



PLANO, Texas (Jan. 8, 2025) — JCPenney and SPARC Group today announced that they have combined to form a new organization, Catalyst Brands, creating an unmatched portfolio of six iconic retail banners that celebrate the essence of American style.

Catalyst Brands brings together SPARC Group’s brands Aéropostale, Brooks Brothers, Eddie Bauer, Lucky Brand and Nautica with JCPenney and its exclusive private brands, including Stafford, Arizona and Liz Claiborne. Catalyst Brands, which has served over 60 million customers over the past three years, has broad consumer reach through a robust distribution network of owned stores, e-commerce sites and wholesale partners.

Catalyst Brands Business Details and Ownership

Catalyst Brands launches with more than \$9 billion of revenue, 1,800 store locations, 60,000 employees and \$1 billion of liquidity and is poised to generate significant strategic and operational value. The combined Catalyst Brands organization is a joint venture formed in an all-equity transaction between JCPenney and SPARC Group, with shareholders Simon Property Group, Brookfield Corporation, Authentic Brands Group and Shein.

In addition, Catalyst Brands has sold the U.S. operations of Reebok and is exploring strategic options for the operations of Forever 21.

Leadership and Organizational Structure

Marc Rosen, formerly the chief executive officer of JCPenney, has become CEO of Catalyst Brands. There are three brand CEOs who will oversee the portfolio that report to Rosen. Michelle Wlazlo, formerly the chief merchandising and supply chain officer of JCPenney, has been promoted to Brand CEO of JCPenney. Natalie Levy continues her role as Brand CEO of Aéropostale, Lucky Brand and Nautica and Ken Ohashi will continue leading Brooks Brothers and has assumed responsibility of Eddie Bauer in his new role as Brand CEO of both brands. Kevin Harper, formerly an executive with Walmart, will join Catalyst Brands as chief operating officer. Marisa Thalberg, formerly the consulting chief marketing and brand officer of JCPenney, has become the chief customer and marketing officer of Catalyst Brands. Additional leadership appointments can be found [here](#).

Catalyst Brands Proposition

“Catalyst Brands brings together the rich heritage of six unique brands with modern energy and a new vision for success. The word ‘catalyst’ reflects our drive to accelerate innovation and energy and amplify the impact of this powerhouse portfolio. Together, we bring scale, expertise and broad appeal to customers across America,” Rosen said. “For us, customers are at the heart of what we do. We have a shared belief that customers deserve fashion and style of great quality for any and every moment in life. We will leverage our resources and best-in-class industry talent to grow our brands further.”

With offerings that include business and formal fashion from Brooks Brothers, casual apparel for teenagers and young adults from Aéropostale, outdoor recreation clothing and gear from Eddie

Bauer to everyday style for every family from JCPenney, and more, Catalyst Brands has expansive reach across market and customer segments. Catalyst Brands will integrate complementary strengths, including strong product design and sourcing capabilities, deep supplier relationships and a growing use of data-driven and AI technology to enhance its supply chain and inventory management capabilities and to deepen consumer relationships.

“Our relationships with more than 60 million customers and the deep data we have create a compelling consumer value proposition across our brands. We can design a more personalized shopping experience, offer unified loyalty and credit card programs, and ultimately, cross-sell more effectively. That’s one example of the many benefits we’ll see in this combination,” continued Rosen. “With a clean balance sheet, we’re in great position to move forward.” Catalyst Brands is headquartered at the current corporate location of JCPenney in Plano, Texas with offices in New York, Los Angeles and Seattle.

ABOUT JCPENNEY

JCPenney is the shopping destination for America’s diverse, working families. With inclusivity at its core, the Company’s product assortment meets customers’ everyday needs and helps them commemorate every special occasion with style, quality and value. JCPenney offers a broad portfolio of fashion, apparel, home, beauty and jewelry from national and private brands and provides personal services including salon, portrait and optical. The Company and its 50,000 associates worldwide serve customers where, when and how they want to shop – from jcp.com to more than 650 stores in the U.S. and Puerto Rico.

In 2022, JCPenney celebrated 120 years as an iconic American brand by continuing its legacy of connecting with customers through shopping and community engagement. Please visit JCPenney’s [Newsroom](#) to learn more and follow JCPenney on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#).

ABOUT SPARC GROUP

SPARC Group is a full-service retail enterprise that drives product and commerce innovation through its multi-brand platform. As a dedicated operating partner for several prominent brands, SPARC delivers quality fashion and lifestyle products with a focus on outstanding customer service. The company operates retail stores, shop-in-shops, and eCommerce platforms in the U.S. while supporting leading wholesale accounts across North America, South America, Europe, and Asia Pacific. The Catalyst Brands transaction does not affect the intellectual property owned by Authentic Brands Group which SPARC Group licenses (Aéropostale, Brooks Brothers, Eddie Bauer, Forever 21, Lucky Brand, and Nautica).

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