

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

## Casualization, generational shift has uncovered footwear category's strengths

April 7, 2017



Image courtesy of Jimmy Choo

By JEN KING

MUSCAT, Oman Footwear is a key element in defining fashion, with the product category now accounting for 7 percent of the overall luxury market's growth between 2012 to 2016, according to Jimmy Choo's CEO.

Subscribe to **Luxury Daily**  
Plus: Just released  
State of Luxury 2019 **Save \$246 ▶**

Jimmy Choo has benefited from the footwear category's continuous momentum with an 11 percent growth on average since 2012. In the keynote "New Heights for Jimmy Choo" during Cond Nast International's "Mindful Luxury" conference on April 6, the brand's CEO discussed what is driving footwear interest and how the shoemaker has had to revamp its strategy to meet the demands of today's consumer.

"The market of luxury has changed," said Pierre Denis, CEO of **Jimmy Choo**. "We've had great growth in 20 years and it's fair to say in the last three years this growth has been strong.

"If you take last year, the year 2016, the global luxury market was down by 1 percent, so it is not amazing," he said. "But, most importantly, the forecast today is that in the years to come, instead of having big growth, we are poised to have growth of 3 to 4 percent.

"In that, it means that not everyone is equal. Some brands are performing better than others."

New heights

High-end footwear remains at an accessible price point for many consumers. Jimmy Choo, for example, has an average ticket price of 500 pounds, or \$625.

Forty percent of luxury consumers plan to increase spending on footwear, followed by 33 percent with intent to spend more on fragrance and cosmetics and 21 percent on watches and jewelry.

With mainstay shoe designers such as Manolo Blahnik, Christian Louboutin and Salvatore Ferragamo the category has always been competitive. Today's market has added even more competitors as more fashion houses create footwear programs.

On one hand the competition fuels creativity, but it also creates a lot of shoes, possibly too much promotion and

inevitable markdowns. Retailers have also benefited from category growth, and now count footwear as a driver for success.

Competition has also resulted in Jimmy Choo diversifying its product offerings. As consumers' wardrobes have gone from "trad" to "rad," according to Mr. Denis, foregoing traditional trends for creative, radical and casual dress, the brand has responded by evolving its style mix.



*Actress Dakota Fanning wearing Jimmy Choo sneakers*

While footwear has long served as a female statement accessory, the men's shoe category is rapidly expanding as male clients look for an outlet to express creativity. Men's shoes make up a third of the luxury footwear market and at Jimmy Choo the category is its fastest growing, making up 9 percent of the brand's business ([see story](#)).

In women's footwear, the casual dress trend has resulted in a sneaker design being Jimmy Choo's second best-selling style, following its signature stiletto. Surprisingly, 13 percent of Jimmy Choo's business is now sneakers.

#### Changing content

Digital has greatly impacted retailing and influences 61 percent of all purchases, Mr. Denis said. This has led Jimmy Choo to focus its selling methods on omnichannel retail.

In October 2017, Jimmy Choo will launch an omnichannel strategy that links together the consumer journey in the on and offline space, provides currency options, leverages the store network and on the back end, connects distribution centers.

Above all, omnichannel requires direct-operated storefronts, with Jimmy Choo having a network of 150 current boutiques ([see story](#)) and openings planned for the Middle East and South Korea coming this year.



### *Neutral accessories by Jimmy Choo*

As a brand without a runway show, Jimmy Choo embraced social media marketing early on, realizing the importance of lifestyle content. With a community following of more than 6 million, Jimmy Choo uses Instagram, for example, as a lifestyle vehicle.

By presenting consumers with lifestyle visuals, Jimmy Choo was able to expand its offerings by diversifying into new product categories such as handbags and fragrance, without the need for ready-to-wear.

"I think the key sense of what's happening in the luxury industry right now is that the sense of what has been control, organization is changing," Mr. Denis said. "I think that is the most important moment now for luxury.

"Once you have done social media, the second thing is, it is not only about putting shoes, because no one is interested in seeing just shoes," he said. "People are interested in seeing a lifestyle. You have to create your brand as a lifestyle.

"Once you have done that, to be frank, the great thing about creating brand lifestyle is that you're not just discussing shoes, you can start to do bags, you can start do perfumes. If you're one of my competitors you can start to do lipsticks. That's exactly what's going on. [As a brand] you have a role to project a lifestyle vision thanks to the social network."

---

© 2020 Napean LLC. All rights reserved.

Luxury Daily is published each business day. Thank you for reading us. Your **feedback** is welcome.