

# P/O/P TIMES<sup>®</sup>

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## Wall Display Illuminates Asics' Message

**Asics America** chose a small slatwall unit to accomplish a huge branding task: Educating demanding athletes about a new technology in performance running shoes.

The new technology is SoLyte, a cushioning foam that is more light-weight than Asics' traditional materials. The new material is built into the front-, rear- and mid-soles of five shoes in the company's fall line. The product is targeted to runners, who are unfazed by the shoes' \$100 to \$165 price tag, but are not as amenable to changes in their kicks.

"Any time you change a shoe technology, [performance runners] are going to go out and buy three or four pairs of the shoe they had before the change," says Joe Alfidi, manager of point-of-purchase for Asics America.

Athletes fear that the new technology will affect performance, but Alfidi says, "We want to reassure our customers that they won't be losing the cushioning they expect."

To tackle the challenge of educating runners about SoLyte, Alfidi worked with Portland, Ore.-based **The Carlson Group's** Chicago office to create a slatwall unit that highlights the shoe's lighter weight using a lever that allows customers to lift the shoe. As the lever moves, LED lights highlight copy that explains how the SoLyte technology works.

"We wanted it to be in layman's terms," Alfidi says of the copy, which succinctly indicates that SoLyte provides "enhanced shock attenuation"

and "superior durability" rather than dabbling in scientific jargon that could confuse consumers. "We just wanted to get the message across clearly that it's a lighter weight foam, but you won't lose the cushioning."

The brief copy also can be attributed to the unit's small size. Asics eschewed a floorstand or other bulky display in favor of the compact slatwall piece because of the shoe's target distributors, local running-specific specialty outlets. "Local running shops are generally tight on space, so it had to be really compact," says Shannon Scott, senior manager of marketing communications for Asics.

The resulting slatwall piece is a svelte 1½ inches wide by 18¾ inches tall. Five hundred of the molded plastic and thick paper stock pieces were built, and about 460 fully assembled units have been distributed to boutique running stores nationally since SoLyte's introduction in March. —Greg Presto

**Product:** Asics performance running shoes with SoLyte

**Number of displays:** 500

**P-O-P company:** The Carlson Group, Portland, Ore.

**Distribution:** Specialty shops

**Introduction:** March 2006

**Duration:** Permanent

**Construction:** Molded plastic, thick paper stock, metal and wires (for LED)

**Set-up:** Ships preassembled



When the lever is pulled on the display, LED lights highlight copy that explains how the SoLyte cushioning works.

Contact The Carlson Group at (503) 670-7599 or visit us at [www.carlsongroupinc.com](http://www.carlsongroupinc.com)