

# MarketingDaily

## Commentary

### Eddie Bauer's Still Up There

Robert Passikoff, Jun 19, 2009 05:00 AM

Eddie Bauer, the iconic outdoor-clothing chain that sold goose-down coats to Mount Everest mountaineers and modern outdoor clothing to ski- schussing college students, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection this week.

Eddie Bauer has been struggling to repay its debt. And the fact that consumers slowed down spending on anything but necessities can't have helped. In fact, the falloff came as Eddie Bauer was attempting to pull off what would have been a multi-year turnaround.

"Eddie Bauer is a good company with a great brand and a bad balance sheet," said Neil Fiske, the company's CEO, though the retailer also said stores, catalog business and Web sites would continue operating, and that it will honor all customer gift cards, returns, and its points program.

According to our 2009 Customer Loyalty Engagement Index, Eddie Bauer was just edged out of 1st place by J. Crew, another iconic clothing brand, whose ascension was largely aided and abetted by the patronage of Michele Obama, with L.L. Bean a distant #3.

On the marketing side of things, Eddie Bauer recently celebrated a new line called "First Ascent," outfitting two mountaineers as they took on a climb of Mount Everest. On the financial side of things, there are plans in place to sell the company for \$202 million to CCMP Capital Advisors.

A judge still needs to approve the sale, and other potential bidders still could emerge. But based on engagement and customer loyalty levels, whoever ends up buying the brand is pretty sure to end up on top of the world.

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