Selfridges profits rise on accessories and beauty growth

By Sandra Halliday - 2 October 2018

Harrods and Harvey Nichols have both reported profits rising strongly and now luxury peer Selfridges has joined them with news that operating profit hit a record £181 million in the year to February. That was a £1 million rise on the previous year and came as sales leapt 11.5% to over £1.75 billion.

The period covered a time when Selfridges was investing heavily in store refurbishment and that holds out the prospect of even bigger sales and profits rises in the current year, even through the consumer environment is weak.

The £300 million Oxford Street flagship revamp has seen its beauty and accessories areas being transformed and the accessories hall is now a giant-sized world leader.

MD Anne Pitcher said that despite the woes in the UK retail sector at the moment, she’s "absolutely convinced" that luxury department stores have a strong place on the market. She told The Times that “if you can create a sense of fun and the unexpected that inspires people to keep coming to your stores, it is a powerful recipe.”

And the company isn’t only doing that in London with its stores in Manchester and Birmingham also seeing upgrade investment, the Birmingham location seeing an expanded shoe offer recently, as well as concessions opening for Christian Louboutin and Gucci.

The Selfridges Group also owns Ireland’s Brown Thomas and Arnotts, Canada’s Holt Renfrew and De Bijenkorf in the Netherlands.

Pitcher also told The Times that all of the company's stores “did well as more people than ever before visited them and we have recorded outstanding growth in our digital business. I think this is testament to the amount of focus we pay to experiences in our stores and how we engage with our customers.”
The accessories and beauty hall expansion has been key, as has the creation of an eyewear destination that claims to offer the biggest eyewear selection in the UK. The company will also add to its menswear offer in the Oxford Street store from this month.

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