



THE NEWS IN TEN

02 Otto set to make redundancies

Home shopping company Otto UK started a 90-day consultation with its entire 3,800 staff in a bid to dramatically rationalise its business, as Fe went to press.

The company, which owns the Freemans, Grattan, Oli and Kaleidoscope brands, and recently rebranded as Freemans Grattan Holdings (FGH), said it was undergoing an essential restructuring process that would have a "significant impact on employment across all departments", however, it remained unclear how many job cuts would be ultimately undertaken. Part of the restructuring process, which was initiated by CEO Koert Tulleners, is the closure of the company's warehouse in Bradford, which is attached to its headquarters, as well as its warehouse in Peterborough, and a move to a smaller, third warehouse in Bradford instead. Tulleners said that the closures and resulting redundancies were necessary to get the business, which is operating at significant losses, back on track. However, he remained confident about the UK market and hoped to return to profitability by 2010. He blamed operating from multiple locations and difficult market conditions for the problems the company was currently facing, but stated that he had no plans to divest any of its four brands.

01 Buoyant show for Bubble London

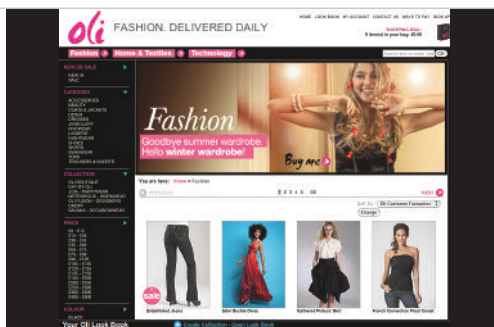
Last month's contemporary kids' lifestyle show Bubble London enjoyed a 20 per cent increase in attendance figures on the previous edition and an 83 per cent increase in visitors between July 08 and January 09.

Bubble, which showcases kids' fashion brands, lifestyle product, footwear and interiors companies, also attracted international visitors from Russia, US, Brazil, Hong Kong and Australia.

Collections from over 120 new and returning kidswear labels from across the world were on show, including Bonnie Baby, Cakewalk, CAT, Elephantito, French Connection, Green Baby, Jottum, Mexx, Mim-Pi, Mini A Ture, Molo, No Added Sugar, Noppies, Oilily and Religion.

Event director Lindsay Hoyes says, "Bubble London quickly established itself as a key international event in the kids' market back in January 2008. The overwhelmingly positive response we have received from both brands and buyers has proved that Bubble London is the number-one kids' trade show in the UK."

The next edition of Bubble London, which runs on 21-23 June 2009 and is the first show in the s/s 10 kidswear show calendar, will take place in the Business Design Centre (BDC), Islington, London. For more information visit bubblelondon.com.



NEWS IN BRIEF

JOHN LEWIS TOPS HIGH STREET

John Lewis is the nation's favourite store, according to a poll carried out by Verdict Research. The survey, which questioned over 6,000 consumers, found that the high street retailer was more highly-regarded than any of its competitors for convenience, range of products, layout, quality and service.

RETAIL JPB WEBSITE LAUNCHES

A new website has been launched at www.likeforlike.com aiming to help jobseeking retailers who have been made redundant. The website highlights jobs that are available across all levels of the retail sector in a positive bid to help those who have fallen victim to the credit crunch.

VAN DAL LAUNCHES TRAINER COMFORT

Footwear label Van Dal has unveiled a new collection of shoes that incorporate "trainer like comfort" into a range of fashion footwear. The TLC collection – created using new technology in shoe design – will make its debut at this month's Moda Footwear, which takes place on 15-17 February at the NEC Birmingham.

NEW BELT LABEL FOR LAWMAN

UK agent Lawman Fashion has increased its portfolio of accessories labels with the addition of a new range of belts from The Netherlands. JBF offers a selection of women's belts in an extensive range of textures and prints, featuring decorative buckles and embellishment.

NEW APPOINTMENT AT SEIBEL

Footwear brand Josef Seibel has appointed a new brand support manager within its UK team. Jennie Petchey – who previously held a position in footwear retail with high-street retailer Clarks – will work alongside UK retailers to generate further success among stockists of the Josef Seibel brand.

SCHOLL PESCURA IS FABULOUS AT 50

Scholl is celebrating the 50th anniversary of one of its best selling sandals – the Pescura – by launching an exclusive, limited collection that will debut this spring. The modern spring/summer 2009 Pescura collection will feature the same natural wood base and non-slip sole that the footwear has been known for since the late 1950s, but will also include a modern, streamlined shape, elegant raised heel height and soft and padded uppers. The limited edition collection – that will showcase at Moda in February – will be available in a range of pop-inspired designs and bold, imaginative colours and will incorporate iconic features, such as the signature Scholl buckle.