look at the shoes, feet and body and talk to the customer to determine what’s the right insole for them.”



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Technology Keeps Insoles On Their Toes (continued)



Icebug Insoles with Arch Flex System Technology, \$46.95, make it easy for wearers to custom match the correct orthotic with foot type. They support the foot's structure and provide an energy return with every step, reacting like a stability ball that constantly responds to body type and activity. They are available in Slim and Flat styles and come in high, medium and low heights.



Sorbothane's Ultra Sole, \$29.95, has a molded air-infused foam base with a proprietary heel inlay that cushions and absorbs shock.

That human element, says Drew Davies, vice president of sales for Sof Sole, starts with the feet.

"There is only so much a computer or mobile app can show or tell you," he says. "All in all, you have to try on the product to truly understand what you like and dislike about it."

Jonathan Koops, co-founder of Kneed, agrees, adding that "ultimately the interaction between the customer and the product recommended by the retailer is what's going to provide satisfaction."

He sees technology as a "crutch" in the fit process.

"Depending on the sophistication of the imaging, you may end up catching a moment and making an assessment unrelated to the actual needs of the runner," he says. "The best practice is treating technology in the retail store the way medically we treat imaging combined with a radiologist. The expertise is key for proper interpretation."

Kristin Stacy, board member of Heel That Pain, says the brand has been "playing with 3-D printing technology for many years" and watching as it matures.

She says that when the prices come down, "depending on the product, it can be a viable alternative to injection molding or other manufacturing techniques."

Koops, too, is taking a skeptical stance in the short term.

"The major obstacles that need to be overcome by 3-D printing are materials,

cost and expertise," he says. "The current assortment of materials available for 3-D printed insoles are generally unsatisfactory for dynamic movement like running. The running insole world has evolved to include more than hard rigid inserts."

He points out that customers traditionally have selected off-the-shelf insoles primarily because their price points are significantly lower than custom orthotics.

"When there are already excellent custom-made orthotics as an expensive option, having an insole 3-D printed for similar costs isn't necessarily a cost advantage to the consumer, particularly when the custom orthotic also includes professional medical expertise," he says.

Powerstep, for one, is taking a step back from the concept of 3-D printing.

"We don't see it as an option in brick-and-mortar stores," says Brett Jewell, business development manager. "There's an abundance of research that shows Powerstep insoles are already as effective as – if not more than – custom orthotics, and we expect that to continue going forward. Our products are proven to be effective, affordable and readily available – a combination that 3-D printed insoles will likely never achieve."

SOLE, too, is sticking to its "tried-and-true method for mass customization," says CEO Mike Baker.

"The costs of 3-D printing," he says, "are still too great, the speed too slow and

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Technology Keeps Insoles On Their Toes (continued)



Spenco's Total Support Insoles, \$39.99, feature the brand's patented 3-POD Modulation System in which pods of various hardnesses are sited beneath key areas of the foot. The insoles – Original, MAX and Thin (above) — carry the American Podiatric Medical Association Seal of Acceptance and are unconditionally guaranteed for one year.

an agreed upon methodology to translate foot scan to product output and patient satisfaction is still not there. High-volume customization through 3-D printing still faces many headwinds.”

Schwartz, however, says it's not a question of if but of when 3-D printing makes its mark in the insole market.

He says that it will allow vendors and retailers “to work in tandem to provide even better custom solutions to the end user, with the ultimate precision in customization and personalization. Quickly and inexpensively, you can print and deliver a next-level custom orthotic, addressing consumers’ specific foot needs down to the fraction of a pressure point.”

FootBalance's Hurme adds that “3-D printing will definitely open possibilities for new players and eventually grow the category.”

Until that time, BLUPRINT Vice President Dave Ortleby says that the brand will stick with its mold-on-demand technology, what he calls a “less technical interface with a super-technical result.”

Price aside, the bottom line is that the customer doesn't care how an insole is made.

“Whether an insole is 3-D printed or uses standard manufacturing, it will only benefit the athlete if it is comfortable and designed specifically for the sport of choice,” says Lutz Klein, CEO and president of currexSOLE, which designs activity-centric orthotics. ■

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Sealing the Sale

There may be an insole for every running shoe, but not all runners are sold on the idea of an orthotic. According to the brands, that's where the retail sales associate comes in.



Evan Wert, President, Icebug USA:

“We recommend that a dealer carry at least three different types and makes of insoles. From those, one will work. Retailers also need to train staff to take time in fitting. Take the socks off the customer and look at the foot. Forming a personal bond and having human contact is something the online guys just can't do.”

Jonathan Koops, Co-Founder, Kneed:

“We partner with independent retailers exclusively. The omni-channel approach many brands have taken has ended up hurting the brands' strongest advocates, the locally owned brick-and-mortar retailers.”

Steve Sheridan, Senior Vice President of Sales, Hickory Brands:

“Insoles and accessories give the retail staff the opportunity to be a true sales consultant. Insoles have to be taken out of the box, put in the shoe, and the consumers need to have that ‘wow’ moment when they realize they really do provide great comfort and fit.”

David Church, President, Sorbothane:

“An informed Sorbothane sales associate wears the insoles and recommends them to customers based on personal experience.”

Evan Schwartz, President, Aetrex:

“For Aetrex and its retailers, orthotics are a high-margin and a high-growth product. Email marketing, scanning and delivering authentic benefits to the consumer keep people coming back. Our scanner's cloud-based marketing suite of assets makes it the best retail tool available to capture valuable consumer emails without even having to close a sale.”

Marcia Lynch, National Sales Manager, Hickory Brands:

“Retailers should offer options that meet the needs of all consumers with a Good, Better, Best story. With HBI, retailers have the option to carry insoles out of the box as a Good option and better than the insoles found in the store, a Better option with a FootBalance semi-custom insole that can be done in-store or at home, and a Best option with 100 percent custom insoles that are done in-store.”

Brett Jewell, Business Development Manager, Powerstep:

“Staff should use insoles to be creative problem solvers. Our partners don't just try to sell insoles, they try to help people. Insoles should be displayed below the shoe wall. That way, they are in the customer's line of sight during a fitting, making it easier for the sales staff.”

Mike Baker, CEO, SOLE: “We strongly encourage product trial. This means retailers need to introduce the product to their customers and allow them to feel it in their footwear as part of the fitting process.”

Matt Gooch, Research and Product Marketing Manager, Superfeet:

“One of the best ways to facilitate insole purchases is to be intentional with the language you use as a fitter, purposely making the conversation about the person, not the product. Personalizing the language you use to describe the insole features helps customers internalize how the insole can directly benefit them (based on the fit evaluation and feedback the customers have given).” ■

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OrthoLite Revs Up Insole Tech



OrthoLite's Super Sipe

Technological innovations are affecting the market for in-shoe insoles. OrthoLite, whose insoles are featured in more than 200 brands, including Nike, New Balance, ASICS and Adidas, and in some 400 million pairs of shoes annually, is revving up the tech track.

Longtime Nike Footwear Designer Skip Lei, vice president of innovation and strategic partnerships at OrthoLite, is leading the effort.

One of the brand's new insole applications, Super Sipe, adds proprietary sipe blades to the mold to magnify the natural flex of the shoe with every step while providing all-day comfort. It is designed for all footwear categories.

OrthoLite's expanded line of high-rebound performance insoles, X Series, provides a cooler, drier and healthier

foot environment as well as long-term cushioning. Their elasticity is customized for each shoe brand and style.

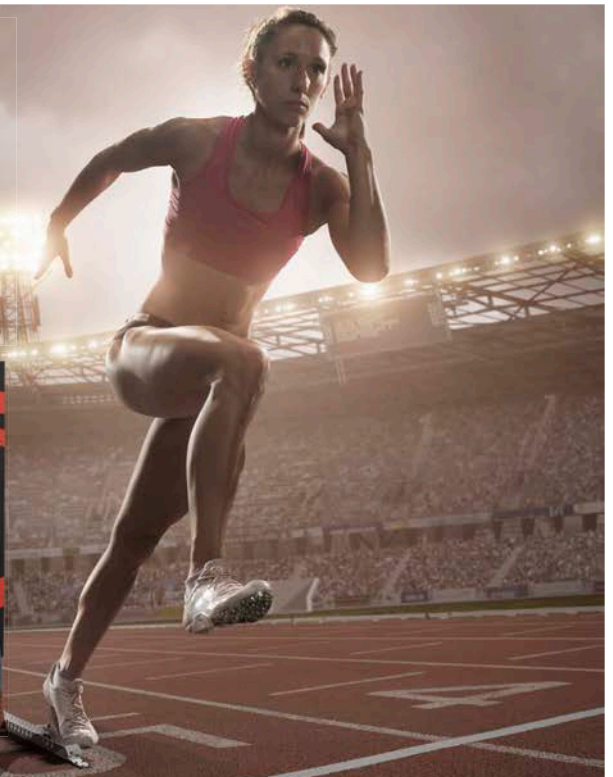
"The series is ideal for shoes used in high-impact sports or minimalist footwear and also great for dress shoe application due to its high levels of cushioning in thinner layers of foam," Lei says.

The OrthoLite feature that wearers will not only feel but also see is a 3-D foam bubble on the heel of the insole. This 3D Skive Heel looks like an egg and provides crucial cushioning. "This 'visible technology' is an excellent selling feature that draws the customer to the product," he says. "It creates the sensation of walking on air."

In addition to the new products, OrthoLite is testing different technologies, including 3-D printing.

"Three-D printing was fun," Lei says, "but it did not seem to meet our current needs in high-output manufacturing. We are keeping a watchful eye on this technology as it gets both faster and more affordable. Once we find the right operating model to include it, we will definitely be onboarding it for critical steps in our product-creation model." ■

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A Smart New Scanner with Personality and a Name

Next month, Aetrex will begin shipping its new Albert foot scanner to about 75 top accounts, with plans to have it in several hundred doors by the end of the summer.

Albert is a sophisticated scanner and software package that features 18 digital cameras, 96 infrared receptors and 5,184 gold plated sensors that will quickly present the consumer with a live scan of their foot and recommend to them suitable insoles from the company's expanded line. The system will also have the ability to synch with gait analysis systems used by many running stores.

Company executives say Albert will allow stores to offer a high-tech, interactive fitting experience and sell a lot of high margin insoles, too. "We wanted to restore the novel aspect of foot scanning and create excitement around the process," says Larry Schwartz, president of Aetrex. The company was among the first to bring foot scanning technology to stores with the iStep foot scanner it introduced in 2002, which uses foot pressure to identify consumers' arch types, foot sizes and pressure points.

With the Albert system, Aetrex is offering a more in-depth process that produces a three-dimensional scan of the foot and recommends specific insoles based on the findings. The system also features a show biz touch: an actual Albert character, a high tech skeletal figure who appears on the computer monitor during the scanning process and talks the consumer through the fitting process.

Albert is a sophisticated scanner and software package.



"We wanted to give him a personality," says Melissa Libner, VP of Marketing, Technology & Orthotics for the brand. "And we wanted him to have a name that was smart and a little geeky."

Showbiz aside, Schwartz says Albert will deliver authentic benefits. "We believe in pressure technology, but that almost always reveals a plantar aspect. When we started with this, we said 'this just can't be a fancy sizer. We need to make a difference to people who are experiencing pain.'"

Of course, Aetrex is counting on Albert to help its accounts sell insoles and is backing him with an aggressive program. The Albert Scanner is leased to stores for \$300 a month, but Schwartz says the company will reduce the monthly fee based on how many insoles the store can sell.

Stores that sell 30 pair of insoles a month will pay \$200 a month for the lease; stores that sell 60 pair a month will pay

\$100 and for stores that sell 90 pair or more a month a month, the rental is free.

"We wanted to help stores offer a consumer experience in-store that they can't online," Schwartz said. "Also for stores insoles are a high margin product." With a selling price of \$60 retail and a wholesale cost of \$25, Schwartz says the net result will be 60 margin points.

Aetrex now offers 11 Orthotic series, with four insoles per series. The entire line features new cosmetics and packaging. And Libner says Albert should also help stores sell the company's new line of Flips, which it introduced last spring. ■

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FuelBelt Unveils Redesign

New Helium Running and Hydration Belts and a Neon Reflective Line.



Clockwise from top left: FuelBelt Neon Bands (2-pack), Hydra Fuel Helium Hand Held and Women's Ergo Belt.

FuelBelt is launching a completely redesigned FuelBelt Helium line that includes hydration, race belts and hand holds. The brand is also introducing Neon reflective products. The products are rolling out nationwide on April 15 at major retailers and running stores, and will be available on the new FuelBelt.com site beginning April 17.

FuelBelt, which is celebrating its 20th anniversary as a brand, was acquired by Implus in 2015. Marco Garsed, VP of Marketing for Implus, parent company of FuelBelt, notes, "Athletes turn to the FuelBelt brand for functionality and reliability."

The redesigned FuelBelt Helium hydration and race belts are

made from Helium Hex-Foam, a proprietary, lightweight and water repellent foam. Redesigned and expanded products in the Helium line include Hydration Belts (Ultralight, Ergo, Uno) and Storage Belts (Race, Stretch Race, Sport Pack and Slim Pack). The Helium Line also contains hand holds.

The new Neon Safety and Lighting collection includes reflective film bands; nylon flare band for the wrists, arms or ankles; clip-on fire light; fire flare band; and an ergonomic, unisex mesh vest.

"From the original prototype I used in 1997 during the Boston Marathon to the redesigned products, FuelBelt provides convenience and performance to meet the rigorous needs of elite athletes and more casual, recreational and amateur runners alike," says Vinu Malik, FuelBelt founder and now SVP with Implus. ■

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Running Shorts

The Digital Light Synthesis process uses digital light projection.



Adidas Futurecraft 4D

Adidas Goes Beyond

3D Adidas has unveiled Futurecraft 4D performance footwear featuring midsoles crafted with light and oxygen using Digital Light Synthesis, a technology pioneered by Silicon Valley-based tech company CARBON. Futurecraft 4D is made through a digital footwear component creation process that eliminates traditional prototyping or molding. It is a departure from 3D printing, instead bringing additive manufacturing into the mix.

The Digital Light Synthe-

sis process uses digital light projection, oxygen-permeable optics, and programmable liquid resins to generate durable polymeric products. Futurecraft 4D is a step into athlete-data driven design and manufacturing. The brand analyzed its library of running data to shape functional zones into a midsole design crafted through Digital Light Synthesis.

Three hundred pairs of Futurecraft 4D were released this month for friends and family of the brand, and will be followed by more than 5000

pairs for retail in Fall/Winter 2017, with more to come in the future.

Brands Teens Like

Athletic apparel brands were named the preferred label of 41 percent of surveyed teens in Piper Jaffray's Spring study on the set, up 15 percent year-over-year. Nike was the top apparel and footwear brand among the 5,500 surveyed. Adidas, the "top new brand by males," moved up to the fifth most popular brand from 10th last year. Lululemon was fourth and Patagonia

was the fifth most most-desired brand among teens.

Brooks Exits Heritage Biz

Brooks is shuttering its throwback lifestyle Heritage Collection. Among the nine styles revived were the 1976 Vanguard, 1982's Chariot and 1993's Regent. The brand showcased special packs as well as collaborations with sneaker heavies including BAIT, Atmos, Barney's New York and Concepts. The final collection, Gelateria, inspired by the flavors of the Italian frozen treat, will release May 1.

Suunto to Sponsor Discrete Cirque Trail Series

Suunto announced its sponsorship of the Discrete Cirque Series, a short-distance, max-elevation trail running series based in North America. The Discrete Cirque Series features races between the 10K and ultra distances. There are five events scheduled at U.S. ski resorts for 2017: June 24 Dear Valley, UT; July 15 Alta, UT; July 29 Arapahoe Basin, CO; August 12 Alyeska, AK; August 26 Snowbird, UT.

GU to Sponsor Ragnar Trail Series

GU Energy Labs will be the official 2017-2018 Gel, Chew and Stroopwafel sponsor of the Ragnar Trail Series presented by Salomon—overnight, long distance, team running relays that take place on the most beautiful trails around the world.



GU will host an energy and recovery lounge at the races, where athletes can relax and stock up on all their nutrition needs, including coffee and Stroopwafels before their sections. The GU team will also be delivering nutrition planning talks, which coincides with GU's recent launch of a nutrition planning tool for athletes, hosted on the GU website. GU launched the nutrition planner this year; with the help of a new in-house sports nutritionist.

Nuun Introduces Performance Mix

Nuun and company is introducing Performance, what it describes as “the cleanest endurance drink mix formulated from science and rooted in nature, designed for sustained and

intense activities.” The nuun team partnered with Exercise Physiologist and Sports Nutritionist Stacy T. Sims, PhD to create a hydration product that it says “is lighter and yet more effective than what has been available.”

The mix uses pure ingredients and Non-GMO Project Verified sourcing. The result is superior absorption and minimized gastric impact, according to the brand. Performance will debut at nuun's expo presence at the Boston

Marathon April 13th– 16th and Sea Otter Classic April 20th – 23rd and will begin being served on course at events this summer.

Reebok and DuPont Team Up on Plant-Based Footwear

Earlier this month, Reebok announced its “Cotton + Corn” sustainable products initiative, which will bring plant-based footwear to the market later this year.

Cotton + Corn is an initiative developed by the Reebok Future team to create shoes “made from things that grow.” The first release will be a shoe that has an upper comprised of organic cotton and a base originating from industrial grown corn (a non-food source).

“This is really just the first step for us,” says Bill McInnis, Head of Reebok Future. “With Cotton + Corn we're focused on all three phases of

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Running Shorts (continued)

the product lifecycle. First, with product development we're using materials that grow and can be replenished, rather than the petroleum-based materials commonly used today. Second, when the product hits the market we know our consumers don't want to sacrifice on how sneakers look and perform. Finally, we care about what happens to the shoes when people are done with them. So we've focused on plant-based materials such as corn and cotton at the beginning, and compostability in the end."

For the Cotton + Corn initiative, Reebok partnered with DuPont Tate & Lyle Bio

Products, a leading manufacturer of high-performance bio-based solutions. DuPont Tate & Lyle has developed Susterra propanediol, a pure, petroleum-free, non-toxic, 100 percent USDA certified bio-based product, derived from field corn. Susterra propanediol is used to create the sole of the Cotton + Corn shoes.

New Floatride from Reebok

Reebok has launched the Floatride Run, a \$150 shoe that the brand describes as its most technically advanced running shoe to date.

The shoe's design aims for an "optimal mix of soft-

ness and responsiveness." It features Floatride Foam, a tech that the brand says has "a consistent cell structure that delivers the seamless integration of cushioning and responsiveness."

The Reebok Floatride Run features an Ultraknit upper for support and flexibility, offering a sleek aesthetic in a performance package.

"Floatride represents a reintroduction from Reebok to committed runners around

the world," says Scott Daley, General Manager of Running at Reebok. "A lot has been invested in the research behind the technical components of the shoe and we're delighted with the results. We're inviting the entire running community to 'Feel The Floatride' and to give us their feedback on its ride and performance."

Daley says the brand thinks of the shoe as offering "cushioning without compromise." ■



Reebok Floatride Run

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Former Fresh Market CEO Buys 14-store NC Chain

Omega Sports Inc., the 14-store sporting goods chain that does a strong running business, has been sold to Craig Carlock, the former CEO of The Fresh Market grocery chain.

Phil Bowman, one of Omega's founders and current CEO, will stay on as president and is also an investor in the deal. Bowman, who will turn 70 this year, said the move was made as part of a succession plan that will "look after the company and its culture."

Founded in 1978, Omega Sports has grown from a single Greensboro location to 14 retail locations spanning the Triad, Triangle, Charlotte area and beyond.

"Omega was never on the market," Bowman told *Running Insight*. "I met Craig two years ago and we began talking and those conversations eventually brought us to a stock sale. He was a customer of ours and liked what we were doing and we believe he is the perfect person to take over."

Bowman and Carlock will begin visiting the 14 Omega stores in North Carolina starting next week.

Carlock was at Fresh Market from January 2009 To January 2015 and led the chain's expansion to 169 from 86 stores.

He also guided Fresh Market's initial public offering in 2010. He first joined Fresh Market as director of marketing in June 2000.

Bowman said Carlock intends to "conservatively grow" the chain in the years ahead. ■



"Omega was never on the market. He was a customer of ours and liked what we were doing and we believe he is the perfect person to take over."

PHIL BOWMAN, FOUNDER, OMEGA SPORTS

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