

Department stores to add more local brands to their mix



Robinsons has been adding local fashion brands to its stores here since about three years ago. The department store chain has also taken Singapore clothing brand In Good Company overseas to its six-month-old store in Dubai. PHOTO: LIANHE ZAOBAO

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New govt move will extend brands' reach and enable them to learn from the bigger stores

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Shoppers here will soon be able to pick up more local brands stocked in department stores, under a new government move.

Not only will this launch local brands in the market, it will also enable the brands to learn from the department stores, said Mr S. Iswaran, Minister for Trade and Industry (Industry) yesterday.

He was speaking at the one-day Singapore Retail Industry Conference, which was attended by about 200 people from the retail industry.

While details on the new initiative were not available, some department stores have already been pushing local brands.

About three years ago, Robinsons started adding local fashion brands such as Reckless Ericka, Cruise and Klarra to its stores here.

ADVERTISING

inRead invented by Teads

The department store chain, which is managed by Dubai-based conglomerate Al-Futtaim, has since taken Singapore clothing brand In Good Company overseas to its six-month-old store in Dubai.

The new move announced yesterday is an addition to the Retail Industry Transformation Map, launched in September last year. The road map aims to help retailers launch new concepts, redesign jobs and use technology including e-commerce to find overseas customers.

USING TECH

Today, Charles & Keith is able to offer a seamless omni-channel shopping experience through its app, website and physical stores, and ships to multiple destinations worldwide.

MR S. ISWARAN, MINISTER FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY (INDUSTRY), on the local shoe retailer's focus on its shopping app.

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Mr Iswaran cited local shoe retailer Charles & Keith, which focused more on its shopping app after observing that traffic to its website from mobile devices had jumped from 20 per cent to 55 per cent from 2012 to 2015.

He said: "Today, Charles & Keith is able to offer a seamless omni-channel shopping experience through its app, website and physical stores, and ships to multiple destinations worldwide."

Such initiatives add variety to the local stores, said Al-Futtaim's Asia group chief executive Christophe Cann. He told The Straits Times: "Robinsons is part of Singapore's legacy so it is our duty to help nurture young brands. It's also a way for us to differentiate our items from the other stores."

Last year, about 23,000 retail establishments chalked up operating receipts estimated at \$35 billion, contributing 1.4 per cent to Singapore's gross domestic product.

Mr Iswaran said that by the end of next year, there will also be a Design Incubator along Orchard Road, which will feature more than 60 local companies which design clothes, lifestyle products or even souvenirs.

These moves will inject vibrancy into the retail landscape.

HELPING HAND

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AL-FUTTAIM'S ASIA GROUP CHIEF EXECUTIVE CHRISTOPHE CANN, on the chain's push of local brands.

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There is also the launch of the Retail Centre of Excellence hosted at Singapore Management University next month.

In his speech, Mr Iswaran also shared highlights from the "encouraging progress" he had seen from the over 200 retailers Spring Singapore had worked with since the road map was launched. For example, there are now unmanned convenience stores and minimarts with self-checkout facilities.

Meanwhile, a Ministerial Steering Committee has been convened to look at how Orchard Road can be rejuvenated, said Mr Iswaran.

He is the co-chairman of the committee, along with Minister for National Development Lawrence Wong and Second Minister for Transport Ng Chee Meng.