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VF Corp. Sells 7 For All Mankind, Splendid and Ella Moss to Delta Galil

By Deborah Belgum *Senior Editor*

VF Corp. is selling two of its top contemporary brands to **Delta Galil**, an Israeli apparel manufacturer that is more than 40 years old.

Delta Galil said it signed a definitive agreement to buy **7 For All Mankind** and **Splendid/Ella Moss** for \$120 million. The acquisition is expected to add \$300 million to Delta Galil's annual sales in 2017. The deal should close in the third quarter of this year.

Splendid/Ella Moss and 7 For All Mankind will join Delta Galil's other brands such as **P.J. Salvage**, **Schiesser**, **KN Karen Neuberger**, **Nearly Nude**, **LittleMiss-Matched** and **FIX**.

Issac Dabah, Delta Galil's chief executive, said he was able to buy the company at a bargain because profits at the brands have declined over the last few years.

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MADE IN AMERICA

Texas Factory With High-Tech, Denim Expertise and Social Message Looks to LA

Roicom USA's sister production company, ReadyOne, employs the severely disabled to produce apparel and equipment for the U.S. military.

By Alison A. Nieder *Executive Editor*

Apparel factory **Roicom USA** is based in El Paso, Texas, but the company has Los Angeles' denim community in its sights.

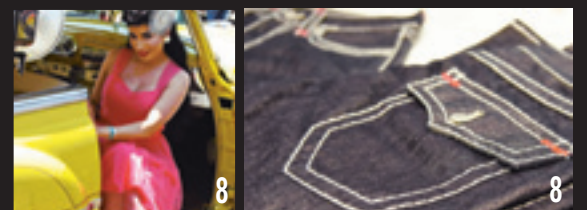
The company is planning to lure denim brands—and other apparel makers—to Texas with state-of-the-art machinery, seasoned denim-industry executives and turnkey operations that include shipping and customer service. Company executives also hope Texas' lower minimum wage, plentiful water and high-tech finishing on both sides of the U.S./Mexico border will provide further incentive to Southern California

➔ Roicom USA page 8

FASHION'S FUTURE

Santa Monica College design student Kathy Zarbakhsh's capsule collection of futuristic dresses received two of the top honors at the college's recent runway show in Santa Monica, Calif. For highlights from the show, see page 6.

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LA Streetwear Company Buys Women's Online Clothing Site

Stikeleather Apparel recently announced it acquired the online women's clothing retailer **White Plum**, based in Modesto, Calif.

With the purchase, the Los Angeles-based Stikeleather said it is planning to move White Plum's headquarters to Los Angeles.

White Plum was founded in 2012 by Hilary Zwahlen, who felt there was a place in the world for an e-commerce site that sold women's clothing at a reasonable price. About 60 percent of her merchandise is made in the United States, and the average customer is between the ages of 25 to 45.

The site filled its one millionth order in

mid-2015 and has a reported \$9.5 million in annual revenue. White Plum's merchandise is also sold on flash-sale site **Zulily** (www.zulily.com) as well as **Jane** (www.jane.com).

Ian Stikeleather, chief executive of Stikeleather Holdings, said he wants to move White Plum to Los Angeles to take advantage of the talent found in the garment industry here and to create innovative designs for young women.

Stikeleather's contemporary menswear collection is known for its minimalist style and its proprietary neodymium magnetic closures.—*Deborah Belgum*

Interim Director Named for Fashion District BID

While the **Los Angeles Fashion District Business Improvement District** searches for a new executive director, the BID's managing director will step in on an interim basis.

Executive Director Kent Smith is leaving on July 31. On Aug. 1, Rena Masten Leddy, who has been at the Los Angeles Fashion District BID since early last year, will step in. The 15-member board of directors is doing a national search for a new executive director.

Smith has headed up the Los Angeles Fashion District BID since 1999. The nonprofit organization, founded in 1996, was the first busi-



Rena Masten Leddy

ness improvement district to be formed in Los Angeles.

When Smith came on board, the district encompassed 56 blocks and had 300 business owners. Now it covers 100 blocks and has 1,000 business owners, who contribute funds for safety enforcement and clean-up crews as well as other services.

Prior to coming to the Los Angeles Fashion District BID, Leddy worked in Denver for three years as vice president of **Progressive Urban Management Associates**, a consulting group

that provided services to advance downtown and community development.—*D.B.*

Belk's New CEO Has a California Connection

Lisa Harper, who has been named the new chief executive of **Belk** department stores, starts her new job on July 5. She was most recently the chief executive of **Hot Topic Inc.**

For five years, Harper headed the teen retailer, based in the City of Industry, Calif., and will remain on Hot Topic's board of directors.

In her new job, Harper is replacing Tim Belk, who is retiring from the family-started department-store chain, based in Charlotte, N.C., after joining the company in 1981 as a management trainee. He has been CEO since 2004.

"After managing through the ownership transition and filling a number of key management positions, I've decided this is an

opportune time for me to retire as CEO of Belk," Tim Belk said.

Harper is a North Carolina native who worked on the selling floor of Belk as one of her first jobs. She was CEO of the children's retailer **Gymboree Corp.** from 2001 to 2006 and worked for retailers such as **Limited Too**, **Esprit de Corp.**, **GapKids**, **Mervyn's** and **Levi Strauss**.

Belk, with 293 stores in 16 Southern states, became last year a portfolio company of **Sycamore Partners**, a New York private equity firm. Sycamore's other investments include **Aéropostale**, **Coldwater Creek**, **Dollar Express**, **Hot Topic**, **Nine West Holdings**, **Talbots** and the **Kasper Group**.—*D.B.*

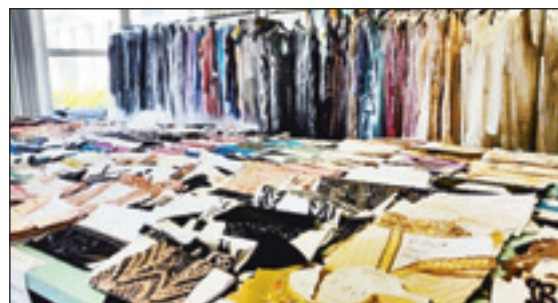
Sue Wong Hosts Sale



Los Angeles-based eveningwear designer Sue Wong, pictured left, is in the process of shifting her business to a licensed operation and has been hosting a series of archive sales at her headquarters in Los Angeles. At the first event, held June 24–25, the designer was on hand to meet with shoppers and offer suggestions—as well as a little backstory on some of her favorite pieces.

In addition to red-carpet and cocktail gowns, the sale includes embellished scarves, evening coats and applique swatches as well as art and furniture.

Wong is hosting another event over the July Fourth weekend on July 1–2 from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. She is offering private appointment shopping as well. To schedule an appointment, call (213) 388-7400 or email luke@suewong.com.



VF Corp. *Continued from page 1*

He is hoping to close some of the brands' unprofitable stores and grow the labels. "We will continue to do what they have done until now," he said in a telephone conversation from Switzerland. "We have some plans in place for growing the brands, but it is too soon to unveil our total strategy."

For years, 7 For All Mankind has been manufactured in Los Angeles and Mexico. Dabah said he plans to continue with that production plan. The same goes for Splendid/Ella Moss, which does much of its production in LA.

Delta Galil's chief executive said he was attracted to the brands because they appeal to a millennial customer and are premium brands known for their quality. "The last two years, business for the brands declined, but the good news is that the denim business has improved in the last year," he said. "We feel this was a terrific acquisition."

Last year, Delta Galil acquired P.J. Salvage, a lingerie and intimate wear company headquartered in Irvine, Calif., and has plans to expand the collection beyond womenswear to children and men. Delta Galil, with revenues of more than \$1 billion a year, likes to find modern brands and figure out how to grow them, Dabah said.

VF Corp., based in Greensboro, N.C., bought Los Angeles-based 7 For All Mankind in 2007 for \$775 million. VF already owned a one-third stake in **Mo Industries**, the parent company of Splendid and Ella Moss. In 2009, VF acquired the other two-thirds for \$161 million plus \$47 million in debt.

7 For All Mankind was started in Los Angeles in 2000 by Peter Koral, Jerome Dahan and Michael Glasser during the height of the premium-denim boom.

Mo Industries was founded by Moise Emquies, who was a lawyer by day and a designer by night. ●

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Eco Fashion vs. Eco Logistics

By Gary Barker and Jerry Levy *Contributing Writers*

The retail industry's tectonic shift toward eco fashion is real, with a renewed focus on clothing made from raw, organic materials; nontoxic dyes or bleaches; low water usage; and made under socially responsible conditions. This is only part of the story of how the retail and fashion industry is building sustainability.

But what about the other aspects of the retail apparel loop: the way the clothing is packaged, shipped, warehoused, displayed, marketed and sold? Can the logistics and packaging surrounding the garment be made more sustainable as well? Can it all be tied together to produce not only a more efficient system but one that builds brand loyalty and costs less?

Sustainable logistics

Although logistics companies don't typically source the material or produce the products, they do move the product from point A to point B. And when retailers and their fashion brands address supply chain and packaging as part of their sourcing and manufacturing process, impact cost savings and sustainability enhancements can be achieved. Efficient logistics planning results in fewer truck kilometers, less bunker fuel, less warehouse space, and, in the end, increased revenue and a reduction in costs and waste.

As an example of supply-chain optimization, using a sustainable hanger rather than a virgin plastic hanger in shipping can result in savings up to an astounding 20 percent. And it eliminates the plastic hanger, of which an estimated 85 percent are landfilled at the store end, meaning less spent on disposal. Compression packaging can also be used to pull air out of packaging, increasing efficiencies up to 25 percent. Another example of impact savings by implementing "strategic packaging" would be to optimize the retail packaging of garments, which reduces the use of toxic glues and packaging footprint as well as simplifies assembly. This reduced "packaging footprint" enables more product to be

shipped in an ocean container or 53-foot trailer. Think about that for a minute: reduced transit costs, reduction in carbon footprint and lower packaging costs. One producer of footwear has been able to reduce the number of containers shipped from manufacturing sites in Asia to the U.S. market by almost 15 percent. This was done through packaging optimization.

Other logistics efficiency tools include:

- Planning transport routes and collaborating with other companies along "green corridors" and ensuring trucks are full in both directions.

- Offering "green shipping" options that use cleaner, but slower, transport modes such as ocean and rail and reducing truck and air miles.

- Reducing processing errors, which result in using more energy-intensive transport to meet delivery windows.

- Reduce packaging waste by optimizing carton size to the item being shipped.

Eco retailing: sustainable messaging

Making garments out of organic fabric, shipping the product in the most sustainable method possible and using recyclable packaging reduces costs. But there is a significant marketing win too. If you do not communicate your good work to your consumer, it wastes a powerful marketing tool that can build brand loyalty and your reputation as a sustainability leader. Creating a profitable sustainable retail

environment is not only possible, it's essential for survival. Natural lighting, organic or recycled counters and floors and elimination of all plastic and acrylic is the first step. Removing the sea of plastic hangers is an innovative step that can reap significant cost and sustainability rewards. Sturdy sustainable hangers made from recycled paper fiber bring out the beauty of organic materials and convey your marketing message. Using reusable or bioplastic shopping bags helps to get your message out as well.

Sturdy sustainable hangers made from recycled paper fiber bring out the beauty of organic materials and convey your marketing message. Using reusable or bioplastic shopping bags helps to get your message out as well.

Combining all three

Taken individually, all three areas—eco fashion, eco logistics and packaging, and eco retail—all bring savings and efficiencies to the retail operation. Each area should be focused on and maximized

as intelligently as possible.

Combining the three builds a unique and authentic platform the consumer can touch and connect to. By demonstrating your forward-thinking values and priorities, you build brand loyalty and trust with your consumer. It's a no-risk vehicle to lead by example. And with a younger demographic that shops their convictions, it's a simple investment for a greener future. ●

Gary Barker is the chief executive officer of Oakland, Calif.-based Ditto Sustainable Brand Solutions. Jerry Levy is director of marketing and communications for Portland, Ore.-based OIA Global. They can be reached at gbarker@ditto.sbs.com and jerry.levy@oiaglobal.com.



Gary Barker



Jerry Levy

RETAIL

Retailers Need to Move From Omni-channel 1.0 to Omni-channel 2.0 to Stay Relevant

By Deborah Belgum *Senior Editor*

Retailers scrambling to enter the omni-channel world may already be behind their competitors.

While some stores are now just learning to fill orders online and manage their inventories, more-sophisticated retailers are adopting something called Omni-channel 2.0.

"Omni-channel 1.0 is a retailer providing their products and services on their terms at their price points and saying, 'Come and get it.' It is very driven on the back-office end and with inventory management," said Paul Gulbin, who leads the digital services platform for CohnReznick, a New York accounting, tax and advisory firm with offices in Los Angeles. "But what has changed the world of retail forever is the mobile device. Now it is about the customer experience and personalization that are changing things. ... Customers are educated. They are consumers who talk to one another, refer one another to a retailer and are demanding a seamless experience."

Gulbin spoke recently at the firm's Century City office to a small group of retailers and manufacturers interested in keeping up on technology.

"We have this omni-channel 2.0 revolution going on, and it is not a fad," Gulbin observed. "A lot of companies are becoming irrelevant in the marketplace and losing marketplace share. There is a lot of uncertainty."

The key players in this evolution are the millennial customers, whose mobile phone devices are like a fifth appendage. "There was a survey in the *Wall Street Journal* that noted that 90 percent of Americans pick up their mobile device the first thing in the morning," Gulbin said.

Today, millennials' spending power is estimated to be \$600 billion a year. That should reach \$1.4 trillion by 2020.

Omni-channel 2.0 is about providing customers with an experience, personalizing that experience, and mining personal data to know about the likes and dislikes of a shopper. "It is not about just knowing someone's email, which shops they shop in and their gender," Gulbin said.

It is about having enough information to know that a customer might be traveling to the Dominican Republic soon and you suggest they buy some tropical shirts or lightweight suits for the journey.

One of the tricks is gathering that behavioral data to customize online shopping and making it a personal experience.

According to Gulbin, 89 percent of shoppers are willing to contribute 20 minutes of their time to help a retailer better understand their needs. Another 55 percent of consumers expect retailers to use purchasing and behavioral data to offer relevant promotions. About 60 percent spend more with retailers that use mobile and behavioral data to create relevant experiences.

Technology-savvy retailers would know, for example, that one of their customers is a 32-year-old marketing manager who has been a customer since she was a teenager. She expects a quality product at a reasonable cost and a relevant, personalized brand experience across channels.

They know she isn't in a physical store very often but uses her mobile phone when inside the store to research and order items that are not in stock. They also would know she is interested in saving money, receiving personalized offers and recommendations but doesn't like email blasts. Perhaps she likes to receive inspirational content through things such as "how-to" videos.

"There is a lot of information in the public domain that Amazon, Google and eBay take advantage of because they speak digital, and a lot of physical retailers are a little bit scared of that," Gulbin said.

One retailer that has been at the forefront of creating a relevant omni-channel experience is luxury brand Burberry. "They went on a six-year transformational journey," Gulbin said.

Burberry has audiovisual content, online personalized customer service, a click to chat or click to call service in real time and customer identity management.

When it comes to an in-store experience, Burberry has iPads in selected stores, live streaming of fashion shows to flagship stores and retail-theater technology that provides an

audiovisual experience for customers. "In some stores, you can pick up a Burberry bag that costs \$2,000 and it launches a video that shows how it was made and how the buttons were handcrafted. It tells the story about the bag," Gulbin said. "Conversion increased by 70 percent."

Online shoppers also want a different experience. One digital company that offers that is Shoes of Prey, an online site that lets customers design their own shoes, which are ordered and delivered in four weeks. When Shoes of Prey set out to market its product, it decided not to market to shoppers who were technically challenged or who wanted a deal. Instead, they concentrated on sensible online shoppers, digital customers and the shopping mom who didn't have time to venture out to a store.

Last year, Shoes of Prey partnered with Nordstrom to open a store within a store at six locations. Later, the department-store chain invested in the custom-shoe site.

Another important element in conquering the omni-channel world is making sure that customers see your site when doing an Internet search. That happens with good search-engine optimization. The No. 1 way to drive traffic to a site is by searching, which beat out social media by more than 300 percent.

Research shows that 95 percent of users consider sites found through search engines as the leaders in their market. Some 75 percent of online purchases and orders made on websites are found through search engines, and 80 percent of search engine users don't browse beyond the first two pages. That means being one of the first to pop up on an Internet search is important.

Gulbin admitted it isn't simple to incorporate all these ideas at the same time. He recommends working on two or three omni-channel updates and trying to incorporate them in 60 to 90 days.

But one of the important things to remember is that good customer service is as relevant online as it is in the store. An unhappy digital shopper can easily spread the bad word about an experience on Yelp. And a happy customer can do the same thing. ●

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Shop.org Adds to Board, Prepares for Digital Events in California, Texas

Shop.org, the digital retail division of the Washington, D.C.-based **National Retail Federation**, added five new board members, bringing the board total to 12.

The new members include Meyar Sheik, chief executive officer and cofounder of **Certona**; April Anderson, managing director for branded apparel and durables at **Google**; Josh Friedman, vice president of digital commerce at **JCPenney**; Alex Miller, senior vice president for digital commerce at **QVC**; and Sarah Veit Wallis, general manager for lifestyle at **Walmart.com**.

"We are thrilled to welcome our new board members," said Vicki Cantrell, Shop.org executive director and NRF senior vice president, in a statement. "They are all established digital leaders with unique expertise who will continue to elevate NRF's commitment to and influence in the digital community."

Returning board members include Billy May, senior vice president for digital, e-commerce and corporate development at **Abercrombie & Fitch Co.**; Bryon Colby, senior vice president for digital commerce at **Cornerstone Brands/HSNi**; Nicolas Franchet, director of global vertical strategy at **Facebook**; Sucharita Mulpuru, vice president and principal analyst for **Forrester Research**; David Brussin, founder, chairman and chief product officer at **Monetate Inc.**; Brad Brown, senior vice president for digital retail at **Recreational Equipment Inc.**; and Kevin Ertell, senior vice president for digital for **Sur La Table Inc.**

Cantrell also thanked the outgoing board

members, saying, "It goes without saying how fortunate we have been to have such strong leadership over the past several years from Scot Wingo, Peter Cobb, Michael Burgess, Bernardine Wu and Deepika Pandey. We look forward to their continued engagement as longtime ambassadors for the digital retail community."

Shop.org's board will next meet at the organization's **Digital Experience Workshop**, set for July 18–20 at **Terranea Resort** in Rancho Palos Verdes, Calif.

The group will also meet at Shop.org's **Retail's Digital Summit**, set for Sept. 26–28 at the **Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center** in Dallas.

Shop.org provides research and hosts events for the digital retail community, which includes networking groups and committees that "lead the global conversation surrounding innovative e-commerce trends and digital retail." NRF, the world's largest retail trade association, represents discount and department stores, home goods and specialty stores, "Main Street" merchants, grocers, wholesalers, chain restaurants, and Internet retailers from the United States and more than 45 countries. The organization hosted **The Big Show**, NRF's retail conference, held annually in New York in January.

For more information about the Digital Experience Workshop, visit digitalexperience.nrf.com. For information about Retail's Digital Summit, visit retailsdigitalsummit.nrf.com. Information about NRF and Shop.org can be found at www.nrf.com.

—Alison A. Nieder

Calendar

July 4

Hong Kong Fashion Week
Hong Kong Convention & Exhibition Centre
Hong Kong
Through July 7

July 9

Interfilière
Eurexpo
Lyon, France
Through July 11

July 10

Liberty Fairs
Pier 94
New York
Through July 12

Capsule
Pier 94
New York
Through July 12

July 12

Texworld USA
International Apparel Sourcing Show
Javits Center
New York
Through July 14

July 13

SoCal Materials Show
LAX Marriott
Los Angeles
Through July 14

July 14

Swim Miami
W South Beach
South Beach, Fla.
Through July 18

July 16

Swim Show
Miami Beach Convention Center
Miami Beach, Fla.
Through July 19

Cabana
Miami Beach, Fla.
Through July 18

Hammock
W South Beach
South Beach, Fla.
Through July 18

July 17

Project MRket
Project Sole
The Tents
Javits Center

New York
Through July 19

July 18

Coast
New World Center
Miami Beach, Fla.
Through July 19

Agenda
Mana Wynwood
Miami
Through July 19

Digital Experience Workshop
Terranea Resort
Rancho Palos Verdes, Calif.
Through July 20

57th India International Garment Fair
Pragati Maidan
New Delhi
Through July 20

There's more
on ApparelNews.net.

For calendar details and contact information, visit ApparelNews.net/calendar.

Submissions to the calendar should be faxed to the Calendar Editor at (213) 623-5707. Please include the event's name, date, time, location, admission price and contact information. The deadline for calendar submissions is the Tuesday prior to Friday publication. Inclusion in the calendar is subject to available space and the judgment of the editorial staff.

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Fashion on the Runway From SMC Fashion and Merchandising Students

ANDY HOUSE, GARRIDO, DONNA WILLIAMS, NGHIEM TRANG



Alba Molina Ana Pivaral Alexander Ortega Aylar Ebrahimi Caroline Trinh Courtney Hunkele Frida Sjoedin Hazell Bone Jennifer Alderhorn Jennifer Vu Kathy Zarbakhsh Turkia Douaoda Bou

On June 16, students in **Santa Monica College's** fashion design and merchandising program showcased their creations on the runway at **Santa Monica High School's** Barnum Hall in Santa Monica, Calif. The students—under the direction of design faculty members Lorrie Ivas, LaTanya Louis and Jan Ardell—presented capsule collections that ranged from Alicia Hicks' nautical collection of childrenswear and juniors apparel to Alexander Ortega's all-black collection, inspired by the music of New Wave bands such as **The Cure** and **Depeche Mode**. Alba Molina's black and yellow palette was inspired by daisies. Turkia Douaoda-Bou mixed Eastern and Western inspiration for her collection.

Ana Pivaral said she was inspired by the color olive—"It reminds me of olive martinis," she said—for her collection, adding that she hopes to one day own her own company and find a way to support single mothers. Courtney Hunkele's ballet-inspired collection featured layers of tulle and feathers in pastel colors.

Jennifer Vu explored pleated details in her capsule collection of dresses while Aylar Ebrahimi explored zipper trim details in her collection, which mixed eveningwear and dressy sportswear. Hazell Bone found inspiration in the 1990s slipdress for her collection.

Jennifer Alderhorn, one of three Swedish students, showed a collection with activewear



Alicia Hicks

details such as hoods, track pants and rib knit. Her fellow Swede Caroline Trinh showed eveningwear pieces in satin, velvet and chiffon.

The third Swedish designer, Frida Sjoedin, drew inspiration from her Scandinavian heritage for her collection of navy separates embroidered with folkloric designs. Frida Sjoedin's collection, titled "fri.elisab.sjn," was named Outstanding Marketable Achievement and Outstanding Technical Achievement.

Kathy Zarbakhsh's "Katz" collection of futuristic, color-blocked dresses was named Outstanding Collection of Show and Outstanding Creative Achievement.

There were also committee awards for Trinh, Vu, Ebrahimi, Alderhorn and Hunkele.

Ivas presented Ilse Metchek, president of the **California Fashion Association**, with the 2016 Style and Substance Award.

"Her depth of knowledge and the history and issues of the industries is unparalleled," Ivas said.

In accepting the award, Metchek congratulated the students on their hard work in creating their collections.

The evening also included a mini fashion show featuring pieces from the SMC Career Closet, which provides professional apparel for interviews or networking events to students at no cost.—*Alison A. Nieder*

TECHNOLOGY

Epson Acquires 100 Percent Stake in Italian Textile Printing Firm

Epson Italia S.p.A., the Italian subsidiary of printing company **Epson**, is acquiring a 100 percent stake in the Italian textile printing business **Fratelli Robustelli S.r.l.**

Epson has worked with Fratelli Robustelli to provide digital inkjet technology since 2003. The company is anticipating the acquisition to drive synergies and provide added value at a time when the digital textile printing market is expected to grow by 25 percent annually, according to the company.

Based in Como, Italy, Robustelli develops, manufactures and sells digital inkjet textile printers, including the Monna Lisa series, which it began developing with Epson in 2003. Epson provides inkjet technology such as print-heads and ink for Robustelli's digital textile printers, including the Monna Lisa. The companies have been working together since that time "to promote digitalization by building the total solution support structure from development through manufacture, sales, and after-sales support," the company said.

As a result of the deal, Robustelli will join the Epson Group and tap into Epson's manufacturing capability, expanding its offerings to more customers around the world. Epson will be able to use Robustelli's expertise to develop digital inkjet textile printers and offer customers a wider lineup of products. Together, Epson and Robustelli plan to focus on joint R&D efforts. Further, Robustelli

products will be sold by Epson's worldwide sales and service network.

"This is a very exciting development for the Epson Group," said Sunao Murata, chief executive officer of Epson's professional printing operations division, who has been named president of Robustelli. "As the market for high-quality digital textile printing expands, I believe that formalizing our partnership with Robustelli in this way puts us in a great place to meet the needs of the grow-

ing numbers of customers who are seeking to leverage the advantages of advanced digital solutions that will help drive their businesses forward. We will work closely with our colleagues at Robustelli to take Monna Lisa to the next level and remain leaders in the field."

Valerio Robustelli, one of the proprietors of Fratelli Robustelli, said he was pleased for his company to join the Epson Group.

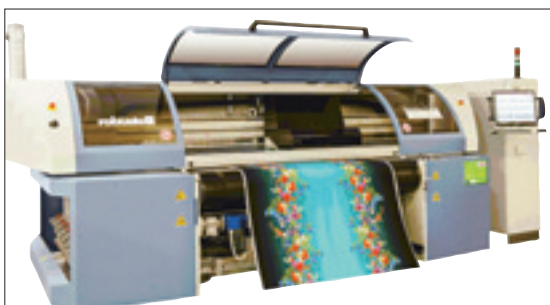
"Our cooperation with Epson led to the development of Monna Lisa, an industrial digital textile printer that is today a market benchmark for high-quality textile printing,"

Robustelli said. "The combination of our respective skills is the natural conclusion of a process of innovation to satisfy customers in Italy and the rest of the world."

Epson Italia is part of the Epson Group, which will oversee the acquisition and partnership with Robustelli. Epson Italia handles sales and marketing of Epson products in Italy and oversees sales in Turkey, Greece and the Balkan area. The Epson Group is part of **Seiko Epson Corp.**, which is based in Japan. The company's U.S. division, **Epson America Inc.**, is based in Long Beach, Calif.—*A.A.N.*



Epson global president Minoru Usui (pictured second from right) with (from left) Sandro, Valerio and Riccardo Robustelli



Robustelli's Monna Lisa digital inkjet textile printer

Tukatech Appoints Director for Europe

Los Angeles-based technology solutions provider **Tukatech Inc.** named Marta Maiandi director of Tukatech Europe.

An engineer with a degree in information and industrial systems from the **Polytechnic University of Milan**, Maiandi will be responsible for engineering, sales and support for Tukatech users throughout Europe. She is based in Curno, Italy.

"Marta has been trained on Tukatech's software solutions at the world headquarters in Los Angeles, USA. Our USA team will be working closely with Marta to help Tukatech users in Europe engineer their product-development processes," said Tukatech founder and Chief Execu-



Marta Maiandi

tive Officer Ram Sareen in a company statement. "The new generation has proved to have a thorough understanding of the importance of technology in the apparel industry. Marta is a perfect addition to show traditionalists how to get more productivity with fewer people."

Founded in 1995, Tukatech provides software solutions such as 2-D patternmaking, grading, and marker-making software, automated marker-making software, 3-D sample-making and virtual-prototyping software as well as hardware including garment plotters, automatic spreaders and automatic cutters. For more information, visit www.tukatech.com.—*A.A.N.*



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Lowriders and Pinups at LA Classic Car Show

The **Los Angeles Classic Car Show**, presented by *Bombs Magazine*, roared into Southern California recently, drawing a stylish crowd obsessed with vintage design.

Stylist Estevan Ramos was at the June 26 event at the **Industry Hills Expo Center** in City of Industry, Calif., with his cousin Arnold Ontes, owner of LA lifestyle brand **Movin' Violation**.

Ramos was commissioned to design mechanics suits and custom T-shirts for Movin' Violation. Shot by famed lowrider photographer Takashi Kikuchi, the images are to be used for a special-edition calendar and other social-media purposes. Ramos and Ontes developed special T-shirt graphics with the Tovar Brothers, who are among the country's top customizers of early-model 1930s and '40s cars. The Tovar Brothers were featured at the Movin'

Violation booth along with calendar girls Candace and Angie.

While at the car show, stylist Ramos—armed with his camera, as usual—captured the scene, which brought together some of his obsessions: vintage classic cars, beautiful pinup girls and Mexican culture. Ramos created a fashion-meets-car-culture story that pairs pinup girls with vintage cars.

"The beauty of it all felt like old Mexican cinema of the '40s and '50s," said Ramos, who said he is always inspired by his Mexican and Chicano heritage in all things creative, from fashion and art to music and culture. "My heritage always reflects off beauty, class, pride and family," he said.

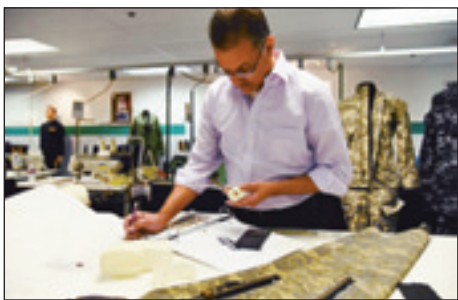
For more information about Movin' Violation, visit www.movinviolation.com. Information about Ramos can be found at www.estevanramos.com.



CUSTOM CLASSIC: Photographer Takashi Kikuchi shot this image of Estevan Ramos' custom-designed mechanics suits and T-shirts for Los Angeles lifestyle brand Movin' Violation.



MADE IN AMERICA



Roicom USA *Continued from page 1*

apparel makers. But it might be the altruistic mission behind Roicom that wins over the hearts of those committed to Los Angeles production.

Roicom is the commercial sister company to **ReadyOne**, a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) sewing factory that produces apparel and other softgoods for the U.S. military. ReadyOne is a member of a federal program that provides jobs for severely disabled people, including disabled veterans. Those workers are among ReadyOne's more than 1,000 employees, who work alongside a management team comprised of former **Levi Strauss & Co.** and **VF**

Corp. executives.

One of those executives is Roy Schiefner, general manager for Roicom USA, whose career includes more than two decades at Levi's as well as stints at **Calvin Klein**, **The Wet Seal** and Los Angeles private-label maker **GMPC Inc.**

"ReadyOne is a member of the federal government's AbilityOne Program, which means that 75 percent of our work hours has to be performed by folks with severe disabilities," Schiefner said. "We transform these folks into an able workforce by training, modifying and automating machines and their work space and equipment to compensate their disability and by so doing help them to be self-reliant with dignity and respect."

The company pays disabled employees full market wages, provides transportation to and from work, has an on-site clinic and retrofits machinery to compensate for workers' disabilities. ReadyOne is an ISO 9001:2008-certified manufacturer. Within ReadyOne's 345,000-square-foot facility, there are more than 2,000 sewing machines as well as specialty fusing, seaming and heat pressing machines, programmable tackers, automatic cutters, and embroidery machines—"many of which are adapted to assist our disabled staff," Schiefner said.

Roicom USA was formed "to directly address the commercial apparel market outside the restraints of the parent non-profit," he said.

The cost of doing business at ReadyOne is higher than at Roicom, where a focus on automation helps the company achieve a much higher efficiency sewing rate," Schiefner said.

The management team—which include Schiefner, Cynthia DeHaro, Roicom's vice president and Antonio Martinez, the company's president and chief executive officer—is currently ramping up the staff at Roicom. The 190,000-square-foot facility can work with larger production orders as well as orders as small as 500 units, Schiefner said, adding that Roicom's turn times are significantly faster than the typical 90-to-120-day turn time for offshore production.

"We're able to execute 35-day turnarounds from receipt of fabric [and] trims," he said.



COMMERCIAL FOCUS: Roicom USA is ReadyOne's commercial facility, also based in El Paso, where a small team under the direction of former Levi Strauss & Co. and VF Corp. executives designs, develops and produces made-in-America apparel. The company is currently highlighting its denim and activewear production capabilities.

Denim focus

Roicom's team can produce anything ReadyOne already does, which includes woven shirts, T-shirts, pants, shorts, workwear, outerwear and headwear. ReadyOne also produces items made with specialty fabrics such as **Kevlar** and fire-retardant fibers. ReadyOne's military production includes sleeping bags, tents and sacks. The factory can make embroidered items and does heat-transfer decals.

But for Roicom, Schiefner and his team are currently focusing on two key markets: denim and activewear.

According to Scheifner, Roicom's team can



NONPROFIT: ReadyOne is a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) sewing factory that produces apparel and other softgoods for the U.S. military in El Paso, Texas. A part of the federal government's AbilityOne Program, ReadyOne's workforce includes severely disabled people, including disabled veterans, who are paid full market wages. The program provides transportation to and from work, has an on-site clinic, and retrofits machinery to compensate for workers' disabilities.

Roicom USA Continued from previous page

work with “a wide range of material options as well as exotic laminations and insulations, knits and wovens—especially in performance and technical fabrics that can be used for athletic, dress/casual and outdoor wear. Fabrics range from cotton to wool and everything in between.”

The company offers a turnkey solution that includes research and development, sourcing, design, sewing, washing and finishing, warehousing, distribution, and delivery. Roicom even has access to ReadyOne’s corrugated packaging division, call center and third-party logistics.

Finishing is sent to **International Garment Processors (IGP)**, a cut-and-sew and finishing facility located across the Mexican border in Chihuahua. IGP recently opened a second operation in El Paso for made-in-America production. IGP techs can launder and finish denim by hand or by using waterless laser finishing.

SoCal target

Not long ago, El Paso was a significant denim hub, and much of the technical knowledge and skill is still in the region.

“In the ’80s and ’90s, El Paso was the finishing center in the U.S. and once again can establish itself as an important center for jeans made in the USA,” Schiefner said.

Roicom is already producing for two large international brands as well as a few Southern California surf brands and is in negotiations with several premium-denim labels. Schiefner said he sees California as “a really good opportunity,” particularly with the state’s recent minimum-wage hike and California’s ongoing drought.

To help build business, the company brought in Mark Singer as account executive. Based in California, Singer is handling all U.S. sales for Roicom. Singer is a longtime manufacturer who produced under the **Softwear by Mark Singer** and **Vikki Vi** labels.

Singer said he thinks Roicom is a good production resource for Southern California’s denim brands “with what’s happening in LA today with labor, the lack of water, and the cost

of living and utilities.”

In Texas, the minimum wage is \$7.25 per hour. California recently approved plans to raise the minimum wage from \$10 per hour to \$15 per hour by 2022. (The federal minimum wage currently stands at \$7.50 an hour.)

“In addition to the emotional story, the dollars-and-cents story is a compelling reason to move production to Texas to make a better margin,” Singer said. “It’s not just your employees. It’s your cutters, your sewer, the washer, the warehouse, the shipper. Everything is going up to \$10.50 per hour [on Jan. 1 for California

workers]. It’s a big savings.”

Plus, Singer noted, Texas has a long track record of producing denim for American brands.

“El Paso was the center of denim manufacturing,” he said. “They are deeply entrenched in the DNA of the product. Plus, there’s plenty of water in Texas.” ●



Roicom USA’s Roy Schiefner and Mark Singer discussed made-in-America sourcing on June 28 at Walmart’s “The U.S. Manufacturing Summit: Investing in American Jobs” in Bentonville, Ark.

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