

The logo for the British Footwear Association (bfa) consists of the lowercase letters 'bfa' in a white, sans-serif font, centered within a solid purple rectangular background.

British Footwear Association Ltd

BFA NEWS FOR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF THE INDUSTRY

AUGUST 2011

REPORT FROM RICHARD KOTTLER, CEO

A former boss of mine was fond of saying "out of bad comes good" - usually when ritually sacking one or the other of his management team!

I was reminded of this during my recent attendance at Moda and Pure, the key UK Shows for the footwear industry. The mood was downbeat, not helped by the London riots during Pure. Moda was also held in troubling circumstances - stock market volatility, Euro zone and US financial markets under pressure; increasing inflation and rising unemployment.

Against this backdrop however, I noted the start of a community spirit echoing that which is so evident in the aftermath of the riots. Buyers and sellers alike working together to make sense of the nonsense of the situation they find themselves in.

Jointly trying to predict how consumers are going to behave over the coming months and how this relates to forward orders was one of the driving forces of this enhanced buyer/seller relationship. The juggling act of balancing the needs of the wholesaler and his commitments to his factories, with the aims of the retailer to keep stocks low and forward orders short, was exercising people's minds even more than usual.

But many exhibitors and buyers were telling me that this year there is a recognition that "we are all in this together" and therefore little point in point in scoring short-term victories. One comment was that "the difference between the 2008 situation and 2011 is that in 2008, no one had any idea what was going to happen. This year, everyone knows what is going to happen e.g. consumers tightening their belts, banks not lending, and a general sense of austerity. So there is an impetus to agree joint plans that might not earn everyone's fortune but does ensure survival and sensible levels of trading and margin for both sides of the industry.

No one was naïve enough to put this down to community spirit alone, but this severe test of the buyer/seller relationship was dealt with and the bond stronger than ever. As was the case when my old boss reinstated his team!

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HR implications of the London 2012 Olympics

There is now less than a year to go until the London 2012 Olympics, and employers will need to start considering and preparing for the effects that the Games may have on their workforce. Possible issues include:

Holiday requests. Employers are likely to be inundated with leave requests next year, particularly from those lucky enough to have tickets to the Games. BFA has an Annual Leave model policy (non NCA); a line manager's guide on managing holidays and also a Time Off for Sporting Events Policy available for member companies.

Unauthorised absence. A recent survey conducted by Badenoch & Clark found that nearly one in six of the 1000 office workers they questioned would consider taking a sickie to watch the Olympics. The number was even higher among 16 to 34 year olds, of whom more than a quarter (28.4%) would use sickness absence in order to attend an Olympic event. We can provide members with advice on managing short-term absence or, should the matter escalate, a whole topic on Disciplinary Procedures is also available.

Homeworking. The traffic chaos that could hit London and the South East during the period of the Games is a major concern, and employers may wish to offer relevant employees the option to work from home. We have Homeworking and Teleworking advice on how best to do this.

Flexible working. Some employees may ask to take a longer lunch break to watch the events, or alter their working hours in order to attend an event. We have advice on flexible working.

Volunteers. Some employees may have volunteered to become a "Games Maker" for the Olympics and Paralympics, for which selection events started in February 2011 and will continue until March 2012. It is possible that employees may request to attend a selection event during work time. BFA can supply a Q&A sheet on volunteering.

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Dealing with disruptions caused by riots

In light of the recent rioting in London and other cities across England, we have a practical factsheet for employers regarding the HR and health and safety issues that may affect businesses.

Also, HMRC has announced a riot related helpline number 0845 366 1207
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SCAM 1

A member company has unfortunately lost money to what appeared to be a legitimate Bangladeshi footwear company which operates under various names: Lady Luck Shoes/Feather Glory Footwear/The First Luxury Shoemaker from Bangladesh/Lady Luck Impex Ltd. They offer to send samples but require payment first and the samples never arrive. Investigations have shown that the company does not exist and their brochure illustrations were copied from trade magazines.

SCAM 2 Beware Bogus Expo Guide

As soon as you start exhibiting at trade shows (overseas and in the UK) you become a target for EXPO GUIDE - you will get a letter by post from them, with a form to complete and a postage paid envelope. The letter suggests that Expo Guide knows that you are showing at a particular show, and it asks you to confirm that you are showing there so that your details can appear in a "free listing" in "The Expo Guide Database" which it suggests is read by buyers etc. It is not. Someone in your office might read it and think - "Gosh, I must complete and return this, it looks important and urgent!"

Please warn everyone who opens the post not to do that....if you read further down the form, you will see that by signing and returning it, you are committing yourself to a free entry, but additionally to an insertion in www.expo-guide.com <<http://www.expo-guide.com>> and an expenditure of 1270 Euros a year FOR THREE YEARS for a "service" which will not do anything to help your business. Expo Guide will then be relentless in pursuing you for this money, and they employ debt collectors. So - if you do get a letter from Expo Guide, write back to them and tell them that you do not require their services. Send a copy of their letter to your local Trading Standards Office, and sign up with one of the campaigns which is working tirelessly to stop their activities - this is a good one - <http://stopecg.org>.

If you have signed by mistake, you do not have to pay....just hold very firm, and eventually they will give up.

With acknowledgement to UKFT.