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ASTRA ANNOUNCES KEYNOTE SPEAKER FOR 2017 MARKETPLACE & ACADEMY

INSIGHTS ON ENTREPRENEURIAL PERSEVERANCE AND LEADERSHIP FROM THE TOP OF THE WORLD

Chicago, Illinois (January 11, 2017) –The American Specialty Toy Retailing Association (ASTRA) announced today that renowned Mount Everest adventurer, successful retail entrepreneur, and bestselling author Jamie Clarke will headline ASTRA’s 2017 Marketplace & Academy. This year’s event, themed ***Mighty Together***, will take place June 25-28, 2017 in Philadelphia, PA.



Clarke created two successful outdoor retail companies, one of which has been named one of Canada’s fastest growing businesses. He brings first-hand understanding of the many challenges faced by a specialty retailer—including hiring, sourcing products, and attracting customers.

Clarke will open the third day of the Marketplace exhibit hall with a rousing keynote titled ***Above All Else: The Power of Passion***. He draws inspiration from his life as a self-styled “adventpreneur” who points out that in elite mountain climbing, *lives* are at stake, but climbers have maps and high tech weather predictions and experienced guides. In the world of entrepreneurial business, says Clarke, *livelihoods* are at stake, but businesses often have far less clear indicators to support their decisions. He will share his insights on perseverance, leadership, and teambuilding, all earned at the top of the world and through his own entrepreneurial business success.

“Teams of climbers who tackle Mount Everest certainly know how to be *mighty together*,” said Kimberly Mosley. “For them, just like small business owners, teamwork, grit and passion are essential to success. We are eager to hear Jamie Clarke’s mighty message about how he used insights learned while conquering the Seven Summits to grow his retail businesses.”

Clarke’s keynote will be delivered on Wednesday, June 28, 2017 from 8:30 AM to 10:00 AM. Following the keynote, ASTRA Marketplace attendees will have, for the first time, a third day on the exhibit floor to find new products that will differentiate their stores and to take advantage of show-only discounts.

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Visit www.astramarketplace.com for complete information about the 2017 ASTRA [Marketplace & Academy](#). [Registration](#) is now open. Early bird discounted registration prices end March 15, 2017.

About the American Specialty Toy Retailing Association (ASTRA)

Founded in 1992, the American Specialty Toy Retailing Association (ASTRA) is an international not-for-profit trade organization that serves more than 1,800 independent retailers, manufacturers and sales representatives in the specialty toy industry. ASTRA is a community of dedicated professionals committed to providing children with healthy, quality play materials that have high play value and are designed with a focus on what the child can do, rather than what the toy can do. ASTRA members are leaders who, through their businesses, make a positive impact on the economy and culture of the communities they serve. For more information, visit www.astratoy.org/.

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