

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Rent the Runway touts alternatives to ownership in multichannel effort

October 17, 2017



Rent the Runway is looking to eliminate the closet. Image credit: Rent the Runway

By STAFF REPORTS

Online fashion rental service Rent the Runway is building on its organic growth with its first brand campaign.

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Since its founding in 2009, Rent the Runway has grown mostly thanks to word of mouth. Now, the service is looking to inspire consumers to join its answer to the fashion sharing economy through a national campaign.

Ownership optional

Rent the Runway's campaign centers on 15- and 30-second television spots. Debuted Oct. 16, the ads show the possibilities that exist with renting.

A 30-second ad shows creative uses for the newly freed up closet space courtesy of Rent the Runway, showing women using what was previously clothing storage as a gym or an office.

The campaign will also be featured on outdoor placements in New York beginning the week of Oct. 23. Rent the Runway tapped illustrator Julie Houts to create imagery for its subway activations.

Rent the Runway's campaign coincides with the launch of additional services.

Since launching its RTR Unlimited membership program last year, which allows consumers to pay a monthly fee for access to designer items, Rent the Runway's subscription business has grown. It expects this aspect of its organization to triple next year.

About two-thirds of RTR Unlimited members report that they buy less clothing than they did before. RTR Unlimited has also boosted in-store services, such as pick-up and drop off, by 120 percent.

One of Rent the Runway's physical stores is in Neiman Marcus' San Francisco store ([see story](#)).



Rent the Runway at Neiman Marcus. Image credit: Rent the Runway

Rent the Runway is now growing its subscription options with the launch of a second tier. While RTR Unlimited allows borrowing of up to four items at a time for \$159 per month, with designers such as Marni and Proenza Schouler, RTR Update will provide access to four items at a time from 200 brands such as Diane von Furstenberg and Tory Burch for \$89 per month.

"Since its launch, RTR Unlimited' has created an entirely new consumer behavior and has disrupted the way women are getting dressed every day," said Jennifer Hyman, co-founder and CEO of Rent the Runway, in a statement.

In addition to its membership programs, Rent the Runway still offers its original single item rental service RTR Reserve.

Consumers are adjusting their perspective on ownership, leading to the rise of alternatives to traditional purchasing in the fashion and beauty categories.

The convergence of consumers' thriftiness and desire for sustainability is creating new models for consumption, such as rentals and secondhand marketplaces. In a webinar from Euromonitor, titled "The New Consumerism: Impact on Beauty and Fashion Industries," two of the research firm's analysts pointed out that brands in these categories need to regroup and deliver experiences and products that consumers are willing to pay for to remain competitive ([see story](#)).

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