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In brief

Hudson Walker International, the headhunting firm, has set up a new division to recruit finance staff specifically for the fashion industry. **Sharon O'Regan**, previously business development manager at fashion recruiter Style Incorporated, joined the business this week to set up the division.

JanSport, the accessories and bag brand, has appointed **Nathan Hill** as country manager for the UK and Republic of Ireland. Hill, who will join later this month from his position as sales manager at footwear brand Vans, replaces Duncan Bembridge, who has been promoted to European sales and marketing director.

Freddy, the Italian sportswear brand, has hired its first sales account manager to drive its wholesale business in the UK.

Tamara Pande has joined from Timberland, where she was an accessories and kidswear buyer. Pande also worked at Jimmy Choo for four years as a key account executive in the wholesale department.

Fashion Monitor editor **Emily Fleuriot** has stepped down from the role to become a consultant for fashion brands on their web strategies. Fleuriot, who was editor for four years, has joined co-operative consultancy Featherhouse.

Clements Ribiero for Blossom, a special tie-up collection, will make its debut at kidswear trade show **Bubble London** next month. The exhibition will also showcase collections from Mini A Ture, Religion Kids, Molo, Amplified Kids and Green Eyed Monster. Bubble Kids takes place at London Olympia on July 2-3.

HOME SHOPPING

Littlewoods unleashes two new sub brands for autumn

By Emily Seares

Littlewoods is to introduce two new sub brands as it beefs up its own-label offer by 40%.

The home shopping and internet business will launch the new brands for autumn 08: *Definitions*, aimed at 30- to 45-year-olds and *Savoir*, an evening-wear range. It already has the *Love Label* and *South* own brands, alongside its plus-size range *So Fabulous*.

The own-label strategy is being led by Rebecca Elderfield, creative director for product – a new position – and womenswear buying director Jane Hotz. Elderfield was previously creative director at Jigsaw.

"*Definitions* is *Love Label* grown-up," said Hotz. "We are using luxury fabrics, leather, velvets and in-house prints, all unique to Littlewoods. This customer has always been out there, but we've never catered



Night shift: Littlewoods' *Savoir* brand focuses on eveningwear

for her before. We want to give her classic staples."

Savoir is an extension to Littlewoods' *South* brand, which focuses on casualwear and daywear for 35- to 65-year-olds. Hotz said: "*Savoir* will feature quality fabrics, value-added detail and embellishments such as lace and tweed."

Savoir skirts will sell for about £25 and coats £85. *Definitions*

dresses will be £45, with coats from £75.

Littlewoods' catalogue and website will be updated to better distinguish each brand.

Separately, model and lingerie entrepreneur *Caprice* has lent her name to an occasionwear range for Littlewoods. *Glam by Caprice* will launch in July with six pieces. A silk dress is £90.

MULTIPLES

Chains accused of rip-offs in Ireland

Marks & Spencer, Laura Ashley and Tesco have been accused of ripping off customers in the Republic of Ireland by failing to pass on a 20% fall in sterling against the euro.

In parliament in Dublin last week, Labour Party leader Eamon Gilmore accused the chains of "profiteering at the expense of the Irish consumer". He alleged the chains were charging prices up to 50% higher than in their UK stores, despite the currency differential.

Irish Prime Minister Brian Cowen said the government had written to the retailers seeking an explanation. He warned that action would be taken "if the



Price dispute: Marks & Spencer

replies are not what we expect to hear".

Separately, the National Consumer Agency urged Irish shoppers to boycott "British retailers that are charging significantly higher prices in Ireland".

Trade body Retail Ireland defended the rises, arguing that Ireland is an expensive place to do business, with the cost of minimum wage, insurance, distribution and waste collection all higher than in the UK.

M&S said there were many factors specific to the Irish market including higher rents and operational costs, which meant it was misleading to compare Irish and UK prices.

But the Irish Consumers' Association said that even if costs are 10% higher, it did not justify current prices. It has also called for "profiteering" retailers to be named and shamed in a national advertising campaign.



Web wizard: Mark Bage

INDEPENDENTS

£1m sales for Coggles.com

York-based young fashion independent Sarah Coggles has racked up £1 million of sales from its website in its first year of trading.

Coggles.com posted sales of £928,000, which put the site into the black in its first year of trading with a profit of £106,000.

The strong performance surprised owner Mark Bage, who told *Drapers* that the figures were 69% ahead of his forecasts. Bage has now revised his 2008 sales forecasts to £1.5m.

"That is what it is all about – making money," said Bage. "You should aim for a profit and as an independent, do something different. In terms of growing the business we have just scratched the surface."

It is rare for anetail start-up business to turn a profit during its first year of trading, but Coggles.com has seen its customer base grow from a standing start to more than 30,000 regular online shoppers.

Bage put the increase in traffic down to a viral marketing campaign called Do Not Look At Coggles.com, as well as direct email alerts advertising the site to existing customers.

Bage said a typical Coggles.com shopper would tend to buy a diverse mix of product similar to high street shopping habits, mixing the likes of Vivienne Westwood with G-Star.

To read more about websites, see *Drapers' Ecommerce Focus* supplement, centre pages >>