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# Abercrombie & Fitch

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**Abercrombie & Fitch** (IPA: /æbəkrɒmbiː ənd ˈfɪtʃ/) (NYSE: ANF (<http://www.nyse.com/about/listed/anf.html>)) (A&F) is an American clothing retailer. Marketed as a lifestyle brand, the company encompasses five brands: the namesake flagship brand Abercrombie & Fitch, abercrombie kids, Hollister Co., RUEHL No.925, and Gilly Hicks. Stores operate in the United States, Canada, and England. Competitor brands include Gap, American Eagle Outfitters, Aéropostale, Buckle, Urban Outfitters, and Rugby Ralph Lauren.<sup>[6]</sup>

Founded in 1892 by David T. Abercrombie, A&F had been an outfitter of sporting and excursion goods. It struggled financially from the late 1960s until it was purchased by The Limited in 1988 and repositioned, under the management of Michael S. Jeffries (current Chairman & CEO), as the "Casual Luxury" lifestyle brand in present day.<sup>[7]</sup>

Prominent figures who patronized the company in its excursion goods days include Teddy Roosevelt,<sup>[8]</sup> Amelia Earhart,<sup>[8][9]</sup> John French Sloan,<sup>[10]</sup> Greta Garbo,<sup>[8]</sup> Katharine Hepburn,<sup>[8]</sup> Clark Gable,<sup>[8]</sup> Cole Porter,<sup>[8]</sup> John Steinbeck,<sup>[11]</sup> Ernest Hemingway (who is said to have bought the gun he used to commit suicide at Abercrombie & Fitch Co.),<sup>[12]</sup> John F. Kennedy,<sup>[13]</sup> Robert Peary,<sup>[13]</sup> Duke of Windsor,<sup>[13]</sup> Ernest Shackleton,<sup>[13]</sup> and Dwight Eisenhower.<sup>[13]</sup>

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## History

### Foundation

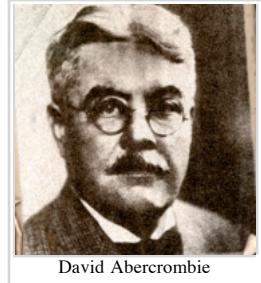
See also: *David Abercrombie and Ezra Fitch*

### Abercrombie & Fitch Co. brand

## Abercrombie & Fitch

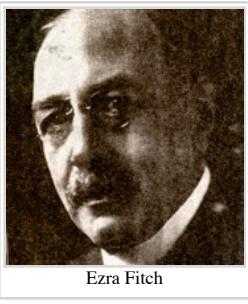
<b>Type</b>	Public (NYSE: ANF ( <a href="http://www.nyse.com/about/listed/anf.html">http://www.nyse.com/about/listed/anf.html</a> ))
<b>Establishment</b>	June 4, 1892 <sup>[1]</sup>
<b>Headquarters</b>	Home office: New Albany, Ohio, United States International office: Milan, Italy <sup>[2][3]</sup>
<b>Key people</b>	David Abercrombie, Founder Ezra Fitch, Co-Founder Michael S. Jeffries, Chairman & CEO
<b>Industry</b>	Retail
<b>Apparel type</b>	A&F / ANF / AF
<b>Initials</b>	 A&F
<b>Logo</b>	
<b>Theme</b>	
<b>Color scheme</b>	Grayscale
<b>Areas served</b>	 United States  Canada  United Kingdom
<b>Store locations</b>	A&F brand: 357 in-mall / 3 flagships <sup>[4]</sup> Entire Co. stores: 1081 <sup>[4]</sup>
<b>Other brands</b>	See A&F brands below
<b>Revenue</b>	 \$3.749 Billion (2007)
<b>Net income</b>	 \$422.19 Million (2006) <sup>[5]</sup>
<b>Employees</b>	94,600 (2007)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.abercrombie.com">www.abercrombie.com</a> ( <a href="http://www.abercrombie.com/anf/index.html">http://www.abercrombie.com/anf/index.html</a> )

The company was originally established as **Abercrombie Co.** by David T. Abercrombie on June 4, 1892, as a small waterfront shop at No.36 South Street in downtown Manhattan, New York. Wealthy New York lawyer Ezra Fitch was one of his regular customers.<sup>[1]</sup> In 1900, Fitch left his law practice and bought a major share into the growing company, thus becoming the co-founder. Abercrombie Co. later moved into larger quarters at 314 Broadway, and Fitch began to implement experimental ideas to renovate the store.<sup>[1]</sup> In 1904, Fitch's surname was incorporated and so the official name was changed to **Abercrombie & Fitch Co.** Partnership between the founders did not end well. The two men, envisioning different ideas for the future of A&F, quarreled frequently while the company continued to grow. Fitch wished to expand the company's appeal to the general public, whereas Abercrombie wanted to continue selling professional gear to professional outdoorsmen.<sup>[14]</sup> As a result, Abercrombie sold his share in the company to Fitch in 1907 and returned to manufacturing outdoor goods.<sup>[15]</sup> Fitch continued the business with other partners and directed the company as he pleased.



David Abercrombie

### The Fitch years



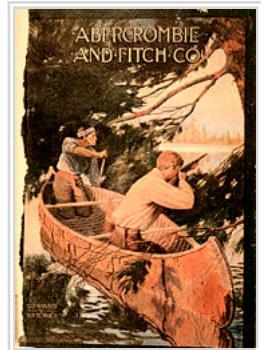
Ezra Fitch

Ezra Fitch wanted his store to have an ambient, outdoor atmosphere. His strategy to expand the company included the creation of a mail-order catalog. In 1909, Abercrombie & Fitch Co. mailed over 50,000 copies of its 456 page catalog worldwide (a staggering and costly amount of publication at that time, each cost a dollar to produce).<sup>[6]</sup> The catalog featured outdoor clothing, camping gear, articles, and advice columns. The cost of the catalog nearly bankrupted the company, but the catalog proved to be a profitable marketing device. Within the store, the catalog was available to customers for free. By 1910, the company became the first store in New York to supply clothing to women as well as men.<sup>[15]</sup> In 1913, after moving into Reade Street, which was not a convenient shopping location for women, the store relocated to a more fashionable and easily accessible midtown address near Fifth Avenue at 55/57 West 36th Street, expanding its inventory to include sportswear.<sup>[1]</sup> In 1917, the store moved again into a twelve-story building at the corner of Madison Avenue and East 45th Street.<sup>[1]</sup>

The store occupied the entire available space (12 stories).

The Madison Avenue store included many different amenities. The basement roomed a shooting range while on the mezzanine (main floor) and paraphernalia for skiing, archery, skin-diving, and lawn games. The second through fifth floors were reserved for clothing that was suitable for different climate or terrains. On the sixth floor, there was a picture gallery, a bookstore (focused on sporting themes), a watch repair facility and a golf school (fully equipped with a resident professional). The seventh floor included a gun room, stuffed game heads, about hundreds of shot guns and rifles, and a dog and cat kennel.<sup>[1]</sup> The eighth floor contained fishing, camping, and boating equipments and included a desk that belonged to a fly-and bait-casting instructor who gave lessons at the pool, which was located on the roof. The fishing section of the store alone was stocked with over 48,000 flies and over 18,000 fishing lures.<sup>[1]</sup>

Abercrombie & Fitch Co. became the first American store to import Mahjong.<sup>[16]</sup> Ezra Fitch imported the game after a female customer looked for the game that she had played in China. He went to China for the game and translated the instructions into English. Mahjong became a fast selling product, and Abercrombie & Fitch became the epicenter of the Mahjong craze.<sup>[6]</sup> The company sent emissaries to Chinese villages to buy as many Mahjong sets as possible and eventually sold over 12,000 sets. In 1927, Abercrombie & Fitch outfitted Charles Lindbergh for his historic flight across the Atlantic Ocean.<sup>[17]</sup> By then, the company began to attract a few prominent figures.<sup>[18]</sup>



Cover of A&amp;F catalog from 1909.



Inside the 1909 catalog.

### Post-Ezra Fitch Era

In 1928, Fitch retired from the company and sold his shares to his brother-in-law, James S. Cobb.<sup>[15]</sup> Soon Cobb became president and Otis L. Guernsey, an employee of the store, became vice president.<sup>[6]</sup> Cobb acquired for the company Von Lengerke & Detmold and Von Lengerke & Antoine (the Chicago branch). Von Lengerke & Detmold was a well-respected company in New York (maker of fine European-made sporting guns and fishing tackle) which specified in the same industry as Abercrombie & Fitch. Cobb also acquired another gunsmith company, Griffin & Howe, and both Von Lengerke & Detmold/Griffin & Howe merchandise were placed in stock in the Madison Avenue store.<sup>[6]</sup> At this point A&F also provided equipment for polo, golf, and tennis.<sup>[6]</sup> By 1929, net sales was reported at \$6.3 million USD with an income of \$548,000 USD.<sup>[6]</sup>

During the Great Depression, the company's revenue decreased, with sales plunging towards \$2,598,925 in 1933. A&F recovered in the following years and resumed paying dividends in 1938.<sup>[6]</sup> During the year, sales from guns accounted for 40% of total sales at the Madison Avenue store.<sup>[6]</sup> Clothing, shoes, and furnishings accounted for 45%, while inventory was valued at about 40% of annual sales (reflecting A&F's readiness to meet customer demands).<sup>[6]</sup> 10% of the business was credited towards the catalogue mail orders.<sup>[6]</sup> Abercrombie & Fitch Co. continued to expand. In 1939, it adopted the slogan, "The Greatest Sporting Goods Store in the World".<sup>[6]</sup> It offered a massive collection of firearms, fishing flies to accompany rods, reels, and other fishing tackle.<sup>[6]</sup>

The highest record for net profit was \$682,894 in 1947.<sup>[6]</sup> Abercrombie & Fitch opened a store in San Francisco in 1958 and soon opened small winter-only stores in Palm Beach, Florida and Sarasota, Florida, and summer stores in Bay Head, New Jersey, and Southampton, New York.<sup>[6]</sup> Guernsey then succeeded Cobb as president.<sup>[6]</sup> With so many locations now under operations by Abercrombie & Fitch, the Madison Avenue store remained as the Flagship store.<sup>[6]</sup>

In 1960, net sales rose to \$16.5 million, but the net profit fell for the fourth straight year to \$185,649.<sup>[6]</sup> By 1961, net sales dropped to \$15.5 million USD, and net profit to \$124,097 USD. The new president and successor of Guernsey, John H. Ewing, paid little attention to the decline in sales.<sup>[6]</sup> Throughout the 1960s, A&F opened locations in Colorado Springs, San malls in Short Hills, New Jersey (1963), Bal Harbour, Florida (1966), Troy, Michigan (1969).<sup>[6]</sup> It also opened small shops in other stores.<sup>[6]</sup>

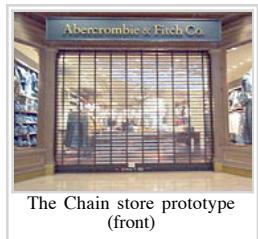
Abercrombie and Fitch held a warehouse sale in 1968 and early 1970 and presented offbeat newspaper advertisements that reflected a measure of desperation.<sup>[6]</sup> Abercrombie & Fitch continued to drop in revenue and reported a loss of about US\$500,000 in its previous fiscal year. Noticing the effect that the ads and sale-days had upon the Abercrombie & Fitch customer base, the next president William Humphreys, a former Lord & Taylor executive, halted the measures.<sup>[6]</sup> He focused on A&F's inventory control and credit practices by cutting the company's budget.<sup>[6]</sup> He changed the store design to present a different image, expanded into the suburbs, and opened a location in Oak Brook, Illinois in 1972.<sup>[6]</sup> The changes did not improve sales performance and the company continued to decline financially under Humphreys and his successor Hal Haskell, who was a major stockholder of the company.<sup>[6]</sup> After losing \$1 million USD in 1975, Abercrombie & Fitch Co. filed for chapter 11 bankruptcy in August 1976 and finally closed doors in November 1977.<sup>[19]</sup>

Oshman's, a sporting goods retailer, acquired Abercrombie & Fitch Co. in 1978 for \$1.5 million.<sup>[20]</sup> It opened an Abercrombie & Fitch store in 1979 in Beverly Hills, California, and another in Dallas, Texas, which was bigger and sported \$40,000 USD elephant guns and an "Abercrombie Runabout sports convertible" worth \$20,775 USD.<sup>[6]</sup> Stores continued to open in South Street Seaport and Trump Tower and catered towards contemporary interests of golf, exercise, and tennis.<sup>[6]</sup> Clothing collections for men and women carried business and casual dress, and sportswear.<sup>[6]</sup> *Forbes* described the merchandise as "a hodgepodge of unrelated items" and that "sometimes it is better to bury the dead than to try reviving them." Abercrombie & Fitch continued to struggle as Oshman's struggled itself to develop a strong identity for the company.<sup>[1]</sup>

## 1988 through 1999: Revival of Abercrombie & Fitch

*See also: Abercrombie Kids and A&F Quarterly*

In 1988, Limited Brands acquired the ailing company for \$47 million after having success in popularizing Express and Victoria's Secret.<sup>[21]</sup> Headquarters was moved to Columbus, Ohio, and all inventory was cleared out.<sup>[6]</sup> The new president of Abercrombie & Fitch, Sally Frame-Kasaks placed a strong emphasis on apparel.<sup>[20]</sup> Michael S. Jeffries, a clothing executive, took over as president in 1992.<sup>[22][23]</sup> He popularized the brand to a teen apparel merchandiser from an ailing sports brand. He believed that focusing the A&F brand towards the American teen market would be financially beneficial as that sector of retail economy was said to be growing at a record rate at the time.<sup>[24]</sup>



The Chain store prototype  
(front)

The new Abercrombie & Fitch reopened shortly after with a preppy outdoors image reminiscent of the company's original roots. Chain store prototypes were opened in upscale malls nationwide targeting teenagers and college students.<sup>[24]</sup> He desired to have Bruce Weber, known for his sexual beefcake photography, as the photographer for the brand, but could not do so until the company gained financial success. The apparel consisted of woven shirts, denim, miniskirts, cargo shorts, wool sweaters, polo shirts, and t-shirts. Its prices were unprecedentedly high in the teen apparel industry.<sup>[24]</sup> Sales rose \$85 million in 1992, \$111 million in 1993, and to \$165 million in 1994.<sup>[6][25]</sup> 49 stores were opened by 1994, 67 January 1995, and a 102 was aimed by the end of 1995.<sup>[6]</sup> In 1994, new records for merchandise margin rate and profitability were established by Abercrombie & Fitch for its parent, The Limited.<sup>[24]</sup> To maintain popularity and to keep up with teen trends, Jeffries hired executives to keep up on popular teenage clothing, music, and entertainment.<sup>[24]</sup>



Side view

By the mid-1990s, there were dozens of Abercrombie & Fitch stores in the United States.<sup>[26]</sup> On September 26, 1996, The Limited, Inc. took Abercrombie & Fitch public on the New York Stock Exchange with the ticker symbol "ANF" and with the per share offering as \$16.<sup>[27]</sup> In late 1990s, the company introduced the "Canoe store prototype" to accommodate its growth. The new canoe store prototype was strikingly different from the Chain store prototype; it bore white molding, navy awnings, metal glass doors, and was divided into five rooms. The first canoe store opened in June 1996 in Chesterfield, Missouri. From then, the company began to opt building stores only averaging between 8,000 to 20,000 square feet (700 to 2,000 m<sup>2</sup>) in high-volume retail centers around the country.



The Canoe prototype adopted in the late 1990s. This version is still used for modern abercrombie kids stores with some alterations.

In 1997, Abercrombie & Fitch launched *A&F Quarterly*. The publication included photography, interviews and articles about sex, pop culture, and other teen interests.<sup>[24]</sup> In 1998, the company introduced its first subsidiary, abercrombie. The concept was designed as the Abercrombie & Fitch for a younger clientele between the ages on 7-14. By the next year, Abercrombie & Fitch became a part of a lawsuit on the behalf of Saipan garment workers. Many brands were charged with responsibility for sweatshop conditions, including Abercrombie & Fitch.<sup>[28]</sup> Revenue recorded for Abercrombie & Fitch at the end of fiscal 1998 was at \$805.2 million USD. By 1998, Abercrombie & Fitch went became an independent company, and Mike Jeffries assumed the position of Chairman and Chief Executive Officer.<sup>[22]</sup> As the brand regained its prominence, industry analysts began to speculate how long Abercrombie and Fitch would be able to retain its popularity.<sup>[24]</sup>

The Company filed a lawsuit against American Eagle in 1999, claiming trademark violations, but the case was dismissed after the judge concluded that "clothing style and image are not copyrightable."<sup>[24]</sup> Analysts predicted that A&F would fall from popularity, but sales continued escalating after a provocative Christmas 1999 in which the *A&F Quarterly* issue of the season features sexually explicit content that drew angry complaints.<sup>[24]</sup> In 1999, the A&F also launched "A&F TV", which featured young people engaged in sports and leisure activities. A&F TV was originally developed to run on cable television and on monitors in Abercrombie & Fitch stores. It was soon removed. Revenue for fiscal 1999 is was at ▲ \$1.030 billion USD.

The overall approach of Abercrombie & Fitch, by the end of the decade, to its customers seemed to please male shoppers more than females, who shopped more frequently at competitor shops.<sup>[24]</sup> Throughout the 1990s, Abercrombie & Fitch Co. enjoyed sales of over ▲\$400/ft<sup>2</sup> (▲\$4300/m<sup>2</sup>). By December 1999, Abercrombie & Fitch operated a total of 212 stores nationwide.<sup>[29]</sup>

## 2000 to today: expansion and growth

*See also: Hollister Co., RUEHL No.925, and Gilly Hicks*



Entering into the 21st century, Abercrombie & Fitch was rated as the sixth most popular brand before Nintendo and Levi's by teenagers.<sup>[30]</sup> The company introduced its third brand Hollister Co. in July 2000. The third concept was based on Southern California surf lifestyle, and was targeted towards high school students. After Hollister lowered the revenue of Abercrombie and Fitch, the company launched the *Ezra Fitch* collection, and began producing A&F clothing with higher grade materials, increasing the prices. In 2001, the company moved into a new 300-acre (1.2 km<sup>2</sup>) home office in New Albany, Ohio. Headquarters were further expanded by 2003.<sup>[1][31]</sup> Also in 2003, the company released its last issue of *A&F Quarterly* after mounting lawsuits and complaints.

After successfully launching Hollister, the company introduced its fourth brand RUEHL No.925 for older consumers, 22 through 35, on September 24, 2004.<sup>[32]</sup> Revenue continued to escalate as sales are reported at \$2.021 billion for 2004. In November 2005, the company completed construction of the first Abercrombie & Fitch flagship store on Fifth Avenue. By this time, the company began to use its trademark *Casual Luxury* for promotion.

Abercrombie & Fitch began its Canadian expansion in January 2006 when the company opened two Abercrombie & Fitch stores and three Hollister Co. stores in Toronto and Edmonton.<sup>[33]</sup> By fall 2006, a third Canadian Abercrombie & Fitch store opened in the Toronto Eaton Centre. Revenue reported for 2006 is \$3.318 billion, an increase of over \$1.297 billion from 2005.

Early in 2007, the Canoe store prototype was revamped to include louvers for a darker atmosphere. The cost for the upgrade on A&F stores was about \$10 million.<sup>[34]</sup> The company spent another \$40 million on upgrading fixtures, flooring, and sound systems in all four brands.<sup>[34]</sup> On March 22, 2007 Abercrombie & Fitch opened its first European flagship store in London at 7 Burlington Gardens at Savile Row.<sup>[35]</sup> The store generated a volume of \$280,000 (around £140,000 GBP) in its first 6 hours of operation.<sup>[13][36]</sup> The flagship remains one of the most profitable A&F locations. Revenue reached record heights in 2007 with an overall sales of \$3.749 billion.

On January 21, 2008, Abercrombie & Fitch introduced its fifth concept, Gilly Hicks: Sydney.<sup>[37]</sup> In April 2008, A&F relaunched *A&F Quarterly* for release in the UK flagship.<sup>[38][39]</sup>

## Management and marketing

### Corporate officials

The following are the top corporate officials of Abercrombie & Fitch Co.<sup>[40]</sup>

- Michael S. Jeffries - Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Jefferies has held this position since the 1990s. He has renovated the brand and oversees all aspects of the company.
- Diane Chang - Executive Vice President of Sourcing
- Leslee K. Herro - Executive Vice President of Planning and Allocation
- David S. Cupps - Senior Vice President, Sec. and General Counsel
- Thomas D. Lennox - Head of Corporate Communications

Michael W. Kramer, CFO, has resigned. New CFO has yet to be announced.

### Stores

The modern Canoe store prototype features white molding and louvers on the exterior. The main marketing image lies against the front wall facing the entrance. The interiors are highlighted with dim ceiling-lights and spot lighting. Distinguishable aspects are the lingering scent of an A&F fragrance, and the blasting electronic dance music. An undercover inspection which measured the noise levels in teen stores in a randomly selected mall, revealed that the noise level in Hollister, Abercrombie & Fitch, and Abercrombie kids stores was as loud as 90 decibels, comparable to heavy construction machinery noise and harmful to the ears. However, 80 decibels is the corporate store policy sound level.<sup>[41]</sup>

There are a few remaining chain store design which feature plaid carpeting and preppy wallpaper. The company operates 1,035 stores across all five brands. The A&F brand holds over 353<sup>[42]</sup> locations nationwide the United States, three in Canada, and one in London. Three flagship stores are located on Fifth Avenue in New York City, within The Grove in Los Angeles, and at Savile Row in London.



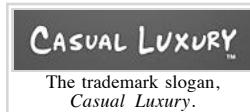
The Modern Canoe with wooden louvers (featuring the Spring Break 2007 marketing campaign picture).

### Employment

The company uses brand representatives for customer service within the stores. For years, the representatives were required to wear only Abercrombie & Fitch apparel until such regulations loosened after lawsuits. The "Impact Team" was created in 2004 to control merchandise within each store and maintain company standards. "Visual managers" are responsible for standardizing the store visually. Forms, lighting, photo marketing, fragrance presentations and brand representatives complying with the "look policy" are key aspects of the position.<sup>[43]</sup> Only higher volume stores have this position.

Lawsuits have been placed against the company in the past years due to discriminatory employment practices. In 2004, the company was involved in a lawsuit, *Gonzalez vs. Abercrombie & Fitch* (see *Controversy and Criticism* below), for giving desirable positions to white applicants. After settling out of court, the company established a branch to seek minority employees.<sup>[44]</sup>

### Advertising



Abercrombie & Fitch markets through means of sensual photographs in grayscale. The photographer of the advertisements is Bruce Weber, who is known for his sexual photography for Calvin Klein and Polo Ralph Lauren.<sup>[45]</sup> Photography is normally shot with a beach or Adirondack backdrop. Models and the photos pertaining to them were previewed seasonally on "A&F New Faces", a previous feature on abercrombie.com. After only featuring select photography, it was renamed "Photo Gallery". "A&F Casting" was introduced in place of "A&F New Faces" to advertise and to give information on being cast for marketing campaigns. The company only casts "brand reps" (store associates) for campaigns.



The official logo of Abercrombie & Fitch is the gray moose.

Matt Ratliff, the model during the Christmas 2005 season, has appeared in numerous advertisements for the brand including Ezra Fitch, cologne Proof, and gift cards.

## Merchandise

The company uses trademark *Casual Luxury* to promote the brand. The slogan is defined as using "the finest cashmere, pima cottons, and highest quality leather to create the ultimate in casual, body conscious clothing."<sup>[46]</sup> "Implementing and/or incorporating time honored machinery and techniques (as antique denim looms and handcrafted tear and wear) in order to produce the most exclusive denim ever created" is also a meaning of *Casual Luxury* among many others.<sup>[46]</sup>

The brand carries colognes Fierce and Cologne 41, and perfumes 8, Classic, and Perfume 41. Released at the same time, Fierce and 8 and Cologne41 and Perfume 41 are marketed to compliment one another. High-end fragrances Ezra Fitch (cologne) and Ezra parfum were described as the embodiment of "the Abercrombie & Fitch heritage," until they were discontinued. Cologne Proof was released in Christmas 2006 to be removed a year later. Perfumes Ready is also among the retired fragrances.

Fierce and 8 are the most heavily marketed fragrances as they are the signature scents of the brand overall.<sup>[47]</sup>

## Other A&F brands

A&F currently has four other concepts apart from its namesake, Abercrombie & Fitch. While referred to as subsidiaries, the brands do not operate separately contrary to the definition; all brands are completely managed under the same Abercrombie & Fitch workforce. Abercrombie & Fitch Co. holds full rights and ownership to every trademark of the following brands.

Name	Consumer age target	Slogan	Logo	Description
abercrombie kids	preteens, 7 through 14	classic cool	The a92 navy Moose	Children's version of Abercrombie & Fitch. Uses blue (against the A&F gray), blasts music from young artists, and spells marketing trademarks all-lowercase.
Hollister Co.	Teenagers, 14 through 18	So Cal	The HCO Flying Seagull	For high-schoolers, Hollister is moderately priced compared to its parent brand. The brand's stores resemble surf shacks with dim lighting, and blast rock music. It is also the first of these brands to offer a personal body care line.
RUEHL No.925	Post-collegiate, 22 through 35	Greenwich Village	The R925 French bulldog, Trubble	With the highest price range among A&F brands, RUEHL is targeted towards older customers. This is the first brand to offer genuine leather purses and bags for women.
Gilly Hicks: Sydney	Women, 18 and up	Down Under	The GH Koala	Gilly Hicks is the latest brand from Abercrombie & Fitch and opened on January 21, 2008. It offers underwear and loungewear for female college students. <sup>[48]</sup>

## Other works

### A&F Challenge

The A&F Challenge is an annual held Fundraiser event by Abercrombie & Fitch. It features running, walking, biking with entertainment and food. A&F hosted the 8th Annual A&F Challenge on September 13, 2008 on its Home Office campus in New Albany. The funds raised will go to the Ohio State University Medical Center's Program for Health. It focuses on "women's cancers and the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of inflammatory bowel disease."<sup>[49]</sup>

### Inferno Elite Racing Team

Abercrombie & Fitch is a sponsor of the Inferno Elite Racing Team, a non-profit cycling team. The 2007 team uniforms have the "A&F" logo across the chest of their uniform which is accented with camouflage patterns.<sup>[50]</sup>

### Scholarships

Abercrombie & Fitch partnered with the National Society of High School Scholars at the Carter Center in Atlanta, Georgia on December 1, 2007 to offer

a \$75,000 scholarships NSHSS members.<sup>[51]</sup>

## Future plans

Throughout 2008, Abercrombie & Fitch Co. plans on increasing its gross square-footage to 11% by adding 110 additional stores by the end of this year (domestically and overseas combined); Abercrombie & Fitch will open 3, abercrombie 17, HCO 67, RUEHL 6, and GH 16.<sup>[52]</sup>

\$300 million USD are being directed towards the completion of the Hollister flagship in New York and the A&F flagships in Copenhagen and Tokyo.<sup>[52]</sup>

## International expansion

### Canadian expansion

Canadian expansion will continue, with more mall store locations for both brands in upcoming years.<sup>[34][33]</sup> In 2008, abercrombie kids stores will open with the first store to open in Sherway Gardens in late August 2008. Later in 2008 abercrombie kids will open in Toronto Eaton Centre.<sup>[34]</sup>

### European expansion

The company has been considering European expansion for years and decided to enter the European market believing that the demand for Abercrombie & Fitch has grown strong there.<sup>[36]</sup> After its expansion into the United Kingdom in 2007, Abercrombie & Fitch Co. plans to continue expansion in the area with key locations - preliminary talks about opening a store in Dublin, Ireland, have been held.<sup>[53]</sup> Abercrombie & Fitch has been attempting to secure locations in Italy, France, Germany, Spain, Denmark and Sweden.<sup>[36][54]</sup> For fiscal 2008, the company plans to open four Hollister Co. stores as well in the UK.<sup>[52]</sup> Furthermore, the company anticipates a further flagship store opening (along with the HCO in SoHo and the A&F in Tokyo) in Copenhagen, Denmark, in 2009.<sup>[54]</sup> Located at Købmagergade 11 in a 16,000sqft space (first constructed in 1910), the flagship has been designed to implement old neoclassical Danish architecture along with the A&F lifestyle.<sup>[54]</sup>

### Expansion into Asia

Abercrombie & Fitch Co. will open its store in Tokyo, Japan in 2009.<sup>[55]</sup> The location will become the fourth overall and the second international flagship of the Abercrombie & Fitch brand. Centrally located in Tokyo's Ginza district, the lease for the location has been signed. Hiroyuki Tanaka presented the company with the deal. Annabelle Selldorf will be in charge of designs for the flagship.<sup>[36]</sup>

### Expansion into Latin America

The expansion into the Latin American market will start in Venezuela. Abercrombie & Fitch will open two stores in Caracas to continue its international expansion.<sup>[56]</sup>

## Controversy and criticism

Since its re-establishment in 1988, Abercrombie & Fitch has faced numerous accusations in regards to its employment practices, merchandise, and advertising campaigns which have been described as sexually explicit and homoerotic.<sup>[35][45]</sup>

### A&F Quarterly

*See also: Nudity in art and Sex in advertising*

Conservative and religious groups panned the original American publication of *A&F Quarterly* (published from 1997 to 2003) for its sexually explicit nature.<sup>[57]</sup> The magazine was plastered with nude photography by Bruce Weber (often taken as soft-porn and homoerotic), contained articles about sex, and gave recipes for alcohol beverages. It was also a catalogue and the merchandise was mostly displayed on separate pages with information and pricing. Print advertisements for the *A&F Quarterly* appeared in *Interview*, *Out*, *Rolling Stone* and *Vanity Fair*.<sup>[58]</sup>

Despite a company policy restricting sale of the publication to minors, critics charged that the publication was readily sold to minors. In 2003, an array of religious organizations, women's rights activists, and Asian American groups organized boycotts and protests over the publication, and the "Christmas Edition" of the catalog was removed from stores.<sup>[59]</sup>

### Product criticism

In 2002, controversy erupted over shirts featuring caricatures of Asians and other ethnic groups. One shirt featured the slogan "Wong Brothers Laundry Service—Two Wongs Can Make It White" with smiling figures in conical straw hats, a 1900s depiction of Chinese immigrants. The company discontinued the designs and apologized after a boycott by Asian American student groups at universities such as Stanford University.<sup>[60]</sup> That same year, abercrombie kids removed a line of thong underwear sold for girls in pre-teen children's sizes after parents mounted nationwide storefront protests. The underwear included phrases like "Eye Candy" and "Wink Wink" printed on the front.<sup>[61]</sup>

More T-shirt controversy occurred twice in 2004. The first incident involved a shirt featuring the phrase, "It's All Relative in West Virginia," a jab at alleged incest relations in rural America. West Virginia governor Bob Wise spoke out against the company for depicting "an unfounded, negative stereotype of West Virginia," but the shirts were not removed.<sup>[62]</sup> Also, there was controversy over a t-shirt with the phrase "L is for Loser" written next to a picture of a male gymnast on the rings (the same shirt was worn by Tyson Ritter of The All-American Rejects in the music video for "Move Along"). The company stopped selling the shirt in October 2004 after USA Gymnastics president Bob Colarossi announced a boycott of Abercrombie & Fitch for

mocking the sport.<sup>[63]</sup>

In 2005, the Women and Girls Foundation of Southwest Pennsylvania launched a "girlcott" of the store for selling T-shirts bearing sexist and degrading messages like "Who needs brains when you have these?", "Available for parties", and "I had a nightmare I was a Brunette." The campaign went national on NBC's *The Today Show*, and the company pulled the shirts from stores on November 5, 2005.<sup>[64]</sup> A&F has also sold shirts that didn't raise much controversy but were still viewed as offensive; an example of this is a spring break soccer shirt with the sentence, "no penalty for using hands" written on the breast area, seemingly encouraging touching of a woman's breasts.

Bob Jones University and its affiliated pre-collegiate schools along with other Christian schools have prohibited Abercrombie & Fitch clothing from being "worn, carried, or displayed" on its campuses because of "an unusual degree of antagonism to the name of Christ and an unusual display of wickedness" in the company's promotions.<sup>[65]</sup>

After the company opened its flagship in London, the brand was criticized in the UK because the merchandise that was offered to the customers cost double (or even a direct \$/£ swap) the prices found in the United States.<sup>[66]</sup>

## **Employment practices**

In 2004 lawsuit *González v. Abercrombie & Fitch*, the company was accused of discriminating against ethnic minorities by offering desirable positions to White American employees.<sup>[67]</sup> The company agreed to an out-of-court settlement of the class action suit. As part of the settlement terms, Abercrombie and Fitch agreed to pay US\$45 million to rejected applicants and affected employees, include more minorities in advertising campaigns, appoint a Vice President of Diversity, hire 25 recruiters to seek minority employees, and discontinue the practice of recruiting employees at primarily white fraternities and sororities.<sup>[44][68]</sup>

Dwight A. McBride has written *Why I Hate Abercrombie and Fitch: Essays on Race and Sexuality*, which explores greater American intergroup relations while criticizing Abercrombie and Fitch.<sup>[69]</sup>

## Parody

Improv Everywhere, a comedy group that pulls public pranks en masse, parodied A&F's ads featuring bare-chested male models by having 111 "agents" enter the A&F store in New York City and remove their shirts. This drew mixed, but mostly amused, reactions from customers and staff, but store security quickly ejected the IE members.<sup>[70]</sup>

*MADtv*, a sketch comedy television series, parodied A&F's homoerotic advertising images and hiring practices. In these skits, three Abercrombie & Fitch Employees are depicted as vain, vapid, unhelpful and overly coifed gay men. However, in one sketch, a young woman named "Apple" (Alanis Morissette) reminds the male employees that Abercrombie is also about "girls with sunkissed skin and medium sized breasts who get together at dawn to play topless flag football".

*Wizards of Waverly Place*, a children's television show based on wizards and magic. The daughter is seen mentioning the store, "Abercrombie and Witch", referring to Abercrombie and Fitch. *Shrek 2* also parodies A&F as "Abercrombie & Witch" at the Far Far Away strip mall. In the *Sabrina, the Teenage Witch* episode titled "The Big Sleep" Salem mentions ordering a water balloon catapult from "Abercrombie & Witch."

In the Canadian animated show *6teen*, the show frequently refers to "Abercrombie & Fitch" as Albatross & Finch. The people who work in the store have a style reminiscent of Abercrombie & Fitch, and the store also has greeters.

The Abercrombie & Fitch Emergency Department and Trauma Center

In 2008, Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio plans to rename its emergency room the Abercrombie & Fitch Emergency Department and Trauma Center in exchange for a \$10 million donation from Abercrombie & Fitch. A letter written by the Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood, and signed by over 100 doctors and children's advocacy groups urged the hospital not to go ahead with the renaming, arguing that, "Given this company's appalling history of targeting children with sexualized marketing and clothing, no public health institution should be advertising Abercrombie & Fitch."<sup>[71]</sup>

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