

NORDSTROM

Behind-the-Scenes Look at the Anniversary Sale with Nordstrom Leaders

June 18, 2021

The Nordstrom Anniversary Sale is our biggest, most popular sale of the year, featuring brand-new arrivals from the best brands on sale for a limited time. As we approach our one-of-a-kind sale, we sat down with Nordstrom leaders for a behind-the-scenes look at how we prepare for the sale—from building new digital experiences to identifying trends and expanding our product offering, each leader shared their expertise. See highlights from our conversation below.

BEHIND-THE-SCENES: MERCHANDISING

We sat down with Shea Jensen, Executive Vice President, General Merchandise Manager, to learn how the team buys inventory for our biggest sale of the year.

What goes into the preparation of the Anniversary Sale?

We start our Anniversary planning as early as the year prior, evaluating our opportunities and successes from the event, and learning from our customers and teams. Reviewing our scorecard provides a good starting point for the next year's event planning. At the same time, we like to place the customer at the center of our preparation, gathering insights and sentiments directly from customers, helping inform our buyers about important occasions, categories and brands they should consider for the event.

What is one thing most people don't know about Anniversary from a merchandising perspective?

It is the strength of relationships in the marketplace which allows us to negotiate and partner with our brands to bring the event to life. Because the event is exclusive to us, brands don't necessarily receive the benefit of scale, unless the product is fantastic and the customer votes. It is the trust and confidence in the relationship we have with our customers that keeps the brands coming back year over year to participate.

How might the sale assortment look different this year compared to last year?

We have a lot of new brands at the event and have adjusted the balance of new fashion with wardrobe staples. Brands such as Open Edit, Cinq et Sept, Reiss, NN07, Marine Layer, R + Co, Boy Smells, Frame and Paige footwear are new, among many more. And we can't wait for customers to see the new fashion offering—we hope this gives our customers a reason to refresh and renew their closet after the past year.

BEHIND-THE-SCENES: STORES AND STYLISTS

To get insight into how our stores, stylists and salespeople prepare for the event, we had a conversation with Fanya Chandler, Senior Vice President.

How far out do you, your stores and the styling team start planning for Anniversary? What goes into that preparation?

Our stores immediately begin preparing for next year's sale after the end of the sale. We listen to our customers about what they loved and what they didn't to then adjust the plan and make the following year's sale even better. We root all our decisions on the customer, which means we are well-positioned to meet the everchanging needs and preferences of our customers.

Our stylists and salespeople make their summer plans around the Anniversary Sale dates to ensure they are available to serve customers throughout the event. Our stylists and salespeople spend the month leading up to the event reaching out to customers, organizing their calendar of appointments, reviewing their customers' preferences and curating outfit recommendations that their customers would love.

How do styling services play a role in the sale?

Styling services allow a customer to have the most personalized, convenient and connected Anniversary Sale experience. A stylist can help you find the best picks from the sale for your wardrobe and budget and give you tips to build versatile outfits. Our customers can enjoy the help of their stylist wherever they choose to shop. For some, that's an immersive in-store experience and for others, it's reviewing outfit recommendations in five minutes on their phone.

This year, customers can work with a stylist in-store, through a virtual appointment or chat. They may also get inspired with outfit ideas that our stylists post on their social platforms and on Nordstrom Looks.

How might the sale look different this year compared to last year?

Thanks to the vaccine rollout, we expect to see more customers shopping in-store with us this year. New this year, customers in all top 20 markets can enjoy expanded merchandise availability for next-day pick-up in-store or at curbside and free two-day shipping. We are also excited that our stylists and salespeople can share their favorite Anniversary Sale picks on their social media platforms, empowering their followers to view and purchase quickly and seamlessly.

BEHIND-THE-SCENES: TECHNOLOGY AND DATA

The entire Nordstrom Anniversary Sale is built on our technology and informed by data. We asked Sam Violette, Director, Engineering and Technology, to share how customer experiences are powered by data and technology.

Walk us through the planning process for the Anniversary Sale.

The planning of the sale starts as soon as the current year's event ends! Our partners in Strategy gathered data, customer feedback and business results to understand what worked, what didn't and where we could provide an even better experience for our in-store and digital customers. Once this analysis is complete, Strategy met with leaders across Nordstrom, including our Product and Technology teams, so we could start dreaming up fun and engaging experiences for next year's event.

How might the sale look different this year compared to last year? Are there new features?

The response to last year's Anniversary Preview feature, which allowed customers to add Anniversary products to their Wish List before the event started, was overwhelmingly positive. We're doubling down on this experience with an enhanced Wish List feature and push notifications on our App when products in your Wish List are available to be purchased, based on your Nordy Club status. There are also hundreds of small enhancements throughout the Website and App to make sure this is the best Anniversary Sale to date.

How are you personalizing the experience for customers?

We've spent all year making our Nordstrom.com and our Nordstrom App Looks and Recommended Products features better than ever, so customers will see curated product and style recommendations to make this Anniversary feel like it was made just for them. These enhancements are just the first of many upcoming features our Nordstrom Technology team has planned for Anniversary, Holiday, and year-round personalization of our digital shopping experience—helping customers look good and feel their best. And, of course, our in-store and online stylists are ready and waiting to help customers put together the perfect outfit during Anniversary.