

# TWICE

THIS WEEK IN CONSUMER ELECTRONICS



## Majap Sales Rise 5.6% For Top 100 Dealers

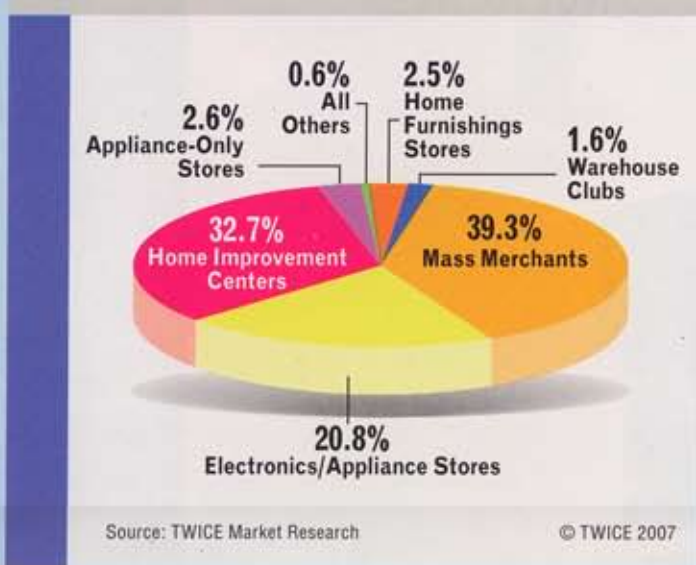
NEW YORK — The bloom is off the rose for the major appliance business.

After successfully riding the decade's wave of record home sales and remodeling, white goods hit a rough patch last year when the housing market crashed and interest rates rose.

The change was tracked by TWICE's annual Top 100 Appliance Retailers report, which provides sales, rankings and store counts for the nation's largest majap dealers. According to the study, prepared with TWICE market research partner The Stevenson Company, the pace of revenue growth in 2006 fell 50 percent from 2005, when the Top Ten contingent saw sales rise nearly 12 percent.

### The TOP 100 Major Appliance Retailers

2006 Sales: \$25.119 billion



Still, overall performance was none too shabby. Total Top 100 sales broke the \$25 billion mark for the first time, and the 5.6 percent gain outpaced that of the total U.S. retail majap market, which rose 4.9 percent last year.

Despite industry turbulence, retailer status quo was largely maintained. Although it continues to shed share, Sears remained the No. 1 white goods dealer, with more than twice the sales of second-ranked Lowe's, while third place Home Depot and fourth place Best Buy outpaced them both with double-digit gains. The only change among the Top Ten: Costco, which bumped Best Buy's Pacific Sales subsidiary from the No. 10 slot. The report begins on p. 39. — Alan Wolf

## Imation Is Reinvented Through A Portfolio Of Top Brand Names

BY JOHN LAPOSKY

NEW YORK — With a string of acquisitions that began in January 2006, Imation has invested almost \$800 million in an effort to gain brand dominance in the global market for storage media products and, in the process, remake itself from a reliable business-to-business supplier to a consumer giant.

Boasting a newly expanded lineup of brands that includes

See **Imation Reinvented** on page 56

## JVC Kicks Off Hi-Def Promo Tour

BY GREG TARR

WAYNE, N.J. — JVC has launched a national product promotional tour, called "Focus on Hi-Def," that is scheduled to hit key fairs, festivals and air shows over the next six months to promote the company's HDTVs and camcorders.

The tour is an extension of a larger "Focus On" advertising and promotional effort, running this spring through fall, showing consumers how to fit JVC products into their lives.

Karl Bearnarth, JVC marketing

See **JVC Tour** on page 12



JVC's Karl Bearnarth presents a map of the United States showing each of the nearly 50 stops on its planned Focus On Hi-Def Tour running through November.

## Circuit City Restructures Workforce

BY ALAN WOLF

RICHMOND, VA. — Circuit City dismissed 200 employees at company headquarters here last week and has begun realigning store workers around the country as part of an ongoing corporate restructuring.

The headquarters layoffs affected departments across the board, and were implemented to

control costs and eliminate duplication, spokesperson Jackie Foreman told TWICE. For the past several months Circuit City has been reorganizing its corporate workforce into cross-functional teams to promote teamwork and to allow the company to react more quickly to marketplace changes, she said.

See **Circuit Workforce** on page 65

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# Wal-Mart Mixes Up TV Shelf Share

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plasma technology.

In the plasma category, Sanyo's introduction of its 50-inch DP50747 HD plasma set at Wal-Mart helped the manufacturer's presence share increase 4 percentage point month to month, to reach a plasma TV product placement share of 7.6 percent during the current period.

No. 1 Panasonic also experienced a shelf-share gain due to additional placements of its new releases — the TH-50PX77U, TH-50PZ700U and TH-58PZ700U — which are now available at Best Buy, Fry's Electronics, Tweeter and Sears. The manufacturer secured the top spot in plasma with 21.37 percent product-presence share in May 2007.

Current Analysis' Trendline study showed that the average sales prices of 50-inch plasma displays inflated by less than 1 percent from its April level, or an increase of \$20 in the sales price of 50-inch sets.

This minor price increase trend reflects the higher price points of 1080p 50-inch plasma models released into the retail channel, Current Analysis West reports.

In comparison, the average selling price of a 42-inch plasma set continued to decline, dropping 4.8 percent month-over-month as LCD TVs continued to encroach

into the 42-inch screen size with more aggressive prices.

The latest plasma products to appear in the U.S. retail channel this month were the TH-50PX77U, Th-50PZ700U and TH-58PZ700U from Panasonic.

In addition, Philips introduced a 42-inch plasma set, the 42PFP5332D, at Best Buy, BJ's Wholesale Club and Sam's Club, and Vizio released the VP50HDTV at Costco and Sam's Club during the current period.

In rear-projection TV product placements, Toshiba was among the most active brands during May, moving from seventh place in April to the sixth spot in May.

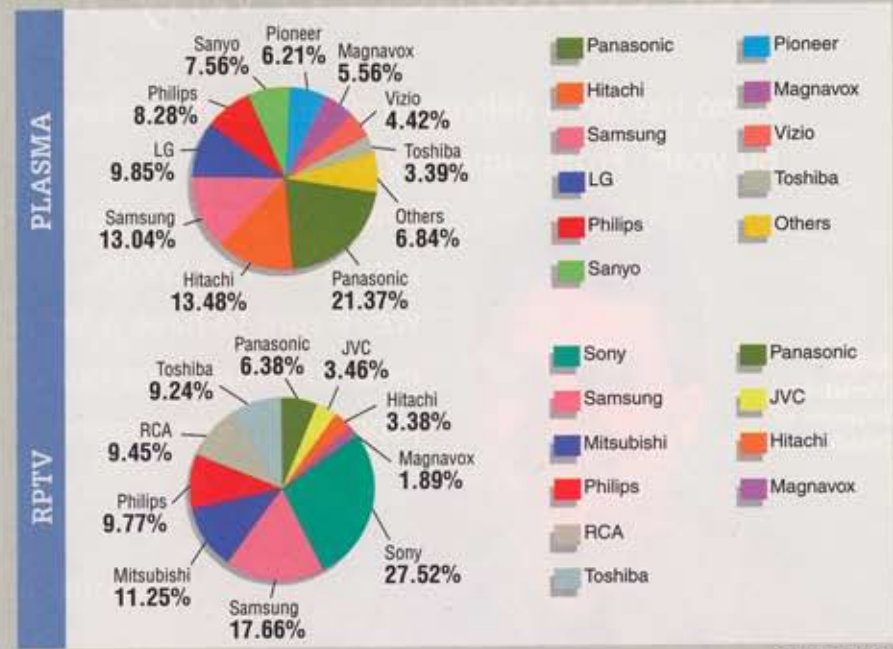
The move reflected a 3.33 percentage point gain in shelf share during the period, from the additions of model 50HM67 at Best Buy and the newly released 57HM167 at Sears.

Sony, Samsung and Mitsubishi maintained their respective first, second and third place rankings during May, Current Analysis said.

The overall average selling prices for rear-projection TVs continue to fall as a category, although prices of DLP units have been the most stable over the past year. Meanwhile, LCD-based models have seen the greatest year-over-year drop.

The average selling price of a DLP rear

## Plasma & Rear-Projection Shelf-Share, May 2007



Source: Current Analysis

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projection TV dropped from \$2,586 in June 2006, to \$2,261 in May 2007, marking a 13 percent decline over the past year.

Current Analysis West said the relatively small price erosion of DLP models resulted from the average screen size of DLP sets further expanding into the 65-inches-and-above segment, while the majority of other RPTV technologies stayed in the 60-inches-and-below ranges.

The report spotted a total of seven new rear-projection TVs this month from JVC, Samsung and Toshiba. JVC's 56-inch LCoS set, model HD-56FC97, debuted at Costco with a \$1,699 selling price.

In addition to Toshiba's 57HM167 at Sears, Samsung introduced five DLP models during the current period. All new releases feature full HD (1920 by 1080) native resolution. □

# Optoma Expands 1080p Line With Front Projector Pair

BY GREG TARR

MILPITAS, CALIF. — Optoma introduced today a pair of high-value 1080p DLP front projectors, targeted at custom and A/V specialty home theater distribution.

Model HD80 and HD81 are both 1080p projectors based on Texas Instruments' 0.95-inch 1920-by-1080 digital micro-mirror device (DMD) Dark Chip2 and Brilliant Color chip set technology. Both models are scheduled to ship later this month and should appear on store shelves in early July, said Jon Grodem, Optoma's senior product manager, and will give dealers a range of option steps for 1080p DLP projection.

Optoma said the HD80 (\$2,999 suggested retail) produces a 10,000:1 contrast ratio, using its proprietary ImageAI technology. The technology is said to deliver high color saturation and detail levels. It features a one-piece design.

Brightness from the native 16:9 aspect ratio projector is listed at 1,300 lumens.

The projector includes two HDMI v1.3 inputs, DVI-I w/HDCP, S-Video, compo-

nent video, composite video, RS-232, 12V trigger and external IR receiver port.

Image processing is handled with a 10-bit, motion adaptive 480i, 576i and 1080i de-interlacer and advanced 3D comb filter. Video processing uses a Pixel-Works-based solution.

The Optoma HD80 home theater projector will be available in July for an estimated street price of \$2,999 through authorized Optoma dealers and retailers.

The HD81-LV (\$7,999 suggested retail) is an enhanced version of Optoma's two-piece HD81, offering a native 1080p projector and studio-grade video processor.

The Optoma HD81-LV's 2,500 Lumens brightness level offers more flexible use in home theater environments with varying degrees of ambient light. The HD81-LV includes Texas Instruments 0.95-inch 1080p DarkChip3 DMD chipset, which is optimized for deep textures with image quality.

The contrast ratio is listed at 10,000:1 and the two-piece design reduces the need for multiple cable runs from video sources to the projector.



Optoma's Jon Grodem presents the new Optoma HD80 1080p DLP projector, which will hit a sub-\$3,000 price point.

An optional anamorphic lens/sled kit will be offered to help users create a "true widescreen cinematic experience," Optoma said.

When the anamorphic lens is installed together with the HD81-LV, it creates a 2.35:1 widescreen image, without the loss of color clarity, brightness or resolution.

Connectors include three HDMI (plus external HDMI expansion), one RS-232, one USB (projector), two BNC component YPbPr/RGBHV, two sets of compo-

nent video, three composite video, one VGA, RS-232, two 12V triggers and one IR port extension (video processor).

A three-year warranty is offered on the HD81-LV, and both the HD80 and HD81-LV will have one year warranties on lamp replacement, up from the previous 90-day period.

Image processing uses 10-bit motion adaptive 480i, 576i and 1080i de-interlacing, and an advanced 3D comb filter. Optoma's two-piece models use a Gennum-based processing solution.

Among new dealers getting the new projectors will be the 20 West Coast standalone stores of Best Buy's Magnolia specialty chain. Optoma will supply a mix of products including its HD73 and new HD 80 and HD81-LV (the latter in select stores).

"DLP is a big deal for Magnolia, and we were able to deliver some high-performance products," said Jon Grodem, Optoma's senior product manager. "We are able to offer them a \$2,000 entry-level solution and help put together a tri-level system solution strategy." □