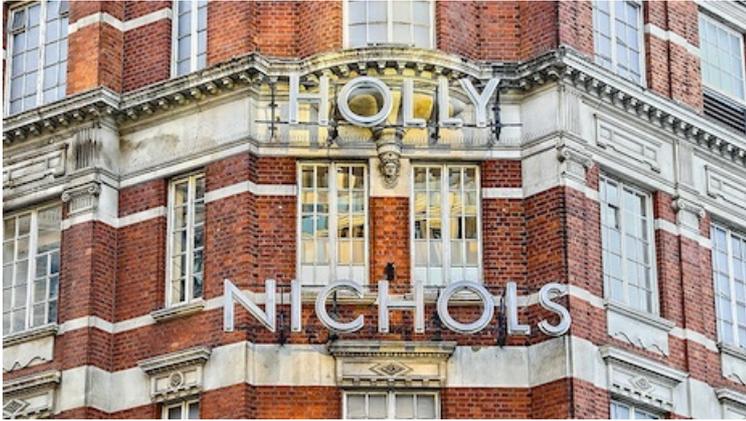


RETAIL

Harvey Nichols transforms into Holly Nichols for women's wear push

September 17, 2018



Harvey Nichols has turned itself into Holly Nichols this month. Image credit: Harvey Nichols

By SARAH JONES

British department store chain Harvey Nichols is getting in touch with its feminine side in a multichannel makeover in honor of its newly renovated women's floor.

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For the month of September, the retailer has changed its name to Holly Nichols, with both its bricks-and-mortar and online presence reflecting the updated persona. While a promotion for its updated store look, the campaign also hits as the United Kingdom celebrates the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage, allowing Harvey Nichols to align its marketing with broader themes of female empowerment.

"Brands today shouldn't think twice about celebrating historical 'wins' and emphasizing their core principles," said Beatrice Egan, senior consultant at [Boston Retail Partners](#), Boston. "Staging this female takeover not only creates buzz but reinforces the brand's steadfast values."

Ms. Egan is not affiliated with Harvey Nichols, but agreed to comment as an industry expert. [Harvey Nichols](#) was reached for comment.

Harvey meets Holly

Harvey Nichols' branding this month is being taken over by the temporary Holly Nichols identity. Limited-edition shopping bags, the signage on the flagship store facade and social media accounts have all been temporarily renamed.

Consumers can even shop [HollyNichols.com](#), which redirects to the women's collections at the retailer. Here, an interactive video features shoppable looks from brand partners including Loewe and Off-White.

Complementing female-focused window displays, the pavement outside of Harvey Nichols' Knightsbridge store is emblazoned in quotes of female empowerment from personalities including Rihanna, Coco Chanel and Virginia Woolf.

Harvey Nichols' magazine this month also features the Holly Nichols branding.

[View this post on Instagram](#)

Holly Nichols has taken over and to celebrate we're releasing a #limitededition shopping bag, available in all stores from today #HelloHollyNichols

A post shared by Holly Nichols (@harveynichols) on Sep 3, 2018 at 5:29am PDT

Instagram post from Harvey Nichols

As part of its women's empowerment campaign, Harvey Nichols is looking back at a significant milestone in U.K. history. In 1912, suffragettes earned the right to vote in the country after a campaign that included smashing the windows of London stores, including Harvey Nichols, to get their point across.

Recreating that event, the retailer invited eight women to break its windows in a ceremony on Sept. 13. Among the participants was Helen Pankhurst, the great-granddaughter of Emmeline Pankhurst, the leader of the suffrage movement.

"A century later, we asked a new generation of women to break our windows again," said Deb Bee, group director of marketing and creative at Harvey Nichols, in a statement. "Why? To remind the world that there is still work to be done."

Harvey Nichols invited women to smash its windows in honor of a suffrage milestone

Ms. Pankhurst, herself a women's rights activist, will be hosting a breakfast event at the store on Sept. 26, talking about gender equality and female advancement.

"Changing the name to 'Holly Nichols' above its doors and on social media shows the brand's firm commitment to female empowerment," Boston Retail Partners' Ms. Egan said. "Referencing a historical London moment reminds

consumers of Harvey Nichols' strong British legacy."

Harvey Nichols recently revamped its first floor, which houses its women's ready-to-wear collections. The 23,700-square-foot space is brighter and more spacious, thanks to uncovered windows and a layout that prioritizes sight lines.

Architecture firm Studio Four IV envisioned the space as a boutique. Rather than the typical walls that separate one designer's collections from another, the multi-brand environment is opened up.

Making the fitting room experience more social, Harvey Nichols has created large spaces where those who are trying on merchandise can be joined by either the store's stylists or their friends. Catering to consumers' tech needs, these rooms also include mobile charging stations.

Name game

As women's empowerment becomes a strong force into culture today, Scotch whisky brand Johnnie Walker similarly put a feminine spin on its logo.

To celebrate Women's History Month, Johnnie Walker transformed its "Striding Man" logo into a female version. "Jane Walker" was sold across the United States for the month of March, and hoped to attract a stronger female audience ([see story](#)).

With female empowerment a key topic today, retailers are engaging consumers in a conversation about women's equality.

Department store chain Barneys New York called on the likes of Hillary Rodham Clinton, Dame Helen Mirren and Gloria Steinem to celebrate female empowerment at a time when women's issues are a point of social and political contention.

Barneys' "We Will Be" project saw the creation of custom video content that was screened in the windows of the department store's Madison Avenue flagship. The content highlighted strong women in society and was developed in partnership with The Barneys New York Foundation, women's media and leadership platform MAKERS and the High School of Fashion Industries in New York ([see story](#)).

As consumers increasingly put emphasis on retailers' values when choosing where to shop ([see story](#)), retailers that take a stand can benefit.

"Consumers will remember this display of character for years to come," Ms. Egan said. "Harvey Nichols is hoping to imprint on customers two brand equities: one, they continue to support women's rights and two, they are a British brand with a strong history.

"Consumers want to shop at brands they feel connected with," she said. "This extends beyond social media and the right merchandising mix to shared values and experiences."