

RETAIL

All major luxury department store chains in North America go dark

March 18, 2020



Bottega Veneta has taken over six window displays at Saks Fifth Avenue's flagship department store in midtown New York. Image courtesy of Saks

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

With the decision of Saks Fifth Avenue and Neiman Marcus Group, all major luxury department store chains in the United States and Canada have gone dark for at least two weeks.

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The decision to shutter the bricks-and-mortar stores of these two chains comes soon after Nordstrom and Macy's Inc.'s Bloomingdale's took similar measures to avoid the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus outbreak. It also follows the North America store closures announced by Michael Kors, Gucci, Cartier, Jimmy Choo and a raft of other luxury brands.

"At moments like these, we want to focus more than ever on supporting our community," said Marc Metrick, New York-based president of **Saks Fifth Avenue**, in a statement to customers.

"Please know that we are dedicated to taking care of our store associates, who will be paid for their scheduled hours during this two week period," he said. "We look forward to continuing to serve all our customers on saks.com."

Irving, TX-based **Neiman Marcus Group** CEO Geoffroy van Raemdonck issued a similar statement to customers and consumers on the retailer's mailing list, encouraging a push to ecommerce, online and mobile channels.

"While our stores are temporarily closed, we will be digitally serving our customers," Mr. van Raemdonck said. "All our associates are accessible via mobile, text, the Neiman Marcus and Bergdorf Goodman apps, and our Web sites."

"In addition, we will accelerate the roll out of a new selling and styling tool that will facilitate remote selling," he said.

The closures may stretch into May if the virus is not contained by then and local and state governments maintain lockdowns, imperiling hundreds of thousands of jobs in the luxury retail sector.

Here are the letters from the CEOs of Saks Fifth Avenue and Neiman Marcus Group:

SAKS FIFTH AVENUE

To our Saks Fifth Avenue family,

Our customers and associates mean everything to us, and their health and well-being are of utmost importance.

For that reason, in response to the evolving circumstances around COVID-19, Saks Fifth Avenue has made the decision to temporarily close all of its stores across the U.S. and Canada effective Wednesday, March 18 for two weeks, unless otherwise instructed by government or public health officials. We will continue to reassess operations during this time.

At moments like these, we want to focus more than ever on supporting our community. Please know that we are dedicated to taking care of our store associates, who will be paid for their scheduled hours during this two week period. We look forward to continuing to serve all our customers on saks.com.

Above all else, stay safe everyone. On behalf of the entire team, we hope to see you in a Saks store again soon.

Thank you for your loyalty to Saks Fifth Avenue.

Sincerely,

Marc Metrick

President

Saks Fifth Avenue



Kate Upton modeling looks for U.S. department store chain Neiman Marcus' spring 2020 campaign. Image courtesy of Neiman Marcus

NEIMAN MARCUS GROUP

A message to our customers

As this COVID-19 pandemic continues to accelerate throughout the U.S., we have made the decision to temporarily close all Neiman Marcus, Bergdorf Goodman, and Last Call stores, effective tonight.

These stores will remain closed for the next two weeks, with the potential to be extended pending future evaluation of the situation.

We will provide pay and benefits to store associates affected by store closures for this two-week period.

While our stores are temporarily closed, we will be digitally serving our customers. All our associates are accessible via mobile, text, the Neiman Marcus and Bergdorf Goodman apps, and our Web sites.

In addition, we will accelerate the roll out of a new selling and styling tool that will facilitate remote selling.

As I've said before, Neiman Marcus Group was born out of love love for our customers, love for our associates, and love for our brand partners. There is nothing we care about more than the safety and well-being of our customers and our associates.

We have a rich history in being responsible members of the communities in which we serve and must do our part to help stop the spread of COVID-19.

We encourage everyone to remain safe and healthy during this time of uncertainty.

Geoffroy van Raemdonck

Chief Executive Officer

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