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# Why the Neil Lane Deal Could Be a Trailblazer

by **ROB BATES**

**Last week**, Authentic Brands Group purchased a majority stake in Neil Lane's brand for an undisclosed sum. What makes this a different kind of deal is that it calls for the designer to branch out from jewelry.

Lloyd Greif (pictured), CEO of Los Angeles-based Greif & Co., Lane's financial advisor, believes this shows the potential of jewelry designers to cross over.

"Vera Wang started in wedding gowns, and now she is everywhere," he says. "Michael Kors started in sportswear. Neil started in jewelry, but there is no reason a jewelry designer shouldn't become synonymous with all things fashion including clothing."

Of course, in many ways, Lane is a unique case, as his brand lends itself to branching out.

"Neil is synonymous with weddings thanks, in part, to *The Bachelor* and *Bachelorette*,"

says Greif. "So then you get into bridal and things like anniversary and baby gifts. There are a lot of presents you can give on these special occasions."

Hooking up with Authentic Brands Group, Greif says, gives Lane the ability to enter new markets.

"Neil is a couture jewelry designer *par excellence*," he says. "He doesn't have all the sourcing relationships you need to do Neil Lane tableware or Neil Lane draperies. He doesn't have the relationships to go into China or Latin America. But *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* and the Oscars are beamed across the world."

Greif wouldn't be surprised to see other jewelry names pursue similar deals.



"I think this is a pioneering effort. "Neil is the first, but he's not going to be the last. A lot of jewelry designers' eyes are open a little wider today. It opens up a whole new set of possibilities."