

Denim Becoming Less Fashionable

Jean brands struggling as female tastes lean toward more athletic options

Blue Jeans. NewPremium denim in general continues to be a challenging category of retail as girls increasingly prefer to wear leggings made of innovative textiles and simple seam design, reports Joe's Jeans. "The girl no longer throws on a pair of bleached worn-out denim," says Joe Jean's Marc Crossman. "She now puts on a pair of Lululemon pants. And what we are finding is that the girl is wanting something a little bit more dressy for lack of a better word and it's this new category called athleisure. We have a whole group where we are doing sweats in French Terry and [something] that is similar to Lululemon's pant, but with more of a design feel to it and special prints."

Bank Funds. The average amount in a checking account is \$3,100, according to BuzzFeed.



Larissa Faw
The Business Roundup

Home Lunch. Fewer people at the office means less money for caterers and food cafeteria suppliers. "I mean it's a logical trend as companies are downsizing as also the way of, the work habits are changing, it has a lot of more people working at home for few days," says food provider Sodexo's Michel Landel.

Paid Helpers. The Container Store is expanding its At Home program where organizers go directly into customer's homes and design solutions for them, organizing every thing, using of course The Container Store products. The average At Home customer spends more than \$2,000 for these services, compared to the average in-store ticket of \$60. The service will launch in Los Angeles, Chicago, and Washington DC by the end of this calendar year and then to the rest of our stores in 2015.

No Recovery? Family Dollar says its average customer is still struggling. "The low end consumer has not benefited in this recovery at all, in fact, I think have slipped further back," says Family Dollar's Howard Levine. "Unemployment trends remain high. The government cutbacks continue, there is quite a bit of healthcare uncertainty coming

from this unbelievably cold winter, heating prices, heating oil and gas prices are moving upwards. It's a tough playing field out there. What it does mean to us is there are going to even be more people out there looking for great values and opportunities to help them get through of these challenging times out there."

Tastes Like Chicken. Dinner represents 30 percent of Bob Evans Restaurants' sales mix, with the most sales in Ohio. Now, the chain is introducing Broasted Chicken, a thoroughly marinated, ham-breaded, oven-crust chicken that is in a different league than everyday fried chicken. "Our number one complaint on Broasted Chicken was out of stock," says Bob Evans' Steve Davis.

Blowing Wind. It has been a good season for selling fans, reports Helen of Troy. "So far it's

been hot. It's been hot in North America, it's been hot in Europe and as a result, we sold a lot of fans," says Helen of Troy's Brian Grass.

Gear Heads. In the past, most people first encountered WD-40 while working on automobiles, now WD-40 must attract them in other ways since most people don't fix their own cars. "We are not going to be like a blind dog in a meat house here," says WD-40's Gerry Ridge. "This is a very valuable shield, and we will not slap it on anything. It will be deliberate and controlled and ensuring that we continue to keep our promise to our end users, which is delivering above expectation performance at great value."

Larissa Faw covers business trends for Forbes, The Motley Fool and other outlets. Contact her at larissafaw@gmail.com.

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