



UNITED SHOE RETAILERS
ASSOCIATION

USRA MAY EVENT 2009

Press Release

For Immediate Release

May 6-8 2009

Las Vegas, Nevada

USRA MAY EVENT 2009 HITS THE JACKPOT!!

Over 150 retailers and vendors participated in the USRA's 16th annual May Event held May 6-8 in Las Vegas, Nevada. The Event started very early Wednesday morning with three very different activities. At 7:00am, approximately 60 golfers checked in to enjoy the beautiful weather for their Texas-Scramble tournament, sponsored by Wolverine World Wide, on the grueling Badlands course. While golfers were starting their first hole, over at Ronzone Elementary School in South Las Vegas, participants handed out over 700 pairs of shoes to children in Pre-K through 5th grade. The Service Day Event was sponsored by Soles4Souls & The J.W. Marriott. *"The look of excitement and gratitude on the faces of the children said it all!"* stated USRA Chairman, Richard Olson. Back at the J.W. Marriott, CPED's participated in a 4 hour seminar on "Shoe Fitting for Diabetics", sponsored by Aetrex Worldwide.

The seminar portion of the Event started at 2:00pm and was kicked off by David Kahan, Sr Vice-President Rockport, who shared his thoughts on the importance of not waiting for things to happen, but rather how people need to MAKE IT HAPPEN. David ended the kick-off with an incredible video montage featuring photos of the attendees, their families and stores. The Keynote Speaker, Tony Hsieh, CEO of Zappos, offered his insights in his keynote titled "DELIVERING HAPPINESS". Tony fascinated the audience with his creativity, innovation and unique business strategies. (Congratulations to Tony and the entire Zappos Team on their 10th anniversary!!) Gary Hauss, President & CEO J. Stephens, ended the first day with his passionate speech about strength in numbers and the importance of working together, quoting Benjamin Franklin *"We must, indeed, all hang together or, most assuredly, we shall all hang separately"*.

DAY TWO: Chris Carmichael, Communications Director Soles4souls, enlightened

participants on the staggering number of people already assisted by this amazing organization. He explained the various ways individuals and companies can offer their help. A Credit Panel offered their thoughts and ideas on how to best work with your financial partners in these challenging economic times - Communication is the key!! Gary Champion, President Geox USA, gave a Vendor Insight about strength in numbers and the importance of participating in Events like the USRA May Event. Keynote Speaker, Kathryn Dager, Profitivity, Inc., spoke on ways to maximize each sale and create customer loyalty. After lunch, attendees were given the opportunity to participate in 5 different workshops. The topics included, Larry Kramer's Leasing 101, Customer Service by Kathryn Dager, Leveraging New Technologies to Level the Playing Field with Big Box Retailers presented by Chris Martin, CEO COREsense, Joe Salzano of Clarks offered his expertise on Customer Service & Retail Math and Aetrex presented "The iStep Experience".

The Annual May Event Awards were given out: *"The Partnership Excellence"* award was given to Tiffani Trujillo of The Clarks Companies for her tireless efforts to strengthen the Retail Vendor Partnerships on behalf of the USRA. David Kahan of The Rockport Company received the *"Special Thanks"* award for his contributions to the USRA and the May Event. The *"Jack Evans"* award was presented to The Clarks Companies for their outstanding commitment & dedication to the USRA and the Independent Retailer.

DAY THREE: Peggy Meill, President Two Ten Footwear Foundation, reminded attendees that the Two Ten is there for EVERYONE in the industry. All they need to do is ask. Whether it is helping out with the rent, sending a child to college or helping with medical bills, they are SHOE PEOPLE HELPING SHOE PEOPLE! A very distinguished Executive Panel, which included: *Gary Champion*, President Geox USA, *John Heron*, General Manager Born Footwear, *Daniel Silver*, Director of Sales Birki's and *Julie Wellman*, Regional Director Earth Footwear, discussed the various ways that Vendors can be there for their Retailers. They stated that the best way to do business is to partner with one another. Beth Bartholomew, Director of Retail Sales & Development The Clarks Companies, ended the Event with her fun and interactive "Shoe Game".

While selling shoes is not the focus of the Event, it was still a bonus! Vendors had their shoes on display throughout the entire three days. Networking was encouraged in many different ways at the May Event. First, Retailers were given a passport which needed to be stamped by EVERY Sponsor to be eligible for a raffle. The raffle prizes were offered by the Sponsors and varied from shoes, jackets, gift cards, ipods and the grand prize, a two night stay at the JW Marriott Las Vegas. At the end of each day, participants were given specified "Networking Times" to visit the tables and turn in orders. Then, there was mingling at the two breakfasts, lunch time, two dinners and the two hosted cocktail parties. But the favorite networking activity was Thursday night's exciting interpretation of "Speed Dating". Retailers were seated on one side of long tables and Vendors on

the other. They were given one minute to talk and then Retailers moved one seat to the left and began again. The amount of information received in that short amount of time was amazing!!

The USRA May Event is a place to brainstorm, share ideas, problem solve and offer support & guidance to one another. The May Event is a very unique and beneficial Event. It is the only one like it within the shoe industry. It is a place where all walls are dropped and we become one industry all working together for a common cause -- keeping the Independent Shoe Retailer alive and growing. One industry...One Goal...One Place....The USRA May Event!!

Next year's Event will take place May 5-7, 2010 at the Westin Mission Hills, in Palm Desert, CA.

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About The USRA.....

The USRA is a Non-Profit organization dedicated to serving Independent Shoe Retailers nationwide. The Benefit Package offers services such Insurance, Shipping, Bankcards and more with incredible savings for members. The USRA Board of Directors meets at various times during the year, to check & re-check benefit services to maintain a substantial and beneficial Benefit Package. The goal is to assist Shoe Retailers nationwide by offering services that help run a business in a cost efficient manner.

THE USRA MISSION STATEMENT

USRA will strive to provide a united independent shoe retailer voice within the shoe industry and make available . . . cost-effective services, opportunities for peer communication and consistent timely information that will strengthen the independent shoe retailer.

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For more information about the USRA and The USRA May Event

[CLICK HERE](#)

or email Linda@USRAonline.org

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MAY EVENT 2009 SPONSORS

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