

COMMERCE

## Ralph Lauren targets British elite with ecommerce destination

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By KAITLYN BONNEVILLE

Ten years after launching in the United States, Ralph Lauren expanded its ecommerce site to Britain.

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The Web site features items from Ralph Lauren's men's, women's, children's and Home collections. The U.S. and Britain are the only two regions where the brand has enabled ecommerce.

"In order to really make the shopping experience in the UK profitable, Ralph Lauren would need to fulfill their products in the UK," said AJ Leale, vice president and head of consulting at [FitForCommerce](#), New York. "So it's about creating a full channel in the UK.

"Ralph Lauren probably would not want to do that through a third party — they would want to do it themselves," he said.

[Ralph Lauren](#) is a brand of the Polo Ralph Lauren Co., which has apparel, accessories, home and fragrance collections.

Its brands include Polo by Ralph Lauren, Ralph Lauren Purple Label, Ralph Lauren Collection, Black Label, Blue Label, Lauren by Ralph Lauren, Polo Jeans Co., RRL, RLX, Rugby, Ralph Lauren Childrenswear, American Living, Chaps and Club Monaco.

When the Web site launches, it prompts U.S. and British consumers to shop online. They are able to browse through the women's line, which includes the Ralph Lauren Collection, Black Label, Blue Label, RLX Ralph Lauren and Pink Pony. The menswear includes Purple Label, Black Label, Polo and RLX Ralph Lauren.



*A countdown to Britain's ecommerce launch featured on RalphLauren.com*

Consumers can also look through children's wear and the luxury home goods.

By clicking on individual items within a collection, consumers are given more information on the product and sizing options. They can add the item to a wish list or directly to their virtual shopping bag.

The new site also features a Style Guide that offers multimedia advice on how to style Ralph Lauren looks from the women's, men's and home lines.

There is a question and answer panel for men's women's and home styling tips and video style advice, which vary in length from one minute and 30 seconds to 13 minutes.



*The Ralph Lauren Style Guide*

The site also includes RL Magazine, Ralph Lauren's quarterly luxury lifestyle publication that features stories and articles that mirror the designer's inspiration.

RL TV, another Web site feature, includes interviews with celebrities, clips from the designer's runway shows and other footage that embodies the Ralph Lauren collection.



### *The Fall 2010 issue of RL Magazine*

In 2009, Ralph Lauren entered the ecommerce mobile sphere with its mobile site based on their location. It claimed to be one of the first luxury brands to launch a mobile shopping site and to use QR codes in advertisements ([see story](#)).

Additionally, the luxury brand launched its iPhone application in 2008, letting consumers browse through the Ralph Lauren Collection ([see story](#)).

Other digital platforms by Ralph Lauren include the shoppable Children's Virtual Storybook ([see story](#)) and the Make Your Own Rugby application that allows consumers to create and style their own rugby from their iPhone ([see story](#)).

Given its past digital efforts and mounting pressure from luxury brand competitors, it was only natural that Ralph Lauren's next step would be overseas.

"Creating a site in the UK is not a big deal," Mr. Leale said. "The language is similar and it's not like creating a site in Japan or China with different characters.

"One of the biggest challenges going overseas is customer service and fulfillment," he said. "They probably wanted to concentrate in the U.S., but now, other luxury apparel retailers are expanding so it's almost like they have to.

"Most of their competitors are in that space right now."

Final Take

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