

BUSINESS

Bloomingdale's to Show Working Moms Some Love

● Retailer's multitiered campaign spotlights successful women, who happen to be mothers.

BY SHARON EDELSON

Bloomingdale's is putting working mothers on a pedestal as it redoubles its Mother's Day efforts to capitalize on the National Retail Federation's assertion that this will be a near-record year, with \$23.1 billion in projected sales. The NRF and Prosper Insights & Analytics said an average of \$180 per person will be spent on gifts for mom.

Mombosses, the theme of Bloomingdale's multiplatform effort highlights working mothers in high-profile careers — they're featured in a catalogue and in the windows of the 59th Street flagship in Manhattan. Among the women featured are Jessie Randall, founder and creative director of Loeffler Randall; Emma Grede, cofounder with Khloé Kardashian of size-inclusive apparel brand Good American, and Temple St. Clair, founder of the eponymous jewelry brand. Each woman shares her personal style and recalls her

favorite Mother's Day gifts.

According to the NRF survey, about \$4.6 billion will be spent on jewelry for Mother's Day, which will be bought by 34 percent of shoppers; \$4.4 billion will be spent on meals such as dinners or brunches, 55 percent; \$2.6 billion on flowers, 69 percent, and \$2.1 billion on clothing, 36 percent.

Bloomingdale's executive vice president and chief marketing officer Frank Berman said Mother's Day 2018 has more moving parts than prior years, including windows dedicated to designers Michelle Smith of Milly, Rebecca Taylor and Rebecca



Bloomingdale's Mother's Day catalogue.

Minkoff. Moms who lead philanthropic organizations will also be honored in windows, including Studio in a School's Agnes Gund; Chelsea Clinton's Too Small to Fail; Christy Turlington Burns' Every Mother Counts; Kim Sweet's Advocates for Children of New York, and Elizabeth Bryan-Jacobs' Spread Your Wings. Berman expects the displays will touch a chord with shoppers.

"Being a new mom, I agreed to get involved," said Minkoff, who gave birth to her third child, Nico Valentine, in February. She liked Bloomingdale's message of female empowerment. "Because of the climate and women's rights in general, people see Mother's Day as a day to get that message heard loud and clear," she said. "They want capture the momentum."

In the age of #MeToo, retailers are tapping into consumers' appetite for probing discussions. A monthly panel series, "In Her Shoes," at the fifth floor renovated shoe department of Bloomingdale's flagship, hopes to create culturally relevant dialogue and experiences that resonate with customers. A May 3 discussion of women's empowerment will include participants Minkoff; beauty expert and activist Jodie Patterson; Peanut app founder Michelle Kennedy, and Bloomingdale's creative director Sophia Tang.

Minkoff said monthly fireside chats at her company are organized so employees can hear from a range of successful

women. "Within our company we have internal mentorship programs where we pair up different employees from different segments. We have a workout club and a book club, and we go out of office for workouts every two weeks. We're going to have our own fireside-like event at our store featuring some diverse mothers."

Peanut, which calls itself "the app for moms," has 320,000 users. "It's about finding a connection with like-minded women, who happen to be moms," Kennedy said. "Being the first in your friendship group to have a child can be an isolating experience, and that sense of loss of identity can be very challenging for many women. So, finding like-minded women to share this new chapter with, well, that can be game changing."

"We're hosting panels surrounding women, motherhood, the journey and empowerment," Kennedy added. "Given today's climate, this is important to our women and our users. And not just as women in society, but as parents responsible for raising the next generation of, what we hope to be, right thinking members of society."

According to NRF, 35 percent of consumers plan to shop at department stores; 31 percent, online; 29 percent, specialty stores such as florists and jewelers; 23 percent, local businesses; 22 percent, discount stores, and 10 percent, specialty apparel retailers.

