

COMMERCE

Farfetch to power Manolo Blahnik's ecommerce site

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Manolo Blahnik heels on its Web site

By STAFF REPORTS

Footwear label Manolo Blahnik has selected online retailer Farfetch to operate its monobrand ecommerce point of sale.

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A new direction for the United Kingdom-based retailer, which recently extended its own category offerings to include beauty and children's wear ([see story](#)), will operate manoloblahnik.com using its new Black & White service. For brands yet to adopt ecommerce, partnering with an established retailer lessens the behind-the-scenes infrastructure needed for in-house commerce, thus creating a retail outlet that avoids the trial and error of starting afresh.

Step in the right direction

Going forward the Black & White division will operate monobrand ecommerce sites for designer brands, counting Manolo Blahnik as its first client.

Through Black & White, Manolo Blahnik will sell its entire catalog of men's and women's shoes as well as books relevant to the brand. Recently, Manolo Blahnik extended categories to include handbags ([see story](#)), which will also be available through its Farfetch-powered ecommerce Web site.

For Farfetch its venture into ecommerce is a natural progression of the retailer's business ([see story](#)).

"We do not look at this in terms of share of the overall business," Jose Neves, founder and CEO of Farfetch told [WWD](#). "We look at it as a holistic answer to the question, 'How will people shop for luxury fashion in five years?'"

"We think it's going to be multibrand online – hence farfetch.com and brownsfashion.com," he said. "But it will also be in-store and this is why we invested in Browns and we have created a retail business unit for continuous tech innovation."



Manolo Blahnik's ecommerce site, powered by Farfetch Black & White service

Mr. Neves added that three additional brands are slotted to use Farfetch Black & White for ecommerce in the future, but declined to reveal which labels.

To gauge interest in monobrand ecommerce, Farfetch first launched its White Label service in September. This allows brands, with Derek Lam, La Perla and Jason Wu trying it out, to create branded boutiques that live on the Farfetch Web site.

By doing so, partner brands could tap into Farfetch's customer support, click and collect, return and other customizable features such as accepting local forms of payment and international shipping.

The difference with using Black & White is how brands can integrate a service they wish to provide to their consumers. A brand can opt to use Black & White "end-to-end" as Manolo Blahnik does, or use the service to offer delivery to China, as WWD suggested.

Additionally, a brand's products do not need to originate from a warehouse, but can be sold from a label's boutiques or an "inventory point" within Farfetch's network to ship. The White & Black service, from local payments to customs, clearance and logistics support, is available in English, Japanese, Korean, Chinese, Russian, Brazilian Portuguese, Spanish, German and French.

The move toward monobrand ecommerce also puts Farfetch in direct competition with the Yoox Net-A-Porter Group.

Yoox, which started as a monobrand ecommerce platform, operates 40 dedicated sites including Armani, Moschino, Emilio Pucci, Valentino and Marni, with plans for Chlo to join later on this year.

For instance, French fashion label Karl Lagerfeld is the latest luxury brand to make a foray into ecommerce with the upcoming launch of its online store.

According to WWD, the venture in partnership with the newly formed Yoox Net-A-Porter Group is a head-first leap, establishing ecommerce sites for multiple countries and languages from the start rather than doing a slower roll-out internationally ([see story](#)).

Net-A-Porter has also dabbled in helping brands test out ecommerce, as it did with Chanel for its Coco Crush jewelry capsule sold on the site. The soft opening of ecommerce through Net-A-Porter likely offered Chanel some insight to its consumer's willingness to buy online. ([see story](#)).