

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Michael Kors opens permanent online WeChat boutique

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Michael Kors will retain complete creative control over the look and feel of the online store. Image credit: Michael Kors

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Fashion label Michael Kors is making a major move to court more Chinese consumers by launching its first full store on popular Chinese social media application WeChat.

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The boutique functions as a kind of mini-app within the larger WeChat platform. Using this model, Michael Kors is one of the first luxury brands to have its own full-fledged store with complete control on one of the most widely used social media platforms in China.

Online boutique

China has increasingly become one of the most important markets in the world for luxury brands.

For Western luxury labels, China is desirable but at the same time difficult to navigate. Many of the channels and strategies that are in use elsewhere do not work quite as easily in China.

For that reason, Chinese platforms such as WeChat have been helpful facilitators between Western brands and Chinese consumers.



The WeChat boutique. Image credit: Michael Kors

Michael Kors' latest effort is the most advanced step in this facilitation yet seen. Through WeChat, Michael Kors has created its own online store that functions as a mini-app within WeChat.

From there, customers around the world can purchase products and interact with Michael Kors without having to download a separate mobile app to do so. This allows Michael Kors to reach more customers while still retaining complete creative control over the look and feel of the store.

Michael Kors has been working with WeChat for seven years now, and its new online boutique is the culmination of that partnership.

In 2015, Michael Kors made shopping more personalized for its consumers in Asia with a CRM experience housed on WeChat.

Designed to merge the online and offline, the tool offers digital customer service touchpoints to be used both at home and in-store and offers benefits to members to spur bricks-and-mortar visits. Not only does this platform assist Michael Kors in delivering a customized experience to its consumers, but it also enables the brand to learn more about its most engaged clients ([see story](#)).

Permanent fixture

These types of boutiques are becoming increasingly popular on WeChat.

Online luxury platform Farfetch is expanding its presence in China with the acquisition of CuriosityChina, a Chinese digital marketing agency.

In doing so, Farfetch is looking to smooth the sales of luxury brands' goods in China through popular ecommerce and WeChat. The social platform has often acted as the gateway for Western brands looking to penetrate the market ([see story](#)).



Customers can browse Michael Kors products and purchase them through the app. Image credit: Michael Kors

Other brands have done projects similar to Michael Kors' boutique, but on a temporary basis.

For example, Italian fashion label Tod's is partnering with WeChat and influencer Mr. Bags for a new digital pop-up shop.

The pop-up combines editorial content with shopping, allowing customers to learn more about the products and their creation before making the purchase directly through WeChat. The collaboration emphasizes not only the importance of ecommerce but also the continued crossover between European luxury and China ([see story](#)).

Similarly, LVMH-owned travel retailer DFS Group launched a mini purchasing program powered by WeChat.

DFS' mini purchasing program launched on WeChat Sept. 1 last year, ahead of the busy Labor Day holiday weekend, and targeted travelers who prefer to shop via mobile, rather than stop into a duty-free shop. WeChat introduced the mini program to create rich experiences for its users who turn to the app for commerce and communication ([see story](#)).

What sets Michael Kors' version of these boutiques apart is that it is a permanent fixture of WeChat that is jointly operated between brand and platform. If the shop is a success, WeChat will likely target more luxury brands to open their own permanent shops through the platform.