

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

China saves Tod's sales for the first half of 2017

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Tod's China Web site: Walking the walk. Image credit: Tod's

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While Italian luxury group Tod's reported a 2.9 percent decline in **revenue for the first half of 2017**, sales from China increased 1.4 percent for the first half, year-over-year.

Even though China is placed third by region share, right after Italy and Europe, it is the only region that experienced positive growth, which means Tod's next task could be to figure out how to discover the full potential of this market.

Considering that Chinese consumer tastes are becoming more sophisticated, the challenge of the task seems to be figuring out how to balance their focus on classic heritage with an offer of something fresh.

Many speculated that for Tod's, the decision to stick to its heritage was a lesson learned from the past.

In 2013, former creative director Alessandra Facchinetti tried to give the brand a new fashionable look, **but the result was not satisfying to many of the brand's old and loyal customers who turned away**. Ms. Facchinetti stepped down in May 2015.

The group's chief financial officer, Emilio Macellari, confirmed the reason behind this power shift.

"According to market response," he told **Footwear News** at the time, "fashion is not what a client coming to Tod's stores is looking for."

Recently, the Italian luxury brand has continued to revamp its offering by taking more cautious steps, one of which is to add customized elements to its design strategy.

For one, the group frequently worked with China's top fashion blogger Mr. Bags and continues to give him more creative control. Together, they launched 200 custom-designed Tod's bags to sell exclusively on WeChat.

All the bags were sold out at **a total value of 3.4 million yuan**, nearly 1 percent of the group's China sales in the first half of 2017.

Besides working with KOLs to drive buzz online, the group also hosts pop-up events globally and invites customers

to come to the physical store to redesign its classic Gommino Tod's loafer.

The event is part of a global project called My Gommino, [according to brand's official WeChat](#), in China.

From July 21 to July 28 this year, consumers could come to Tod's Shanghai flagship store to enjoy the customization service, and mix match their own Gommino in various ways, such as choosing different kinds of leather, color and stitching. Hey, it has worked for [Fendi and Prada](#). Seems like it is on the right track.

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