

IN-STORE

## Breitling opens first flagship store, solidifies brand strategy

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By RACHEL LAMB



Fine watchmaker Breitling opened its first flagship boutique in

the prestigious Midtown district in New York, creating a unique mono-brand location for its customers to visit.

Breitling is sold in many retailers in North America, South America, Asia, the Middle East and Europe. The boutique opened Jan. 13.

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“Many organizations believe that having their own store enhances their brand, while supporting their online strategy,” said Rex Whisman, founder and principal at Branded Consultants Group, Denver. “While most consumers are shifting to online purchases, they still want the store experience and brands understand this.”

“They also understand that what we touch, smell and taste in a store is more memorable than what we see or hear online,” he said.

“As long as the store supports the brand’s platform, and is not too self-serving, then consumers will support the brand’s strategy, too.”

Known for its aerial sport-centric timepieces and pilot celebrity ambassadors, **Breitling** is a watch brand based in Grenchen, Switzerland.

**BrandED** is not associated with Breitling. Mr. Whisman agreed to comment as a third-party expert.

About the store

Breitling celebrated the opening with brand ambassadors and celebrity guests John Travolta, Wayne Gretzky and Mark Streit.

The store is located on 57th Street in the middle of Manhattan, close to famous shopping hub 5th Avenue.



*The inside of the Breitling store*

Breitling’s boutique is three stories and amasses approximately 4,500 sq. feet.

The brand is showcasing limited-edition models and Breitling for Bentley timepieces in addition to its traditional collections in its boutique.

Should traditional luxury brands dodge digital?

Interestingly enough, Breitling chooses to sell its products in small boutiques around the world, in contrast to large retailers like Nordstrom and Saks Fifth Avenue, like some of its competitors.

Although its products are available almost anywhere around the globe, it is still important for luxury brands to have their own retail locations, since experience is so important to their consumers.

It is also important that brands do not rely solely on an online presence, especially since

some brands, like Breitling, do not opt to sell online.

Though luxury brands do not participate in ecommerce, an online presence is crucial.

Breitling has active YouTube, Facebook and Twitter accounts, as well as an updated and informative Web site.

It uses these mediums to engage with consumers, feature new products, share news and show campaigns.

### *New teammaker Wayne Gretzky makes commercial for Breitling*

Indeed, the news of the new flagship store was advertised on all of these channels.



### *The announcement found on the brand's Web site*

"In the 21st century it is all about connectivity," Mr. Whisman said. "Brands must provide ways for their consumers and employees to connect with each other and with the brand itself.

"A few years ago that may have seemed taboo for luxury brands," he said.

"While some luxury brands might think emerging media communication channels dilute

their brand, those that utilize Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Linked-In and mobile are more likely to recruit and retain champions for their brand, and drive traffic to their stores.”

*Rachel Lamb is an editorial assistant at Luxury Daily. Reach her at [rachel@napean.com](mailto:rachel@napean.com).*

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