**Beat: Lifestyle**

# RETAIL - Exporting FRENCH Expertise from PARIS to NEW YORK

**From PARIS RETAIL WEEK**

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**USPA NEWS -** As the birthplace of retail trends, PARIS is a leading capital city for international chains and brands. NEW YORK meanwhile presents itself as the world's retail lab. Why do French retailers choose New York to test their products ? Why is French Expertise such a big hit across the Atlantic ?...

As the birthplace of retail trends, PARIS is a leading capital city for international chains and brands. NEW YORK meanwhile presents itself as the world's retail lab. Why do French retailers choose New York to test their products ? Why is French Expertise such a big hit across the Atlantic ? Do these two cities, both symbols of retail, really complement each other ?

As the world's leading tourist destination, Paris is famous for its expertise in the luxury sector in particular. Several historic fashion houses were founded and still prosper today in this capital of style, like Louis Vuitton, Christian Dior, Lancôme, Cartier... Many international chains and brands want to open a branch there. Indeed, the capital has all the factors that retailers need : a history and infrastructure with charm, tourists who make up an important part of these clientele, and the image of the Parisienne, combined with the shopping experiences that Paris offers.

Unlike New York, where stores are naturally segmented by district (tourism at Time Square, luxury on 5th Avenue, new brands in SoHo), Paris as a whole is a retail attraction. As the spearhead of the French Touch, luxury is everywhere : on Faubourg Saint-Honoré, on Saint-Germain des Prés, in the 7th Arrondissement, in the 16th, on Rue de Sèvres, on the Champs-Elysées, in the Marais... Not forgetting the luxury brands represented at Le Bon Marché, BHV Marais, Frank & Fils, or of course at Galeries Lafayettes and Le Printemps.

Innovative retail ideas flourish in the French Capital. However, the large spaces available for retail in the attractive neighbourhoods are oversubscribed. This is why retailers need to test their innovations in another place, before establishing them in Paris in the long term. New York therefore presents itself as the French retailers' playground.

New York has some specific assets that Paris struggles to compete with, in terms of space and employment policy. Its architecture and the scale of its surface areas and buildings enale brands to express themselves more in physical terms by displaying wider ranges and dramatising store displays.

In additon, in the field of employment the USA has lower wage costs, allowing retailers to employ twice as many shop staff as in France. Therefore there is less need to invest in technologies to mitigate a potential lack of personal in-store advice. Furthermore, job insecurity is a key differentiator between New York and Paris : a salesperson who is not motivated or helpful, and who does not develop the culture of the brand, can be easily and quickly replaced in the United States. This fact stops the many shop staff from resting on their laurels and makes themselves engage fully with the image and history of a brand, thus developing a unique culture of customer service.

While more and more US stores are successfully moving into FRANCE by simply copying and pasting their concept, French retailers are playing the French Expertise card while turning chameleon. While almost all of the Top 50 French luxury brands already have branches in New York, they aim to be subtle, and draw on their luxury culture and the strengh of their products while adapting to the cities, their residents and local consumer habits : they develop on a case-by-case basis.

Finally, the well-known Sephora, which already has as many stores in New York as in Paris, regularly tests its new concepts and innovations across the Atlantic before re-importing them into FRANCE if they are validated and relevant. Examples include the first presentation of the red and black identity, check-outs with no fixed tills, the 'Find Your Fragrance' digital coaching application, as space dedicated to false eyelashes, the 'Beauty to Go' area, etc...

Thus, it is undeniable that Paris and New York benefit from specific features of their environment and culture. It should be noted that French Expertise has become a safe bet, equally popular in FRANCE and the UNITED STATES. It is likely that this French Expertise,

a real asset with its innovations and luxury culture, will continue to be exported around the world.

Source : Mike Hadjadj, co-founder of the iloveretail.fr, for Paris Retail Week

Ruby BIRD
http://www.portfolio.uspa24.com/
Yasmina BEDDOU
http://www.yasmina-beddou.uspa24.com/

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United Press Association, Inc.
3651 Lindell Road, Suite D168
Las Vegas, NV 89103, USA
(702) 943.0321 Local
(702) 943.0233 Facsimile
info@unitedpressassociation.org
info@gna24.com
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