

January 9th, 2014

Sojitz Corporation

Sojitz General Merchandise Corporation

## **Sojitz GMC Acquires Trademark Rights to Admiral Brand for Five Regions in East Asia**

**Planning and Development Capabilities Established in Japanese Market to be Used for Business Expansion**

Sojitz General Merchandise Corporation (Sojitz GMC), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Sojitz Corporation, acquired trademark rights to England's Admiral casual fashion brand for five regions in East Asia (China, Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan, and South Korea).

Sojitz GMC began selling Admiral brand casual footwear in Japan in 2006 and has performed planning, design, production, and sales. Sales volume were approximately 40,000 pairs in 2007, but by using its own product planning to emphasize the English characteristics of the products, Sojitz GMC has gained support from the younger generation about 20 years old, and annual sales are currently more than 200,000 pairs. Sojitz GMC designed some products using Harris Tweed and Liberty brand textiles from England, and took various measures such as product planning in collaboration with Japan's largest mail-order fashion sites and premier select shops, developing Admiral as a brand that retains unique English characteristics. Sojitz GMC also created a special website (<http://admiralfootwear.com/100th/>) to mark the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Admiral brand and will use the website to actively promote the brand by posting Admiral's history, product information, information about England, interviews with celebrities, and more.

Sojitz GMC recently expanded the scope of its trademark rights from the footwear that it handles in Japan to also include a wide range of consumer goods such as bags, apparel, and sporting goods. With the acquisition of these trademark rights, Sojitz GMC will solidify the production foundations of its existing business while using the brand know-how that it established in the Japanese market to sell Admiral as an English brand launched from Japan in East Asian markets. Sojitz GMC will begin overseas marketing of Admiral brand products in 2014 and will look into sales of products other than casual footwear.



In addition to Admiral, Sojitz GMC handles a wide range of consumer goods brands including Eastpak backpacks, Reef surf goods, and Dot-Drops suitcases. Sojitz GMC imports and sells products, but also conducts brand marketing through original product planning and promotions that make maximum use of the brand histories and concepts.

Sojitz GMC will continue to propose ever-better consumer products as the consumer's best partner and to expand its scope of business even further.

### **Brand explanation**

Admiral was established in 1914 and has become an international brand sold in 40 countries around the world including Japan. It is one of the most widely-recognized European brands in Japan. The Admiral name derives from the manufacture of uniforms for the British Navy. The brand logo is based on the chevron of admiral. In the 1970s and 1980s, Admiral integrated sports and fashion, sold textiles with innovative designs and quality, and contracted with a number of major professional soccer clubs including Manchester United (1975-1980). Admiral also sponsored the historic England national soccer team for 10 years.

## Overview of Sojitz General Merchandise Corporation

Head office address	4th floor, Akasaka Oji Building, 1-22 Akasaka 8-chome, Minato-ku, Tokyo, Japan
Established	October 1967
Shareholder	Sojitz Corporation (100.00%)
Capital	450 million yen
Sales	8.4 billion yen (fiscal year ended March 2013)
Business activities	Planning, development, import, and wholesale distribution of the footwear, suitcases, sandals, apparel and other products Planning, production management and sales of uniform clothing and bedding products
End of fiscal year	March
No. of employee	63 (as of end of June 2013)
Website	<a href="http://www.sojitz-gmc.com/en/index.shtml">http://www.sojitz-gmc.com/en/index.shtml</a>
Brands handled	Admiral, Reef, Eastpak, Dot-Drops

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