

Bamboo Surfboards

The eco surfboard has arrived. In 1999 Shale Gordon started a surfing revolution when he and shaper/designer Frank McWilliams began making Bamboo boards, which are more durable, lighter, faster and more manoeuvrable than traditional fibreglass boards. They are also better for the environment as fibreglass and polyurethane manufacture is quite toxic and fibreglass boards are more difficult to recycle.

Shale's 16 workers, including five with disabilities, are also pleased that this successful Byron Bay, NSW business has created employment, keeping them busy making 1000 boards a year. Over 30 per cent of Bamboo Surfboards' income comes from exports and this is likely to grow as world championship surfer, Sunny Garcia, is now using these boards in some major WCT competitions.

Shale's marketing strategy varies to suit the target market. In Japan he uses local distributors because customers there identify with local endorsements, in the US he uses a large distributor with over 400 retail outlets. Also, direct sales to North America, Europe and Brazil are growing through the Internet and are expected to increase three per cent annually.

While these eco-friendly boards appeal to a growing niche market, Bamboo Surfboards® is also developing other bamboo sports equipment to strengthen their business, including some very durable bamboo skateboards. They have developed the skill in working with this material but need to be alert to copies, despite owning the trademarks, websites and patent for this construction technique.

Check out this business at www.bamboosurfboards.com .