

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Hemster turns tailoring into an on-demand service

October 16, 2019



Hemster aims to give consumers a more custom fit. Image credit: Hemster

By STAFF REPORTS

Fashion label Diane von Furstenberg is among the first partners for on-demand tailoring service Hemster, which aims to give consumers a custom fit while helping retailers gain conversions.

Subscribe to **Luxury Daily**
Plus: Just released
State of Luxury 2019 **Save \$246 ▶**

Hemster has just closed a \$4 million post-seed funding round, and it plans to use the additional capital to expand to new markets and grow its team. With standardized sizing in off-the-rack attire failing many consumers, Hemster is working to improve the fit of clothing by making it more personalized.

"I grew up in South Korea, where shoppers typically find the correct size based on weight first and where tailoring is expected, even with budget options," said Allison Lee, founder/CEO of Hemster, in a statement. "In the U.S., shoppers very often have to choose from small, medium and large sizes, but those sizes don't fit almost 90 percent of people.

"I founded Hemster to make it simple, convenient and cost-effective for U.S. consumers to solve the fit problem, while giving brands a new, scalable way to provide excellent service to customers," she said. "We're extremely pleased to now be partnering with this group of investors, who will be key to our strategic expansion into new markets."

Tailored touch

Hemster announced its launch on Oct. 16. The service is accessible to consumers both in-store and at their home or office.

While shopping at a bricks-and-mortar store, tailoring can help make a sale. It also engages the customer at the time of the fitting and at the pickup 48 hours later.

Those who are shopping online can schedule a fitting at their home.

Hemster also has a do-it-yourself fitting option, which has consumers use a RuleSticker to mark where an item needs an adjustment. The garment can then be dropped off at a store or picked up at their house for the tailoring job.



Hemster's patent-pending RuleSticker. Image credit: Hemster

The company partners with mom-and-pop local tailoring shops for the alterations in an effort to draw attention to the profession and art of tailoring.

In addition to helping conversions, tailoring lowers the chance that a shopper will make a return.

Most consumers have returned fashion merchandise bought online in the past year, with common causes tied to fit issues and a difference between ecommerce imagery and reality.

According to a new report from Yotpo, only 12 percent of shoppers say they have not returned any fashion merchandise in the past year. Returns can eat into retailers' bottom lines, but providing enough context and information through features such as user-generated content can help consumers anticipate what to expect ([see story](#)).

"It's critical for us, as a retailer, to continue to implement features and services that help enhance our consumer's life: the woman who is in charge, busy and needs an unparalleled one-stop experience," said Sandra Campos, CEO of Diane von Furstenberg, in a statement. "Hemster provides the perfect solution in offering a custom fit, and we are excited to partner with them at DVF."

Along with DVF, Mr Porter, Brooks Brothers, Ted Baker and Tory Sport are among Hemster's current partners.

The company's board members also include Karen Katz, who is the former CEO of Neiman Marcus Group, and Ephraim Luft, the former chief product officer at Farfetch.

To-date, Hemster has raised \$5 million. This latest funding round was led by Bullpen Capital, which also has investments in Ipsy, Fanduel and Suiteness.

"Bespoke tailoring is one of the world's oldest professions, but the industry hasn't seen a radical update in decades," said Paul Martino, general partner at Bullpen Capital, in a statement. "We invested in Hemster because of the unique opportunity they're giving retailers and brands to connect with their customers."

"Their perfect fit' data holds massive potential for traditional retailers, ecommerce DTC players and marketplaces alike, who all crave new and personal touchpoints with their customers," he said.