

Gap, Amazon Fresh, CVS: 8 retailers making a comeback

Article



For October's Unofficial Most Interesting Retailers list, we're looking at eight retailers hoping to escape the ghastly realm of spooky deserted shopping centers and zombie malls. Gap, Amazon Fresh, and Victoria's Secret lead our trick-or-treat bag of comeback brands.

1. Gap

Gap is trying to be more culturally relevant and use marketing dollars more efficiently. It stepped up its collaboration game, partnering with influencers such as Julia Huynh, who launched the “Hoodies That Hoodie” series on [TikTok](#). Recent financials indicate these efforts seem to be working.

“It’s no small task to turn around all four banners that operate under the Gap, Inc. label,” said our analyst Sarah Marzano on a recent episode of the [“Reimagining Retail: Behind the Numbers” podcast](#). “Crawling out of the never-ending discounting race to the bottom has really eroded a lot of the brand equity.”

2. Amazon Fresh

To invigorate the struggling brand, [Amazon](#) is testing new initiatives, such as a new micro fulfillment center for online order pickup and a new small-format store in Chicago offering products that don’t fit into Whole Foods’ ingredient restrictions.

“Folks are going to Whole Foods, but then conducting the remainder of their grocery shopping elsewhere to get those national brands, so it makes sense,” said Marzano. “But I don’t think Amazon has all the time in the world to keep iterating.”

3. Victoria’s Secret

[Victoria's Secret](#) relaunched its iconic fashion show this month with a more inclusive, body-positive and racially diverse focus. Time will tell if—and with whom the makeover resonates.

“There’s not a very clear, cohesive strategy coming through some of their moves,” said Marzano. “The brand lost a lot of market share to brands like SKIMS and Fenty, and I don’t think the fashion show is going to bring today’s consumer back.”

4. Abercrombie & Fitch

This is another 2000s brand revamping its image to be more inclusive. Now no longer a teen brand, Abercrombie & Fitch has morphed into a younger [millennial](#) brand, with styles suitable for the office and formal occasions like weddings.

“It’s part of a group of mall brands that are growing up,” said Marzano. “It’s exciting to see this turnaround, which stands in stark contrast to department stores.”

5. Adidas

After a few rough years where it shuttered the Yeezy brand and halted its business in Russia, Adidas is making steps in the right direction. It scaled up production of the Samba, and is focusing on the strength of its wholesale business, flying in the face of so many other brands' strategic shift to [D2C](#).

6. CVS

CVS breathed new life into its food and beverage aisle, launching a new private label line called Well Market, focusing on healthy offerings and recyclable packaging. To reinvigorate its [retail media](#) capabilities, it also debuted a self-service ad partnership with The Trade Desk.

7. Lidl

Since launching in the US in 2017, grocer Lidl has struggled with brand confusion with fellow discount European grocer Aldi. A new marketing campaign is reintroducing the brand to US customers.

“Because they're so much smaller than Aldi and focused mainly in the Northeast, I think a lot of the rest of the country just don't even know about them,” said our analyst Sky Canaves.

8. Kohl's

Kohl's has been trying a little bit of everything, from new brand offerings like a relaunched Limited Too and expanded holiday assortments to Amazon returns to get people in-store. But a more focused effort may be needed.

“Previous-quarter comparable sales were down, and they really need to rethink the whole store in a more holistic way,” said Canaves.

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