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Kizik's Bradley Johnson Discusses Enabling Discovery for Innovation Hungry Consumers

The senior director of footwear design shares insights behind the brand's successful outdoors collection and knack for trend spotting.

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The Wasatch shoe from Kizik's Step Outside collection. COURTESY IMAGE.



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Since entering the market, **Kizik's** hands-free shoes have been giving consumers what they didn't know they were missing: casual lifestyle **footwear** that is comfortable and, importantly, practical.

The slip-on shoes have been a hit with consumers. But what makes Kizik so popular isn't just its innovative technology but a keen eye for trend spotting that Bradley Johnson, senior director of **footwear** design, said will continue to propel the brand forward. The goal is to provide its consumers with practical, stylish footwear for casual activity. The brand's most recent collection, called The Step Outside collection, consisted of four gender-neutral styles and represented a fresh take for the Kizik as it explored the **outdoor** category for the first time.

"We noticed that mid-pandemic **outdoor** products in general were becoming more common with a lot of growth in those categories across just about every industry," he said. "We knew that we could probably do hands-free outdoor products and we're a casual brand so we knew they would be casual outdoor, but that doesn't mean we can't do our version of outdoor and so we chose that category because of that immense opportunity and believing that we could infuse our hands-free technology into these shoes."

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Digging deeper into what this means for Kizik's consumer, he said that the Kizik woman is someone who is on the go and enjoys experiencing life. The brand does not focus on a specific activity, it's not a sports brand or running brand but supplies footwear for those moments in between. Johnson said he likes to think of it as a brand for the moments that don't require equipment and for any of those little life adventures.

Kizik's Juno boot from The Step Outside collection.

Moreover, he told WWD that The Step Outside collection was both "a way to introduce a new category and to raise the game a little bit. It's definitely more technical than anything we've made before, so it was an exciting opportunity and exciting challenge as well as a great way to offer more and grow the business. And [creating an] outdoors collection, in my opinion, is so authentic to us. We're surrounded by mountains [in Utah] so it's natural."

Notably, the Juno snow boot from Kizik's collection sold out completely in all colors for both men and women in just seven hours on its launch day.

In addition to entering a new category for the brand, Kizik's collection represents its first high-top shoe and boot, testing the capabilities of its hands-free promise.

"With the Juno, that's a full-size snow boot and we didn't even know it was possible until we did it," Johnson said. "And as soon as we did it, we wanted to share it with everyone. We're sort of discovering what we're capable of at the same time as everyone else."

Connecting with its customers is something that Kizik continues to prioritize as it identifies trends to tap into next, learning insights from the wearers in real-time. From opening its store, Johnson said they have gleaned that trying the shoe on and testing

the technology in person is a huge benefit to sales, finding that nearly a quarter of consumers who visit the Salt Lake City store make a purchase.

A self-proclaimed people watcher and traveler, Johnson looks forward to putting Kizik’s signature on new footwear and classic styles.

“What’s exciting is that we’re realizing that the hands-free option doesn’t keep us from making anything we want to,” Johnson said. “The Juno is super exciting because it’s an ultimate innovation statement, where even the highest snow boots can just be stepped into as easily as our low top knit athletics. For me personally, I want the [collection] to get out there and declare us kings of hands-free.”

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