

SOFTWARE AND TECHNOLOGY

Hero taps former Google, John Hardy execs

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John Hardy is among the retailers using Hero. Image courtesy of Hero

By STAFF REPORTS

Retail startup Hero is expanding its leadership by naming Benjamin Baum chief operating officer and Marc Hruschka president of luxury strategy and partnerships.

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Hero is designed to give retailers an omnichannel tool to leverage their bricks-and-mortar stores for online purchases. Reflecting Hero's mix of technology and high-end service, it has hired executives with experience from companies including Google and John Hardy.

"We're proud to announce a stellar line up of executives to our leadership team, accelerating our vision to transform retail by uniquely extending the physical experience of the store to digital," said Alistair Crane, CEO of Hero, in a statement. "By bringing together the most experienced team of industry titans, no other technology company is as well positioned to understand the strategic issues facing retail today, pioneering groundbreaking innovation that transforms an entire industry."

Building a bridge

Founded in 2015 by Adam Levene, Hero connects ecommerce customers with in-store associates, mobilizing sales staff for customer service online. This both empowers store employees to benefit from online sales while also allowing customers to shop more confidently via ecommerce.

Hero has multi-year deals with LVMH and Richemont, and has also been used by a number of luxury labels including John Varvatos and Harvey Nichols.

John Hardy rolled out integration with the app to a number of its stores around the United States. Through a combination of video and messaging, consumers can communicate what they want and have it demoed for them by associates in the store ([see story](#)).

John Hardy uses Hero in its stores

Earlier this year, the company was one of the 30 shortlisted startups for LVMH's Innovation Award.

Mr. Baum was most recently executive vice president, chief digital officer at Tailored Brands Inc. His resume also includes the role of head of business development, multichannel retail at Google.

"I am thrilled to be joining Hero at this critical time to help retailers of all kinds compete, transform and win in the age of new retail," Mr. Baum said in a statement. "My career has been built on having a deep understanding of what makes retail brands important to consumers - Hero's team has built some of the most impressive technology that is solving many needs of retailers in 2018.

"It's critical to survival for retailers to digitally reinvent themselves while preserving the unique strengths of stores and service that have made them who they are," he said. "I look forward to building great things with Hero and our retail partners."

Hero has also hired Mr. Hruschka to head its luxury partnerships and strategy. Most recently chief customer officer at John Hardy, Mr. Hruschka was previously president and CEO at Chopard U.S. and vice president at Chanel.

"Global retail is at an inflection point, and in luxury, brands are looking to double down on digital while protecting the white glove service traditionally found in the boutique," Mr. Hruschka said in a statement. "Hero is preserving and pioneering the most personal shopping experience and at the same time driving new sales opportunities for associates to earn digitally for the very first time, both in-store and online.

"I'm excited to help forge new global partnerships and cement Hero's reputation as the omnichannel power brand," he said.

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