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## Great Retail In The Great Northwest

Seattle Shops Prepare For Winter  
By Tyler Ketz

Rain, coffee, rain, the Space Needle, and more rain. Certain stereotypes undoubtedly spring to mind when you think of Seattle, Washington. However, the coffee keeps us heading up the hill, and the rain changes to snow—piling up feet of fresh at some of the best mountains in the country. So think what you must about the Northwest—its bad weather, and all that supposedly wet, heavy snow—but Seattleites know firsthand about days filled with light and airy powder and sessions cloaked in sunshine.

Just like the rest of the snow-loving world, Seattle is at the mercy of Mother Nature and thus vulnerable to terrible snow seasons. A winter like that hit the Northwest three years ago—no snow fell, no one went riding, and local board shops took the brunt. A majority of the smaller local shops ran aground, and only the few, the strong, and the resilient hung around. This is their story.

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Erik Leines, Mt. Baker.

COURTESY ZUMIEZ

## Zumiez's Founding Father Sounds Off

An Exclusive *Transworld Business* Interview With Tom Campion  
By Joshua Hunter

Tom Campion has it. His employees—with enough training—get it. And, looking at the company's numbers, customers at Zumiez's 275 mall-based stores across the country can't get enough of it. But what, exactly, is it?

Of its 29-year history, Zumiez has enjoyed positive comparable store sales for 28 of those years. For fiscal year 2006, Zumiez averaged 504 dollars per square foot. In comparison, its closest competitor, PacSun, did roughly 352 dollars per square foot. For the month

of September 2007, sales rose nearly twelve percent to just over 32-million dollars, with consolidated same-store sales up 13.9 percent, amidst a month analysts projected to be flat due to unseasonably warm weather. The same analysts say Zumiez is on track to open 50 more stores in fiscal year '07.

So whatever it is, it's working.

*Transworld Business* sat down with Zumiez Co-founder Tom Campion to try and figure it out. Here's what he had to say:

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Zumiez Co-founder Tom Campion.

## 2008 Skate Deck Preview

A sneak peek at the latest offerings from the industry's leading deck manufacturers. (Page 29)



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# Fall 2007 ASR Show Wrap-up:

III FEATURE

## Overall Return To Business Evident

By the editors of *Transworld Business*

### INCREASE IN BUYER ATTENDANCE VISIBLE IN SURF AISLES

The aisles at this September's ASR show were noticeably busier than last year's show on the first two days, and as usual Sunday was sleepy. But ASR says it's planning on changing its schedule to make all three days more relevant to both exhibitors and retailers.

"We're always looking at dates to make sure they are in line with industry needs," explains Show Director Andy Tompkins. "For 2008 we're moving to Thursday through Saturday for both shows [January 24-26 and September 4-6, 2008], which we feel will be more business conducive and help boost retail traffic. In addition, we are working with SIMA, IASC, BRA, and the action-sports community at large to determine the best mix of dates for 2009 and beyond."

Regardless of a typical slow Sunday showing, ASR is reporting the largest turnout in five years. "It looks like we had about 6,600 retail buyers from 2,200 unique storefronts," says Tompkins of this September show. "These buyers represent an estimated 10,000 storefronts across the world. Including the U.S., we had buyers from 51 countries at the show."

Tompkins says that retail consolidation seems to be a continuing trend in the industry, as the buyer count was up more than thirteen percent from ASR September 2006 (2006 buyers numbered approximately 5,800),

but the store count was relatively flat (2006 store count was approximately 2,150). "Many brands told me that larger retailers [such as Nordstrom, PacSun, Zumiez, Active among many others] are commanding more market share and spending more of the total open-to-buy dollars than previous years, and some smaller, specialty doors may be going out of business," Tompkins reports. "In addition, the industry is definitely exploring the topic of sustainability and environmental awareness and protection, and the trend of integrating music and art into action-sports product lines continues."

### MEETING ROOMS GAIN POPULARITY WITH SKATE CROWD

Another September come and gone, another manic trade-show season. Most anyone will agree that it's a lesson in overstimulation out on the floor.

This year all the usual suspects were present displaying their wares. Of the 86 new companies listed in the ASR guide, I don't think a single one carried an honest-to-goodness skateboard. Popular names for these new

brands were "Dog Poo Wax," and "Cookie And The Dude."

This year, the skate market seemed to be focusing on a return to business. This was mostly evident in the fact that each year, more and more companies are leaving the trade-show floor, and opting for the quieter, cheaper rooms in the upper area. Also, you can serve beer all day up there. These rooms are where companies like Blitz, CIRCA, Sole Tech, and DC have their products displayed and their meetings held.

"That trend is centered on skate footwear companies," explains Tompkins. "In my opinion this trend is fueled by production cycles overseas and the need to submit product orders earlier than years past." He explains that the trickle-down effect from earlier production commitments means many brands pre-book in August, before the show. "We're always looking at show dates to be in-line with industry needs."

Skate One was probably the first brand to take their business off the manic floor of the show. "It was September 2002," recalls Skate One's Michael Furukawa. "And we love it. It's worked out well for us."

Across town (let's face it—it was ten blocks) was the Agenda show, where fancy high-end apparel brands congregated. It does seem like they were leeching a bit off of ASR's draw, what with the admission being an ASR badge and limos to take people to and from the convention center, but when in San Diego, right? Companies like WeSC, Stereo, Altamont, and Veece were all exhibiting at the agenda show, and while it certainly wasn't as crowded as ASR, it was definitely populated. This isn't Agenda's first year, and even before it was around, there were fringe shows (Coup d'état, anyone?). But it's hard to compete with the entertainment that goes on at ASR. *ES*



Arthouse Distribution: it's a family affair.



The crew at UM Surfboards.



SIMA's Travis Willeason, Melinda Carter, and Jennifer Kelly were all smiles.



Professor Schmidt held his CreateAskate.org workshop all weekend long.



Bikini? Check. Body glitter? Check. Swim goggles? Check. Yup... it's ASR.



Blitz Distribution converted a meeting room to feel more like a pub.



Altamont was showing at the Agenda show across town.



Orion Borca, Monica Wise, and Greg Weisman had a quick meeting at the L-Space booth.



Osiris hired the domestically challenged to promote their video.