ULTA BEAUTY

Marketplace is open. Are you in?

Navigo MARKETING

Ulta Marketplace Is Here. The Shelf Is Expanding. Not Everyone Gets In.

This fall, Ulta will open its digital storefront to a wider slate of brands through a new marketplace model—one that sits inside Ulta.com, taps into its loyalty engine, and gives select brands a new path into the ecosystem.

This isn't a play for scale. It's a play for depth. And it changes the retail map.

For brands looking to grow in prestige beauty, this is the first real opening Ulta has offered in years. But it's not for everyone.

Marketplace is not open access. It's curated. The onboarding timeline is tight. The internal bar is high. And the teams that move now will have a first-mover advantage while everyone else is still waiting on instructions.

What Marketplace Actually Is

Ulta Marketplace is not a test tab. It's a full expansion of their digital shelf, embedded directly into the Ulta.com experience, designed to go deeper across categories and formats without disrupting the curated feel of their core assortment.

Here's what that means in practice:

- Marketplace listings will live inside Ulta.com's navigation
- Shoppers will earn and use loyalty points the same way they do with 1P
- Brands may be invited to move into 1P or in-store if performance is strong
- Onboarding windows run 6 to 12 weeks depending on system setup
- Product curation will still be led by Ulta's merchandising team

This is not a free-for-all. It's a new shelf with guardrails.

What Ulta gains is category depth, flexible assortment, and more opportunities to test formats, bundles, and price points that may not make sense on physical shelves. What brands gain, if they show up right, is access to a high-intent shopper base and visibility that ties directly into loyalty behavior.

Why It Matters Now

Ulta's Marketplace rollout isn't happening in isolation. It's part of a broader shift in how beauty is being merchandised online. First-party access is increasingly limited. Shelf resets are harder to secure. And brands are being asked to prove performance before they're granted expansion.

This new layer creates an entry point for brands who've previously been boxed out. But it also creates pressure to perform.

Marketplace listings won't sit in isolation. They'll be exposed to the same visibility standards, PDP expectations, and conversion benchmarks as 1P SKUs. If your brand doesn't have the pricing, media, or product page structure to back it up, this isn't a soft entry. It's a missed one.

We expect competition to tighten quickly. The first brands in will build reviews, rank, and paid media efficiencies while everyone else is still waiting for the invitation.

What Success Will Require

1. Assortment discipline
This is not the place to dump your catalog. Brands will need to think in terms of fit—format, claims, price point, and shopper alignment. Ulta is still looking for product-market fit within their customer's mindset. The $20 to $40 range continues to dominate. Minis, bundles, and dermatologist-backed SKUs outperform because they check the right boxes.

2. PDP strategy that converts
What wins on Ulta.com is not what wins on DTC. Your product detail page has to work harder. Above-the-fold value, second image trust builders, review visibility, and simple problem-solution copy all matter. A pretty page won't move a SKU. A strategic one will.

3. Media that maps to behavior
Marketplace products will need support. That means launch sequencing, paid search aligned to high-volume terms, and conversion-

focused creative that speaks to the Ulta shopper. Sponsored placement is not just about showing up—it's about pulling carts through.

4. Smart pricing—not just value per ml
 We've seen time and again that absolute price beats unit economics. Shoppers are not calculating cost per ounce. They're reacting to the number on the tag. Brands that can package value below the psychological ceiling will win early velocity.

Why This Puts Ulta Ahead

Sephora doesn't have a Marketplace. They're still running a closed model, tightly gatekept, with limited digital expansion and fewer entry points for emerging brands. That won't change fast.

Amazon is wide open, but it comes with clutter. Oversaturation, knockoffs, no curation, and no built-in brand elevation. You get traffic, but not trust.

Ulta is threading the needle. Marketplace gives them depth without chaos, flexibility without dilution. It lets them pull in new brands, test new formats, and scale what's working, all without touching store space.

For brands, this creates a window that doesn't exist anywhere else. A real retail channel with control, visibility, and structure.

What We've Already Seen Work

At Navigo, we've been scaling Ulta.com brands through these exact levers for over a year. Our average ROAS across Ulta campaigns is 4.8x. Our conversion rates regularly exceed 20 percent. And we use data Ulta doesn't surface publicly—**category-level share, keyword trends, ad placement patterns, and SKU-level velocity**—to drive every piece of our strategy.

With Fur, we helped reframe pricing strategy around shopper perception. Their $26 mini became the velocity driver—not because it was the best value, but because it was the right product at the right price. We built the media, structured the PDP, and turned a format decision into a growth engine.

With about-face, we launched their Ulta.com channel from zero. That meant asset sequencing, PDP architecture, paid structure, and conversion logic tuned specifically to Ulta's platform.

These aren't edge cases. They're signals. And they're exactly what Marketplace will demand from the brands entering now.

This Is a Potential Land Grab

Marketplace is launching in phases. Most brands are waiting for more clarity. The smart ones are moving. Early movers will own the high-converting categories, earn early reviews, establish visibility, and benefit from performance-based expansion before the rest catch up.

We're already working with clients on entry strategy, PDP builds, and full-channel media support.

Reach out. We'll walk you through what this rollout really looks like and how to move before the moment passes.