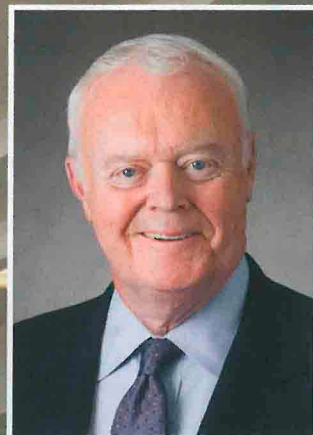


Authentic American



AN ICONIC AND MUCH ADMIRER SPECIALTY RETAILER, ABERCROMBIE & FITCH CO. HAS ESTABLISHED AN ENVIABLE PLACE IN THE GLOBAL MARKETPLACE. RLI TALKS TO CHAIRMAN ARTHUR MARTINEZ TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE BRAND'S CUSTOMER-CENTRIC ETHOS AND ITS PLANS FOR GROWTH IN 2016 AND BEYOND.

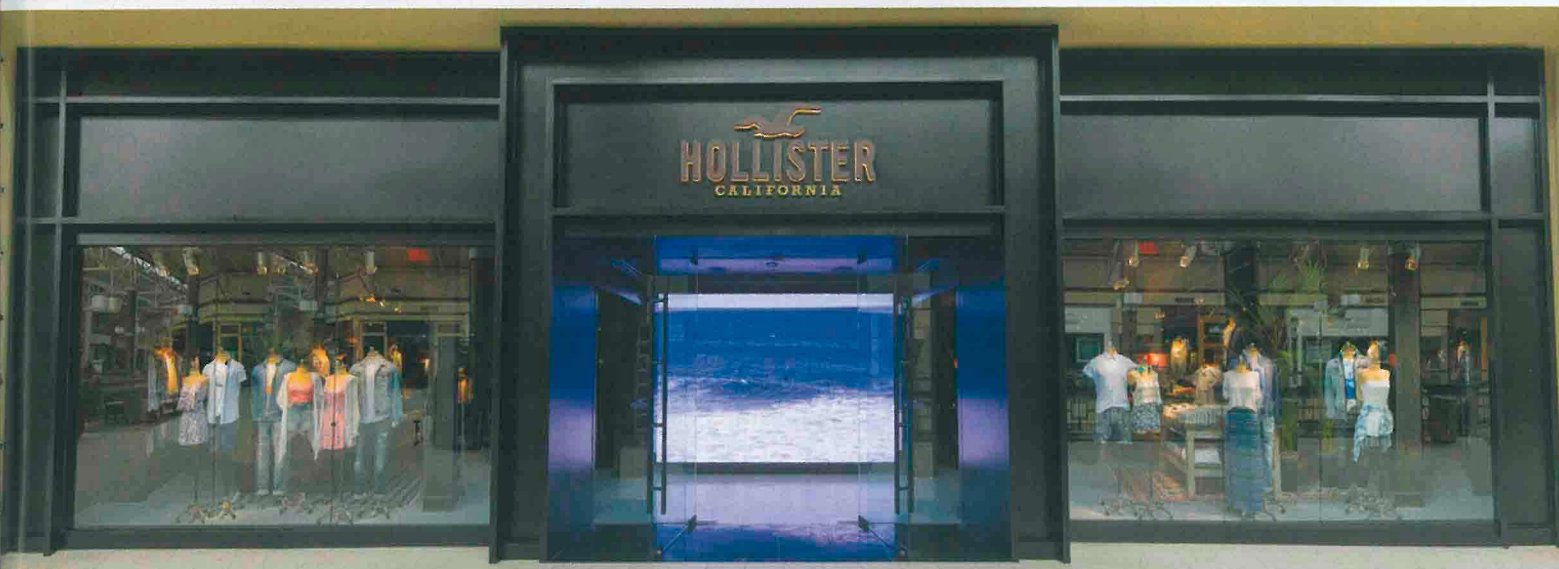
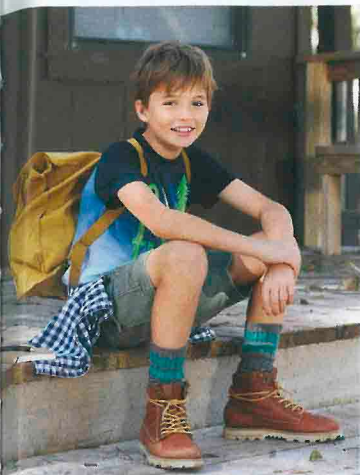


Founded in 1892, Abercrombie & Fitch Co. is a leading global specialty retailer of high quality, casual apparel for men, women and kids with an active, youthful lifestyle under its Abercrombie & Fitch, abercrombie kids and Hollister Co. brands. The company started out as a small specialty shop in New York City, providing the highest quality outdoor apparel, camping, fishing and hunting gear. Today, the brand continues to uphold its reputation for quality apparel, but has since evolved into a destination for casual, classic, and trend right clothing. Its Abercrombie & Fitch East Coast roots and Ivy League heritage provide inspiration for our youthful All-American lifestyle.

As at the end of Q4 2015, the brand operated 932 stores across the globe, operating in 21 countries, including Austria, Belgium, Canada, China, Denmark, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Ireland, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Kuwait, Netherlands, Poland, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, the UAE, UK and US.

Last year was one of tremendous change and refocus for Abercrombie & Fitch Co., resulting in a great deal of success, particularly by year-end, says company Chairman Arthur Martinez. "Our corporate culture is collaborative and optimistic, which energizes the teams to move the brands forward by putting the customer at the centre of everything we do. The company has gone through immense change, from new leadership to a new branded structure, to refocusing on the customer; we are working diligently as a team to provide customers quality, differentiated, and balanced product."

The company recently opened its first store in Dubai in the UAE, and in December of last year its opened its first Abercrombie & Fitch, Abercrombie kids and its first ever standalone fragrance store at the Mall of the Emirates, with its partner, Majid Al Futtaim. The brand first arrived in the Middle East in 2013 when it opened its Hollister location in Dubai.



The company plans to continue to open new stores in Asia and is looking at further opportunities in the Middle East, he adds: "We continue to see growth opportunity in our online business and plan to make strategic investments in DTC and omnichannel capabilities."

Abercrombie & Fitch Co. puts the customer at the centre of everything it does and looks to them for feedback as it evolves its product and holistic brand experience, from the brand's in-store atmosphere, to its digital landscape.

That said, many brands have found it challenging to translate their offer across borders, both culturally and in terms of the consumer's needs and wants – not something that has caused Abercrombie & Fitch too many headaches, it seems.

"Our brands translate well overseas," explains Martinez. "Though we do of course make some adjustments in our assortments to

fit cultural needs."

The customer has clearly changed in recent years, they are digital experts and expect a seamless experience across all channels; they are value focused and want more access to information when making purchasing decisions. As a result, the company has put its focus and resources into digital and omnichannel experiences, such as Order in Store, Ship from Store.

"Social media is also key part of our consumer's lives, so we know the value of communicating to them through those channels," he adds. "We continue to develop innovative and engaging social media campaigns across all of our brands, and have created strong partnerships with Instagram, Snapchat, international bloggers and influencers."

Indeed, this hard work is being recognised, with Hollister ranked Number 1 retailer and Abercrombie & Fitch Number 2 on Instagram as

published in AdWeek recently.

Such loyalty is due in no small measure to the fact that its brands are iconic and the company has an authentic heritage, as it continues to provide quality clothing to people around the world.

Martinez and his team are also working with a branding agency to map out its core beliefs and convictions that will drive each brand and the DNA that supports those beliefs and convictions. This is an ongoing process and there will be a gradual change over time for its brands.

"Our focus is on the customer and improving the shopping experience," he stresses. "We are excited to launch the new brand positions in the coming year and look forward to evolving our product assortment across all brands. We believe we are on the right track and will continue to focus on delivering a customer-centric shopping experience and compelling assortments based on clearly defined brand positions."