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TAKE 2

Makeover on Fifth Avenue: Lord & Taylor's Redefining Facelift

BY BARBARA THAU

The approach of a new year summons plans for resolutions, reinventions, even

Lord & Taylor got a head start.

The recent \$25 million makeover of the 184-year old tony chain's Manhattan flagship store on Fifth Avenue—known for its iconic, extravagant holiday window displays—ushers in a brand new look for the store that has transformed everything from the cosmetics department to apparel. It has even brought the retailer back into the home business after a 20 year absence.

And the store is already beginning to see its return on investment, gushed Dominick Ponti, senior vice president of store planning for the department store, and David Clements, general manager of the Fifth Avenue flagship.

The two offered a presentation this week on the revamp at the Women In Real Estate Special Interest Group during the International Council of Shopping Centers' New York National Conference.

Faith Hope Consolo, chairman of the retail leasing and sales division of real estate firm Prudential Douglas Elliman, hosted the event.

The presentation was headlined as, "Reinventing Their Legend and Yours," and billed as, "lessons you can apply to your business and life."

In that spirit, here are some of the highlights of the makeover that breathed new life into the store—which had become somewhat dowdy and dated—and might spark inspiration.

Let there be light. On numerous floors, the retailer opened up windows to bathe the store in natural light and create an airier feel. People tend to shop longer if they don't feel like they're in an enclosed box "and they can see the light," Ponti said. The second floor was converted into a



Lord & Taylor received a \$25 million makeover of the 184-year old Manhattan flagship

women's contemporary apparel department that's "very Soho-like," said Ponti, referring to Manhattan's upscale hipster neighborhood, largely defined by its chic retail shops. It carved out a runway on which mannequins showcase the latest trends.



Pictured from left is David Clements, vice president and general manager of Lord & Taylor's Fifth Avenue flagship; Debra Hazel, president of Debra Hazel Communications; Faith Hope Consolo, chairman of the retail leasing and sales division of Prudential Douglas Elliman real estate; and Dominick Ponti, senior vice president of design, construction and facilities for Lord & Taylor.

Street passers-by can see the fashion trends on that runway through the large store windows that look out to Fifth Avenue.

The first floor cosmetics department has been reinvented so that vendor shops are dramatically distinct from one another.

This way, shoppers are "made to feel comfortable," and that they're not being pulled in many directions by the salespeople of the competing cosmetics shops, Clements said.

Gone is the sea of look-alike makeup case displays. The department has been revived with "color, texture—and a lot of fun and energy," he said.

Estee Lauder has a foundation fitting room, Lancôme now boasts a mascara bar, and Clinique's shop has been reimagined so that

its selling proposition is more clearly about skin care treatment, Clements said.

New open-sell fixtures spotlight jewelry in coordinating earring, necklace and bracelet sets to showcase an entire look. (Because of this, average unit sales are up.)

The retailer entered the bridal business with a new wedding dress department that stocks all of the gowns it carries. It's also offering same-day alterations.

And after a two-decade absence, Lord & Taylor is back in the home business in a big way with a 9th floor department that tells a total lifestyle story.

It boasts the largest Calvin Klein home shop ever. But instead of showcasing Calvin Klein bedding, tabletop and furniture separately, the department features "the world of Calvin Klein," in a complete apartment set-up.

A large Ralph Lauren shop is also on hand.

The changes already appear to be paying off.

Lord & Taylor is now laying the groundwork for its first new store in over a decade in Yonkers, New York, that will be a part of the Ridge Hill outdoor shopping center under construction.

Ponti cheered the plan and said he expects to visit the site, which he'll design as well.