

# FAST TALK

Interviews by Kate Rockwood

## > Roaring Into New Markets

No sitting idle for these companies. *Vroom! Vroom!* How big brands are venturing into unexplored turf.



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> Creative Brand Extensions

## The Supersoaker

**NICOLE MALCOLM**, 30, guides the Mr. Clean Car Wash brand as part of FutureWorks, P&G's new-business incubator that's also testing Tide-branded dry cleaners. Fourteen car washes opened this past summer.

"To grow an \$80 billion company like P&G requires a lot of effort. We need to find ideas where we can blow out a concept and make it big. In the United States, more than two-thirds of consumer spending is on services, and we see opportunities to take a strong brand like Mr. Clean and turn it into a service."

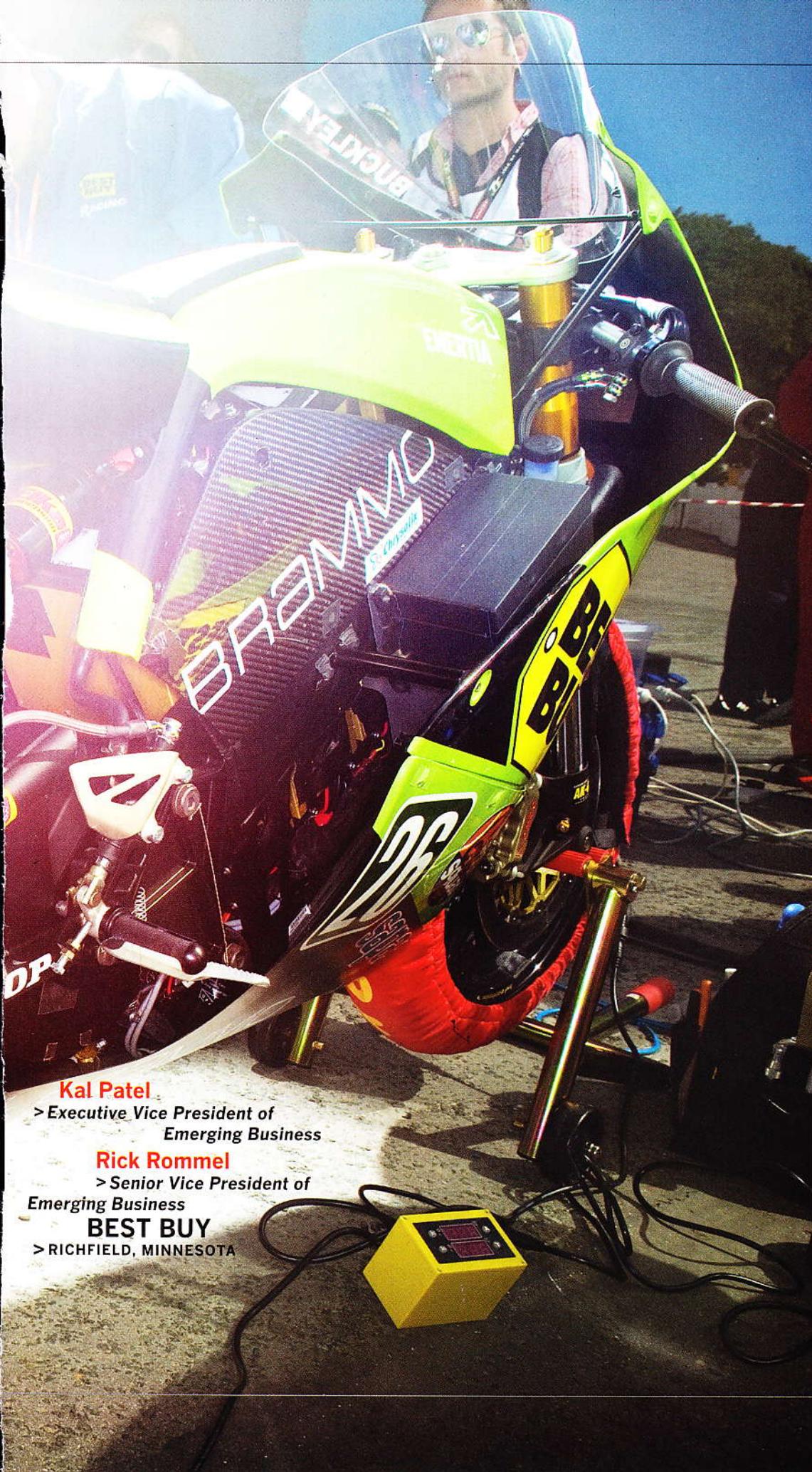
There's no national car wash. It's a fragmented \$8 billion industry. We're creating an environment that's comfortable for both women and men. We have Wi-Fi and coffee bars and giant water guns for the kids. As the cars go through the tunnel, kids can shoot soap on them. We want to really focus on the service experience. This isn't about selling Mr. Clean car-wash kits.

The demand is there. Recently, we did research in Atlanta and when we mentioned that Mr. Clean Car Washes were coming soon, people's faces lit up. Some started singing the jingle from back in the day. There's a built-in excitement, and we're aiming to be a national player."



**Nicole Malcolm**

> Brand Manager, Mr. Clean Car Wash  
**PROCTER & GAMBLE**  
> CINCINNATI, OHIO



## Easy Riders

Best Buy's KAL PATEL, 45, and RICK ROMMEL, 49, are expanding the idea of consumer electronics by exploring home energy and green personal transportation. First up is the \$12,000 Brammo Enertia electric bike, which the company will debut nationally by year's end. Best Buy also sponsored Brammo's team in the TTXGP electric-bike race on the Isle of Man.

**PATEL:** "We are looking at industries in turmoil. They hold a lot more opportunity, and you can't turn on the 6 o'clock news without hearing about gas prices, energy, or health."

**ROMMEL:** "We're aggressively experimenting with a broad array of personal-transportation ideas—and in other markets that are going through substantive change. You look at energy and, boy, it's not hard to map out how the consumer is going to experience changes in home-power management and home automation. Technology is at the heart of it all."

**PATEL:** "When we enter a new space that the public doesn't quite expect us to be in yet, like electric bikes, we take a venture-capital mind-set. We invested millions in Brammo after our first meeting, in order to be taken seriously."

**ROMMEL:** "Years ago, Best Buy didn't sell cell phones or even computers. Best Buy brings consumers the technology in their lives. The Brammo bike is really a computer and a battery on wheels."

### Kal Patel

> Executive Vice President of Emerging Business

### Rick Rommel

> Senior Vice President of Emerging Business

### BEST BUY

> RICHFIELD, MINNESOTA

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**Katrin Ley**

> Head of Brand Strategy and  
Business Development

**REEBOK**

> BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS



## The Aerialist

Reebok's KATRIN LEY, 36, developed a new trapeze-based fitness routine with Cirque du Soleil called Jukari Fit to Fly and launched it, along with two new related apparel lines, in 14 cities around the world this past spring.

"Women understand that exercise is crucial for their health, but most think of it as a boring chore, embodied by the 'dreadmill' and the 'stair monster.' We wanted to come up with a new, unconventional concept that made fitness fun again. Cirque du Soleil is known for entertainment that's very exhilarating, inspiring, athletic, and, above all, fun. We considered all sorts of things with them—body contortion, rhythmic gymnastics, trampolines. In the end, we focused on aerial performance, because it's the most unexpected and because the equipment translates easily to a gym and has longevity."

We created buzz by starting with a custom-built studio in Los Angeles and wooing celebrities such as Mischa Barton, Kim Kardashian, and Audrina Patridge to try it. In New York, we debuted at the high-profile Equinox gym. We have to make it work from a business-model perspective for the gyms, to motivate them to buy the sets and offer these classes. Feeding this industry's hunger for newness and stirring the public's curiosity lets gyms advertise something new, which helps them retain customers and acquire new ones."