

COMMERCE

Missoni extends aspirational line to China via ecommerce site

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By TRICIA CARR

Italian label Missoni is using Shangpin.com as its exclusive Chinese retailer to tap into one of the fastest-growing luxury markets in the world.

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The high-end ecommerce site now has exclusive rights to the M Missoni brand to offer products from the designer's youth-oriented collection to the Asian luxury market. This is M Missoni's first ecommerce partnership in China, with experts agreeing that it is a good move at a time when luxury product consumption is on the rise.

"M Missoni's new partnership will provide easy access to a population that's already enthusiastic about spending on luxury brands," said Jen Oliver, Philadelphia-based consultant and program manager at [FitForCommerce](#).

"Retailers face a number of logistical roadblocks when attempting to expand internationally, including fulfillment issues, customs and taxes, customer service and language barriers," she said. "By entering the market via established partnerships, M Missoni can more easily address these barriers from the start, making the brand as accessible as possible."

Ms. Oliver is not associated with Missoni, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Missoni could not be reached before press deadline.

Shangpin.com is a China-based online luxury retailer.

Missoni on the mainland

This partnership will give luxury consumers in China the ability to shop the brand's new spring/summer collection.

M Missoni's Chinese ecommerce venture comes after a major shift in the country's luxury market.

Online transactions for luxury goods are predicted to reach \$5.9 billion by 2015, up from \$1.7 billion in 2011, according to iResearch.

The brand could be leveraging its youth-oriented products to aim for a slightly aspirational audience in China.

The growing market for luxury goods does confirm that Missoni is making a wise decision, no matter what demographic it aims for.



Shangpin Web site

The latest collection by M Missoni blends decades of fashion in one line, per the brand.

M Missoni was established in 1998 as the younger line of the Italian luxury brand Missoni.

Over 50 percent of China's online shoppers are between the ages of 19-30, a coveted demographic among luxury retailers, per Kris Green, chief strategy officer of FiftyOne, New York.



M Missoni spring/summer 2012

“China’s ecommerce market is vast and booming, with quickly-growing demand from domestic consumers for increasingly varied online shopping options and luxury is no exception,” Mr. Green said. “By ensuring online availability in China, this enables a company to reach a sizable, growing and unique demographic they would otherwise not be able to reach.

“If a company can make this user experience smooth for the foreign consumer from start to finish, it can see not just greater brand recognition and awareness but also higher sales volume and conversion rates,” he said.

This ecommerce expansion also marks the official cooperation with fashion group Valentino Fashion Group, which operates Missoni.

Additional top brands owned by Valentino Fashion Group will be launching on Shangpin.com in the future.

Sights set East

A few other fashion-centric luxury brands preceded Missoni’s efforts to tap into the growing luxury market in Asia.

For example, French fashion house Christian Dior aimed at the Asian luxury market with a third edition of its online magazine that will be published in Mandarin and was released during the week that the brand presented its haute couture collection for the first time in Shanghai ([see story](#)).

In addition, Neiman Marcus Group will expand to the Asian market with a new online shopping and editorial site later this year.

The retailer took a \$28 million stake in Glamour Sales Holding, a private ecommerce company that specializes in authorized online flash sales for consumers in China and Japan, and which will host Neiman Marcus' first ecommerce site in China ([see story](#)).

"In order to reach China's ever expanding marketplace, online media is where brands need to be," said Jose A. Muñoz, Jr., New York-based senior consultant for [FitForCommerce](#).

"The luxury consumer is using ecommerce at a faster rate than the rest of China, so this participation with Shangpin is only going to increase brand awareness," he said. "These consumers are incorporating more online media, ecommerce and other digital vehicles to learn about new and existing brands and to stay in touch with the world."

Final Take

Tricia Carr, editorial assistant with Luxury Daily, New York