



## MORE THAN BOOTS IN BOXES

### Justin Goes the Distance to Support Retailers with Innovative Bent Rail Launch

**T**HE SUN WAS SWELTERING AT THE NUTTY BROWN CAFÉ IN Dripping Springs, Texas, on the afternoon of June 23, 2009, but it was no match for the blistering sounds emanating from the Randy Rogers Band on the outdoor stage.

The Randy Rogers Band, as well as Wade Bowen, the Casey Donahew Band and Reckless Kelly, are core to Justin's strategy in the launch of their Bent Rail Collection, along with heavy reliance on social media such as Facebook and Twitter.

The Bent Rail Collection is geared toward a younger consumer not easily reached by traditional media such as newspapers, and Justin even involved customers in such usually-behind-closed-doors developmental activities as choosing the logo, by voting at concerts, and helping choose styles by voting on Bent Rail's Facebook page. Justin is aiming to reach the elusive 18-to-24-year-olds through a powerful combination of technology, music and social media.

"We want to reinvent the brand and create a two-way dialogue with customers," says Louis Russo, brand manager. "So we're validating all of it with the consumer."

Justin's goal is to drive business back to the Western retailer with seamless follow-through in every aspect of their merchandising support. For example, concert tickets are "hidden" in a pair of Bent Rail boots at a selected retailer and a "tweet" sent out with clues to drive customers to the store. Besides the lucky one who finds the concert tickets, anyone coming in and purchasing a pair of Bent Rail boots gets a 10 percent discount. Justin even makes it easy to get to the retailer with iPhone/Google maps applications built into the site. Text-to-win promotions and free music downloads further encourage bonding with the brand.

Once customers are in the store, Justin continues to support branding and drive sales. "We're supporting the launch by expanding into the customers' lifestyle through licensees," explains Lisa Lankes, director of corporate communications and licensing. "This includes a terrific retailer DVD with a detailed overview of the entire Bent Rail branding strategy, in-store point-of-sale displays, coozie giveaways, guitar picks with the Bent Rail logo, boot box design and the 'All-Access Backstage Pass' hang tag to create an entire experience throughout the bonding, buying and wearing experience."

The boots themselves—85 percent of them American-made—feature distressed leathers, tattoo-inspired embroidery and flashy stitch patterns for men, with the women's boots sporting fashion-forward silhouettes marked by eclectically rich tones and colors. The collection offers affordable retail price points—\$119-\$129 for ropers and \$149-\$159 for cowboy boots.

So is it a huge risk for a venerable brand such as Justin to hang its hat on this new-fangled social media for such an important launch? Not really, says Russo. "Innovation and risk go hand-in-hand," he affirms. "Here at Justin, we challenge what we do every day: Is there a better way, a more efficient way, a more unique way? It's part of our corporate culture. You have to define your goals and what you're after to avoid information overload, and let the consumers drive the product development."

Boots from the Bent Rail Collection are available for September delivery and can be seen at the Denver WESA Market, Sept. 11-14.

**Justinboots.com; (800) 545-8707**  
**Denver WESA MR 3169**



The Randy Rogers Band, endorsees for Justin's Bent Rail Collection, enjoy a brief moment in the shade prior to taking the stage at the Nutty Brown Café at a recent photo shoot.

