

# business

THE LEADER IN BOARDSPORTS NEWS AND INFORMATION

## Internet Service Provider

Zappos.com has evolved into a billion-dollar brand through customer service and word-of-mouth marketing.

By Joshua Hunter

Tony Hsieh nearly deleted a voicemail eight years ago that would've changed the way six-million Americans shop today. Hsieh (pronounced Shay) was 24 years old at the time and had just sold his first company, LinkExchange, to Microsoft for 265-million dollars. While running a venture capital firm called Venture Frogs, as CEO in 1999, Hsieh received a phone call from an even younger entrepreneur named Nick Swinmurn proposing an investment opportunity no one else would touch—selling shoes on the Internet.

It's a good thing for Hsieh he didn't delete that message.

In the voicemail Swinmurn mentioned the size of the retail shoe market (40-billion dollars at the time) and that five percent of that business was already being done through mail-order catalogs. "That intrigued me," says Hsieh.

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You can buy Adrian Lopez's Pro C1RCA shoe—along with 3.5 million other items—at zappos.com right now. Backside nosegrind.

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE



### SHECKLER AIRS ON MTV

Skateboarding boy wonder adds "TV star" to his already long list of accomplishments with *Life Of Ryan*.



### BURTON AND CHANNEL ISLANDS OPEN RETAIL STORE

Where Burton sees opportunity for expansion, local retailers see a direct attack on their business.



### KEEPING ABREAST

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month and the snow industry's heavy hitters are doing their part.

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UNIV Co-Owners Mirko Mangum and Tim Swart.

## The One Percent Of The Ten-Percenters

Instead of battling for low, low prices, UNIV raises the stakes with high-end merchandise.

By Adam Sullivan

### "Are you a coffee snob?"

That's the first question UNIV Co-Owner Mirko Mangum asks as we walk out the front door of his Encinitas, California-based store. "There's a Starbucks over there, and an independent joint across the street."

We end up at the indie place, which sadly, is empty. Makes for a good interview environment, though.

By the time we get back to the store, Co-Owner Tim Swart is there, with wife and one-

week-old son in tow. Owning your own business doesn't come with paternity leave. Fortunately, UNIV is relatively self-contained.

"I'll come down to the sales floor if someone needs help," Mangum admits, "but I'll get sucked in for an hour. It's like a black hole."

Both are self-proclaimed workaholics, in addition to doing UNIV they both hold down full-time jobs. Mangum is Zoo York's VP of sales, and Swart is Zoo's surf marketing guy, as well as the marketing director over at IPath.

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## Men's 2008 Apparel Preview

A sneak peek at the latest offerings from the industry's leading men's apparel brands. (Page 28)



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Feed The Need and Duffel's new homey video *Modern Kicks*, and a grip of photos, so he'll be back before you know it. And it sounds like he could use a vacation. Get better, Corey.

On a related note, Globe bigwig Michael Marckx moved all right. He ran a marathon and blew his knee fifteen yards from the finish line. The day before surgery he ate shit again at Mammoth, breaking his arm and wrist. Stay up, players.

skate movers

Congrats to **Garrett Hill** and **Dan Murphy**. Both have received the nod from **Jamie Thomas** and turned pro for **Zero** and **Mystery**, respectively. Boards should be on, and quickly off, shelves by the time you are reading this.

There's been a lot of wheeling and dealing with the next generation of San Diego shredders. **Kenny Hoyle** is on **DVS**, **Shuriken Shannon** is on **Planet Earth**. **Stereo Sound Agent PQ** (a.k.a. **John Lupfer**) is dressed in **Ezekiel** clothing, and joins **Shannon** and **Jimmy Carlin** on **Osiris** shoes.

**Darrell Stanton**'s got a shoe on **Element**, **Chris Haslam** has one on **Globe**, and **Scott Bourne**'s got one on **Puma**. **Ray Barbee** is a **WeSC** activist. **P-Rod** has picked up a new sponsor—**InCase**. **InCase** is an accessory brand for **Apple** products and is co-owned by **DC**'s **Damon Way**.

**Corey Duffel** is on **CSS**. **Kristian Svitak** is on **NSS**. **Anthony Williams** is on **Ice Cream**. **Donny Barley**, **Kevin "Spanky" Long**, and **Andrew Reynolds** are all on **Roughneck Hardware** now. **Lenny Rivas** and **Wade Des Armo** are the newest pros on **DGK**, and **Bobby Worrest** has been granted pro status from **Gonz** and has a board for **Krooked**. **Corey Sheppard**'s on **SubGenus**. **Jovante Turner** is on **Western Edition**. **Ben Gore**'s on **Rasa Libre**. **Ragdoll** is off **Birdhouse**, with no board sponsor named yet. **Daniel Castillo** has a pro truck on **Grind King**. **Sean Malto** is wearing **Fourstar** clothing now. **Kris Markovich**'s **Arthouse Distribution** has picked up **Heroin** skateboards. **Clae Footwear** is back, too, but they're not out of **Podium**.

On the industry side, there's been quite the team manager ho-down. **Fallen TM Mike Sinclair** left to be the TM for **DC**. **DC TM Heath Brinkley** left to be the TM for **etnies**. No word yet as to where **etnies TM Clifford Unsworth** departed to. **Drake Jones** left his position as **Mystery TM**, and **Jay Thorpe** took up the reins. "Ohio" **Dave Smith** is now the TM at **iPath**. I think that's all of them. Figure out who works for whom, and go hit them up for gear. Also **Rita Nadhazy** is holding shit down in the PR department for **DVS** and **Lakai**.

Did we miss something? Let us know. Send press releases and news to adam.sullivan@transworld.net.

Skateboarding Gets Technical

Paul Schmitt is educating the retailer.

**Paul Schmitt**, owner of **PS Stix** wood shop, has added a seminar designed just for retailers to his recent venture, **Create-A-Skate**.

**Create-A-Skate** is a nonprofit organization Schmitt began in late 2004 that teaches kids how to make a skateboard from start to finish. The program includes lessons in math, science, ecology, and more.

Schmitt soon realized he was educating the consumer, but the retailer was still for the most part unaware. The logical solution was to extend that knowledge to the retailer, as well. "The issue with specialty retail," explains Schmitt, "was how to be special. I'm trying to give content for specialty retailers to be special. For my entire career, I've relied on specialty retailers. I don't want to rely on big box."

The **Retailer Customer Development Seminar** consists of approximately 40-percent **Create-A-Skate**, with the remaining 60 percent focusing on developing a place in the community. It launched at **Surf Expo** earlier this year and was met with



This kid's got a head full of knowledge—and a self-made Pac-Man board.

resounding success. "I enjoyed it very much," says **Jason Chapman**, owner of

**"I'm trying to give content for specialty retailers to be special."**

—Paul Schmitt

**Charm City** in **Baltimore, Maryland**. "I try to keep myself as educated as possible, but I definitely learned a few things."

In the program, Schmitt walks educators through lessons on wood expansion and lamination as well as how to draw, cut, and sand the shapes they create. The **Create-A-Skate DVD** comes with a curriculum that can be taught by anyone. "You don't have to be a skateboarder to run this program," explains Schmitt. "It's about the education." The teacher curriculum comes complete with lesson plans, worksheets, supply lists, and study questions.

"My ultimate goal is for the students to learn life lessons and find the power of satisfaction and achievement as they work with their hands, making a skateboard throughout the **CreateAskate.org** curriculum," he says.

The **Create-A-Skate** program is running with the **Dew Tour**, in the **Fuel TV** booth. For booking and scheduling the **Retailer Customer Development Seminar**, visit [www.createaskate.org/retailers](http://www.createaskate.org/retailers).

—Adam Sullivan

New Blood For IASC

Committee votes for an updated board and gears up for 2008.

Earlier this year, the **International Association of Skateboard Companies (IASC)** voted to restructure its board of directors, providing a limit on time a member can serve in succession.

"Everybody's been saying it's the same guys every year," explains **Executive Director John Bernards**. "The same guys were there for six years. Now they can have a maximum of four years—they can be elected for two, reelected for another two, and then they have to take a year off before they come back." Bernards says the board voted on this not to deter criticism per se, but as a means to constantly bring fresh ideas to the table.

**"IASC will objectively work with the skateboarding committee and support USA Skateboarding in pursuit of bringing skateboarding to the Olympics."**

Bernards explains one of **IASC**'s major initiatives for the coming year is to give skateboarding an autonomous presence at **ASR**: "We're working with **ASR** to change the look of the skateboard section. And by January '08 you will see a big change in the floor plan for the skateboard area. Skateboarding's going to be its own world." **IASC** is working together with **ASR** to offer booth space at half the price for hardgoods companies.



IASC's Executive Director John Bernards with Steve Douglas and Jim Gray.

IASC MEMBERS AND THEIR RESPECTIVE COMMITTEES

**Per Welinder**  
Skatepark Committee

**Jim Gray**  
Political Advocacy

**Don Brown**  
Marketing

**George Powell**  
Pro/Am Contests

**Steve Van Doren**  
Fundraising

**Roger Harrell**  
Education

**Tod Swank/Glen Brumage**  
Membership

**Frank Messman**  
International Membership

**Bod Boyle**  
Industry Action

Another task for **IASC** is working on skateboarding's potential presence in the 2012 Olympic games. The games, to be held in **London**, could quite possibly include skateboarding, regardless of skateboarding's collective permission or input. **IASC** has issued the following statement: "IASC will objectively work with the skateboarding committee and support **USA Skateboarding** in pursuit of bringing skateboarding to the Olympics. Our goal is to see that the authenticity and integrity

of skateboarding is maintained throughout this process, and to help implement a national governing body for skateboarding that will represent the best interests of skateboarding."

Other goals for 2008 include learn-to-skate days, marketing the **Skatepark Development Guide**, working to create a sanctioning body for pro contests, and of course, a big push for **Go Skateboarding Day 2008**. "This past **Go Skateboarding Day** was a big success," says Bernards. "There were over 600 videos posted, and retailers said their business was up 25 percent."

Membership recruitment is always a big focus for **IASC**, and Bernards explains opening up the board of directors has already resulted in a boost. "We've picked up three new members in the last month."

The current board of directors for **IASC** is **Per Welinder**, **Tod Swank**, **Jim Gray**, **Don Brown**, **Bod Boyle**, **Steve Van Doren**, **Glenn Brumage**, **Roger Harrell**, **George Powell**, and **Frank Messman**. —A.S.