

# from recycled goods

"We were supplying retail to streetwear stores," he says.

In 2006 the company took a short-term one-year lease on a property in Northcote to test the waters.

Later, came a shift to Fitzroy, two doors along from the Piedmonte supermarket to a shopfront, warehouse and manufacturing outlet.

But Mr Kilmartin says more exciting things are happening for haul.

It is about to open a retail outlet off Flinders Lane, in the city.

The emphasis is shifting from retail to more business-to-business dealings in the form of eco-corporate gifts. Haul

is now dealing with corporates and rebirthing its old vinyl billboards into a variety of goods such as messenger bags, dog collars and even iPhone sleeves.

"Initially, number plates were 80 per cent of our business, now it is 5 per cent," he says.

The company started doing document folders for SEEK, using their old billboards.

It struck a chord with Generation Y because they wanted green initiatives rather than just "blind mission statements".

Later SEEK started giving away

goodies made from billboards. He says haul started negotiating so that at the end of a billboard campaign media buyers would sign the old boards over to them to turn into new goods.

Jetstar, AGL, BP, Origin Energy and Virgin Mobile were among a growing number of businesses getting into the use of billboards for corporate gifting.

Mr Kilmartin says the business was ahead of its time, being green before it became fashionable.

For a company such as Virgin Mobile to give a product made from its recycled billboards to staff or

clients there was a real wow factor. "The products are a way for companies to display corporate social responsibility and differentiate themselves," he said.

Haul was using old billboards to make bean bags for an office for Google in Sydney.

There had been a shift from customers accounting for 70 per cent of business to a 50-50 split between corporates and retail customers.

Mr Kilmartin says haul is also involved in the marketing of the goods.

"We employ five (staff) directly and

a couple indirectly. My mother still makes the odd bag, my father still works a stall at Salamanca Market," he said.

"At various points in time anyone with a Kilmartin in their name has worked in the business."

Last week haul bagged another honour and was named the Business3000 business of the year.

Mr Kilmartin says the export side is growing slowly with online sales to New Zealand, Hong Kong, the US and Britain. A haul corporate website was also on the drawing board.

www.haul.com.au

## It's a bright future for Sunny Lifestyle

Lisa Toia

THE sun is the key to not only life, but health, happiness and fun — that's the message SunnyLIFE is expounding.

The fashion lifestyle brand has a bright future ahead with its initial forays into export looking promising, and its national range achieving sales growth of 50 per cent year on year.

The business, about to launch into its fifth summer of selling, was founded by creative director Joel Bartfeld and managing director Paul Cherny.

The pair first started with beach-focused accessories, inspired by a rhetorical question Mr Bartfeld was asked during a holiday in Barcelona: "Why are beach umbrellas so ugly?"

On returning to Australia, the Sunny Lifestyle Group was formed, designing and wholesaling products that fit the business's philosophy.

"For me it was always a no-brainer — we own this lifestyle — how outdoors we are (and) the word 'sunny' was crucial," Mr Bartfeld said.

"Say the word sunny and it's always a good connotation."

Up to six ranges a year are produced in the outdoor lifestyle, homeware, giftware and apparel categories.

"Our brand is geared toward that lifestyle," he said. "The surf brands service the younger market; we target women — the buyers of lifestyle products — in their mid-30s, mothers, stylish but still understated."

"People might not book an overseas holiday, but they'll still go to the beach; they'll nourish themselves in a small way."

SunnyLIFE's products are sold in David Jones and in more than 200 other retailers in



SUNNY days... creative director Joel Bartfeld from the Sunny Lifestyle Group.

Australia and New Zealand.

"Now we're at the point we can look overseas (and) we're speaking to a few major department stores in the US and the UK," Mr Bartfeld said.

"We'll continue to evolve what the offer is — everything you can think of for a summer's day — the way you entertain outdoors, a bedroom and bathroom range, a fashion

direction. We would like to have concept stores — outdoor furniture, garden accessories, food related to summer, books, music — it's very easy to link a lot to that lifestyle."

## Nervous employers axe jobs to survive

NERVOUSNESS about the impact of the global economic downturn on the local economy has begun translating into job losses, despite what the official statistics may say.

Right Management regional general manager Bridget Beattie says many firms had contemplated shedding staff during the past three to six months, but decided to hold off in order to hoard talent in what was then considered a tight labour market.

"With what's happened in the global financial markets, all bets are off now," Ms Beattie said.

Ms Beattie said the company was expecting a busy end to 2008 as it helped firms deal with the loss of staff and provided opportunities to those who had lost their jobs to learn new skills.

Major companies such as Ford, Optus, Boeing, Telstra and ANZ Bank have recently flagged intentions to cut staff.

Talent2 director John Banks says banking and financial services have been hit hard with many staff let go, but demand for people with skills in the mining and electronics industry remain healthy.

### business owner

#### business opportunities

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Daryl Johnson  
Managing Director  
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