

# The Great Outdoors

Since Dri Duck Traders Inc. joined the ad specialty industry two years ago, the company's had success with America's outdoorswomen.

BY AMY LUCAS



Roger Carroll is vice president of sales at Overland Park, KS-based Dri Duck Traders Inc.

**G**olf's one of corporate America's favorite pastimes, but not the only one by a long shot, says Roger Carroll, who's vice president of sales at Overland Park, KS-based Dri Duck Traders Inc.

As a relative newcomer to the ad specialty industry, Dri Duck saw a promotional industry whose primary sportswear is for golfers. "If you look at any major supplier catalog, you'll see 28 kinds of polos," Carroll says. "But what do you do for the person who doesn't play golf?"

That's where Dri Duck Traders, a retail and wholesale supplier of outer and work wear, saw its opportunity. "There are three times more Americans who fish than play golf, and 21 million active hunters who hunt at least 19 days a year," Carroll says. So, just by catering to the masses, he estimates Dri Duck will triple its sales this year alone.

**Wearables Business: Why did Dri Duck decide to enter the wearables market?**

**Roger Carroll:** Our parent company, Design Resources Inc., has long been involved in the promotional wearables market developing products for suppliers. So, it was a natural extension for us because of our familiarity with the market.

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**WB: What were Dri Duck's initial challenges getting into this market?**

**RC:** The biggest challenge so far is that most of our competitors have a 100 year head start on us. So we have to be better in every way, from fabrication to construction, to listening to our customers' needs.

**WB: Dri Duck offers quite a few jacket styles just for women. Explain why you've taken the time to cater specifically to women?**

**RC:** Unisex doesn't cut it in the retail market and increasingly doesn't cut it in the promotional market either. There are much higher numbers of women in

the workplace than there were 10 years ago, and they want garments that fit their bodies. It's easy to design for women when 90% of our merchandisers are female.

**WB: What are the biggest differences between your men's and women's outerwear?**

**RC:** When apparel suppliers first started to accommodate women in the workplace, they added an extra small to a popular style and merely downsized male patterns. Our merchandisers customize each companion style to fit the female form, taking the time to change the length, adjust the armhole size, factor in the waist, reverse zippers and add color choices that are more appealing.

**WB: What type of size range do you offer?**

**RC:** Our best sellers come in size small through 6XL and tall, LT through 3XLT; however, all our styles are available in small to 4XL. We also have tall sizes for men. All our styles fit consistently across our size range.

**WB: What are Dri Duck's best sellers in the ad specialty industry? Is that different than what's popular on your retail side?**

**RC:** Our styles perform at pretty much the same rates for both retail and corporate.

Our best seller is the classic hooded work jacket, the Cheyenne series 5020, so we're coming out with a women's companion style to this jacket for spring 2008. Our next best seller is our full-zip fleece jacket, the Crossfire series 7033, which is also available in a women's style, the Wildfire series 9570.

**WB: Who do you think will be buying your camouflage hunting jackets for women in the promotional marketplace?**

**RC:** Our network of distributors will be carrying these styles for the first time this fall. We anticipate that they'll do well in the construction, trucking, contractor and building trades.

**WB: Do you plan to offer any new styles for 2008?**

**RC:** We have a couple of exciting new collections to we plan to introduce. The first one is the Sawtooth Collection, a line of authentic work shirts. ■

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