

MEDIA/PUBLISHING

Hearst appoints new chief brand officer to lead ecommerce project

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Ken Downing joins Hearst to transform its digital capabilities and oversee The Tower. Image courtesy of Hearst Magazines

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

Media conglomerate Hearst has announced the launch of a new integrated ecommerce marketplace, The Tower, which will be carried out by Ken Downing, the newly appointed chief brand officer of Hearst Luxury Collection.

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The Tower is made up of four individual stores under one platform and shared technology from Hearst Luxury Collection's *ELLE*, *Esquire*, *Harper's Bazaar* and *Town & Country*. Mr. Downing will oversee the vision, creation and marketing strategy of the new digital retail shopping destination.

"Within a few years, digital will be the dominant channel for luxury purchases," said Kristen O'Hara, chief business officer of Hearst Magazines, in a statement. "Companies that deliver content, curation and customers to luxury brands will lead this commerce transformation.

"The Hearst Luxury Collection is poised to do just that," she said. "With Ken's leadership, deep understanding of the luxury consumer and ability to identify trends and items that excite them most will turn our vision for The Tower into a reality."

New directions

Having worked in luxury retail for more than 30 years, Mr. Downing will work closely with the editorial teams to create virtual, multifloor shopping experiences to bring each magazine's individual style to life.



Readers and consumers will be able to shop products featured in the four publications through the new digital marketplace. Image credit: Harper's Bazaar

Each brand store will live within its own brand URL with a distinct point-of-view and design, but shoppers will be able to navigate between brands.

The newly launched ecommerce destination will be the shoppable home of Hearst's four luxury brands, merging content, commerce and community to create a unique shopping experience.

The first store will debut in spring 2022 with the remaining three stores launching before the end of 2022.

Earlier this year, Hearst titles *Harper's Bazaar* and *Esquire* debuted seasonal editions in Saudi Arabia, becoming the first international luxury and fashion magazines published within the kingdom.

Both titles were already published in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf, as *Harper's Bazaar Arabia* and *Esquire Middle East*. In addition to having the largest economy in the region, Saudi Arabia also has one of the world's youngest populations, with two-thirds of citizens under the age of 35 ([see story](#)).

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