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Democratizing H by Halston for the QVC Customer

By Vicki M. Young

NEW YORK — [Cameron Silver](#) [A-A](#) [A+](#) [PRINT](#)
[Silver](#) has lately been learning a lot more about the QVC customer.

That's because Silver is the fashion director for [H by Halston](#), one of two brands — the other is [H Halston](#) — that Xcel Brands Inc. acquired in December 2014 for \$27.7 million in a combination of cash, stock and warrants. [H by Halston](#) is aimed at the [QVC](#) audience, and at some point Xcel will produce [H Halston](#) as a separate line for the department store channel. Silver is fashion director for that collection as well.

As the on-air personality for the brand, Silver gets to interact with the QVC audience each week on Thursday night at 10. Because new product is shown weekly, with the QVC buying team having a say on what to showcase each week, Silver said during a walk-through of the new spring-summer selection: "QVC was into buy-now-wear-now even before buy now-wear now existed."



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Cameron Silver
Thomas Iannaccone

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Silver, a fashion historian, said he has always been a fan of the Halston aesthetic, one that he takes on as his own with his clients. For the H by Halston line, the same overall look is maintained, although the emphasis is more sportswear than glam. The product line is under \$100, although some leather handbags can go as high as \$300. Silver pointed to a watch that will be sold on air and on the QVC Web site for \$25 each, adding, "It works!" He also highlighted a pair of sunglasses priced at \$35, noting that the eyewear is polarized as a pointed reference to the quality of the merchandise. Because the consumer wants easy care, the apparel is in fabrications that are machine washable, Silver said.

The customer is a "cool, young mom to a sophisticated working woman, who all want

to add elements [of the line] to her wardrobe," the stylist said. Most of the pieces in the current selection feature relaxed silhouettes, items that can appeal to a Baby Boomer and a Millennial at the same time. The democratization of the line is largely due to its wide size range, from XXS to XXL, giving everyone a chance to incorporate something from the line into their wardrobe, Silver said.

"The biggest challenge for brands is knowing how much to produce," he said, adding that the buying team at QVC and the design team at Xcel use QVC's proprietary data on its customer to determine both price point and the appropriate quantity to produce.

"Many of our pieces sell out right away. We had a perforated leather jacket for \$300 that sold out in seven minutes," Silver said. He also said that the QVC customer is very aware of size and fit, most likely due to being used to ordering online or via a televised shopping show "They are more aware of fashion fit than my luxury customer who is buying a \$28,000 dress," he said. The average QVC dress price point for H by Halston is \$68.

Xcel earlier this year also brought to market its updated version of the C. Wonder brand, which it acquired last year for \$12.5 million. Celebrity stylist Brad Goreski is the creative director and on-air personality for the brand at QVC.

The C. Wonder focus has shifted from the preppy look to a mix of the Upper East Side infused with a touch of the bohemian vibe. While clearly aimed at the Millennial, the collection can skew slightly older. At a preview earlier, Goreski said, "The biggest challenge to QVC is helping her step out of her comfort zone. We're teaching her to mix prints, and bring color to her wardrobe."

The two lines attract different fashion customers, and represent a way for QVC to expand its fashion market share. Competitors are trying to find ways to distinguish themselves from each other. Digital commerce firm Evine Live, for example, has made a greater push in the fashion space by focusing on growing its celebrity-fronted brands. Evine added Paula Deen and Vanessa Williams this year, joining the Nancy O'Dell and Karen Fairchild fashion lines the company introduced last year.