

This Week's Top Stories in Retail

March 20, 2009

Report: Wal-Mart giving employees \$2B in annual incentive program

New York City (March 19, 2009) In its largest annual employee award ever, Wal-Mart Stores is awarding approximately \$2 billion to its U.S. hourly employees through financial incentives, including handing out \$933.6 million in bonuses on Thursday.

Store closing costs drag down Shoe Carnival

Evansville, Ind. (March 19, 2009) Shoe Carnival said Thursday that it lost \$3 million in its fiscal fourth-quarter, compared with a profit of \$1 million in the year-ago period.

Wal-Mart reduces costs on eyewear

Bentonville, Ark. (March 19, 2009) Wal-Mart Stores on Thursday announced it has sharply reduced prices for both contact lenses and children's eyewear as part of an effort to help customers cut down on healthcare costs.

Eddie Bauer at risk of violating loan requirements

Bellevue, Wash. (March 19, 2009) Eddie Bauer Holdings warned that the recession had put it in jeopardy of violating some loan requirements.

Barnes & Noble Q4 profit drops 29%

New York City (March 19, 2009) Barnes & Noble said Thursday its profit fell 29% in the fiscal fourth quarter, citing sales drops due to scaled-back book purchasing.

Bon-Ton amends CEO's contract

York, Pa. (March 19, 2009) The Bon-Ton Stores said Thursday that its board voted unanimously to ask Byron L. (Bud) Bergren to continue in his role as president and CEO.

Casual Male reports Q4 loss

Canton, Mass. (March 19, 2009) Casual Male Retail Group said Thursday its net loss for the fourth quarter was \$108 million.

Stein Mart loss widens

Jacksonville, Fla. (March 19, 2009) Stein Mart on Thursday announced a fourth-quarter net loss of \$56.2 million, compared with a net loss of \$12.1 million for the year ago period.

New York & Co. posts Q4 loss

New York City (March 19, 2009) New York & Co. reported Thursday that it lost \$27.4 million in the fiscal fourth quarter as sales fell and it absorbed a hefty restructuring charge.

Limited CEO pay package up 32%

New York City (March 18, 2009) Leslie H. Wexner, chairman and chief executive, Limited Brands, received compensation valued at almost \$6.9 million in 2008, up 32% from a year ago, according to an analysis of a regulatory filing.

Talbots executive to step down

Boston (March 18, 2009) Michele Mandell, executive VP retail, Talbots, will step down from her post effective Friday, The Boston Globe reported.

FAO Schwarz replaces CEO

New York City (March 18, 2009) FAO Schwarz said Wednesday it replaced its chief executive

Ed Schmults with Barry Erdos, the former president of online retail site Bluefly.com, effective immediately.

Drug Fair files Ch. 11, to sell 32 stores to Walgreens

Somerset, N.J. (March 18, 2009) Drug Fair Group and its parent company CDI Group Wednesday announced that they filed voluntary petitions for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection.

Gap to reduce size of board

San Francisco (March 18, 2009) The Gap board of directors announced it has decided to reduce its size from 13 to 10 members, and to cut the compensation for remaining members for 2009 by reducing both the annual cash retainer and stock compensation by 15%.

Starbucks CEO says company on track

Seattle (March 18, 2009) Starbucks Corp. is on track to hit its target of \$500 million in cost savings this fiscal year as it closes stores and sheds staff, chief executive Howard Schultz said at the company's annual shareholder meeting.

ShopperTrak reports slight rise in weekly sales

Chicago (March 18, 2009) ShopperTrak's National Retail Sales Estimate on Wednesday reported that year-over-year retail sales for the week ending March 14 declined 2.7%, while weekly sales rose a slight 1.0% vs. the previous week ending March 7.

Sears unveils new tag line, ad campaign

Hoffman Estates, Ill. (March 18, 2009) Sears on Wednesday announced a new communications initiative designed to build on its brand equities to appeal to today's American family.

Barnes & Noble opens in San Antonio

New York City (March 18, 2009) Barnes & Noble will open a store on April 1 in San Antonio. Concurrently, an existing store in the area will close.

Charming Shoppes reports Q4 loss

Bensalem, Pa. (March 18, 2009) Charming Shoppes on Wednesday posted a narrower-than-expected fourth-quarter loss, but said it will eliminate some of its non-core assets, including its Web site shoetrader.com, as part of its cost-cutting initiatives.

Leadership change at La Senza

Columbus, Ohio (March 18, 2009) Limited Brands, parent company of La Senza, Wednesday announced the appointment of Joanne Nemeroff as president of La Senza.

Staples announces executive promotions

Framingham, Mass. (March 18, 2009) Staples Wednesday announced the promotions of Steven Bussberg to senior VP finance for the company's North American Delivery business and Luis Borgen to senior VP finance for the U.S. Stores business.

Moody's cuts Saks' credit rating

New York City (March 17, 2009) Moody's Investors Service lowered its long-term credit ratings on Tuesday for Saks, citing the company's operating losses and the slowdown in the luxury sector.

Dick's upgraded to "Buy"

Portland, Ore. (March 17, 2009) Analysts at Sterne Agee & Leach upgraded Dick's Sporting Goods to a "Buy" rating, saying the retailer is well-positioned to weather the economic downturn.

NY&Co: Wall Street vote of confidence

New York City (March 17, 2009) Despite falling sales and continuing losses, one Wall Street analyst still has upgraded New York City-based New York & Co. to "Buy."

Guess Q4 profit down 13%, up for full year

Los Angeles (March 17, 2009) Guess reported Tuesday afternoon that its fourth-quarter profit fell 13% from a year-earlier, as same-store sales slowed.

Wal-Mart revamping, expanding private-label brand

New York City (March 17, 2009) Wal-Mart Stores is revamping its private-label Great Value product line, including changing the formulas for some items.

NPD Report: Consumer spending intentions low

Port Washington, N.Y. (March 17, 2009) The NPD Group's Economy Tracker report, released Tuesday, has found that consumer attitudes toward the economy and intentions to shop are at their lowest point since last October.

DSW, Zappos reach settlement

Columbus, Ohio (March 17, 2009) DSW and Zappos announced Tuesday that the companies have reached a settlement in a lawsuit brought by DSW in May 2008.

Best Buy on the climb

New York City (March 17, 2009) One chain's demise may portend another's rise. A Wall Street analyst has upgraded Richfield, Minn.-based Best Buy, citing bigger profits ahead based on the company's absorption of defunct Circuit City's customer base.

Blockbuster shareholder expresses confidence in company

New York City (March 16, 2009) A Blockbuster shareholder expressed confidence that the company will not need to file for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection, in a filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission on Monday.

Pershing Square's Ackman to mount proxy fight for Target board seats

New York City (March 16, 2009) Hedge-fund manager William Ackman, whose Pershing Square Capital Management owns about 7.8% of Target stock, told Bloomberg Television on Monday that he will nominate himself, and a slate of four experts in credit cards, real estate and food sales, to shore up expertise in areas he believes the company is underperforming.

Comcast, Sony to launch new retail format

New York City (March 16, 2009) Cable operator Comcast Corp. and consumer-electronics manufacturer Sony Corp. are launching a new store concept called Sony Style Comcast Labs on March 17, inside Comcast's Philadelphia, corporate headquarters building, according to USA Today.

Jos. A. Bank offers promotion to aid customers who lose jobs

Hampstead, Md. (March 16, 2009) Jos. A. Bank Clothiers said Monday it will refund the price of a suit if the purchaser loses his job, while allowing him to keep the suit.

China Nepstar reports Q4 sales, profits up

Shenzhen, China (March 16, 2009) Drug store chain China Nepstar announced Monday its fourth quarter and fiscal year-end 2008 results, ending Dec. 31, 2008, which showed fourth-quarter gross profit up 17.7%, revenues up 25.2% to US\$96 million and same-store sales up 0.9%.

Walgreens names Bob Evans chief to board

Deerfield, Ill. (March 16, 2009) Walgreen Co. announced Monday that Steven A. Davis, chairman and CEO of Bob Evans Farms, has been elected to its board of directors, effective immediately.

Charming Shoppes names senior management

Bensalem, Pa. (March 16, 2009) Charming Shoppes on Monday announced the appointment of Visa Vei as president - Asia, charged with overseeing the company's multi-country sourcing operations.

Cabela's names new chief

Sidney, Neb. (March 16, 2009) Cabela's announced Monday that 33-year company veteran Dennis Highby will move into the position of vice chairman of the board after serving as the company's president and CEO for the last six years.

FTC settlement, cost cuts propel Whole Foods up, says analyst

New York City (March 16, 2009) Wall Street has given a thumbs up to Whole Foods Market, saying the grocer is doing a good job cutting costs to counter the recession's impact on sales.

Lumber Liquidators names CIO

Toano, Va. (March 16, 2009) Lumber Liquidators announced Monday that Seth Levy has joined the company as senior VP information technology and CIO.

Signet amends borrowing agreements

Hamilton, Bermuda (March 16, 2009) Signet Jewelers announced Monday it has entered into amended borrowing agreements, following a Nov. 2008 report that it was initiating such talks in light of the significant deterioration in the economic environment.

Tiffany & Co. to open store in Amsterdam

New York City (March 13, 2009) Tiffany & Co. announced plans to open a new store in Amsterdam, Netherlands, this fall.

Build-A-Bear names president

St. Louis (March 13, 2009) Build-A-Bear Workshop has hired John Haugh to fill the newly created position of president and chief marketing and merchandising officer, effective March 16.

Costco buys \$20M office building near HQ

Seattle (March 13, 2009) Costco has purchased an office building less than a mile from its Issaquah, Wash., headquarters for \$20.3 million, according to The Seattle Times.

American Apparel to receive \$80M investment

New York City (March 13, 2009) American Apparel said Friday that it will receive an \$80 million investment from Lion Capital that could give the private-equity firm a nearly 20% stake in the company.

Aeropostale to debut kids concept

New York City (March 13, 2009) Aeropostale will unveil its children's format in June, opening 10 locations in the New York metropolitan area.

Report: Wal-Mart to debut Hispanic supermarket format

Bentonville, Ark. (March 13, 2009) Wal-Mart Stores plans to open its first Hispanic-focused supermarkets this summer in Arizona and Texas, according to the Financial Times.

Survey: Golfsmith.com best retail site

Austin, Texas (March 13, 2009) Golfsmith International Holdings announced that its Web site (golfsmith.com) was recognized as one of the top retail sites for customer service and overall customer experience.

Books-A-Million announces management change

Birmingham, Ala. (March 13, 2009) Books-A-Million announced that Sandra B. Cochran has resigned from her position of president, CEO and director to accept a position with Cracker Barrel Old Country Store.

Stein Mart to launch new ad campaign

Jacksonville, Fla. (March 13, 2009) Stein Mart is launching a new multimedia advertising campaign featuring Stein Mart shoppers talking about staying fashionable during tough economic times.

Sears Tower to be renamed Willis Tower

Chicago (March 13, 2009) Chicago's famed Sears Tower is getting a new name.

A.C. Moore sales down in Q4, full year

Berlin, N.J. (March 13, 2009) A.C. Moore Arts & Crafts announced that sales for the fourth quarter of 2008 were \$165.0 million, down 6.9% from \$177.3 million in the same period the year before. Same-store sales were down 8.7% for the quarter.