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Marathon Training Groups Benefit Runners and Retailers



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GROUP THINK

The training team from Big River Running Co. strikes a pose.

RUNNING INSIGHT

Marathon training groups and the races they serve play a central role in store business.

By Jennifer Ernst Beaudry

On October 9, 40,000 runners took to the streets of Chicago for the 39th Bank of Chicago Marathon. And in a few weeks, nearly 50,000 runners will do the same in New York for the TCS New York City marathon, the world’s largest.

Marathon participation declined 8 percent in 2015 according to advocacy group Running USA, part of an overall trend of single-digit declines in race participation overall after two decades of growth. But even with the dip, more than 500,000 finished marathon-distance races last year. And running storeowners say that marathons — and marathon

training groups — are a cornerstone of their community programming.

“We refer to the marathon as the Super Bowl of running in Chicago,” says Dave Zimmer, owner of the seven Fleet Feet Sports Chicago stores.

Zimmer estimates that his stores work with 900 to 1,000 Chicago marathoners through the training programs run by the Chicago Endurance Sports group (which the Fleet Feet Chicago team owns), and supports 14 different marathon charities. Participants, who pay around \$230 to join the 20-week program, get coaching, supported group runs, and access to the “Race Day Resort,” a dedicated space across from the race start and finish line with gear check,

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Group Think (continued)



Top: Fleet Feet Chicago's marathon involvement includes training groups and much more.

private bathrooms, post-race buffet, reunion areas, post-race massage and PT consults, medal engraving, finisher's gear purchase and open bar.

The store also hosts events in the lead-up to the race, like a panel in late September that brought runners Meb Keflezighi, Amy Cragg and Desi Linden, CES owner Mike Norman, as well as a nutritionist, physical therapist and Chicago race director Carey Pinkowski together to discuss marathon prep.

Zimmer says his stores have been involved with the marathon since they opened in 1996, and that the marathon groups help drive sales.

"The seminars, clinics and coaching are done out of the retail stores, and it gives us access and creates traffic on a consistent basis," he says. But, he adds, it's more than that: "We're helping our customers

achieve a goal, and we're giving them the locker room and retail store to do it."

Katie Helbig of Big River Running Co. in St. Louis agrees: Training groups can drive sales.

"We meet at our stores four to six times a season, and we see sales as a result of that, a couple thousand dollars before the store even opens on Sunday," she says.

The Sunday long runs routinely draw 150 to 250 people, she says, with 450 to 500 runners enrolled each season. After some experimenting, Helbig says, Big River has made their program, organized around the October Great Go! St. Louis Halloween Race half-marathon and April Go! St. Louis Marathon, free to participants. "It's more important to have the numbers, and more people participate if it's budget friendly," she notes.

And there's an upside to the numbers: It's a great way to really reach dedicated shoppers.

"It's a good opportunity for our brand partners," she says. "Our regular newsletter has an open rate of maybe 20 percent — the training team emails are closer to 80 percent."

But there are more subtle benefits as well.

For Fleet Feet Sports Hartford, based in Hartford, CT, marathon season is a good chance to connect with dedicated runners, owner Stephanie Blozy says.

"The marathon is right in that sweet spot of runners ages 20 to 45," she says. And as the store's consumer group ages, with more people coming in for walking or just properly fitting comfortable shoes, offering services to runners keeps the store in touch with their core.

And while the store just looks to "break even" on the groups, Blozy says (Fleet Feet Hartford runs its groups itself and charges \$145 for the marathon



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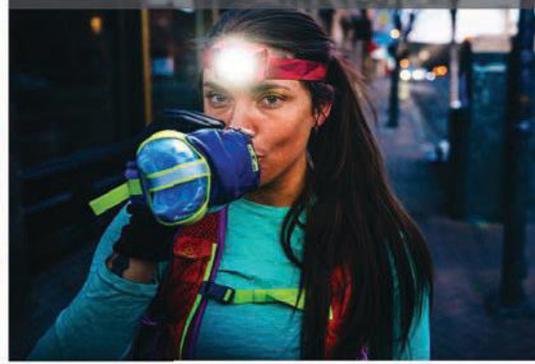


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Group Think (continued)



Photo: Dennis Snelizer

Top: a group run organized by the Philadelphia Runner store. Below: a member of the Fleet Feet Hartford training team.

program, \$125 for the half marathon), she says it's given her some insights into the business. Training group members get discounts at the store, and watching what they bought (and didn't buy) gave her ideas. After noticing that very few marathoners bought their gels and hydration at the store in favor of bulk Amazon deliveries, Blozy says she created a "Nutrition Pass" program that keeps her customers buying with her.

Ross Martinson, co-owner of the four Philadelphia Runner stores based in Philadelphia, PA, says the group runs his store organizes as part of their marathon training groups has been eye-opening

as to what his runners — especially beginning runners — need.

"I came out of being a college runner and, when you look at the experience of running a marathon at a 7-minute-mile pace versus an 11-minute-mile pace and what you need to run and what you need to recover and the time it takes, it's such a different training experience," he says.

Martinson also believes the marathon is a great way to get in front of a lot of runners. This year for the second time, Philadelphia Runner is sponsoring the "All City 20 Miler" long run for any runners prepping for the Philadelphia Marathon or anyone else who wants to join. Set for Oct. 22 in advance of the Nov. 20 marathon and free and open to all runners, the last training run will feature gels, water and organized pace groups organized by Philadelphia Runner.

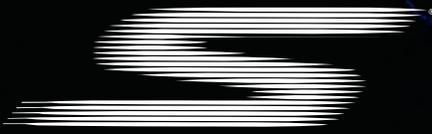
"I think we were going to get 1,000 people," Martinson says.

Fleet Feet Chicago has a similar approach: Zimmer says the stores, in addition to coordinating 320 employees and volunteers to oversee the water, entertainment and manpower at the aid station outside the Old Town store on race day, sets up hydration stations along the Chicago lakefront for any and all runners for the 20 weeks leading up to the marathon — more than 425,000 cups of hydration over the season, he estimates.

And cultivating that sense of a running community is really the biggest advantage, Big River's Helbig says.

"Our training groups have truly allowed us to create a Big River Nation — it's a following," she says. "It's another way we can provide a relationship that's personal, and that helps." ■





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Leveraging Etsy at Retail



Products at the Lively Athletics store include unique Etsy finds such as Southern Hospitality products (left) and Vagabond yoga mats (right).

The online marketplace's two-year-old wholesale arm offers running retailers access to unique products and compelling opportunities.

By Daniel P. Smith

This relationship goes back to the beginning.

Almost as soon as sisters Anne Pezalla and Kate Pezalla Marlin opened the doors to Lively Athletics in August 2014, the Oak Park, IL-based shop began using Etsy Wholesale to find differentiated product it could bring into its upstart running boutique.

Alongside the traditional array of running footwear, apparel and accessories, the 1,800-square foot shop on Chicago's western edge features a strategic array of handmade goods with rich stories behind their creation and, oftentimes, local connections that Lively Athletics' staff can share with customers.

"We want to be different and want to offer products that people can't just get anywhere else," Pezalla says. "This sets us apart and helps make us more 'boutiquey.'"

With run specialty shops increasingly looking to broaden their reach beyond the sit-and-fit footwear experience and eager to diversify their sales mix in light of core running gear's swelling ubiquity across the retail landscape, leveraging the Etsy

Wholesale marketplace has proven to be a winning formula for Lively Athletics and one that just might hold potential for other retail shops in the run specialty channel.

What Is Etsy Wholesale?

The flagship Etsy website debuted in 2005, promising consumers a way to score unique handmade or vintage goods. Today, Etsy's flagship retail site features more than 1.7 million vendors peddling more than 35 million items ranging from jewelry and apparel to furniture and food.

In August 2014, Etsy took a step to attract retailers directly when it launched Etsy Wholesale, which company representatives describe as a streamlined way for retailers to leverage the massive, designer-driven online marketplace in an efficient, effective and professional way.

In the two years since, Etsy Wholesale has blossomed into a vibrant retail force. The site features a juried collection of more than 9,000 independent designers prepared to process wholesale orders and the company reports that more than 11,000 retailers procure goods from the platform.



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Etsy (continued)

The private online marketplace, which is free for retailers to join, shares information on artists, their goods and wholesale terms, such as turnaround time, minimums and production techniques. To further inform decision-making, retailers can also view comments about designers, investigate their social media following and review their popularity.

While a good number of Etsy Wholesale dealers will hold little relevance for a running retailer, others certainly possess the potential to complement conventional running store inventory and generate sales.

Lively Athletics, for instance, initially began its Etsy Wholesale relationship with t-shirts, particularly favoring energetic designs from Chicago area artist Megan Lee of Megan Lee Designs. Later, the store added jewelry, specifically looking for items carrying a running theme. In more recent times, Lively Athletics has added yoga mats from Vagabond Goods and beauty products from the Black Kettle Soap Company and Southern Hospitality, practical goods that Pezalla says prove especially popular around the holidays.

One-on-One Relationships

Unlike popular footwear models or apparel created for the mass market and available in thousands of doors across the U.S., many of Etsy Wholesale's goods are limited edition-like products, which enhances their specialty vibe in a specialty shop.

Better yet, retailers have an opportunity to deal directly with designers. With these one-on-one relationships, retailers can enjoy a range of advantageous benefits. Designers, for instance, are often willing to send samples, grant local exclusivity, swap lingering products for fresh inventory or craft exclusive product for a particular retailer.

"Many of these artists are happy to work with us and customize an order specifically to our tastes," Pezalla says, adding that many of the designers she has encountered are fellow small business owners excited to be accommodating and collaborative partners. The aforementioned Megan Lee, for instance, produced a special line of shirts exclusive to Lively Athletics.

"We had a trunk show and sold 50 t-shirts in two hours," Pezalla says.



On the retail floor: checking out a t-shirt by Megan Lee Designs.



Inside the Lively Athletics store.

On the flip side, Pezalla acknowledges that some Etsy Wholesale-sourced goods she brings into Lively Athletics are not sales floor ready in pretty packaging. This puts the onus on Lively Athletics staff to find merchandising solutions.

"That's a bit of a bummer," Pezalla says, "but something we try to overcome with some creative displays."

Running with Etsy Wholesale

As consumer interest in artisan products with deeper stories accelerates across the retail spectrum, Etsy Wholesale holds particular appeal for independent retailers, including run shops, looking to give customers added reason to visit their stores.

Using the platform, retailers can offer unique products with spirited backstories, tales and tidbits they can then share with customers via in-store collateral and social media.

"I think people are more interested than ever in how things are made and where they come from," Pezalla says.

For retailers interested in joining Etsy Wholesale, Pezalla suggests they start small on the platform, specifically looking for moderate-cost products that can complement a given store's vibe or its local character as well as those that can easily be pitched as add-on sales – something the \$10 beauty products from Southern Hospitality at Lively Athletics do so well. On most products, the minimum order is \$200 and there are no contracts, Pezalla notes.

"At those terms, it's easy to put together a totally custom order, bring in the product and test it out with little to lose," she says.

While Pezalla acknowledges that Etsy Wholesale might not be for every running retailer, she nevertheless has found great value in having a few scattered goods from the marketplace in her store.

"When you want to be different and catch customers' interest, you can't just be putting out the same product as everyone else," she says. "Having some differentiated product and the stories that come with some of these goods has been a real positive for us." ■

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Locally Sees Bright Future in Running



Left to right: Johanna Rotondo-McCord, Retailer Account Manager; Tammy Mercure, Content Manager; Mark Strella, Business Development Director; Mike Massey, President; Graham Gibby, Retailer Connectivity.

Q&A with Mark Strella of Locally.com

Since its launch last year, Locally.com has sparked interest among specialty retailers as a possible means to help them compete with bigger, better financed web only retailers by letting their shoppers know what inventory is available in what stores.

Locally was founded in 2012 by a number of specialty retailers, including Mike Massey of Masseys Outfitters, which has five stores in Louisiana. The business raised some money in 2012 and 2013 and originally used the name *localgear.com*. Last year, it purchased the name *locally.com* and began targeting the running market. Locally launched in running with

Nathan this past January and now has local inventory coverage in more than 385 cities.

Mark Strella, who spoke at The Running Event last year, recently sat down with *Running Insight* and then answered some follow up questions via e-mail. Here are highlights from those exchanges.

So can you explain exactly what it is Locally does?

“The one thing we want to stress is that Locally is not about Direct-to-consumer vs. specialty or any of that. We’re about restoring harmony to brand/dealer/shopper relationships. Our goal is to build the definitive online-to-offline shopping platform that seamlessly blurs the lines between online and off by presenting nearby inventory information to shoppers in as many places across the internet as possible,

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Locally (continued)

Locally makes local inventory **visible and actionable** to online shoppers across our eco-system of tools for brand sites, retailer sites and social media, and our own marketplace locally.com.

Locally.com is a longer tail strategy for us that generates a healthy clip of its own organic traffic already primarily through local **Search Engine Optimization**, that we expect to see rise substantially over the holiday months.

to maximize the chance that a shopper walks through the doors of a store.

In doing so, we're solving real challenges for brands—helping the number of shoppers who come to their site not ready to buy, but want to try on in a store or get something that day, and making it exceptionally easy for retailers to reach shoppers across the web with their inventory without flushing money down the e-commerce drain.”

Give me the elevator pitch on how this process works for retailers.

“Sure. Locally makes local inventory visible and actionable to online shoppers across our eco-system of tools for brand sites, retailer sites and social media, and our own marketplace locally.com.

Retailers start by claiming their locally.com. This allows them to control their own store information on any Locally-powered tool on brand sites, removing the constant needless back and forth between retailers and all of their brands about changes to store info. Stores can also add additional information to their listings like store hours and upcoming events and broadcast that through brand sites.

Their next step is setting up their free Locally inventory feed. Locally has developed a near-universal inventory sync process and has connected with over 20 POS systems. Retailers on RICS have it easy—they contact RICS, ask for the Locally integration, and will be wired up in no-time. We have a real-time API integration with RICS that syncs with Locally each time a transaction occurs in-store.

Once their feed is setup, their inventory will start showing on brand sites that use our tools, as well as their store page on locally.com. Retailers can then take this Locally.com feed and host it on their own site through our “Locally Pages” tool which gives retailers a simple way to add their inventory to folks on their own website. They can also add their Locally feed to their Facebook page through our Locally Pages for Facebook tool. This is all free for retailers.

The last step is to explore using our “Buy it Locally” transaction tools. We currently facilitate “reserve online, pay in store” and “Pay online, pick up in store” which allows

that store to accept holds and payments for pickup from brand websites, locally.com, and their own site and social media. Next year we will be rolling out a beta of local same day delivery. We've made these tools totally free all holiday season.

In a nutshell, Locally offers retailers a simple and novel way to make their inventory visible and actionable to online shoppers on a variety of locations across the internet, in partnership with their brands.”

Ok. That was a long elevator ride. But I understand. Is locally for specialty retailers only? When I went on the site a few days ago, and searched CamelBak, it referred me to two specialty retailers and a Dick's Sporting Goods Store not far from my house.

“It's not specialty only. Any retailer can participate, as long as they have a physical brick and mortar location we can refer someone to. Because we currently power a Product Locator for CamelBak (and are about to manage their Dealer Locator as well), we need to show shoppers all possible options to purchase that product, not just specialty stores. Currently, only specialty stores and smaller regional chains are participating in Locally with inventory.”

How do most of your consumers engage with the process? Through locally.com, or the retailer's website?

“Most of our traffic comes from brand sites—through a Product Locator like on OOFOS or Nathan, or a Dealer Locator where shoppers can browse a store's inventory like Brooks or Features!.

After brand sites, we power tools on a number of retailer sites—including many in running—that allow a shopper to browse a store's inventory, reserve products for pickup, or a number of other options. These see a good bit of traffic.

Locally.com is a longer tail strategy for us that generates a healthy clip of its own organic traffic already primarily through local Search Engine Optimization, that we expect to see rise substantially over the holiday months. In 2017, we are relaunching

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Locally (continued)

Locally has developed a simple, near-universal way for retailers to submit daily, often hourly, and in some-cases real time inventory through our platform.

We can add value to existing infrastructure and provide runners with nearby product information in an elegant way that sends shoppers to stores to buy our partner brands...

locally.com. We just finalized a partnership with the phenomenal web firm ZaneRay, to rebuild locally.com from the ground up. The site hasn't kept up with our evolution as a company so we're excited to transform that experience considerably next year with one of the top web firms in this space."

What brands are you working with?

"From our inception in the outdoor industry, we began with a bit of overlap with brands like CamelBak, Smartwool, and Salomon. In 2016, we've launched our initial cohort of brands, which included Nathan, Brooks Running, Features!, OOFOS, and the start-up brand Knead Footwear. We're pleased to announce that we're in the process now of launching on-site tools for more major footwear brands this fall—Hoka and Saucony, as well as Darn Tough and OS1st compression. We have a few more getting ready to launch before The Running Event that we'll announce at that time."

Talk about POS integration. How does that work?

"Locally has developed a simple, near-universal way for retailers to submit daily, often hourly, and in some-cases real time inventory through our platform. We've integrated with more than 20 Point of Sale systems, including a state of the art API integration with RICS. Retailers on RICS can activate their free integration, and it pings Locally with inventory updates in real time. It's one of our best integrations and the team at RICS has been great getting it on rails."

Talk about your challenges in running and goals for the next two years.

"We've had tremendous help this year with early mover run stores and brands who were quick to embrace the potential of this experience and help us jumpstart the industry from close to scratch. It's always a challenge to confront the inevitable chicken and egg scenarios that accompany launching a new industry from scratch, so we're incredibly grateful for the stores and brands who helped us get this far. Our goal over the next six months is to continue to loop in major brands

into this experience at a rapid pace and gain as near total saturation with the brands that matter to specialty run stores as possible."

What sort of data do you collect?

"Locally collects a tremendous amount of data about what products shoppers are looking for, right down to the city level, that we're rolling out in new ways throughout the next year to help optimize sell-in and buying."

And what about partnerships in the running business?

"We think running is ripe for branching out into partnerships. Locally is essentially a syndicator of local inventory information- currently to brand sites, retailer sites, social media, and locally.com—and there are so many partnership opportunities in the running eco-system with races, apps, and so forth where Locally could play a role at presenting runners with nearby stores, product availability, etc. Locally is a utility, our goal is to present premium brands in-stock in stores to shoppers in as many different ways as possible. We think if a runner signs up for a race that's sponsored by Saucony, they should see all of the Saucony products in-stock at their nearby specialty store. Or if you use a run app and you're clocking long runs, maybe you should see where you can buy a hydration pack nearby. However, we can add value to existing infrastructure and provide runners with nearby product information in an elegant way that sends shoppers to stores to buy our partner brands, that's where we want to be."

In addition to running, you are in the outdoor business, automotive, baby goods and tactical products. How did you choose these categories?

"We look for industries where there are well-known, premium brands that sell premium products, and there is a desirable in-store experience with a base of specialty stores selling those products." ■

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3 CASE STUDIES

How Entrepreneurs Support their Neighborhoods on Small Business Saturday and Beyond.



Shirt by Ledbury.

This year marks the seventh Small Business Saturday, a day dedicated to supporting small businesses across the country. Small Business Saturday, which falls on Nov. 26 this year, was founded by American Express in 2010 and has gained serious momentum since its launch. According to a consumer survey commissioned by American Express and the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB), more than 95 million consumers shopped on Small Business Saturday in 2015, spending around \$16.2 billion total at independent retailers and restaurants across the U.S. More than 4,100 Neighborhood Champions rallied local businesses in 2015 and created events around the day.

So how can your business get the word out to customers about the importance of shopping small on Small Business Saturday and beyond? These three entrepreneurs share ideas on how they help foster their local communities all year long.

Ledbury: Crafting Luxury Shirts With an Eye on Local Community

It was September 2008 when Paul Tribble and Paul Watson knew their careers were in for a change. Both were living in England, having just graduated from the University of Oxford, and both had jobs waiting for them.

The pair had often talked about their love

for the tailored shirts readily available in the U.K. Instead of starting the jobs they'd lined up, they decided to start a shirt-making business in the U.S.

In December 2009, they moved to Richmond, Virginia, and founded Ledbury, a men's luxury apparel company. Business took off and today there are two locations in Richmond and one in Washington, D.C. Nearly 80 percent of their business is online, with 95 percent of that from outside the greater Richmond area, according to the founders.

The concept of community has been at the center of Ledbury's mission from day one. "It has always been about the local story," says Tribble. "When we started marketing the business, we realized we could tell the story of Paul and I, or it could be a richer conversation where we include friends and places we interact with on a regular basis."

The pair started telling stories of local artists, chefs and entrepreneurs on their website. In each photo, the featured subject would wear a Ledbury shirt. Today, Ledbury has more than 100,000 people on its email and newsletter list, according to the founders. The company also hosts one weekend-long quail hunt each year where they bring in customers, vendors and investors along for the fun. To help build buzz in the past, Ledbury has hosted social media contests to give customers a chance to win a free trip to the hunt.

Ledbury has participated in Small Business Saturday since 2010 and plans to continue indefinitely. "We get the word out on social media and keep longer hours at the stores," says



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Small Biz Success (continued)



Bwè Kafe donates a portion of its profits to the charity Love for Haiti.



Journeys of Life bookstore is a small business success story.

Tribble. “We also do promotions. It definitely drives foot traffic.”

Bwè Kafe: Brewing Coffee to Bring Relief to Haiti

More than 300 miles north of Richmond in Hoboken, New Jersey, sits Bwè Kafe, a coffee shop that sells Haitian coffee and features Haitian-inspired art, run by Dale Ryan and her brother, Evan Ryan. The store opened in May 2013 as a spin-off project of a nonprofit their mother started to help victims of Haiti’s 2010 earthquake.

“Part of our profits go to Love for Haiti, the charity our mom started,” says Dale, adding that every coffee blend includes beans from Haiti and the space is decorated with indigenous art from Haiti.

Business has been good from the start for the sibling co-owners and in November 2015, they opened a second location in Jersey City. Along with its philanthropic mission, the Ryans are dedicated to fostering a sense of place, starting with a 10-foot-long “community table” in the center of both cafes.

“Strangers sit next to each other and enjoy coffee; we’ve had two marriages come out of people who met at that table,” Dale says. “We also use the table to host community events at no charge. Right now we have a weekly French class. [In the past] we’ve had a meditation workshop, an essential oils workshop and other events.”

Bwè Kafe jumped at the opportunity to participate in Small Business Saturday back in 2013 when they’d been open just six months. “It reminds people that they don’t have to go far to get unique gifts for the holidays,” says Dale, adding that every year they put up marketing materials around the store for the holiday and offer gift baskets at 10 percent off. “This year, we are going to put together more packages for our customers and incorporate some Haitian crafts,” she says.

Journeys of Life: Selling Soulful Gifts

Another 350 miles west of Hoboken on Bellefonte Street in the Shadyside district of Pittsburgh is Journeys of Life, a bookstore and gift shop for people with a variety of spiritual and religious belief systems. Local Jean Haller founded the shop in 1989 to provide items for people “who are on a path or a way to something,” she says. Many of her customers are recovering from hardships while others are looking for items to cheer up a friend who might be down.

From the day she opened, Haller worked hard to build a community around her, donating time and resources to nonprofits in her area—from a school for at-risk youth to an animal rescue to women’s organizations. A few years ago, that community showed up for her in an unexpected way.

At 3 a.m. on Nov. 13, 2011, her phone rang and she was informed that an electrical fire had destroyed her store. “I was the Neighborhood Champion for my area and it was two weeks until Thanksgiving,” she remembers. “I had to do something.”

Haller’s community gathered around her and helped her open an interim location in a matter of days. That Small Business Saturday was one for the books. “I couldn’t believe how many people came in to the store,” she says. “I think I cried most of the day.”

Haller renovated her former space and moved back the following May. She continues to participate in Small Business Saturday. “I always do giveaways,” she says. “I’ve started buying inventory specifically for Small Business Saturday because I want to offer good deals for my customers.”

This November, Haller plans to start marketing on Facebook and through her email newsletter several weeks before the holiday and offer a number of in-store promotions.

“I recommend every entrepreneur get involved in Small Business Saturday,” she says. “You get amazing marketing materials and you have the chance to hold a party in honor of your customers.”

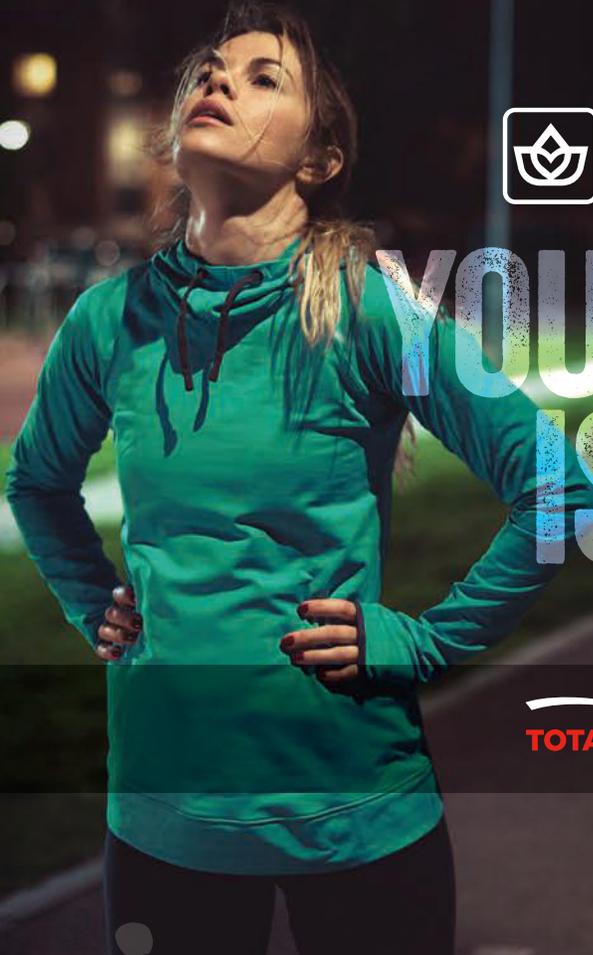
Working Together, No Matter What

Whether you’re highlighting other businesses on your blog or providing a physical space for customers to gather, these three entrepreneurs help prove the importance of fostering community. Business owners are smart to collaborate not only with each other and offer cross promotions, but also with local charities. On Small Business Saturday and beyond, try thinking of fun ways to rally your neighborhood for a cause—whether that’s shopping locally or giving back to your community. As Jean Haller notes when partnering with nonprofits in her area, the help you give “will come [back] to you.” ■

Want to know more about Small Business Saturday and how your business can benefit? Bring in new customers and take advantage of free marketing and promotional items here: www.ShopSmall.com



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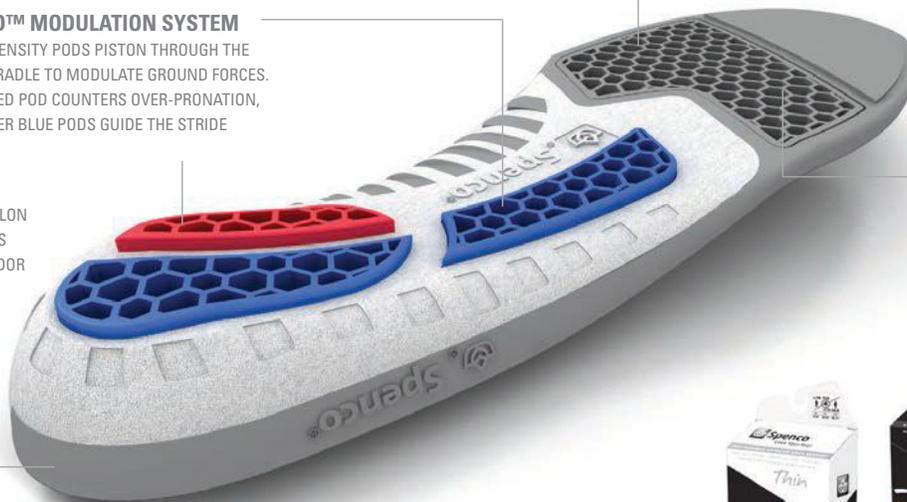
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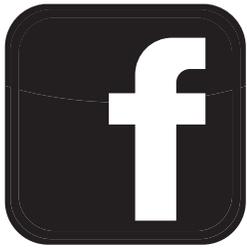
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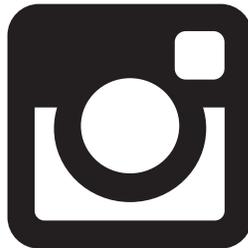


Let's Get Connected

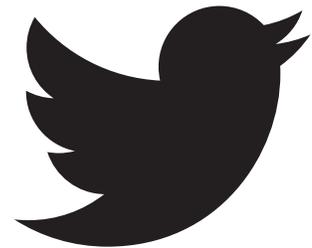
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Running Shorts

EnduraFit's Bamboo Briefs

Long time wholesale performance apparel company EnduraFit has developed a line of moisture wicking bamboo boxer briefs. These briefs come in 7-inch and 9-inch inseams, and are made from 95 percent pure bamboo and 5 percent spandex. The briefs contain no cotton, nylon or viscose (a bamboo derivative). The briefs are moisture wicking, anti-microbial and anti-odor with no chemical additives. Designed to be comfortable and super lightweight, the



EnduraFit Bamboo Boxer Briefs

performance briefs target the running, crossfit and fitness lifestyle market, while also being good for everyday wear.

They are made with a no pinch, soft waistband and are

available in eight colors. EnduraFit is also committed to giving back and a portion of all sales goes to Back on My Feet; a charity that helps the homeless through running.

Active Network Introduces New Merchandising Feature For Endurance Event Organizers

Event and activity community leader Active network announced a new technology integration for its ACTIVEWorks Endurance platform that provides what it describes as a risk-free opportunity for event organizers to drive merchandise revenue. With this new functionality, event organizers can now offer and deliver customized and personalized event-branded merchandise directly to their participants at a lower

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Running Shorts (continued)

cost and without having to manage fulfillment. Through an alliance with Viralstyle, a leading social commerce platform that allows people to easily create, share, buy, and sell their apparel and accessory designs, event organizers can design event-branded merchandise that can be ordered and shipped directly to participants by Viralstyle as part of ACTIVE Network's online registration process.

The solution manages the entire merchandising fulfillment lifecycle for events of all sizes. Because participants place their orders directly through Viralstyle as

part of ACTIVE Network's online registration process, the solution eliminates the need for event organizers to pay upfront inventory costs or handle logistics related to event-branded merchandise for participants. There is also no minimum volume requirement for inventory orders, so organizers won't finish their event with unsold merchandise. Additionally, ACTIVE tracks merchandising sales activity and delivers data insights to help organizers determine their increased revenue as a result of the merchandise sales, which is designed to help organizers make decisions for their future

events.

Event organizers who utilize the merchandising feature can select from more than 20 apparel and accessories options. *More info:* activeendurance.com

Skechers Foundation Plans to Raise \$1.5 Million at Friendship Walk

The SKECHERS Foundation announced a \$1.5 million fundraising goal for the eighth SKECHERS Pier to Pier Friendship Walk, an annual event to support children with special needs and education.

Media sponsor NBC4 will



join returning presenting sponsor Nickelodeon and a team of celebrities – including Sugar Ray Leonard, Brooke Burke-Charvet, Tommy Lasorda, Denise Austin and Camila Alves – for the event on Sunday, October 23 in Manhattan Beach.

Since its inception in

Photo: skechersfriendshipwalk.com

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Running Shorts (continued)

2009, the SKECHERS Pier to Pier Friendship Walk has grown its event in order to build awareness for children with special needs and education. The Walk has raised approximately \$7 million to date. *More info: skechersfriendshipwalk.com*

Zamst Filmista Offers Run Specialty Support

Zamst, a leader in high-performance sports prevention and protective equipment, reports that its ISPO-award winning ankle support product, Filmista, is finding success at specialty retail and with professional athletes, among others.



Zamst Filmista

Filmista became available to the U.S. market this past July. The Filmista received the 2015-2016 ISPO Accessories Award. Constructed with a multi-layer, second skin TECH fusion of flexible urethane micron stabilizer technology,

the Filmista, standing for Film + Stability, provides a flyweight and ultrathin support structure for the ankle. This Filmista fusion process encases two micro layers of urethane support that simulates a taping process that allows for compression and low profile ankle support.

“The Filmista was designed to provide a solution for those athletes who seek both stability and support within the ankle but do not want to compromise fit and comfort in their shoe,” says Dawn Ferreria, Sr. Product Specialist for Zamst US. “The product design is based around proven taping methods that will help support the ankle

during activity.”

“The right shoe fit is crucial for runners, and we are highly impressed with the Zamst Filmista because it does not change the fit of your shoes,” says Kyle Larson, Product Manager for Fleet Feet Sports in Chicago. “The initial response to Filmista ankle support has been very positive within our stores and community and we forecast strong sales of this highly innovative product.”

U.S. Olympian and elite marathoner Amy Cragg says she uses the Filmista for reinforced ankle support and also when she feels any ankle stress or discomfort.

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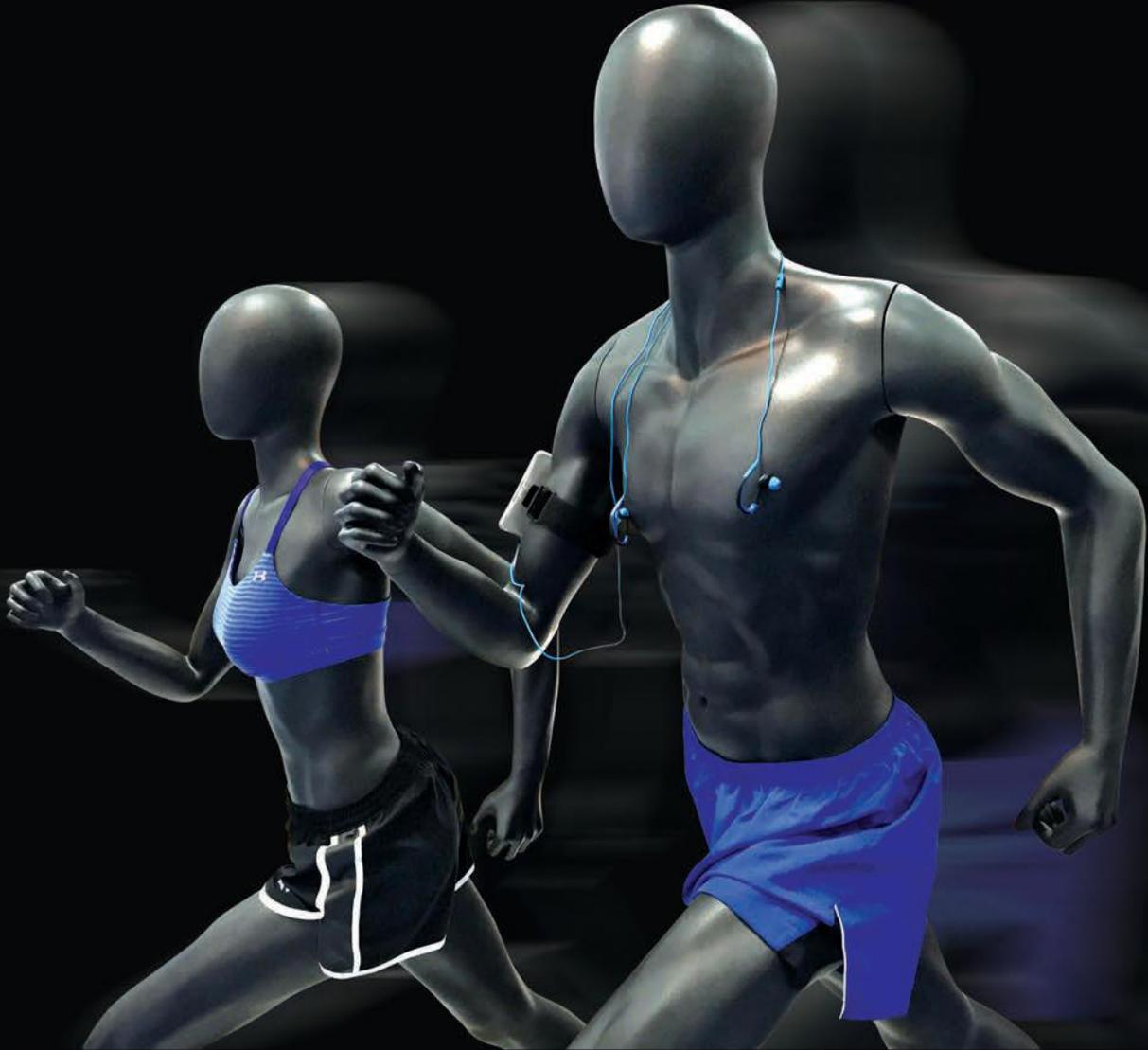
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Running Shorts (continued)



ASICS elite athlete, first time marathoner and Rio 2016 Olympic Triathlon Gold Medalist Gwen Jorgensen.

ASICS Launches Extra Mile Campaign

A new multi-channel brand campaign leading up to the New York City Marathon from ASICS includes digital, social, advertising, outdoor and retail activations, live events and an enhanced online experience on asics.com/extramile. The TCS New York Marathon takes place November 6, 2016.

With this new campaign, ASICS will encourage athletes of all levels to make a positive impact by adding an “Extra Mile” to their workout. For those going the “Extra Mile,” ASICS will donate a pair of running

shoes to Girls on the Run, a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting self-confidence and healthy lifestyles through running.

On October 17, the campaign kicks off through the Runkeeper app where users can sign up for the “Extra Mile Challenge.” The challenge will encourage participants to add an additional mile to the Runkeeper community’s average run distance of three miles, by going four. For each challenge completed until November 30, a pair of ASICS running shoes will be donated to Girls on the Run.

The Extra Mile campaign

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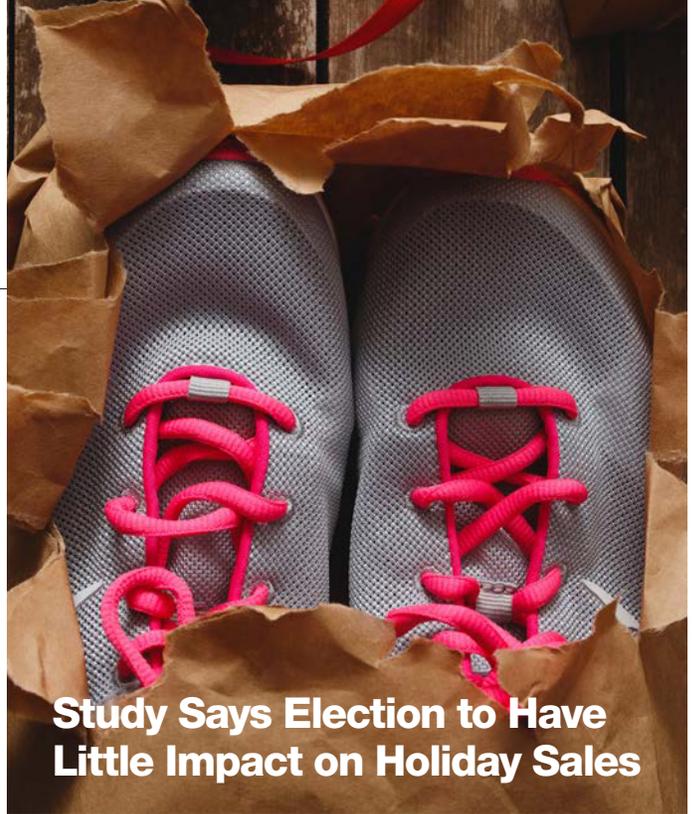
(SHOWN: WOMEN'S ULTRAFLY IN PURPLE/LILAC)

Running Shorts (continued)

will also come to life in New York City's Columbus Circle on Friday, November 4, where the brand will have treadmill stations where participants can run or walk an "Extra Mile" and trigger a donation to Girls on the Run. ASICS will continue to celebrate the Extra Mile campaign on Marathon Monday, with a ceremonial one-mile run starting at the official race finish line in Central Park. The mile run will include runners who embody the spirit of the campaign, including ASICS elite athlete, first time marathoner and Rio 2016 Olympic Triathlon Gold

Medalist Gwen Jorgensen; Girls on the Run members; and fellow ASICS athletes.

To commemorate ASICS' Extra Mile campaign, a customized 27th "Extra Mile" Smile Marker will be located at the ASICS store in the Meatpacking District (420 W 14th Street). Additionally, ASICS will donate a pair of shoes to Girls on the Run for every \$100 spent on ASICS products from October 24 through November 7 within select New York City run specialty stores, and at participating ASICS retail locations nationwide (restrictions apply). ■



Study Says Election to Have Little Impact on Holiday Sales

Retailers should not fret about the noise leading up to the presidential election having much, if any, impact on their upcoming holiday season sales, according to a recent report from Alliance Data.

Citing its research of the last two U.S. election cycles, Alliance said much of the political noise in October will shift retail sales that would have been made during October into November.

Alliance suggests that during the election cycle, retailers should consider shifting their ad dollars away from TV and radio to online and digital, where there is less competition for customers' attention.

Among other key trends cited by Alliance from its 2016 Epsilon Holiday Shopping Survey:

- 87% of shoppers are still very likely to purchase at stores this year.
- 16% of revenues, on average, is at risk by the retailer due to poor customer experience.
- 38% of all purchases will come from cross-channel shoppers.
- 72% of customers have bought or plan to buy gift cards.
- 60% of shoppers prefer to return items to store where 70% will make additional purchases.
- 55% of consumers will look at products online before buying in store.
- 54% of shoppers will look in-store before going online to find the best deal.
- 58% of customers say belonging to a loyalty program has an impact on their overall brand loyalty.

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