

## PRESS COVERAGE

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Headline: Belber appoints Palazzari & Turries to seek strategic partner for USD 10m capital increase – CEO  
 Proprietary Intelligence

**Belber**, the private Philadelphia-based luxury leather goods company, has appointed Hong Kong advisory firm **Palazzari & Turries** to find a strategic partner, CEO and majority shareholder Fabrice Figaret said.

The company is seeking a strategic partner to raise about USD 10m through a capital increase. The ideal partner would be a strategic that could help Belber build retail and wholesale distribution channels in the US, and Asia. The focus initially would be on Japan and South Korea, Hong Kong and Singapore, Figaret said.

The proceeds will be used to establish five to 10 mono-brand stores in Philadelphia, New York, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles and San Francisco, as well as to distribute its products through 30 to 50 POS in department stores across the US over the next five years.

Belber is also planning to establish 5 to 10 mono-brand stores in Asia and seek distribution opportunities in multibrand stores in Japan, South Korea and Hong Kong, Figaret added.

If the right partner is found, Belber expects to reach revenue of USD 100m with EBITDA margin of 25% in five years. Online sales are expected to account for 25% of revenue over the same period, Figaret said.

The company is looking to fill a gap in the affordable luxury leather bags and small leather goods space for urban professionals. The mid-market has been left void as the top 20 premium luxury bags brands moved toward top-end goods while fast-fashion, mass-market brands fight for market share in lower-end products.

The closest comparables include **Mulberry**, **Dunhill**, **Shinola**, **Bally** and the top tier of the **Coach** collection. American brands are gaining traction as the market for high-end European luxury brands is saturated

Figaret said.

Belber's current shareholders include Fabrice Figaret, former CEO and shareholder at shirt specialist **Alain Figaret**; Sandrine Zerbib, former chairman of **Adidas China** and former CEO of **China Dongxiang Group** [HKG:3818]; and François Schwennicke, former owner of **Delvaux**, which was sold to supply management specialist **Li & Fung** in 2011. A Taiwanese family also owns an undisclosed stake in the company, Figaret said.

Figaret and his partners acquired Belber in 2013 from French lawyer Arnaud de Lummen. Belber is one of the so-called "sleeping beauties" – dormant brands that have not lost value and can be relaunched. Sleeping beauties that have been successfully relaunched in recent years include **Vionnet**, **Moynat** and **Elsa Schiaparelli**, Figaret said.

Belber was established in 1891 in Philadelphia by first-generation Romanian immigrants Aaron and Henry Belber and became the largest luxury travel bag manufacturer in the world in 20 years. In the 1950s, Belber lost momentum with the development of air travel and eventually went dormant in the mid-1970s.

Belber will launch its first collection under the new owners through the brand's website shortly, Figaret said.

Figaret is a French-born entrepreneur who has been based in Hong Kong since 2008 and operated in Asia since 1991. He started working for **Cartier Hong Kong** and then joined the family business Alain Figaret – named after his father and founder – in 1992, where he oversaw its retail and Asian operations. He served as general manager until 2005 and then as CEO until March 2008.

In February 2006, the Figaret family sold a 75% stake to Descours family's holding company **E.P.I. (Europeenne Participations Industrielles)** and Figaret stayed on board as CEO until the full exit in early 2008.

Between 1992 and 2008, Alain Figaret's business grew from revenue of FRF 60m (USD 9.8m) to revenue of USD 50m, with EBITDA margin of 25%.

by Riccardo Ghia in Hong Kong

**Target:** Belber

*Financial advisor:* Palazzari & Turries

**Other:** Figaret family, Delvaux Createur SA

Source : Proprietary Intelligence

Size : 50m < (USD)

Value : 10 m USD (capital increase)  
Stake Value : N/A  
Grade : Confirmed  
Alert : Greater China MA alert  
Intelligence ID : 2133573