

Interim report for the first quarter of the financial year 2008/2009

Increasing market share in a receding market

First quarter (September–November 2008)

- KappAhl's net sales (excluding VAT) for the period amounted to SEK 1,266 (1,247) million, an increase of 1.5 per cent.
- The operating profit was SEK 176 (206) million.
- The gross margin was 64.3 (63.9) per cent and the operating margin was 13.9 (16.5) per cent.
- Profit after tax was SEK 113 (138) million, which is equivalent to SEK 1.51 (1.84) per share.
- Cash flow from operating activities was SEK 127 (196) million.

CEO's comments

It has been a difficult quarter with a distinct decline in demand. Increasingly bad news in the autumn has made consumers more cautious. This will continue for a period and we therefore expect the coming market trend to be weak.

Since our business concept offers good value for money our prospects of performing better than the industry average are good in this market situation. KappAhl's market share has also increased slightly during the quarter through better development of comparable stores than the industry average, combined with new stores.



Christian W. Jansson
CEO

Inventory control is central in a weak market and I am satisfied that we managed this in the autumn so that we are leaving the first quarter with well-balanced stocks.

Expansion initiatives are continuing according to plan. Just over 30 stores will be opened in the 2008/2009 financial year, of which 15 has been opened during the first quarter.

For further information, please contact

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KappAhl is a leading fashion chain with more than 300 stores and 4,500 employees in Sweden, Norway, Finland and Poland. KappAhl sells value-for-money fashion with a wide appeal – to women, men and children – and focuses in particular on women aged 30-50. All clothes are from our own designers. In the twelve-month period ending 31 August 2008 KappAhl's net sales were SEK 4.6 billion and operating profit was SEK 651 million. KappAhl is a listed company. In 1999 KappAhl was the first fashion chain to be environmentally certified. Further information is available at www.kappahl.com/ir

Comments on the first quarter

Market

This autumn it became increasingly clear that the unrest on the financial markets is also spreading to the real economy. Expectations on the growth of both GDP and the retail business have been successively written down. There are, however, some positive factors, in that food and energy prices have stabilised and economic incentives have been applied in the form of tax reductions, for example. The problem at present is not primarily that people have less money to spend, but that the quantity of negative news makes consumers cautious, they are saving more.

KappAhl will not be unaffected if spending on clothes falls, but in the current market the company's concept stands a good chance of coping better than the average.

Net sales and results

KappAhl's net sales (excluding VAT) for the quarter amounted to SEK 1,266 (1,247) million, an increase of 1.5 per cent. This growth consists of the effect of new and closed stores; 5,0 per cent, changes in comparable stores, -3.6 per cent and translation differences totalling 0.1 per cent.

Durable goods have been negatively affected by rising food and energy prices and rising interest rates. All this has taken up a greater share of consumer spending, which primarily affects expensive capital goods but the clothing business is also affected. KappAhl's market share has increased through better development of comparable stores than the industry average and through new stores.

Gross profit for the quarter was SEK 814 (797) million, which corresponds to a gross margin of 64.3 (63.9) per cent. A weaker US dollar compared to last year has made a positive contribution to the margin while at the same time there is negative impact from stronger Asian currencies and local inflation in the production countries. All in all, these effects have more or less cancelled each other out. A continued strong gross margin shows that customers appreciate KappAhl's fashion.

Selling and administrative expenses for the quarter totalled SEK 638 (591) million. The increase is attributable to newly opened stores and normal cost increases for rents, salaries etc. A negative sales trend for comparable areas means that the cost share has increased.

The operating profit was SEK 176 (206) million, which is equivalent to an operating margin of 13.9 (16.5) per cent.

Depreciation according to plan was SEK 57 (54) million.

Net financial income was SEK -19 (-15) million for the quarter and the profit after financial items was SEK 157 (191) million. The profit after estimated tax was SEK 113 (138) million. Earnings per share for the quarter were SEK 1.51 (1.84).

Taxes

Tax for the quarter has been calculated in accordance with each country's tax rate. For the Group this is equivalent to about 28 per cent.

Store network

Sixteen new stores were opened and one closed during the quarter. Four new stores were opened in Sweden, two in Norway, four in Finland and six in Poland. One store in Sweden was closed. At the end of the period the total number of stores was 306 (291). Of these, 141 were in Sweden, 89 in Norway, 50 in Finland and 26 in Poland.

Expansion

The work of finding new store sites is proceeding according to plan. Apart from the 306 (291) stores in operation on 30 November this year, there are at present contracts for 53 new stores, of which 23 in Poland. Under the new contracts, one store will be opened in the second quarter and one will be closed. The full 2008/2009 total will be just over 30 newly opened stores and two to four stores closed. The long-term goal to increase the number of stores by 20 to 25 per year remains.

Inventories

At the end of the period inventories amounted to SEK 596 million, a decrease of SEK 60 million compared with the previous year. Measured in local currency, inventories per store are at a somewhat lower level than last year. Both the size and composition of the inventories are deemed to be satisfactory.

Investments

Investments of SEK 104 (69) million have been made in the period, of which the greater part refers to existing and newly opened stores.

Cash flow

KappAhl's cash flow from operating activities amounted to SEK 127 (196) million in the quarter and cash flow after investments amounted to SEK 23 (127) million. Net interest-bearing liabilities fell during the period by SEK 14 million.

Financing and liquidity

Net interest-bearing liabilities at the end of the period were SEK 1,965 million, compared with SEK 1,259 million as at 30 November 2007. In addition to operating activities, this was affected by the previous year's redemption of shares, totalling SEK 825 million. The equity/assets ratio at the close of the period was 21.5 per cent, compared with 30.8 per cent at the close of the corresponding period last year. The net interest-bearing liabilities/EBITDA ratio was 2.3 (1.5) at the close of the period.

Cash and cash equivalents amounted to SEK 24 million as at 30 November 2008. At the period close there were unutilised credit facilities of about SEK 1,200 million.

Related party transactions

There were no transactions with related parties.

Parent Company

The Parent Company's net sales during the year were SEK 0 (2) million and profit after financial items was SEK -25 (-13) million. The Parent Company did not make any investments during the period.

Events after the close of the reporting period

The Government has proposed a corporation tax cut in Sweden from 28 per cent to 26.3 per cent. For KappAhl this will have an impact on deferred tax in Sweden as of the second quarter of the 2008/2009 financial year and the current tax for the 2009/2010 financial year. The amended tax rate is not expected to have any material impact on the company's deferred tax calculation.

Upcoming financial reports

Second quarter (1 December–28 February)	1 April 2009
Third quarter (1 March–31 May)	25 June 2009
Fourth quarter (1 June–31 August)	30 September 2009

This report has not been audited by the company's auditors.

KappAhl Holding AB (publ) discloses the information provided here pursuant to the Securities Market Act and/or the Financial Instruments Trading Act. The information was submitted for publication at 11.30 on 17 December 2008.

The Chief Executive Officer affirms that the report provides a true and fair view of the Parent Company's and the Group's operations, financial position and results of operations and describes material risks and uncertainties facing the Parent Company and the Group.

Mölnadal, 17 December 2008
KappAhl Holding AB (publ)

Christian W. Jansson
CEO

Consolidated income statement - Summary (SEK million)	Sept-Nov 2008/09	Sept-Nov 2007/08	Latest 12 months Dec-Nov
Net sales	1 266	1 247	4 641
Cost of goods sold	-452	-450	-1 742
Gross profit	814	797	2 899
Selling expenses	Note 1 -605	-558	-2 153
Administrative expenses	-33	-33	-136
Other operating income	Note 2 -	-	11
Other operating costs	-	-	-
Operating profit	176	206	621
Financial income	Note 3 3	3	27
Financial expenses	-22	-18	-84
Profit after financial items	157	191	564
Tax	-44	-53	-152
Net profit	113	138	412
Earnings per share, SEK	1,51	1,84	5,49
Earnings per share after dilution, SEK	1,51	1,84	5,49

Consolidated Balance Sheet - Summary (SEK million)	30 Nov 08	30 Nov 07	31 Aug 08
Tangible fixed assets	Note 3 1 082	706	1 032
Intangible fixed assets*	1 340	1 350	1 344
Deferred tax assets	Note 4 68	407	71
Inventories	596	656	622
Other operating receivables	288	95	146
Cash and cash equivalents	24	109	32
Total assets	3 398	3 323	3 247
Equity	732	1 022	532
Interest-bearing long-term liabilities	1 174	1 257	1 229
Non-interest-bearing long-term liabilities	Note 4 39	267	16
Interest-bearing current liabilities	815	111	782
Non-interest-bearing current liabilities	638	666	688
Total equity and liabilities	3 398	3 323	3 247
*of which goodwill	696	696	696
*of which trademarks	610	610	610

Consolidated cash flow statement - Summary (SEK million)	Sept-Nov 2008/09	Sept-Nov 2007/08
Cash flow from continuing operations before changes in working capital	194	227
Changes in working capital	-67	-31
Cash flow from continuing operations	127	196
Cash flow from investment activities	-104	-69
Cash flow after investments	23	127
Change bank overdraft facility	-31	-75
Other from financial activities	-	-3
Cash flow from financial activities	-31	-78
Cash flow for the period	-8	49
Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of the period	32	60
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the period	24	109

Specification of changes in the Group's equity	Sept-Nov 2008/09	Sept-Nov 2007/08
Opening equity	531	890
Translation differences for the period	2	-4
Change in fair value reserves	86	-2
Profit for the period	113	138
Closing equity	732	1 022

Number of stores per country	30 Nov 07	29 Feb 08	30 May 08	30 Aug 08	30 Nov 08
Sweden	133	133	135	138	141
Norway	85	85	86	87	89
Finland	43	44	45	46	50
Poland	18	18	19	20	26
Total	279	280	285	291	306

Sales per country	Sept-Nov 2008/09	Sept-Nov 2007/08	Change SEK %	Change local currency %
Sweden	700	701	-0,1%	-0,1%
Norway	340	357	-4,8%	-2,7%
Finland	153	137	11,7%	5,1%
Poland	73	52	40,4%	27,0%
Total	1 266	1 247	1,5%	

Segment reporting	Net sales Sept-Nov 2008/09	Net sales Sept-Nov 2007/08	Operating income Sept-Nov 2008/09	Operating income Sept-Nov 2007/08
Nordic countries	1 193	1 195	170	201
Poland	73	52	6	5
Total	1 266	1 247	176	206

Yearly income statement (SEK million)	Sept-Aug 2005/06	Sept-Aug 2006/07	Sept-Aug 2007/08
Net sales	4 217	4 473	4 622
Cost of goods sold	-1 677	-1 738	-1 740
Gross profit	2 540	2 735	2 882
Selling expenses	Note 1	-1 863	-1 985
Administrative expenses	Note 5	-147	-142
Other operating income	Note 2	-	16
Other operating costs		-	-6
Operating profit		530	618
Financial income	Note 3	2	23
Financial expenses		-113	-97
Profit after financial items		419	544
Tax	Note 6	-117	115
Net profit		302	659
Operating margin		12,6%	13,8%
Earnings per share, SEK		4,02	8,78
Earnings per share after dilution, SEK		4,02	8,78

Parent company income statement - Summary (SEK million)	Sept-Nov 2008/09	Sept-Nov 2007/08	Latest 12 months Dec-Nov
Net sales	0	2	5
Cost of goods sold	-	-	-
Gross profit	0	2	5
Selling expenses	-	-	-
Administrative expenses	-6	-3	-11
Other operating income	-	-	-
Operating profit	-6	-1	-6
Result from participations in group companies	-	-	139
Financial income	3	3	6
Financial expenses	-22	-15	-106
Profit after financial items	-25	-13	33
Tax	-	-	26
Net profit	-25	-13	59

Parent company Balance Sheet - Summary (SEK million)	30 Nov 08	30 Nov 07	31 Aug 08
Tangible fixed assets	-	-	-
Financial fixed assets	3 144	2 882	3 403
Deferred tax assets	-	-	-
Inventories	-	-	-
Other operating receivables	315	19	29
Cash and cash equivalents	-	-	-
Total assets	3 459	2 901	3 432
Equity	894	1 561	902
Interest-bearing long-term liabilities	1 742	1 049	1 726
Deferred tax liabilities	13	1	6
Interest-bearing current liabilities	799	258	789
Non-interest-bearing current liabilities	11	32	9
Total equity and liabilities	3 459	2 901	3 432

Key ratios	Sept-Nov 2008/09	Sept-Nov 2007/08	Latest 12 months Dec-Nov
Growth in sales	1,5%	4,9%	1,5%
Earnings per share, SEK	1,51	1,84	5,49
Total depreciation/amortisation	57	54	224
Operating result (EBIT)	176	206	621
Gross margin	64,3%	63,9%	62,5%
Operating margin	13,9%	16,5%	13,4%
Interest coverage ratio	-	-	7,71
Net interest-bearing liabilities	1 965	1 259	1 965
Net interest-bearing liabilities/EBITDA	-	-	2,33
Equity/assets ratio	21,5%	30,8%	21,5%
Equity per share, SEK	9,75	13,62	9,75
Equity per share after dilution, SEK	-	-	9,75
Return on equity	-	-	47,0%
Return on capital employed	-	-	25,4%
Number of shares at the end of the period	75 040 000	75 040 000	75 040 000
Number of shares after dilution	75 040 000	75 040 000	75 040 000

Definitions

Earnings per share	Income after tax divided by average number of shares
Earnings per share after dilution	Profit after tax / average number of shares after full dilution
Interest coverage ratio	EBITDA / Net interest income excluding one-off items, for the previous twelve-month period
Net interest-bearing liabilities	Interest-bearing liabilities less liquid funds
Net interest-bearing liabilities/EBITDA	Net interest-bearing liabilities / EBITDA for the previous twelve-month period
EBITDA	Operating profit before depreciation / amortisation
Equity/assets ratio	Equity divided by balance sheet total
Equity per share	Equity / average number of shares
Return on equity	Net result in per centage of equity
Return on capital employed	Operating profit/loss plus financial income in per centage of capital employed
Capital employed	Balancesheet total less non interest-bearing depts incl. deferred tax.

KappAhl's 20 largest shareholders, 30 November 2008	Number of shares	Percent of shares and votes	Change compared to 31 Aug 2008
Christian W Jansson *)	12 214 700	16,28	959 200
Paul Frankenius *)	12 167 000	16,21	911 500
Catella Fondförvaltning	4 106 436	5,47	222 736
Swedbank Robur fonder	4 031 768	5,37	752 747
MORGAN STANLEY & CO INC, W9	3 119 861	4,16	-87 549
SVENSKA HANDELSBANKEN CLIENTS ACC:3	2 002 000	2,67	-3 000
SEB Investment Management	1 586 010	2,11	-471 000
AKTIA SPARBANK	1 320 000	1,76	-90 000
State street Bank	1 246 351	1,66	-887 451
SEB Asset Management	1 077 800	1,44	848 631
US RESIDENTS OMNIBUS LENDING A/C	1 000 000	1,33	0
SKANDIA LIV	898 350	1,20	200 000
JP MORGAN CHASE BANK, W9	883 540	1,18	-506 984
DIDNER & GEORGE AKTIEFOND	850 000	1,13	111 000
FORWARD INTL SMALL COMPANIES FUND	839 247	1,12	42 300
STIFTELSEN VIN & SPRITHISTORISKA, MUSEET	820 000	1,09	0
Nordea Bank Norge Nominee	792 200	1,06	200 000
RIKSBANKENS JUBILEUMSFOND	773 400	1,03	0
AWAKE SWEDISH EQUITY FUND	750 000	1,00	125 000
SEB Fondinvest	608 690	0,81	-253 350
Other Shareholders	23 952 647	31,92	-2 073 780
Total	75 040 000	100,00	0

*) Former 50% of Pegatro Limited

Accounting policies

The Group applies International Financial Reporting Standards, IFRS, adopted by the European Commission. The accounting policies are unchanged in comparison with the latest annual accounts as at 31 August 2008 with the addition of IFRIC 13, Customer Loyalty Programmes, which has been applied from the first quarter of the financial year 2008/2009. An assessment of the impact of IFRIC 13 on net sales has been made and not considered to have any significant effect.

This report has been prepared in accordance with IAS 34. For the Parent Company the report is presented in accordance with the Swedish Annual Accounts Act and recommendation RFR 2.1 of the Swedish Financial Reporting Board.

The company has no outstanding convertible loans or warrants.

Note 1

Due to the restructuring of pension solutions for employees in the Swedish operations, a positive non-recurring accounting effect of SEK 20 million has impacted pension expenses during the financial year 2007/2008. The item is included in selling expenses in the column for the latest 12-month period December–November (the periods December 2007–November 2008).

Note 2

Other operating income for the financial year 2007/2008 includes SEK 11 million as compensation for vacating a store site.

Note 3

During the 2007/2008 financial year the Group acquired the properties in which the distribution centre and head office are located, via two new companies. One finance lease has been terminated as a result of the acquisition. This has had a positive effect on financial income totalling SEK 23 million through terminating the financial liability. The item has had an impact on the last 12 months, December–November.

Note 4

In the latest annual accounts, as at 31 August 2008, a set-off of SEK 274 million was made between deferred tax liabilities and deferred tax assets for taxes pertaining to the Swedish tax units.

Note 5

A reclassification of SEK 4 million was made between selling expenses and administrative expenses in the period December–February 2006/2007 (financial year 2006/2007).

Note 6

During the period December–February 2006/2007 (financial year 2006/2007) a deferred tax credit of SEK 269 million was posted referring to loss carry forwards in acquired companies.

Risks and uncertainties

The most material strategic and operative risks affecting KappAhl's operations and industry are described in detail in the annual report for 2007/2008. These include competition in the fashion industry, economic fluctuations, fashion trends, store location and store expansion. The company's risk management is also described in the corporate governance report in the same annual report, under the section "Report on internal controls". The same applies to the Group's management of financial risks, which is described in the annual report for 2007/2008, note 22. The reported risks are considered to be substantially unchanged and are consequently not described in detail here.