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How Southern Living is going about brand extensions, from community to retail and more

• [Jessica Patterson](#)

| 13th Jun 2017 | MagWorld

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Time Inc.'s **Southern Living** celebrates life in the Southern US, covering the best in food, home, garden and travel. It has a variety of print, digital, mobile, and product licensing and events. Here we take a look at how Southern Living goes about extending the brand.

On Memorial Day weekend in the US, Southern Living **launched two branded retail stores**. The new stores opened in Destin, Florida and Huntsville, Alabama, and feature items from Southern artists and producers, with space for fashion, beauty, food, home décor and gardening. The new stores carry Southern Living-branded items, too.



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“Our consumers love experiential retail,” said **Kristen Payne**, vice president of licensing and brand development at Time Inc. “This weekend we opened our first store in Alabama – there was a line of 100 people waiting to get in 45 minutes before doors opened.”

There are lots of Southern Living readers in Florida, according to Payne, which made it a prime location to open a new store. “Part of the key to our success is opening stores where the brand is the strongest and offering regional merchandise,” she said.

But Southern Living’s retail stores are but one interesting example of how the brand looks at brand extensions.

“Each extension speaks to what’s important to Southerners – whether that’s a community showcasing the best of southern architecture and craftsmanship or plants designed specifically for the southern climate that bloom earlier, longer and bigger, Payne said.

Southern Living has products and extensions for all its key brand pillars in food, garden and travel, Payne said. “We have a home collection offering more than 300 exclusive products from bedding, bath to furniture at Dillard’s going into its fourth year; a branded line of garden and landscape plants sold at Home Depot, Lowes and more than 15,000 independent garden retailers; an array of food products at Winn Dixie, Kroger and more,” she said.

There is also a Southern Living Hotel Collection, Southern Living House Plans and a line of Southern Living Inspired Communities, part of a collection of neighbourhoods marked by Southern spirit and lifestyle, which feature the best of Southern Living-inspired architecture.

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As Payne explained, Inspired Communities, House Plans and SL at Dillard’s bring the brand to life. “Each product, community and house plan has been either designed by SL or vetted extensively to ensure the products and communities look, feel and perform like the products we show in every issue. Authenticity is key to our success in products or brand extensions.”

The key to these brand extensions, according to Payne, comes down to the audience the brand serves. “The notion of our consumer for “all things Southern Living” are the key to our success,” she explained.

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The passion of our consumer for all things Southern Living are the key to our success, she explained. “They have trusted us for 50 years to do our homework. We know that our products must be attainable, must be rooted in southern culture, must be authentic and of the best quality.”

Payne suggested for publishers looking to expand their range of brand extensions, to never follow trends. “Set them,” she said. “Take the time to be authentic and only create products and experiences worthy of your brand.”

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