

BEAUTY

# Philosophy Opens Wellbeing Workshop

- The store is a sensorial, high-touch environment that's both the brand's first retail concept and flagship store.

BY RACHEL STRUGATZ

**Philosophy's new Wellbeing Workshop** is doing double duty.

The 1,096-square-foot store, which will open Nov. 23, is both the brand's first retail concept and first flagship.

The Wellbeing Workshop, located in Paramus, N.J., is designed as a sensorial, high-touch environment designed to resonate with consumers who not only wish to buy product but also want to "take a deep breath" and relax in between their shopping journeys, according to Marie-Pierre Stark-Flora, global senior vice president at Philosophy.

Similar to how Lululemon has transformed its stores into havens for yoga, meditation and overall wellness for its spandex-clad consumers, Philosophy is taking the same approach. Stark-Flora said that amidst the brand's full range of beauty product – which includes makeup, skin care, fragrance, bath and body and men's – customers can visit the shop for a complete "well-being experi-



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Located at Westfield Garden State Plaza, Stark-Flora said the brand is nestled in a new “prestige luxury aisle” in close proximity to Tiffany & Co., Louis Vuitton, Penhaligon’s and Make Up For Ever.

The company already has a robust wholesale distribution – it’s sold in more than 3,500 doors in the U.S. – but retail is an area Philosophy is turning its focus to. The concept wasn’t developed to live in just one store, maintained Stark-Flora who said the plan is to have a total of three



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stores by the end of 2017. The second Wellbeing Workshop will be in New York, and that target plan is to open one to two stores per year over the next five years.

“The objective is to make it into a really important part of our business eventually. We would, in an ideal world, want to be in multiple cities with the right locations,” Stark-Flora said.

Philosophy does have one freestanding store in Arizona, where the brand was founded two decades ago. But carrying just “basic product offerings,” the Chandler, Ariz., shop neither contains any of the experiential components of the flagship or the wellbeing stance the brand has adopted.

Stark-Flora pointed to the Gratitude Room as one of the store’s highlights.

Inspired by the spirit and landscape of Philosophy’s native Arizona, customers can go to a virtual reality escape corner, put on virtual reality goggles and follow a five-minute guided meditation (by Bernstein) through an Arizona landscape. There’s a Gratitude Wall with a live feed populated with consumer generated content that’s inputted through in-store iPads as well as a Conversation Circle that has a coffee table, arm chairs and sofa to allow for product discovery via iPad or consultation with a Beauty Confidante (the brand’s lingo for sale’s associates).

“Think about an Italian village with a fountain where everyone gathers. It’s the center of a village, and [in the store] store, [there is a] large, beautiful sink where women can use it to play [with] and

experience products,” Stark-Flora said of the shop’s Consultation Table and Sink.

There is also a gift wrapping station, product videos on the walls and an Inspiration Mirror. Mock skylights were even installed in the ceiling to “let in” light that’s “similar to daylight and light of the desert.”

“In beauty, [retail] is a great opportunity [for a brand] to express themselves, but it’s also a place where they can create a unique experience for the consumer, because at the end of the day, especially for younger consumer, the experience is paramount – even more important for them than product. They want to live through a unique experience with a brand they choose,” Stark-Flora said, calling the store and retail in general – “a major growth opportunity for us.”