

MEDIA/PUBLISHING

Cond Nast's Vogue Business takes B2B fight to WWD, Business of Fashion

January 29, 2019



Vogue Business brings Cond Nast International back into B2B. Image credit: Cond Nast International

By BRIELLE JAEKEL

After backing off from business-to-business publishing mid-decade, Cond Nast International is funneling the authority of its *Vogue* brand to return to B2B and compete with a name it seemingly sold off in haste: *Women's Wear Daily*.

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Cond Nast International today officially launches a new B2B endeavor titled *Vogue Business*, looking to get back into the B2B sector as it sees the industry's recent growth and advantages of having both business- and consumer-facing sources of fashion information. While competing head-on with *WWD* and London-based *Business of Fashion*, the new publication has taken a different approach to launch, starting with a print newsletter and moving to a digital Web site after gauging feedback from readers.

"Times are changing and what was seen as right yesterday is seen as wrong today," said Samir "Mr. Magazine" Husni, director, professor and hederman lecturer at the [Magazine Innovation Center](#) at the University of Mississippi's Meek School of Journalism & New Media. "I believe Cond Nast was quick to sell *WWD* and the other B2B publication thinking, like the majority of the industry, that there is no future there.

"However, with a strong brand like *Vogue*, which should be the main cornerstone for the *Vogue Business* and not who is editing it, it should be able to play a major role in the fashion and luxury industry," he said. "Magazines in 2019 are much larger than their ink on paper editions. They are much more than content providers they are experience makers.

"And to be an experience maker you have to be in business and there no business like the fashion and beauty luxury business."

Mr. Husni is not affiliated with Cond Nast International, but agreed to comment as an industry expert. [Cond Nast International](#) was reached for comment.

Strictly business

With *Vogue Business*, Cond Nast International enters a media market falling over each other to inform readers of the

ins and outs of fashion, beauty and luxury.

WWD, now owned by Penske Media, has stuck to its trade publishing roots by documenting every move in the fashion and retail business, from acquisitions, moves and fashion shows. However, even Penske struggled to keep the print newspaper going on a daily basis or weekly basis and recently gave up the print ghost in favor of an online-only presence for *WWD*.

Meanwhile, *Business of Fashion* challenged *WWD*'s coverage with its launch in 2007 and carved a niche for itself with a steely-eyed focus on fashion and its personalities, as well as an education component.

Others in the space include New York-based *Luxury Daily*, which is the world's leading publication covering the luxury business, focusing on strategy, tactics and execution, as well as the overall business of luxury with fashion as one of the top sectors along with retail, hospitality, automotive, watches and jewelry, media, and leather goods and accessories.

Among the digital-oriented titles, *Glossy* has created a following for its fashion and beauty coverage, while there are several newsletters, sites and blogs such as *Fashionista* and Italy's *Pambianconews* that feed a growing appetite for fashion and beauty coverage, both B2B and B2C.

Vogue Business can count on its parent company's first brush with business publishing to throttle it to faster market acceptance.

From 1999 to 2014, the media group owned Fairchild Fashion media, which included a number of fashion and business publications including *Women's Wear Daily* and *Footwear News*. In 2014, Cond Nast made the decision to sell off the entity when it foresaw a dip in the B2B market.

Cond Nast also owned glossy business publication *Portfolio*, but shuttered that title in 2009 after only two years.

Now as the B2B media industry shows staying power, Cond Nast is getting back into the game.

Vogue Business will use the well-known name of *Vogue* to help strengthen the brand of its new editorial endeavor.

The publication will be based out of London, but its target audience is global. It will operate as a separate entity from the main *Vogue* brand, with an independent editorial team and its own distinct voice.

Former *Fashionista* editor in chief Lauren Indvik will take the reigns as editor of *Vogue Business*.

The publication launched with a printed newsletter, hoping to start off with a captive audience. Prior to its start, *Vogue Business* worked closely with all of the Cond Nast markets to ensure the creation of a truly global product.

Vogue Business will officially launch online today, supported by journalists from 29 different markets.

The publication will focus on trends in the fashion industry, including consumer-facing marketing as well as in-company design, manufacturing and talent without stooping completely to the level of a hardcore trade publication.

The global market, "from climate change to geopolitics," says *Vogue Business*, will also be included, with cultural elements that impact retail as well as technological and scientific advancement.

"*Vogue Business* started with a newsletter before the launch of the Web site, when traditionally new titles begin with an online presence first," said a Cond Nast spokesperson in a statement to *Luxury Daily*. "This way we were able to talk and shape *Vogue Business* with feedback from readers."

"A good example is that we now have trends and innovation editors on our team as a result of reader feedback. We will be taking a highly visual and data-driven approach by tapping into our heritage of visual storytelling."

"We'll stand apart from text-heavy B2B publications with impactful data-driven visualizations and photography, telling stories in a design-driven way."

Back in fashion

The Cond Nast company as a whole has seen huge swings and business changes this year and years prior, even as the biggest companies have struggled to navigate the new media landscape.

Prior to the *Vogue Business* announcement, Cond announced it will officially combine its Cond Nast United States and Cond Nast International divisions in the near future. Along with the merger, CEOs of both groups will be stepping down, ([see story](#)).

Cond Nast is also asking readers to invest in its digital content as it plans to expand a paywall strategy to its entire

portfolio of U.S. brands.

After seeing success with metered paywalls for three of its titles, Cond Nast anticipates that readers will be willing to pay for the digital extensions of all of its brands, including *Vogue* and *Architectural Digest*.

The media landscape has become more challenging in recent years due to the rise of digital consumption and subsequent drop in advertising revenue, making this move a potential solution and subscription driver for Cond Nast ([see story](#)).

Experts and readers alike will be tuned in to see how Cond Nast will manage in the future, and what the fates of *Vogue Business* as well as its competitors will look like.

"It is time for CNI to jump back on the train and regain the position the company once held," Magazine Innovation Center's Mr. Husni said. "I do believe that focusing on the brands rather than who is leading the brand will bring CN brands back to a very healthy competitive environment.

"It may not happen overnight since the lost years,' but with a powerful and known brand like *Vogue*, nothing should be impossible, given the right execution," he said.

Mickey Alam Khan contributed to this story

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