

# Managing Change

**T**HE ONLY THING CERTAIN IS CHANGE. You've no doubt heard that a number of times in your life. If ever that old axiom is true it's now as we turn our attentions toward 2006.

Uncertainty lurks everywhere. The winds of change are blowing, some of them good and some of them less good. How we prepare ourselves to deal with the changes can be a key to success.



Veterans of the equine trade industry should be quite accustomed to change. The industry has experienced more change in the past 10 years than it did in the previous 90 years, a major portion of that related to the advances in technology.

On top of that has been the explosion in the number, types and varieties of products that have become available in recent years.

This month, we turn our attention toward outerwear, particularly leather outerwear. It wasn't that many years ago when this topic might have yielded a handful of images and a small list of manufacturers, but not today.

Just as with nearly every subcategory of outerwear, the choices for retailers and consumers have become dizzying.

Another feature this month looks at what's likely ahead in English apparel, another area in which the growth of styles and colors can only be described as explosive. While tradition still rules the day in many English riding circles, exciting new fabrics, colors and designs have captured the minds and hearts of consumers.

Change is hard work, especially for those of us who have been around for a while. It doesn't come naturally for everyone, but keeping an open mind and being willing to learn something new every day are often the keys to survival.

The abundance of options in the equine trade industry means retailers have to do their homework. The day of stocking one color or one style of anything is over. Consumers are more demanding than ever. You have to plan ahead. You have to take some risks.

Nostalgia buffs need not apply.

It's important to remember, however, that with all of the changes and the speed at which they race toward us, there are a few things that stay the same. Stellar customer service never goes out of style. Providing value for every dollar consumers spend in your store will always be a key to success. Courtesy and humor in dealing with your customers is always appreciated and is something they certainly can't get online or out of a catalog.

We'll do our best over the remainder of 2006 to keep you abreast of changes and how they affect the industry. Stay tuned! ☐

Paul Wahl, Editor



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