

RETAIL

## British luxury trade body Walpole, girding for harder times, pushes for virtual Bond Street online

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*Walpole: The show must go on. Image credit: Walpole*

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

British luxury trade association Walpole is actively working to help its members weather the fallout of the COVID-19 coronavirus outbreak. One focus is on promoting ecommerce and the other is communications with the authorities.

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As more luxury brands and retailers such as Harrods and Selfridges temporarily shut doors in the United Kingdom, they are expecting ecommerce to step up to the plate. Recognizing this, London-based Walpole now is asking its members to collaborate on an initiative to promote members' online stores.

"With the sobering news from many luxury retail brands that they are shutting their physical shops in the coming days, now is the time for Walpole and the wider luxury retail sector to support brands' digital offer, and work collaboratively to establish a virtual Bond Street," Walpole told members.

"In this ever-changing situation, Walpole will actively work to promote members' online shops across all of our platforms, and ask that all retail brands both big and small support this endeavor.

"By working together, we will have a bigger platform to cut through the uncertainty and reach our customers, with the message being: you may not be able to get to the shops, but you can still support your favorite brands online.

"We begin our #onlineluxury campaign with a focus on one of Walpole's longest-standing members, **Ettinger**. Purveyors of elegant, customizable leather goods, Ettinger may have shut their London showroom for now, but they have thrown open the doors to their digital world. Visit [ettinger.co.uk](http://ettinger.co.uk), browse their edit of chic accessories from the comfort of your own home and then have your selection delivered right to your door with no delivery charges using the code FREEDEL20. And even better given the current climate there's far less chance of you missing your delivery."

Meanwhile, **Walpole** on March 18 updated its members via its digest on efforts around COVID-19's impact on British luxury marketers. Here is the letter:



*Walpole's COVID-19 response: Stand together, British luxury*

## COVID-19: Walpole's response

Dear members,

Over a week ago, Walpole asked member CEOs to complete a survey to share the initial impact of Covid-19 on your businesses: the insights we had from your answers helped us feed the picture for British luxury into Government and other stakeholders. Since then, the situation has developed rapidly: it's clear that things are going to be increasingly tough over the coming months and we are aware every Walpole member will experience significant and unavoidable disruption. With this in mind, we thought it helpful to provide an update on what Walpole is doing and how we are here to support you.

### Working with government and business organizations

First of all, we welcome the measures announced by Chancellor Rishi Sunak last night: the extension of business rate holidays for 12 months for all retail, hospitality and leisure businesses regardless of rateable value; the Government backed and guaranteed business loans; and grants of up to 10,000, which will help companies both large and small affected by the outbreak. We will be monitoring further announcements and pushing for more help to protect businesses.

Once again, thank you to those who completed our initial survey. This has already informed our planning but given the context in which we all operate continues to change, we will repeat the study within the next fortnight to make sure that the information we feed into policy makers is relevant and representative.

We work closely with the CBI so that high-end businesses are represented in UK business as a whole and will share any useful guidance with you. We are also founders of the luxury strategy group in the DIT, which also includes business associations like the Royal Warrant Holders and UKFT. This is proving helpful in getting the interests of Walpole brands heard.

Our partners at the Department of International Trade advise that you subscribe to email alerts and other information about Government advice and support: [guidance for employees, employers and businesses](#). This should ensure you have the most up-to-date and accurate information about the Government's response as soon as it happens.

### Walpole advice

Walpole is a highly connected, engaged network of like-minded businesses and the [Walpole team](#) is available for support and advice, and to connect you to your peers in member brands as well as advisors and mentors from the wider network. We are now preparing practical advice on support for your businesses in the coming days and weeks, all of which will be communicated through the Digest and on [thewalpole.co.uk](http://thewalpole.co.uk), where we will also host virtual events and webinars.

### Sharing your news with the wider luxury sector

As readers of this digest, you will know we are always open to ways to support our members, and to shine a light on the incredible work you do. We have an engaged audience of 35,000 subscribers and followers across our newsletter and social channels, and we want to talk about the actions you the U.K.'s finest brands are taking to support your customers, employees, and businesses over the ensuing weeks. We have already seen some strong

examples from many of our members, and it's hugely valuable to share these they provide inspiration, advice and examples of good practice as well as strong brand communication in challenging times. Please email [content@thewalpole.co.uk](mailto:content@thewalpole.co.uk), or reply to this email with examples or news about what you are doing.

Walpole community

Finally, Walpole is known for the strength of its community and its network. Walpole members have always worked together closely to support and sustain each other: right now, the power of our individual and collective connections, and the solidarity and compassion we show to each other, will offer our businesses a unique advantage as we try to deal with this unprecedented situation.

Working together, supporting each other and pooling our collective knowledge and sector-specific advice will mean British luxury will withstand the pressures of the coming weeks and months and emerge in good health.

Stay well, stay in touch, and together we will face the uncertainties ahead.

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