

RETAIL

Selfridges beats the holiday competition via October opening

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Selfridges window display 2017. Image credit: Selfridges

By BRIELLE JAEKEL

British department store Selfridges is getting a head start on its Christmas celebration with the unveiling of window displays, but its new strategy will keep the display from getting stale.

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The retailer is the first in the world to display its Christmas window decor so soon, which will likely gather significant attention and free publicity. Selfridges' display will see a second unveiling in November, which is the first time in the retailer's history it has had a dual-staged unveiling.

"Selfridges has launched its Christmas windows in late October, ahead of Halloween, for well over 15 years," said Hannah Emslie, head of windows at Selfridges. "This year, Selfridges also responded to an increasing customer demand for a greater availability of Christmas products outside the Christmas season, and made a select offer of Christmas food available to buy from Aug. 4.

"Although this is the first time we've sold Christmas food in August, the Selfridges Christmas shop, which opened on July 31, has always launched in the height of summer," she said. "Selfridges welcomes customers from all over the world, some of which will only visit London once during the season."

Happy Christmas

Christmas in retail has been coming out earlier and earlier each year, with every brand competing for consumers' attention and feeding into demand.

Selfridges unveiled the first part of its holiday display on Oct. 19. A second unveiling will come in November, which will coincide with the opening of the second part of its new Accessories Hall on Duke Street.



Commuters make their way to work past the new Christmas window displays at Selfridges London. Image credit; Matt Writtle.

As part of its "With Love From" theme, Selfridges looks to evoke the feeling of a loving gathering where everyone is invited, no matter where they come from. It will also look to celebrate the retailer's hometowns, London, Birmingham and Manchester, and capture its overall intent to surprise and delight.

Selfridges is extending this theme to its collection of holiday gifts as well, calling these items an "open love letter" to its history.

The window displays depict a Christmas parade with various floats on display, indicative of London's famous parades, decorated with lavish holiday dcor.

"With Love From" took a year to complete from inception to reveal, with over 500 people working on the project and 100 working 24 hours for eight days.

Selfridges' holiday windows are featured from Duke to Orchard Street with its largest window featuring 10 different Santas. The featured Santas are dressed in suits' with special pearly buttons modeled after Pearly Kings and Queens of London.

With almost 120,000 pearly buttons, each Santa has almost 12,000.



Selfridges is the first department store in the world to unveil its Christmas windows. Image credit: Matt Writtle.

Inside the stores, glitter cannons will dispense more than 65,000 pieces of confetti daily, starting Nov. 27 until Dec. 16.

There will also be a variety of hanging paper decorations, mirror balls, garland, Christmas Trees, electric cabling and more than 85,000 baubles.

Selfridges initiatives

Last year, Selfridges urged consumers to press pause during the holiday season to reconnect with themselves and loved ones.

Selfridge's "Shine On!" holiday 2016 campaign sought to reaffirm the reason for the season, regardless of how

hectic consumers' lives can be throughout the year. The retailer's campaign commands celebration, turning the "dial to the max" by hosting a holiday-themed rainbow-colored glitter disco ball dance party at its Oxford Street flagship in London ([see more](#)).

The retailer has doubled the space dedicated to selling accessories, citing the category's appeal as motivation.

With the ideology that "the power of a truly great accessory can never be underestimated," Selfridges renovated its accessories department at its Oxford Street flagship in London. The accessories category is viewed as an access point to many luxury goods brands due to the entry-level price tag for many pieces such as wallets and cosmetics bags, with handbags commanding a higher ticket ([see more](#)).

"In the past few years, retailers have kicked off the Christmas season earlier and earlier," said David Naumann, vice president of marketing, BRP. "Shoppers are also starting their holiday shopping earlier as retailers begin their holiday sales sooner.

"According to the National Retail Federation, 40 percent of holiday shoppers start buying before Halloween," he said. "Selfridges' first move on the Christmas display will garner a lot of free publicity and inspire Christmas enthusiasts to visit their stores sooner than they planned to kick-off their holiday shopping.

"While it may seem too early to most people, it is a clever strategy."

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