

RETAIL

Saks elevates CX with personalized virtual styling service

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HOW IT WORKS

1. TAKE THE STYLE QUIZ
We'll match you with a personal stylist based on your preferences.

2. GET MATCHED
Your new stylist will reach out to you within 24 hours to get started.

3. START CHATting
You'll receive personalized recommendations and more via chat.

Saks has revamped its virtual styling services. Image courtesy of Saks

By SARAH RAMIREZ

Ecommerce platform Saks has redesigned its personal stylist and shopping service to offer high-touch styling to online consumers.

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Saks Stylist is a complimentary service now available to all Saks Fifth Avenue shoppers on the retailer's ecommerce site and mobile app. The service matches shoppers with professional stylists, shaping consumers' relationship with Saks while the retailer can glean more insights from customer behavior.

"At Saks, we are constantly innovating and elevating our experience," said Emily Essner, chief marketing officer at **Saks**, New York.

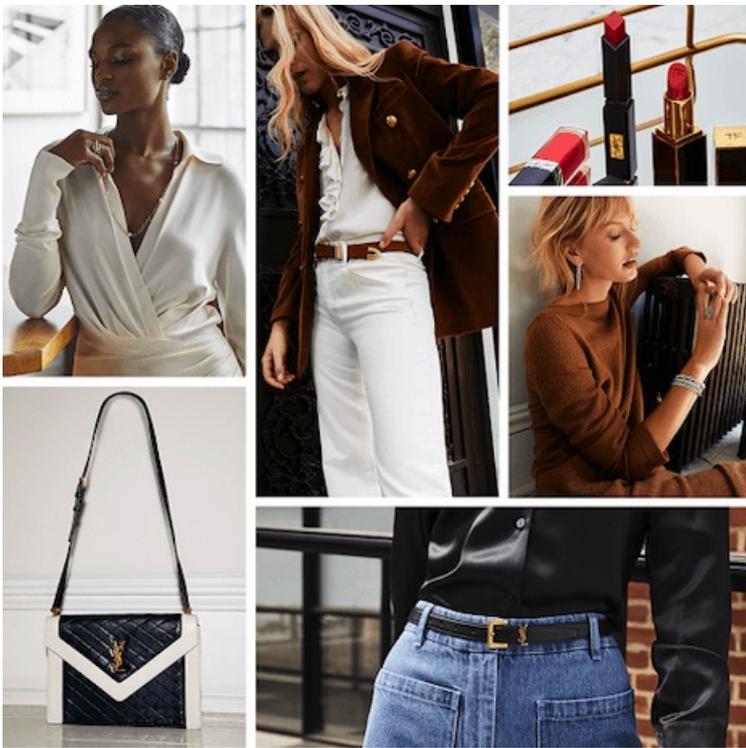
"Our commitment to providing highly personalized experiences for our customers at no cost is a key differentiator," she said. "Personal styling and shopping are a vital part of the Saks experience, and now we're excited to transform these services to be more accessible to all of our customers."

Personalizing online style

Saks enlisted software company Wishi to bring the new styling experience to life.

"At Wishi, we believe great style can be accessible to everyone," said Karla Welch, celebrity stylist and cofounder at **Wishi**, in a statement. "Wishi has digitally styled hundreds of thousands of clients and we're excited to bring our learnings to our partnership with Saks, a well-known leader in luxury fashion and ecommerce."

Shoppers start by taking a brief, but in-depth, online quiz. Consumers must create or log into their Saks accounts to take the quiz, helping the retailer build first-party data.



The "classic style" mood board from the Saks Stylist quiz. Image credit: Saks

"According to the Saks Luxury Pulse survey of luxury shoppers, the majority of respondents have never used a personal stylist before," Ms. Essner said. "However, 70 percent said they would be willing to work with one if available at no cost and 42 percent said they would be interested in using a personal stylist for help with a wardrobe refresh."

First, the quiz asks a shopper if they need help with women's or men's fashion. Then, the questions gradually become more specific.

For instance, those looking for women's fashion help will be asked to describe their style. Instead of leaving the question open-ended, they will be prompted to select "always, sometimes or never" for a variety of aesthetics, including minimal, classic, romantic, edgy, artistic and streetwear.

Next, shoppers can select some of their favorite high-end designers and brands as well as colors and patterns they like to wear. The quiz also asks about body type, clothing sizes and favorite features to accentuate, such as the neck, arms, waist or legs.

Shoppers can also share what else they value about their wardrobes, such as comfort, uniqueness or versatility. This helps give the stylists more insights into consumers' personalities and priorities.

The quiz also allows shoppers to share their age and set a budget for each product category, ranging from under \$300 to \$1,000 and above. Notably, however, there is no minimum spend for a shopper to use Saks Stylist.

Finally, shoppers are asked if they are shopping for any specific situation for instance, a special occasion, wardrobe refresh or a vacation and if they need assistance with specific items, including accessories, shoes, handbags, swimwear, coats, dresses and jumpsuits.

Once a shopper completes the quiz, they are matched with a Saks stylist.



Saks shoppers can request styling help for several occasions. Image credit: Saks

Clients will receive curated shopping recommendations within 24 hours, but in the meantime, they can chat online with the stylists. Shoppers also learn about their stylist's background with a brief biography, "style philosophy" and inspiration board examples, making the digital experience more intimate and personable.

After receiving their recommendations, clients can give feedback to their stylists, who can update options as needed. Once shoppers establish a relationship with a stylist, consumers can reengage for future assistance.

Leveraging styling technology

With the continued acceleration of ecommerce, more brands both traditional retailers and otherwise are embracing digitized styling tools.

In March 2021, social media company Snap Inc. acquired German machine learning platform Fit Analytics in a push towards ecommerce.

Fit Analytics' flagship product is Fit Finder, a tool that helps online shoppers select clothing that will fit properly using machine learning and customer-provided information. With Fit Finder, ecommerce sites can deliver more accurate, data-driven sizing recommendations to shoppers reducing returns and improving user experience ([see story](#)).

In an effort to mitigate fitting room fatigue and help brands and retailers minimize waste, Modern Mirror digitizes the retail experience both in-store and online.

Modern Mirror's consumer-centric, virtual fit technology services aim to elevate personalization by virtually showing how products look and fit an individual using interactive 3D imaging ([see story](#)).

Digitizing personal styling also resonates with consumers who are looking for the fun in fashion.

"Almost two years into the pandemic, we're continuing to see customers looking to fashion for joy and escapism," said Saks' Ms. Essner. "Providing access to personal stylists adds a new element of discovery and inspiration.

"Additionally, as our customers' lifestyles shift, so do their wardrobe needs," she said. "Saks Stylist makes it easy for them to find styles that complement their lifestyles, with curated recommendations specific to their preferences."