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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Columbus Consulting Earning Respect Among Notables in Retail Space

Company announces Saks Fifth Avenue as new client and adds four industry experts to help support growing demand for consulting services

COLUMBUS, Ohio – May 23, 2005 – Boasting clients such as American Eagle Outfitters, Ann Taylor, Big Lots, CVS Pharmacy and New York & Company, Columbus Consulting, Inc. has quickly become a force of industry experts that is earning respect from many of the notables in the U.S. and international retail industry. The company offers a variety of business expertise and services designed to help improve a retailer’s merchandising systems and processes, from planning and allocation, supply chain, to reporting and analysis.

Columbus Consulting today announced that it has been hired by Saks Fifth Avenue to help the renowned retailer re-engineer its merchandise planning process. Saks Fifth Avenue is part of Saks Incorporated, one of the nation’s premiere retail enterprises operating 382 stores in 40 states, with more than \$6 billion in annual revenues and 50,000 service associates. As part of the project, Columbus Consulting will also assist Saks in selecting a new merchandising planning system, which will be critical in helping the retailer implement and maintain a profitable merchandising process. The first phase of the project, which began in April 2005, marks the first engagement for Columbus Consulting at Saks.

In response to the growing demand for its consulting services, Columbus Consulting recently added four industry experts who will be responsible for supporting existing contracts and several major new projects.

“We are successful in helping large retail organizations because we have put together a unique and diverse team of proven leaders and experts who understands the ins and outs of the retail industry, including both merchandising process and technology,” said Richard Amari, president of Columbus Consulting. “We have been experiencing solid growth in the past 18 to 24 months and are establishing a presence in the competitive retail consulting industry. Much of this success can be attributed to our significant expertise in the industry combined with positive referrals from our clients. These clients, which include some of today’s most successful retailers, depend on us to manage critical projects and to deliver results on time and within budget.”

The Columbus team of Richard Amari, Jon Beck, Mike Downing, Don Poirier, and Richard von Hirschberg are industry veterans, each with decades of retail experience. The company recently expanded with the appointments of, Ken Knop, Stuart Tattum, Drew Achabal, and Marc Reifeis as senior consultants.

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- Knop has more than 20 years of retail merchandising experience, working with many of the nation's leading retailers, including Sears Roebuck, Payless ShoeSource, L.L. Bean and Neiman Marcus. Prior to joining Columbus, Knop served as vice president of business process consulting for Planalytics, where he was responsible for complex implementations of inventory planning and control systems, and business processes at retailers and manufacturers nationwide. He also held various management and director-level positions specializing in merchandise planning, allocation and distribution at Comshare, Contempo Casual, Hub Distributing and Mervyn's. Knop earned a bachelor's degree in mathematics and applied science from the University of California at Los Angeles where he graduated magna cum laude. He then earned a master's degree in business administration from the University of California at Berkeley.
- Tattum is a 20-year retail software veteran and began his career at Next, where he was a founding member of the team that developed the initial versions of the *Arthur Planning*, *Assortment Planning* and *Decision Support* applications. He also managed the design and implementation of the *Arthur Planning* and *Decision Support* applications at numerous major retailers and wholesalers, and directed the design, development and global roll-out of the initial versions of the *Arthur Allocation* application. Prior to joining Columbus, Tattum was responsible for retail planning services sales and marketing at Planalytics, and developed and enhanced partnerships with retail software and consulting companies. Prior clients include, Ann Taylor, Neiman Marcus, Target Stores and Wilsons Leather. He earned a bachelor's of science honors degree from The University of Leeds in England.
- Achabal is an experienced retail consultant and comes to Columbus after serving for five years as engagement manager and senior retail planning consultant at Planalytics, where he was responsible for managing the day-to-day customer relationship for Gap, Inc. He has overseen critical assortment planning implementations, including system planning and design at several major retailers. Achabal earned a bachelor's degree in finance from Santa Clara University in Santa Clara, Calif.
- Reifeis is an experienced, senior-level retail executive who began his career with KPMG/Peat Marwick, LLP. During the past 13 years, he has held progressively more senior roles across the Limited Brands organization, including work in Victoria's Secret stores. Major accomplishments include the implementation of an enterprise data warehouse and leading enterprise human resource and payroll systems. Reifeis earned a bachelor's of science degree in computer information science – engineering from The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio.

“We are excited about adding Stuart, Ken, Marc and Drew to our team and look forward to their contributions to the ongoing success of Columbus Consulting,” added Amari. “Each person brings unique talents, as well as significant retail experience that will help us to serve our clients better and expand our reach. Among our team members are individuals who led the development of the world's leading merchandise planning applications, and conceived and advocated system concepts and business processes relating to merchandise planning and allocation that are today accepted as industry best practices. With more than 150 years of combined experience in the retail industry, we have a unique understanding of implementing effective and efficient merchandising systems that have helped multi-million and multi-billion dollar organizations improve their business processes.”

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About Columbus Consulting, Inc.

Founded by industry veteran Richard Amari in 2001, Columbus Consulting, Inc. is comprised of a team of highly experienced specialists in retail systems and processes. The company works with many of the world's largest and well-known retailers, general merchandisers and apparel stores, including American Eagle Outfitters, Ann Taylor, Big Lots, CVS Pharmacy, and New York & Company. Columbus Consulting is called upon to provide a variety of services, from managing short-term, high-impact, executive-level advisory services on matters of strategic importance relating to retail systems and processes, to overseeing large, multi-disciplinary, multi-million dollar projects, lasting more than a year. The company is based in Columbus, Ohio. For more information on Columbus Consulting, visit www.columbusconsultinginc.com.

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