

# Traub Launches Celebrity Division

By LISA LOCKWOOD

**NEW YORK** — Marvin Traub Associates has joined forces with Bruce H. Ross and John D. Goodman to establish Traub Celebrity Group, a business development and advisory firm dedicated to working with celebrities and athletes to guide and develop global branded opportunities.

The business will be led by Ross and Goodman as co-managing directors.

Ross has spearheaded the development of new businesses for such celebrities as Tony Bennett, Lauren Conrad, Jordin Sparks and Dara Torres, while Goodman is credited with creating the Kardashian Collection at Sears; Sofia Vergara and Dream Out Loud by Selena Gomez for Kmart, and Sandra by Sandra Lee for Sears and Kmart.

Mortimer Singer, chief executive officer of Traub, explained that celebrities doing business in the retail space is a phenomenon that has grown in importance in the branding arena.

“Today, with social media and other platforms, celebrity power is unleashed in a way that’s never been seen before because they’ve become media outlets of their own,” said Singer. Celebrities today don’t just want to do licensing deals, but they want to create companies which may, or may not, bear their name. “They want to get into the consumer branded business and use their celebrity as a marketing engine,” he said.

For example, 50 Cent owns 5 percent of Vitamin Water; Jessica Alba started Honest Co., and Kate Hudson cofounded Fabletics, an activewear firm. While those examples are unrelated to his firm, Singer noted one of his partners helped Paul Newman do a lemonade deal when Newman was building his charity-based foods enterprise. Last year, Traub Associates did a deal with burlesque star Dita Von Teese for a lingerie collection for Bloomingdale’s and a diffusion line, Von Follies by Dita Von Teese, for the midmarket. The firm is now working with five international stars, but Singer said it was too soon to disclose their identities.

Ross founded Celebrity Fashion Group in 2009 and was earlier president of JH Collectibles, the

sportswear company, where he had a 15-year tenure. He also established Imagemark, a promotional products and marketing solutions business, which worked with global companies such as Citibank, Fox Sports and Manpower to develop branded apparel and merchandise. He also served as a consultant for the Lauren Conrad Collection, where he developed a licensing agreement with Kohl’s.

Ross told WWD that when he left Imagemark in 2007, a friend contacted him about Lauren Conrad. “I flew out to Los Angeles to meet the team and she [Lauren] was in a factory and was actually pinning garments” — a good sign, said Ross. “So many celebrity deals don’t work out because the celebrity is in it for a paycheck... The most important thing to any deal is product.”

Goodman teamed up with Ross in Celebrity Fashion Group last October. Earlier, Goodman was ceo of The Wet Seal, Inc. for a year and a half and resigned that post last August. Before that, he was executive vice president of apparel and home at Sears Holding Corp., and was ceo of Charlotte Russe Holding. He has also been ceo and president of Mervyn’s and president of Dockers Brand. Goodman spent 10 years at Gap, Inc., where he developed and launched Gap, Inc.’s Banana Republic and Old Navy outlet concepts.

Goodman described the new celebrity group as a “one-stop shop for representing global celebrities.” Ross said the company will be working with talent agencies, managers and management companies, as well as manufacturers looking to expand their business by developing new product lines, and retailers and department stores looking to develop exclusive celebrity product offerings.

The celebrity field is dominated by firms such as Creative Artists Agency and William Morris Endeavor, which have divisions that handle celebrity endorsements. CAA, for example, has done deals with George Clooney and Omega watches; Penelope Cruz and Agent Provocateur; Jennifer Lawrence and Dior, and Carrie Underwood and Dick’s Sporting Goods for an activewear line called Calia by Carrie Underwood. WME’s deals include Robert Pattinson and Dior; Emma Stone and Revlon, and Serena Williams and Nike.



John D. Goodman



Bruce H. Ross

## THE BRIEFING BOX

IN TODAY’S WWD



Backstage at 3.1 Phillip Lim. For more, see WWD.com.

PHOTO BY LENA GREENE

**Recent currency swings** have unlocked new and lucrative opportunities for European luxury companies, retailers and bargain-hunting tourists alike. **PAGE 1**

**Bergdorf Goodman** has a five-year plan called BG 20/20 to renovate and update its women’s store and evolve bergdorfgoodman.com. **PAGE 1**

**OVS SpA** will make its debut on the Italian Stock Exchange on March 2 — the first public listing in the country’s fashion industry since Moncler’s in December 2013. **PAGE 17**

**Giorgio Armani** is launching a new bag that also marks the 40th anniversary of his brand and for the first time, the accessory will be unveiled at two luxury retailers. **PAGE 19**

**I-D Magazine** is expanding its team in New York, with more than 10 hires to come this year. It will also open offices in Asia. **PAGE 19**

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# Yoox Launching E-commerce App in China

By LARA FARRAR

**BEIJING** — Yoox is going mobile in China.

Yoox Group entered China around five years ago, hosting flagship online shopping sites on the mainland for fashion brands such as Emporio Armani. Two years later, the e-tailer launched its own site for Chinese consumers.

Now, indicative of the rise of mobile commerce in China, Yoox, under the domain name Yoox.com.cn here, revealed on Monday that it is launching a mobile e-commerce app for its Chinese clientele.

“In China, the mobile shopping market is skyrocketing,” said Luca Martines, the Milan-based Yoox Group International Markets director.

In 2014, Chinese consumers spent more than 929 million yuan, or nearly \$150 million, shopping via mobile devices, according to iResearch, a Beijing-based Internet research firm. By 2016, iResearch predicts transactions made via mobile in China will surpass those made via personal computers.

“For Yoox Group, the Chinese customer is the youngest in the world, with more than 50 percent of these customers below age 30,” Martines said. “This is the new generation of customers. They are tech-savvy. They engage with brands through being hyper-connected and socially active online and have rapidly embraced tablet technology. This was a big opportunity not to be missed.”

Yoox’s mobile app in China allows mainland consumers to see what other shoppers around the world are purchasing in Milan, Paris and New York. It also has a feature that offers Chinese clientele an area where they can discover exclusive global collaborations, capsule collections and inspiring trends.

A “China for China” section provides localized content and exclusive promotions.

Martines said one factor driving Yoox’s sales is Chinese consumers’ preference for Italian products. “Generally speaking, the trend among Chinese cus-

tomers is a love for ‘Made in Italy’ brands,” he said. “Shoes are among the top-bought categories. Female Chinese customers love high heels while male customers prefer sneakers.”

The executive said the company welcomes an investigation by China’s antitrust regulator over unfair business practices in the country’s e-commerce sector. On Friday, China’s National Development and Reform Commission revealed a probe into possible unfair marketing and sales tactics used by mainland e-commerce companies. The investigation did not name specific companies.

“Yoox is dedicated to creating a healthy online shopping environment for customers and brand partners through our transparent products with direct origins,” Martines said, adding that in China the e-tailer has launched an exclusive antifraud program using radio frequency identification, or RFID, tracking technology to ensure product authenticity.

Martines said Yoox’s full-priced operations, which includes its Chinese version of the full-priced fashion e-tailer site Thecorner.com, as well as 14 monobrand luxury e-tailing sites on the mainland, are achieving “positive results.”

“Over the past four years... We have seen a rise of the young, Chinese middle-class becoming sophisticated, experienced shoppers,” he said.

Martines added that in terms of buying full-priced luxury online, male consumers in China are more likely to pay more than females.

“Amongst Chinese consumers, men’s wear purchases from our full-priced channel make up more than 70 percent of net sales,” he said. “This contrasts with consumer trends on a global scale, where women’s wear and men’s wear net sales shares are almost equal.”

In 2014, sales in other countries grew 32.1 percent, accelerating by 41.4 percent in the fourth quarter, driven by Yoox.com in China, which benefited from the extension of its offer following the introduction of the complementary logistics setup in February last year.

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