

## Victoria's Secret gets ready for a makeover

**Notes & Cues:****Article:**

Sex sells, and it sells few things better than lingerie. Nowhere is that more evident than the Victoria's Secret fashion show. Befeathered models, known as "angels", shimmy down a runway to promote America's biggest underwear retailer. In 2011 more than 10m people watched it on television. But on December 2nd just 3.3m viewers tuned in.

Once its chief asset, the brand's sexiness now looks like a liability. "The way people dress has changed, " says Serena Rees, a stalwart of the industry whose most recent project is a brand of unisex underwear. "People don't want boobs up under their chin or things pressed or pushed in."

A slew of competitors, promoting comfort and inclusivity, have taken that message to heart. Michelle Cordeiro Grant left Victoria's Secret, where she was a senior merchant, and went on to found LIVELY, an online underwear brand. She argues that what makes women sexy is confidence, meaning an emphasis on comfort: 70% of the bras sold by LIVELY are wireless.

They are eager to emphasise inclusivity, too. According to Mintel, a research firm, over half of consumers in Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Spain reckon fashion retailers should use more realistic models.

Victoria's Secret is not about to go bust. The firm's scale is such that with the right rebranding, it could bounce back. In November it replaced its chief executive, Jan Singer, with John Mehas, formerly of Tory Burch, a fashion retailer. Following that rejig Victoria's Secret has held off on big announcements.

**Summary:**