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Galleries Lafayette redefines chic in first phase of rebranding effort

September 18, 2015



Anais Mali for Galleries Lafayette's *Le Nouveau Chic*

By JEN KING

French department store chain Galleries Lafayette is conveying its creative energy through a rebranding effort that introduces a new brand logo paired with an advertising campaign.

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Galleries Lafayette's rebranding is part of the department store chain's implementation of its "Ambitions 2020," a transformation plan that will assist it in becoming the key omnichannel fashion retailer in France and in international capitals. Rebranding can be risky since consumers hold associations with brand imagery, but if done well, refining a brand's perception can be modernizing and propel a new identity through visuals.

"Of course there are always risks involved with rebranding a well-known heritage brand," said Tina Masciadrelli, client services director at **The O Group**, New York.

"Not everyone was thrilled with Google's new logo, but the reasoning lies within the rationale," she said. "Trends, fashion and consumers are constantly evolving.

"No one can deny the Galleries' brand heritage, but if the department store is unable to predict and stay ahead of consumers' ever-changing wants heritage will become meaningless. This new campaign proves that Galleries is listening to its customers, and

will remain relevant.”

Ms. Masciadrelli is not affiliated with Galeries Lafayette, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Galeries Lafayette was unable to comment directly.

Redefining chic

As Galeries Lafayette transforms itself under Ambitions 2020, it has created a new identity for itself. By doing so, the department store chain is aiming to modernize and return to its “primary purpose: surprise its customers at every visit” by offering unique and renewed experiences both in-store and digitally.

One aspect of this process was the development of “Le Nouveau Chic” advertising campaign created for Galeries Lafayette by global creative agency Wednesday. The campaign includes both stills and video clips that have been shared by the department store on its social media accounts.

For the campaign, Galeries Lafayette cast talent who capture the spirit of the retailer and are ambassadors of Le Nouveau Chic. The campaign features musician Gabriel-Kane Day-Lewis, models Camille Rowe and Anais Mali, chef Pierre Jancou and prima ballerina Marie-Agnes Gillot, all of whom are French to some extent, among others.



Galeries Lafayette's Le Nouveau Chic

In content shared socially, Ms. Mali stands in blue jeans and a feathered hat with a cartoon-like speech bubble that reads Le Nouveau Chic. In a short video clip the model struts, poses and dances after text reading Le Nouveau Chic appears on the screen.

A similar approach was taken by entertainers Les Twins Organization who appear in a still version and video clip that shows off both the apparel and accessories available at Galeries Lafayette as well as their definition of “chic.”

Text furthers this with the twins being quoted as saying, “The New Chic is more urban – it’s serendipity, being original and zany yet ever level-headed.” Ms. Mali has a similar statement with her social content that reads, “Chic is about attitude. A woman who respects herself and knows how to make the most of herself automatically radiates chic.”

#LeNouveauChic “The New Chic is more urban – it’s serendipity, being original and zany yet ever level-headed.” Les TWINS Organization

Ms. Mali and Les Twins Organization have both shared their campaigns for Galeries Lafayette thus expanding the reach of the retailer's rebranding effort to their audiences, who are likely French as well. By tapping into these established audiences outside its own social media happenings, Galeries Lafayette may see a larger response to its latest effort.

The rebranding effort also saw the unveiling of new brand logo. Designed by BETC, the new logo replaces the one used by the retailer for the past 25 years.

As with the visual campaign, the new logo reflects Galeries Lafayette's creative energy and The New Chic while respecting its 120-year history.



The new Galeries Lafayette logo

"Galeries' new logo evokes a sense of artistic confidence," Ms. Masciadrelli said. "The playful yet bold script seems to take a strong step forward into the world of their fashion-forward millennial buyers. [The] new campaign #LeNouveauChic complements the handwritten logo.

"The campaign uses an almost ode-to-Apple, crisp white background, allowing the fashion to pop and the energy of the models to loudly promote that they are indeed the new, chic faces of Galeries," she said.

Galeries Lafayette will roll-out its new identity to its 64 locations in the coming months.

While its flagship on Boulevard Haussmann in Paris unveiled its new identity Sept. 16., its Maine-Montparnasse store, also in Paris, and its 10 French flagships will as soon as November 2015, in time for the holiday season. Other locations in its retail network will begin transformation in the new year.

A new look and feel

Although steeped in tradition, luxury brand still aim to modernize in subtle ways that do not alienate established consumers and expectations but allow them to be viewed as more relevant in today's landscape.

For instance, The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company is rebranding itself with a newly designed

logo and voice to be implemented across all its properties within a year.

The organization, founded in Boston in 1983, is the parent of not just the Ritz-Carlton hotel brand but also golf clubs, high-end spas and meeting centers, a leadership center, residences and the Community Footprints charity, which focuses on relieving poverty and hunger and protecting the environment. The new logo and color, the first changes in the brand's history, aim to "clarify, simplify and amplify" the brand's identity for global consumers ([see story](#)).

On the contrary, some rebranding efforts bring about change that may be viewed as disruptive for the consumer.

For example, Condé Nast is launching an ecommerce business designed to reach global consumers, including its 300 million readers of titles such as Vogue and Vanity Fair.

The new enterprise will be branded Style.com, a name currently being used by a fashion news site owned by the media company, and will sell merchandise directly through the desktop sites and digital editions of its publications on mobile applications, as well as on Style.com. The new venture will launch this fall in Great Britain, to be followed by the United States and later other global markets ([see story](#)).

"The benefits to a strategic and thoughtful update to a brand's look can be endless," Ms. Masciadrelli said.

"It is imperative for brands to maintain relevance and to connect with consumers," she said. "Updating your brand's image with a respectful nod to heritage, especially for a fashion brand, proves you are trend-savvy, confident and most importantly, relevant."

Final Take

Jen King, lead reporter on Luxury Daily, New York

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