

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

To grow globally, Donna Karan's Urban Zen poaches exec from Alexander Wang for CEO position

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Helen Aboah's mandate as newly named CEO is to grow the footprint and product reach of Urban Zen. Image credit: PRNewsfoto/Urban Zen

By STAFF REPORTS

Helen Aboah has been named CEO of Urban Zen, a direct-to-consumer women's lifestyle brand founded by fashion legend Donna Karan that blends retail, wellness, culture and education.

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Ms. Aboah was previously executive vice president of Alexander Wang and, before that, an executive at Donna Karan Intl., which was owned by LVMH. The CEO's post at New York-based Urban Zen has been vacant for two years.

"It's exciting to be joining forces with Donna Karan to lead Urban Zen through the next phase of growth," Ms. Aboah said in a statement.

"Donna is not only an icon, but a visionary that has always been ahead of her time with concepts that have changed the way consumers dress, shop and live: from her original seven easy pieces, buy-now-wear-now, wellness and yoga and now conscious consumerism," she said.



Furniture and home dcor items from Urban Zen. Image credit: Urban Zen

Conscientious retailing

Based on Ms. Karan's philosophy, **Urban Zen** offers a mix of mostly Italian- and U.S.-made women's ready-to-wear and accessories products, as well as furniture and home dcor items from Africa and Southeast Asia that are handcrafted and artisan-created.

All Urban Zen products are available in-season through its three stores in New York, Sag Harbor in the Hamptons, Los Angeles and online.



Urban Zen's mostly Italian-made apparel and accessories match other luxury brands' pricing in its peerage. Image credit: Urban Zen

Sales go to support the Urban Zen Foundation created to preserve culture, and support integrative healthcare and education.

Ms. Aboah's mandate is not only to "dress women, but address them," as Urban Zen puts it.

The new hire will also oversee the Urban Zen Integrative Therapy program that blends Eastern healing techniques with Western science, supported by more than 900 certified therapists working across the United States.



Donna Karan is founder and chief creative officer of Urban Zen. Image credit: Urban Zen

OVERALL, MS. ABOAH is expected to build and expand on the founding three pillars of Urban Zen: preservation of culture (past), healthcare (present) and education (future), as the company puts it.

"Urban Zen is a philosophy of living, a platform to create, connect, collaborate, communicate and change while dressing and addressing people in preservation of culture, healthcare and education," Ms. Karan said in a statement.

"Helen and I share this vision," she said. "Her experience leading creative organizations will drive my dream of commerce and philanthropy to a global level.