

Kipling targets millennials with brand revamp



Vera Breuer, Global President, Kipling

Belgian bag and accessories brand, Kipling is launching new look travel retail stores following a brand overhaul. Vera Breuer, Global President, was tasked with reinventing the brand to make it more

accessible to a wider market. “We took the brand apart and looked at its values,” she comments. “We came up with a new purpose: Kipling Live Light.”

This concept focuses on inspiring people to come as they are, lighten their step and be free to do what they want. The iconic monkey is still a vital part of the brand, but has been updated. Travel retail stores will be refurbished to reflect the new creative vision. For example, each store will have a monkey mural done by a local artist that gives a sense of place. Similarly on the bag the monkey is still present but in new and more subtle forms. “In studies in China we kept hearing that customers would only take their Kipling bags where they felt that the monkey was allowed to go,” says Breuer. “The fluffy monkey was not seen as appropriate for the office.”



The new collections include trendy material, a reduced assortment and a muted colour pallet



The new collection is focused at millennials

The customer profile of school children and over 35 year old left a huge market untapped. The challenge was to bridge the gap between loyal customers and millennials. As well as changing the monkey, the collections include new trendy material, a reduced assortment and a muted colour pallet. Feedback has been extremely positive and the full range will be launched in Winter 2019.

King Power in Bangkok Airport will be the first travel retail store to offer the new branding and assortment in July 2019. This will be followed by Ever Rich in Taichung Airport. Each store will carry the core assortment as well as products targeted at that particular market. For example, in China with its cashless society, the demand for purses has seen a rapid decline. Stores here will stock more cross body and backpack products.

Personalization is a major trend and one that Kipling capitalizes on, especially in travel retail. "Each season tells a story," says Breuer. "Now it is music, next season is on the move." The season is supported by accessories such as T-shirts for the new robot monkeys, and many airports have exclusive monkey products.

Breuer admits that the company has taken radical choices with the brand to make it more relevant to a bigger market, but with its new product offering and store revamp, she is confident of its success.