

FORMERLY **POP**TIMES Shopper Marketing

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people? watch

TREVOR WESSMAN- LAVELLE

For Trevor Wessman-Lavelle, working at Reef is much more than a day job. Getting his first taste of sales and marketing as the manager of a small surf shop, he joined Reef's sales department in 2002. A few years later, when the surf apparel brand decided it needed to put someone in charge of P-O-P, Wessman-Lavelle was nominated and ultimately selected for the new position.

Currently, he is kind of a one-man show, in charge of all of Reef's in-store efforts, promotional materials and print production. Since many of the company's employees are surfers themselves, they all share a passion for the industry, which Wessman-Lavelle considers a big part of the brand's success.

"I think it's important to remain involved in a business that has to do with you; it makes it more of a career vs. a job," he says. "Your job is very much an expression of yourself, so if you have the ability to work in an industry that reflects you in some way, make it happen."

Another major part of Reef's success is the company's intimate understanding of its consumers. For this year's launch of the girls' apparel line, Wessman-Lavelle and the rest of the marketing team had to look for new ways to reach its female target audience. Unlike Reef's male shoppers, young women don't read the surf maga-

zines the brand usually advertises in. So instead, Reef looked to fashion magazines like Teen Vogue and was chosen for the publication's "It Girl" program, which turned a select group of readers into market testers who wrote about the products they received in the magazine and on its website.

"Connecting to the consumer is key," Wessman-Lavelle says. "Survival in this industry means relevance to your consumer. If you're not seen as an inspirational, meaningful part of this industry, you're obsolete."

Maintaining this connection extends to the retail arena, where shoppers can interact directly with the brand. The girls' apparel launch was supported by new fixtures that feature Reef imagery and feminine touches like a vase with a single silk flower in the header. The in-store presence for the girls' line will be ramped up for 2009 with additional fixtures and an array of temporary and permanent signage.

"Consumers are not getting their messages from TV or radio," Wessman-Lavelle says. "They're getting it interactively from the Web, and they're getting it at the store level, so it's very important that we can go into 2009 equipping the sales reps and retailers to be able to parlay the brand story."



REEF

TITLE:

Retail Marketing Manager, Reef, Carlsbad, Calif.

AGE: 33

EDUCATION:

Morehouse College (one year); Mesa Junior College

WHY HE'S ONE TO WATCH:

Became Reef's first P-O-P manager, helping the surf apparel brand grow its retail presence worldwide

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