

COMMERCE

Nordstrom places emphasis on customer service through new acquisition

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Exterior of Nordstrom Seattle flagship store

By SARAH JONES

Department store chain Nordstrom has entered an agreement to acquire menswear personal clothing service Trunk Club.

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Luxury Daily

Trunk Club's personal stylists pick out apparel for its stylish male consumers based on profiles, rather than having the men shop themselves. This new addition to Nordstrom represents the retailer's dedication to constantly improving its multichannel experience for consumers.

"We think trunk club is a terrific business with a growing reputation with customers," said Erik Nordstrom, president of [Nordstrom Direct](#), Seattle. "They have a growth plan that we can help them with.

"What they do we think is a terrific complement to what we do," he said. "We believe today is a time when customers demand to be served on their terms.

"[Trunk Club] is about guys who want to look good and it's about a high level of service.

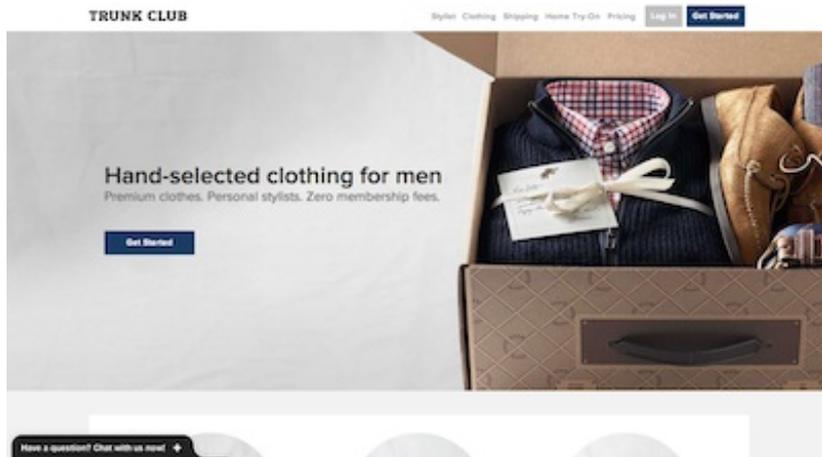
They do that in a way that doesn't involve the guy having to come into the store.

"It's different from what we do, but it fits in with fashion and service, which is the core of our business."

Personal service

Nordstrom made the announcement July 31. Pending approval from stockholders, the acquisition will close in the third quarter of 2014.

Trunk Club will continue to operate independently, but will be able to leverage Nordstrom's expertise in logistics, merchandise buying and planning to help scale its business.



Trunk Club homepage

Trunk Club has 250 stylists on staff who are paired up with members. The service enables men to connect with stylists online, on an iOS application for iPhone or in person at one of three showrooms in Chicago, Dallas and Washington.

Once the consumer tells Trunk Club their size, style and fit preferences, stylists hand select pieces from more than 50 high-end brands, including John Varvatos, and ship them to the customer. The client keeps what he likes and returns the rest with a prepaid shipping label.

Nordstrom also offers personal styling, with 1,500 employees nationwide at its stores helping consumers. This complementary service differs from what Trunk Club does, which is select pieces just based on a consumer's profile, which they call "assisted commerce."

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Nordstrom Personal Stylist: Melissa

The retailer has recognized Trunk Club's ingenuity in using ecommerce for true customer service.

"They've done some things that are really interesting to us," Mr. Nordstrom said. "Mostly ecommerce online retail has been about speed and convenience and the customer really self serving, where trunk club uses their online capabilities is to give a higher level of

service.”

Multichannel mentality

Retailers have recognized the importance of serving male consumers, who are fashion-minded but often overlooked.

British department store Harrods hosted a made-to-measure event that brought together tailors from 13 menswear labels.

Consumers could schedule a one-on-one appointment with one of the tailors from brands including Tom Ford, Ermenegildo Zegna, Gucci, Brioni and Canali. Harrods as a retailer has the opportunity to offer a range of brands, making this event stand out in the made-to-measure landscape ([see story](#)).

Nordstrom and Saks Fifth Avenue were ranked as the most digitally progressive retailers because of their large size and ecommerce options, according to a report published last year from L2 Think Tank.

The “Digital IQ Index: Department Stores 2013” examined the digital competence of global department stores and finds that the larger the store, the more effective its digital strategies ([see story](#)).

This new addition to the Nordstrom umbrella will be mutually beneficial.

“By working together and being exposed to what the other does, we will both get better,” Mr. Nordstrom said.

Final Take

Sarah Jones, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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