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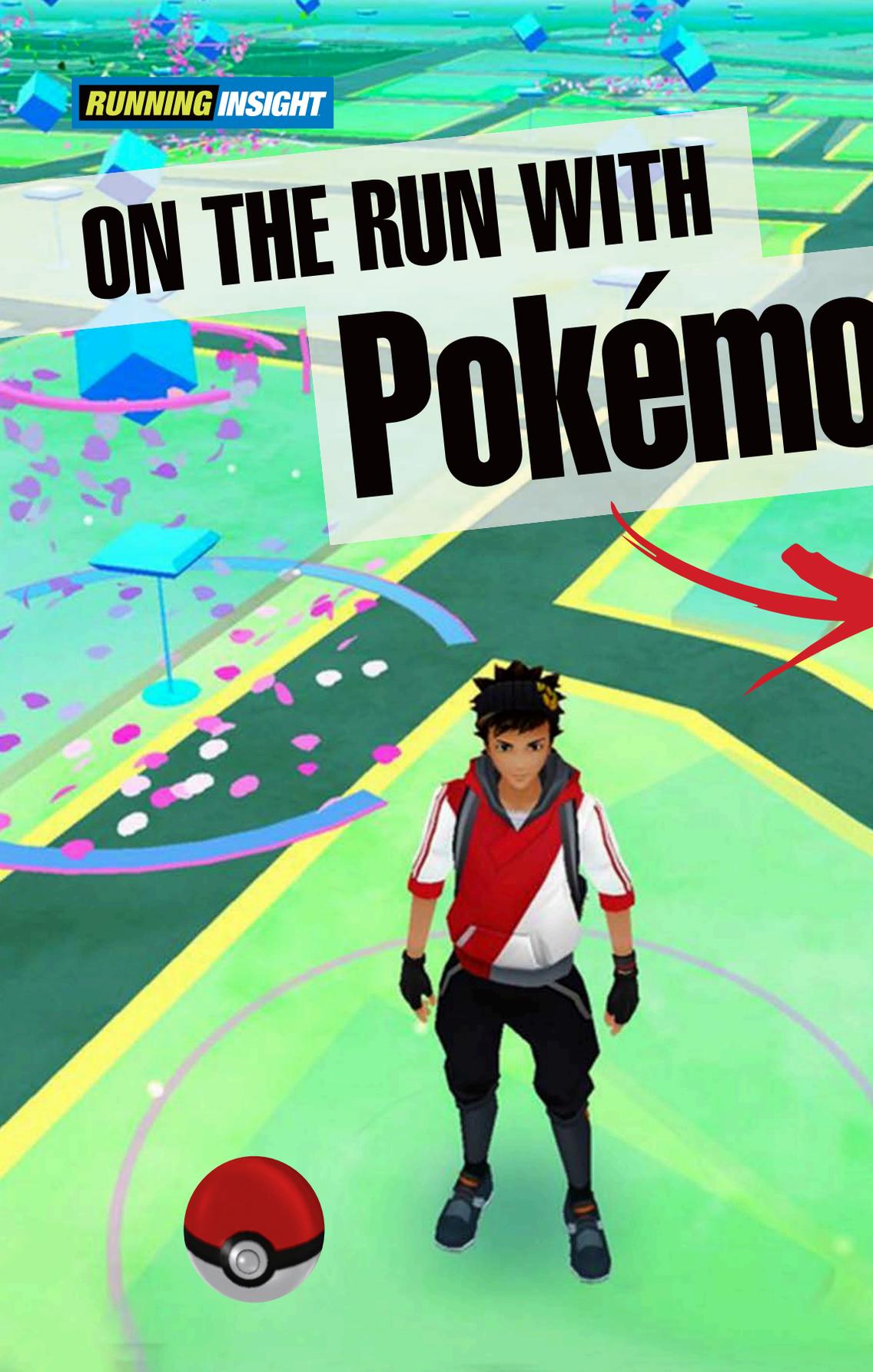
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ON THE RUN WITH

Pokémon GO



The augmented reality game has become a U.S. phenomenon, but does it have value for running retailers?

By Daniel P. Smith

The revolution began on July 6. On that day, Pokémon Go debuted in the U.S.

Within a week of its release, the location-based, augmented reality game captured an estimated 15 million downloads and surpassed Twitter in its percentage of daily active users. A week later, downloads doubled to 30 million as the game dominated social media chatter, captured headlines and pushed thousands of gamers into the real world for something perhaps best described as a massive Easter egg hunt.

“I equate it to the Big Bang: there was nothing and then – Boom! – there’s this big universe,” Independent Running Retailer Association executive director Terry Schalow says.

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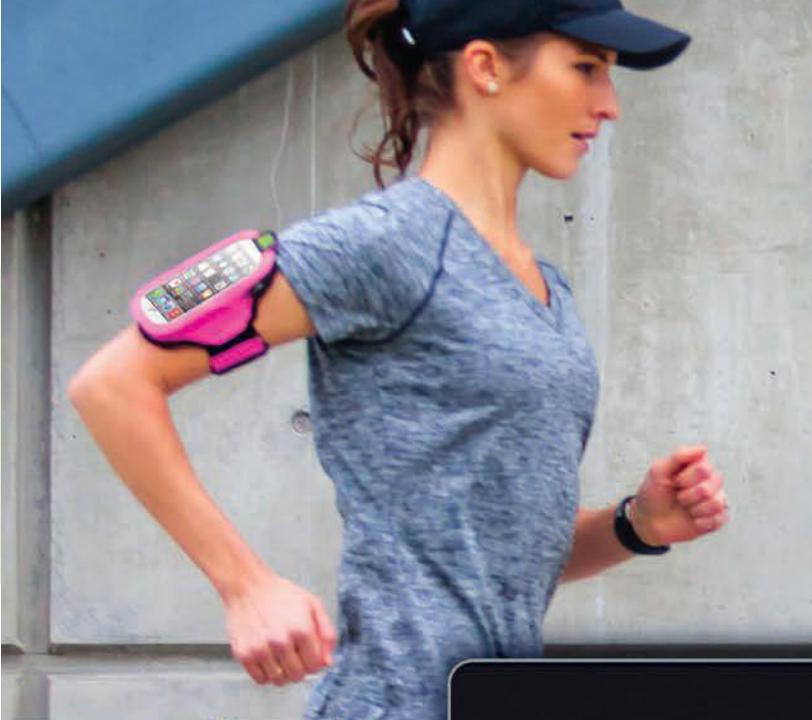
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On The Run With Pokémon Go (continued)



Left to right: Nathan sees an opportunity to sell products to gamers who are getting active; savvy businesses are reaching out to players of Pokémon Go.

And now, less than a month after its release, the Pokémon Go craze continues sweeping the country, pushing participants into the real world for adventure and sparking many small businesses, including running retailers, to investigate the movement's relevance to their business.

Brent Hollowell, vice president of marketing for Nathan, says running stores might be as well positioned as any enterprise to capitalize on the Pokémon Go rage, especially given how many participants are walking multiple miles each day to hatch eggs.

"Anything that gets people up and moving is potentially good for running stores and Pokémon Go is doing just that," Hollowell says.

A July 16 *USA Today* story noted as much with

"Anything that gets people up and moving is potentially good for running stores and Pokémon Go is doing just that"

BRENT HOLLOWELL, NATHAN

one observer commenting: "Almost overnight, it has gotten a generation that's most comfortable inside on the couch playing a game outside walking around, getting fresh air, sunshine and exercise." A headline in *The Washington Post*, meanwhile, read: "Pokémon Go leading to a 'population-level' surge in fitness tracker step counts."

More long term, some tech analysts predict that the Pokémon Go sensation could intensify the marriage of fitness and gaming in health and fitness. Such efforts could cer-

tainly prove advantageous for the running industry, which has seen a shift away from traditional fitness approaches in recent years.

But is Pokémon Go a business-driving tool today?

The Pokémon Go Potential

While acknowledging that leveraging Pokémon Go to attract traffic is far from a plug-and-play option for retailers, Schalow says it could also produce interesting and potentially tangible results for running stores.

"The hope is sales, of course, but if the only thing you gain out of this is exposure for your store, then that's a positive," Schalow says, adding that he sees an opportunity for retailers to market specifically at Pokémon Go

players "while the iron is hot."

Already small businesses and retailers across the country are doing just that.

In downtown Las Vegas, Glutton restaurant is offering Pokémon Go players \$3 Poké-style Ahi Tuna Tacos as well as 2-for-1 beers. In addition, the restaurant has highlighted local Pokémon "gyms" and nearby PokéStops on its social media accounts to further boost its connections to the game.

Also in Las Vegas, Grand Bazaar Shops, an outdoor shopping mecca, hosted a Poké-Palooza on July 27. Attendees received discounts at many of the center's shops, took photos with a real-life Pikachu and received other Pokémon-themed gifts.

Perhaps most exciting, L'inizio Pizza Bar in New



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On The Run With Pokémon Go (continued)



“It can be a fun way to engage staff and the local community in something that so many people are doing.”

BRENT HOLLOWELL, NATHAN

“Even if the only thing you gain out of this is exposure for your store, then that’s a positive.”

TERRY SCHALOW, IRRA

York spent about \$10 on “Lure Modules” to attract players into its doors. The restaurant’s manager told Bloomberg that sales jumped about 30 percent as a result.

A July story on *Inc* magazine’s website (<http://www.inc.com/walter-chen/pokemon-go-is-driving-insane-amounts-of-sales-at-small-local-businesses-here-s-h.html>) detailed how small business could use lures to drive traffic, an investment author Walter Chen pegged at \$1.19 per hour. The story also carried other tangible ideas on how retailers might use Pokémon Go to fuel business.

“With Pokémon Go, businesses have an unprecedented opportunity to create strong emotional bonds with new customers, and for very little money,” Chen wrote, urging small businesses to capitalize on big cultural shifts like Pokémon Go given the fluidity of marketing initiatives. “Even if Pokémon Go isn’t as powerful a tool for driving sales

six months or a year from now, the customers that you delight today are going to remember you tomorrow.”

Running with Pokémon

For running stores, creativity and flexibility might be the only ingredients necessary to increase awareness and drive new business with Pokémon Go.

On July 15, for instance, Nathan sent out an email to its retail partners spotlighting its water bottles and strobe lights in red, yellow and blue, colors that coincide with Pokémon Go’s three teams. The safety and hydration play, Hollowell says, is one tangible way retailers can tie the Pokémon Go phenomenon to in-store product.

“With people of all age groups out after dark, running stores can share a safety story that’s super legit,” Hollowell says.

In addition, Hollowell sees an opportunity for retailers to offer team-colored bundles (shoes,

apparel, socks, hair bands, water bottles and so on) that invite players to “Show Your Team Colors” or to host Hatch Run/Walk events at the store that award prizes based on productivity.

“This is an opportunity to tap into a new group of prospective customers who might not be very active,” Hollowell says. “Plus, it can be a fun way to engage staff and the local community in something that so many people are doing.”

While some retailers will discount the game as a passing fad, which both Schalow and Hollowell acknowledge it certainly could be, Hollowell encourages retailers to look at the social phenomenon through a different lens and assess the level of effort and expense they are comfortable devoting to the movement.

“Very few times does a cultural tidal wave like this come along, so why not get out on your surfboard and see how long you can ride the wave,” Hollowell says. ■

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Carrying the Torch



361 Execs Get in on Olympic Run

Jim Monahan is living the Olympic Dream. The president of 361 Degrees USA was one of the final torchbearers for the Olympic flame that is currently making its way to Rio de Janeiro for the Aug. 5 kickoff of the Olympic Games. Monahan — as well as 361 Degrees Director of International Development Jay Geier— was set to carry the torch for 200 meters as representatives of the Chinese athletic brand, which announced earlier this month that it would be outfitting volunteers, referees and medical and operational staff during the games. (361 Degrees is also the delegation sponsor of the South Africa and Greece teams.)

“To have the opportunity to carry the Olympic torch is something that you can only dream about.”

JIM MONAHAN, 361 DEGREES

Speaking to *Running Insight* a few days before his July 31 run through Campos de Goytacazes, Monahan said anticipation was mounting.

“Based on what I have seen so far, I am expecting an energy level that I have not experienced in an event before,” he said.

Monahan wasn’t expecting to set any records: “The bulk of our torch entrants were provided to our wonderful retail partners in Brazil —

after that, they selected the two slowest runners in the USA office,” he said. But the significance of the event is top of mind.

“To have the opportunity to carry the Olympic torch is something that you can only dream about,” he said. “I have been fortunate to be part of a tremendous industry filled with tremendous people throughout the world, and I will be carrying the torch proudly as a member of the 361 Degrees team and in honor of all those that have enabled it to happen.”

Mostly, he said, he just wanted to do the job right.

“As we know, not much happens globally without it being seen on social media,” he said. “Let’s hope I stay upright and on my feet.” — *Jennifer Ernst Beaudry* ■



361 Degrees USA president Jim Monahan (left) and director of international development Jay Geier.





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PICKING UP THE PACE

Trail Shoes Go the Distance.
By Lou Dzierzak

Swiss brand On is launching a collection of running apparel this month.

“

The trail running community is so welcoming to anyone who wants to be out there. It doesn't take long to be embraced by the community.”

JENA WINGER, ASSOCIATE FOOTWEAR PRODUCT LINE MANAGER, BROOKS

Running enthusiasts are spending more time off road. Runners, both experienced and new, are exploring trail distances that go beyond the traditional 26.2-mile road marathon. Ultra distance races like 50K, 50-mile and 100-mile are attracting full fields.

The International Skyrunning Federation reports more than 200 races worldwide attracting more than 50,000 participants from 65 countries. And the Outdoor Industry Association reports that participation in adventure racing has increased 211 percent and ranked in the top five most popular outdoor activities tried by first-timers in the last five years.

“More and more people are open to those

longer distances. They understand it's less about the race time than spending time outdoors and enjoying the time outdoors at your own pace. It's about wellness and living a balanced life. It's more about the experience and adventure,” says Andrew Conley, the product lead, HOKA.

According to Running USA, nontraditional events participation eclipsed traditional events such as half marathons and marathons for the first time in 2013. “For ultra distance races, the number of events is growing quickly and so are the participants, though it's a still a small percentage of runners. The growth of trail running festivals and sky running in the U.S. market is worth noting and following as future trends,” says Shaun Bohnsack, category business director for performance footwear, Merrell.

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Trail Running (continued)



Altra: With Polartec Neoshell the Lone Peak 3 neoshell low cut is a waterproof trail shoe that sheds water/snow/slush/mud. MSRP \$150.



New Balance: The Fresh Foam Hierrov2 trail runner combines ultra-plush cushioning, a glove-like fit and improved stability. MSRP \$124.95.



Inov-8: The RocLite 305 GTX is designed for multi-terrain running. Offers climate comfort for the feet. Has claw-shaped cleats on the sole.



Hoka One One: The Clayton has a softer heel for cushioning and a firmer forefoot for propulsion. MSRP \$150.



Under Armour: The Horizon FKT trail runner is designed for speed. Ultra light and durable featuring a translucent ripstop upper. MSRP \$129.99.



Pearl Izumi: The Trail N2 v3 is designed for ultra-run comfort and control. The shoe is built to tackle the most treacherous terrain. MSRP \$125.



La Sportiva: The Akyra is a stable, structured mountain running shoe. Aggressive lugs and Trail Bite heel provide all-terrain traction. MSRP \$140.



Altra: A major redesign of the Lone Peak 3 features a new overlay design on the upper to reduce intrusion from dirt, sand, rocks. MSRP \$120.



ASICS: The GEL-FujiRunnegade 2 can tackle tough terrain. PlasmaGuard tech protects shoes without sacrificing breathability. MSRP \$120.



Runners are looking, and always have looked, for something to make the run entertaining.”

TRAVIS HILDEBRAND, RUN PRODUCT MERCHANDISING MANAGER, SALOMON FOOTWEAR

After mastering a marathon, runners are turning to trails for their next challenges. Many find 50K and 50-mile distances more approachable. “Just like with trail running shoes, there are a lot of options for fun and well-organized events. With that said, if you really dig into a given runner’s primary motivation for trail running, ‘racing’ is rarely the answer. Trail running seems to attract many people’s imagination for investigating their physical and

mental limits. It creates a rich dynamic within the community and ultimately pushes the boundaries of the sport,” says Pete Cameron, global commercial manager, footwear & equipment for Arc’teryx. (The outdoor brand is getting into the trail run game with its new Norvan VT trail shoe.)

By reputation, organizers of long distance trail running events value and support newcomers to the sport. “The trail running community is so wel-

coming to anyone who wants to be out there. It doesn’t take long to be embraced by the community. You don’t have to hammer the entire way because you will have a network of people to help you along the way,” says Jena Winger, associate footwear product line manager, Brooks.

“Runners are looking, and always have looked, for something to make the run entertaining. They’re looking for something different than



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Trail Running (continued)



Brooks: The Caldera is equipped with a sticky rubber outsole, lugs that allow the shoe to flex and have ample ground protection. MSRP \$140.



The North Face: The Endurus TR features a high traction Vibram outsole, supportive midfoot cage and soft, comfortable XtraFoam midsole. MSRP \$130.



Salomon: The XA Enduro is built to equip the growing number of alpine running athletes who demand protection, comfort and trail feel. MSRP \$160.



Merrell: The Agility collection balances connection to the terrain and protection from it. FLEXconnect platform flexes and protects. MSRP \$130.



Arc'teryx: The Norvan VT delivers scrambling ability and durability with strategically-mapped outsole compounds and lug geometries. MSRP \$170.



Saucony: The Peregrine 7 is adaptable across any terrain and has an ultra-grippy outsole as well as EVERUN topsole cushion. MSRP \$120.

another half marathon or marathon. If you look at a race series like Ragnar Trail, which is a partner of Salomon's, they increased their race days by almost double from 2015 to 2016, and they're far from alone," says Travis Hildebrand, run product merchandising manager, Salomon Footwear.

Trail Expertise

Like enthusiasts in any other outdoor pursuit, trail runners are digging deep into trail running footwear design philosophies, construction methods, material selection and application recommendations. There are dozens of footwear models tailored for every kind of trail environment and distance.

"A higher percentage of runners are doing more research

about brands. They are doing more primary research, getting up to speed and forming their own opinions before they visit a retailer. They certainly take the retailer's opinion into account after their own primary research," says Conley.

"Trail runners pride themselves on being tech geeks. From stack heights to foam chemistry to upper engineering, today's trail runner wants to be able to tailor their ride and trail feel, often down to the millimeter," says Patrick Anderson, senior product manager footwear, The North Face.

"The technical trail runner is savvy and always seeking more information. Trail runners have to be very in tune with what is happening underfoot, as perhaps lack of toe protection could cause accu-

mulated metatarsal damage, or lack of flex could contribute to a lack of spring. Everything is interconnected, but on tough terrain this sensitivity and awareness is heightened," says Claire Wood, senior product manager, New Balance

Trail runners train and race on a variety of surfaces and environments from narrow mountain single-track to urban crushed limestone rails-to-trails conversion paths. Runners often use different models for different applications.

"I've certainly noticed an increased interest by trail runners in the design of their footwear. A heightened consumer awareness and appreciation for resolved design is a good thing in my view as it pushes brands to

innovate and explore new ways to create a better running experience," says Cameron.

"The current crop of trail runners, core trail runners, are very much in tune with product. They're very much on the leading edge in recognizing innovation in product. They may have a quiver of shoes, each with a specific purpose. They understand outsole materials and fit technologies. But as we see more general runners coming into trail, that may not hold as true," says Hildebrand.

"A great trail shoe should disappear on the feet and the runner should not have to think about it. If they are, it is usually for the wrong reasons," says Mike Thompson, global footwear category manager, Pearl Izumi. ■



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Marching Orders



Terry Schalow,
IRRA Executive Director

Much can be done to assist and support the vendor community in finding solutions that level the competitive playing field.

A few weeks ago On Running hosted a retailer summit with a decidedly unique approach. Rather than hold the typical two days of product presentations, their approach was to present a variety of relevant topics and allow the attendees to share their thoughts, with the goal of gaining a deeper understanding of the needs of specialty retailers.

As a representative of the IRRA, I was invited to kick start the conversation by presenting to the group on the state of the specialty running channel. The topics within that presentation were the catalyst for healthy, frank dialogue that centered around the challenges that the channel faces and how best to remain healthy in an increasingly competitive environment. The most passionate conversation, not surprisingly, centered around internet and vendor-direct selling. One rather pragmatic attendee acknowledged that Amazon and Vendor DTC platforms are here to stay, and that opinion prevailed within the group. However, this decidedly did not represent a defeatist attitude. No one was throwing up their hands and saying “Well, that’s just the way things are going, and we have to just sit and take it.” To the contrary, all agreed that much can be done to assist and support the vendor community in finding solutions that level the competitive playing field. That was a key takeaway and one

that will be a focus for the IRRA going forward.

What I found really interesting was that the topics of internet and vendor-direct selling actually took a back seat to the time spent discussing how to get customers in the store, and how to encourage them to come back. To that end, there was a general consensus that specialty retailers who focus their energies on what they can control rather than what they can’t are more likely to thrive in the face of powerful competitive forces. So the prevailing message was essentially this: “Provide us with support and guidance to help us evolve our business models to work within this new market paradigm.” Another key takeaway.

How best to evolve the channel to meet this challenge is of course a complex task with a variety of solutions, but two very clear directions presented themselves that every retailer and vendor should consider. The first idea is to make specialty retail special again by offering differentiated product assortments. This is not to say that retailers should recklessly abandon the popular products that their customers are asking for. However, supporting exclusives offered by established vendors and introducing customers to exciting product ideas from new vendors will begin to resonate over time and build a hedge against outside competition. Keep in mind that this idea is

not limited to footwear. There are some amazing new apparel and accessory brands that offer unique solutions to the consumer that are virtual channel exclusives, and keep customers coming back. These should be supported as well.

More challenging, but certainly achievable, is the idea of embracing the omni-channel solutions that are so

“It is well established that people want to shop in a variety of ways, and seeking ways to retain them after that first purchase is paramount to success.”

key to reaching today’s consumer. It is well established that people want to shop in a variety of ways, and seeking ways to retain them after that first purchase is paramount to success. There are new and exciting platforms available, and the IRRA is diligently working with the vendor community and these providers to make this a reality.

These are only two of the many solutions the channel should consider as we evolve our competitive model. As we move forward, the IRRA will be presenting these initiatives and other initiatives to our membership, and we invite all to follow along as we progress in that effort. ■

Terry Schalow
Executive Director, IRRA

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Saucony Has Reason to Celebrate

There was solid growth generated by Saucony in the second quarter despite the impact of several U.S. retail bankruptcies that also affected the Merrell and Sperry businesses at parent Wolverine Worldwide. Sales at Saucony increased “high teens” in the run specialty channel in the second quarter ended June 16, bolstered by demand for its Everun product, and were up double-digits in its three largest regions outside the U.S. Overall, parent Wolverine Worldwide’s Boston Group, which also includes the Sperry



Wolverine opened a new office for its Boston Group (Saucony, Keds and Sperry).

and Keds’ brands, experienced a nearly 9 percent drop in period revenues. Earlier last month,

Wolverine senior executives and officials from Massachusetts celebrated the opening of a new 245,000

square foot office for the Boston Group in Waltham, MA. The company also used the event as an Olympic send-off for Team Saucony member and U.S. Olympian Molly Huddle, who will compete in the 10,000- and 5,000-meter races at the Rio Games. At the grand opening celebration, Huddle was on-hand to present a \$10,000 Wolverine Worldwide Foundation grant to the City of Waltham’s Parks and Recreation Department, an effort to spark local youth participation in fitness, sports and summer camps and perhaps, inspire local future Olympians. —*Bob McGee* ■

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Running Shorts



Nike's Olympic Color Palette Is "Unlimited"

In anticipation of this summer's Olympic Games, the design team at Nike spent plenty of time thinking about color schemes for the summer of 2016. You can bet that the brand's colorways in Rio will capture consumer attention.

Brand designers say they first considered the "flow of the body in motion." Influences on the shoe colors you'll see in Rio also include: tropical rainforests and the fauna that thrives in the environment: birds, with their attention-grabbing, color-shifting feathers; and beetles, with their futuristic shining shells; and more. Absorbing these inspirations prompted an exploration of artwork,

according to Nike's design team, including images and films of birds in flight, close-ups of their iridescent wings and insects arranged like precious jewels.

These influences can be seen in Nike's summer palette, led by Nike's new signature "Unlimited" colorway (pictured above).

Spenco executives buy footwear assets

Four executives at Spenco Medical Corporation have purchased the company's footwear and Silicore assets.

The move comes in the wake of Implus, a provider of athletic, fitness and outdoor accessories, acquiring the assets of the Spenco insole and 2nd Skin first aid

products.

Jeff Antonioli, Spenco's current vice president of sales and marketing, stressed that although the Implus acquisition of insoles and 2nd Skin has been announced, it's "business as usual" at the Waco, Texas-based Spenco until at least the end of August.

"Our current Spenco Sales and Customer Service Team will continue to execute service to all of the Spenco products until further notice," said Antonioli, who is one of the new owners of the footwear and Silicore business. "We will work with the Implus Team to make sure we meet all of our customers' needs."

"Since launching the

footwear division six years ago, the sales of Spenco shoes, sandals and slides have grown impressively with double digit increases every year," said Antonioli. "Our team is excited to take this portion of the business to the next level. We believe the potential for trend-relevant footwear that helps consumers maintain foot comfort and health is virtually unlimited."

In addition to Antonioli, other new owners are Brad Granger, current vice president of business development; David McKown, current chief financial officer; and Nancy Muhlmán, current vice president of operations.

Spenco first entered the footwear market in 2010 with its Yumi sandal, designed for customers who traditionally could not wear flip-flops because of poor arch support. Since then, the company has introduced many additional styles for both men and women in shoes, sandals and slippers.

All footwear will continue to use the Total Support foot bed design of Spenco insoles, and incorporate a cushioned heel, deep heel cupping, orthotic arch support, metatarsal dome, and a cushioned forefoot.

Exec Moves at Nike Running

Nike announced that Steve Lesnard will become VP, GM of Global Running, succeeding Patrick Seehafer who will become VP, Europe Merchandising.



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Running Shorts (continued)



Patriotic style from Brooks.

Lesnard, currently VP, GM of Running for North America, is a 19-year Nike veteran and has held leadership positions across Footwear and Brand in multiple Geographies. Lesnard led Nike's Global Brand campaigns for the London and Beijing Olympics as Global Running Brand VP from 2008 to 2012. As Western Europe Brand VP from 2012 to 2014 Lesnard accelerated the category offense to create stronger consumer connections.

The position is effective August 1, and Lesnard will report to Jayme Martin, VP, GM Global Categories.

USA-Themed Shoes from Brooks

Hansons-Brooks Runner Desiree Linden and Brooks Beast Decathlete Jeremy Taiwo will compete in the Olympics this month along with fellow Brooks-sponsored athletes Joe Maloy and Greg Billington (triathletes).

In celebration of their

accomplishments (and to help them run at their best), Brooks has made patriotic versions of these athletes' competition shoes: a custom Hyperion for Linden, Maloy and Billington and a red, white and blue The Wire 4 for Taiwo's 1,500-meter run. The red, white, blue and gold Hyperion features each athlete's name stitched in gold on the heel as well as their name on the lace eyelets along with a custom sock insert for each one of them. Taiwo's special

The Wire 4 is traditionally USA with color-blocked red, white and blue with white stars and gold Brooks logo.

Vibram Refining FiveFingers Line in 2017

For Spring 2017, Vibram FiveFingers is refining its offerings and renaming and revamping some key styles.

In 2017, Vibram will introduce two FiveFingers styles including the V-Train and V-Trail. Formerly the KMD Sport LS, the V-Train

is a training and fitness shoe for use inside and outside of the gym. Upgrades to the V-Train include specially-designed lugs on the shoe's arch, designed for rope climbing and traction, and secure TPU moldings on the upper that prevent wear. The V-Trail is a technical shoe for trail runners and mud racers and is an ideal off-road, minimalist shoe. Formerly the Spyridon MR/Elite, the V-Trail is updated with increased Cocoon 3D technology in the forefoot and an increased-traction sole, featuring Vibram Megagrip.

In Spring 2017, Megagrip will be incorporated for the first time on select shoes from brand partners Asolo, Columbia, Garmont, Iowa, New Balance and Teva; adding to a roster of Megagrip soles already available from Altra, Arc'teryx, Garmont, Giro, Hoka One One, La Sportiva, Merrell, SCARPA, Scott, The North Face and Vasque, among others.



Spring 2017 offering from Vibram.

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- Soft metatarsal cushion reduces stress at forefoot
- Extra soft toe post for a comfortable wear
- Water friendly, so light they float



Running Shorts (continued)

Active Ankle's Eclipse II and Eclipse I

Active Ankle has released the Eclipse II and Eclipse I, which the brand describes as two “best-in-class multi-sport rigid ankle braces with improved durability, design, comfort and mobility.” They join the newly rebranded AS1 Pro Ankle Brace and 329 Ankle Sleeve in Active Ankle’s latest offerings for ankle protection.

Improved from the classic T2 Ankle Brace, the Eclipse II Rigid Multi-Sport Ankle Brace provides protection through its U-shaped design and multi-point strapping system. The anatomically

correct bilateral hinge allows for unencumbered, forward/back and vertical mobility, while the contoured stirrup shape is designed to improve fit and create a more compact ankle device that is lightweight.

To complement the Eclipse II, the new Eclipse I Rigid Multi-Sport Ankle Brace offers mobility while maintaining the protection of a rigid ankle brace through its single upright design. It increases side-to-side mobility while still maintaining rigid protection. In addition, freeing up the inner ankle allows athletes from a broader range of sports to



The Eclipse II brace by Active Ankle.

enjoy rigid ankle protection with little compromise to performance.

For those looking for less support than a rigid brace but more security than tape, Active Ankle recommends the newly rebranded AS1 PRO Multi-Sport Sport Lace-Up Brace. It provides protection with the comfort of the classic lace-up ankle brace.

The newly rebranded 329 Ankle Sleeve provides support to ligaments with specialized warmth through its supportive compression, multi-directional dual straps and innovative heel-lock technology.

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Running Shorts (continued)

Rocky Mountain Retail Camp in Boulder October 5-7

Visual merchandising and store design team, Holly Wiese and Andy Davis of Boulder based 3 Dots Design are teaming up with cycling industry veterans Mercedes Ross of Merchandising Werx and Gregg Frederick of G3 Development to offer a retail boot camp that focuses on training and how stores can improve the environment of their specialty store.

Key topics include:

- Visual merchandising magic (what are the NEW merchandising trends looking like?)
- Global retail trends & how

they impact your customers and their expectations at your store.

- Customer engagement strategies-how to draw new customers in and how to keep them coming back.
- Apparel merchandising tips and strategies: How to tackle everybody's hardest product category.
- Hands on merchandising exercises and training with an abundance of take home ideas and action items.

The camp will be held at the 3 Dots Design main office near downtown Boulder, CO and the neighboring Pearl Izumi showroom. Camp co-founder Holly Wiese says, "We have been talking about



[CLICK FOR MORE INFORMATION](#)

doing something like this for years. There is a real need for a brand-agnostic workshop to show retailers how they can improve their stores."

The camp will kick off with a welcome reception

Wednesday evening, October 5th and will conclude Friday afternoon, October 7th.

This session is limited to 40 attendees and tuition covers all classes, training, meals and ground transportation.



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Running Shorts (continued)

Polar Appoints Brajer as SVP of U.S. Sales and Marketing

Wearable tech brand Polar has hired Stan Brajer as Senior Vice President of U.S. Sales and Marketing. Brajer brings more than 20 years of experience in sports, fitness and retail to Polar. Previously, Brajer held the position of VP of U.S. Sports Sales for Timex where he recruited and signed elite athletes, including a host of Olympic medalists. Brajer also held the position of Director of Fitness Sales and Marketing for Garmin where he designed, implemented and executed a comprehensive



sive fitness sales and marketing plan that was optimized and integrated across

other Garmin divisions. Additionally, Brajer served as CEO of Pegasus Sports Performance where he led the launch of the company's initial application for runners and coaches.

Richard Joins ASICS Sales Team

Andrew Richard has been named the new Vice President of Regional Sales

for ASICS America, effective immediately. He will lead the brand's sales team. Richard comes to ASICS with more than 20 years of sales experience and a track record in progressing brands to new levels.

"Andy brings a wealth of sales expertise to ASICS and we are thrilled to welcome him to the team in this imperative role," said Gene McCarthy, ASICS America Group CEO and President. "As our industry continues to shift, we must continue to evolve. With Andy and his deep industry knowledge at the helm, we are positioning ourselves for great success

within the marketplace."

Richard most recently served as the Global Head of Merchandising for footwear at Puma, overseeing global product line management and over \$1.1 billion in footwear sales annually. Prior to his time at Puma, he built, reorganized and led national sales and merchandising teams at Timberland and Reebok, exceeding sales and profitability objectives.

In his role as Vice President of Regional Sales for ASICS America, Richard will oversee sales for the brands largest region, which encompasses the U.S., Canada, Mexico and Brazil.

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Brooks Revealed as the Brand Behind Rule 40 Campaign

Brooks is the brand behind the yellow generic branding and Olympic Charter slamming message of Rule40.com.

dear athletes,
if we could wish
you luck by name,
we would.
but it's too risky to
even mention ours.

*generic worldwide
quadrennial sporting
event advertisement

rule40.com

The Seattle-based brand was revealed last week after a story in the *Wall Street Journal* pegged it as the firm responsible for the website and social media presence named for the section of the International Olympic Committee's rulebook that prohibits any Olympic athlete or participant from commercializing their image for the duration of the games.

Through the campaign, Brooks charged that the rule effectively hamstring athletes from participating in one of the biggest, and in some cases, only, chance they have to earn sponsor dollars. (It also prevents brands like Brooks from being able to celebrate or even mention their sponsored athletes, all of whom compete in official sponsor Nike's kit.) Conceived of over the

winter and launched in late May, the campaign posted slogans meant to point out the discrepancy between the multi-billion dollar Olympics and the athletes who make it happen: "Only half of

American track and field athletes who are ranked in the top 10 in their event earn more than \$15,000 a year from the sport," or "Not pictured here: an athlete earning a living below the poverty line to bring glory to their country."

The Rule 40 guidelines are extensive: according to the guidelines recently issued by the US Olympic Committee, brands are prohibited from posting on their official accounts about the Olympic Trials, the Olympic Games, using any pictures taken at the Olympics, and are not allowed to share event results. They are even restricted from using hashtags like #rio2016 or #teamUSA.

According to a Brooks spokesman, the goal was to start a conversation about what benefits athletes. The rule40.com website and social media accounts will continue to operate for the foreseeable future, he said — and he added that post reveal "we're not going to go back and turn all the yellow font into blue, but we're going to keep having that conversation."
—Jennifer Ernst Beaudry

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