

BOOKS A MILLION INC
Form 10-K
April 15, 2010

UNITED STATES
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
Washington, DC 20549

FORM 10-K

(Mark One)

ANNUAL REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934

For the fiscal year ended January 30, 2010

OR

TRANSITION REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934 [NO FEE REQUIRED]

For the transition period from _____ to _____

Commission File No. 0-20664

BOOKS-A-MILLION, INC.
(Exact name of Registrant as specified in its charter)

DELAWARE
(State or other jurisdiction of
incorporation or organization)

63-0798460
(IRS Employer
Identification No.)

402 Industrial Lane
Birmingham, Alabama
(Address of principal executive offices)

35211
(Zip Code)

Registrant's telephone number, including area code: (205) 942-3737

Securities registered pursuant to Section 12(b) of the Act: Common
Stock, par value \$.01 per share

(Title of Class)

Securities registered pursuant to Section 12(g) of the Act: None

Indicate by check mark if the registrant is a well-known seasoned issuer, as defined in Rule 405 of the Securities Act.
Yes No

Indicate by check mark if the registrant is not required to file reports pursuant to Section 13 or Section 15(d) of the Act.
Yes No

Indicate by check mark whether the Registrant (1) has filed all reports required to be filed by Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the Registrant was required to file such reports) and (2) has been subject to such filing requirements for the past 90 days.

Yes No

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant has submitted electronically and posted on its corporate Web site, if any, every Interactive Data File required to be submitted and posted pursuant to Rule 405 of Regulation S-T (§ 232.405 of this chapter) during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to submit and post such files).

Yes No

Indicate by check mark if disclosure of delinquent filers pursuant to Item 405 of Regulation S-K is not contained herein, and will not be contained, to the best of the Registrant's knowledge, in definitive proxy or information statements incorporated by reference in Part III of this Form 10-K or any amendment to this Form 10-K .

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a large accelerated filer, an accelerated filer, a non-accelerated filer, or a smaller reporting company. See the definitions of "large accelerated filer," "accelerated filer" and "smaller reporting company" in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act. (Check one):

Large Accelerated Filer Accelerated Filer
Non-Accelerated Filer Smaller Reporting Company
(Do not check if a smaller reporting company)

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a shell company (as defined in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act).

Yes No

The aggregate market value of the voting stock held by non-affiliates of the Registrant (assuming for these purposes, but without conceding, that all executive officers and directors are "affiliates" of the Registrant) as of July 31, 2009 (based on the closing sale price as reported on the NASDAQ Stock Market on such date), was \$64,292,832.

The number of shares outstanding of the Registrant's Common Stock as of March 26, 2010 was 15,865,567.

DOCUMENTS INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE

Portions of the Proxy Statement for the Annual Meeting of Stockholders to be held on May 20, 2010 are incorporated by reference into Part III of this report.

BOOKS-A-MILLION, INC. AND SUBSIDIARIES
10-K INDEX

PART I		
Item 1.	<u>Business</u>	4
Item 1A.	<u>Risk Factors</u>	7
Item 1B.	<u>Unresolved Staff Comments</u>	12
Item 2.	<u>Properties</u>	13
Item 3.	<u>Legal Proceedings</u>	13
Item 4.	<u>Reserved</u>	14
PART II		
Item 5.	<u>Market For Registrant’s Common Equity and Related Stockholder Matters and Issuer Purchases of Equity Securities</u>	14
Item 6.	<u>Selected Financial Data</u>	17
Item 7.	<u>Management’s Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations</u>	17
Item 7A.	<u>Quantitative and Qualitative Disclosures About Market Risk</u>	26
Item 8.	<u>Financial Statements and Supplementary Data</u>	26
Item 9.	<u>Changes In and Disagreements With Accountants on Accounting and Financial Disclosure</u>	47
Item 9A.	<u>Controls and Procedures</u>	47
Item 9B.	<u>Other Information</u>	48
PART III		
Item 10.	<u>Directors, Executive Officers and Corporate Governance</u>	48
Item 11.	<u>Executive Compensation</u>	49
Item 12.	<u>Security Ownership of Certain Beneficial Owners and Management and Related Stockholder Matters</u>	50
Item 13.	<u>Certain Relationships and Related Transactions, and Director Independence</u>	50
Item 14.	<u>Principal Accountant Fees and Services</u>	50
PART IV		
Item 15.	<u>Exhibits and Financial Statement Schedules</u>	50
	<u>Signatures</u>	53

Safe Harbor Statement under the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995

This document contains certain forward-looking statements within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995, that involve a number of risks and uncertainties. A number of factors could cause the actual results, performance or, achievements of Books-A-Million, Inc. (the "Company,") or the results of its industry to be materially different from any future results, performance or achievements expressed or implied by such forward-looking statements. These factors include, but are not limited to, the competitive environment in the book retail industry in general and in the Company's specific market areas; inflation or deflation; economic conditions in general and in the Company's specific market areas, including the length of time that the United States economy remains in the current economic downturn; the number of store openings and closings; the profitability of certain product lines, capital expenditures and future liquidity; liability and other claims asserted against the Company; uncertainties related to the Internet and the Company's Internet operations; the factors described in ITEM 1A. RISK FACTORS herein; and other factors referenced herein. In addition, such forward-looking statements are necessarily dependent upon assumptions, estimates and dates that may be incorrect or imprecise and involve known and unknown risks, uncertainties and other factors. Accordingly, any forward-looking statements included herein do not purport to be predictions of future events or circumstances and may not be realized. Given these uncertainties, stockholders and prospective investors are cautioned not to place undue reliance on such forward-looking statements. The Company disclaims any obligation to update any such factors or to publicly announce the results of any revisions to any of the forward-looking statements contained herein to reflect future events or developments.

PART I

ITEM 1. BUSINESS

General

Books-A-Million, Inc. is a leading book retailer in the southeastern United States. The Company was founded in 1917 and operates both superstores and traditional bookstores. Superstores, the first of which was opened in 1987, range in size from 8,000 to 36,000 square feet and operate under the names "Books-A-Million" and "Books and Co." Traditional bookstores are smaller stores operated under the names "Bookland" and "Books-A-Million". These stores range in size from 2,000 to 7,000 square feet and are located primarily in enclosed malls. All store formats generally offer an extensive selection of best sellers and other hardcover and paperback books, magazines, and newspapers. In addition to the retail store formats, we offer our products over the Internet at Booksamillion.com.

We were founded in 1917, originally incorporated under the laws of the State of Alabama in 1964 and reincorporated in Delaware in September 1992. Our principal executive offices are located at 402 Industrial Lane, Birmingham, Alabama 35211, and our telephone number is (205) 942-3737. Unless the context otherwise requires, references to "we," "our," "us" or "the Company" include our wholly owned subsidiaries, American Wholesale Book Company, Inc. ("American Wholesale"), Booksamillion.com, Inc. and BAM Card Services, LLC.

Our periodic and current reports filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission ("SEC") are made available on our website at www.booksamillioninc.com as soon as reasonably practicable. Our code of conduct and key committee charters are also available on our website. These reports are available free of charge to stockholders upon written request. Such requests should be directed to Brian W. White, our Chief Financial Officer. You may read and copy any materials we file with the SEC at the SEC's Public Reference Room at 100 F Street N.E., Room 1850, Washington, D.C. 20549. You may obtain information on the operation of the Public Reference Room by calling the SEC at 1-800-SEC-0330. The SEC maintains a website that contains reports, proxy and information statements, and other information regarding issuers that file electronically with the SEC, including us, at <http://www.sec.gov>.

Business Segments

We have two reportable segments: retail trade and electronic commerce trade. In the retail trade segment we are engaged in the retail sale of primarily book merchandise at our retail stores. The retail trade segment includes our distribution center operations which predominantly supplies merchandise to our retail stores. In the electronic commerce trade segment we are engaged in the retail sale of book merchandise over the Internet. This segment is managed separately due to divergent technology and marketing requirements. For additional information on our reportable business segments, see Note 9, "Business Segments," in the notes to consolidated financial statements.

In both our retail trade and electronic commerce trade segments we sell books, and other merchandise, which consists of gifts, cards, collectibles, magazines, café sales, music, DVDs and other products. Sales as a percentage of net sales by merchandise category are as follows:

	Fiscal Year Ended		
	January 30, 2010	January 31, 2009	February 2, 2008
Books and magazines	80.9%	82.4%	83.8%
General merchandise	8.7%	8.1%	7.7%
Café	4.2%	4.2%	4.4%
Other	6.2%	5.3%	4.1%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

General merchandise consists of gifts, cards, collectibles and similar types of products. Café consists of coffee, tea and other edible products, as well as gift items related to our Joe Muggs cafés. Other products include music, DVD, E-Book and other products.

Retail Stores

We opened our first Books-A-Million superstore in 1987. We developed superstores to capitalize on the growing consumer demand for the convenience, selection and value associated with the superstore retailing format. Each superstore is designed to be a receptive and open environment conducive to browsing and reading and includes ample space for promotional events open to the public, including book autograph sessions and children's storytelling. We operated 201 superstores as of January 30, 2010.

Our superstores emphasize selection, value and customer service. Each of our superstores offers an extensive selection of books, magazines, general merchandise, including, gifts, cards, collectibles and similar products, including music and DVDs. Each superstore has a service center staffed with associates who are knowledgeable about the store's merchandise and who are trained to answer customers' questions, assist customers in locating books within the store and placing special orders. The majority of our superstores also include a Joe Muggs café, serving Joe Muggs coffee and assorted pastries and other edible items. Our superstores are conveniently located on major, high-traffic roads and in enclosed malls or strip shopping centers with adequate parking, and generally operate for extended hours up to 11:00 pm local time.

Our traditional stores are tailored to the size, demographics and competitive conditions of the particular market area. Traditional stores are located primarily in enclosed malls and generally feature a wide selection of books, magazines and gift items. We had 22 traditional stores as of January 30, 2010.

Merchandising

We employ several value-oriented merchandising strategies. Books on our best-seller list, which is developed by us based on the sales and customer demand in our stores, are generally sold in the Company's superstores at or below publishers' suggested retail prices. In addition, customers can join the Millionaire's Club and save 10% on all purchases in any of our stores, including already discounted best-sellers. Our point-of-sale computer system provides data designed to enable us to anticipate consumer demand and customize store inventory selection to reflect local customer interest.

Marketing

We promote our bookstores principally through the use of traditional direct mail, email and online advertising, as well as point-of-sale materials posted and distributed in the stores. In certain markets, radio and newspaper advertising is also used on a selective basis. We also arrange for special appearances and book autograph sessions with recognized authors to attract customers and to build and reinforce customer awareness of our stores. A substantial portion of our advertising expenses are reimbursed from publishers through their cooperative advertising programs.

Store Operations and Site Selection

In choosing specific store sites within a market area, we apply standardized site selection criteria that take into account numerous factors, including the local demographics, desirability of available leasing arrangements, proximity to our existing stores and stores of our competitors and overall level of retail activity. In general, stores are located on major high-traffic roads convenient to customers and have adequate parking. We generally negotiate short-term leases with renewal options. We also periodically review the profitability trends and prospects of each of our stores and evaluate whether or not any underperforming stores should be closed, converted to a different format or relocated to more desirable locations.

Internet Operations

On Booksamillion.com we sell a wide selection of books, magazines and general merchandise similar to those sold in our Books-A-Million superstores.

Purchasing

Our purchasing decisions are made by our merchandising department on a centralized basis. Our buyers negotiate terms, discounts and cooperative advertising allowances for all of our bookstores and decide which books to purchase, in what quantity and for which stores. The buyers use current inventory and sales information provided by our in-store point-of-sale computer system to make reorder decisions.

We purchase merchandise from over 1,500 vendors. We purchase the majority of our collectors' supplies from Anderson Press, Inc. and substantially all of our magazines from Anderson Media, each of which is a related party, see Note 7, "Related Party Transactions," in the notes to consolidated financial statements. No one vendor accounted for over 10.0% of our overall merchandise purchases in the fiscal year ended January 30, 2010. In general, more than 80% of our inventory may be returned to the publishers for credit, which substantially reduces our risk of inventory obsolescence.

Distribution Capabilities

Our subsidiary, American Wholesale, receives a substantial portion of our inventory shipments, including substantially all of our books, at its two facilities located in Florence and Tuscumbia, Alabama. Orders from our bookstores are processed by computer and assembled for delivery to the stores on pre-determined weekly schedules. Substantially all deliveries of inventory from American Wholesale's facilities are made by a dedicated transportation fleet. At the time deliveries are made to each of our stores, returns of slow moving or obsolete books are picked up and returned to the American Wholesale returns processing center. American Wholesale then returns these books to publishers for credit.

Competition

The retail book business is highly competitive, and competition within the industry is fragmented. We face direct competition from other superstores, such as Barnes & Noble and Borders, and we also face competition from mass merchandisers, such as Wal-Mart and Costco, and online retailers such as Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Borders and Wal-Mart. Our bookstores also compete with specialty retail stores that offer books in particular subject areas, independent single store operators, variety discounters, drug stores, warehouse clubs, mail order clubs and other retailers offering books. In addition, our bookstores may face additional competition from the expanding market for electronic books and from other categories of retailers entering the retail book market. We believe that the key competitive factors in the retail book industry are convenience of location, selection, customer service and price.

Seasonality

Similar to many retailers, our business is seasonal, with the highest retail sales, gross profit and net income historically occurring in our fourth fiscal quarter. This seasonal pattern reflects the increased demand for books and gifts during the year-end holiday selling season. Working capital requirements are generally at their highest during the third fiscal quarter and the early part of the fourth fiscal quarter due to the seasonality of our business. As a result, our results of operations depend significantly upon net sales generated during the fourth fiscal quarter, and any significant adverse trend in the net sales of such period would likely have a material adverse effect on our results of operations for the full year. In addition to seasonality, our results of operations may fluctuate from quarter to quarter as a result of the

amount and timing of sales and profits contributed by new stores as well as other factors. Accordingly, the addition of a large number of new stores in a particular fiscal quarter could adversely affect our results of operations for that quarter.

Trademarks

“Books-A-Million,” “BAM! Books-A-Million,” “Bookland,” “Books & Co.,” “Millionaire’s Club,” “Sweet Water Press,” “Thanks-A-Million,” “Big Fat Coloring Book,” “Up All Night Reader,” “Read & Save Rebate,” “Readables Accessories for Readers,” “Kids-A-Million,” “Teachers First,” “The Write-Price,” “Bambeanos,” “Hold That Thought,” “Book\$mart,” “BAMM,” “BAMM.com,” “BOOKSAMILLION.com,” “Chillatte,” “Joe Muggs Newsstand,” “Page Pets,” “JOEMUGGS.com,” “FAITHPOINT.com,” “Faithmark,” “Joe Muggs,” “Anderson’s Bookland,” “Snow Joe,” “American Wholesale Book Company,” “AWBC” and “NetCentral” are the primary registered trademarks of the Company.

Employees

As of January 30, 2010, we employed approximately 2,800 full-time associates and 2,700 part-time associates. The number of part-time associates employed fluctuates based upon seasonal needs. None of our associates are covered by a collective bargaining agreement. We believe that relations with our associates are good.

ITEM 1A. RISK FACTORS

The following risk factors and other information included in this Form 10-K should be carefully considered. The risks and uncertainties described below are not the only ones we face. Additional risks and uncertainties not presently known to us or that we currently deem immaterial also may impair our business operations. If any of the following risks occur, our business, financial condition, operating results and cash flows could be materially adversely affected.

Business Strategy

Our future results will depend, among other things, on our success in implementing our business strategy. There can be no assurance that we will be successful in implementing our business strategy or that the strategy will be successful in sustaining acceptable levels of sales growth and profitability.

Intense competition from traditional retail sources and the Internet may adversely affect our business.

The retail book business is highly competitive, and competition within the industry is fragmented. We face direct competition from other superstores, such as Barnes & Noble and Borders, and we also face competition from mass merchandisers, such as Wal-Mart and Costco, and online retailers such as Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Borders and Wal-Mart. Our bookstores also compete with specialty retail stores that offer books in particular subject areas, independent single store operators, variety discounters, drug stores, warehouse clubs, mail order clubs and other retailers offering books. In addition, our bookstores may face additional competition from the expanding market for electronic books and from other categories of retailers entering the retail book market.

Many of our current and potential competitors have longer operating histories, larger customer bases, greater brand recognition and significantly greater financial, marketing and other resources than we have. They may be able to secure merchandise from vendors on more favorable terms and may be able to adopt more aggressive pricing policies. Competitors in both the retail and electronic commerce trade also may be able to devote more resources to technology development, fulfillment and marketing than we are.

Competition in electronic commerce trade may intensify. The online market is rapidly evolving and intensely competitive, with few barriers to entry. Companies in the retail and electronic commerce trade may enter into business combinations or alliances that strengthen their competitive positions. This increased competition may reduce our sales or operating profits, or both.

Our business is highly seasonal.

Our business is highly seasonal, with sales and earnings generally highest in the fourth fiscal quarter and lowest in the first fiscal quarter. Our results of operations depend significantly upon the holiday selling season in the fourth fiscal quarter. During the fiscal year ended January 30, 2010, approximately 30.9% of our sales and approximately 83.4% of our operating income were generated in the fourth fiscal quarter. If we do not stock popular products in sufficient amounts or if we fail to have sources to timely restock popular products during the busy holiday period such that we fail to meet customer demand, it could significantly affect our revenue and earnings and our future growth. In addition, if we experience less than satisfactory net sales during a fourth fiscal quarter, we may not be able to sufficiently compensate for any losses which may have been incurred during the first three quarters of such fiscal year.

The current economic downturn, along with difficult and volatile conditions in the capital and credit markets, could materially adversely affect our financial position, results of operations and cash flows, and we do not know if these conditions will improve in the near future.

The Company believes that the United States and global economies are presently experiencing extremely challenging times and that general economic conditions could persist or deteriorate further. The Company believes that these conditions have had and may continue to have an adverse impact on spending by the Company's current retail customer base and potential new customers. Because of these significant challenges, we are continuously reviewing and adjusting our business activities to address the changing economic environment. We are carefully managing our inventory and liquidity and enforcing expense controls while working diligently and prudently to grow our business. Because of the uncertainty in the overall economic environment, the unpredictability of consumer behavior and the concern as to whether economic conditions will improve, it is very difficult for us to predict how our business may be affected in the future. Our business and financial performance may be adversely affected by current and future economic conditions that cause a further decline in business and consumer spending, including limited or further reduced availability of credit, continued high or increased unemployment levels, higher energy and fuel costs, rising interest rates, financial market volatility and long-term downturn. These conditions could have a negative impact on the earnings, liquidity and capital resources of the Company.

Current economic conditions have accentuated these risks and magnified their potential effect on us and our business. The current economic downturn and difficult conditions in the capital and credit markets may affect our business in a number of ways. For example:

- The economic downturn could have a significant adverse impact on consumer confidence and discretionary consumer spending, which may result in decreased sales and earnings for us.
- Although we believe that we have sufficient liquidity under our credit agreement to run our business and to provide for our plans for growth, under depressed economic or extreme market conditions, there can be no assurance that such funds would be available or sufficient and, in such a case, we may not be able to successfully obtain additional debt financing on favorable terms, or at all.
- Recent market volatility has exerted downward pressure on our stock price, which may make it more difficult for us to raise additional capital in the future.

We do not know if the state of the economy or market conditions will improve in the near future or when any such improvement will occur.

If the Company is unable to continue to open new stores, our growth may decline.

The Company's growth depends in part on our ability to open new stores and operate them profitably. In general, the rate of expansion depends, among other things, on general economic and business conditions affecting consumer confidence and spending, the availability of desired locations and qualified management personnel, the negotiation of acceptable lease terms and the ability to manage the operational aspects of growth. It also depends upon the availability of adequate capital, which in turn depends in large part upon cash flow generated by the Company.

If stores are opened more slowly than expected, sales at new stores reach targeted levels more slowly than expected (or fail to reach targeted levels) or related overhead costs increase in excess of expected levels, the Company's ability to successfully implement its expansion strategy would be adversely affected. In addition, the Company may open new stores in certain markets in which the Company is already operating stores, which could adversely affect sales at those existing stores.

Furthermore, increases in the complexity of the Company's business could place a significant strain on our management, operations, technical performance, financial resources and internal financial control and reporting functions, and there can be no assurance that the Company will be able to manage this effectively. The Company's current and planned personnel, systems, procedures and controls may not be adequate to support and effectively manage our future operations, especially as the Company employs personnel in multiple geographic locations. The Company may not be able to hire, train, retain, motivate and manage required personnel, which may limit our growth. If any of this were to occur, it could damage the Company's reputation, limit growth, negatively affect operating results and harm the Company's business.

Our business is dependent upon consumer spending patterns.

Sales of books may depend upon discretionary consumer spending, which may be affected by general economic conditions, consumer confidence and other factors beyond our control. Weather, among other things, can affect comparable store sales, because inclement weather can require us to close certain stores temporarily and thus reduce store traffic. Even if stores are not closed, customers may decide to avoid going to stores in bad weather. In addition,

sales are dependent in part on the strength of new release titles offered by vendors. A decline in consumer spending on books could have a material adverse effect on our financial condition and results of operations.

The Company faces the risk of a shift in consumer spending patterns to e-content.

As technology evolves and consumers shift spending patterns to e-content, the Company may enter new markets in which we have limited experience. The offering of e-content may present new and difficult challenges. The Company's gross margin of e-content products may be lower than our traditional product lines, and the Company may not recover our investments in this area. These challenges may negatively affect the Company's operating results.

The Company's costs of doing business could increase as a result of changes in federal, state or local laws or regulations.

Changes in federal, state or local laws or regulations, including, but not limited to, laws related to employment, wages, data privacy and information security, taxes and consumer products, could increase the Company's costs of doing business.

Our business may be affected by our relationships with suppliers and delays in product shipments.

We rely heavily upon our suppliers to provide us with new products as quickly as possible. The loss of any of our suppliers could reduce our product offerings, which could cause us to be at a competitive disadvantage. In addition, we depend upon the business terms we can obtain from suppliers, including competitive prices, unsold product return policies, new release title quantity allocations, advertising and market development allowances, freight charges and payment terms. Our failure to maintain favorable business terms with our suppliers could adversely affect our ability to offer products to consumers at competitive prices. To the extent that our suppliers rely on overseas sources for a large portion of their products, any event causing a disruption of imports, including the imposition of import restrictions in the form of tariffs or quotas and currency fluctuations, could hurt our business.

Our vendor relationships subject us to a number of risks, and we rely on certain vendors that are related parties.

Although we purchase merchandise from over 1,500 vendors and no one vendor accounted for more than 10.0% of our inventory purchases in the fiscal year ended January 30, 2010, we have significant vendors that are important to us. If our current vendors were to stop selling merchandise to us on acceptable terms, we may not be able to acquire merchandise from other suppliers in a timely and efficient manner and on acceptable terms. We have entered into and may, in the future, enter into various transactions and agreements with entities wholly or partially owned by certain stockholders or directors (including certain officers) of the Company, including one such entity that serves as our primary magazine vendor and another that serves as our primary provider of collectors' supplies. We believe that the transactions and agreements that we have entered into with related parties are on terms that are at least as favorable to us as could reasonably have been obtained at such time from unrelated third parties.

If we do not successfully optimize inventory and manage our distribution, our business could be harmed.

If we do not successfully optimize our inventory and operate our distribution centers, it could significantly limit our ability to meet customer demand. Because it is difficult to predict demand, we may not manage our facilities in an optimal way, which may result in excess or insufficient inventory or warehousing, fulfillment or distribution capacity. Additionally, if we open new stores in new geographic areas where we do not currently have a presence, we may not be able to provide those stores with efficient distribution and fulfillment services, which may impact our stores in those markets. We may be unable to adequately staff our fulfillment and customer service centers to meet customer demand. There can be no assurance that we will be able to operate our network effectively.

We rely heavily on the American Wholesale warehouse distribution facilities for merchandise distribution functions and to maintain inventory stock for our retail stores. Our ability to distribute merchandise to our stores and maintain adequate inventory levels may be materially impacted by any material damage incurred at our warehouse facilities caused by inclement weather, fire, flood, power loss, earthquakes, acts of war or terrorism, acts of God and similar factors.

We also rely heavily on our dedicated transportation fleet for deliveries of inventory. As a result, our ability to receive or ship inventory efficiently may be negatively affected by inclement weather, fire, flood, power loss, earthquakes, labor disputes, acts of war or terrorism, acts of God and similar factors.

Any of the inventory risk factors set forth above may adversely affect our financial condition, results of operations and cash flows.

Failure to retain key personnel could adversely affect our business.

Our continued success depends to a significant extent upon the efforts and abilities of our senior management. The failure to retain our senior managers could have a material adverse effect on our business and our results of

operations. We do not maintain “key man” life insurance on any of our senior managers.

Failure to attract and retain qualified associates and other labor issues could adversely affect our financial performance.

Our ability to continue to expand our operations depends on our ability to attract and retain a large and growing number of qualified associates. Our ability to meet our labor needs generally while controlling our associate wage and related labor costs is subject to numerous external factors, including the availability of a sufficient number of qualified persons in the work force, unemployment levels, prevailing wage rates, changing demographics, health and other insurance costs and changes in employment legislation. If we are unable to locate, attract and retain qualified personnel or if our costs of labor or related costs increase significantly, our financial performance could be affected adversely.

We rely extensively on communication and computer systems to process transactions, summarize results and manage our business. Disruptions in these systems could harm our ability to run our business.

Given the number of individual transactions that we have each year, it is critical that we maintain uninterrupted operation of our computer and communications hardware and software systems. Our systems are subject to damage or interruption from power outages, computer and telecommunications failures, computer viruses, security breaches, catastrophic events, such as acts of God, fires, tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, power losses, telecommunications failures, acts of war or terrorism, physical or electronic break-ins and similar events or disruptions, and usage errors by our employees. If our systems are damaged or cease to function properly, we may have to make a significant investment to fix or replace them, and we may suffer interruptions in our operations in the interim. Any material interruption in our computer operations may have a material adverse effect on our business or results of operations.

Our electronic commerce trade faces business risks, which include:

- competition from other Internet-based companies and traditional retailers;
- risks associated with a failure to manage growth effectively;
- risks of the Internet as a medium for commerce, including Internet security risks;
- risks associated with the need to keep pace with rapid technological change;
- risks of system failure or inadequacy; and
- risks associated with the maintenance of domain names.

If any of these risks materialize, it could have an adverse effect on our electronic commerce trade.

Government regulation of the Internet and e-commerce is evolving, and unfavorable changes could harm our business.

We are subject to general business regulations and laws, as well as regulations and laws specifically governing the Internet and e-commerce. Such existing and future laws and regulations may impede the growth of the Internet or other online services. These regulations and laws may cover taxation, privacy, data protection, pricing, content, copyrights, distribution, electronic contracts and other communications, consumer protection, the provision of online payment services, unencumbered Internet access to our services and the characteristics and quality of products and services. It is not clear how existing laws governing issues such as property ownership, sales and other taxes, libel and personal privacy apply to the Internet and e-commerce. Unfavorable resolution of these issues may harm our business.

We could be liable for breaches of security on our website.

A fundamental requirement for e-commerce is the secure storage and transmission of confidential information. Although we have developed systems and processes that are designed to protect consumer information and prevent fraudulent credit card transactions and other security breaches, failure to prevent or mitigate such fraud or breaches may adversely affect our business or results of operations.

We are subject to a number of risks related to payments that we accept.

We accept payments by a variety of methods, including credit card, debit card, gift cards, direct debit from a customer's bank account, physical bank check and cash. For certain payment transactions, including credit and debit cards, we pay interchange and other fees, which may increase over time and raise our operating costs and lower our profit margins. We are also subject to payment card association operating rules, certification requirements and rules governing electronic funds transfers, which could change or be reinterpreted to make it difficult or impossible for us to comply. If we fail to comply with these rules or requirements, we may be subject to fines and higher transaction fees and lose our ability to accept credit and debit card payments from our customers, process electronic funds transfers or facilitate other types of online payments, and our business and operating results could be adversely affected. If one or more of these agreements are terminated and we are unable to replace them on similar terms, or at all, it could adversely affect our operating results. In addition, as we offer new payment options to our customers, we may be subject to additional regulations and compliance requirements and a greater risk of fraud.

We may be unable to protect our intellectual property, which could harm our brand and reputation.

To protect our proprietary rights in our intellectual property, we rely generally on copyright, trademark and trade secret laws. Although we do not believe that our trademarks and other intellectual property are materially important to the continuation of our operations, our failure or inability to maintain or protect our proprietary rights could materially decrease their value, and our brand and reputation could be harmed as a result.

We are subject to certain legal proceedings that may affect our financial condition and results of operations.

We are involved in a number of legal proceedings. In the opinion of management, after consultation with legal counsel, the ultimate liability, if any, with respect to those proceedings is not presently expected to materially affect our financial condition or results of operations. However, we can give no assurances that certain lawsuits either now or in the future will not materially affect our financial condition or results of operations.

Changes in our effective income tax rate could affect our results of operations.

Our effective income tax rate is influenced by a number of factors. Changes in the tax laws, the interpretation of existing laws or our failure to sustain our reporting positions on examination could adversely affect our effective income tax rate and, as a result, our results of operations.

Changes in accounting standards could affect our results of operations.

A change in accounting standards or practices can have a significant effect on our reported results of operations. New accounting pronouncements and interpretations of existing accounting rules and practices have occurred and may occur in the future. Changes to existing rules may adversely affect our reported financial results.

If the Company is unable to renew or enter into new leases on favorable terms, our revenue growth may decline.

All of the Company's stores are located in leased premises. If the cost of leasing existing stores increases, the Company cannot assure that we will be able to maintain our existing store locations as leases expire. In addition, the Company may not be able to enter into new leases on favorable terms or at all, or we may not be able to locate suitable alternative sites or additional sites for new store expansion in a timely manner. The Company's revenues and earnings may decline if the Company fails to maintain existing store locations, enter into new leases, locate alternative sites or find additional sites for new store expansion.

The Company may engage in acquisitions which, among other things, could negatively impact our business if we fail to successfully complete and integrate them.