

IN-STORE

Barneys enters wearable technology market with exclusive product

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By SARAH JONES

Luxury specialty retailer Barneys New York will collaborate with Opening Ceremony, the Council of Fashion Designers of America and Intel on wearable technology pieces.

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To launch the project, Opening Ceremony will design a smart bracelet that will be sold exclusively at Barneys, making the retailer one of the first luxury store chains to carry this type of item, a mix between tech device and fashion accessory. With this collaboration, which was announced at the International Consumer Electronics Show, Barneys will be able to set itself apart and show that it is current and understands what the modern consumer wants.

"Intel brought forward a unique opportunity to bring the fashion and technology industries together," said Tomoko Ogura, senior fashion director at [Barneys New York](#).

"We believe in the power of technology in fashion," she said. "This particular partnership is interesting because the fashion and tech worlds are coming together in a harmonious way, the designer guiding the aesthetic and Intel delivering the technology.

"The thoughtful design, which seamlessly works into our customer's lifestyle and wardrobe, is what spoke to us first. This is an opportunity to present to our customer a

beautiful accessory which is also an intelligent device."

Fashion meets function

Opening Ceremony is a chain of boutiques founded by Carol Lim and Humberto Leon, who also design for LVMH fashion label Kenzo. Under their helm, Kenzo has been revived into a street style staple.



Elena Perminova and Miroslava Duma in Kenzo

Intel will provide the technology for the smart bracelet, which Ms. Lim and Mr. Leon will design.

The project combines Intel's technology expertise with Barney's ability to spot consumer trends and the CFDA's dedication to innovation in fashion, per Ayse Ildeniz, vice president, Business Development and Strategy of Intel's New Devices Group, in a branded statement.

Intel intends for this collaboration to permanently unite the tech company with the fashion industry.

Barneys was selected as the retailer for this project to present the new product in the store's gallery-style layout. Barneys caters to fashion-forward consumers, so carrying a trendy tech accessory is on-brand for the retailer.

Fashion statement

Tech accessories have become fashion items themselves, with luxury brands designing high-end versions of devices.

Silversmith Christofle lent its design aesthetic and craftsmanship to technology company LaCie to create a spherical hard drive that combines statement and function.

The hard drive is hand plated with silver in Christofle's workshop in France, merging the two brands' expertise. With this collaboration on a technology product, Christofle is able to show that it is a modern brand that understands business people today ([see story](#)).

Retailers can benefit from carrying exclusive tech devices in stores, which could bolster

foot traffic.

German fashion label Porsche Design is furthering its collaboration with BlackBerry for the P'9982 smartphone and a crocodile model limited to 500 units that will be sold at British retailer Harrods.

The P'9982 smartphone seems like an appropriate venture for a fashion brand that produced the first black watches and aviator sunglasses with interchangeable lenses. The phone's cosmetic qualities such as a satin finished frame made with stainless steel, a hand-wrapped Italian leather back door and a sapphire glass camera lens will allow Blackberry to contend with other luxury smartphone brands such as Vertu ([see story](#)).

"The potential for this collaboration is huge," said Jordan Phillips, New York-based author of ["The Lure of Luxe."](#)

"Clearly wearables are the future, but no one has been able to marry both form and function thus far to create something that really catches on," she said. "As long as the design is solid and the technology truly enhances people's lives, Barneys will benefit greatly from this collaboration.

"Both Barneys and Opening Ceremony are known for being ahead of the curve within the fashion industry, and a successful wearables launch would solidify their reputations within the technology industry as well."

Final Take

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