

Ralph Lauren has been at the forefront of the fashion industry, creating a global lifestyle brand. He is widely recognized as one of the most innovative design and business leaders in the world, thanks to his ability to blend classic and contemporary styles to create unique collections that appeal to a wide range of individuals, (Lauren,2024). One of the successes of the Ralph Lauren collections conducts in his ability to draw inspiration from different regions of America.

He draws on New England's rusticity to create apparel that is both comfortable and stylish, while his collections based on the natural beauty of the West. Hollywood's glamour also plays a role in his designs, which celebrate the glitz and glamour of one of America's most iconic cultural institutions. Ralph Lauren's collections are not just limited to apparel for men and women. He also designs clothing for children, as well as home decor items that embody timeless style and elegance, (Lauren,2024). With a focus on quality, craftsmanship, and attention to detail, his collections are recognized and celebrated all around the world, making him one of the most influential figures in the fashion industry.

Every incredible journey starts with a single step, and for Ralph Lauren, that step was taken in 1967 when he created a simple garment. He launched a neckwear line under Polo, later sold in Bloomingdales in 1970. At the time, he drew inspiration from the 'old Hollywood' look and quickly set the latest trends. Ralph Lauren's garments were all handmade with quality fabrics, ensuring they were of the highest standard. Ralph later launched a men's collection consisting of suits and dress shirts. Unlike other brands at the time, Ralph used sports shirt fabrics in his garments.

In 1971, Ralph opened his first store in Beverly Hills, which was a big success. This prompted him to expand his business nationwide, including cities like Texas, Chicago, and

others. With the opening of new stores, Ralph started working on a new line of women's collections. The line consisted of women's polo shirts designed to keep the original polo design intact. However, minor adjustments were made to enhance the difference between men's and women's polo shirts. Ralph included a much more fitted and tailored look and the iconic embroidered pony logo. Ralph launched more women's collections in 1972 to meet the demand for the new design.

Figure 1: Polo Green (1978)

Ralph Lauren expanded its brand's offerings beyond apparel with introduction of Polo for Men Fragrance 1978. The cologne boasts a blend of



pine, leather, and tobacco scents. In 1979, Ralph introduced a new casual and ready-to-wear fashion line inspired by Western American style. This line was created under "Made to be Worn," specializing in polo western denim clothing. The aim was to enhance traditional American workwear by offering new and stylish options.

As the brand expanded further, Ralph decided to expand his brand and create a home collection in 1983. His collection included bedding, rugs, and a variety of home decor. In 1986, he continued to expand his brand and opened his first flagship store in New York City. This retail store is his vision of his brand and how he wants it to be projected. Later, Ralph appeared in Times magazine to elaborate on his brand growth over the past years.

In 1991, the creation of the iconic polo teddy bear took Ralph's inspiration and became an iconic symbol for the brand. It is imprinted on the brand's garments and accessories. However,

more comes with the creation/inspiration of the 'Polo Bear.' It all started in 1902 when President Theodore Roosevelt set off on a hunting trip in the Mississippi to hunt bears. From a bear escaping to later finding another bear, they chased up a tree. Before he could get a clear shot, one of his companions intervened and tied the bear to the tree, intending to make it easier to shoot it. Refusing to shoot the bear, considering it was inhumane to kill an animal that was tied up and

unable to defend itself. The incident was reported in newspapers nationwide, and a political cartoon featuring Roosevelt and the bear was published in The Washington Post. The published cartoon inspired a New York City store owner, Morris Michtom, to create a stuffed bear named "Teddy's Bear," after Roosevelt.



Figure 2: Polo Bear, Ralph Lauren

After Roosevelt was gifted these gifts by his brother Jerry Lauren, the creative director of men's design, Ralph was inspired by the looks the bears wore every time he was gifted one, so he incorporated the bear into his brand. The first appearance of the teddy bear was known as the "Preppy Bear," produced in collaboration with Steiff. It was a limited-edition run of 200 teddy bears and sold out at the Madison Avenue flagship store in one weekend. The second appearance of the bear appeared on everything from T-shirts and denim jackets to dress shirts and ties. The Polo Bear has become a signature symbol of the Ralph Lauren brand and is a testament to Ralph's love of the bears. As with many things in the world of Ralph Lauren, what appeals in his life makes its way into the clothing lines. The Polo Bear is just one example of Ralph's ability to take something he loves and turn it into a timeless classic.

With further successes, Ralph and his company accomplished many more milestones up to the twenty-first century, including opening restaurants in New York City, Chicago, and Paris. A significant milestone occurred in 1997 when Ralph officially made his brand public on the New York Trade Exchange (Ralph Lauren bear,2024).

THE RALPH LAUREN WAY

LOVE WHAT YOU DO,
BE PASSIONATE,
WORK HARD,
EMBRACE
INDIVIDUALITY, WORK
TOGETHER, TAKE
RISKS, DO THE RIGHT
THING, STAND UP FOR
WHAT YOU BELIEVE IN,
ASPIRE TO THE BEST

**Figure 3: The Ralph Lauren
Way; (Karthikeyan, 2023)**

Ralph Lauren has been synonymous with classic American style and luxury. The brand's success is rooted in a number of well-executed promotional strategies that have helped it become a name worldwide. One of the key factors behind the brand's success is its focus on brand identity. Ralph Lauren has developed a distinct brand voice that is instantly recognizable and resonates with consumers. This is further reinforced through celebrity endorsements, which have helped create a sense of inspiration and exclusivity around the brand.

Ralph Lauren has also been successful with social media in connecting with its audience. The brand has a strong presence on many platforms, including Instagram and Twitter, where it showcases its products and engages with followers. This has helped the brand to stay relevant and top-of-mind among consumers. Strategic partnerships and event sponsorships have also significantly impacted Ralph Lauren's success. The brand has collaborated with many high-profile organizations and events, including the Olympics, Wimbledon, and the US Open. These partnerships have helped to raise the brand's profile and establish it as a leader in the fashion industry.

The brand's success can be attributed to its marketing mix, which includes various products catering to a diverse audience (Next great chapter,2024). The strategic placement of these products in key locations has ensured visibility and accessibility to consumers who enjoy the brand. The brand's premium pricing strategy has been instrumental in positioning it as a high-quality and prestigious product. Additionally, the brand's promotion techniques and advertising campaigns have helped to create a strong brand identity and increase customer loyalty.

Ralph Lauren's well-crafted place mix strategy has helped the brand establish a solid global footprint. The brand has over 500 retail stores in over 100 countries, strategically placed to ensure they are accessible to shoppers worldwide (Next great chapter,2024). These retail stores provide an exquisite experience for customers, allowing them to see, touch, and feel the brand's products before purchasing. In addition to physical stores, Ralph Lauren has an enormous e-commerce platform, which serves as a virtual gateway to the brand.

Customers from around the globe can purchase and explore the brand's iconic designs without leaving their homes. The user-friendly platform offers a seamless shopping experience, from browsing to checkout. Ralph Lauren's place mix strategy is a testament to the brand's commitment to excellence and customer satisfaction. The brand's physical stores, e-commerce platform, and strategic partnerships all work together to provide customers with a convenient, enjoyable, and seamless shopping experience that keeps them coming back for more.

Ralph Lauren has been struggling with several significant issues in its operation. One is a lack of focus on core brand strength, which has led to the brand's downfall and a decline in customer purchases. This has decreased profit margins and reduced overall sales growth ((Team, 2016),). To tackle these issues, Ralph Lauren implements a demand-driven supply chain to optimize inventory management. This approach will help the company reduce the full-price inventory transferred to discounted channels and improve its profitability. By focusing on core brand strength and implementing a demand-driven supply chain, Ralph Lauren aims to strengthen customer loyalty and enhance profitability. In addition, the cost-cutting measures will help the company to operate more efficiently and effectively, leading to long-term growth and success.

The Ralph Lauren Corporation has hosted a meeting for investors and analysts to present its Next Great Chapter: Accelerate Strategic Growth Plan (Next Great Chapter,2024)

This plan aims to accelerate the company's growth and create sustainable long-term value for shareholders. It includes a focus on driving revenue growth through increased digital capabilities, expanding the company's global reach, and enhancing the customer experience.

As part of the company's strategic plan, they have identified three key growth features, (Next Great Chapter,2024)

Elevate and energize the lifestyle brand—They are committed to expanding and elevating their brand positioning globally to deliver high-quality products and services to customers. To achieve this, a customer experience that appeals to a broader audience must be created. They also invest in marketing campaigns and collaborations to increase brand awareness and attract new customers. The goal is to increase customer lifetime value by providing high-quality products that meet their needs and exceed their expectations.

Drive the core and expand for more—The company will continue to focus on core products while exploring new opportunities in under-penetrated categories. It will conduct market research to identify emerging trends and changing consumer preferences. By doing so, it can create innovative products that cater to customers' evolving lifestyles and wardrobe preferences. Win in key cities with consumer ecosystem - recognize the importance of building a solid digital presence to reach customers worldwide. To achieve this, the plan to scale the digitally-led, cohesive ecosystem strategy across the top 30 cities. By doing so,it can provide a seamless customer experience that meets the expectations of customers.

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