The Galeries Lafayette group appoints Philippe Berlan as CEO of La Redoute

By Olivier Guyot - March 10, 2022

La Redoute faces major changes as its co-chairmen, Nathalie Balla and Éric Courteille, leave the company. The historic firm founded in 1837 was transformed by the duo when they took over in 2014 and established it as a strong player in French e-commerce.

The Galeries Lafayette group, which acquired 51% of the company’s shares in 2017, announced that it “will own 100% of the company in the coming months,” on March 9. This transition that has been planned and anticipated since 2021 is accompanied with the departure of its two co-presidents. The online retailer boasts a current foothold in 20 different countries and a physical presence in France through 12 points of sale and 50 corners in the Galeries Lafayette department stores. The enterprise that recorded a business volume of more than one billion euros in 2021 will be led from this day on by Philippe Berlan, former deputy CEO, as decided by the company’s supervisory board chaired by Philippe Houzé.

The former manager of Petit Bateau, Casino, and Lancel experienced first-hand the online marketplace’s challenging years followed by its revival after being part of the company since 2012. “La Redoute’s high-quality teams and solid business model means that I am taking on my new role with great pride and enthusiasm. Although the company will have a new CEO, I will ensure continuity by sticking to our 2025 strategic plan and the major ambitions it represents for our company,” stated the leader, paying tribute to the two former co-presidents.

“We are proud of the progress we have made with the whole La Redoute staff over the last four years. We would like to offer our sincere thanks to the part that Nathalie Balla and Eric Courteille have played in our shared journey, and we wish them all the best,” explained Houzé in a press release. “We are also very happy that Philippe Berlan is becoming La Redoute’s new CEO. His excellent knowledge of the business, which he has actively helped to transform, will be a valuable asset as we seek to maintain the trajectory of this leading French e-commerce enterprise.”
company in the years to come."

La Redoute’s trajectory is indeed a positive attribute for the company. The former catalog sold by Kering to the two executives and its employees in 2014 for the symbolic price of one euro suffered hundreds of millions in losses at the beginning of the decade before becoming an e-commerce site offering ready-to-wear products and home goods. During the first year of losses, the services and logistics were adjusted according to the industry’s scene, but not without encountering problems. However, the business volume rose to around 700 million euros in the first few years and momentum remained despite continuing losses. Today, the company claims that 30% of its business is exported and 70% is produced by the fashion industry.

“We are delighted to see that the proactive and ambitious strategy we have implemented to transform La Redoute has been a success. We would like to thank all of La Redoute’s staff members for their unstinting dedication. Together, we have been able to develop the business with agility and in accordance with the values we hold dear. La Redoute is in good shape and on the right track,” said Balla and Courteille in a press release. “As we hand over to Philippe Berlan, we can be pleased with the work we have done together. We are making this change at the right time, and we are leaving La Redoute in excellent hands, with a solid shareholder and a new CEO who has played a major role in its success and will be able to meet the challenges of tomorrow.”

This decision was announced when the Galeries Lafayette group acquired a stake in the company. Galeries Lafayette’s know-how was combined with La Redoute’s teams in order to enable both players’s operations to grow. At the time, the group reported sales of €4.5 billion and was aiming for €5.5 billion by the end of 2020. However, the French group owned by the Houzé family did not reach their goal and instead reported €4.5 billion in sales due to the huge slowdown suffered by department stores amidst the Covid-19 health crisis. Today’s increasing demand for digitalization deems La Redoute’s expertise even more relevant to the group in order to support their transition to this business model.

By Olivier Guyot
Translated by Roberta Herrera

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