A year to remember for Wiley X

Protective, polarising eyewear brand Wiley X has been on a crazy ride in 2015. TW relives a year that saw the company reveal its biggest-ever product launch and chart record success in export markets.

If you’ve had your finger even remotely near the pulse of the international angling trade in 2015, then you will be well aware of Wiley X. The protective and polarising eyewear brand has made some significant strides this year with the help of coordinated marketing, product launch and sponsorship endeavours.

The brand, headquartered in California, USA, with a European subsidiary in Denmark, has been a consistent name in the fishing industry over the last few years, but has enjoyed some significant growth this year to become a major player.

“This year was always going to be important for the progression of the brand because we executed our biggest-ever launch of new products,” explains Ray Hill, director of corporate accounts and outdoor sales for Wiley X USA.

The launch Ray talks of happened at the start of this year, when the company revealed a staggering 17 new models and four new polarising lens tints, giving retailers more choice than ever before to offer to their customers.

“This launch showed that Wiley X continues to be a serious contender in the polarized fishing industry and that we are prepared to invest and develop our range to offer our unrivalled optical and protective technology in more forms than ever before,” Ray adds.

“There’s no doubt that a product launch like this will have a serious impact on any brand’s fortunes, but Wiley X sunglasses offer more than just new styles and shapes. Its polarising technology, Filter 8, is second to none and all its lenses are ANSI and EN safety rated/ certified – it also has other options such as a patented removable Facial Cavity™ Seal on selected models – quite simply, Wiley X is all about performance.

While this launch was hugely successful, it was only one component that makes up why 2015 has been a terrific year for Wiley X. Throughout the year, the market share growth achieved by Wiley X Europe has been impressive. The subsidiary company has been working flat out to establish a larger distribution network on the Continent.

“It has been a record-breaking year on so many levels for Wiley X Europe,” explains the company’s European vice-president and outdoor director, Thomas Wæver.

Wiley X Europe now deals with in excess of 30 companies distributing its products in the European market, a figure that has grown exponentially over the last two years.

“Obviously the quality of our products and brand are starting to be recognised in the industry,” says Thomas.

“In years gone by I would have to work to get in front of decision makers, but in the last two years big companies have been coming to us and asking to be representatives of Wiley X. This is a very nice position, but obviously it didn’t happen by accident.”

Besides the huge product launch and the tireless work of Ray and his teams to attract new partners and distributors, Wiley X has coordinated an international effort to be present at the major fishing-industry trade shows and have an involvement in some of the biggest worldwide fishing tournaments.

“Being present at both American trade show ICAST and European show EFTTEX was hugely important for our global push this year,” explains Ray.

“After such a significant product launch and also with a new slick and streamlined look to the brand, we had to be there to meet the people in the industry and back up what we had done by showing that our service and industry interaction is also second to none.

“We picked up some great business and brand awareness from both events and that all just added to the mixing pot for what has been a strong year in 2015.”

As well as this trade promotion, Wiley X also spread its brand message to consumers with continued sponsorship of the World Carp Classic and World Predator Classic events. The two events hosted probably their biggest and best outings in 2015 and Wiley X was there as a prominent supporter and donor of top prizes at each – including becoming part of its European Fishing Team.

Alongside this in the United States, Wiley X continued to support top professional bass anglers, including Edwin Evers, Stephen Browning and Scott Ashmore. Ray says: “Each of these top touring bass pros is sponsored by eyewear innovator Wiley X, Inc., supporting their tournament efforts all season long and equipping these pros with the company’s premium-quality protective eyewear.

“Wiley X polarising sunglasses provide free vision to help them spot fish, read the schooling shad below the waves.”

So, as the headline of this article states, it has been a year to remember for this innovative eyewear brand. However, it has not happened by accident – it is down to the perfect cocktail of unique products that perform, a great team ethic and well co-ordinated and strong marketing.