

INTERNET

## Nordstrom partners with clothing donation service to incentivize giving

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By SARAH JONES

Department store chain Nordstrom has partnered with clothing donation Web site Fashion Project that resells high-end clothing for charity.

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**Luxury Daily**

Now when consumers donate their designer apparel and accessories to Fashion Project, they can receive a \$40 Nordstrom gift card. With this partnership, Nordstrom will be able to reach socially-conscious fashionistas and further its own charitable efforts.

"Giving back to our communities has always been important to us at Nordstrom and we know that many of our customers feel the same way," said Emily Romans, public affairs specialist at **Nordstrom**, Seattle. "We're so excited about this FashionProject.com partnership because as people simply clean out their closet, they can also support great charities and earn a \$40 Nordstrom gift card.

"The great thing about this program is that anyone can participate," she said. "If you're interested in supporting charity organizations and want to clean out your closet and refresh your wardrobe, this is for you.

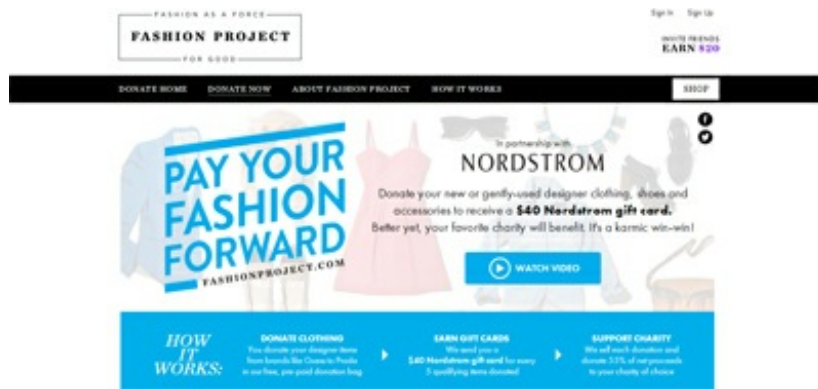
"We think this is a great opportunity for everyone involved, from those who participate by donating clothes to the charities that will benefit. We hope everyone will appreciate this

new way to give back and we're excited that they'll have the opportunity to visit us at Nordstrom as they refresh their closets."

## Gift card for giving back

Fashion Project launched in 2012 as a way to raise money for charity through clothing donations.

For this new partnership with Nordstrom, Fashion Project set up a dedicated Web page explaining what is necessary to earn a gift card.



## Fashion Project Nordstrom page

Consumers have to donate five qualifying items worth at least \$50 original retail and from the list of accepted brands, those that are found at high-end department stores.

To donate, consumers first fill out a form which asks consumers to choose a charity from a long list of 501 (c)3 nonprofits.

In the drop-down menu there is a list of charities that Nordstrom supports, including the food bank of New York and TheatreworksUSA. Consumers can also browse by categories including animal welfare, the environment, the arts, education and hunger, among others.

When a charity is selected a message pops up telling consumers about the work of the organization.

## Fashion Project Web site

If a donor does not see her favorite charity listed already, she can submit a form to get her cause signed up and put her fashion toward that nonprofit.

Once a charity is picked, Fashion Project asks whether the consumer wants to print a mailing label at home or be shipped a packet that she can use in the mail.

Fashion Project offers a white-glove service in a few cities where someone will come pick up the designer merchandise so that there is no worry it will be lost in the mail.

A recent donations feature below the form shows items that were received, what charity will benefit and what the garment or accessory will pay for. For instance, a Fendi handbag will provide 1,650 meals for families at the Greater Boston Food Bank.

Fifty-five percent of the proceeds of each item donated goes to the selected charity.

Once the items reach Fashion Project, the service processes them and snaps photos of the items.

After that the garments are listed on Fashion Project's ecommerce site. At press time, the Web site had pieces from Alexander McQueen, Missoni, Prada, Gucci and Mulberry.

"This makes perfect sense on several levels," said David Russo, vice president at [Boston Retail Partners](#). "By partnering with the Fashion Project, Nordstrom is facilitating the feeling of altruism and humanitarianism, both from the their customer and their company.

"The customer gets to feel good about their purchase long after they are done using it and the employees feel good for being part of a caring company," he said. "Additionally, Nordstrom is providing a cycle to flow older goods out of their customer's closets and replace them with newer ones purchased, in part with a \$40 Gift Card.

"Nordstrom is not the only one to benefit either. The Fashion Project will gain not only from the items gathered as part of the relationship, but also from the visibility of such a high profile partnership."

Charity department

Nordstrom has previously used fashion for a good cause.

The retailer promoted the "One Day Without Shoes" program by holding events at its department stores that built awareness and raised money for children in Third World countries who do not have shoes.

Footwear maker Toms pledged to donate one pair of shoes for every pair bought to Third World countries where there are millions of people without shoes. Nordstrom helped by hosting this event at seven of its U.S. stores ([see story](#)).

Department stores can often find ways to blend shopping with charitable outreach.

Neiman Marcus donated 10 percent of proceeds from The Ken Downing Gift Collection to benefit 41 art-based youth charities around the country from Nov. 20 to Dec. 25.

The 37 gifts selected by Neiman fashion director Ken Downing for the campaign ranged in price from \$28 to \$1,795 and included brands such as Alexander McQueen, Chanel and Moncler. As holiday shopping gained momentum, retailers continued to differentiate themselves with escalated charity endeavors ([see story](#)).

Consumers will be even more likely to participate in this offer since they are able to

choose where the money goes.

"The typical Fashion Project donor is someone who wants to do more with what they wear," said Anna Palmer, cofounder/CEO of the **Fashion Project**, Boston. "Previously, shoppers had to choose between getting cash back for their clothing or doing good with their closet, but now you can do both.

"At Fashion Project, we empower shoppers to donate their clothing to any cause they care about, from local schools to global aid organizations," she said. "Nordstrom's commitment to supporting their customers in giving to a broad range of organizations is a perfect complement to the ability to choose any charity on Fashion Project.

"Our mission at Fashion Project is to change the world one piece of clothing at a time. Partnering with Nordstrom gives us a great vehicle to spread the word and encourage every person to pay their fashion forward and raise millions of dollars for charity. For Nordstrom, it is a great way to engage customers in giving back and reward them for doing good with a \$40 gift card to restock their closet."

Final Take

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