SMCP takes deep dive into China with JD.com deal to expand online presence

By Sandra Halliday - 23 April 2019

France’s buoyant SMCP, the owner of the Sandro, Maje and Claudie Pierlot brands, on Tuesday announced a new partnership with China’s JD.com and will expand its online presence in the world’s key luxury growth market as a result.

Calling it a “landmark” deal, the company said it will offer Chinese consumers “additional access to” the Sandro and Maje labels, which are already popular in that market.

“This partnership marks an important milestone in the deployment of SMCP’s successful digital strategy in the APAC region, lifting the group's customer reach to another level in mainland China,” it said. “It ideally complements the growing digital presence of the group in the country, fostered by the successful deployment of its three owned websites and the historical collaboration with Tmall, and further diversifies its digital sales channels.”
And it added that it's “an important building block in the execution of its omnichannel strategy, bringing together the best of online and offline shopping.”

SMCP, which is Chinese owned after Shandong Ruyi bought a controlling stake, has a significant physical presence in the country with 137 stores in 23 cities. But in a country that covers 9.597 million sq km with a population of almost 1.4 billion, 137 stores is relatively small-scale, which makes digital growth essential. Claudie Pierlot, for instance, has only three points of sale (in Beijing and Shanghai).

Flavien d’Audiffret, SMCP’s Digital & Innovation Director, highlighted the online shopping boom in the country and how the new agreement illustrates the company’s “ambition to capture all growth opportunities in a region where our brands’ desirability has been constantly growing over the past five years.”

And linking with JD certainly gives it huge exposure. JD has around 400 million users and is one of the largest pureplay e-tailers in a country whose biggest e-tailers compete in size with global leaders such as Amazon. Its reach covers 99% of the country’s population and while more consumers in China are switching on to local brands, the prospects for international names are still very bright.

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