



Glossy's Weekly Recap

Exploring the week's biggest beauty and fashion stories.

📧 Weekly newsletter



The Toccin guide to a strong brand launch

Hi, and welcome to Glossy's Weekly Recap, where Glossy editor-in-chief Jill Manoff breaks down the industry conversation that ruled the week and highlights five of the latest must-read Glossy stories. Sign up [here](#) to get Glossy's daily, in-depth coverage on the businesses of beauty and fashion in your inbox every weekday morning.

Since launching in September 2019, contemporary womenswear brand Toccin has been in growth mode.

For example, accelerated by the pandemic, it's expanded from strictly selling workwear to creating styles for every aspect of its customers' lives. And it now sells in retailers including Saks, in addition to its original partners of Neiman Marcus and Rent the Runway. In 2023, the founders and sole company owners Michael and Alex Toccin built out their team to 16 members, with hires including a director of e-commerce. And their plan for 2024 is to grow the overall business by 136%, in part by relying on trusty "old school" strategies like hosting trunk shows.

Michael Toccin's dream is to make Toccin "the next Ralph Lauren," he told Glossy. Below are three steps he and Alex Toccin took to give their brand a strong start out of the gate.

Gain experience

Alex Toccin: "We met as college freshmen. And when we graduated from George Washington University, we both moved to New York and pursued our careers in fashion. Michael went to Parsons — they have a graduate program that he did. And I went and got my hands right into PR. And then ... we switched. He went and worked for brands like Oscar de la Renta and Diane von Furstenberg, and I went to Parsons — because we both knew that it was the best way for us to excel in the fashion industry: to not only be educated about it, but also get experience in it. And so, once I graduated, we both spent about a decade getting experience. I worked for Ralph Lauren, Theory and a high-end jewelry brand, and Michael worked for a company called Kaufman Franco for about 10 years. And we both got our hands wet and learned everything about fashion, from merchandising to styling to sales to marketing. And we felt like it was so critical for us to get that experience and understand the customer before we decided to start our own business."

Build a community

Michael Toccin: "We created a [shared] social media platform, with the handle "Stylists to a T." And we were telling women what to wear, how to wear it and where to buy it. And from there, I always knew the only way to grow was to create a product. The voice of our followers and our customer base enabled and allowed us to say exactly what they were looking for when we [decided to reconnect with our contacts] in the industry. And that's how Toccin was born."

Leverage data

Alex Toccin: "Parsons had drilled into both of our minds that you start with one product and then you can expand into other categories. So based on our audience and [retail partner feedback], we were able to jump into the opportunity to create dresses for women to wear for work. ... And right out of the gate, we started doing trunk shows to get in front of our customers to see how they wear things, how they touch and feel [products], and what their feedback was."

Michael Toccin: "Rent the Runway was our first partner and told us what they were looking for, because I had a very strong relationship with the founder and chief merchant officer. The [latter was] like, 'We really need wear-to-work dresses.' And that's what put the company in business. We are one of their top five vendors today. We also have a private label collection with them through their Collective program, which is Tossin x RTR Collective."