

Walmart, Target among retailers dropping Mario Batali products

Dive Brief:

- Walmart, Target and Eataly — Mario Batali's retail and restaurant business — have cut ties with the chef after his admission of sexual misconduct, according to company statements provided to [Business Insider](#). In a statement emailed to Retail Dive, Walmart said: "The recent sexual misconduct allegations against Mario Batali are unacceptable. We're ending our relationship with Batali and will discontinue our business with his brand."
- As of Monday, there was one cookbook involving Batali and other chefs still for sale at Target's website, and Walmart.com was still [featuring a line of his sauces and food prep items](#) like a cutting board. A request for more information from Target was not immediately returned to Retail Dive.
- Costco, Kmart and Amazon are still selling Mario Batali items, as are grocery chains Shop Rite, Publix and Stop and Shop, according to Business Insider.

Dive Insight:

In a statement emailed last week to his newsletter subscribers, Batali admitted to "mistakes" in his past behavior and stoked further controversy by including a recipe with his mea culpa, according to several news reports. The apology with a side of self-promotion was quickly roasted on Twitter.

Hi guys, it's 2017 and Mario Batali just apologized for sexual harassment AND gave a recipe for Pizza Dough Cinnamon Rolls all in one email. pic.twitter.com/88VuVB8a4H

— Jules (@jules_su) [December 16, 2017](#)

Unfortunately for Batali but in good news for retailers, Eataly patrons didn't stay away even after the report, seemingly unaware that the chef's likeness and products had been swept away from the premises, according to a description of a visit to the emporium's New York City flagship by [Hollywood Reporter](#).

Considering the slew of Batali sauces that were still available online after releasing its statement, Walmart's e-commerce site hadn't got the message or was hoping to unload the jars online while removing them from store shelves. For all Walmart's efforts to merge its e-commerce and brick-and-mortar operations, that's an indication that the two arms may not be working together or are under the mistaken impression that consumers see a difference in the two channels.

Retailers are unlikely to escape fallout from any affiliation with those accused of sexual misconduct amid the cataclysmic culture change ushered in by revelations of Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein's predatory behavior and the #MeToo movement that has followed.

In one of the [starkest examples of such consequences](#), research from YouGov BrandIndex found that women this season are turning away from Signet Jewelers' three retail banners — Jared, Kay and Zales — in light of longstanding sexual harassment and discrimination issues at the company. Women's perception of the brand and their "purchase consideration" levels are both down, according to YouGov BrandIndex's measurement of potential sales revenue.

This story has been updated.

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