French childrenswear label Petit Bateau names new CEO

By Olivier Guyot - June 18, 2020

French childrenswear label Petit Bateau has been without a CEO for six months following the departure of Patrick Pergament, but it finally knows the name of his replacement, as its owner, the Rocher group, has opted for an internal appointment. Petit Bateau, founded in 1893 and owned by the French group since 1988, will be headed by Guillaume Darrousez, who will take office on July 6.

Darrousez joined the Rocher group in 2015, and since 2018 he has been the general manager of Yves Rocher International.

Darrousez is a retail distribution specialist. He began his business career at Boston Consulting Group, then worked for 20 years for leading French retail distribution groups: the Kingfisher group, at chains like but and Castorama...
for 20 years for leading French retail distribution groups, the Kingfisher group, at chains like But and Castorama, and then Darty, where he was in charge of darty.com and introduced its click&collect service in 2007.

Darrousez’s first foray in the fashion industry as an executive was in 2008, when he joined French luxury group Kering (called PPR at the time), to take charge of marketing and e-commerce at mail order/e-tail company La Redoute. In 2011, he was appointed general manager of the Cyrillus Vertbaudet Group. After a two-year stint there, he switched industry, becoming the boss of optics group GrandVision (owner of Grand Optical and Mas).

Quoted in a press release issued by Petit Bateau, Darrousez said: “In this tough post-Covid environment, Petit Bateau’s strategic priorities are accelerating its digitalisation, internationalisation and sustainability efforts, capitalising even further on its brand DNA.”

Darrousez’s track record of successful international expansion will undoubtedly be an asset for Petit Bateau. In 2018, the label recorded a revenue of €300 million, and nearly half of this is currently generated outside France, via a global network of over 400 stores. Petit Bateau is chiefly focused on childrenswear, though about 20% of its product range consists of adult apparel, and is also very strong in the e-tail channel, the source of 15% of its total sales. According to Darrousez’s initial statements, the share of online sales is destined to increase further.

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