



JANICE SULLIVAN TAPPED AS REBECCA TAYLOR PRESIDENT

By Lisa Lockwood

AUGUST 4, 2015

Janice Sullivan has been named president of Rebecca Taylor, the \$75 million contemporary sportswear division of Kellwood Co. Cofounder Rebecca Taylor will continue to serve as the brand's creative director.

Sullivan, who began Monday, takes over some of the duties formerly handled by Beth Bugdaycay, who cofounded the brand and was chief executive officer for 18 years. She left last December and opened her own boutique, Foundrae. Sarah Gallagher was brought in as a consultant last year, and will assist in the transition.

In Sullivan's new role, she will direct day-to-day business operations and will partner with Taylor to leverage each others' strengths and drive the Taylor brand strategy in the U.S. market and internationally. Sullivan will report to Joe Lombardi, chief executive officer of Kellwood.

Most recently, Sullivan was ceo of Edun Americas, a post she held since 2009. Sullivan joined Edun when LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton bought a minority stake in the brand, which was founded in 2006 by Bono and his wife Ali Hewson. Earlier Sullivan served as president of Calvin Klein Jeans and before that held posts within Liz Claiborne Inc., including president of DKNY Jeans and Active.

"I look forward to a great partnership with her and being able to leverage her substantial industry experience and business acumen toward growing our brand," Taylor said.

"What's been amazing is to join the brand when it's been on an amazing high," said Sullivan. She noted that the company has been experiencing double-digit growth in wholesale and their eight freestanding stores, and has experienced triple-digit increases in e-commerce.

Asked what she attributes the strong growth to lately, Taylor said, "A return to femininity. People are finding appeal in the brand. I'm really enjoying myself and I feel we're just hitting our stride."

Sullivan said her priorities will be to capitalize on the growth Taylor is experiencing and work with the designer to develop the lifestyle components of the brand. The company, which has been in business 18 years, has no licensees. The company is primarily interested in developing new divisions in-house, such as footwear, handbags and jeans.

Sullivan said Sullivan said she intends to learn from the team and get up to speed, while getting to know Taylor and her vision “and drive her vision so it really resonates from every touch point of the brand.” At present, 15 percent of Taylor’s business is generated through their own stores, 11 percent is international and the balance is with major department and specialty stores, said Sullivan.

“I am “I am confident that Janice will be a considerable asset to the Rebecca Taylor business,” said Lombardi. “Not only does she possess a global perspective, she brings considerable breadth of experience in operational areas to the brand, including marketing and sales.”

Taylor, who stopped doing fashion shows last February after doing them since 1999, said she doesn’t plan to stage one in September. She said she is energized more by developing different ways to talk to her customers. She plans to do a lot more social media marketing, a look book, and have personal appointments with fashion directors to show them the collection. “I’m so much more focused without a doing a show,” said the designer.