

# Closet Connection

Rebecca Minkoff partners with virtual closet app to mine customer information

by LAURI GIESEN

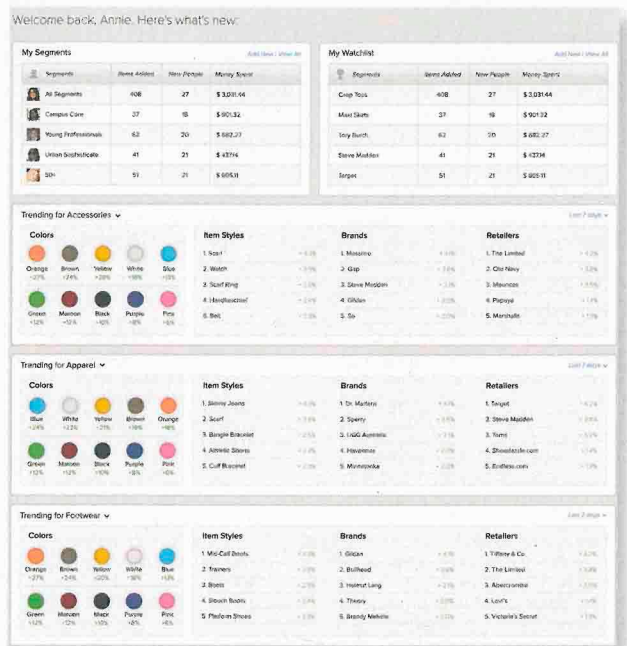
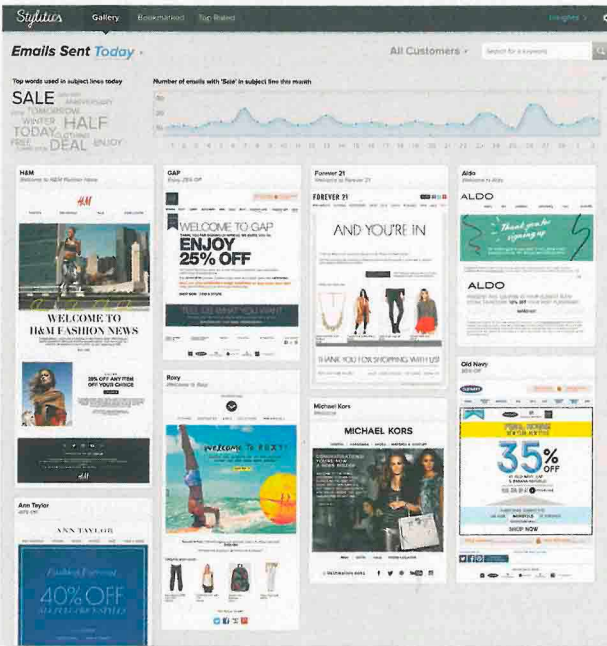
Rebecca Minkoff is a high-end fashion design firm that sells through 900 retailers worldwide as well as its own website. The brand recently opened a store in Los Angeles and has a New York City location in the works. To effectively expand direct sales to customers, however, it needs to know more about them.

to retailers like Rebecca Minkoff, Stylistics represents more than an on-line closet.

“It has a six-figure base of users that we can leverage information about,” says Uri Minkoff, the company’s CEO and co-founder. “We want to know what they have in their closets and Stylistics lets us do that. We fell in love with their data when we saw it.”

clothing line. Then it can look at the other brands those customers are purchasing. If it appears that loyal shoe customers are buying clothing that is different in style or price from what Rebecca Minkoff offers, it can make adjustments in its product offerings and bring out new items likely to appeal to those customers.

On the other hand, if loyal shoe cus-



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To get that information, the company is using Stylistics, a mobile-based “electronic closet” originally created to help consumers keep track of their clothing and make smart choices when shopping. Users can call up existing items from their wardrobe to find matches with potential purchases and be reminded of what they already own before buying new items.

The “connected closet” concept lets users communicate about their fashion choices and purchases with selected friends and merchants. But

## ‘MORE INTELLIGENT’ DIALOGUE

Like most designers and retailers, Rebecca Minkoff has compiled information about what its customers want and are buying. What it doesn’t know is what those customers are buying from other retailers and designers. Stylistics “represents a great way for us to get analytical information that we can use throughout our organization, from design to marketing,” Minkoff says.

The company can now identify customers who are purchasing its shoes and handbags, but nothing from its

tomers are purchasing clothing of a similar brand and price to those offered by Rebecca Minkoff, it might be a marketing issue; the company could communicate better about what it currently offers.

The company has just scratched the surface of the analytic capabilities of Stylistics. “We can use this information to improve the messages we send out to customers,” Minkoff says. “We want to have a more intelligent dialogue with them and send them coupons and offerings that are more targeted to their needs.”

The firm also plans to use the information to stock merchandise as well as communicate and service customers at its new store locations.

“Stylitics gives us information that will help us give better service to our customers when they come into our stores,” he says. “It will help us know what items to recommend to our customers and what to put into their dressing rooms.”

## WHAT CONSUMERS WANT

Rebecca Minkoff targets a broad range of customers, but its primary market is women between 18 and 32 years old that it terms “downtown romantics” — urban consumers looking for moderately high-end items. Clothing items typically sell in the \$195 to \$350 range; Minkoff describes the company as “an accessible luxury brand.

“We want to be the brand of first moments, those five or six experiences in a woman’s life that shape her life — graduating from college, getting her first job, getting engaged, getting married,” he says.

Stylitics targets women between the ages of 24 and 30, although men and women outside the target market use it as well; some 90 percent of users are based in the United States. The income range of users is broad, but they tend to spend more on clothing per month than the average consumer.

The original retail application was aimed at creating a panel of consumers that selected merchants could use as focus groups to gain information for new product offerings and promotions. But Stylitics realized there was a lot more it could do with this data.

“Our goal now is to make this more accessible to customers to gather more information,” says co-founder and CMO Zach Davis, “and then partner with big brand retailers to provide them with analytical information about what consumers are buying.”

Davis describes Stylitics’ connected closet as the “future of personalization” in retail. “There is so much fragmentation in the information retailers gather. It is not only three or four stores that consumers shop anymore,” he says. “They are shopping all over the world and it is hard for a retailer to gather information about what its customers are buying. Most retailers know less than 5 percent of what their customers own and want.”

Stylitics was recently improved to make it easier for participating retailers to gather information. “With one click, retailers can download information about their customers into their systems to analyze,” Davis says.

The platform is also helping to improve retailers’ electronic communications with consumers. “E-mail marketing is a mess right now,” he says. “Retailers need to get the right message [out] at the right time, and the data to do that is not always accessible.” **STORES**

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