

## Exclusive interview: Huda Kattan talks Shilla Duty Free partnership



Huda Beauty chose The Shilla Duty Free as one of its key strategic business partners for penetrating the Asian market and the launch was immediately mutually successful despite the timing and implications of COVID-19

This past June marked the newly celebrated partnership between The Shilla Duty Free and global beauty brand Huda Beauty. The brick-and-mortar store is first of its kind, making The Shilla Duty Free the world's first duty free store to house the brand. Huda Beauty, which has been focusing on the North American and Middle Eastern markets, has chosen The Shilla Duty Free as its partner as a strategy to increase its presence in the Asian market.



This is no small feat. Huda Kattan (Pictured on right) is Founder and CEO of Huda Beauty, a name synonymous with beauty on all digital platforms. Kattan was named one of the 25 Most Influential People on the Internet by *TIME* Magazine and Digital Innovator of the Year by *Women's Wear Daily*, and is proud to have one of the fastest growing beauty brands worldwide. Today, her company's Instagram account is one of the most followed beauty brands on Instagram with over 45 million followers, while her Huda Beauty YouTube channel has garnered over 4 million subscribers.

In an exclusive interview with *Americas, Asia, Gulf-Africa Duty Free*, we ask Kattan how she feels a business that thrives on a digital platform translates to a more tradition platform like duty free?

"Duty free is typically thought of as very traditional but that's why we chose to partner with Shilla," explains Kattan. "They offer duty free shopping in their brick-and-mortar stores, but they also operate<sub>2</sub>

online as well. We have high expectations of bringing the brand to life in-store and online with Shilla, a partner that values and appreciates our social/digital nature and wants to work with us to translate what that means for travel retail.”

The Americas and Gulf-Africa are especially strong markets for Huda Beauty. Entering the duty free market was a strategic move for the beauty mogul as she looks at this opportunity not only as a means of expanding within Korea and as a new environment for its products, but also doing this to increase its exposure within China and other key APAC countries that heavily rely on duty free shopping.

### **The customer is a thing of beauty**

Huda Beauty’s next step to penetrating the Asian market was choosing the right partner. The Shilla Duty Free is one of the largest duty free partners in Korea and Asia, and understands the value of customer service — making it an ideal fit for the brand.

Says Kattan: “Their focus on the consumer was the ultimate driving factor for working with them. Our brand was built on a strong sense of community and we saw that as a priority for Shilla too. Shilla is also known for its detailed and seamless shopping experience with their innovative Tipping App, which made us more naturally inclined to choose Shilla as our partner in Korea. It was really just a perfect match on both sides.”

Huda Beauty understands that travel retail is an incredibly impactful channel for its brand — one that will continue to increase its share of voice in the global marketplace, broadening its reach to new audiences outside of the social and digital world, creating new moments within the consumer journey for the Huda Beauty consumer.

This new step into the uncharted world of duty free is coupled with excitement and a desire to learn. Huda Beauty will continue to monitor the best-selling SKUs, the trends in the marketplace and what might be missing, to understand the void it can fill in the market.

“But first, we have to introduce them to who we are and get them to fall in love with the product. We need to form a relationship with the market so we can profoundly understand their needs and meet them on a granular level. We’ll definitely get there,” enthuses Kattan.