

TRUE RELIGION

True Religion, the premium jeans label famous for its branding, stitching and the jovial Buddha image, is reinventing itself “through innovation and the use of details” while still maintaining its “distinct product codes”, as Rosella Giuliani, Head of Product, told **WeAr** in an interview. She added: “We want to be a brand for everybody but put denim first.” Indeed, True Religion’s updated product range focuses on all things denim: shirts, skirts, dresses, jackets and so on – and also experiments with knitwear. Last month saw the launch of the brand’s new bag collection; belts and a men’s underwear line have been introduced into the mix, too. “We want to put the fun back into the brand and not take ourselves too seriously,” says Giuliani.

True Religion strives for the artisanal feeling, interpreting the vintage trend, while the bohemian spirit, inherent to the brand’s identity, shines through in trims and patches. The new jean fits include ‘Jenny’ – a flattering and sexy curvy fit for women. Meanwhile, the new men’s athletic fits respond to the athletic body shape.

Giuliani’s advice on what True Religion items to stock? The best option is to go for basic jeans, with their great fit, fabrics and feel, and place them next to crazier, iconic True Religion pieces. This product mix never fails to catch consumers’ attention and is a bestselling combination in True Religion’s numerous own stores.

www.truereligion.com

DIFFERENTIAL BRANDS GROUP

To take a brand to the next level, one needs management advice as well as financial resources. **Differential Brands Group** (DBG), run by CEO Michael Buckley, is a great example of how brands can grow if the right partner steps in.

Buckley is an industry veteran who earned his first credentials building up **Diesel**’s US business. He then propelled the expansion of **True Religion** and **Ben Sherman**, before getting involved with DBG. Here, he started by elevating the shirt line **Robert Graham**, giving it a global exposure: profits went up significantly. Next, he added **Hudson**, which then belonged to **Joe’s Jeans**, to the DBG portfolio, making the two labels independent again.

He is now pushing for Hudson to expand globally, working closely with the brand’s much-lauded founder, Peter Kim. “I like to acquire brands where the founder stays in the company, so the heart and soul of the brand are kept intact,” Buckley stated. “Only as a team can we achieve the success we aim for.”

Buckley’s mission is to form a platform similar to LVMH for premium brands with global expansion potential. Further acquisitions are on the cards. Knowledgeable investors and a great management environment like DBG: a good way for labels to weather today’s challenges.

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