



Fashion INDEX

/ Talking Trade /

'Power List players prove the UK retail cynics wrong'

— Dan Coen



Last week saw the publication of *Drapers'* Top 100 most influential people in fashion, with several high street names featured above more niche designer brands. In fact, many of the top 10 represented the UK's best-known retailers, many of whom I have talked about in this column previously.

Nick Robertson, chief executive of fashion retailer Asos, for example, bagged the top spot – and rightly so. The company's shares have risen more than 500% in the past five years, and the retailer is fast becoming the bellwether of global retail, flying the flag for British retail and retail innovation. Asos's success is pretty easy to explain: it continues to choose the channels that are most relevant to its target market, to use innovative technologies, and to act quickly on key trends. In other words, it is doing everything right.

Lord Wolfson, chief executive at Next, is on the list at number four, a well-deserved nod to the company's long-standing commitment to innovation. The Next Directory was one of the UK's earliest examples of successful multichannel shopping, and more recently, the success of its online Directory business has helped to offset a fall in sales at its high street stores.

Peter Ruis, buying and brand director at John Lewis, follows Lord Wolfson at number five. Even though John Lewis often credits its success with favourable trading conditions, a combination of superior service, careful buying and an unwavering commitment to protecting its brand has clearly paid dividends over the years.

Michael Sharp, chief executive at Debenhams, is at number nine. The retailer is planning to open 70 more stores in the UK, on top of the 154 the company has already, which could result in an extra £1bn of sales. At the same time, Debenhams is systematically improving its stores, communicating its proposition clearly, and improving the customer experience every day through innovative multichannel options – which is exactly why Sharp deserves his place in the top 10.

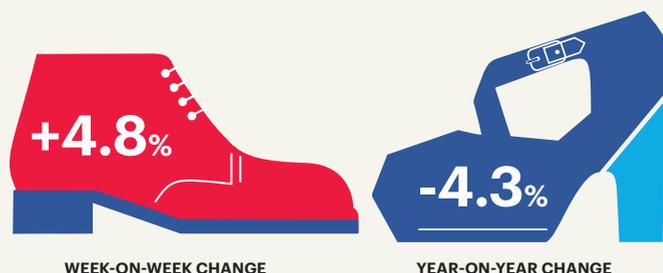
Many cynics will tell you the high street is dead, but don't believe the hype. Have a look at some of these retail visionaries and see why British retail is still something to celebrate.

Director, corporate advisory firm Zolfo Cooper

WEEKLY FOOTFALL RETAIL INDEX

National UK footfall figures

Week 49 – December 3 to December 9, 2012



The UK saw another expected weekly increase in shopper numbers, up 4.8% on the previous week, although retail parks saw a 5% decline. The 4.3% year-on-year fall is larger than the year-to-date deficit of 3%. Retailers will have hoped for better but may be encouraged to see performance improve slightly on the 7.2% year-on-year drop last week. The British Retail Consortium reported an 11% rise in pre-Christmas retail parcel deliveries, but with another two weekends to go and the last postage deadline looming, high street figures promise a further sharp incline.

HIGH STREET SALES TRACKER

Like-for-like sales figures across the high street

Week ending December 9, 2012



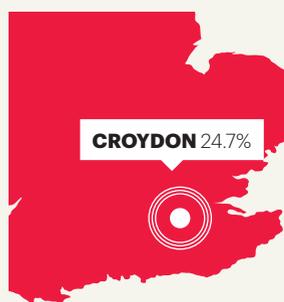
Growth was uneven, with some retailers struggling to reach positive territory. For more information, email Don Williams, head of retail and wholesale at BDO, at don.williams@bdo.co.uk

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The most applied for jobs

1. Design 9.8%
2. Sales 6.1%
3. Merchandising 6%
4. Production 5%
5. Buying 4.4%

As a percentage of total applications on DrapersJobs last week

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