

G.S.
SCHWARTZ
& Co. Inc.

Public Relations
Investor Relations



September, 2008

Power Shopper: High Heels Heaven

There's no need to sacrifice style over comfort.

by Emily L. Foley

Women have come to accept painful shoes as a part of life. We buy stylish shoes expecting that end-of-the-night limp each time they're worn. But, like everything in life, when it comes to shoes, education is the path to empowerment.

For many women, foot pain is such a part of their daily routine that it is deemed normal and ignored. In fact, statistics from the American Orthopaedic Foot and Ankle Society reveal that 90 percent of foot surgeries in the United States are performed on women, and that 86 percent of women wear shoes that are one- or even two-width sizes too small (A person's foot never stops growing. Just because you were a size 7 in college doesn't mean you still are today.)



It is commonly accepted wisdom that properly fitted shoes are the best way to prevent foot pain and ultimately, foot damage. Although most big-name shoe designers completely ignore foot health for fashion, there are brands who work to merge the two elements.

Aetrex Worldwide Inc. is a family-owned business that has specialized in pedorthics (the art of designing devices to relieve foot pain) for more than 60 years. Although the brand originally focused more on the medical side of the footwear industry, for the last decade Aetrex has been creating fashion-forward, yet comfortable shoes.

Aetrex President Evan Schwartz says, "Most shoe companies design their footwear from the outside in. They create the style they want, and it typically has either no insole or a piece of inexpensive foam. We're very different. We work from the inside, out. We figure out the support and cushioning each shoe should have to protect the feet, legs and knees. Then, we construct the exterior.

Each **Aetrex** shoe comes with an insert that uses a peel-off process to customize it to the specific needs and pressure points of each customer. Stores in Atlanta that carry Aetrex products include Foot Solutions and the PGA Superstore.

Foot Solutions is a franchise company with nearly 250 locations worldwide, 13 of which are in the Atlanta area. The stores carry shoes in every category from dress to casual. Each brand and style is specifically chosen because of its ability to alleviate and prevent 18 health problems targeted by Foot Solutions, including back pain and arthritis. Each store's employees receive specialty training to ensure every customer not only buys the correct shoe but also the proper inserts and arch support to go along with them. Available brands such as Helle Comfort and Oh! Shoes each have specific technologies to provide physical well-being along with style.