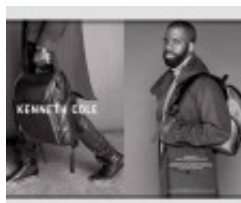


## Kenneth Cole Returns to Activist Roots in Brand Reboot Aimed at Millennials

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**Kenneth Cole** has plenty of [brand awareness](#) but it is going through a reboot anyway to help it collect more eyeballs from the group everybody seems to covet these days: millennials.

To do so, **Cole** is pushing itself more **digitally** and bending over backwards so far that it will open up its new flagship store within three hours of someone calling or texting a particular number—as long as they are in New York City’s five boroughs. This seems to lend itself to endless store pranks but **Cole** sounded into it when the store first opened its doors in lower Manhattan.

“This is the new model of how we’re going to reposition the **brand** and the business,” he said, according to [Women’s Wear Daily](#). “The store is a fully immersive **digital** experience. When you come in, you get a very curated presentation of product that isn’t available in most places.” This could serve as the blueprint for future **Kenneth Cole** stores.

The new campaign features such folks as transgender model **Andreja Pejic**, hip-hop artist/humanitarian **Rhymefest**, model/activist **Topaz Page-Green**, deaf pro soccer player **Jamie Clarke** and pro surfer/activist **Jon Rose** as members of what **Cole** calls “The Courageous Class.” Or, as he told *WWD*, they are: “People who have overcome personal obstacles and challenges, and gone on to become the person they wanted to be.”

**Cole** has often fought for underdogs of one sort or another. When the **brand** got going in the '80s, it was all about raising AIDs awareness. Its most recent political statements have been against gun violence. Earlier this month, the American Psychiatric Association got upset over the **brand**’s Manhattan billboard, which read, “Over 40M Americans suffer from mental illness. Some can access care ... All can access guns.” The APA felt this suggested the mentally ill are the reason there is so much gun violence in the US.



**Cole** is certainly ready to spend big bucks to attract those millenials, upping its media spend 25 percent this year over last, [Adweek](#) reports. It will run **digital** spots nationally on Undertone, *The New York Times*, *New York Magazine* and Instagram.

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