

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Hugo Boss goes on demand with effortless shopping and impeccable service

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Boss On Demand

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

German fashion label Hugo Boss is going on demand with the help of a feted player in the new economy.

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With the help of Uber, Hugo Boss is debuting Boss On Demand, a multichannel shopping experience designed to combine the diverging strengths of in-store and online shopping. As bricks-and-mortar revenue decreases and ecommerce grows, an omnichannel approach will allow Hugo Boss to maintain both channels and stand out from competitors.

"Uber is a good choice of car service for Hugo Boss, as it has the highest brand awareness and usage in the online car service space," said David Naumann, vice president of marketing at Boston Retail Partners. "According to a survey by GlobalWebIndex, nearly 75 percent of Uber users are in the 16-34 age group, which is a strong target demographic for Hugo Boss.

"Uber is becoming so pervasive that many consumers use the name Uber' as a verb and loyal users love the service and the brand," he said.

Impeccable Service

Boss on Demand consists of three major services: Effortless Shopping, Impeccable Service and Inside Access.

Effortless Shopping provides consumers with the amenities necessary to avoid the inconveniences of shopping. Via a partnership with UberCentral, which lets businesses pay for customers' rides, a car will pick up the client and deliver him to the store appointment, where Uber will facilitate a hands-free shopping experience.



Boss and UberCentral

"Uber is very low cost, so the company isn't giving up much margin," said Paula Rosenblum, "The drivers tend to look professional, so the customer doesn't feel like she (or he) has gone down market, and Uber is fast.

"With regard to What problem are they solving?' the short answer is, I'm not sure," she said. "I think the emphasis is on effortless' and so I imagine there are people who will appreciate not having to handle heavy bags."

After the Westfield World Trade Center store in New York opens on August 16th, the service will also include delivery services. If a client in the Wall Street area needs a replacement for a stained tie or shirt or needs shoe shine service, it will be delivered within an hour.



Boss On Demand shopping

"This is a big deal, particularly in their pilot location," Ms. Rosenblum said. "I've used Prime Now for forgotten or broken cables and power adapters, but haven't been able to do the same for a fashion item."

Online, Boss has partnered with Shoprunner to offer free two-day shipping. Boss will also allow consumers to designate at online checkout a retail outlet for pick-up and/or alterations.

Impeccable Service will provide Boss stylists and associates, from wedding experts to private sales associates, to consumers. Clients will be able to book appointments with individual specialists, ensuring the optimal in-store experience.

The benefits of Boss Inside Access are more wide-ranging, incentivizing customer loyalty and rewarding longtime and high-spending customers.



Boss On Demand Inside Access

On the low-end, Boss will gift these consumers everything from grooming products to complimentary monogramming. Up the ladder, it will allow early access to book singings in Boss stores and send invites for exclusive access to the New York showroom.

Finally, Inside Access also provides opportunity to test drive new luxury cars and to golf at world-renowned events.

"Everybody is busy and they appreciate anything that is convenient and saves them time especially affluent consumers," Mr. Naumann said. "Hugo Boss' strategy to make it easier for its upscale customers to get to their store and receive their purchases quickly is another way to make their customers feel like they are receiving exclusive, personalized services."

Omnichannel changes

Boss' focus on stand-out omnichannel service could help it regain margins as it takes back department store consumers.

When it comes to omnichannel retailing, department stores perform better on average than their monobrand peers, according to a recent report by ContactLab and Exane BNP Paribas.

Multibrand retailers as a whole are reaching 50 percent of their full omnichannel potential, higher than the collective mega brands such as Louis Vuitton and Gucci and beating out premium, jewelry and high-end labels. Consumers who shop both in-store and online spend 50 percent more in a year than those who buy in bricks-and-mortar boutiques alone, making it financially smart to create an omnichannel shopping experience for clients ([see story](#)).

While the business potential of omnichannel is evident, brands need to ensure that their decision to go the extra mile solves a definite problem.

As retailers strive to fill out their omnichannel capabilities, they may be investing in more than consumers expect, want or need, according to a report from A.T. Kearney.

From lightning fast fulfillment to in-store technology, certain additions may be unnecessary for retailers to win consumers' loyalty and dollars. At the same time, one resource that has the power to drastically impact a retailer's bottom line is largely ignored: its store associates ([see story](#)).

"The new Boss On Demand multi-channel shopping experience services support Hugo Boss' strategy to elevate the Boss core brand with the expansion of its luxury offering into the high-end segment in terms of both style and price," Mr. Naumann said. "With exclusive services like UberCentral and UberRush, consumers will feel more connected, engaged and loyal to the brand."