

Accessories to apparel drive significant dollar volume growth

Wallets, wristlets, and key fobs are driving significant dollar volume growth, when priced right. Approximately 20 million small personal accessories were sold in US department store, national chain, and direct-to-consumer retailers in 2015, a 4 percent increase over 2014, according to Retail Tracking Service data from global information company, The NPD Group. This unit growth, combined with an increase in average selling price, drove 6 percent dollar growth for the category, bringing sales to more than \$708 million for these channels.

Small personal accessories is a growing market with big potential, proving its importance to the fashion industry as more than just ways to tote money, mobile phones, and cosmetics. These products are functional and fashionable ways for consumers to accessorize, express their personal style, and own a piece of designer fashion, without spending a fortune.

Wallets are the largest small personal accessories segment, but their 2 percent increase in 2015 was below the pace set by others in the category. The double-digit growth of wristlets brought an additional \$15.3 million in sales this past year, almost two-thirds of which came from wristlets with a mobile phone sleeve. Key fobs, although a much smaller portion of the overall small personal accessories category, shaped up to be a key holiday item and drove incremental growth comparable to that of wallets.

Despite differences in segment size and growth rate, price is a common denominator for wallets, wristlets, and key fobs sold in participating department store, national chain, and direct-to-consumer retailers. Products in the \$50 to \$100 price range were the top dollar sales growth driver in wallets (up 6 percent), and wristlets (up 49 percent). The \$50-\$100 price point was important for key fobs as well, multiplying their previous year's sales by a factor of eight.

Consumers are willing to spend a little more if the perceived value is there, and small personal accessories deliver with product that have splurge appeal with attainable price tags. This market has a unique sweet spot for manufacturers and retailers to be aware of, and capitalize on, in order to be competitive and claim their share of the wallet. ■ *Source: NPD*



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US toy sales up Nearly Seven Percent in 2015

US toy sales increased 6.7 percent to \$19.4 billion in 2015, according to report by the NPD Group, an uptick from the estimated 6.2 percent growth. Nine of the 11 toy categories saw gains last year. Outdoor & sports toys and dolls had the largest dollar gains followed by building sets and infant/toddler/preschool toys, while games/puzzles and vehicles grew the fastest by 10.8 percent and 9.7 percent, respectively.

Content toys, including movies, television shows, and YouTube, were a major factor fostering this growth, with Star Wars-related toys, alone, pulling in \$700 million in sales, more than Jurassic World, Minions and The Avengers combined. Overall, Star Wars was the biggest contributor to an increase in sales in three key categories: Action Figures, Vehicles, and All Other Toys.



This report also listed the toy selling toys of 2015. Topping the list: Shopkins 12 Pack Assortment from Moose Toys. What was especially interesting to see this year among the top ten selling items was the wide diversity of toys from simple to complex. Christmas falling on a Friday in 2015 also contributed to a healthier year of sales since consumers had one extra day to shop in the week compared to last year. As a result, the week of Christmas grew 25 percent in 2015. The week of Christmas also represented eight percent of all toy sales for the year, and is the second most important week of the year for the toy industry. Globally, the NPD Group reported in November 2015, that toy industry sales increased by seven percent. "The toy industry had an incredible year and, as is typically the case, there isn't one reason; there were a number of factors coming together to grow the industry nearly 7 percent in 2015,"



said Juli Lennett, US toys industry analyst, NPD Group, in a statement. ■ *Source: NPD*

Gap Inc. deepens social and environmental efforts

Gap Inc. has set an ambitious new climate goal to foster cleaner global business and deepens efforts to help protect human rights across global supply chain. With release of the company's most recent global sustainability report, Gap Inc. commits to reducing absolute greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions across all global owned and operated facilities by 50 percent from 2015 levels by the end of 2020.

Gap Inc.'s new climate goal was announced as part of the company's most recent Global Sustainability report, "Our Futures are Woven Together," which outlines the company's steadfast commitment to protect human rights and improve working conditions in garment factories across the company's supply chain; to advocate for greater equality and opportunity across its global enterprise; and to change the lives of one million women through P.A.C.E., its award-winning women's life skills education program by 2020.

"At Gap Inc., we believe that environmental issues are fundamentally human rights issues. We also believe that creating a more sustainable environment is critical to our company's business success," said Melissa Fifield, Senior Director of Sustainable Innovation at Gap Inc. "As we look to integrate our sustainability efforts more deeply into our business strategies and policies, we recognize the potential to create tremendous positive change for the people touched by our business while unlocking new possibilities to grow our global enterprise. We recognize that much work lies ahead of us, but we remain steadfast in our commitment to help ensure the safety and well-being of the people who make our clothes, to advocate for greater equality, and to foster more sustainable communities in the places we live and work."

Gap Inc. is a leading global retailer offering clothing, accessories, and personal care products for men, women, and children under the Gap, Banana Republic, Old Navy, Athleta, and Intermix brands. Fiscal year 2014 net sales were \$16.4 billion. Gap Inc. products are available for purchase in more than 90 countries worldwide through about 3,300 company-operated stores, over 400 franchise stores, and e-commerce sites. ■ Source: Gap Inc.



More sophisticated and mature Juvenile rug category grows up

While its target audience still starts at birth, the juvenile rug category has matured over the last few years as designs become more sophisticated and fibers more soft. Themed rugs such as fire trucks, butterflies and other styles remain important, though there is a growing call for cosmopolitan looks that are more style-driven. Consumers are looking for more sophisticated designs for their kid's room and there is definitely a focus on quality. Rugs have become far more artist-driven, more colourful and more playful over time.



"If a retailer is not addressing the juvenile rug business, they are leaving sales on the table," said a manufacturer which has licensed lines in the juvenile arena. The category has expanded to

be part of the in-line assortment at most major national and regional retailers whereas only a select few did 7-10 years ago. Several manufacturers have gotten juvenile lately, jumping into the category. There's another manufacturer that launched microfiber rugs with polka dots, stripes and pinwheels, rather than the more traditional kids' themes of fire trucks and race cars, as they felt they could get into this market in a little different way. Another expanded into the juvenile market last fall with its licensed line, known for its modern nursery wall décor and playthings with a midcentury influence. Ready to ship now, this line is offered in three collections: Graphic (geometric flatweaves), Iconic (machine-made and handtufted polyester) and Playful (handtufted wool). Retail prices will range between \$149 and \$349, with about 27 designs available.

Softness is an important feature in the baby to toddler category. It's about quality, easy care, price and, of course, a return to basic, easy-to-coordinate designs such as tiles, stripes and chevrons that are very popular. Besides, moms want their design aesthetic to reach the child's room as well.

Geometric designs have been trending. Girls rule, some manufacturers say—in terms of which gender-themed rugs sell better in the category. It all comes down to what the rug looks like. ■

Source: HFN



Wayfair unveils six brands in home category

Wayfair has unveiled six original home furnishings brands covering bedding, furniture, area rugs, lighting and decorative accents. "We are building the assortment in these new brands using in-line product from our top suppliers," said Steve Oblak,

senior vp and general manager, Wayfair.com.

"When shopping for home furnishings and décor, we know

that our customers are seeking items that truly reflect their individual sense of style." Wayfair's new brands include:

Andover Mills: Traditional design at affordable prices, including stylish upholstery, wood furniture and richly-colored finishes.

Breakwater Bay: Nautical designs highlighting crisp, bright colors, traditional silhouettes, and lush textures.

Lark Manor: French countryside design with vintage style and casually elegant décor.

Mercury Row: Industrial-chic with an on-trend twist.

Three Posts: Inspired by America's heartland, featuring warm colours, rustic materials like leather and iron, and classic accents.

Zipcode Design: Affordable, apartment-ready designs.

The home furnishings retailer said the new exclusive brands will be followed by more home furnishings collections slated to launch in the coming year. Wayfair Inc is a U.S.-based e-commerce company that sells furniture. Formerly known as CSN Stores, the company was founded in 2002, and now sells many other home furnishings, luggage, toys, and pet items. The Wayfair family of brands includes Wayfair.com, Joss & Main,



AllModern, DwellStudio and Birch Lane. Wayfair is headquartered in Boston, Mass., with additional locations in New York, Utah, Kentucky, Ireland, U.K. and Germany. ■

Source : Home Accents Today



Holiday sales shy of target US non-store sales get biggest boost

Retail sales during the holiday season fell short of USA's National Retail Federation's forecast, but online sales outpaced expectations. Total retail sales during the holiday season rose 3.0% to \$626 billion, missing NRF's target for 3.7% year-over-year growth. Online sales, which in October the association predicted would increase between 6% and 8%, jumped 9% to \$105 billion. This was a tough holiday season for the industry as unseasonably mild weather left cold weather merchandise sitting idle, along with inventory challenges and the early cadence of deep discounting.

The US Commerce Department said that retail sales for the month of December decreased 0.2% seasonally adjusted month-to-month and increased 2.2% unadjusted year-over-year. Said NRF chief economist Jack Kleinhenz: "The results of December's retail sales remind us just how significant of an impact unusual weather can have on retail and overall economic activity." ■ Source : Home Textiles Today

Consumers to use physical stores as showrooms

The structure of retail is shifting. Brick and mortar stores are slowly turning into showrooms for consumers, according to a recent report by IBM, reported by ComputerWorld. Many physical stores within 10 years will evolve into showrooms featuring merchandise, but ordered online and shipped to shoppers' homes. Menswear e-retailer Bonobos has already dived in with "Guideshops," stocking clothes to try on. Women's apparel e-retailer Modcloth, has also tested the model.

Today, a retailer has 10 to 15 percent of its business as internet sales or consumer direct, meaning it goes straight from the warehouse to the consumer. In the future, that will be upwards to 50 or more percent. The store will be more of a showroom and a fitting room. That will mean there will have to



be significant transformation in terms of retailer supply chains. Supply chains have been tuned for the majority of volume to go from warehouse to store, so there will be a lot of work to adjust to this. ■

Source : Gifts & Decoratives

Chat Group sales

Up 6.4% in 2015

Total retail sales for chat groups reached an estimated \$1.09 billion in 2015, according to the 2015 Casual Living Universe Study. That's a 6.4% increase over 2014's sales of \$1.02 billion. Almost nine out of 10 consumers answering the 2015 Casual Living and Apartment Therapy's exclusive Outdoor Decorating Survey have a chat group with chairs and 36% have a sofa within their group. Nearly three-fourths have an occasional table and 27% have a loveseat. One-fourth of Baby Boomers, those ages 52 to 70, and affluent consumers, those who earn more than \$100,000, have an ottoman in their chat group. A fire pit accompanies the chat groups of consumers who live in the Northeast and in the West, at 35% and 30% respectively.

Casual Living and New York-based Apartment Therapy fielded an online consumer survey this May. The survey, asking readers about the outdoor spaces in and around their home, garnered responses from more than 550 consumers. ■

Source: Casual Living

Gender neutral kids decor

Target's new collection spans 12 universal themes



Target Corp. is launching a new gender-neutral home décor collection for kids. Pillowfort encompasses bedding, furniture and accessories. "Parents tell us they're spending hours upon hours searching for pieces that fit seamlessly into their homes, but still capture the spunk and personality of their little ones, all without feeling too matchy-matchy," Target explained in an announcement on its "A Bullseye View" web page. "Pillowfort spans more than 1,200 pieces of furniture, bedding and more – such as décor/toy items such as teepees, felt animal head wall décor and bean bags – classified into 12 whimsical themes, like "Camp Kiddos," "Tropical Treehouse," "Stellar Station" and "Ocean Oasis." In August, Target shared its plans to become more androgynous in its approach to certain businesses, including home, based on feedback from shoppers. ■ Source: Home Textiles Today

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