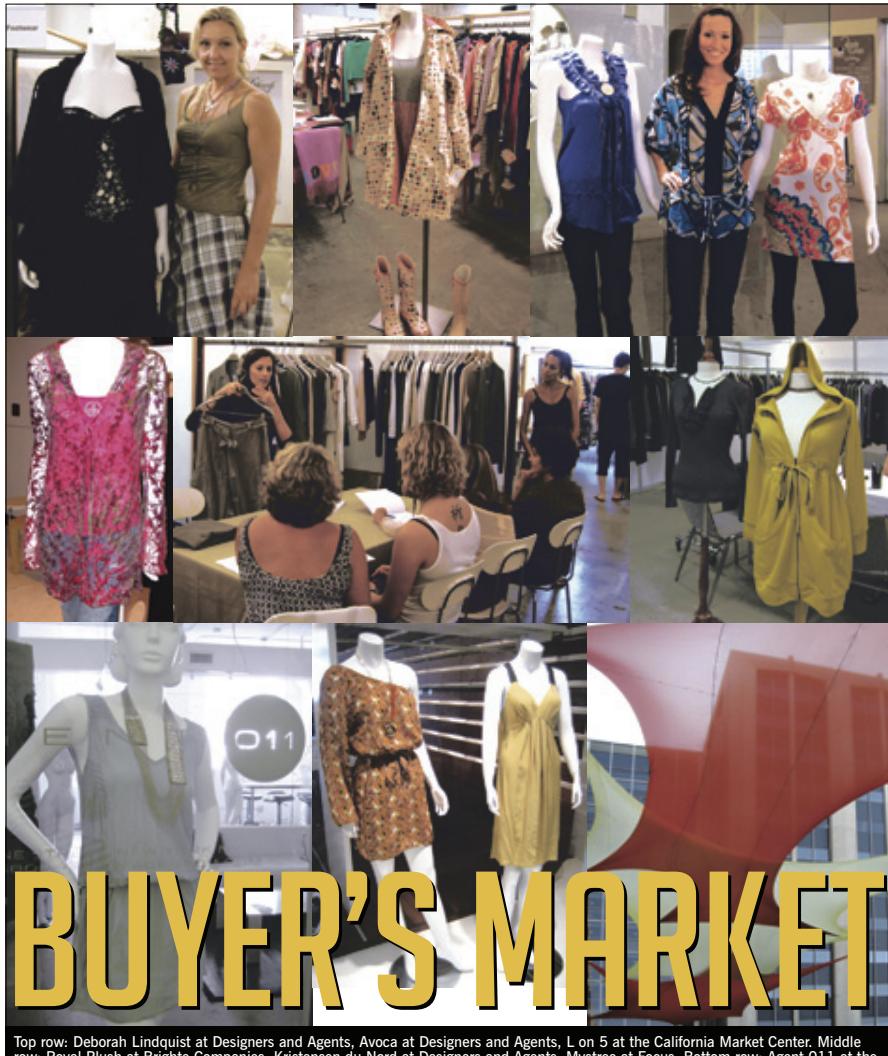


CALIFORNIA Apparel News

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BUYER'S MARKET

Top row: Deborah Lindquist at Designers and Agents, Avoca at Designers and Agents, L on 5 at the California Market Center. Middle row: Royal Plush at Brighte Companies, Kristensen du Nord at Designers and Agents, Mystree at Focus. Bottom row: Agent 011 at the Cooper Design Space, Ginger at The New Mart, the California Market Center.

TRADE SHOW REPORT

Immediate, Accessories Fare Best at Slow L.A. Market

By Erin Barajas, Deborah Belgum, Rhea Cortado, Robert McAllister and Alison A. Nieder

Tucked into a busy trade show calendar, the Holiday/Resort market in Los Angeles is never one of the larger markets, but for its Aug. 7-11 run the **Los Angeles Fashion Market** was exceedingly quiet, according to showroom representatives.

That said, there were buyers in attendance, and they were writing orders. Many reps said Immediate, fill-in orders did well, as did accessories and gift items for Holiday. And while the market seemed to draw mostly local buyers, there were some retailers from Western states who travelled to the show, as well as a smattering of European and Japanese buyers.

To be sure, buyers had plenty to choose from among the showrooms in the **California Market Center**, **The New Mart**, the **Cooper Design Space**, the **Gerry Building**, the **Lady Liberty Building** and the **824 Building**, as well as temporary exhibitors in **Designers and Agents**, **Brighte Companies**, **Boutique Lingerie** and **Focus**.

But many showroom reps and owners said some buyers skipped market in favor of upcoming trade events in Las Vegas and New York, and others said they were expecting a greater turnout during the larger Spring market in October.

► **Market** page 8

Rearranging Spaces

Showroom owners turn to feng-shui practices to maximize their work spaces.

By Deborah Belgum *Senior Editor*

Apparel-showroom people are a creative bunch who are always trying to figure how to boost their sales. They send out postcards to buyers, attend trade shows, make cold calls and go on the road in hopes of garnering more business.

But a handful of showroom people in the **Los Angeles Fashion District** are taking an unconventional approach to improving their chances of success. They are calling in a feng-shui expert to analyze how color, light, furniture, plants, water fountains and metal racks can improve the flow of energy inside the showroom and attract more retailers.

"We made [a few] corrections and business went crazy," said showroom owner Michael Cohen.

Nearly a decade ago, Cohen called in feng-shui expert Karter Diamond to his showroom in **The New Mart** to make a few tweaks. Diamond asked him to put red gels in some of his ceiling lights to add warmth and position plants in the right location.

► **Feng shui** page 6

Retailers Stand to Lose in Ban on High-Tech Swimsuits

By Robert McAllister *Technology Editor*

A recent ruling by the international swimming body FINA proposing to ban controversial, high-tech swimsuits produced by makers such as **Speedo**, **Tyr** and **Arena** may trickle down to the retail level, putting a dent in many stores' bottom lines.

For retailers, the suits have provided a bountiful resource, as they are priced anywhere from \$350 to \$600 and even higher, providing substantial margins. The sleek suits, made in cuts from jammers to full-body length, also caught the attention of swimmers at noncompetitive levels and have been sold at specialty and department stores.

"At the retail level, the recent FINA rules have already significantly affected consumers and dealers. Swimmers are hesitant to purchase technical swimwear until they are reassured that their purchase will be legal for competition. Tyr will continue to innovate within the guidelines and provide swimmers with elite technology to perform at their highest level," said Ryan Dolan, Tyr's national team dealer and triathlon sales manager.

► **High-tech swim** page 4

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Where fashion gets down to businessSM



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Supply Chain

Supply-Chain Blogs Help Navigate Tricky Problems

By Deborah Belge *Senior Editor*

In the past few years, as the economy has taken a dip and the supply chain has become more complicated, a host of blogs have popped up giving sage advice for businesses people trying to increase profits and reduce risk.

It has also become a new form of social networking for industry professionals who share their trials and tribulations about moving goods from one point to another.

As the world shrinks, these blog sites are becoming more important, offering up information and what to do when an earthquake devastates a region rich in factories or how to find a factory that is socially responsible.

"Within the supply-chain discipline, things are moving pretty fast in terms of events and in terms of activities, sometimes faster than traditional media can pick it up. The importance of a blog is that supply-chain professionals get a chance to see or hear or sense what their peers are talking about or concerned about," said Bob Ferrari, who posts daily on his "Supply Chain Matters" blog at www.theferrarigroup.com. He takes his years of expertise and provides his views and insights on various topics surrounding the management and deployment of global supply chains. "Also of late, with the economy and the global recession, some of the sources of information where professionals used to get their information, such as industry analysts or other firms, have succumbed to the financial times, either closing down or cutting back."

Ferrari, whose company is **The Ferrari Consulting and Research Group** in Reading, Mass., started his blog in February 2008 and has been writing religiously on everything from how the latest typhoons in Taiwan and China have affected the supply chain to RFID (radio frequency identification) technology.

"Certain topics gain a lot of commentary," Ferrari observed. "Supply-chain risk topics are very hot right now because so many organizations are struggling with that, trying to get their hands around [the issue]. They are thinking about a green supply chain, and technology is always an issue."

Some of the risks for businesses include product contamination, which seems to be on the rise, and natural disasters, which can turn industries upside down.

Procurers are concerned with reliable and financially viable suppliers and whether they comply with labor laws.

Social responsibility and the environment

Another blogger on the supply-chain front is Ron Southard, who started **SafeSourcing** last year. It's a company based in Scottsdale, Ariz., geared for retailers who need help in procuring merchandise and want supply-chain advice, focusing on environmental and social-responsibility practices as well as other issues.

Southard said there has been an increased focus on supply-chain management because of the added profit it can generate for businesses if they take cost-effective steps and use the chain wisely. "It is a well-known fact that the supply-chain section hasn't been the

most highly respected profession in retail. Operations, loss prevention and marketing have always gotten more attention," Southard said. "If you are going to have an impact on your profitability, this is certainly an area that should get attention."

The company's blog, published Mondays to Fridays, discusses a number of topics, from how to improve your corporate social responsibility to handling the logistics of shipping products and dealing with U.S. Customs' 10 + 2 rule.

SafeSourcing has a database with 300,000 suppliers that support the retail community. The company's Web site, at www.safesourcing.com, also has its own Wiki, named after the online encyclopedia **Wikipedia**. It defines terms commonly used in the supply-chain industry.

Other supply-chain companies with blog sites include New York-based **Panjiva**, an information resource tool used by sourcing and supply-chain professionals. Panjiva takes a lot of the work out of looking for a good factory. The company, started in 2007, has a large database of suppliers that are rated by Panjiva and put on a watch list if their shipments decline more than 50 percent to U.S. customers.

The blog, at www.panjiva.com, shares trade data from Panjiva's research team and analyzes the import activity of various corporations. ●

Advice Online

There are several blog sites out there addressing supply-chain issues. Here are a few:

www.atrisk.net The blog discusses supplier risk and how to deal with it. The Web site is associated with **Aravo Solutions Inc.**, a San Francisco company that deals with supplier-information management to solve expensive and complex problems.

The Supply-Chain Council (SCC) is a global nonprofit consortium whose methodology, diagnostic and benchmarking tools help organizations make dramatic and rapid improvements in supply-chain processes. SCC has a Forums section, where visitors can discuss and post topics for discussion, at www.supply-chain.org.

European Supply Chain Blogs

FDI Logbox This is in France, run by an export customer account-management and logistics company. www.fdi-logbox.com

Supply Chain Standard Europe's strategic supply-chain management resource. www.supplychainstandard.com/Fashion/Default.html

BusinessGreen.com is a British Web site that publishes the latest news and best-practice advice on how to become more environmentally responsible while still growing the bottom line.