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Swiss Colony: Moving Ahead Slowly With Caution

Wisconsin State Journal :: CAPITAL REGION BUSINESS JOURNAL :: 4

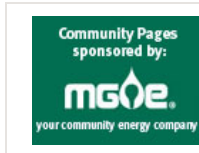
Monday, September 1, 2008
Ellen Williams-Masson

Mail-order colossus The Swiss Colony of Monroe has taken a "foot off the accelerator" in response to softening sales in the early spring and cites "rising costs across the board" as an impediment to boosting sales with price cuts.

"We're taking on a very strong cost focus right now and being very conservative with a 'wait out the economy' approach," Swiss Colony president John Baumann said, adding that they are also cutting back on new initiatives. "We've started a number of new businesses over the past 10 years, but right now we don't feel that's a smart thing to be doing... because you really don't get a clean read on what the consumer is looking for you to do."

Swiss Colony's recent acquisition of the Montgomery Ward brand - fruit of the weakened economy - is one way the company hopes to grow with less risk.

"Since the Montgomery Ward business is smaller than The Swiss Colony, we are fortunate that we can integrate it into our current marketing and operations platforms, and manage it with existing staff," Baumann said. "Rather than trying to grow a new catalog brand from scratch, we're integrating a well-known, existing brand that can make an immediate impact on our sales and profits."



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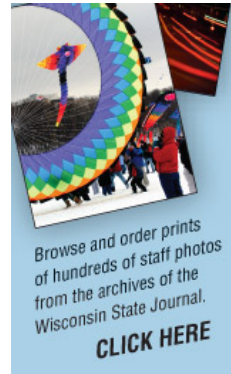
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