

BOARDSPORT

# SOURCE

EUROPEAN SURF/SKATE/SNOW BUSINESS

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At Source's last snow forum in Livigno, Italy, representatives from the world's biggest snowboard brands met in workshops to address the challenges of our industry. It was during one of these workshops that we discovered the Shopatron.com concept as a way of improving online sales and supplying the end consumer, whilst also encouraging retail commerce. Rémi Forsans interviewed Shaun Moores, one of the directors of the European branch in Swindon, UK, as well as Ed Stevens, Founder and CEO, based in San Obispo, California to find out more.

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# Shopatron By Rémi Forsans

## – A New Retail Concept



Ed Stevens

In 2001 Ed Stevens launched a revolutionary concept from his garage, and with a \$180,000 loan – boosted by the internet sales explosion at the time – gathered additional investment that was used to launch a global development plan. A supportive article in the UK newspaper, The Financial Times, in March 2008 helped build the brand and to date Shopatron has a catalogue of over 500 brands and 8000 retailers... could this be a retail solution in troubled times?

### What exactly is Shopatron.com ?

Shopatron.com is a new concept in eCommerce that allows manufacturers and their existing retailers to collaborate [in order] to provide consumers with shopping how and where they want it. A consumer buys directly from a brand they know and trust. Shopatron then matches their order to a local retailer that has stock of the item. The consumer decides if they would like the order shipped to them or would like to visit the shop to collect the goods. The key is to provide consumer convenience and leverage from the value-add provided by a specialist dealer network. Shopatron solves the problem of sales channel conflict where a brand would compete with their own retailers if they sell directly on their website.

### Where did it start and how big is the market there?

Shopatron started in San Luis Obispo, California in 2001. We have grown rapidly to 80 people in our US operation and 17 in the UK. We provide eCommerce solutions to some of the largest and



**“SHOPATRON SOLVES THE PROBLEM OF SALES CHANNEL CONFLICT WHERE A BRAND WOULD COMPETE WITH THEIR OWN RETAILERS IF THEY SOLD DIRECTLY ON THEIR WEBSITE”, Shaun Moores. Founder and CEO, Shopatron**

most sophisticated brands in the US including Brooks Running, Calloway Golf, Panasonic and many other specialist brands.

### How fast is the business growing?

The company has sustained growth quarter-on-quarter since its inception. We continue to add new brands and we now have over 500 brands and 8000 retailers collaborating in our order exchange.

### What about Shopatron in Europe?

Shopatron launched its European operation by opening a full-service operation based in Swindon UK. The UK office provides French, German and English support to consumers and retailers in the local language. We opened the office in March 2008 and started accepting orders in April 2008.

### What are the pros and cons for a retailer when working through shopatron?

Shopatron supports retailers by recruiting as many brands in a particular market vertical as quickly as we can. Our



order exchange needs to be attractive to both retailers and manufacturers for the exchange to function optimally. Retailers are rewarded for holding inventory by being able to fulfil orders from a manufacturer's website in their country. The in-store pickup option allows the manufacturer to drive new footfall to a retailer that gives them the opportunity to sell additional products and build a relationship with the consumer. Shopatron allows the brand and the retailer to leverage each other's strengths for the benefit of consumers.

### Ed, can you tell us what is the main interest for a boardsport retailer to work with Shopatron right now?

Simply because consumers are demanding. Shopatron is free for retailers to join and they have two advantages: to sell more and to collect more data on latest tendencies. It is a solution to buy more effectively for their store.

### What is your strategy with European brands?

Consolidated business will happen on E-commerce. We trust our system because to be more global than boardsports only offer low costs and free services like reports for consumer trends. We create big economy of scale and our utility is great for manufacturers and consumers as well. We expect to double every year.

### How does your strategy differ with European retailers than back in the US?

We are already multicultural. We started an office in UK and we hired consumer service covering English, German and French customers. Being successful means that you believe in your heart that the world is a big place for making business.

### do you expect to extend to eastern European countries and Russia?

We started with the three main eCommerce countries in Europe (UK, Germany and France), but we will go wherever infrastructure is needed. By the second half of the year we will start development in new countries. Russia is one of our targets too.

### What is your main strength and main threat?

Our strength is our focus on suitability and the reliability of our system. Our threat is that not every company thinks about the future. Industry is dealing with short-term problems and it is almost a luxury for a CEO to think he will have a 10-year career.

### How big will Shopatron be in 2010?

In 2010 we will be four times bigger than we are today with 15 to 20 countries and probably an opening in Asia. In 2010 in-store pickup will be definitively accepted.

### What is your opinion on the future of retail?

Retail is swinging back to local value. 50% of the consumers prefer to buy local. Cross channel shopping is the future and Shopatron is creating an environment with no difference between off line and on line business. 🐼