

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

## Erdem Moralioglu: Not overextending key to growth

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*Erdem has grown incrementally. Image credit: Erdem*

By SARAH JONES

VENICE, Italy While designer Erdem Moralioglu has expanded into new product categories through collaborations, he is focused on not stretching his namesake brand too far, too fast.

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Keeping control over product extensions and distribution is important to the Erdem designer, who has preferred his incremental growth to more of a boom. Speaking at the Financial Times Business of Luxury Summit on May 21, the designer shared his thoughts on his trajectory over his last 13 years in business.

"I've been very fortunate that our growth has been to a certain extent incremental and controllable," Mr. Moralioglu said.

"We've never grown so big and so fast that we weren't able to produce," he said. "And in a way, I've always paced myself with distribution and controlling that distribution very closely."

### Brand story

The son of a British mother and a Turkish father, Mr. Moralioglu completed his masters in fashion in London at the Royal College of Art. After graduating, he worked for only one year before launching his eponymous label in 2005.

Remaining independent is important to Mr. Moralioglu. While starting out, he admits that there were challenges and mistakes, as he did not have a business background.

He also believes that this independent approach led to a slower growth in the beginning for **Erdem**. A buy from Barneys New York helped to get orders from other retailers.

Mr. Moralioglu believes that gaining in-store placement at key retailers is still important to designers starting out today, allowing them to be associated with other more established labels that share the sales floor.

When Erdem opened its first store, Mr. Moralioglu notes that seeing his customers actually made the identity of his woman less clear, as shoppers ranged in age and came from different places.



*Erdem flagship store. Image credit: Erdem*

The brand's store in London features a homey environment, and Mr. Moralioglu believes that the bricks-and-mortar environment allows for a level of service that his customers expect.

Online retail has also been big for the brand, with his colorful dresses and silhouettes naturally translating to screens. Today online sales represent 40 percent of Erdem's business, almost doubling in a couple of years.

The designer is interested in better translating the in-store experience online, creating a bespoke, personalized experience.

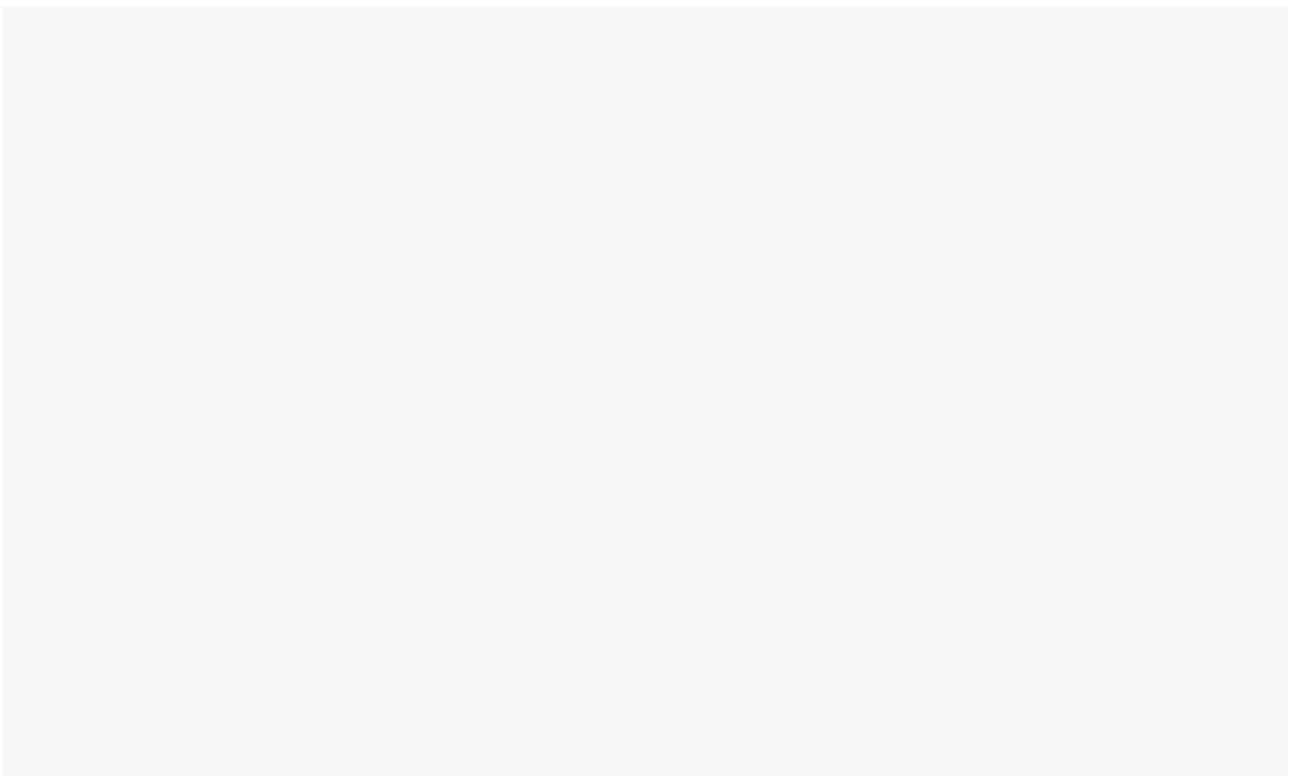
Personalizing consumers' retail experiences can lead to loyalty and increased spending, according to a report from Boston Retail Partners.

Today consumers expect more individualized communications and interactions with retailers, with 59 percent saying that personalization impacts their purchasing decisions. Identifying and appealing to shoppers with relevant offers or communications can help to establish a relationship between consumer and brand ([see story](#)).

What's next

While his brand is focused on women's ready-to-wear and accessories, Mr. Moralioglu has experimented with other categories through partnerships.

Last year, the brand worked with fast fashion retailer H&M on a collection that included his first menswear designs. Rather than creating inexpensive copies of his designs, he instead worked with H&M to source textiles from suppliers such as Harris Tweed, creating pieces that could have a longer life.





The #ERDEM x @hm campaign. Photographed by @michal\_pudelka Styled by @omattias #ERDEMxHM

A post shared by ERDEM (@erdem) on Oct 17, 2017 at 10:48am PDT

Mr. Moralioglu has also collaborated with Nars on a makeup line.

While certain categories, such as sneakers and menswear, are not on the horizon at the moment, the designer is interested in extending his universe to fragrance.

Similarly to a number of other luxury brands that have costumed dancers, such as Balmain ([see story](#)), Mr. Moralioglu brought his talent to the Royal Ballet.

"I've never done a collaboration because of a fiscal motivation," Mr. Moralioglu said. "Of course, there is a fiscal aspect in every collaboration that you do, but it was whether or not it was a language that I could apply to something new."

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