

Spring has sprung but what trap is waiting for you next?

As an industry we have learnt many things this spring. Some of the lessons learnt are simply ones we re learnt!

Has the product supply flow this spring been the result of unprecedented demand, inefficiency by suppliers, unrealistic expectations from retailers, off shore production, or simply a shortage of transport for all the reasons in that?

Did the weather taking a turn for the worse part way through May save many suppliers and retailers from acute embarrassment through unavailability of stock?

So perhaps it is time to stop. Time to take stock and really think ahead before plunging headlong into another season, chucking margin away in preseason deals, taking the gamble of ordering that little bit extra from far off shores “just in case” and all those other margin eroding activities we seem to specialise in?

Is pre season still relevant to our industry? If so on what terms – discounts, volumes, payment dates. Have suppliers and retailers weighed up the “**risk verses the gain**” of the extra space taken up, the bad debt risk, along with all those other pros and cons? There must be topic to stimulate debate within the industry between suppliers and retailers. Perhaps it is a debate we have round the table with a panel of suppliers and retailers?

- Is pre season still important to Suppliers?
- Is pre season still important to retailers?
- Following this a good season such as spring 2007 has it made PS more important to retailers and do suppliers expect more commitment this time around?
- What are the expected and the main delivery times?
- What are the payment dates being offered to retailers?
- Where does the wholesaler fit into this equation – do they have a role to play?
- Is there a need to offer incentive to retailers or are all year round net prices becoming the norm?
- Could we get greater commitment in advance from retailer if we gave an extra 30 days credit in the spring for deliveries in Jan/Feb/March/April/May on orders over a certain value/volume so they would shift away from “just in time”
- What are the reason retailers are giving you for not committing to volumes in advance
- Being the mere retailer I am what other questions/comments/feedback have I failed to ask you for?

Retailers and Suppliers?

What are your views? Answers on a postcard (could be a topic to contemplate while you lie on the beach this holiday) or better still via email to Neil Gow GIMA Director at neil.gow1@btinternet.com

Would you be interested in sitting round a table with a mix of suppliers and retailers to discuss the issues? Please email your contact details to Neil Gow if you are. We seek to have this round table discussion before the end of August at a location convenient to the greatest volume of response.



Did your warehouse racking get close to looking like this in April this year?



Did your shop shelves start to look like this towards the end of April 2007?