

Inspiring fearless style not fashion followers



In brief

Harvey Nichols needed to adapt to customer expectations in the face of newcomers such as Net-a-porter and Dover Street Market. We reinvigorated the brand, putting customers back at its heart based on the insight they wanted to be fearlessly stylish rather than fashion-followers. The new brand promise and strategy kick-started a radical transformation and upturn in the company's performance.

Impact

9% revenue growth to £210m
for the year to March 2018

From **21st to 3rd** in Which High Street survey, putting it on par with John Lewis

The challenge

Harvey Nichols was at the height of fashion in the 80s and 90s. However, they failed to recognise or act on changing customer needs and expectations, and by 2014 they had found themselves in steady decline with number of customers and brand affinity falling monthly. The challenge was to revisit what the brand was all about in an attempt to reignite the organisation's success.

The Insight

By speaking to colleagues, customers and designers we uncovered that:

- Many potential customers were intimidated by the brand's 'fashion sheep' stance

- What really mattered to them was to be considered stylish and unique
- What they needed were products, inspiration and motivation to be the best version of themselves – not peer pressure to follow the fashion crowd

We believed 'inspiring fearless style' was something Harvey Nichols could own given fearlessness was in their DNA from their category-busting advertising to their exclusive new designers.

Evolution rather than revolution was needed; a return to their roots and a refocus on the customer not the products.

The Solution

We defined the brand in terms of a 'Customer Promise' (to inspire customers to stand out, be unique and be 'fearlessly stylish') in order to keep customers front of mind at all times.

To build belief in the idea and give the team confidence to move away from 'fashion' we made sure they heard the insight directly from the designers and influencers they respected most.

To make the promise tangible we broke it down into 8 'Experience Promises' (for example 'A welcome worthy of a 5* hotel'). Each of these was defined in terms of an ambition, a KPI, current performance and plans to improve.

The Result

Beyond a series of 'Style' centric PR initiatives, the work kick started activities across channels from the rebranding of sales assistants to 'Style Advisors', to the launch of a handbag refurbishment service. It also led to the Knightsbridge store redesign, the development of the Bullring store and the launch of the members' app.

Internally it inspired new ways of working, with Directors leading initiatives in their promise area, breaking down silos to ensure a focus on the customer. A customer-led scorecard was developed to track progress against the promises, with financial success as an outcome not the primary focus.



'Fearlessly stylish' brand promise

