

Leading international brands look to expand to SA

Having successfully launched Ted Baker, one of Britain's top mid-tier designer fashion brands in the market last year, Brand Capital has now secured a deal to launch Radley+ Co, the successful British handbags and accessories brand, in time for the Christmas season in Stuttafords in South Africa.



Marco Cicoria with new range from Radley.

Xavier Simonet, Radley's CEO comments, "The brand is a success story in the UK and now is the right time to expand internationally and make the brand a global player."

Marco Cicoria, CEO of Brand Capital says, "There is a strong appetite in South Africa for international brands, particularly British brands, and for premium but affordable luxury. This brand is synonymous with British premium quality handbags and accessories at an accessible price. Ted Baker is now a top performing brand and we expect the same from Radley."

He is convinced that Radley has the potential to become a global brand. "Handbags and accessories remain the number one category seller in retail across the board, so we are confident this range will be enthusiastically received."

Luxury brands set trend in SA

The focus on affordable luxury brands appears to be the trend, with Edcon earlier this year securing the master franchising rights to the UK's Tom Tailor brand as well as other international brands such as Topshop and Topman, Lipsy and Dune. Massmart also announced that it would be launching the UK George Clothing Brand in pop-up stores during December, although these would be aimed at a slightly lower income bracket.

In South Africa, these brands are targeting consumers that are not spoilt for choice. "While there is still a very strong market for everyday, affordable brands, there is definitely growing support for mid to premium fashion brands that appeal to the high-end consumer. These shoppers generally travel extensively and can relate to international brands and are willing to pay a premium for quality merchandise," comments Cicoria.

The stats speak for themselves with retail in South Africa still topping many of the European markets. "In the UK, where growth is almost non-existent, Ted Baker, for example, is still showing a 30% year-on-year growth. Both are quality, luxury brands but sold at an affordable price when compared to other premium brands and we believe this is a major factor of their success.

"The South African retail market and consumers are hungry for exciting international brands. We are in the midst of a consumer revival and now is the time for international brands to start testing the South African waters. It is a lucrative market if approached in the right way," he concludes.

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