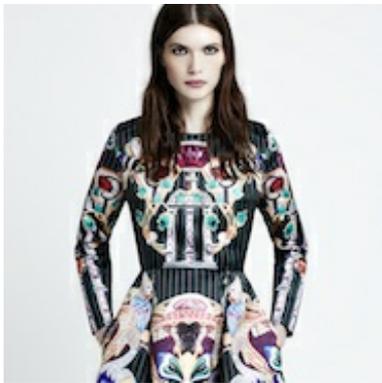


MULTICHANNEL

Selfridges invests in online store to enhance multichannel shopping experience

October 1, 2014



Fashion image shot by Alex Sainsbury for Selfridges Web site redesign

By SARAH JONES

British department store chain Selfridges is relaunching its online store Oct. 1 with a new look and touch-first approach.

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Selfridges will invest more than \$64 million over the next five years in its Web site, committing itself to making a seamless, fulfilling multichannel shopping experience for consumers. As consumers become more comfortable buying luxury products online, having an easy-to-use ecommerce platform is a major customer service.

"Selfridges' decision to invest in their online presence is very sound from the perspective of an omnichannel strategy," said Dave Rodgeron, a retail business development executive at [Microsoft Canada](#), Toronto.

"Many retailers have realized that consumers are the ones who own the relationship and they've announced loud and clear that they're the ones who decide when, where and how they shop," he said. "You often hear about retailers that are concerned about 'showrooming,' the idea that customers will look at merchandise in the store and buy it

online, potentially from a competitor.

"Smart retailers like Selfridges have come to understand that having a customer oriented Web site is just as valuable drawing customers into the physical store as it is giving them a new way to shop."

Selfridges was unable to comment directly before press deadline.

New face

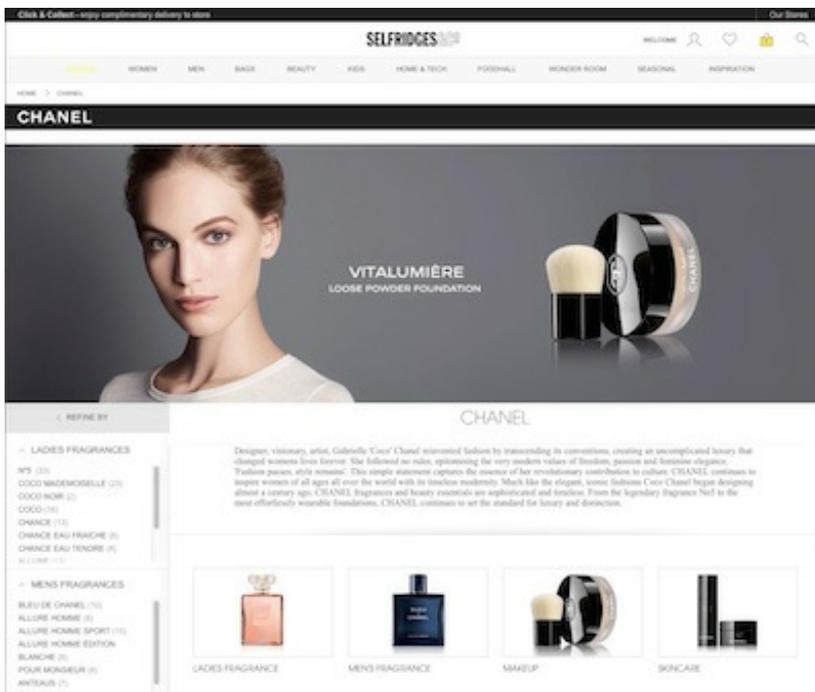
Selfridges is the most trafficked premium online store in the United Kingdom, with 1 million visits per week, a statistic 30 percent higher than its closest competitor. In addition, sales through the online channel have more than doubled each year-over-year since its launch in 2010.



Selfridges redesigned homepage

The new Web site reflects the growing consumer desire to shop via mobile devices, built from a touch-first approach with responsive design to allow for easy navigation across technology. Currently, 60 percent of Selfridges shoppers access the site from a smartphone or tablet.

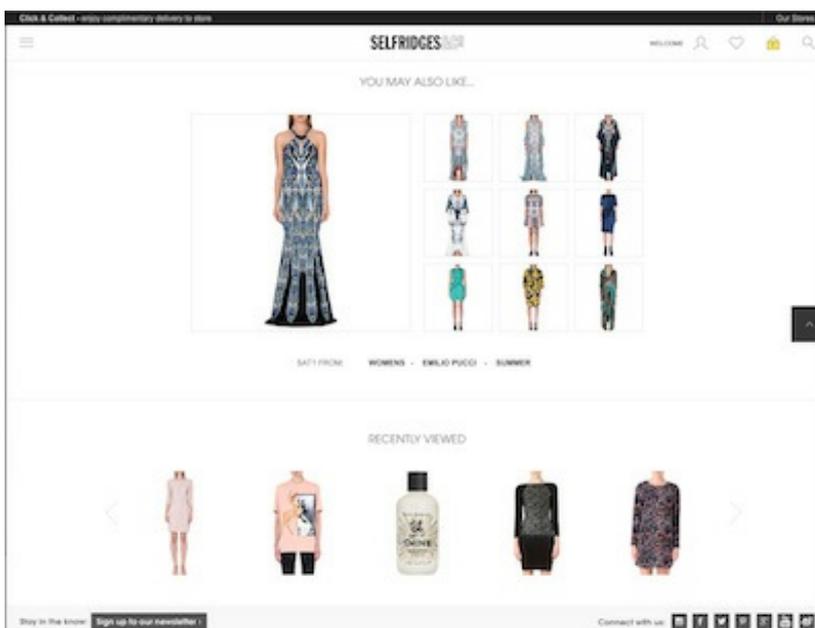
A streamlined layout includes quick view options for products and the ability to compile favorite items into a wish list, enabling an easier path to purchase.



Chanel beauty page on new Selfridges site

In addition to serving local consumers, this revamped online store will help Selfridges provide a customer service to international shoppers outside the U.K., which represents almost a third of its business. Because of the global appeal of the site, with a diverse following from China, Hong Kong, the United States, Australia and France, among others, the new design is meant to be universally appealing and intuitive.

This fall, Selfridges will expand its wide selection of fashion with the addition of 100 new brands, including luxury labels Brunello Cucinelli and Burberry, brands with limited distribution outside of their direct-operated channels.



Selfridges Web site

Selfridges is placing additional emphasis on its fashions with visuals and a newly installed editor-in-chief, who will oversee content and stories as well as the retailer's voice.

The Wonder Room, an online and in-store assortment of fine jewelry and watches, will sell more pieces via a click-and-collect service, which was originally tested with Cartier.

Selfridges welcomed French jeweler Cartier to its Web site for a spin on traditional ecommerce through a mandatory click-and-collect option.



Promotional image for Cartier click-and-collect

Cartier's presence on the site was embellished with videos and images, but the shopping aspect, Click & Collect, was the main focus which allows brands to create a space for consumers to shop online and pick-up their purchases in-store. The ability to buy a luxury item on Selfridges' Web site gives consumers new options for ecommerce, but the pick-up facet ensures in-store traffic ([see story](#)).

Enhancing ecommerce

Consumers are becoming more comfortable making large jewelry purchases online.

Auction house and art seller Christie's is capitalizing on the interest of fine horology with the launch of its online Watch Shop.

Christie's Watch Shop will have rare, vintage and luxury timepieces available for immediate purchase, year round via ecommerce. As more third party retailers begin to set up ecommerce options for luxury watches, timepiece manufacturers will likely be forced to follow suit to keep up with the competition ([see story](#)).

Being one of the early adopters of ecommerce for fine jewelry will likely set Selfridges apart.

Thinking about mobile first when building new digital assets ensures that the user experience is enjoyable across devices.

Affluent consumers are willing to convert on mobile, but they expect an experience that goes above retail, said a Gilt executive at the Mcommerce Summit: State of Mobile Commerce 2014.

Gilt operates from a mobile-first philosophy, thinking first about how a new feature will look on mobile and then building it for desktop, rather than the other way around to ensure “fast, simple and fun” for consumers. Brands should think of mobile as an integral part of the omnichannel experience rather than an afterthought ([see story](#)).

"The idea of making the website mobile friendly is a 'best-in-class' practice," Mr. Rodgerson said. "It does come with some technical challenges, because the customer expects the same experience on their phone or tablet as they do on their desktop computer at home. Selfridges understands that the future of retail is mobile.

"Customers are looking for a shopping experience that engages and entertains them," he said. "When it comes to a digital experience, the opportunities are beginning to evolve beyond product descriptions and shopping baskets that process transactions. Online shopping is becoming more immersive, allowing the retailer to tell stories, share insights and create a place where customers can come together and share a community of interest.

"By achieving these things, retailers like Selfridges are able to drive new levels of customer loyalty and provide a higher level of customer service. Of even greater significance is the opportunity to analyze data that helps them make better merchandising decisions and design more effective marketing programs."

Final Take

Sarah Jones, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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