

FHI Heat returns to an aggressive growth mode

For several years, **FHI Heat** has been one of the hottest appliance companies in the professional beauty industry. With premium tools, the newest technology and a high-end brand imaging and marketing campaign, the company quickly penetrated the marketplace. Then, the industry's distribution consolidation went into hyper speed, and its rapid changes resulted in a loss of national distribution for the company.

After 12 months of regrouping behind the scenes, FHI Heat is back in an aggressive growth mode, stronger than ever, with new national distribution through SalonCentric, a new line of premium appliances that will include high-end shears, a visionary new marketing and advertising campaign and a strong, dynamic education program featuring some of the biggest names in the industry. **Beauty Industry Report (BIR)** recently sat down with **David Kim**, FHI Heat's founder, chairman and CEO, to get the inside story and learn about all of the newest developments at the company.

BIR: Welcome, David. Please give BIR's readers an update on FHI Heat.

David Kim (DK): Thanks, Mike. It's an exciting time for FHI Heat. We're ready to make some big noise after a quiet spell. FHI Heat has new distribution, a new line of tools, a new ad campaign and a new education platform—all focused on the heroes of our industry, the professional stylists. Wherever stylists reveal their creativity—whether it's in the salon or behind the scenes of a fashion or entertainment event—FHI Heat will be empowering them to do their best work with premium blow dryers, flat irons, curling irons and other styling tools, and soon, shears.

BIR: In a crowded marketplace, what is FHI Heat's point of difference?

DK: Many of our competitors offer some fine tools, but we believe that FHI Heat offers two things that set us apart. First, our approach is focused on the stylist. At FHI Heat, we make tools that empower stylists to reveal their creativity. We are focusing our research and development and marketing directly on the stylists, paying tribute to them as artists and the super heroes behind everyone who needs

to look sensational. To that end, we're not only offering terrific tools with the newest technology to maximize their creativity and efficiency and minimize carpal tunnel syndrome, but we're also creating a multi-dimensional education program that provides the cutting and styling techniques and tool selection know-how to take stylists from the student level to the top of their profession. We are confident that we'll over-deliver on our promises to support the stylist.

Second, we're taking the approach of a designer fashion house, offering lines at every price point to meet every need of stylists and their clients. For example, we've improved and relaunched our **Runway Iron** as our "couture" product in a new premium package that includes our **Hot Sauce**, **T-Rex Hair Clips**, our

oval brush, **carbon combs**, **thermal mat** and **carrying case**. At a \$495 suggested retail price point, it's the iron of choice for many session stylists who love the fast heat up and deep conditioning heat generated by six layers of hand-made pure ceramic plates

that are treated with tourmaline to produce 20% more moisture-locking negative ions than competing irons and our proprietary Nano Fuzeion technology, which produces unmatched conditioning and shine.

On our "Ready-to-Wear" side, we have our **GO Hairstyling Iron by FHI Heat**. These are terrific ceramic tourmaline styling irons in fun colors with a value-conscious \$84.95 suggested retail price. We support GO Hairstyling with limited edition designs, compelling value adds, such as a free tote bag or travel iron, and very progressive marketing and public relations that speak directly to consumers. Since our July launch, our GO Hairstyling Irons are already

available in more than 6,000 salons. We'll be adding new tools, including a blow dryer and a curling rod, to the line this year.

In between, to accompany our high-performance **EPS (Elite Professional Series)** styling iron and dryers, we're launching the revolutionary **KORE** line of professional tools, which combines the newest technology in a complete collection of tools in the multiple sizes stylists told us they need with a new education program that's just as cutting edge. KORE stays true to our mission by delivering innovative products and inspirational education. KORE celebrates the creativity and passion that fuel stylists to pursue their craft. We'll debut the KORE flat irons, and marcel and spring curling irons in multiple sizes at **America's Beauty Show** in Chicago, then



FHI Heat will debut the KORE line of irons at America's Beauty Show in Chicago this month. A blow dryer and premium shear collection will launch at Premiere Orlando.

launch the KORE blow dryer and a full line of high-end Japanese-steel shears and our new education program at **Premiere Orlando** in June. We are entering the shear market in a very strategic way. Stylists are often confused by the

diverse choices and styles of shears. With our new KORE shears, it is our policy to make sure that every stylist understands the benefits and uses of each style and size. Using only the finest Japanese steel, our shears are prepared with the most intricate detail possible. Hand crafted and personalized by a unique identity code, each shear will represent a world-class tool in every aspect. Add to that a series of excellent cutting courses and education, and FHI Heat will show stylists that we have considered their every need and desire. Watch out for us!

Finally, our **Platform** line remains a solid stylist staple and consumer favorite, so we'll

continue to offer those as affordable, workhorse tools.

BIR: Tell me about your new distribution.

DK: We are delighted to be launching nationwide with the **SalonCentric** network. We have already achieved great success in our partnerships with **SalonCentric Midwest-Central** and **SalonCentric Midwest-West**, so rolling out through the entire network was a natural next step. We also recently aligned with several key distribution partners across Canada, including **West Coast Beauty Supply** in British Columbia, **Star Bedard** in Quebec, **Venus** in Toronto, **IBS** in Alberta and **Salon Centre** in Saskatchewan. At the end of 2010, we opened Mexico and will be opening Brazil and Argentina this year.

BIR: FHI Heat has always been known for its groundbreaking imagery. Tell me about the new campaign that launches this month.

DK: Our first “FHI was here” campaign was themed around the hottest looks in Hollywood, Music and Fashion. Our new campaign shifts the spotlight to the sensational stylists who create these trend-setting looks. With the tagline “Tools for Seriously Sensational,” these highly stylized ads profile accomplished stylists, whom we call our “VisionMakers,” in a very aspirational and heroic manner. We shot the ads with renowned British fashion photographer **Rankin**, and they look amazing. This campaign recognizes our VisionMakers for their amazing artistry and FHI Heat as creating the tools that allow them to reveal their creativity. Through our online vehicles, we follow our VisionMakers behind the scenes to take our audience on a unique journey into the lives of these VisionMakers. Our partnership with our VisionMakers extends beyond marketing and PR, as we draw upon their passion and talents to broaden our educational offerings and assist us in product development. Our ad campaign will break online just prior to America’s Beauty Show and in the April issues of leading trade magazines.

As part of the VisionMakers campaign, FHI Heat will participate in high-profile events, arming the stylists behind the scenes with the tools they need to achieve amazing results. Last month, many top session stylists at New York Fashion Week used our tools, and we also sponsored a special styling/gifting suite for

“Empowering stylists to create beautiful hair lies at the core of everything we do.”

American Express’s top customers. Additionally, FHI Heat tools were used extensively to style the stars on the red carpet during awards season, including **Anne Hathaway**, who co-hosted the Oscars. This month, FHI Heat will be the official styling tool sponsor at **Aspen Fashion Week**, where our artists will be styling hair for 15 runway shows.

In addition, we will also debut our new trade show booth this month at America’s Beauty Show in Chicago. The booth personifies the upscale, premium image of our brand and incorporates a complete shear section.

BIR: Tell me about your education program.

DK: Empowering stylists to create beautiful hair lies at the core of everything we do. That’s why we developed a three-tiered curriculum—VisionMakers, FreeForm and Team Heat—that follows the same path we take when creating our tools—a course must be new, unique and provide maximum benefit in minimum time. We’ve united a team of unique artists from Hollywood, music, fashion and beauty to share their experiences and challenge stylists’ thinking. Plus, we’re delivering our programs wherever stylists prefer to learn—at a show, in the classroom, in their own salon or online.

VisionMakers invites stylists to grab a backstage pass to learn from and jam with the stylists who’ve created the hottest looks on the red carpets, runways and movie sets. We’re also proud to announce our partnership with **RUSH London**, an award-winning team from the United Kingdom. They will provide classroom education and appear with FHI Heat at

tradeshows and distributor shows.

Created by FHI Heat’s Global Creative Director **Phillip Wilson**, FreeForm Cutting and Styling turns the industry upside down with a fresh approach to haircutting that marries the organic style of cutting practiced by the European Grand Master stylists and the more geometric, linear style of cutting developed by Sassoon. It decreases the overall time stylists spend cutting, so they have more time to finish, style and educate their clients about using FHI Heat’s tools to style their hair at home. Phillip has been our global creative director for several years and carried our education program, so we are now delighted to surround him with many established artists and educators and a much grander vision.

Team Heat offers experienced educators and successful stylists who know what it takes to be a star—and they can’t wait to share their knowledge.

BIR: With so much happening, you must be adding to your team?

DK: We are aggressively expanding our education, sales and operations teams. We are in the process of transitioning **Bryan Batstone** from managing director of FHI Heat United Kingdom to executive vice president and general manager of FHI Heat. He joins me; **Joseph Kim**, executive vice president and chief marketing officer; and **Dave Genes**, our vice president of global sales, on our senior management team in Solon, OH. **Dave’s** top-notch sales team includes **Les Haverty**, channel director/full service; **Michael Rob**, channel director/SalonCentric; and **Keri Schricker**, national sales manager/chain accounts. We recently hired **Michael Macklin** and **Leslie Strickland** as regional sales managers, and **Kate Everhard**, as a salon development manager, who report to Michael



*David Kim
chairman/CEO*

Rob. We are currently looking for qualified candidates for the director of education position, as well as regional sales managers.

To learn more about FHI Heat, reach Joseph Kim at 216-456-0400 or visit www.fhiheat.com and www.gohairstyling.com.