

A DECADE OF NEON

Shred, Slytech celebrate 10 years standing out in the goggle and protective-gear business. **By Eric Smith**

Olympic gold medalist Ted Ligety doesn't have a hard time getting noticed now, but when he and Carlo Salmini were preparing to launch a line of goggles in 2006, the duo needed a signature look for the company to catch the market's eye.

The answer was loud and clear. But especially loud. They created their brand around a "healthy dose of neon."

"We wanted a way to stand out, to pop," said Ligety, the company's chairman, from the brands' booth on Friday. "The idea was to have goggles that you could see across the valley. We wanted to differentiate from the get-go, and neon was a way to do that."

The company, now celebrating its 10th anniversary, as well as a recent relocation to Park City, Utah, from New Hampshire, uses bright colors straight out of the 1980s to call attention to itself and achieve crossover appeal to both skiers and snowboarders.

Ligety and Salmini saw neon as attractive to all disciplines, another way to differentiate in a competitive segment of the industry.

"It sounds normal now, but back in 2006, having this vision was 10 years ahead of time," said Salmini, CEO.

For Ligety, who grew up a ski racer and found that most athletes stayed in their own lanes, uniting snowboarders, freeskiers and ski racers with a singular style of goggle was integral to Shred's mission.

"I wanted to create something that would unify all those," he said. "Someone who was a snowboarder would feel cool in it; someone who was a ski racer would feel cool in it. That was the impetus behind Shred."

Shred and Slytech, the protective gear side of the business, have grown beyond just being known for its flashy neon. Ligety's stature as one of the world's top skiers doesn't hurt, either. Though he is recovering from back surgery, he hopes to be skiing by April and then training for the 2018 Winter Olympics in Korea.

But when he's done skiing professionally, he said he will continue to play a key role in Shred's and Slytech's success.

"I always wanted something that was more than just a ski-racing career," he said. "I wanted to work in the industry, and having a successful business in the industry was



▲ CARLO SALMINI AND TED LIGETY

always a goal of mine. I still plan on racing for a few more years, but it will be nice to have this and be even more embedded in the intricate details of the day-to-day operations."

The company is now focused on the next 10 years, says Salmini, who sees the company continuing to grow its colorful line of goggles, helmets and other protective gear for all riders.

"We want to become big. It's time for us to become big," he said. "We think we are relevant because we are driven by passion and love for the sport." ●