

Kohls Interview

Jackson Flint

Title

Reasoning

I don't have much time in the day so I need something that works for me. Plus, The first thing I saw from kohls tek gear and flx was the CFO, Tom Kingsbury, saying, "The one area that's negatively impacting us from a trend perspective ... is our active business," Kingsbury said. "We've done well with our own products, Tek Gear and FLX, but the balance of it, we have a lot of work to do in order to turn that business around."

After a 2024 first quarter net loss of 27 million with a majority of it being from the active brands

(Kohl's Sees Opportunity in Activewear Business after \$27 Million Net Loss - Bizwomen, 2024)

Consumer Profile

Who:

Luke McNeil, a 23-year-old student in Springfield, MO.

What:

Luke enjoys activity, like soccer and the gym, but also looks forward to meeting with his friends and family.

Challenges:

Luke faces the issues of, clothing that can meet both activity and casual wear, many brands cost too much, and too much layering to be active and comfortable.

Mood board

AI: I wanted to include this one just because I thought it was funny. We had a huge talk in one of our classes about how AI was the future of design, and we should basically be doing everything with AI. I tried to ask it to use colors for next fall and included the materials I wanted and this is what it came up with.

Real: This is the mood board I created. My idea of Tek Gear and the ideal customer is someone who is more focused on activity than anything. While our consumer, Luke is a student, they need something that covers both their active lifestyle and time with friends and school. The colors included come from WGSN and their active fall trends of 25/26. While there were more colors included, I picked the colors that were more vibrant that I felt also matched Kohl's identity and their current lineup of colors.

Garments

Preface:

Action points

1

Upgrade core programs with value-adding details

Premium details provide upsell opportunities, but there's no need to reinvent the wheel. Look to success stories within your current assortment to find pieces to rework and augment. The market for wardrobe-building items will grow

2

Cater to shoppers' desire for multi-end use products

When consumers are buying into options that will serve various smart and casual situations, help them invest in fewer items that work better. Use our direction to create an assortment relevant to contemporary lifestyles

3

Lean into transseasonal themes

Focus on products that will last consumers several seasons. Interrogate your assortment to ensure the right balance of items that carry over and those that deliver seasonal newness

A1: Focusing on keeping the customers coming back to purchase new items, I think this is a key piece of doing that. With Kohl's, I see it more as the basics of clothing, a safety net if you would. While that seems to be the case, a report done by CNBC, states that Kohl's is one of the most popular retailers of Gen Z and I think that this needs to be hammered in by Tek Gear, (Fonrouge, 2024). With these styles, we are still keeping those Kohl's essentials, but adding those extra touches will really seal the deal with these new consumers.

A2: One part of designing this collection that I kept in mind was having clothes that work with you and not against you. As a student myself, I never have enough time between work and play; therefore, I wanted these products I created to be multifunctional. I think this aligns with Tek Gears brand identity and adds upon it. While I see more garments that are

targeted towards that activewear circle, I see those lifestyle pieces too. I tried to combine these aspects into these garments as I don't want to spend time at the gym, go home, change, then go out to the coffee shop to meet with a friend.

A3: As for the last action point, I know this collection is based around fall seasonal items, but I see some of the pieces being multi-seasonal. Specifically, the vest and windbreaker, I see these items working in both the fall and spring but I will dive into that more.

Another Point: From this article, WGSN mentions that key essentials are always hot as they are essential but need something new. To differentiate, Kohl's should stay on track with their essentials, but add some sort of newness to them. Not basics, essentials.

Garments:

Joggers:

Made from a polyester spandex blend

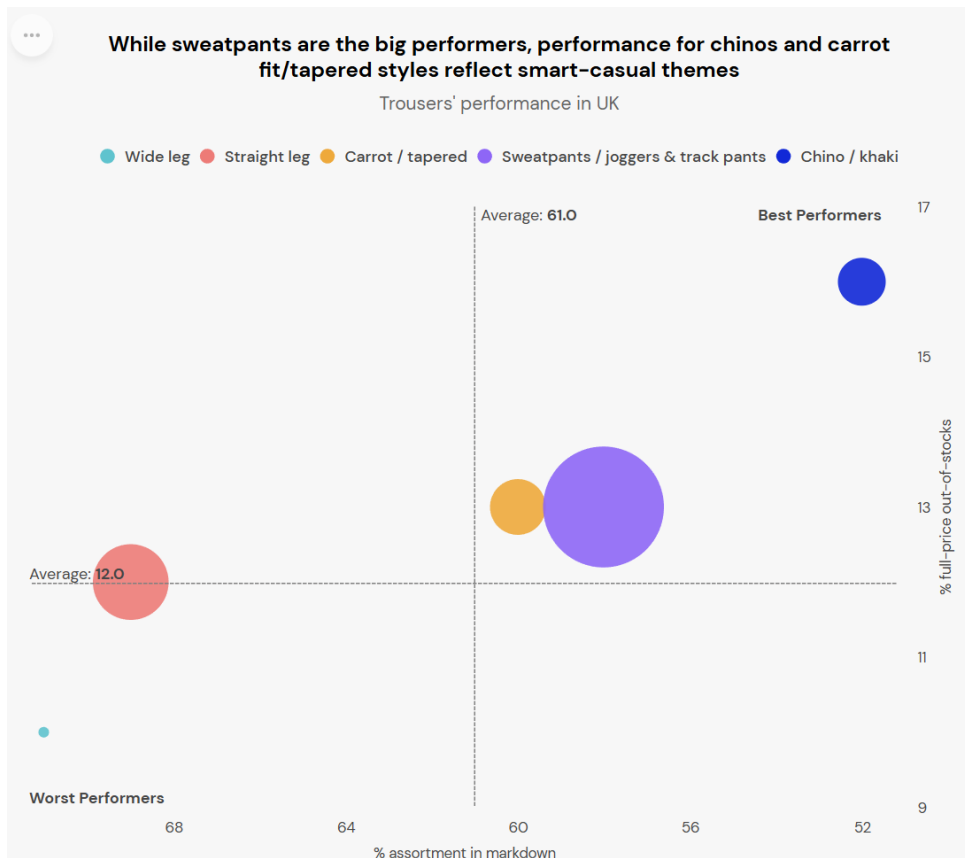
Has an elastic waistband and drawstring for inclusivity and comfortability

Elastic drawcords on the bottom hitting action point one and two

Allows for airflow if needed or trapping heat if colder

Zipper pockets included to keep items in while running or sitting

Can remove zippers for deeper pockets in the event of keeping prices low



Half-Zip:

Made of a Brushed Microfiber Fleece

A total of 134 million searches on TikTok for half-zips, (*Buying Director's Briefing: Men's Key Items A/W 25/26 - WGSN Fashion Design, 2024*)

60% of gen z is on TikTok (Bradian Muliadi, 2020)

Bringing in that Kohl's essential but adding a new spin on it

Having that split bodice with the chance to either color block or black and a pattern on the top half

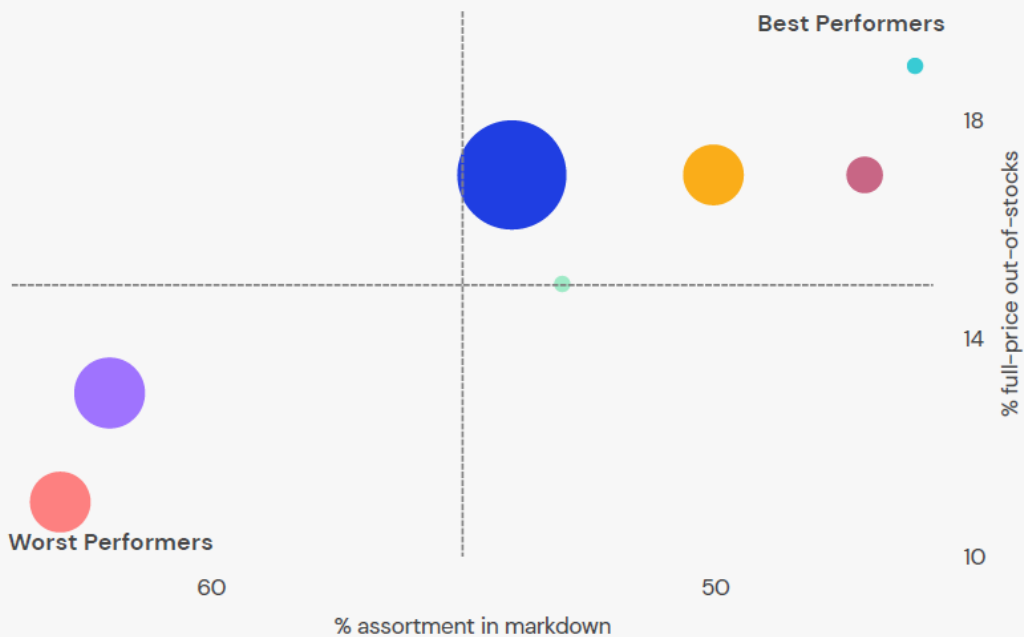
Once again, bringing in those elastic drawcords to keep airflow moving or keeping in heat hitting action point one

Added a pocket on the heart to store items

Heavyweight products underperform, pointing to the relevance of transseasonal items like the T-shirt and polo

Cut & Sew tops' performance in UK

Half zip top Rugby shirt Henley top Sweatshirt Polo shirt
Hoodie Tee / t-shirt



WGSN.com

Puffy Vest:

Made up of a Quilted Nylon with a Synthetic Insulation

Added those zipper pockets to hold items while doing activity

Can take away if cost is too high

Choose a vest over a jacket as it gives that body heat while not restricting the arms

Kohl's has a puffer vest but very plain so adding some new style is key to keeping up

WGSN talks about taking well executed essentials and reimagining them

Hitting a lot on action point three where you can wear this both as the season starts getting colder and while it starts to get warmer in the spring

Windbreaker:

Made of a Lightweight Ripstop Polyester

This product gives Kohl's an opportunity to sell both a jacket and a sweatshirt or the vest

I loved the windbreaker Kohl's offers but can be better

Noticed no tighteners on the hood so I brought those in although that could be due to cost

Added the elastic drawcords on arms and hem to reduce wind catching while running

Or cut down on water getting into the jacket

Thought it could be covered in a wax finish to repel water and stays on track with the sustainability aspect of Kohl's

Hits on all action points



Fabric/Materials Board

Prints:

Just a few prints I made for the brand. I barely saw many prints or graphics on the current Tek Gear garments. I thought it would be a little more exciting for the garments to have prints even if they are barely visible.

First: WGSN states, “Getting closer to nature will become a priority. The growing interest in biometric design informs textures inspired by plant forms, enabling the wearer to blend with their natural surroundings... highlighting the anatomy and structure of plants to inform patterns,”. As an activewear brand, I see that the use of these plant like structured patterns work well with the people that want to be outdoors. Even in situations where they are stuck in a classroom or coffee shop, it still brings something interesting to the outfit.

Second: Also from WGSN, the idea of a soft utility pattern comes into play during the fall 25/26 season. I see that Kohl’s has also picked up on this trend and I wanted to add my own style to it. While it’s sharper than the current state of patterns, I feel that it still incorporates that nature vibe. Representing the jagged rocks, you find trail running and that wooded forest color I think matches well with the brand of Tek Gear.



<https://www.wgsn.com/fashion/article/65f01c86a4a12b45edc200f6>

Fabrics:

First: The first fabric here is more of a base layer for the garments. Something people can wear outdoors without needing a jacket making any activity easier and better. This fabric specifically is [Polartec](#)’s Delta fabric. This fabric amplifies the body's natural cooling

response with a mint-based deodorizing finish to eliminate metal-containing additives. With this, I see the idea of the Tek Gears ideal customer wearing this for their morning run and then hitting the coffee shop right after. It's also made from recycled polyester and sustainable lyocell which falls in line with Kohls sustainability impact.

(<https://www.wgsn.com/fashion/article/651dd4129d6bfc1e45f6b29>)

Second: This second fabric comes from Align Textiles and it is more focused on that halfzip, lightweight sweatshirt. This fabric is a 4-way stretch knit with a waffle texture. This fabric keeps in warmth using the closed loop fibers without. Using sea wool and garment recycled polyesters, the fabric is very sustainable. The color also comes from pre- and post- consumer garment waste, which eliminates the need for chemical dyes.

(<https://www.wgsn.com/fashion/article/651dd4129d6bfc1e45f6b29>)

Lightweight Ripstop Polyester

Ideal for: Windbreaker

Why? Durable, water-resistant, and windproof while staying lightweight and packable. Possibly use DWR finish or wax.

Polyester-Spandex French Terry

Ideal for: Joggers

Why? Soft on the skin, stretchy, and moisture-wicking for comfort during activity.

Brushed Microfiber Fleece

Ideal for: Half-Zip

Why? Warm, lightweight, and breathable, with a soft inner surface for comfort.

Quilted Nylon

Ideal for: Vest

Why? Combines warmth with a sleek, lightweight profile perfect for layering. Possible looking at Synthetic Insulation (Polyfill)

Materials:

Zippers: an easy pick for the closures of the garments. They keep all the consumers items stuffed inside without having to worry about losing them. I like the idea of metal zippers as they are in, with a brushed metal effect, and communicate high quality but plastic would work for costs.

Drawstring: Mainly used for the joggers waistband or the hood of the windbreaker.

(Buying Director's Briefing: Men's Key Items A/W 25/26 - WGSN Fashion Design, 2024)

References

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Garments:

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