

# SGI Europe

## Sporting Goods Intelligence

News and analysis of the international market

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## A drop of 9% at Sport 2000 International

**Sport 2000 International** reports a decline in the retail sales of its affiliated members of almost 9.0 percent in terms of euros to €4,326 million in 2020, due to the pandemic. The figure includes VAT and applies to the 3,615 stores managed by retailers in 22 countries by the end of 2020 with the exception of **Base Detail Sport** in Spain and **Kuruçayirli** in Turkey, which have left the world's second-largest international buying group in our sector after **Intersport International Corp.**

The annual general assembly of the group, which took place for the second time virtually, confirmed its intention to focus on the advancement of the digitalization process, the roll-out of a new multi-category format and the further expansion of the specialized **Absolute** format. It will also pursue new strategic partnerships and seek to identify new strategic business areas.

For example, **Arena**, **Icebreaker** and the **Newline** brand of **Hummel** have agreed to join Sport 2000 as new international brand partners, and Sport 2000 has extended its collaboration with the **Scott Sports Group** in the areas of running and outdoor lifestyle.

As previously reported, **Sport 2000 Austria** has started to handle purchasing of winter sports products at the international level. A similar "center of intelligence" approach is planned to be established in the team sports and running categories. Such initiatives are partly meant to help steer international cooperation on digitalization projects and to expand the Absolute concept.

A digitalization and e-commerce task force has been set up to create synergies between the countries in these areas as part of a plan to launch a central Sport 2000 International website in middle of 2021. It will refer visitors easily and intuitively to the individual countries for the purchase of certain products, in line with the local demand.

There are currently four **Absolute Run** stores in Germany and one in Dubai. There are also six **Absolute Teamsport** stores in Germany and one in Austria. First launched two years ago, the new premium format is expected to be implemented also in Hungary, Switzerland and the Benelux countries in the near future.

As previously indicated, the first new multi-category Sport 2000 concept was going to see the light in the French city of Chambéry in March, but the opening has been delayed to later this year. Another one is in the pipeline at an undisclosed location in Belgium.

Following the repositioning of the Sport 2000 brand, the organization will launch a global campaign in the summer that will define it as a leader in sports performance and the “expert with a human touch.”

The annual meeting of Sport 2000 International confirmed its present board of directors, run by **Holger Schwarting**, with **Matthias Grevener** acting as vice chairman. **Margit Grosau** remains as CEO of the organization as well as **Sport 2000 GmbH**.

## ANWR's financial services offset declines at retail

The German-based **ANWR Group**, whose holdings include the **Sport 2000** business in Germany, Switzerland and the Benelux countries, looks back on a challenging year in its annual report. Despite the difficult situation in the retail sector caused by the Covid-19 crisis, the operating result shows a slight increase to €17.8 billion for 2020, thanks mainly to the group's expanded financial services.

While the footwear and leathersgoods segments recorded particularly high sales declines of 20.1 percent and 36.0 percent, respectively, the sports segment grew by 1.1 percent. The total invoiced purchasing volume for the affiliated retailers amounted to €2.6 billion across all product categories, 11.5 percent down on the previous year.

The centralized settlement business for retail cooperatives that don't belong to the ANWR Group developed positively in 2020. The purchasing volume handled in their behalf via ANWR's own banks - **DZB Bank** and **Aktivbank** – went up by 5.1 percent to €13.8 billion. Retail cooperatives in the building materials, wood, furniture, automotive, plumbing, heating and bicycle sectors were less affected by the Covid-related restrictions. Both banks benefit from guarantees offered by the Federal Association of German Cooperative Banks (**BVR**).

On the other hand, the ANWR Group reports 4.1 percent lower revenues of €630.8 million from commissions related the centralized settlements for its affiliated shoe and leathersgoods retailers, although its **schuhe.de** e-commerce platform performed well. Extraordinary gains came from the sale of a property in Düsseldorf, and this step helped the group to generate a consolidated pre-tax profit of €69.9 million for the year, compared with just under €5 million in 2019. A dividend payout of 10 percent is being proposed for the holders of the cooperative shares.

ANWR expects to meet ongoing challenges for the affiliated brick-and-mortar retailers by arranging or providing financing, intensive consulting and training and management tools, including stock management solutions and e-commerce platforms.

## Intersport lays out a three-part strategy for Spain

**Intersport Spain** has set forth a strategic plan for the next three years, 2021-23, to bolster its brand and rejigger its inner workings.

The public has “lost confidence in Intersport,” said **Oriol Tomas**, chariman of the Spanish retail organization, in an interview with *CMDsport*. To regain it, the buying group has set an explicit objective to become “the preferred destination for consumers of performance sports.” Or, as its CEO **Xavier Alomar** has told *Diffusion Sport*, “changes seen in the market, in the behavior of consumers as well as of suppliers and brands, demand that we adapt to a new horizon.”

The plan rests on three pillars: (1) product selection, with a combination of attractive, high-quality and multi-category name brands and house brands (**McKinley**, **Firefly** and **Energetics**); (2) omnichannel points of sale renovated and standardized for profitability and sustainability; and (3) “one voice, one brand” communications, to unify the offering for the consumer and the market, and loyalty programs tailored to each store’s locality. House brands, incidentally, account for about 10 percent of Intersport’s business in Spain.

By the end of this year, 95 percent of Intersport’s points of sale will reflect the new corporate image, and all should be operating on the same computer system by the first half of 2022.

The plan’s second pillar breaks down into several parts. Intersport will be farming out some of its logistics (to a company called **Ceva**) and digitalization, overhauling its financial structure, and putting its headquarters, in the Catalan city of Rubí, up for sale. The company will thus be needing less warehouse and showroom space. The sale will both bring in capital and cement certain pandemic-related changes to the company’s labor practices. There are no plans for now to lay off any of the headquarters’ staff, which stands at about 70.

At present Intersport operates more outlet stores in Spain than any other banner. According to Alomar, however, the current tally of 19 will be cut to 14 or 15. “We will be keeping only those that are truly profitable,” he told *CMDsport*, “adapting their se-

lection and the inventory-return percentages of our partners to volumes that truly reflect the demand.” A new credit and risk insurance policy will seek to eliminate insolvencies by setting limits on retail partners.

The buying group federates 293 stores, including 155 operating under the Intersport banner. By the end of 2021, says Alomar, there will be nearly 200 under the banner. Speaking to *Diffusion Sport*, Alomar said: “Our format is based on stores of 400 to 500 square meters and a multi-category strategy in which each retailer prioritizes what it considers most suitable for its specific environment.”

The total sell-out for the Intersport stores amounted to €214 million in 2020, down 25 percent year-on-year. The figure was even worse for the revenues of the buying group, with a drop of 36 percent from €96 million in 2019 to €61 million in 2020. Alomar chalks this up to pandemic-inspired order cancellations from partners, the buying group and suppliers alike.

On the bright side, e-commerce was up. It accounted for 2 percent of sales (€5.7 million) in 2019 and 5 percent (€10.7 million) in 2020. The current year looks to be on track to meet growth projections from 2019's figures.

In sum, says Alomar, “our objective is to grow more in value than in volume, and it's not clear that greater volume leads to greater value.” Tomas takes a more abstract view: “Our chief intention is to have a clear, profitable and replicable concept.”

With the third pillar, finally, Intersport will place an emphasis on verticalization, taking its cue less from other buying groups than from the already vertical retail chains operating or likely to arrive in Spain. An early step in this direction has been to hire two advisors, in finance and in digital.

Merging with Base? While the focus remains on the new plan, Intersport is open to forming alliances with other groups. In fact, both Tomas and Alomar have told *Diffusion Sport* that there have been talks over the past year with **Base-Detallsport**. Relations between the two are “fluid and based on mutual trust. There exists a more transparent communication and, at the same time, an incentive to ponder an alliance and cooperation.”

Base recently stopped working with **Sport 2000 International**.

As for the retail landscape, Alomar tells *Diffusion Sport* that the group is seeing “no great differences in demand between the traditional

channel and online except in women's items, which do in fact show an increase of five percentage points in online as compared to the traditional channel."

## JD transfers Dutch chains to ISRG

**JD Sports Fashion** says it has agreed to sell two Dutch chains of sporting goods stores, **Aktiesport** and **Perry Sport**, to the **Iberian Sports Retail Group (ISRG)**, in which it holds a controlling interest off 50.02 percent, for £16.5 million (€19.2m-\$23.3m). The rationale behind the transaction, which is expected to be completed on June 30, is explained with the fact that ISRG is more focused on the broad sporting goods market than the JD chain, which focuses more on sports fashion.

Aktiesport and Perry Sport operate 55 and 37 stores in the Netherlands, respectively. They were taken over in 2016 and are currently managed by a 100 percent own subsidiary of JD, **Sports Unlimited Retail (SUR)**. With banners such as **Sport Zone** in Portugal and **Sprinter** in Spain, the management team of ISRG is better placed to drive growth and high returns for SUR in cooperation in cooperation with their international brand partners, says JD, while pointing out that it will continue to make strategic decision regarding the company's future. **Peter Cowgill**, executive chairman of JD, notes that ISRG's "excellent" management team has "successfully" integrated the Sport Zone business into its operations.

ISRG made a small profit on revenues of £579.2 million in the financial year ended Jan. 30, with 107 Sport Zone stores in operation in Portugal and 163 Sprinter stores in Spain. The other major shareholders in ISRG, which was formed in 2017, are the Portuguese-based **Sonae Group**, former owner of Sport Zone, and **Balaiko Firaja Invest**, the investment vehicle of the **Segarra** family, which previously had a stake in the Spanish Sprinter chain. JD has put options on their shares. No sales figures have been given for the Dutch retail operations being divested.

According to a spokesman, there are no immediate plans to implement the successful marketplace concept introduced by Sprinter in the Netherlands. ISRG has decided to implement it through Sport Zone in Portugal.

## FESI report indicates a recovery in the sports goods sector

A new survey conduct in April by the **Federation of the European Sporting Goods Industry (FESI)** indicates that most sporting goods companies are now “on their way to recovery;” despite the difficulties they have been going through over the last 12 months. The picture is, however, quite diversified. The outdoor sector and some others have registered a tremendous increase in revenues, while the ski industry is still paying the price for the closure of ski lifts in many European countries. The new figures are featured in the third edition of the “FESI survey on Covid-19,” released on June 2.

The vast majority of respondents (75%) recorded a loss of turnover of up to 30 percent in 2020 as compared to 2019. For 12.5 percent of the respondents, the rate of the decline lied between 21 percent and 30 percent. Only 13 percent of the companies saw revenues increase in 2020, thanks to the expansion of individual and outdoor sports (cycling, running, hiking, etc).

On a more positive note nearly half of the companies envisage a smaller impact of less than 10 percent from the pandemic on their turnover in 2021, while 13 percent even forecast growth. Also, more than 80 percent of the respondents do not expect to go bankrupt in 2021, and more than half (56%) are confident that the economic activity will recover in 2021. For the remaining 44 percent, the economic recovery is more likely to occur in 2022 or 2023.

By distribution channel, revenues from physical stores were the most-impacted in 2020, as 62 percent of the respondents were forced to shut them down to comply with sanitary restrictions. By contrast, 25 percent of the respondents saw an increase in online sales of more than 60 percent. For another 44 percent, online sales grew by between 20 and 40 percent. Combining the two trends, almost 20 percent of the respondents said that online sales offset the decline in revenues from in-store sales by more than 60 percent. Unfortunately, 18 of the respondents, mostly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), do not have an online store and they were not able to benefit from the boom in the digital channel.

In addition to a shift toward e-commerce, other consumption trends emerged during the pandemic. For example, consumers increasingly opted for repairing rather than purchasing new products. Leasing, renting and second-hand buying also registered increases.



By product segment, the demand for outdoor equipment jumped, driven by the restrictions on indoor sports. More than 55 percent of the respondents reported an increase in this segment. Nearly 44 percent of the respondents registered an increase in the demand for footwear, followed by a 37 percent increase for bikes. Opposite trends were recorded by ski companies, though, with 89 percent of them recording a loss of up to 50 percent due to the closure of ski lifts during the 2020-2021 winter sports season. For 11 percent of them, the loss exceeded 80 percent. Even in the countries where ski lifts remained open, 67 percent of the companies witnessed a strong decrease in the number of visitors, the report indicates. For 67 percent of the respondents, the winter sports season represents between 10 and 50 percent of their company's total turnover. Although state aids limited the damage, more than 55 percent of the respondents in this segment said that these aids only covered less than 10 percent of the lost business.

Asked to comment on the role of the European Union in managing the crisis, 75 percent of the respondents expressed a negative view, with 37.5 percent saying that its response to Covid-19 was "not good at all" and another 37.5 judging it to have been "not good." The recommendations made by the participants in the survey included: reopening stores, resuming sport activities in compliance with safety guidelines, ensuring more coordination and alignment between EU member states, improving the delivery of vaccines and the harmonization of vaccination certificates to make travel possible again, and accelerating the distribution of financial aids under the EU recovery plan.

To conclude, among the five most pressing challenges, the companies surveyed by FESI placed the supply chain disruption at the top. It was mentioned by 93 percent of the respondents, followed by the global shipping crisis (87%), delivery fulfilment (80%), travel restrictions (67%) and cash-flow management (60%).

The survey was conducted during the month of April 2021, covering the entire period of the Covid-19 outbreak until now. The report is based on responses from a critical mass of the European sporting goods companies, with 80 percent of them being brands and retailers, 12 percent manufacturers, and 8 percent suppliers to the industry. The respondents include large enterprises with more than 250 employees (38% of the respondents), SMEs with between one and 249 employees (50%), and national trade associations (12%).

FESI represents the interests of 85 percent of the European sporting goods companies (about 1,800 sporting goods vendors) through its national sporting goods industry federations and its directly affilia-



ted member companies. Between 70 and 75 percent of FESI's membership is made up of SMEs. The European sporting goods industry employs more than 700,000 people and has an annual turnover of around €81 billion.

## New boss and new structures for the Luhta group

**Juha Luhtanen**, 51, became the new managing director of the **Luhta Sportswear Company** on May 4, taking the place of his older brother, **Vesa Luhtanen**, who has retired after many years at the helm of the Finnish-based family-owned company, previously known as the **L-Fashion Group**. The change of management has come with some significant organizational changes and a stronger focus on sustainability across the whole brand portfolio, which includes **Luhta**, **Icepeak**, **Rukka**, **Torstai** and **Dachstein**.

Juha has already spent more than 20 years with the 114-year-old company in various positions. Since 2007, when he became global sales director for its sports brands, followed by the role of director of its sports division, he helped raise its global annual sales by €130 million until Covid struck, shaving the turnover of the company by €39.9 million in the past year.

The total turnover of the group fell by 16.4 percent to €204 million in 2020, with decreases of 22 percent in Finland and 15 percent in the rest of the world. Nevertheless, a drastic reduction in marketing expenses and radical cost-saving measures allowed the company to maintain an operating profit and some cash flow. The company even made a higher pre-tax profit of €6.63 million for the year, up from €3.39 million in 2019, thanks to proceeds of about €11 million from the sale of real estate assets and a €3 million equity increase entirely subscribed by members of the family.

The company's own global retail operations generated sales of around €50 million in 2020 in Finland, Russia and China, and they are being restructured. The balance of the turnover came from the group's wholesale business with its own brands. Sales declined by 7 percent in Germany, which remained the biggest market, but they fell by more than 20 percent in terms of euros in Russia, an important market where the group has its own sales subsidiary.

Combined with retail lockdowns, the closure of ski resorts in the Alps, where Luhta and Icepeak sell a lot of clothing, caused a drop of almost 30 percent in orders from Central European markets in the last quarter of 2020. On the other hand, the first quarter of the new year was marked by excellent sales in the Nordic and Baltic countries as well

as in Russia, thanks to exceptionally cold weather and the lifting of Covid restrictions, leading Juha to predict a flat turnover for the present year.

Juha pointed out that the group managed to secure on-time deliveries in the past year, in spite of the Covid crisis, following investments of around €40 million that had been made in the previous five years on a new sourcing and quality control office in China and new logistic facilities in China and Finland. He indicated that the group will also support its retail clients in the near future with new investments in digital tools.

Meanwhile, Covid and the change in the top management have led the company to make some important strategic decisions, including a streamlining of its former fashion operations, which had been declining anyway, and the phase-out of **Top Sport**, a Finnish chain of multi-brand sports stores that it had bought in 2015 to help sell more of its own brands in the country.

Besides the impact of Covid, which caused some temporary closures, Top Sport's 14 remaining stores had run into problems, partly because the major global brands had decided to impose strict conditions as part of a more selective distribution policy that they had been adopting internationally.

Starting with the next autumn/winter season, all Top Sport stores will be converted to a new **Luhta Outdoor** format for the Finnish market, offering mainly products for hiking and other Finnish outdoor lifestyles sold under the group's own brands and some other Finnish brands. The chain will also have its own web store for the national market.

Adding some regular Luhta stores and others operating under the Top Sport, **Aleksi 13** and **Your Face** banners, the group's global retail operations consisted last year of around 80 points of sales that generated a turnover of about €50 million. Juha Luhtanen stressed that the group has no intention to go into competition with its retail partners in the B2C space in the rest of the world.

With the change of management, the group has also launched a new product-driven divisional structure. Instead of managing each brand separately, the group will run all its brands by product categories, specifically Active Sport, Sportswear, Footwear and Essentials.

All performance apparel sold under various brands of the company are being developed jointly by brand-specific R&D teams within the Active Sport division. The same goes for the sports-inspired lifestyle apparel developed for them in the Sportswear division. The Essen-

tials division will be in charge of accessories, pet products and home textiles. The company is already offering footwear under the Dachstein, Icepeak and Luhta brands. For the Rukka brand, it will add a new range of running shoes for sale in spring/summer 2022, starting in Finland and some other selected markets where the brand is strong such as Germany, Austria and France.

All the sales made by the group under its various brands will also be managed centrally. Taking over some of the previous functions of Juha Luhtanen, the company has promoted **Tuomas Tarvo** as group sales director. A former manager of **Adidas** in the Nordic countries, he had been previously working for the Luhta group as area manager for the Benelux, the Baltics, the U.K. and Japan.

The group also appointed its first sustainability director, **Tia Rantanen**, on March 15. She previously worked for **Ninyes**, a new marketplace for responsibly produced children's wear. The group has always been cultivating the principle of corporate responsibility and sustainability strongly, and during the last few years it has strongly developed the approach with its Torstai brand, which is a member of the **Fair Trade Organization**. The group will now start to apply the learnings to all of its brands and to the production partners, communicating that message more strongly.

While the more accessible Icepeak brand has remained the group's biggest one, Luhta and Rukka had been gaining ground before the Covid epidemic, and Juha feels that they will regain the momentum in the near future.

He is also rather optimistic about Dachstein, the Austrian brand of outdoor boots that it took over in two stages in 2018 and early 2019, after a major reorganization. The design is still made in Austria, but some unprofitable items made in Austria have been canceled from its range, and all the production is now made in Italy and China under the group's control. Sales have declined in Austria, but they have increased in other markets such as Germany, Switzerland, France, Finland and Russia, and deliveries have improved. The company was making a loss on sales of about €15 million when L-Fashion took it over, but it is now expected to make a profit this year on a lower turnover.

## Head will be run by a team

**Johan Eliasch** is stepping down as CEO of the **Head** group, effective immediately, in connection with his election on June 4 as the new president of the **International Ski Federation (FIS)**. As the majority shareholder of the Austrian-based company, which he

took over in 1995 out of his passion for skiing, he will remain as its chairman, but will retire from all day-to-day operations.

Asked about his successor as Head's CEO, the 59-year-old Swedish executive told us that there will be none. Head will be run by the balance of its "exceptionally strong" executive board, without any changes. It is made up of three veterans of the group: **Otmar Barbian**, **Klaus Hotter** and **Gerald Skrobanek**. Declining to provide any figures about Head's recent financial performance, he said there will be no chief financial officer as part of the team.

Hotter has been the longest-serving executive at Head, which he joined in 1986 to run its winter sports division, after managing the distribution of **Blizzard** for five years. He was appointed joint managing director of **Head Sport** in 2002, and he is still in charge of snow sports.

Barbian took responsibility for international sales & marketing at Head's racquet sports division in 2008. Four years later, he assumed full responsibility for the division and joined the group's executive management team.

Skrobanek joined Head in 2000, running the group's IT and other operations for five years until he became vice president of the group's division, whose portfolio of water sports brands was subsequently enlarged beyond **Mares**. In addition to these responsibilities, Skrobanek became the group's chief operating officer at the end of 2017 – a position that he will continue to hold.

Actually, Eliasch has managed to run Head at a distance for many years. Based in London, he has been simultaneously acting as chairman of **Equity Partners**, **Aman Resorts** and **London Films**, among numerous other positions. He has been non-executive chairman of **Investcorp Europe** and a board member at many other bodies including the **Foundation for Renewable Energy and the Environment**, the **Stockholm ResilienceCentre**, the **Centre for Social Justice** and the **British Olympic Association**. Eliasch has been the first president of the **Global Strategy Forum**. He has been chairing lately the food, energy and water security program of the **Royal United Services Institute (RUSI)** in London.

Head's press release about the change of management noted that Eliasch has presided over the transformation of the brand from a heavily loss-making operation to a highly profitable sports equipment group with leading market shares in all its segments.

The statement also pointed out that Head has won the **FIS Ski World Cup's** Overall Ski Manufacturers **Crystal Globe** in eight out

of the last ten years including the 2020/21 season.

Eliasch was reportedly one out of four candidates for FIS' presidency including **Sarah Lewis**, the long-standing general secretary of the governing body. Eliasch has reportedly agreed to give up on an annual compensation of 600,000 Swiss francs (€550,000-\$670,000) for the post.

The Swedish billionaire is taking the helm at FIS from **Gian-Franco Kasper**, who is retiring at the age of 77 after 23 years in charge of the governing body. He has been named honorary president of FIS, which has had only four president in its 97 years of history. Eliasch, who secured more than half of the valid votes (54.6%), had previously pledged to stand down as Head's CEO if elected FIS president.

He reportedly received several high-profile endorsements for his campaign from sports stars like **Lindsey Vonn** and **Hermann Maier**, among others. During his campaign, Eliasch vowed to bring new race formats and to create an advisory forum of experts made of officials from sports marketing, media and entertainment, to help guide the organization. He also proposed governance reforms such as the introduction of term limits.

## Lululemon's Q1 sales leaped by 88%, showing accelerating trends

**Lululemon Athletica's** share price jumped by 12 percent the day after the company announced very strong growth in sales and earnings for its first quarter, ended on May 2, beating analysts' estimates. As customers returned to its brick-and-mortar stores and the e-commerce business continued to expand, albeit at a lower rate than before, the company's total revenues went up by 88 percent to \$1,226.5 million as compared to the same quarter a year earlier and were 83 percent higher on a constant-currency basis.

Total revenues were also up by 57 percent from the first quarter of 2019, representing a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 25 percent over a two-year period. It thus surpassed the 19 percent CAGR generated in the three years prior to the Covid pandemic.

Compared with the same quarter a year earlier, revenues at company-operated stores soared by 106 percent to \$536.6 million, while revenues from e-commerce climbed by 55 percent to \$545.1 million, with a 50 percent increase at constant currencies. The balance between the offline and online channels shifted for the vertically

operating company, with the share of the offline business rising to 43.8 percent of the total turnover from 39.9 percent when most of its stores were closed by the pandemic, and the share of the online business declining to 44.4 percent from 54.0 percent.

Boosted by the acquisition of **Mirror**, “other revenues” – from outlets, temporary locations, sales to wholesale accounts, licensing and supply arrangements and the sale of in-home fitness equipment and content subscriptions - jumped to \$144.8 million from \$40.0 million.

First-quarter revenues increased by 82 percent in North America, but they went up by a higher rate of 125 percent in international markets. **Calvin McDonald**, Lululemon’s CEO, said the company still expects its international business to match the size of its North American operations in the near future, after representing 14 percent of the total in 2020. On a two-year CAGR basis, Lululemon said it has seen double-digit growth in all major regions, led by mainland China, where the two-year CAGR for revenues stood at 90 percent.

In line with its business plan, the growth in the men’s segment outpaced women’s growth on both a one- and two-year basis. On a two-year CAGR basis, sales grew by 23 percent in women’s and by 27 percent in men’s. The relatively new running category was boosted by a new marketing campaign emphasizing inclusivity and featuring several of the company’s endorsers.

The strong development of the top line led to a fivefold increase in Lululemon’s net profit to \$145.0 million from \$28.6 million the year earlier. The operating margin improved to 15.8 percent from 5.0 percent in the year-ago period, but was slightly lower than the 16.5 percent margin achieved in the first quarter of 2019.

The gross margin increased by 5.8 percentage points to 57.1 percent year-on-year in the latest quarter. It was 3.2 percentage points higher than two years earlier, driven by 2.2 percentage points of leverage on occupancy costs, depreciation and product team costs, an increase of 0.8 percentage points in product margin, and a positive foreign exchange impact of 0.2 points. These factors more than offset higher airfreight expenses related to logistics constraints.

As of June 3, the company had 90 percent of its stores open. Since the first quarter of 2021, Lululemon has added 34 new stores on a net basis, including two in the first quarter of 2021, both in the Asia-Pacific region. Lululemon had 523 company-operated stores at the end of the first quarter, up from 489 the year earlier. It now anticipates

that it will open 45 to 55 net new company-operated stores this year – including 35 to 40 stores internationally - up from prior guidance of 40 to 50 doors.

Lululemon also raised its financial guidance for the full year. It is now targeting revenues of \$5,825 to \$5,905 billion compared with previous expectations of \$5,550 to \$5,650 billion. Mirror is on track to achieve previous guidance for full-year revenues of \$250 to \$275 million. For the present year, Lululemon forecasts an expansion of its gross margin of between 1.5 and 2.0 percentage points as compared to 2020, up from its prior forecast of a 1.0-1.5 points, despite an anticipated negative impact of 0.5 points from higher freight costs.

The gross margin is seen rising already in the second quarter by 0.3 to 0.5 percentage points. Lululemon foresees a modest decline in second quarter e-commerce sales, as last year's second quarter marked the height of Covid-19 related channel shifts. On a two-year CAGR basis, e-commerce jumped in the first quarter by 61 percent, while brick-and-mortar sales were up by a tiny 3 percent.

## Enda's Kenyan shoes land in Europe

**Enda** is a special brand of running shoes assembled in Kenya, a country that has become famous for producing some of the world's greatest distance runners. Started in 2017 by a U.S.-born athlete and entrepreneur, **Weldon Kennedy**, it is only now beginning to be sold in a few European stores, for the moment only in Italy and Spain.

The U.S., where Enda has its own sales team and DTC program, made up about 90 percent of Enda's turnover last year, with the balance sold mainly through in Africa and through its own international web store. After making its first appearance at **ISPO Munich** in January 2020, it enlisted an agent for the Italian market and a distributor for Spain.

The Italian market is covered since last September by **Marco Rocca**, who knows the running market well. After working for **Cisalfa Sport** for three years, he took care of **Brooks Running's** distribution in Italy for 14 years until 2016, first as an agent and then as the brand's country manager.

Rocca has collected orders for about 2,000 pairs of Enda shoes from 47 specialty stores for the spring/summer 2021 season, but they are only being delivered now from a new distribution center in the Netherlands because of the supply chain disruption caused by Covid-19. **Giorgio Garello**, a former colleague of Rocca who has also worked for



**Asics**, is now helping to push the sell-through by marketing the brand through the social media.

The Spanish distributor since March is **Sport Different**, a company founded in 2009 that also sells **Polar Bottle**, **Ronhill** running clothing and **Hilly Socks**. It plans to sell around 1,000 pairs from its inventories this year, having taking orders from 16 points of sale so far and hoping to add five or six others.

Enda's collection for the current season consists of two models for road running and one model for trail running in the three colors of the Kenya flag and with specific lasts for men and women. The next one will be wider, and it will have a more African twist to it.

Enda is a name that means "go!" in Swahili. Its logo represents the head of a spear, similar to a symbol of liberty featured in Kenya's national flag. It stands for energy and forward movement.

Like with other brands, the high-tech components of Enda's shoes come from China, but they are assembled in Kenya at a factory in Mombasa. With a workforce of 45 employees, it made a total of about 7,000 pairs in 2020. Kennedy says the production is expected to double this year.

The brand started four years ago with only one model sold through a crowdfunding campaign. The Kenyan government subsequently provided some funding to help take the project up to the next level.

Kennedy, who has also worked as a manager of **change.com** in Europe, founded Enda together with **Navalayo Osembo-Ombati**, a Kenyan lawyer and accountant. She graduated in London and also worked in other countries. Both of them live now in Kenya.

Enda has been certified as a climate-neutral company. A portion of the purchase price for each pair of shoes goes toward a local foundation to finance local projects chosen by a committee of experts every six months, with input from the brand's customers. The main goal is to create new jobs in a country where the unemployment rate stands at 17 percent.

## Covid has created many new young and female runners

Running has been one of the sports that have benefited the most from the Covid-19 pandemic, along with golf, cycling, home fitness, surfing, hiking and a variety of other outdoor sports. According to a global survey of 3,961 current runners, 28.76 of them started to

run during the pandemic,

Questioned by us, **Nicholas Rizzo**, who conducted the survey for **RunRepeat**, which claims to be the world's largest online athletic shoe review company, gave us even higher shares for new runners in some European countries. The share of new runners stood at 36.96 percent in Denmark, 34.78 percent in Poland and 34.09 percent in Ireland. Lower-than-average scores were recorded in the U.K. (28.1%), Greece, Portugal, Italy, Belgium, Finland, Switzerland, Spain, France and Germany.

The study determined that the desire to keep physically fit ranked highest among the new runners, as it was mentioned by 72.78 percent among their motivation for engaging in the sport. Social interaction is a motivation for only 11.59 percent of the new runners, and in fact, many of them have been seen running solo during the recent lockdowns. Only 22.83 percent of them mentioned competition or achievement as one of their motivations. Higher scores were registered in the areas of mental or emotional health (54.52%) and confidence and self-esteem (31.52%).

Comparatively, physical health was cited one of the motivations for running among 61.66 percent of the "pre-pandemic runners, but the benefit of mental or emotional health ranked higher, as it was mentioned by 64.00 percent of them. Pre-pandemic runners are motivated more than the new runners by a spirit of competition or achievement (34.73%), confidence and self-esteem (32.49%) and social interaction (16.90%).

The survey also found that only 50.04 percent of the new-pandemic runners are planning to participate in a race over the next 12 months, compared with a ratio of 63.08 percent for pre-pandemic runners.

On the other hand, virtual races have become more popular. Out of the new runners who are interested in participating in a race, 68.42 percent would race in-person, while the others would prefer a virtual race. They are 115.37 percent more likely to engage in a virtual race than their pre-pandemic counterparts, 85.34 percent of whom plan to race in-person.

Running is here to stay, with more women and younger people. The high shares of new runners found by Rizzo have been confirmed by other national studies, and they have yielded some other interesting insights. In France, for example, the number of regular new runners grew by 12.5 percent to about 13 million in 2020, according to an annual study by the **Observatoire du Running**, and 60 percent of the newcomers to the sport were women.

Also, thirty-nine percent of the new runners in France are 35 years old or younger. Out of all the runners, 84 percent have been practicing yoga and others sports that were permitted based on the anti-Covid regulations. The new runners have been running smaller distances more frequently.

Interestingly, 99 percent of them indicated that they want to continue to practice the sport after the end of the current health crisis. On the other hand, the increase in the number of runners hasn't automatically translated into an increase in the number of running shoes sold, based on **NPD** data, probably because of the cancellation of many in-person races.

The number of new runners rose at a lower rate in Spain. A study recently conducted by the government among 14,238 runners all over Spain points to an increase of 5.13 percent in the course of 2020, up from an average annual growth of 3.10 percent between 2015 and 2019.

There have been stronger increases among women and children also in Spain. This year, 32 percent of the runners included in the study were women, compared with 9 percent in 2002 and 20 percent in 2011. The study also found that 53.41 of the runners' children aged less than 16 are running occasionally in the course of the year, up from 35.32 percent five years ago.

Kenyans are the most frequent runnersAnother survey of 8,414 current runners conducted between March and April by **Nielsen Sports** for **World Athletics** in ten different countries shows the highest level of participation in Kenya, with 47 percent of them running at least once a month and 12 percent less often. In terms of frequency, Kenya is followed by Colombia and Mexico, South Africa and India, France, the U.K., the U.S. and Australia.

Across the international sample, 47 percent of the runners are women and 49 percent of them run every day. The survey also indicates that runners show greater confidence to associate themselves with positive personality characteristics. They are more likely to consider themselves to be warm and friendly, family-oriented, optimistic and passionate.

This survey shows that 13 percent of all the respondents began to run since April 2020, and 9 percent said that Covid-19 played a role in their decision. Out of all the runners, 22 percent said they are running more often than before because of Covid, and 20 percent will continue to run more frequently after the pandemic is over.

Keeping fit is the main motivation, followed by the fact that runners can practice the sport at their own pace, that they don't need much

equipment to start, and that running helps them to de-stress. Three-quarters said that running is good for their mind as well as their body.

## Primosole takes control of Samurai Sportswear

A British investment company, **Primosole Holdings**, has acquired a majority stake in **Samurai Sportswear**, a 25-year-old sports apparel producer based in Norfolk that is relatively well-known in the rugby sector. Its founder, **Terry Sands**, was a former team manager of **England Rugby**. Besides five rugby clubs in England and Hong Kong, Samurai works with the Derbyshire Country Cricket clubs. It also boasts thousands of clients in schools, universities, colleges, corporations and amateur sports clubs in hockey, netball and athletics around the world.

Samurai will keep its directly owned Chinese manufacturing facility in Shenzhen. The business plan calls for pivoting the company's approach to branding, marketing and technology, strengthening its teamwear platform and developing Samurai as a broader athleisure brand with new investments in e-commerce.

The company is opening a new office in the Shoreditch district of London. A new management team will be formed around Samurai's newly appointed CEO, **Stefano Schivo**. He is replacing the company's founder, who will retain the role of director of commercial relationships. Schivo describes himself as a "high-octane and forward-looking" business professional who lived in eight different countries and executed more than 20 multi-million M&A and financing transactions across the EMEA region. After founding a technology start-up, he worked for **BNP Paribas** and, most recently, as vice president of investment banking at the **Nomura** group.

No details could be obtained about the terms of the latest transaction or Samurai's turnover. We only could learn that more than half its sales are generated outside the U.K. It has sales representatives and agents in Ireland and France. Open for distribution partnerships, it also has a presence in 21 other countries including Dubai, Hong Kong, Japan, New Zealand, Samoa and Kenya.

Primosole, which partners with large family offices to acquire majority stakes and operational control in small and medium-sized growth-oriented enterprises in various sectors, was advised in the transaction by **Wilson Partners** and **Marriott Harrison**. Samurai was advised by **Castle Square Corporate Finance** and **Mills & Reeve**.

## VF launches new incubator platform for innovative business models

**VF Corp.** has launched **Venture Platforms**, an “innovation pillar that will focus on identifying and investing in new, future-focused opportunities.” The new initiative will add a specific innovation-focused component to the existing brand portfolio strategy by identifying and investing in new, forward-looking companies and business models.

“We’re interested in ideas and approaches that meet broad-scale consumer needs, advance fast-growing technologies, and create new and innovative business models,” the company says on its website. “We’re looking for founders and entrepreneurially-minded leaders from diverse backgrounds who have the grit, creativity, and curiosity to ignite change and disrupt industries.”

The company’s existing brand portfolio pillars to date are its “Core Brands,” including **Vans**, **The North Face** and **Timberland**, and its ten remaining “Emerging Brands.” It recently divested many brands and acquired **Supreme**.

To find and support new ideas and visions, VF’s new Venture Platforms consists of the business model incubator **VF Venture Foundry** and a new venture capital fund called **BaseLayer Ventures**, which can provide “early-stage venture capital for daring entrepreneurs who aspire to reach the summit.” This is available for both internal ideas and external start-ups, the company said. BaseLayer Ventures, an “independent venture capital firm,” defines the areas in which new ideas are to be supported and built as Health + Self, Sustainability, Marketplaces and Virtual Goods + Experiences. In addition to capital, new brand developments will also benefit from the experience and network of existing VF brands.

Venture Platforms is led by a small team of existing VF employees and supported by a Venture advisory board that includes selected external venture experts as well as representatives from VF brands and functions.

Other sporting goods companies such as **Adidas**, **Asics** and **Nike** have made investments in innovative start-ups over the last few years.

## Bike and sports e-tailer Bike24 plans to go public in 2021

In September 2019, **The Riverside Company** bought back German e-commerce retailer for cycling, outdoor, fitness and swimming products, **Bike24 GmbH**, from a big British cycling e-commerce operator, **Wiggle CRC**. The private equity company had sold the continental European cycling online platform to the British industry giant in 2017, but that deal had not been to everyone's satisfaction. Now Riverside, together with the founders and the management of Bike24 founders, announced plans for a public offering (IPO) of shares in **Bike24 Holding** on the **Frankfurt Stock Exchange** in the course of 2021.

In advance of the listing, Bike24 and its shareholders intend to conduct a private placement, which "includes newly issued shares from a capital increase as well as shares from the holdings of the major shareholder, the **European Riverside Fund VI**." The private placement will offer new shares from a planned capital increase with expected gross proceeds of around €100 million. To achieve a significant free float, Riverside has agreed to sell existing shares for a possible over-allotment at market conditions. It was noted that Bike24's founding and management team will not sell any shares in the offering.

Bike24 was founded in 2002 by **Andrés Martin-Birner**, **Falk Herrmann** and **Lars Witt** and is one of today's leading e-commerce platforms for cycling and other triathlon-related products in continental Europe. It claims to have the widest range of branded products in the industry and currently operates three country-specific online stores in Germany (*Bike24.de*), Austria (*Bike24.at*) and Spain (*Bike24.es*). In addition, an international store (*Bike24.com*) caters to customers in 80 countries worldwide.

With the IPO, the company intends to accelerate the current pace of growth in continental Europe and fund future business development. The proceeds from the private placement will be used, among other things, to expand Bike24's fulfillment infrastructure in Germany and abroad, as well as to further localize the respective offerings for selected foreign markets. Following the successful launch of its online store in Spain, Bike24 is already planning the roll-out of online stores in France and Italy, as well as the establishment of local logistics and fulfillment centers. In addition, Bike24 aims to further improve the customer shopping experience through the use of new technologies. Part of the proceeds will be used to optimize the capital structure by refinancing existing bank liabilities.

## Nice Footwear considers reshoring and acquisitions

**Nice Footwear**, an Italian footwear licensing company that also owns the **Kronos** brand of sports shoes, is considering a reshoring of its production from the Far East to Italy and the launch of e-commerce. Specializing in the design and sourcing of sneakers, the company has a team of 21 designers at its headquarters in Vicenza. It produces roughly 70 percent of its shoes in China, 20 percent in Taiwan and 10 percent in Vietnam, but the Covid pandemic has led it to rethink its supply chain. It has selected ten shoemakers in the Marche and Veneto regions to evaluate the feasibility of the project.

One reason for the project is evidently the company's relatively small size and the large number of its SKUs. Because of Covid, its sales declined by around 15 percent to about €20 million in the financial year ended on April 30, 2021 as compared to the previous one, despite a strong recovery in the second half, thanks to the addition of many new clients. The company's CEO and sole shareholder, **Bruno Conterno**, said in an interview with *Shoe Intelligence* that it is targeting annual sales of between €25 million and €30 million in the next three years.

Besides Kronos, the group has footwear licensing agreements with four brands - **Ellesse**, **Conte of Florence**, **Avirex** and **Fred Mello** - with some territorial restrictions. The Ellesse line is only for Italy, where the Cisalfa Sport chain has an exclusive distribution agreement for the brand. The three other licenses are for the European market. In addition, Nice Footwear has a license for **Lotto** sneakers sold in France.

About 60 percent of the company's revenues come from so-called "special projects" to design and produce sneakers for "premium international brands." In this case, Nice Footwear sells the shoes directly to the brands which then distribute them worldwide. Conterno declined to disclose the names of his clients, but in previous regulatory documentation released for a €3 million bond issued in July 2020, the company indicated that it had worked with **Lumberjack**, **Dainese**, **U.S. Polo Assn.**, **Etonic**, **Skechers**, **Blauer**, **Napapjiri**, **Guardiani**, **Sparco** and **Champion**.

The company expects some of its future growth to be generated by its Asian subsidiary, **Nice Footwear Hong Kong**, which posted sales of \$2 million in fiscal 2020 in China, South Korea and Indonesia, as well as by Kronos, which specializes in sports shoes, mainly for basketball and football. Its revenues surged in fiscal 2020 to €1.0 million from €0.6 million, following the hiring of a brand manager and the signing



of some licensing agreements. It recently became the sponsor of a basketball club in Turin.

The company does not have a proprietary e-commerce platform and its digital sales are carried out through marketplaces such as **Amazon**, **Vente Privée** and **Zalando**. To protect its wholesale clients, Nice Footwear says that it develops ad hoc collections for these platforms. Nice is now evaluating opportunities for a proprietary digital platform that would be financed by last July's bond issue, which was fully taken up by a sole investor, the Italian investment fund **Finint SGR**.

Nice Footwear has the right to issue an additional €2 million in bonds at similar conditions to the previous placing by the end of 2021. The bonds bear an annual interest rate of 4.375 percent and have a six-year maturity.

The proceeds of the bond were also used to develop a proprietary software for 3D design, which has streamlined the design process. The company claims that the time needed for decision-making with brand licensors on product launches has been cut by 80 percent and design costs halved.

Nice Footwear spends about 2 percent of its revenues in research and development, focusing on eco-friendly products and innovative production techniques. It has developed a seamless upper as well as a sole which is 30 percent lighter and better fits the foot's palm.

Conterno is the only owner of Nice Footwear, but is ready to dilute his stake through a capital increase to finance the company's growth. He said that he is not proactively seeking an investor. The proceeds of a recapitalization would be used to finance "a couple of initiatives currently underway". But, Conterno would also be interested in buying a brand, "possibly 100 percent eco-friendly."

## Sales more than double at Blue Tomato's parent

Exceeding the financial analysts' projections, global sales jumped by 102.6 percent to \$279.1 million in the first quarter ended May 1 for **Zumiez**, the U.S.-based action sports retailer whose assets include the physical and online shops of **Blue Tomato** in Europe. The strong performance led the company to post a net profit of \$26.4 million for the quarter against a net loss of \$21.1 million in the same period a year ago.

Even when compared with the first quarter of 2019, the turnover was up by 31.1 percent overall. The progress was particularly

strong in the U.S., where Zumiez' quarterly revenues of \$248.7 million were 113 percent higher than in the year-ago period and 32 percent higher than in the first quarter of 2019. Besides the fact that its U.S. stores were open for 94 percent of the potential operating days, the company benefited from the U.S. government's financial stimulus for discretionary spending.

With the company's European and Canadian stores being open for only 40 percent and 77 percent of the normal operating days, respectively, Zumiez' international sales were up by 43 percent to \$30.4 million in the latest quarter, with increases of 30 percent in local currencies and 22 percent compared with 2019.

The gross margin improved by 19.8 percentage points to 37.0 percent for the quarter, including an increase in product margins of 3.9 percent, but most of the improvement came from leverage in occupancy costs as the channel mix returned to historical levels. The operating margin rose by 7.9 percentage points to 20.2 percent.

The company predicts an improvement in gross margins for the balance of the year on sales that will likely grow by low- to mid-teens as compared to 2019. In the four weeks ended May 29, total revenues were 42 percent above the prior year and 31 percent higher than in the same period of 2019.

## Swiss Snowsports Initiative appoints new vice president

The non-profit organization **Swiss Snowsports Initiative** appointed **Virginie Faivre** as its vice president at the start of May. She has replaced **Pierre Pfefferlé**, who was instrumental in the development of the initiative's website, *GoSnow.ch*. A native of Lausanne, Faivre is a former world freestyle ski champion and now sits on the boards of the **Swiss Foundation for Sports Aid** and other sports organizations. She presided over the **2020 Youth Olympic Games**, held in her hometown, and will also be presiding over the next edition, scheduled for 2024 in the South Korean province of Gangwon.

Pandemic restrictions precluded any snowsports camps in winter 2020/21, but the initiative was able to book 13,000 reservations for some 258 such camps in the preceding few months, from April to October 2020. Had they been held, these camps

would have amounted to a rise in participation of 15 percent year-on-year. In lieu of the camps, the initiative was able to sporadically hold snowsports days. Still, the cancellations resulted in a loss of 4 million Swiss francs (€3.6m-\$4.5m) and more than 52,000 overnight stays.

The initiative has since opened up reservations for 60 summer camps at 20 locations. These will offer vacationing students a number of turnkey options in cycling, hiking, climbing, clean-up days, fauna hikes, Foxtrails and other activities. Reservations may be canceled up to four weeks before a camp's start date. Reservations for winter 2021/22 are also open, on GoSnow.ch. Group transport is available for an additional fee of CHF 10 (€9.12-\$11.17) per person.

## Sports and outdoor brands emerge as circularity champions

Sports and outdoor brands are among the companies that have made the most progress toward circularity, a new report from **Textile Exchange** suggests. According to the study, titled "Material Change Insights Report," the circularity score of Outdoor/Sports companies increased by 57 percent in 2020, as compared to an average increase in circularity scores of 37 percent. The progress of Outdoor/Sports companies in this respect is featured in the report as one of the "Five big trends" of 2020.

Among the other findings, the uptake of preferred materials increased by 24 percent. Preferred materials now account for 44 percent of the Material Change Index (MCI) portfolio, up from 39 percent. Preferred renewable cotton and recycled polyester accounted for most of this growth. The use of preferred cotton went up by 26 percent and recycled polyester by 30 percent. Textile Exchange defines a "preferred fiber or material" as one that results in improved environmental and/or social sustainability outcomes and impacts in comparison to conventional production.

Awareness of environmental, social and governance (ESG) risks rose sharply over the past year. While climate change was the top-rated risk in the 2019 benchmark, the loss of biodiversity took over in 2020, rising from 6th to 1st position.

The number of brands participating in the latest survey increased to 191 from 173 in the previous year. **Kering, New Balance, Smartwool, The North Face** and **Zalando** were among the 22 companies ("MCI New Entries") that completed the MCI full survey for the first time.

The strongest participation growth took place within the Apparel/Footwear sub-sector.

**Columbia Sportswear** and **Deckers Brands** are featured in the latest report among the “MCI Big Movers” of 2020, which include the ten companies that made the greatest improvement in the MCI from 2019 to 2020. The Top 10 also include **C&J Clark Limited**, **Darn Tough Vermont**, **KappAhl Sveridge**, **Kuyichi B.V.**, **Orsay GmbH**, **Outerknown**, **Piping Hot Australia** and **Royal Robbins**.

Other sports and outdoor brands that participated in the survey include **Adidas**, **Arc'teryx Equipment**, **Nike**, **Patagonia** and **Puma**, among others. The full list is available in the report, which can be fully downloaded from the Textile Exchange website.

## Adidas releases an update on its commitments to equality and inclusion

**Adidas** has provided a new update to its “Creating Lasting Change Now” commitments, which revolve around diversity, equity and inclusion within the company and across communities. Among the advances highlighted in the factsheet is the launch of a global “Creating a Culture of Inclusion” training program for employees, in which teams are also required to demonstrate their personal commitment on how to create a more inclusive workplace. In addition, the company has strengthened its global Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy. Other initiatives include the launch of a voluntary Inclusion Survey for job candidates in North America, designed to help understand the representation of candidates as they progress through interview processes, and the creation of a company-wide event called **Global Day of Inclusion**.

In the area of community programs, Adidas is investing \$120 million to support and empower Black communities in the U.S. through 2025, in addition to its existing grassroots initiatives. Also for local communities, the company helped found **Pharrell Williams’ Black Ambition**, a program for Black and Latino entrepreneurs who are launching tech, design, healthcare and consumer products/services start-ups. It goes with two competitions for special prizes. Adidas’ community programs are generally focused on increasing access to sport, education and creative pursuits, as well as a holistic sports, academic and social mentoring program called **Beyond**.

Finally, to ensure accountability and transparency in these commitments, Adidas has launched a **Global Committee to Accelerate Inclusion and Equality**, which provides regular updates to

the board as well as internal communication for all employees on these matters.

The factsheet on Adidas' progress on its Creating Lasting Change Now commitments is fully accessible online.

## Reebok releases update on its commitments for inclusion

**Reebok** has unveiled details on the progress it made over the past year in its commitments to fight racism and to promote diversity and inclusion. Progress is listed based on five pillars: **Human Rights Award, Product with Purpose, BOKS re-focus, Talent Practices, and Change Management.**

Over the past year, Reebok's employees dedicated more than 2,700 hours to re-launching the Reebok Human Rights Award, which originally ran from 1988 to 2007. The brand received more than a hundred nominations from 11 countries for the award, and will host a virtual **Reebok Human Rights Summit** on Aug. 12, 2021, to announce the winners.

The Reebok Product team worked on the Product with Purpose pillar in order to establish a long-term product platform that represents the brand's commitment to human rights. The team developed the first "**Human Right Now**" product capsule of footwear, apparel and accessories, which will launch in August alongside the Human Rights Award Summit.

The **BOKS** program, designed to get kids of all abilities and races physically active, targeted further on Black and LatinX communities through a series of initiatives, including additional partnerships with **Mission Society, After School All-Stars, Jack and Jill of America, MENTOR, Boys and Girls Club, YMCA, Children's Defense Fund Freedom Schools and Communities in Schools**, among others.

Regarding the Talent Practices pillar(hiring, promotion, retention), Reebok implemented a variety of programs designed to improve its practices in these areas, in partnership with **Adidas** North America. Among the initiatives undertaken over the past year, the brand launched the **Pilot Reebok Career Coaching Program**, promoting mentorship and coaching at Reebok.

Finally, under the **Change Management** pillar and as a corollary to the others, a dedicated team of Reebok employees supported

each of these initiatives by working to drive a cultural transformation at Reebok that emphasizes “change, commitment, community and conversation.”

Reebok said that it will continue to share progress updates in the future.

## UCI announces Sustainability Guidelines and Sustainability Targets

The **Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI)** has announced the approval of two key elements of its sustainability strategy: **Sustainability Guidelines** and **Sustainability Targets**.

The Sustainability Guidelines document sets out recommendations for all cycling stakeholders with practical advice, case studies and detailed checklists enabling sporting organizations worldwide to integrate sustainable practices into their daily operations. The document is addressed to all UCI stakeholders, which include its 197 national federations, event organizers and teams.

The Sustainability Targets include:

- reducing greenhouse gas emissions from UCI and **UCI World Cycling Centre (WCC)** operations to achieve carbon neutrality with a 45 percent reduction of absolute emissions by 2030;
- integrating environmental, social and economic responsibility into the UCI's policies, operations and decision-making processes
- establishing a task force to guide the development of a strategy of equality, diversity and inclusion in cycling
- developing a sustainable sourcing strategy for the UCI and UCI events
- sharing best practice and become a global center for collaboration on cycling sustainability solutions
- developing a carbon calculator tool for use by cycling stakeholders
- measuring the UCI's environmental and social impacts to report progress against sustainability objectives and the UN Sustainable Development Goals
- working with organizations from all over the world to protect and enhance the planet's biodiversity

- advocating for safe cycling and promoting strong local economies through cycling and sustainable development

Furthermore, as part of its policy for the promotion of women in governance, the UCI has modified its Constitution to include the obligation to elect at least one vice-president of each gender, for a total of four (three up until now). This provision is set to be approved by the UCI Congress in September.

## News Briefs & Short Stops

### Corporate

**361 Degrees** has fully redeemed the remaining principal of around \$130 million still outstanding from the the Chinese sports brand's senior noted due on June 3, which were yielding an annual interest of 7.25 percent. The company had repurchased other tranches in the past two years. After this move, **Standard & Poor's** revised its outlook for the company to stable from negative, while maintaining an issuer credit rating of B-. It then withdrew its rating at the company's request as the bonds are not paid off.

**Clarus Corp.**, the Utah-based parent of **Black Diamond**, **Sierra Bullets** and **Pieps**, among others, has reported a definitive agreement to acquire **Rhino-Rack Pty**, an Australian-based manufacturer and distributor of roof racks, mounting systems, luggage boxes, carriers and other automotive accessories, for a total purchase price of around 255 million Australian dollars (€162m-\$198m) in cash and shares. That would imply a multiple of just under 12 times last year's adjusted Ebitda of around A\$21.5 million (€13.6m-\$16.7m) on sales of A\$115 million (€73m-\$90m). In addition, an earn-out of A\$10 million (€6.3m-\$7.7m) is payable in cash on July 31, 2022, contingent upon the achievement of a specified revenue target. Clarus expects the cash payment to be funded by an increase in the company's existing credit facility led by **J.P. Morgan**. With 2.5 million shares, **Richard Cropley**, Rhino-Rack's chief executive who founded the company in 1992, would become one of Clarus' five largest shareholders once the transaction



closes in July, subject to customary conditions. Clarus says the takeover will be immediately accretive. While keeping the management in Sydney, the group plans to help Rhino-Rack to expand in North America, which represents about 20 percent of its sales. The balance comes from a loyal customer base in Australia and New Zealand. Clarus plans to invest in product innovation, engineering, operations and disruptive marketing to boost its sales.

**Deporvillage** plans to move its headquarters to new buildings in the Catalan municipality of Sant Fruitós de Bages sometime late this year. There the staff, which recently came to exceed 100, will occupy 2,500 square meters of space. The Spanish e-tailer last expanded its office space in 2017, and has since been dividing operations between Manresa and the innovation district called 22@Barcelona, formerly known as Poblenou. The move is seen as a natural step following the strong growth of the last few months and years on an international basis. Deporvillage exceeded all expectations in its most recent financial year, its tenth. In meeting increased demand during the pandemic, it generated more than €120 million in sales, exceeding projections by 60 percent and the previous year's tally by 106 percent. The sales target for the current year is €180 million.

**Eleiko**, the leading Swedish-based producer of weightlifting equipment, has started construction of a new logistics center in Halmstad, close to its head office in Kistinge, to help cope with its continued growth, which reportedly led it to book sales of about 500 million Swedish kronor (€45m-\$60m) last year, up from SEK 200 million in 2015. The 18,000-square-meter building is expected to be completed during the third quarter of 2022, allowing it to more than double the production in its current premises. It should also optimize lead times and the overall service levels. The use of solar cells will reduce energy consumption by 20 percent. The company's former warehouse in Halmstad had caught fire in March 2016. Last September, Eleiko strengthened its production capacity by acquiring **Melanders Verkstad**, a machining and steel specialist located close to its headquarters with which it was collaborating in the development and manufacture of free weights. The 60-year-old company also started a subsidiary in France last year, and it expanded its U.S. operations in March by moving its office from Chicago to Austin, Texas, with

a distribution center for the whole North American market. In a strategic move designed to cater to the growing home fitness trend, Eleiko launched a B2C web store last year.

**Kathmandu Holdings**, which owns the **Kathmandu**, **Rip Curl** and **Oboz** brands, has already been recognized as a certified B Corp. The company has now refinanced its credit facilities with two others where the borrowing costs are linked to the achievement of certain targets for reduced carbon emissions, transparency and labor conditions. One is a loan of 100 million Australian dollars (€63m-\$78m). The other is a A\$200 million (€126m-\$154m) multi-option facility. The refinancing was jointly arranged by the **ANZ Bank New Zealand** and the **National Australia Bank**

**Livall** has announced that the campaign for the official launch of its **EVO21** smart bike helmet on **Indiegogo** has now raised over \$300,000 from more than 2,100 backers. The campaign debuted on Indiegogo on May 13, and Livall plans to start shipping the new helmet globally this month. The EVO21, designed in collaboration with **Ruma**, has been the winner of an **IF 2021 Gold award**. The new helmet, described by Livall as “brighter, lighter and safer than any other helmet on the market,” features wide-angle front lights and super-bright 270° rear lights that maximize visibility even at long ranges. A series of sensors detect when the cyclist is slowing down or coming to a stop, and this automatically triggers the brake warning light on the back of the helmet. The EVO21 also features Livall’s patented fall detection and SOS technology. It can detect falls anywhere above 1.5 meters and trigger an SOS alert text message, including the GPS location, to the user’s emergency contact within 90 seconds of a fall. The EVO21 is also IPX5 waterproof, which means that the LED lighting system and remote will run regardless of the weather conditions.

With the company’s 50th anniversary approaching, **Macron** has inaugurated its new headquarters with an open house for the VIPs of Bologna’s society. The company broke ground for the new campus in July 2019 in the town of Valsamoggia, Italy, situated 10 km from Bologna, 25 km from Modena and right on the thoroughfare connecting Milan to Rome. The complex covers some 55,000 square meters – with 22,000 square meters of buildings for logistics (16,000 sqm) and offices (6,000 sqm) – and has received

**BREEAM Excellent Certification** for sustainability. Photovoltaic panels supply 350 kWp, and tanks collect rainwater. Around the buildings lie 15,000 square meters of fields, with 150 trees and 2,000 bushes. There are 15 conference rooms and four showrooms, as well as facilities for electric cars and car-sharing. To underscore its local connections, Macron has made donations to Bologna's **Sant'Orsola Polyclinic** and set up an online channel to expedite purchase of surgical masks and tickets to watch its sponsored teams' sports matches.

**Maxpro**, a Detroit-based start-up specializing in connected fitness equipment, has announced a strategic partnership with the American basketball legend **Shaquille O'Neal**, who has invested in the company. Maxpro was founded in 2019 by a former athlete, **Nezar Akeel**. Since then, the company has grown from a pre-revenue **Kickstarter** campaign to a high-growth start-up that has sold more than 10,000 units across the U.S. and 56 other countries worldwide, with revenues of more than \$10 million. Maxpro's first product, the **Maxpro SmartConnect**, is a full-body portable fitness machine with smartphone connectivity and a digital coaching app.

While confirming its entry into the Australian market, which is expected to coincide with the start of its 2021/22 financial year on July 1, **Peloton Interactive** said it plans to move into one or two additional foreign markets each year. Addressing financial analysts at the **Bank of America's** Securities Global Technology Conference, the company also said that it plans to relaunch its lower-priced **Tread** treadmill in late July in the U.S., Canada and the U.K. in late July, after correcting a faulty screen-mounting screw. The model will play a meaningful role in the company's performance in the next fiscal year, as the addressable market is seen as two to three times bigger than that of its interactive stationary **Bike** product. Deliveries of the Bike+ model have been cut to just one to three weeks, helped by a \$100 million investment in is now planned to get underway at the end of this calendar year rather than in 2023.

**Prevayl**, a start-up specializing in "intelligent" and connected sportswear based in Manchester, has secured a £7.5 million (€8.7m-\$10.6m) pre-revenue investment that is supposed to help the company "take wearable health technology to new heights."

The investment has been made by **Stonebridge**, the private equity fund headed by **James Cox**. Prevayl was founded by **Adam Crofts**, a former personal trainer and Prevayl's current CEO, alongside **David Newns** (chairman) in April 2019. The company will launch its products to consumers in the fourth quarter of 2021. Prevayl's garments are described as "elevated smart clothing" that allows the wearers to connect their body, via invisible technology, to an app that monitors performance and recovery. Despite their key technical component, the garments are crafted from performance materials and are designed to look and feel as luxury sportswear, the brand says. They use graphene, a material that has been developed by the University of Manchester for applications to various sports. The garments incorporate sensors and make use of biosignal analysis, advanced analytics and fast data streaming. At launch, the brand will consist of three distinct elements - the sportswear, the hardware and the app - underscoring the company's vision to be at the interface of the athleisure and tech industries.

**Snipes**, the German-based sneaker and streetwear retail chain owned by **Deichmann**, is expanding to Poland with the acquisition of **Distance**, a retail chain founded in 2003 that sells soûoamr products through 31 physical stores in the country and an online shop that can be accessed from 20 European countries. No financial details were released about the deal, which still has to obtain regulatory clearance. The takeover will expand Snipes' overall network of brick-and-mortar stores to 440 units and give it a foothold in Eastern Europe. The Cologne-based retailer is already active in Germany, Austria, Belgium, Portugal, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Spain, Italy and the U.S. The owner and managing director of the Polish chain, **Waldemar Wi cek**, will remain with Snipes as country manager.

**Carlo Rivetti**, president of the Italian sportswear brand **Stone Island** recently acquired by **Moncler**, has taken complete ownership of **Modena FC 2018**, a football club based less than 20 kilometers from the brand's headquarters in Ravarino. The club has been acquired from **Kerakoll**, its previous owners, via **Rivetex**, the financial holding company of the Rivetti family. **Matteo Rivetti**, Carlo's son, has been named as the new president of the football club. Modena FC 2018, originally founded in 1912, was re-founded in 2018. The club currently competes in Serie C, the

third tier of Italian football. The Rivetti family has said in a statement that the takeover is not a manufacturing plan but rather a “personal operation” for the family, totally disconnected from other industrial activities.

To further boost its liquidity, while reducing its annual interest payments by about \$3.75 million, **Under Armour** is exchanging half of the \$500 million in convertible senior notes that it issued last spring with cash and Class C common shares. The bonds being redeemed currently yield an annual interest of 1.50 percent. The price of the notes will be determined based on a volume-weighted average price per share over a specific period. The company will also terminate the offsetting capped-call transactions that were entered into when the notes were issued, receiving a cash settlement from the participating banks.

+++ **VF Corp.** is planning to discontinue the **Eagle Creek** brand of backpacks and luggage by the end of this year due to strategic and financial concerns, according to the *Outside Business Journal* +++ According to *Bloomberg*, the **Sequential Brands Group** is working on a deal with **KKR** and other lenders to file for bankruptcy protection from its creditors prior to the sale of the whole company or some of its brands, which include **And1**, **Avia** and **Gaiam** +++ **CVC Capital Partners** is reportedly discussing a \$4 billion merger of the **ATP** and **WTA Tours** into a single entity, called **One Tennis**, in which it would hold a 15% stake +++ **Focus Brands**, the owner of **Fenchurch** and other brands that belongs to **JD Sports Fashion**, has opened a new and more modern head office for 70 employees in Huddersfield +++ **Peek & Cloppenburg**, the German fashion retailing group based in Düsseldorf that already has 140 **P&C** and **Anson** stores in 15 countries, is taking over the Danish **Magasin du Nord** chain of seven department stores and its web shop from the bankrupt British **Debenhams** group +++ **Therabody** has announced **Romelu Lukaku**, the football star with the Belgian national team and [Inter Milan](#), as the latest investor in the wellness technology brand and a new Therabody athlete ambassador +++

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## Executive Changes

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**Daniel Rüfenacht** has been appointed CEO of **Bluesign Technologies**, effective June 1st. He replaces **Jill Dumain**, who has become global vice-president for sustainability solutions at the **SGS Group**, the global testing, inspection and certification company of which Bluesign is part. Rüfenacht began his career with the Swiss government, identifying market opportunities for sustainable trade from developing countries and overseeing the development of the first sustainable label in Switzerland for the textile industry. He joined SGS in 2008 as vice-president of corporate sustainability, and was promoted to group vice-president of corporate communications and sustainability in 2017. Bluesign Technologies, established in 2000 and based in St. Gallen, Switzerland, works with the entire textile value chain to eliminate harmful substances within the manufacturing process to minimize the impact on people and the environment.

While extending its contract with the German Football League (**DSL**) to provide the official matchball for the first and second **Bundesliga** as well as at the **Supercup**, **Derbystar** has created new functions to better meet customer needs. It has set up a new e-commerce department headed by **Fabian Wenten**, in charge of the company's own B2B and B2C online stores as well as third-party online retailers and other digital sales channels. **Oliver Neumann** has been placed in charge of direct contacts between the German sports ball specialist and the sports clubs. The company has also set up an inside sales team, headed by **Bianca Swemers**, to supplement the field sales team run by two long-standing employees, **Carsten Berg** and **Joaquim da Silva**. In addition, the function of a cross-departmental project manager has been created, with **Andreas Wanders** charged of implementing the new processes and optimizing existing structures and procedures.

**Hervis Sport**, the Austrian sports retail chain, has appointed **Oliver Seda** as its new CEO, effective Oct. 1. He takes over from **Werner Weber**, who will leave Hervis at the end of the year based on a transitional arrangement that began after the sudden departure of the previous CEO, **Alfred Eichblatt**, in October 2019. Seda, 47, has been working for **Spar Austria**, which is Hervis' owner, since 2003. He started his career at Spar Austria as assistant to the

financial director. Seda is currently working as head of Spar's legal and human resources department, a role that he has held since 2012. Hervis has 234 stores and a staff of more than 3,000 people in Austria, Bavaria and Eastern Europe. The retailer posted revenues of €470 million in 2020, down 7.3 percent as compared to 2019.

**Hoka One One** has appointed **Norma Delaney** as vice president of global brand marketing. Hoka has been a client for Delaney's through her approximately four-year-old firm, **Delaney Brand Consulting**. She has in fact made a career of brand marketing, starting at **Keds** and **Sperry**, when it was a division of **Stride Rite**, in the late 1990s before moving on to **W.L. Gore**, the **Prince Sports Group**, **The Rockport Company** (when it was owned by **Adidas**) and, most recently, **New Balance**. Hoka has also promoted **Erika Gabrielli** to the position of senior director of Hoka Global Integrated Marketing. Gabrielli has spent the past decade or so with Hoka's parent company, **Deckers Brands**, as senior director of global marketing for **Teva**. She was previously a marketing manager at **Adidas** and **Yakima Products**, an account service manager at **Airwalk** and a field marketing representative at **Red Bull**. At Hoka she will be heading up global marketing integration and product storytelling. For the fast-growing brand of running shoes, which may soon reach an annual turnover of €1 billion, the next step may be the opening of a concept store. **Green Room Design**, a U.K.-based brand experience agency that has already worked for Puma and Under Armour, has been charged to develop a retail concept that should launched in late summer.

**Hyosung**, the Seoul-based provider of textile solutions, has appointed **Claire O'Neill** and **Julia Nam** as European and U.S. marketing managers, respectively. O'Neill, based in the U.K., has extensive experience in intimate apparel, swimwear and global textile markets. She joins Hyosung from **The Lycra Company**, where she most recently served as EMEA brand communications manager and before that as EMEA marketing segment manager for lingerie, underwear and swimwear at **Invista**, the former parent of Lycra. At Hyosung, O'Neill will work with the company's European marketing team. Nam, who most recently served as Hyosung's marketing manager for intimates and swimwear, has held numerous leadership positions during her 19-year career with the company. As U.S. marketing manager based in New York City, she will



identify business opportunities and develop customized textile solutions for U.S. brands and retailers. Together with Hyosung's **Fashion Design Center (FDC)** team, which forecasts trends and creates fabric stories and patterns in the context of global trends, the global brand marketing team of the company supports brands and retailers with design ideas, textile and product development. To enable faster product delivery and reduce its environmental footprint, Hyosung, founded in Korea in 1992, has strategically expanded its manufacturing network to serve customers on every continent. In 1999, the company expanded into China and now has bases in Vietnam for the rest of Asia, India for emerging Asian markets, Brazil for the Americas and Turkey for Europe. It recently expanded its plants in Turkey and Brazil and is looking to further production developments in the near future.

The **MacNeill Pride Group (MPG)** has announced the appointment of **Keith Bornholtz** as its new CEO. MPG is a portfolio company of **Centre Partners**, a middle-market private equity firm. Bornholtz, who has more than 30 years of experience in branded consumer products, joins MPG from **Central Garden & Pet**, where he was president of the pet distribution business unit. Prior to that, he held senior leadership positions at **Yes To, Big Heart Pet Brands, Clorox** and **Procter & Gamble**. In addition, MPG has appointed many important personalities to its board of directors: **David Tanner**, former CEO of **Boardriders**; **Jessica Klodnicki**, chief marketing officer of **Skullcandy**; **Kevan Talbot**, former CFO at **Sportsman's Warehouse**; and **Joe Steranka**, an executive strategist and former CEO of the **PGA of America**. MPG, headquartered in Nashville, Tennessee, has a portfolio of brands that include Orca, GCI Outdoor, PrideSports, Freestyle Rocker, RoadTrip Rocker, SoftSpike, CHAMP, Pride Golf Tee and Professional Tee System, among others.

**Gino Fisanotti** will be filling the new position of chief brand officer for **Moncler** as of June 7. He has been with **Nike** for the past 24 years, occupying a series of executive posts in retail and brand marketing and moving through various geographies: Latin America, North America and Europe. He has spent the past two years or so as Nike's creative officer, based at its global headquarters in Portland, Oregon. He was the first executive to hold the title. Fisanotti will now be reporting to **Remo Ruffini**, Moncler's

chairman and CEO, serving on the strategic committee as strategic director. He will be focusing through a multichannel lens on branding, collections, segmentation and marketing. In Ruffini's words, the objective is to "continue to push cultural and creative frontiers beyond fashion and beyond luxury." In addition, Moncler's executive director, **Roberto Philippe Eggs** – who has been serving as chief operations and marketing officer – is becoming the group's chief business strategy and global markets officer.

**Marrouane Nabih**, who had been serving as **CCM Hockey's** chief financial officer since February 2019, has been promoted to the position of CEO, heading up a renovated executive suite. **Jeffrey Dalzell** has been promoted to chief product officer, **Janne Heino** to executive vice president in charge of Europe, and **Caroline Losson** to executive vice president and chief marketing officer. In addition, **Alana Lapierre** has been named global vice president of people and culture and chief human resources officer.

**Smartwool** has announced two changes to its top management team. **Corey Stecker**, who was promoted to international general manager of sales and marketing last January, has been named global head of sales. Stecker has been with Smartwool since 2016. In his new role, he will be responsible for global wholesale and distribution channels for the U.S., Canada, EMEA and emerging markets. Prior to Smartwool, he held various sales and marketing positions at **The North Face Canada**, **Intrawest** and **Burton Snowboards**. Smartwool's new global head of e-commerce is **Matt Etzler**, who joined the company in 2020 as senior manager for e-commerce. In his new role, he will lead and develop the brand's global digital commerce channels. These roles cover some of the responsibilities held by **Scott Bowers**, who announced his intention to retire as VF if U.S. sales in late June. Both Stecker and Etzler will report to Smartwool's brand president, **Jen McLaren**.

**Alexandre Nodale**, 43, has been promoted to the new position of deputy CEO of **Maus Frères**, reporting to **Thierry Guibert** who became CEO of the Swiss family-owned group in January. Nodale has also been made president of **MF Brands Group International**, the group's subsidiary that oversees **Lacoste**, **Aigle**, **Gant**, **Tecnifibre** and **The Kooples**. Guibert previously had that role. Nodale joined Maus Frères in January 2020 to run the group's two

Swiss department store chains, **Manor** and **Jumbo**. After working in the finance department of **Kering** from 2000 and 2009, he spent nine years at **Conforama**, a French furniture store chain, where he became the CEO in 2015, taking the place of Guibert. Nodale had spent two years as deputy CEO, reporting to Guibert until he left in January 2015 to become the CEO of Lacoste.

**Christian Ollier**, who has worked for **Decathlon** for 15 years, has been elevated to the position of CEO of **Decathlon USA**. He takes the place of another company veteran, **Michel D'Humières**, who is said to be moving to handle other projects inside the world's largest sporting goods retail chain. Ollier had already been working closely with D'Humières on the U.S. project to ensure a smooth transition. He will continue to supervise the company's Swiss joint venture with **Maus Frères**, of which he has been the CEO since 2016. Ollier started at Decathlon in 2006 as director of its private outdoor brand, **Quechua**. In 2014, his responsibilities were extended to Decathlon's other mountain sports brands, **Wedze** and **Simond**. D'Humières moved to San Francisco in 2016 to lead the company's new U.S. operation, after running **Decathlon Spain** for 13 years. He is credited for obtaining U.S. certification for more than 7,000 Decathlon products and for building up a U.S. team of 140 people. Decathlon USA currently has a web store and two physical stores in the San Francisco Bay Area. It probably won't stop there.

+++ **Jeroen Both** is leaving as chief supply chain officer of **Accell Group** +++ **Winfried Rapp**, who oversaw the merger of a German cable network operator, **Unitymedia**, with **Verifone**, has joined **Canyon Bicycles** as chief financial officer, taking the place of the retiring **Lothar Arnold**, brother of the company's founder, **Roman Arnold** +++ **Selim Say**, an industry veteran how has been working most recently at **Keen Europe**, has been named vice president of footwear at **Jack Wolfskin**, reporting to the brand's new CEO, **Richard Collier** +++ **Claes Winterfeldt**, a former chief commercial officer of **Sportamore** who joined **XXL** as executive vice president in charge of purchasing and category management last August, has decided to leave the company at the end of October, according to *Sportfack* +++ **Alain Pourcelot**, formerly **Adidas'** managing director for Europe, is the new CEO of the **Afflelou** group, a big French optical retailer +++ **Thomas Lanis**, who has worked for **Nike** for 14

years, among other stations, has been made marketing manager for **Puma France** following the departure of **Benoît Menard**, who has become regional marketing manager for Europe, as previously reported +++ **Deichmann** has appointed a new chief marketing officer, **Sabine Zantis**, replacing **Christian Hackel** +++ Taking the place of **Matt Jones**, who is now director of operations for **Rusty Surfboards**, **Todd Stanley** joins **Surftech** as VP of sales after working for **Vans**, **Dakine** and **Reef** +++ **Duca del Cosma** has promoted **Evelien Lauwers** to general manager for North America from her previous position as global marketing & e-commerce manager +++ **Pure Archery** has promoted **Kevin Anderson** to the post of international sales manager +++

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### DTC & E-Commerce

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**Fila** has inaugurated its largest store in China in the city of Beijing, coinciding with the brand's 110th anniversary. The 1,700-square-meter store, dubbed the "**Fila Sport Fashion House**," is located at The APM Mall (138 Wangfujing Street) and occupies three floors. The store has been designed to reflect a blend of the brand's Italian DNA with the culture and architecture of Beijing. Fila's business in China, which has been growing more strongly than in other countries, is conducted by a joint venture between **Anta Sports Products** and **Fila Holdings** in Korea.

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The **Pinterest** photo app wants to become more of a shopping platform internationally. After the U.S. and U.K., the company's shopping functions will now also be available in Australia, Canada, France and Germany later this year. Users will thus have the opportunity to buy products directly via pins, pinboards and search results. The **Pinterest Lens Camera** can also be used to buy "real-world inspiration online in an instant." **Shopping Spotlights**, which feature expert recommendations and favorite trends from well-known fashion and home decor creators and publishers, provide additional inspiration. Pinterest is also launching its **Shopping Lists**, albeit initially only in the U.S. and U.K. Bookmarked product pins can be automatically saved to this list so users can purchase the items at a later date. Pinterest users will also get a notification when products they have saved are on sale. In addition, Pinterest is expanding its current suite of merchant tools to support merchants of all sizes. The **Verified**

**Merchant Program** is rolling out in the U.K., Australia, Canada, France and Germany. The merchant storefront in the profile and new product markers will also be available in those countries. **Dan Lurie**, global head of shopping products at Pinterest, reports that the Covid-19 pandemic has seen a significant increase in shopping usage on Pinterest. Fashion and home decoration have been among the most popular product groups.

Over the coming months, the **Iberian Sports Retail Group** of **JD Sports Fashion** will be setting up a marketplace for **Sport Zone**, under whose banner more than a hundred physical stores are operating in Portugal and the Canary Islands. The group hopes to replicate the success of its **Sprinter** marketplace, set up in November 2019 and placed under the management of **Queena Lin**, who has now spoken with the Spanish trade publication *CMDsport*. According to Lin, not only did Sprinter enjoy a four-digit increase in sales for 2020, thanks to the pandemic-inspired online boom, but sales have continued to rise by 60 percent so far in 2021. Sprinter's selection has increased as well, from last summer's 28,000 items from 300 brands to 50,000 items now from 800 brands. Most of the buyers on the marketplace, Lin said, are urban athletes aged 29 to 49. Other sources within the group have revealed to *CMDsport* plans to extend the marketplace concept to other unspecified markets outside Spain by sometime in 2022.

**KYX World**, a new sneaker subscription platform that features a "try-before-you-buy and non-committal sneaker access model," was launched out of Los Angeles on June 1, starting with 900 subscribers. By subscribing to the platform, users can obtain "fresh sneakers" every month and to "wear them, and then choose to keep them, buy them, or swap them out for a new pair next month." KYX offers four levels of access, from \$49 to \$599 a month, based on the total number of pairs allotted per month, as well as their value. Members can opt for brand-new or lightly worn sneakers. The company states that lightly worn sneakers undergo an extensive cleaning and sanitizing process, utilizing **Reshoevn8r** products to bring them to a "near new" appearance. Subscribers who do not find a particular style or size can reach out to KYX's digital concierge. At launch, KYX was offering over 275 styles ranging in price from \$200 to \$2,000 on the resale market. The platform was

founded by **Brian Mupo**, who is also its CEO, and **Steve Dorfman**, after raising \$1.75 million in seed funding.

+++ **Zalando** is expanding its Connected Retail program to Switzerland, offering an internet platform to local retailers, offering special financial conditions until the end of 2021 and claiming that it can boost their sales per square meter by 60% +++ **Zalando** is expanding its e-commerce platform to Lithuania, Slovenia and Slovakia, to be followed by Latvia, Estonia and Croatia later this year, and by Romania and Hungary in 2022 +++ **Amazon.fr** has launched an official store for **Roland-Garros**, to coincide with the start of the Parisian tennis tournament on May 30 +++ **Je suis à vélo** (jesuisavelo.com), a French multi-brand e-tailer specializing in cycling, has opened a 100-square-meter pop-up store in Paris' central rue de Rivoli, where cars are banned, and it will remain in place until the end of June +++ **Asics** has opened a London flagship of 9,300 square feet for its **Onitsuka Tiger** brand at 249-251 Regent Street, marking the event with a new limited-edition line of shoes and apparel +++ **Reef** opens a store in the Mallorca Fashion Center of the Spanish island by the same name +++

### Retail & Distribution

Despite the restrictions imposed by Covid-19, **Decathlon** was able to increase its net sales in Germany by 1.2 percent in 2020 as compared to the previous year. They reached €667 million, generating operating income (Ebit) of €10.8 million. In addition to the growing digital business, which represented 28 percent of the turnover last year as compared to 20 percent in 2019, the brick-and-mortar sales channel was expanded with six new physical locations in Hamburg-Langenhorn, Erding, Fulda, Munich-Elisenhof, Weiterstadt and Singen. Among the winning categories in 2020, the company mentioned fitness, yoga and Pilates as well as cycling, hiking and trekking. Decathlon Germany points out that it used 95 percent green electricity to power its stores and logistics centers. Addressing the ecologically relevant issue of returns in its report, it says that 97 percent of the returned goods were resold as new, for a total of more than two million items, while one percent of them went into a "second use" program. In addition, in-store service points repaired a total of 12,700 products. As of Dec. 31, the German subsidiary of Decathlon employed 5,116 people, and 46

percent were female. At least five new stores planned for this year will be located in the southern part of Germany. They include a 6,000-square-meter unit that opened its doors in Unterföhring on April 30 with strict anti-Covid measures.

**Decathlon** has opened its first point of sales in a pop-up store format in Russia. Located in the Nagorny district of Moscow, it is expected to operate for a limited period of five months in partnership with the Russian **ADG** real estate group. Decathlon explained that the new format would allow the company to improve brand recognition and increase market share within the reach of the main retail area in the district. It is noted that the placement of a pop-up sales point in such a regional center would help Decathlon to study in detail the needs of different target groups of customers, including families with children, youth, and adults. Decathlon is reportedly planning to scale up the project in the future.

+++ **Decathlon France** has opened a pop-up store in Boulogne-Billancourt, near Paris, at the shopping mall Les Passages, focusing on summer sports, which will be in place until July 31

+++ **Decathlon** has identified a bug on an external server that has forced it to reimburse multiple debits for the purchases of 2,248 customers +++ **Juventus F.C.**, the Turin-based football club that competes in Italy's **Serie A**, has announced the opening of the **Official Juventus Flagship Store** on **Tmall.com**, part of **Alibaba Group** +++ **Blueseventy**, the American brand of wetsuits and swim products, has chosen **Sported** as its new distributor across the Middle East region +++ **Traunstein Sport** has taken on the distribution of **Protective** bikewear in Austria +++ **Schöffel** is using new digital tools to accompany the sell-in of its products, as reported more in detail in the *Outdoor Industry Compass* +++

## Results & Statistics

**Buff** closed its fiscal year on April 30 with record sales of €85 million, a growth of 63 percent as compared to the previous year. The Spanish neckware and headware company attributed the good performance to the boom in outdoor sports and the production of protective equipment during the pandemic. In the U.S., for example, authorities recommended neck tubes as an alternative when



masks were in short supply, which boosted Buff's sales. According to **David Camps**, CEO of Buff, the company had already invested €1 million in new machinery last year. It is in the process of expanding the factory with an additional investment of €2 million. The goal is to internalize the production of caps and hats, which is currently in the hands of Asian factories. Sales for the upcoming fiscal year are expected to be lower because last year was "exceptional" due to the pandemic, Camps said. The company expects sales of around €70 million, which would still be well above the €52 million level of fiscal 2019/20.

**Goldwin** has laid out a plan to reach an annual turnover of 125 billion yen (€940m-\$1.15bn) by the financial year ending in March 2026, up from 100 billion this year, while transitioning to 100 percent recycled and biosynthetic materials. The Japanese company, which markets 18 different brands in its home country including **The North Face**, **Helly Hansen**, **Canterbury** and **Danskin**, says that this would put it on a path to zero waste manufacturing by 2020. In the near term, the group's operating income is expected to decline by 6 percent to ¥14 billion (€105m-\$128m) this year, due to investments in core systems and marketing, but the goal is to reach operating income of ¥21 billion (€160m-\$190m) by 2025/26.

**El Corte Inglés**, the leading Spanish department store chain, is a major factor in the country's sporting goods market. The company reported a 19 percent decline to €10.52 billion in revenues from its retail business in the 2020 financial year, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The drop would have been steeper without the expansion of its omni-channel operations, which led its online sales to grow by 132 percent, representing 17.3 percent of the retail turnover. The company boosted services such as same-day delivery, in-store pick-up and "Click&Car." The group's travel business contracted by 89 percent. Despite positive Ebitda of €142 million on total revenues of €10.43 billion, the group booked a net loss of €2.95 billion for the year after extraordinary charges of €2.5 billion.

So far in 2021, Russia has experienced a slump in bicycle sales as compared to the last year, due to a high base of comparison and the booming popularity of scooters, according to research conducted by the **Yandex.Market** trading platform. Russian consumers

have also started to buy fewer skateboards and longboards for similar reasons. A 24 percent drop in bike sales year-on-year from February to April could also be largely attributed to delays in deliveries, caused by a shortage of components, and a sharp rise in prices. On average, the price for new bicycles in Russia jumped by 50 percent as compared to the same period of the previous year, Yandex.Market estimated. In contrast with the situation in the bike market, Russia is experiencing a booming demand for gyro scooters, roller skates and electrically powered scooters. In the scooter segment, sales jumped by a factor of 10 times as compared to the same period of the last year. As a result, overall sales of bicycles, unicycles, gyro scooters, roller skates, scooters, and skateboards increased by 38 percent in Russia and by 63 percent in Moscow between February and April as compared to the same period last year, the researchers said. January was probably still too cold for such purchases. On the other hand, in 2020, the Covid pandemic spurred the demand for bicycles in Russia, leading to a 20 percent increase in terms of volume as compared with the previous year.

In its monthly study in Germany this May, **GfK** market researchers found consumer sentiment that has been “rather bright than muted,” because of falling illness rates and success in Covid-19 vaccinations. With more employees coming out of short-time or remote work and incremental re-openings of stores and restaurants, conditions are good for a significant recovery in consumer sentiment, GfK said. As a result of the persistent retail lockdowns, broad sections of private households have accumulated substantial financial reserves. This is reflected in the increased savings rate of private households, which rose to roughly 16 percent during the pandemic, up from between 10 and 11 percent in 2019, making considerable funds available for potential catch-up. In spite of increased confidence in the economy, the propensity to buy has suffered moderate losses, with the indicator dropping by 7.3 points to a current value of 10 points, after three consecutive increases. This is still 4.5 points higher than the corresponding figure for the previous year. Despite some partial store openings and easing measures that have been implemented or announced to date, a number of consumption options, especially in service sectors, are still not available or only possible to a very limited extent. This is likely to put the brakes on any noticeable revival in consumers’ shopping wishes at present. Some observers predict

that the turnaround in consumption will only take place in the second half of this year. *Photo: Christian Lue on Unsplash*

Two new participation reports produced by **Sports Marketing Surveys (SMS)** – “2020 Great Britain Golf Participation Report” and “2020 Ireland Golf Participation Report” – have shown an increase in participation by a combined 2.3 million on-course adult golfers in Great Britain and Ireland last year. The reports are based on new figures from **The R&A**, together with **England Golf, Golf Ireland, Scottish Golf** and **Wales Golf**. Like in the U.S., Sweden and elsewhere, the sport flourished in those two countries in 2020 despite the major challenges of Covid-19 and related restrictions. According to the two reports, a significant number of players enjoyed golf on full-length courses but also alternative forms of the sport, including the use of driving ranges, Par 3 golf and pitch and putt. Other key trends were an increase in the number of female golfers and a reduction in the average age of participants. In the U.K., the total number of adult golfers on a full-length course (9 or 18 holes) increased by 2.1 million players to 5.2 million, a record for this century. Of these golfers, 16 percent started or tried golf for the first time because of the pandemic. The average age of golfers fell by five years to 41. Among female golfers, 25 percent were new to the sport. In Ireland, the total number of adult golfers on a full-length course rose by 219,000 to 540,000. A third of Irish adult golfers who tried the sport for the first time were under 25.

In 2020, Spain surpassed for the first time in history the milestone of 1.5 million bicycles sold in a single year. According to figures by **Ambe**, the Spanish bike industry association, released in collaboration with **Cofidis**, bicycle sales jumped by 24.10 percent to 1,565,233 units last year. The sector’s turnover rose by 39.39 percent to €2.6 billion. E-bikes posted the largest increase, with sales up by 48.9 percent to 212,635 units, followed by city bicycles with a 46.4 percent increase. Mountain bikes, which saw sales increase by 27.7 percent in volume, are still the most popular category in Spain, but e-bikes have taken the lead in terms of revenues. Of all the bikes sold last year in Spain, 38.8 percent were mountain bikes, 6.8 percent road bikes, 8.7 percent urban bikes, 32.2 percent children’s bikes and 13.6 percent e-bikes. The average sales price per bike increased by 21.7 percent to €865, largely driven by the

higher sales of e-bikes, whose average price grew by 10.2 percent to €2,648. The number of bike shops, including bike rental and repair shops, rose by 30 to 2,981. By retail channel (sell-out), bike specialists accounted for 83 percent of the total volume, a 2.89 percent increase as compared to 2019. Multi-sport specialty retailers had a 10.94 percent market share, down 0.93 percent. Department stores saw their market share go down to 6.06 percent of the total volume, mostly due to Covid-related lockdown measures.

Like in other countries, the pandemic has accelerated a reduction in the number of sporting goods stores in Spain, adding to factors such as the growing weight of e-commerce, the more selective distribution policies of the major sports brands and the general modernization of the trade. Some 372 sporting goods stores closed in Spain over the course of 2020, an increase of 84 percent from the 202 that closed in 2019, according to a report in *CMDsport* citing figures from the 2021 edition of the *Sports Statistics Yearbook*. The surviving stores at the end of 2020 amounted to 5,416, down by 6.43 percent from 2019. Hardest hit among Spain's autonomous communities was Andalucía, which lost 93 stores. Catalonia remains in the lead with 943 sports retail operations, followed by Andalucía (843) and Madrid (647). Much of the recent damage is due to pandemic-inspired lockdowns, but that is not the whole story. As *CMDsport* shows, there has been a steady loss for more than a decade. The store total in 2008 was 7,753, so there has been a loss of 2,337 over a 12-year period.

The market for tennis shoes was worth \$2.19 billion in 2020, and is forecast to reach \$2.60 billion by 2028, representing a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 2.8 percent from 2021 to 2028, according to a new report by **Allied Market Research (AMR)**. By playing surface, the hard-court tennis shoe segment dominates the market and contributes to nearly half of the global tennis shoe market. In 2020, this segment accounting for sales of \$1.0 billion, and is expected to maintain its significance during the forecast period. The clay-court tennis shoe segment ranked second in terms of market share in 2020, and is anticipated to grow significantly in Europe and Latin America, where it is popular and widely used. By distribution channel, the supermarket/hypermarket segment accounted for more than one-third of the global tennis shoe market in 2020, driven by its wide-scale penetration

and popularity in the leading markets. However, the e-commerce segment is expected to experience a higher CAGR of 2.9 percent from 2021 to 2028. By region, North America held the largest share in 2020, contributing to nearly two-fifths of the total turnover, but it is the market across Asia-Pacific that is projected to show the highest CAGR at 2.7 percent during the forecast period, driven by growing participation in tennis. The new AMR report is titled *“Tennis Shoes Market by Playing Surface (Hard Court Tennis Shoes, Clay Court Tennis Shoes, and Grass Court Tennis Shoes), User (Men, Women, and Kids), and Distribution Channel (Supermarket/Hypermarket, Specialty Stores, E-Commerce, and Others): Global Opportunity Analysis and Industry Forecast, 2021–2028.”* Allied Market Research (AMR) is a market research and advisory company of **Allied Analytics**.

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### Legal & Institutional

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Authorities and the police in Badalona, a Spanish municipality near Barcelona, have detained ten Chinese nationals for trafficking in counterfeit goods at the shops they operate. Of the 10,000-odd items seized, with a total value exceeding €400,000, some 8,836 were apparel and footwear items offered under such faked brands as **Nike**, **Converse** and **Siksilk**. The suspects are being charged with crimes against industrial property.

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New EU tax rules for orders placed with non-European online retailers will come into force at the beginning of July. The most important change is the elimination of the previous exemption limit of €22 for direct (B2C) imports. This means that import VAT will be due on all packages, with the exception that taxes below €1 are not levied. The elimination of the €22 exemption limit on July 1 affects all online purchases sent directly from non-EU countries, such as China, the U.S. or the U.K. Above all, purchases on ultra-cheap platforms such as **AliExpress** or **Wish** will be affected. Loopholes for tax evasion remain open in both cases, according to experts. For both small shipments and container exports, merchants can reduce the tax burden by declaring false values of goods. In the case of small consignments, there is still a chance to get away completely tax-free if the value of the goods is so low that the tax is less than €1. The EU Commission has high hopes for the new measures. The tax reform creates “fair

competition between European and foreign e-commerce market participants,” the Brussels-based authority writes in a brochure. It expects additional annual tax revenues of €7 billion.

A group of ten German retailers including **Intersport**, **Engelhorn** and **Rose Bikes** have sued the German federal government in the country’s Constitution Court over its strict anti-Covid lockdown regulations. The current measures prevent the opening of so-called “non-essential” retail stores, including sporting goods retail shops, in areas where more than 100 out of 100,000 residents have been infected for three consecutive days. The plaintiffs charge that the measures run against the three constitutional principles of business freedom, right of property and non-discrimination. Among other things, they note that there is no proof that the risk of infection is particularly high in a retail store, and that there is no reason to keep then grocery stores, bookshops and garden centers open. The complaint has been filed through the law office of **Heuking Kühn Lüer Wojtek** in cooperation with a constitutional law expert, **Prof. Franz Lindner** of the **University of Augsburg**. A few days earlier, a similar constitutional challenge was launched by the **ANWR Group**, parent company of **Sport 2000 Germany**, through one of its directly managed retailers, **Schuh Mücke**.

The **Indian Olympic Association (IOA)** has dropped **Li Ning**, the Chinese sportswear maker, as its official uniform partner, citing public sentiment in the country. Indian athletes will wear unbranded apparel at the upcoming **Tokyo Olympic Games** instead, the IOA said. The next edition of the Summer Olympics, postponed from 2020 because of the Covid-19 pandemic, is scheduled to take place from July 23 to Aug. 8 this summer. The IOA’s decision is linked with strained ties between India and China over a disputed Himalayan border, which led to the death of 20 Indian soldiers in a clash with Chinese forces in June last year. This deadly clash in Ladakh, in the disputed Kashmir region, has generated growing calls in India for a boycott of Chinese companies.

**Nike**’s decision to stop working with **Neymar jr.** last year was connected with allegations by a Nike employee that the footballer had sexually assaulted her, the *Wall Street Journal (WSJ)* has revealed, and Nike has partly confirmed the report, adding that the allegations could not be confirmed. Neymar has vigorously

denied the allegation, his spokeswoman told *WSJ*, claiming that he split with Nike for commercial reasons. According to the *WSJ* report, the Nike employee told colleagues and friends in 2016 that the Brazilian football star tried to force her to perform oral sex in his hotel room after a promotional event in New York City. The employee was there to help coordinate events and logistics for Neymar and his entourage. In 2019, after the employee made a complaint to Nike about the fact, the Swoosh launched an internal investigation, which proved “inconclusive,” said Nike, as no supporting facts actually emerged. The company said it ended its relationship with the athlete because “he refused to cooperate in a good faith investigation of credible allegations of wrongdoing by an employee,” apparently to avoid any publicity. The partnership between Nike and Neymar had lasted for 15 years. In August 2020, when it was put to an early end by Nike, the company had not publicly given a reason for it. The athlete has since signed an endorsement deal with **Puma**. Nike’s partnership with Neymar was supposed to continue for another eight years, according to *WSJ* sources familiar with the matter. The 29-year-old football champion had been formerly accused of rape in Brazil, but it was never proven. A few days ago, Neymar extended his contract with the **Paris-Saint-Germain** club through the 2024/25 season.

The federal court of New York for the Southern District has rejected a request for a temporary restraining order against **Puma**, which would have prevented it from using teeth designs on its apparel. The plaintiff, **Christophe Roberts**, claimed that various designs launched by the Wild Cat to address **NBA** customers infringe on his trademarked graphic “Roar” design, but the court ruled that the Brooklyn-based artist failed to establish a likelihood of success on the merits of any of his claims. Puma filed various counterclaims after the ruling, accusing Roberts of making false representations as to when the mark was first used in commerce, and asking to have his Roar mark canceled. Puma is also seeking a declaratory judgement of non-infringement.

The co-chairmen of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, Senator **Jeff Merkley** of Oregon and a member of the House of Representatives, **James P. McGovern** of Massachusetts, have addressed a letter to **Chris Paul** and **Michele Roberts**, the president and executive director of the **National Basketball Players**



**Association (NBPA).** In it Merkley and McGovern – sponsors of the **Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act** – call on **NBA** players to leverage their contracts with Chinese brands to push them to end their use of cotton from the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region or relinquish their endorsement deals with them. The letter mentions three brands by name: **Anta**, **Li-Ning**, and **Peak**. “The U.S. State Department,” reads the letter, “has determined that the Chinese government is committing genocide and crimes against humanity in Xinjiang, including the mass internment of over a million primarily Muslim ethnic minorities and the systematic use of forced labor to make goods for global export. The NBA and NBA players should not even implicitly be endorsing such horrific human rights abuses.” The endorsers include **Klay Thompson**, **Gordan Hayward**, **Rajon Rondo** and **Alex Caruso** for Anta, **Dwyane Wade**, **Jimmy Butler**, **Evan Turner** and **CJ McCollum** for Li-Ning, and **Dwight Howard** and **Lou Williams** for Peak. Through its customs administration, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has been fighting back against brands that have stopped sourcing their cotton in Xinjiang, banning some 81 “hazardous” items from importation, among them some children’s apparel from **Nike**, **Gap**, **H&M** and **Zara**. The CCP has also been waging a campaign on social media to push Chinese citizens to buy domestic brands.

+++ Citing insufficient evidence of an organized criminal plot, a U.S. district judge has dismissed the racketeering claims raised against **Adidas** by a basketball player, **Brian Bowen jr.**, in November 2018 as part of a college basketball scandal involving the **University of Louisville** +++ The **Football Association (FA)** of England has named **Debbie Hewitt** as its new chair, the first woman appointed to the top role in FA’s 157 years of history, subject to confirmation by the FA Council next month +++ **FIFA** has appointed **Dave Beeche** as chief executive of the 2023 **Women’s World Cup**, which will be jointly hosted by Australia and New Zealand +++ China’s State General Administration of Sport has announced plans to build up to 18 so-called “football cities” in the country between 2021 and 2025, each equipped with at least two professional clubs, one national-level youth training center and a series of local training centers +++ The 2021 **Copa América** will be hosted by Brazil – in the four venues of Rio de Janeiro, Brasilia, Mato Grosso and Goias - after it was moved from both Argentina and Colombia due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and, in the case of Colombia, civil unrest +++

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Product & Marketing

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**Train Me**, Decathlon's coaching platform and the **Ibis** chain of low-cost hotels are launching the "Smart Sport Tour." Starting on June 12, 52 **Ibis Budget** hotels in France will be proposing fitness sessions for free. These sessions will include easy exercises accessible to everyone. Decathlon fitness accessories will also be made available at the receptions of the participating hotels. The overall 104 sessions will be run by Train Me coaches. The new initiative builds on another ongoing collaborative project that has seen Ibis make available Decathlon sporting kits at their receptions since the beginning of 2020. Ibis is a hotel brand of the **AccorGroup**.

**Quiksilver** is going to offer 450 unique unisex items from its archives for sale in a special pop-up area of the **Citadium** sports fashion store in central Paris between June 7 and 27. The colorful, authenticated vintage items come out of its collections dating from 1980 to 2000. They will be sold along with items from its present collections, which can be customized. The sale will be accompanied by animations over the weekend. A previous vintage sale on Quiksilver's web store in 2019 was sold out within 24 hours.

**Rover Development**, a small start-up based in Minneapolis, has developed the **PSicle** sensor, an NFC-based pressure sensor that is said to allow cyclists to read the tire pressure of their bike via their smartphone. The PSicle sensor threads into an existing **Presta** valve. It can be used with tubeless tires or any tube with a removable core, and is also fully reusable when buying a new tubeless tire or tube. Unlike some other sensors, the PSicle has no battery to charge it or replace it. The pressure can be read by holding an iOS or Android smartphone within about one inch of the sensor. The NFC reader inside the smartphone automatically wakes and powers the sensor. Then, the PSicle app detects the sensor and automatically activates the system, allowing for an instant pressure measurement. Pressure readings are updated as the tire is being inflated. Rover Development is comprised of three engineers with more than 60 years of combined product development experience who have brought over a dozen previous products from concept to production. They launched a **Kickstarter** campaign for the PSicle sensor on May 25, with an early-bird price of \$52 for two sensors delivered in September and a regular price of \$56 for

two sensors delivered in November. The sensors will later be sold directly through the company's website.

**Adidas Golf** has announced the launch of the **Solarthon**, an ultralightweight shoe designed to keep feet feeling fresh all day long, especially during the hot seasons of the year. The Solarthon is indeed inspired by the summer solstice, the brand explained, when golfers are motivated to maximize the time they spend on the green. The Solarthon features a full-length **Boost** midsole for enhanced comfort, along with a spikeless **Fishscale Traxion** outsole for grip and stability. A film has been added around the edges of the upper to make the shoe water-resistant and help the golfer against early morning dew. The Solarthon will initially be released in a limited-edition gray, blue and white colorway, featuring **Adidas Primeblue** textile upper, a high-performance recycled yarn containing at least 50 percent **Parley Ocean Plastic**. This limited edition will be available online and at selected retailers worldwide beginning June 15. Two more in-line colorways in black/gold and gray/yellow will be released beginning July 1st. These new lots will also come in additional size offerings.

For spring 2021, **Emilio Pucci** is releasing a capsule collection with **Supreme**, the American streetwear brand recently acquired by **VF Corp.** The collection comprises 14 items including a silk jacket, waterproof nylon sweats, shirts and T-shirts, a hoodie and pants, a football jersey and shorts and accessories such as sunglasses, caps, a belt and a **Zippo** lighter. For inspiration, **LVMH's** Italian brand, which is famous for its prints, has reached into its archives to revive its Tulipani and Fantasia motifs from 1965 and 1970. To be the collection's face, Pucci has selected the American skater, rapper and music producer **Sage Elsesser**, who has been photographed for a social media campaign by **David Sims**.

The collection goes on sale on June 10 at Supreme's stores and on the brands' respective websites: [supremenewyork.com](https://supremenewyork.com) and [emiliopucci.com](https://emiliopucci.com). Supreme already engaged in a highly publicized collaboration in 2017 with **Louis Vuitton**, the biggest brand inside the LVMH group.

The **International Organization for Standardization** has confirmed the **ISO** standard 23223 for the **Gripwalk** ski boot binding system developed by **Marker Dalbello Völkl Brands**, also known

as **MDV Sports**. The system, which was first presented at **ISPO Munich** in 2016, enables easier and more comfortable walking on ski boots. It is already used by almost all well-known manufacturers of ski bindings and ski boots. With the confirmation of the ISO standard, **Marker's** patented technology will officially become the industry standard later this year. The ISO standard ensures cross-brand compatibility for Gripwalk products among the bindings and ski boots of different brands. MDV Sports estimates that more than 60 percent of all alpine ski boots and bindings will already have Gripwalk installed or be Gripwalk-compatible by the 2020/21 winter sports season. "The ski industry knows only a few standards. In this context, uniform systems and joint developments such as Gripwalk can increasingly ensure that comfort and safety are improved across manufacturers. In this way, we optimize cooperation, further develop the range of equipment suppliers and also increase the appeal of skiing through greater comfort," explains **Jonathan Wiant**, president of MDV Sports. All compatible ski boots, soles and bindings are marked with the Gripwalk logo across all manufacturers and they are **TÜV**-certified.

For **Marimekko**, a major Finnish producer of highly colorful fabrics, has decided to have its first collaboration with a sportswear brands through a limited edition with **Adidas**. Bold patterns are combined with a functional style to convey a positive spirit of movement and playfulness. The Adidas x Marimekko collection is scheduled to be launched on June 1 on Mainland China, on June 10 in Japan, on June 15 in South Korea, Hong Kong, North America and Thailand, and on July 1 in Australia and Europe. It will be available from Adidas' and Marimekko's webshops, in selected Adidas stores, in Marimekko stores and those of selected retailers.

**Mango** is further expanding its activewear segment by launching a capsule collection of "active" men's clothing for the gym and the outdoors, made with breathable, comfortable and lightweight materials. It has made it available through its own web shop and at three mono-brand stores in Barcelona. The Spanish fashion label first launched an activewear line for women last October. The range was expanded in March, focusing on yoga and other fitness activities.

Underlining its concern for the LGBTQ community, **Puma** has launched a **Forever Free Pride** collection in collaboration with **Cara Delevingne**, a fashion model who is known for her dedication to the cause. The company will donate 20 percent of the proceeds from its sale to her foundation. To signal its willingness to welcome people of all sexual orientations and genders, Puma is also celebrating Pride Month by putting rainbow colors on the façade of its head office in Herzogenaurach throughout June. It will place the premises at the disposal of DJs to stream their performances for virtual Pride events in the neighboring cities of Nuremberg and Erlangen.

**Puma** has created a new midsole that is made with sugar cane and is introducing new footwear styles made with recycled materials, the company has announced, as part of its plan to make its entire product range more sustainable. **Better Foam** contains at least 35 percent bio-based materials that are derived from sugar cane, a material that absorbs carbon as it grows. The parts of the plant that are not destined for food production are blended into traditional foam cushioning to make Better Foam. The first sneaker to feature Better Foam will be the **Emerge**, which will be sold from July 1st. In addition, the brand has launched two new sneaker styles, the **Caven** and the **Jada**, which are made with at least 20 percent recycled materials in the upper and the laces. The Caven is inspired by the basketball shoes of the 1980s, while the Jada takes inspiration from classic tennis shoes. Earlier this year, Puma announced that by 2025, nine out of ten Puma products will be made of more sustainable materials.

For a month starting on Global Running Day, June 2, **Asics** will be conducting a worldwide study to track the effects of sport on the “collective mood of cities, nations and the world.” The Japanese brand is using an interface called the “Mind Uplifter” – available through the **Race Roster** and **Runkeeper** apps – to record facial scans, electroencephalograms and customer-reported data on ten “emotional and cognitive metrics” such as confidence, positivity, calm and focus. With the results it is generating a dynamic, interactive “World Uplift Map.” “By taking part in any number of our different events and activities running across the year,” says Asics’ president and COO, **Yasuhito Hirota**, customers can “help us further understand the uplifting effect of sport.” A preliminary

study – developed by **EMOTIV**, a bioinformatics company in San Francisco, and **Dr. Brendon Stubbs**, who studies exercise and mental health at **King's College** in London – found immediate post-exercise increases in confidence (14.4%), energy (9.7%) and relaxation (13.3%) in a sample of 42 athletes of varied accomplishment. More information is available at: [asics.com/uplift](https://asics.com/uplift)

**Foot Locker** has announced the launch of an exclusive basketball-inspired capsule collection designed by **Melody Ehsani**, the new creative director of its women's business. It will be the first of several capsule collections that the international sports retailer plans to drop this year. The collection highlights colors inspired by nature and temperature. More specifically, thermal patterns are used to reflect an individual's response to the environment and what connects people at a global level. Except for the shapewear (bra and bike short), 70 percent of the collection is unisex/neutral. This first capsule collection will debut on June 10. All pieces, whose prices range from \$10 to \$80, will be available online and in-store at Foot Locker locations across the U.S. and Canada, as well as at select stores in Europe and Asia-Pacific. In the U.S., the launch will be preceded by a digital crowd-sourcing program to determine the locations of pop-up shops where the line will be available before the rest of the world. The launch will be accompanied by a "No More Next" virtual festival inviting customers to engage in interactive conversations and product sweepstakes.

**Joma Sport** has announced a three-year technical partnership with the **Hibernian Football Club**, a professional club based in Edinburgh that competes in the Scottish Premiership. The agreement, effective June 1st, brings an end to the club's four-year deal with **Macron**. Upon the terms of the new agreement, described by the club as a "seven-figure" and "record-breaking" kit deal, the Spanish brand will become the Hibs' official kit manufacturer and technical partner from the 2021/22 season. Joma will provide the club with the playing kit, training wear, leisurewear and footwear. The club finished third in the Scottish league this season.

**Keller Sports**, the fast-growing German online retailer for premium sports products and services, is organizing a special multi-sport challenge, the "Brand City Clash by Keller," in five German cities - Würzburg, Dresden, Münster, Freiburg and Munich - with the

help of five brands for the first time this summer. In each city, two teams of three sports enthusiasts will compete against each other between July 24 and Aug. 28 in behalf of their city. Each of the participants will represent one of the brands supporting the event: **Asics, On, Scott, The North Face** and **Under Armour**. Any team can apply on *Instagram* to participate in the competition, convincing the brands of their value as ambassadors. The chosen competitors will be equipped and supported by the brands. The event will be accompanied digitally via Keller's own channels and by the brands themselves. The aim is for the teams to win for their city and their brand. **Garmin** will supply each team with test watches for on-site navigation and provide one of the three main prizes. The participants will collect points on the **Keller sMiles** app. The Keller group has just won the **German Innovation Award** for the second time for its brand positioning and approach to customer loyalty. The company expects to grow by more than 40 percent this year, as it did in 2020. It was targeting a turnover of more than €100 million in 2020, and the Covid pandemic apparently helped it to reach that goal, but no precise figures could be obtained.

Over the course of the two weeks of the **The French Open**, best known as **Roland-Garros**, which started on May 30, the tennis ambassadors of **Lacoste** as well as journalists and other personalities close to the action are having their polo shirt equipped with a special **GoPro** camera, integrated in the crocodile logo of their shirt. The initiative is meant to "open the door" of the iconic tournament to as many spectators as possible via a series of short videos, at an edition characterized by severe restrictions in the number of spectators due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This year, Lacoste celebrates the 50th anniversary of its partnership with Roland-Garros, which is one of the four annual Grand Slam tournaments.

The important technical partnership between **Nike** and the **FC Barcelona** football club has been in place since 1998, when Nike replaced Barça's previous partnership with **Kappa**. The agreement with Nike is supposed to last until 2028. However, both Nike and Barcelona are reportedly inclined to renegotiate the terms of the deal, although somehow in opposite directions. Nike, which currently pays between €105 million and €155 million per season to the club, would like to review the financial terms downwards,



arguing that the Covid-19 pandemic has altered the context. For its part, FC Barcelona would like to be more independent with respect to decisions in key profitable areas, especially e-commerce. In the midst of this, **Puma** is reportedly testing its options to replace Nike, according to reports in the Catalan newspaper *Ara*, which *Mundo Deportivo* was able to confirm, the sports newspaper said. Puma has not released any official statement on the matter.

The **English Football League (EFL)** has announced **Puma** as its new official match ball supplier. The agreement with Puma, which will begin at the start of the 2021/22 season, replaces the EFL's historic partnership with **Mitre** after 45 years. The new contract will see Puma supply the official match ball for all EFL competitions, including the **Sky Bet Championship, League One, League Two, Carabao Cup** and **Papa John's Trophy**. Puma is currently the official match ball supplier of Spain's **LaLiga**. The new Puma EFL football is based on the **Accelerate** model, the same as the one that was released for LaLiga a few days ago.

**Therabody** has signed an endorsement deal with the famous footballer **Cristiano Ronaldo**, the **Juventus** and Portugal forward who has been using the **Theragun** since the company's founder and "chief wellness officer," **Dr. Jason Wersland**, introduced it to the **Real Madrid** squad in 2017. The company is also launching its largest ad campaign to date, in the U.S., the U.K., Continental Europe, Canada, Australia, China and Japan. It says that Ronaldo is expected to "amplify the importance of whole-body wellness and educate his community on the benefits" of Therabody's handheld percussive massager.

+++ **Callaway Golf** has teamed up with the **Chelsea Football Club** on a new range of golf accessories, available at the Chelsea FC Stadium Megastore at Stamford Bridge as well as at select Callaway retail partners +++ **Champion** is partnering with **Levi's** to develop the official apparel for the members of the U.S. BMX freestyle national team at the **Tokyo Olympics** +++ **De Rigo Vision** has extended its 25-year-old eyewear licensing contract with **Fila**, limiting it to EMEA, the Americas, Australia and New Zealand +++ **Izipizi** has introduced two models of sunglasses designed for sports and outdoor activities – called **Zenith** and **Speed** –

developed in collaboration with its team of athlete ambassadors +++ The German fashion label **Joop!** is launching a line of women's activewear for running and fitness in collaboration with the **Nautrana** group +++ **Onefootball**, which boasts 85 million active users on its digital platform, has launched a streetwear line on its new web store +++ **Archroma** has introduced its new "Color Atlas by Archroma Polyester Library," a new library of colors for polyester that features 1,440 colors for sportswear, athleisure, swimwear, children's clothing, shoes, fashion and home textiles, which add to the already available 4,320 colors of its "Color Atlas" for cotton +++ **Kappa** will replace **Nike** as the new technical partner of **Venezia FC**, the Italian football club that has just been promoted to **Serie A**, starting from the next season +++ **Titleist** and **FootJoy** have become official partners of **Scottish Golf** +++ **Wilson** has been chosen by the **Italian Volleyball Federation (Fipav)** as the official ball supplier for the **Italian Beach Volley Championship** and its **Beach Volley National Series** +++ **Shimano** has become the exclusive official group-set supplier to the **Great Britain Cycling Team** and **British Cycling**, an expansion of the ten-year relationship between the brand and the national cycling governing body +++ **Pinarello** has extended its partnership with the **INEOS Grenadiers** for the next four seasons, taking the deal beyond 15 years by the end of the contract +++ **Skechers** has signed up **Michael Ballack**, the legendary 44-year-old German football player, as brand ambassador who will appear in a European campaign later this year +++ **Craft** expands its partnership with **Spartan**, which acquired **Tough Mudder** in some countries at the beginning of 2020, through a multi-year contract develop co-branded performance apparel and footwear for **Spartan Trail** and **Tough Mudder** obstacle course races +++ **Macron** has announced a new four-year technical sponsorship deal with the **Luxembourg Rugby Federation (FLR)**, as well as the renewal of its partnership with **Stoke City FC** until 2024 +++ **Macron** announces a sponsorship deal with a leading Italian basketball club in its own region, **Pallacanestro Reggiana**, for the next five seasons +++ **Kappa** will replace **Adidas** as the new technical partner of **Red Star FC**, a French football club that competes in France's third tier (National), for the next three seasons +++ **Adidas** has extended its partnership with the **Racing Club Strasbourg**, a football club that competes in France's **Ligue 1**, as equipment supplier of the club until 2030 +++ **Mizuno** has announced the renewal of its partnership with the **French Judo**

**Federation (FF judo)** as equipment supplier +++ **Puma** has signed a deal as official footwear and apparel supplier for the **Boston 10K for Women**, presented by **REI** +++ **Salomon** has signed up an ultra-running athlete, **Rich Roll**, as an ambassador of the brand +++

### Trade Shows & Other Events

**Arc'teryx'Alpine Academy** will return to Chamonix for the tenth time on July 1-4, accompanied by a full digital program. For those who can make it to the French alpine village, the downtown area will host movie screenings, DJ sets, product demos and more. An Arc'teryx brand experience area will preview upcoming winter gear and the brand's "Outer Peace" initiative. A total of six films will be shown in the village in the evenings, including the world premieres of *WoGü*, *4 Elements* and *Glacial*. The concurrent digital program will be available free of charge between July 1 and 11 at [chamonix.arcteryxacademy.com](http://chamonix.arcteryxacademy.com). Mountain enthusiasts from all over the world will be able to access all films from this year's academy digitally and attend the panel discussion moderated by a mountain guide, **Isabelle Santoire**, on "*Nature Consumption: How to balance the use and protection of wild spaces?*" A photo contest will be held to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the academy. Through July 7, participants can post pictures of their favorite moments spent in Chamonix on social media by tagging [@arcteryxacademy](https://twitter.com/arcteryxacademy). Prizes include an Alpine Academy goodie bag and an Arc'teryx **Atom SL Hoody**. More in the *Outdoor Industry Compass*.

In 2021, for the second year in a row, there will be no **Festibike**. The annual Spanish consumer-oriented cycling-industry festival – organized by a Portuguese events company called **Lastlap** – was scheduled for Sept. 10-12 in Las Rozas. Also canceled are the accompanying **MTB Marathon** and **FBK Cyclocross**, which were due to be held in November. "We've listened to the sector and believe, as a cycling-event company, that Festibike has no reason to be this year," Festibike's director, **Guillermo de Portugal**, told *CMDsport*. Last year, the pandemic lockdowns were the reason for the cancellation, but the reason given this year is, ironically, the high demand for bicycles. Thanks to the recent boom in cycling, most brands and distributors have already sold out of the models for 2022 – even the test bikes – and have therefore set their sights two years ahead. According to the event's announcement online,

“most brands are focused on regularizing their production and correcting service interruptions.” On the other hand, **Sea Otter Europe**, another cycling trade show organized by another company that was canceled last year, is for the time being still planned to be held, on Spain’s Costa Brava, near the city of Girona next Sept. 24-26, accompanied by a program of races. De Portugal has confirmed to *CMDsport* that two events are planned for 2022: the **FBK Demo Test**, in Madrid, and the usual Festibike, in September.

**Raccoon Events**, the U.K.-based company behind events such as the **National Running Show**, the **National Snow Show** or the **National Outdoor Expo**, announced today that it is adding another consumer event to its portfolio: The **National Cycling Show**, scheduled for June 18-19, 2022, at the NEC in Birmingham. The event aims to be “provide a comprehensive retail experience, first-class speaker line-up and a plethora of impressive interactive features under one roof.” More than 20,000 cycling enthusiasts and 200 exhibitors are expected to attend. The organizer says the show is unique in that it offers consumers the opportunity to try *and* buy the bike that meets their needs, whether it’s a road, mountain, commuter, family or gravel bike. At the same time, it supports independent bike dealers (IBD) who deliver the items purchased directly after the event, strengthening the IBD network in the U.K. The two-day event, which is aimed at established, former and new cyclists and will play host to big names on the cycling scene who will lead a program of inspirational talks on the “Inspiration Stage.” The show will also feature a “Cycling 101 Stage,” specifically geared toward those new to the sport, featuring workshops and presentations on topics such as road safety, bike maintenance, cycling as a commuting option and getting started in cycling.

**Women’s Golf Day (WGD) 2021** saw the total number of participating venues reach 941, exceeding previous records. The sixth edition of WGD took place in more than 80 countries around the world on June 1st. New Zealand, Japan and Argentina joined the WGD Community for the first time this year. The #WomensGolfDay hashtag reached 72.4 million unique visitors, generating 87 million impressions across *Facebook*, *Instagram*, and *Twitter*. Women’s Golf Day is a four-hour collaborative effort taking place globally in which women and girls can experience golf for the first time or where current players can play and engage with women interested

in golf. Any location that offers golf or golf-related products and services can host an event on Women's Golf Day, including golf resorts, public golf courses, private golf courses, golf stores etc.

+++ Confirming our previous report that he has no plans to step down as chairman and CEO of **JD Sports Fashion**, **Peter Cowgill** said the company will hold a Capital Markets Day on Oct. 13 that will demonstrate "the depth of expertise" of its senior operation leadership team +++

## CSR & Sustainability

**Asics** has announced an extension of its partnership with **Right To Play**, an international non-profit organization that helps vulnerable children overcome the effects of war, poverty and disease through play. Asics will now support Right To Play programs in East Africa (Uganda, Burundi, Mozambique and Tanzania). Since launching their partnership in 2018, Asics and Right To Play collaborated on sport-focused activities for Syrian refugees in Lebanon, supporting more than 7,000 people and training 115 coaches. The extended partnership agreement will support Right To Play's continued public programs for the children of East Africa, a region affected by multiple social issues. The programs provide opportunities and equipment for play and sports, peace education and gender equality development.

**Burton Snowboards** is calling for the annual **Burton Clean Up Days**, which started years ago with a crew of company employees picking up trash on their local mountain. Over the years, the event has grown into a movement of like-minded snowboarders cleaning up their personal playgrounds around the world. This year, Burton is partnering with **#EUGreenWeek** and **Protect Our Winters**. All responsible snowboarders (and everybody else) are invited to clean up an area they love and enjoy on June 12 and 13, 2021. For every cleanup post or story tagged with **#burtoncleanupdays** and **@burtoneurope** on Facebook, Burton will plant a tree in cooperation with **@onetreepanted**.

**Dolomite**, the 124-year-old Italian outdoor apparel and footwear brand owned by the **Scott Sports Group**, is supporting the **Clean Mont Blanc** project, led by the **Summit Foundation** and **Aqualti**.

This cross-border initiative will see a multi-disciplinary team collect water samples for microplastic testing around the Mont Blanc Massif and organize volunteer clean-up days in the three countries surrounding the massif: Italy, France and Switzerland. The sampling and testing of water for microplastics by Aqualti will allow scientists to enhance their understanding of the mechanisms of the transfer and accumulation of microplastic particles in the ecosystem. The clean-up campaign led by the Summit Foundation is meant to raise awareness of the problem and the effects that humans have on the mountain environment.

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**The Lycra Company** is launching a new print and online advertising campaign, “*Keep in the loop with Lycra*,” aimed at driving the conversation about the circular economy in textiles. The campaign is an invitation to customers and industry professionals to join Lycra in using resilient, sustainable materials that can be recycled at the end of their lifecycle to reduce textile waste and close the “loop” in the value chain. The campaign, developed by the agency **Grounded World** (a certified **B Corp**), uses a cycle as a design tool to show the transformation of textile waste into new fibers/fabrics. The campaign’s tagline invites the industry to learn about the company’s latest advances in the circular economy while promoting awareness and collaboration.

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According to a recent study by Depop, a popular e-commerce platform for second-hand fashion, and an 11-year-old management and business consulting firm based in Boston, **Brain & Company**, the shopping behavior of the so-called Generation Z – born between 1997 and 2012 – is not only, but predominantly driven by the desire to live more sustainably. In the survey taken among 2,176 Depop users in the U.K., U.S. and Australia, the consulting specialists have found that 90 percent of the Gen-Z consumers are trying to reduce the carbon footprint of their daily lives, with an interest in more sustainable fashion playing a central role. 75 percent of them reported that their decision to buy second-hand is driven by their desire to reduce consumption. At the same time, for 55 percent of the sample, a wish to buy one-of-a-kind (like vintage or upcycled) pieces is an important factor. They are especially attracted by the looks of the recent past: on the U.S. Depop Site alone, “Y2K” is tagged for over 2,7 million products. But the study also offers information on generation’s shopping behavior outside of the shopping platform:



70 percent of the consumers surveyed confirmed that their buying decisions are influenced by a brand's "commitment to fair wages and safety," while another 60 percent said a brand's commitment to "diversity and inclusion" is important. Also, 60 percent of the respondents added that a "reduced" footprint is a driving force in their choice-making when it comes to the environment, while 45 percent said a brand's use of "eco-friendly materials" is also a factor. Depop was founded in 2011 as a platform to buy, sell and trade. It was just acquired by a competitor, **Etsy**, for \$1.6 billion and is the 10<sup>th</sup> most visited shopping site among Gen-Z consumers in the U.S.

*SGB Media* reports that a U.S. oilfield company, **Liberty Oilfield Services**, is using billboards around Denver, a website and videos on *YouTube* and *Twitter* to pillory **The North Face (TNF)** for hypocrisy. Last December, TNF turned down an order from **Innovex**, a Texas-based oil and gas company, to buy and label 400 TNF jackets for its employees. Innovex reported that TNF rejected the order because the company supplies oil and gas, which would damage the public image TNF wants to convey of itself. **Chris Wright**, CEO Liberty, which is a competitor of Innovex, took the case as an opportunity to publicly point out how high the percentage of fossil beta components in clothing was overall, but especially in TNF's case. In a video, Wright states that the company creates products that likely use at least 90 percent fibers derived from oil and gas – well above the global average of 60 percent – "simply because they make premium high-performance products." The campaign's ironic message is that "TNF is not only a customer but a partner of the oil industry." According to *Fox Business News*, Wright hoped the campaign would spur an honest conversation about the role of fossil fuels in the economy and climate change, which he says is real. And driving past the billboards (one of them, for example, reads: "That North Face puffer looks great on you. And it was made from fossil fuels. Your friends in Oil & Gas.") would give TNF customers and employees a chance to reflect on how the oil and gas industry enables their lifestyles, from the jacket they wear to the kayak they took out last weekend.

For several years, **Under Armour** has been pursuing a policy of standing for equality through its "Unified" program, which helps to create a safe, friendly and empowering workplace for people who identify as LGBTQ. Unified is now one of nine "Teammate



Resource Groups,” or TRGs, described as networks of more than 2,000 members around the globe who support a diverse and inclusive marketplace at UA in various ways. To celebrate Pride Month, Under Armour has developed an **Under Armour Pride** collection of clothing using the words from some of the most positive and inspiring handwritten messages sent in by the members of its Unified TRG. Unified as also selected **The Pride Center of Maryland**, located in UA’s hometown of Baltimore, for a donation that will fund the establishment of a new wellness studio and digital lounge there. The collection was released on June 2 for purchase on UA.com and at Under Armour Brand Houses.

**Vans** has introduced a new take on some of its best-known silhouettes, made from responsibly sourced materials. The new capsule collection, dubbed the “**Eco Theory**” line, features new takes on the **Authentic**, **Slip-On** and **Style 36** models. For the Eco Theory, Vans has used materials like natural rubber, organic cotton, jute laces, cork-lined footbeds and water-based inks and glues.

+++ The **Rossignol Group** will participate via its new CEO, **Vincent Wauters**, in the **Convention des Entreprises pour le Climat (CEC)**, a collective of 150 leaders who will meet for eight months, from July 2021 to March 2022, to help align the French business world with the objectives of the Paris Climate Agreement +++

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