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## **THE FOOTWEAR INDUSTRY STEPS FORWARD FOR ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL WSA SHOW**

### **Business Continued and Many Reported Excellent Results, Despite Off-Cycle Show Dates**

**ENCINO, Calif. (February 26, 2008)** – Business moved forward and flourished in several market segments at The WSA Show in Las Vegas, particularly with independent specialty retailers and boutiques. The WSA Show and The Collections at WSA completed another successful marketplace, hosting men's, women's, and kid's shoes, in addition to jewelry and accessories. Materials at WSA made its debut and showcased innovative materials, components, chemical treatments and technology processes, and general suppliers to the industry -- making this the only marketplace in the world to offer a 360-degree viewpoint of the entire footwear industry.

A total of 28,700 participants attended, compared to 36,200 from the February 2007 show due to the later show dates, a one-time anomaly. According to WSA chief operating officer Diane Stone, "WSA focused on attendance promotion outreach where we could make a difference, with independent specialty retailers and boutiques, and saw a 31 percent increase in new buyers to the show. We anticipated some buying teams would be reduced or absent due to their individual needs because our retail relations team is in constant contact with them."

"While our attendance was off some year over year, the buyers in attendance were serious, focused and doing business. Many brands had exceeded their expectations for results at the show. The late dates impacted many companies' planning processes on both the brand and retailer side of the aisle," Stone continued.

Edelman, Oh deer!, Mia, Eastman, Crocs, Ugg, Steve Madden and Dolce Vita were just a few of the exhibitors who were happily surprised by the February 2008 WSA Show results. They experienced a steady stream of independents and strong international traffic.

Attendees from all 50 states, including the U.S. territories of Puerto Rico and Guam, were among those to walk the show floor alongside buyers from 79 countries on all continents. As a result of aggressive global retail recruitment efforts, attendance from Aruba, Costa Rica, Turkey, France, Chile, Poland, Ecuador, Peru, and Russia saw increases over previous shows. The global buyer recruitment effort will be strengthened significantly for the upcoming July event since the field offices of the U.S. Department of Commerce will be working on the show's behalf around the world. The WSA Show and

The Collections at WSA have been accepted into the Department's International Buyer Program which accepts only 32 tradeshows per year.

In addition, the introduction of Materials at WSA also brought over 1,600 high-level decision makers to Las Vegas in the design, product development and supply chain field for the exhibits and workshop program. This added a new dimension to the industry gathering that is unparalleled at any other footwear marketplace in the world.

The WSA Show also introduced *The Box at WSA*, a featured destination that provided buyers with a venue in which to view a carefully selected assortment of trend-driven contemporary footwear and accessories collections. This intimate space provided a user-friendly atmosphere for buyers to have a look at fashion-forward products in a fresh, new landscape that included innovative style and design elements and no high walls to block their view.

"We decided The Box was the place for us because it offered a great opportunity to showcase our brand alongside other innovative, quality fashion brands and we were thrilled with the response that we received from the buyers on the show floor," stated Joe Ponce, president, Velvet Angels.

Known to offer resources above and beyond what is available on the show floor, The WSA Show also offered educational programs for attendees, including:

- The Footwear & Accessories Business Conference, nine individual seminars and four workshops designed to suit attendees from all facets of the industry from buying, marketing and merchandising to sourcing, product design and development. Attendance was up year over year.
- The National Shoe Retailers Association (NSRA) Conference, "Lifestyle Retailing: Enhancing Business by Providing for Your Customer's Every Step," which took a lively look at providing for the changing needs of customers by acknowledging the multiple facets of their lives.
- Footwear Distributors & Retailers Association board meeting, which focuses on the leading brands and retailers.
- Susquehanna International Group (SIG) conference was held with the financial industry's leading footwear investors in attendance to meet face to face with brands, retailers and see the overall marketplace.

The WSA Show is gearing up for the next marketplace, which will take place under one roof at The Las Vegas Convention Center July 28 – 30, 2008. The Collections at WSA will continue to be held in the suites at The Venetian. The date pattern for Materials at WSA will be announced shortly to maximize the overlap opportunity that offers the greatest convenience for this part of the market.

Anticipating an even more successful marketplace in July, brands like Nine West Group have decided to expand their brand offerings and increase their presence on the show floor alongside industry leaders such as Brown Shoe, Skechers, H.H. Brown, Wolverine, White Mountain, Steve Madden, Clarks, Geox, Chinese Laundry, Ugg, and Crocs, among others.

For more information on The WSA Show, The Collections at WSA, and Materials at WSA, please visit [www.wsashow.com](http://www.wsashow.com).

**About The WSA Show**

The WSA Show is the world's largest and most comprehensive footwear, handbags, and accessories marketplace, offering a 360-degree viewpoint of the footwear industry. The twice-yearly event in Las Vegas attracts more than 37,000 participants from 95 countries in 2.1 million square feet of space. The Collections at WSA, an exclusive premium footwear and accessory show within The WSA Show, features hundreds of luxury footwear, handbag and jewelry designers from around the globe in an exclusive upscale setting. Materials at WSA, which launched in Las Vegas in February 2008 alongside The WSA Show, further expands the breadth of this industry marketplace to include the supply chain by focusing on materials, design, components, technology and sourcing alongside the finished product, becoming easily accessible to brand and retail leaders. For more details, please visit [www.wsashow.com](http://www.wsashow.com).

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