

CELEBRITY-ENDORSED BRANDS: A SAFE HAVEN?

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BRANDS USING STARS TO INCREASE THEIR REACH IS OLD NEWS. THIS TRIED AND TESTED MARKETING TOOL IS GAINING EVEN MORE INFLUENCE IN OUR SOCIAL MEDIA AGE. BUT ARE CELEBRITY-ENDORSED COLLECTIONS A SAFE CHOICE FOR RETAILERS IN THESE DIFFICULT TIMES?



YEEZY Season 3

Model and influencer Gigi Hadid is developing a capsule for **Tommy Hilfiger**. **Guess** has announced a collaboration with rapper A\$AP Rocky, and Alexa Chung's collection for **M&S** will arrive in stores in April 2016: celebrity-endorsed collections are on the rise.

Evelyn Hammerström of **Jades** – a store famous for picking celebrity collections out that enjoy great sell-throughs – explains: “Our customer attaches a lot of importance to the high fashion factor. If a cool brand is combined with a well-known name, the sales possibility is high.”

Both Jades and department store **Selfridges** agree that a celebrity brand's success is nowadays dependent on its social media outreach. A recent example is the **YEEZY** collection by Kanye West and **adidas**:

the affordable footwear offering sold out within days when the first collection hit Selfridges' shop floor. Considering that Mr. West has 18.6 million Twitter followers and his wife Kim Kardashian 60 million subscribers on Instagram, it is no wonder the product instantly acquired must-have status.

Similarly, when Pharrell Williams announced his part-ownership of **G-Star**, within a few hours his post gained more than 40,000 'likes'. Such recognition elevates the brand name and, ultimately, helps the retailers that stock it.

Nordstrom acknowledges this: apart from establishing itself as partner of choice for existing celebrity brands, such as Sarah Jessica Parker's **SJP Collection**, it recently launched a year-long collaboration between its in-house brand **Chelsea28** and style

icon Olivia Palermo, highlighting: “We know our customers look to her for fashion inspiration.”

Ultimately, as a spokesperson for Selfridges points out, the success of a collection is dependent on its originality and quality. Hammerström explains: “Authenticity, a high fashion profile and sales potential are deciding factors.” She refers to the impressive sell-throughs of ‘celebrity’ labels, such as **Victoria Beckham**, **Elizabeth & James**, **William Rast** founded by Justin Timberlake, and **Stella McCartney**. Their success stories show that a well-managed brand, in combination with an endorsement from a celebrity who has the power to influence millions, has commercial appeal and is indeed a stable option to fall back on in tougher times.