

RETAIL

YNAP teams with Valentino to build frictionless omnichannel ecosystem

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Image from Valentino's fall/winter 2016 campaign

By STAFF REPORTS

Yoox Net-A-Porter Group is working with Valentino to give shoppers equal access to the brand's fashions, regardless of channel.

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The "Next Era" business model, slated to launch early in 2018, expands on the Italian label's existing relationship with YNAP, which has powered Valentino's ecommerce site since 2008. Now, the retail group is collaborating with Valentino on omnichannel solutions designed to meet the changing needs of luxury shoppers.

Breaking down barriers

As it looks to give consumers truly omnichannel services, Valentino and YNAP are setting up shared inventory capabilities. On the back end, Valentino will have a single view of all inventory held in its boutiques, eight international fulfillment centers and logistic centers.

With this integrated inventory, consumers will be able to view what is available in-store from the brand's ecommerce site, while bricks-and-mortar shoppers will be able to browse and buy via ecommerce through mobile touchpoints.

These boutiques will also be leveraged as additional fulfillment centers, helping to cut down time from purchase to delivery. The platform will be able to automatically choose the fastest fulfillment option for a particular shopper.

Consumers will also be able to split fulfillment options in a single order, allowing them to choose to buy and pick one item up in-store while also having other merchandise shipped. Any ecommerce items they do not wish to keep can be returned online or in-store.

The comprehensive inventory management also extends to Valentino stockists Net-A-Porter and Mr Porter. Shoppers on these platforms will have access to products being sold on Valentino.com and in the label's boutiques, giving them a wider selection to choose from.

Behind the Next Era model is both YNAP's in-house technology solutions and an order management system developed alongside IBM ([see story](#)). Along with tracking purchases and inventory, this will allow Valentino to learn about its clients' patterns across channels so it can better market to them and deliver better experiences online and

in-store.



Finale of Valentino's fall/winter 2017 men's show

Going along with the inventory upgrades, Valentino's Web site will also get a mobile-friendly makeover.

Incorporating elements of artificial intelligence, the new site will enable shoppers to interact with the platform in a conversational manner. The Web site's AI functions will also deliver personalized suggestions to each consumer.

At the store level, mobile touchpoints will allow visitors to have as much or as little contact with sales staff as they prefer. Mobile checkout eliminates the need for associates to ring up purchases, while mobile platforms can also assist shoppers in finding merchandise.

These mobile devices can also make a connection between frontline staff and customers for those looking for a more personal touch.

Retailers are increasingly in tune with consumers' expectations of personalized, seamless experiences across channels, with 56 percent of brands citing this as a top digital priority going forward, according to a new report by Boston Retail Partners.

As consumers and retailers alike have embraced mobile and online selling, the traditional retail silo model has been broken down to create a bridge between the physical and digital. Likewise, retailers now have a better grasp on bringing consumers an individualized and streamlined shopping experience, wherever, whenever and however they prefer to shop ([see story](#)).

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