

# FOOTWEAR PLUS

**SPECIAL  
REPORT**

## On the Road Again

The trade show round-up: key trends, traffic reports and juicy topics coming out of FN Platform, FFANY, Outdoor Retailer and The Atlanta Shoe Market among others.

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### ENKWSA: Fast Companies

**BILLED AS THE** show for fast fashion plus all elements of the footwear supply chain, the second edition of ENKWSA's reincarnation held at the Sands Expo & Convention Center in Las Vegas (Aug. 7-9) didn't disappoint, according to David Kahan, president of the ENK Footwear Group.

"Attendance was up more than 15 percent versus the February edition," Kahan reports, adding that attendees now understand the show's focus and what to expect. "They came prepared to do business," he says, noting a second hall dedicated exclusively to sourcing was added. "This was the largest, most comprehensive footwear sourcing exhibition in the U.S. as well as the biggest in the entire history of the WSA show."

Many attendees were equally enthused with the format. "The show was excellent and I'm looking forward to next year," states Feroz Jessani, president of Mochi Shoes. "It's definitely a great show for us and I'll definitely be back," concurs Laura Locurto, footwear buyer for Cititrends. Adds Heather Jo Johnson, buyer for Karavel Shoes, "Education is key for buyers and the seminars were great."

Regarding the seminars, Kahan says the topics were chosen to meet the immediate needs of attendees. "Amid such a challenging economic climate, people can't afford to make as many mistakes and education is key," he says. "Having industry experts make presentations like Matt Priest from Footwear Distributors & Retailers of America (FDRA), Tiffany Vasilchik from Materials Connection, Laurie Pressman from Pantone and a trend presentation from Lineapelle really gave attendees critical and relevant information that they could use when shopping the show."

This show showcases rapidly growing market segments with respect to private label, discount and fast fashion. In fact, Kahan notes that more than 50 percent of all shoes currently sold in the U.S. are not traditional branded footwear and, in the South American region, where the show drew

a large attendance, the percentage is even higher. And in particular to fast fashion, Kahan points out that designer styles that previously were interpreted at value price points 12 months later are now hitting discount chains at nearly the same time. "ENKWSA serves the unique needs of this business segment in a way that has not previously been met and that is why the response has been so positive," he affirms. "It's important to have a singular focus for such a significant portion of their business."

It's also one of the reasons that many attendees were writing orders. "For many retailers this is the one market where they actually place virtually all of their seasonal buys, so it is important for them to make good use of their time and do business," he says. Kahan reports many buyers were guardedly optimistic amid a difficult economy. "As such, they are seeing greater demand for on-trend styling and fashion at value price points," he notes.

That's not to say there wasn't time for a little unwinding at ENKWSA's Olympic-themed opening night party that drew more than 600 attendees to sample food from all five continents. Kahan reports the soirée was a welcomed respite and plans are in the works for another party for the show's next edition, which has been moved up in the calendar to Jan. 29-31 to better accommodate retailers' buying schedules. "The dates have been moved to capture both in-season business as well as future bookings," he says. In addition, ENKWSA will expand its seminar series and move forward with its matchmaking program that assists retailers in connecting with emerging suppliers as well as helping suppliers connect with sourcing contacts. Also, the addition of a Fast Apparel segment will be expanded. "Adding clothing was brilliant," says Yossi Joseph, CEO of Famous Horse and VIM chains. "The stores who carry these shoes can now also buy their clothing right across the aisle." —Greg Dutter