

Ulta Beauty, Inc.
Form 10-K
April 03, 2018
Table of Contents

UNITED STATES

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

Washington, DC 20549

FORM 10 K

Annual Report Pursuant to Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934

For the fiscal year ended February 3, 2018

or

Transition Report Pursuant to Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934

For the transition period from _____ to _____

Commission File Number: 001 33764

ULTA BEAUTY, INC.

(Exact name of Registrant as specified in its charter)

incorporation or organization) Identification No.)

Delaware 38 4022268

(State or other jurisdiction of
incorporation or organization) (I.R.S. Employer
1000 Remington Blvd., Suite 120 Identification No.)
60440

Bolingbrook, Illinois (Zip code)

(Address of principal executive offices)

Registrant's telephone number, including area code: (630) 410 4800

Securities registered pursuant to Section 12(b) of the Act:

Edgar Filing: Ulta Beauty, Inc. - Form 10-K

Title of each class	Name of each exchange on which registered
Common stock, par value \$0.01 per share	The NASDAQ Global Select Market

Securities registered pursuant to Section 12(g) of the Act: None

Indicate by check mark if the registrant is a well-known seasoned issuer, as defined in Rule 405 of the Securities Act. Yes No

Indicate by check mark if the registrant is not required to file reports pursuant to Section 13 or Section 15(d) of the Act. Yes No

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant (1) has filed all reports required to be filed by Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to file such reports), and (2) has been subject to such filing requirements for the past 90 days. Yes No

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant has submitted electronically and posted on its corporate Web site, if any, every Interactive Data File required to be submitted and posted pursuant to Rule 405 of Regulation S-T (§ 232.405 of this chapter) during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to submit and post such files). Yes No

Indicate by check mark if disclosure of delinquent filers pursuant to Item 405 of Regulation S-K (§229.405 of this chapter) is not contained herein, and will not be contained, to the best of registrant's knowledge, in definitive proxy or information statements incorporated by reference in Part III of this Form 10 K or any amendment to this Form 10 K.

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a large accelerated filer, an accelerated filer, a non-accelerated filer, a smaller reporting company, or emerging growth company. See definitions of "large accelerated filer," "accelerated filer," "smaller reporting company," and "emerging growth company" in Rule 12b 2 of the Exchange Act. (Check one):

Large accelerated filer	Accelerated filer
Non-accelerated filer (Do not check if a smaller reporting company)	Smaller reporting company Emerging growth company

If an emerging growth company, indicate by check mark if the registrant has elected not to use the extended transition period for complying with any new or revised financial accounting standards provided pursuant to Section 13(a) of the Exchange Act.

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a shell company (as defined in Rule 12b 2 of the Act). Yes No

The aggregate market value of the voting stock held by non-affiliates of the registrant, based upon the closing sale price of the common stock on July 28, 2017, as reported on the NASDAQ Global Select Market, was approximately \$9,854,201,000. Shares of the registrant's common stock held by each executive officer and director and by each entity or person that, to the registrant's knowledge, owned 5% or more of the registrant's outstanding common stock as of July 28, 2017 have been excluded in that such persons may be deemed to be affiliates of the registrant. This determination of affiliate status is not necessarily a conclusive determination for other purposes.

The number of shares of the registrant's common stock, par value \$0.01 per share, outstanding as of March 29, 2018 was 60,611,334 shares.

Table of Contents

DOCUMENTS INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE

Information required in response to Part III of Form 10-K (Items 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14) is hereby incorporated by reference from portions of the registrant's Proxy Statement for the 2018 Annual Meeting of Stockholders. Such proxy statement will be filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission within 120 days of the registrant's fiscal year ended February 3, 2018.

Table of Contents

ULTA BEAUTY, INC.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Part I</u>		1
<u>Item 1.</u>	<u>Business</u>	1
<u>Item 1A.</u>	<u>Risk Factors</u>	10
<u>Item 1B.</u>	<u>Unresolved Staff Comments</u>	21
<u>Item 2.</u>	<u>Properties</u>	22
<u>Item 3.</u>	<u>Legal Proceedings</u>	23
<u>Item 4.</u>	<u>Mine Safety Disclosures</u>	23
<u>Part II</u>		24
<u>Item 5.</u>	<u>Market for Registrant’s Common Equity, Related Stockholder Matters and Issuer Purchases of Equity Securities</u>	24
<u>Item 6.</u>	<u>Selected Financial Data</u>	27
<u>Item 7.</u>	<u>Management’s Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations</u>	28
<u>Item 7A.</u>	<u>Quantitative and Qualitative Disclosures about Market Risk</u>	41
<u>Item 8.</u>	<u>Financial Statements and Supplementary Data</u>	41
<u>Item 9.</u>	<u>Changes in and Disagreements with Accountants on Accounting and Financial Disclosure</u>	41
<u>Item 9A.</u>	<u>Controls and Procedures</u>	41
<u>Item 9B.</u>	<u>Other Information</u>	42
<u>Part III</u>		43
<u>Item 10.</u>	<u>Directors, Executive Officers and Corporate Governance</u>	43
<u>Item 11.</u>	<u>Executive Compensation</u>	43
<u>Item 12.</u>	<u>Security Ownership of Certain Beneficial Owners and Management and Related Stockholder Matters</u>	43
<u>Item 13.</u>	<u>Certain Relationships and Related Transactions, and Director Independence</u>	43
<u>Item 14.</u>	<u>Principal Accountant Fees and Services</u>	43
<u>Part IV</u>		44
<u>Item 15.</u>	<u>Exhibits and Financial Statement Schedules</u>	44
<u>Item 16.</u>	<u>Form 10-K Summary</u>	71
<u>Signatures</u>		72

Table of Contents

FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

References in this Annual Report on Form 10 K to “we,” “us,” “our,” “Ulta Beauty,” the “Company” and similar references mean Ulta Beauty, Inc. and its consolidated subsidiaries, unless otherwise expressly stated or the context otherwise requires.

This Annual Report on Form 10 K contains forward-looking statements within the meaning of Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended, and the safe harbor provisions of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995, which reflect our current views with respect to, among other things, future events and financial performance. You can identify these forward-looking statements by the use of forward-looking words such as “outlook,” “believes,” “expects,” “plans,” “estimates,” “targets,” “strategies” or other comparable words. Any forward-looking statements contained in this Form 10 K are based upon our historical performance and on current plans, estimates, and expectations. The inclusion of this forward-looking information should not be regarded as a representation by us or any other person that the future plans, estimates, targets, strategies, or expectations contemplated by us will be achieved. Such forward-looking statements are subject to various risks and uncertainties, which include, without limitation:

- changes in the overall level of consumer spending and volatility in the economy;
 - the possibility that we may be unable to compete effectively in our highly competitive markets;
- the possibility that cybersecurity breaches and other disruptions could compromise our information or result in the unauthorized disclosure of confidential information;
- our ability to gauge beauty trends and react to changing consumer preferences in a timely manner;
- our ability to attract and retain key executive personnel;
- the possibility that the capacity of our distribution and order fulfillment infrastructure and the performance of our newly opened and to be opened distribution centers may not be adequate to support our recent growth and expected future growth plans;
- our ability to sustain our growth plans and successfully implement our long-range strategic and financial plan;
- the possibility of material disruptions to our information systems;
- changes in the wholesale cost of our products;
- the possibility that new store openings and existing locations may be impacted by developer or co-tenant issues;
- natural disasters that could negatively impact sales;
- our ability to successfully execute our common stock repurchase program or implement future common stock repurchase programs; and
- other risk factors detailed in our public filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the SEC), including risk factors contained in Item 1A, “Risk Factors” of this Annual Report on Form 10 K for the year ended February 3, 2018, as such may be amended or supplemented in our subsequently filed Quarterly Reports on Form 10 Q.

Except to the extent required by the federal securities laws, we undertake no obligation to publicly update or revise any forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise.

Part I

Item 1. Business

Overview

Ulta Beauty is the largest beauty retailer in the United States and the premier beauty destination for cosmetics, fragrance, skin care products, hair care products, and salon services. We provide unmatched product breadth, value, and convenience in a distinctive specialty retail environment. Key aspects of our business include:

All Things Beauty. All in One Place.™ Our guests can satisfy all of their beauty needs at Ulta Beauty. Our stores and website offer more than 20,000 products from approximately 500 well-established and emerging beauty brands across all categories and price points, including Ulta Beauty's own private label, the Ulta Beauty

Table of Contents

Collection. Our bright and open store environment encourages our guests to enjoy discovering new products and services. We believe we offer the widest selection of categories across prestige and mass cosmetics, fragrance, haircare, skincare, bath and body products, and salon styling tools. We also offer a full-service salon in every store featuring hair, skin, and brow services.

Our Value Proposition. We believe our focus on delivering a compelling value proposition to our guests across all of our product categories drives guest loyalty. We offer a comprehensive loyalty program, Ultimate Rewards, and targeted promotions through our Customer Relationship Management (CRM) platform. We also offer frequent promotions and coupons, in-store events, and gifts with purchase.

Convenience. Our stores are predominantly located in convenient, high-traffic locations such as power centers. Our typical store is approximately 10,000 square feet, including approximately 950 square feet dedicated to our full-service salon. Our store design, fixtures, and open layout provide the flexibility to respond to consumer trends and changes in our merchandising strategy. As of February 3, 2018, we operated 1,074 retail stores across 48 states and the District of Columbia, as well as an e-commerce website.

We were founded in 1990 as a beauty retailer at a time when prestige, mass, and salon products were sold through distinct channels — department stores for prestige products, drug stores and mass merchandisers for mass products, and salons and authorized retail outlets for professional hair care products. We developed a unique specialty retail concept that offers All Things Beauty. All in One Place.[™], a compelling value proposition, and a convenient and welcoming shopping environment. On January 29, 2017, we implemented a holding company reorganization pursuant to which Ulta Beauty, Inc., which was incorporated as a Delaware corporation in December 2016, became the successor to Ulta Salon, Cosmetics & Fragrance, Inc., the former publicly-traded company and now a wholly owned subsidiary of Ulta Beauty.

The following description of our business should be read in conjunction with the information contained in our Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations included in Item 7 and our Financial Statements and Supplementary Data included in Item 8 of this Annual Report on Form 10 K.

Our strategy

We are committed to executing our strategic imperatives to drive long-term growth and sustainable competitive advantages.

Acquire new guests and deepen loyalty with existing guests. We believe there is an opportunity to use consumer insights and effective marketing tactics to acquire new guests and increase our “share of wallet” of existing guests. We have sharpened our brand positioning, and are increasing awareness of the Ulta Beauty brand by communicating our brand differentiation through broad scale advertising. We continue to leverage our direct mail advertising, catalogs, and newspaper inserts to communicate with our guests, as well as marketing tactics such as digital, television, in-store events, and public relations to drive brand engagement, deepen the guest connection to Ulta Beauty, and strengthen our authority in the beauty category. In addition, we continue to leverage our loyalty program and CRM platform to drive traffic, better understand our guests' purchasing patterns, and support new store site selection. We have approximately 28 million active Ulta Beauty guests enrolled in our Ultimate Rewards loyalty program. Loyalty member transactions represent more than 90% of our annual total net sales, and the transaction data demonstrates that loyalty members shop with higher frequency and spend more per visit as compared to non-members. The customer data captured by our loyalty program, together with our CRM platform, enable customer segmentation and targeted marketing communications tailored to our guests' unique beauty needs. We believe our loyalty program, combined with our growing CRM capabilities, provide a significant long-term competitive advantage for Ulta Beauty.

Differentiate by delivering a distinctive and personalized guest experience across all channels. The Ulta Beauty guest experience today is differentiated by our broad array of categories, brands and price points, high quality services and friendly, well-trained, non-commissioned associates. Our opportunity is to sharpen that experience, by making it more relevant, differentiated, and personalized in-store and online. Our store associates are the key to delivering a distinctive guest experience that is personal, informative, and fun. To enable an elevated and engaging in-store guest experience, we are focusing on three key areas: process improvements, store and technology enhancements, and labor and staffing

Table of Contents

solutions. At the same time, we are improving our e-commerce guest experience to ensure it is easy and informative with content that inspires, educates, and enables sharing and social engagement. For example, we have improved our mobile app and mobile site experience, offer a try-on app called “Glamlab” to digitally test products, and expanded our online assortment to include online only brands. Through our loyalty and CRM capabilities, we continue to emphasize targeted communications and personalized promotions that are relevant to our guests.

Offer relevant, innovative, and often exclusive products that excite our guests. We believe our broad selection of merchandise across categories, price points, and brands offers a unique shopping experience for our guests. While the products we sell can be found in department stores, specialty stores, salons, drug stores, mass merchandisers, and pure-play e-commerce companies, we offer approximately 500 brands in one retail format so that our guests can find everything they need in one shopping trip. Our vision is to be the undisputed destination for All Things Beauty. All in One Place.™ To achieve this vision, we continue to evolve our product assortment with a focus on newness and exclusivity. We also continue to upgrade and enhance the Ulta Beauty Collection, our private label, which offers products in key categories such as cosmetics, skincare, and bath. Because of our broad array of categories, brand, and price points, we appeal to a wide range of consumers of all ages, demographics, and lifestyles.

Deliver exceptional services in three core areas: hair, skin health, and brows. Our service offerings play an important role in delivering on our brand promise to be All Things Beauty. All in One Place.™ We plan to establish Ulta Beauty as a leading salon authority by providing high quality and consistent services from our licensed stylists, with a focus on the key pillars of hair, skin health, and brows. We provide haircare services in our full-service salons, using high quality Redken products and offering trend-right hairstyles and color. We also offer skin services in partnership with Dermalogica in all stores and brow services through Benefit Brow Bars in most of our stores. Our strategy is to drive awareness and trial of our salon services with new guests as well as accelerate the frequency of existing guests’ visits. Salon guests shop more frequently and spend three times more than non-salon guests based on loyalty guest data. We believe focusing on guest satisfaction, increasing effectiveness of promotions, and optimizing staffing and scheduling will make our services business an even stronger differentiator in our stores.

Grow stores and e-commerce to reach and serve more guests. Our real estate vision is to make Ulta Beauty accessible and convenient to more consumers across a variety of markets, a key part of how we plan to double our market share over the next several years. We believe that over the long term, we have the potential to grow our store base to between 1,400 to 1,700 Ulta Beauty stores in the United States. We plan to further penetrate existing suburban markets, expand our presence in small markets, and further develop urban markets. We have a solid track record of executing an aggressive store growth program and a rigorous analytical approach to site selection that has translated into a high performing real estate portfolio. We expect to open approximately 100 new stores per year for the next several years.

In addition to store expansion, we expect to significantly grow our e-commerce sales. Our e-commerce platform has two key roles: generating direct channel sales and profits, while communicating with our guests in an interactive, enjoyable way that reinforces the Ulta Beauty brand driving traffic to our stores, website, and native applications. Our omni-channel guests are extremely valuable, spending nearly three times as much as retail only guests. We continue to develop and add new website features and functionality, marketing programs, product assortment, new brands, and omni-channel integration points. We intend to establish ourselves as a leading online beauty resource by providing our guests with a rich online experience for information on key trends and products, editorial content, expanded assortments, best in class features and functionality, interactive experiences, including virtual try-on capabilities, and social media content. We also continue to improve our order fulfillment capabilities with increased speed of delivery through new distribution centers and efficient processes designed for e-commerce order fulfillment. E-commerce sales represented 9.7% of total net sales in the fiscal year ended February 3, 2018, and we expect it to continue to grow as a percentage of our mix in the future.

Invest in infrastructure to support our guest experience and growth and capture scale efficiencies. We expect to continue to grow enterprise inventory capabilities to better anticipate and respond to our guests' demand across all channels. This includes optimizing our distribution network, improving inventory turns by moving product faster and more frequently through all channels, and improving inventory visibility, forecast accuracy, and managing product life cycle through investments in people, process, and technology. We also plan to invest in guest-facing labor hours, training, and tools to deliver a differentiated and personalized guest experience. We expect to capture operational

3

Table of Contents

efficiencies in new enterprise inventory capabilities to help fund investments in additional store labor and other in-store technologies. We will also pursue opportunities to optimize our marketing spend to maximize effectiveness. Finally, we plan to drive scale and cost efficiencies across the enterprise.

Attract and retain talent that drives a winning culture. Leadership, culture, and engagement of our associates are key drivers of our performance. We have an experienced management team that brings a creative merchandising approach and a disciplined operating philosophy to our business. Our well-trained, non-commissioned store associates are highly engaged and deliver a differentiated guest experience. We continue to expand the depth of our team at all levels and in all functional areas to support our growth.

Our market

We operate within the large and growing U.S. beauty products and salon services industry. This market represents approximately \$142 billion in sales, according to Euromonitor International and IBIS World Inc. The approximately \$87 billion beauty products industry includes cosmetics, haircare, fragrance, bath and body, skincare, salon styling tools, and other toiletries. Within this market, we compete across all major categories as well as a range of price points by offering prestige, mass, and salon products. The approximately \$55 billion salon services industry consists of hair, skin, and nail services.

Competition

Our major competitors for prestige and mass products include traditional department stores, specialty stores, drug stores, mass merchandisers, and the online capabilities of national retailers, as well as pure-play e-commerce companies. The market for salon services and products is highly fragmented. Our competitors for salon services and products include chain and independent salons.

Retail stores

Our retail stores are predominantly located in convenient, high-traffic locations such as power centers. Our typical store is approximately 10,000 square feet, including approximately 950 square feet dedicated to our full-service salon. The average investment required to open a new Ulta Beauty store is approximately \$1.6 million, which includes capital investments, net of landlord contributions, pre-opening expenses, and initial inventory, net of payables. Our net investment required to open new stores and the net sales generated by new stores may vary depending on a number of factors, including geographic location. Our retail store concept, including physical layout, displays, lighting, and quality of finishes, has evolved over time to match the rising expectations of our guests and to keep pace with our merchandising and operating strategies. As of February 3, 2018, we operated 1,074 stores in 48 states and the District of Columbia.

Our fiscal 2017 new store program was comprised of approximately 70% new stores opened in existing shopping centers and 30% in new shopping centers. In fiscal 2017, approximately 80% of new stores were filling in existing markets and 20% of new stores were in new markets.

4

Table of Contents

In addition to opening new stores, we also remodeled, relocated, or refreshed (prestige boutiques and related in-store merchandising upgrades) certain stores, as shown in the following table:

	Fiscal year ended		
	February 3, 2018	January 28, 2017	January 30, 2016
Total stores beginning of period	974	874	774
Stores opened	102	104	103
Stores closed	(2)	(4)	(3)
Total stores end of period	1,074	974	874
Total square footage	11,300,920	10,271,184	9,225,957
Average square footage per store	10,522	10,545	10,556
Stores remodeled	11	12	4
Stores relocated	7	2	5
Stores refreshed	190	213	163

Salon services

We offer a full range of services in all of our stores, focusing on the three key pillars of hair, skin health, and brow services. Our current Ulta Beauty store format includes an open and modern salon area with approximately eight to ten stations and the majority of our stores offer brow services. The entire salon area is approximately 950 square feet with a concierge desk, skin treatment room or dedicated skin treatment area, and shampoo and hair color processing area. We employ highly skilled licensed professional stylists and estheticians who offer services as well as educational experiences, including consultations, styling lessons, make-up applications, skincare regimens, and at-home care recommendations. We also have an internal elite artistic team that consists of 12 stylists and six pro team members.

E-commerce

We offer more than 20,000 beauty products from hundreds of brands. Our e-commerce platform (ulta.com) is also an important resource for our guests to access product and store information, beauty trends, in-depth product reviews, and techniques. We continually enhance the website with a collection of tips, tutorials, videos, user generated content, and social content. We have significantly improved our e-commerce fulfillment capabilities through new distribution centers, processes, and systems.

Merchandising

Strategy

We offer one of the most extensive product and brand selections in our industry, including a broad assortment of branded and private label beauty products in cosmetics, fragrance, haircare, skincare, bath and body products, and salon styling tools. A typical Ulta Beauty store carries more than 20,000 products from approximately 500 well-established and emerging beauty brands across all categories and price points, including Ulta Beauty's own private label, the Ulta Beauty Collection. We present these products in an open-sell environment using centrally produced planograms (detailed schematics showing product placement in the store) and promotional merchandising

planners. Our merchandising team continually monitors current fashion trends, historical sales trends, and new product launches to keep Ulta Beauty's product assortment fresh and relevant to our guests. We believe our broad selection of merchandise, from moderate-priced brands to higher-end prestige brands, creates a unique shopping experience for our guests.

We believe our private label products, the Ulta Beauty Collection, are a strategically important category for growth and profit contribution. Our objective is to provide quality, trend-right private label products to continue to strengthen our guests' perception of Ulta Beauty as a contemporary beauty destination. Ulta Beauty manages the full development cycle of these products from concept through production in order to deliver differentiated packaging and formulas to build our

Table of Contents

brand image. We also offer products such as IT Brushes for Ulta Beauty, Tarte Double Duty Beauty cosmetics, and CHI for Ulta Beauty hair care appliances that are exclusive to Ulta Beauty. The Ulta Beauty Collection and Ulta Beauty exclusive products represented approximately 6.5% of our total net sales in fiscal 2017.

Categories

We offer a balanced portfolio across five primary categories: (1) cosmetics; (2) skincare, bath and fragrance; (3) haircare products and styling tools; (4) salon services; and (5) other, which includes nail products and accessories. We have gained market share across all categories of our business, with particular strength in cosmetics.

The following table sets forth the approximate percentage of net sales attributed to each category for the periods presented:

	Fiscal year ended		
	February 3, 2018	January 28, 2017	January 30, 2016
Cosmetics	51%	51%	46%
Skincare, Bath & Fragrance	21%	20%	23%
Haircare Products & Styling Tools	19%	20%	22%
Salon Services	5%	5%	5%
Other	4%	4%	4%
	100%	100%	100%

Organization

Our merchandising team consists of a Chief Merchandising and Marketing Officer overseeing two Senior Vice Presidents who in turn oversee a team of category Vice Presidents, Divisional Merchandise Managers, and their team of buyers. Our merchandising team works with our centralized merchandise planning and forecasting group to ensure a consistent execution across our store base and e-commerce platform.

Our planogram department assists the merchants and inventory teams to keep new products flowing into stores on a timely basis. All major product categories undergo planogram revisions on a regular basis and adjustments are made to assortment mix and product placement based on current sales trends.

Our visual department works with our merchandising team on strategic placement of promotional merchandise, along with functional and educational signage and creative product presentation standards in all of our stores. All stores receive a centrally produced promotional merchandising planner to ensure consistent implementation of our marketing programs.

Planning and allocation

Our merchandising team works to ensure consistent execution across our store base and e-commerce platform. We have developed a disciplined approach to buying and a dynamic inventory planning and allocation process to support our merchandising strategy. We centrally manage product replenishment to our stores through our merchandise planning group. This group serves as a strategic partner to, and provides financial oversight of, the merchandising team. The merchandising team creates a sales forecast by category for the year. Our merchandise planning group creates an open-to-buy plan, approved by senior executives, for each product category. The open-to-buy plan is updated weekly with point-of-sale (POS) data, receipts and inventory levels and is used throughout the year to balance buying opportunities and inventory return on investment. We believe this structure maximizes our buying opportunities while maintaining organizational and financial control. Regularly replenished products are presented

consistently in all stores utilizing a merchandising planogram process. POS data is used to calculate sales forecasts and to determine replenishment levels. We determine promotional product replenishment levels using sales history from similar or comparable events. To ensure our inventory remains productive, our planning and replenishment group, along with senior executives, monitor the levels of clearance and aged inventory in our stores on a weekly basis. We continue to optimize our merchandising planning and forecasting system, master data, and space and floor planning systems.

Table of Contents

Vendor partnerships

We have strong, active relationships with our more than 400 vendor partners. Our top ten vendor partners, such as Estée Lauder Companies, L'Oréal, and Shiseido among others, represented approximately 64% of our total net sales in fiscal 2017 and fiscal 2016. We believe our vendor partners view us as a significant distribution channel for growth and brand enhancement and we work closely with them to market both new and existing brands.

Marketing and advertising

Marketing strategy

We employ a multi-faceted marketing strategy to increase brand awareness, drive traffic to our stores and website, acquire new guests, improve guest retention, and increase frequency of shopping. We communicate with our guests and prospective guests through multiple vehicles, including direct mail catalogs, newspaper inserts, television, radio, and digital advertising. These vehicles highlight the breadth of our selection of prestige, mass, and salon beauty products, new products and services, and special offers, and are designed to increase brand awareness. Our comprehensive public relations strategy enhances Ulta Beauty's reputation as a beauty destination, increases brand awareness, supports our charitable efforts on behalf of The Breast Cancer Research Foundation, and drives awareness of new products, in-store events, and new store openings.

Our loyalty program, Ultimate Rewards, is an important tool to increase retention of existing guests and to enhance their loyalty to the Ulta Beauty brand. Approximately 28 million active loyalty program members generated more than 90% of Ulta Beauty's total net sales in fiscal 2017. Ultimate Rewards enables customers to earn points based on their purchases. Points earned are valid for at least one year and may be redeemed on any product we sell. Our CRM platform enables sophisticated mining of the customer data in our loyalty member database as well as greater personalization of our marketing campaigns. To enhance our loyalty program, we launched co-branded and private label credit cards in fiscal 2016. The credit cards drive higher wallet share and greater loyalty from our rewards members, provide increased consumer insights, and offer attractive economics. In fiscal 2017, we expanded our gift card program to increase distribution to thousands of supermarkets and other retailers through a partnership with a third party.

We are directing a growing percentage of our marketing expense toward email marketing, digital marketing, and national TV and radio advertising. We believe these channels are highly effective in communicating with existing guests, as well as reaching those who have not yet shopped with us. Our email marketing program has been effective in communicating with our existing online and retail guests in a targeted and relevant way. Our digital marketing strategy includes search engine optimization, paid search, mobile advertising, social media, display advertising, and other digital marketing channels. Digital marketing, coupled with our national TV and radio advertising, has helped us grow brand awareness among those not familiar with Ulta Beauty, which we believe has resulted in new guests and reactivation of guests who have not shopped at Ulta Beauty within the last year.

Staffing and operations

Retail stores

Our current Ulta Beauty store format is staffed with a general manager, a salon manager, two associate managers, a full time prestige manager, and approximately twenty full and part-time associates; including approximately four to eight prestige consultants and eight to ten licensed salon professionals. The management team in each store reports to the general manager. The general manager oversees all store activities including salon management, inventory management, merchandising, cash management, scheduling, hiring, and guest services. Members of store

management receive bonuses depending on their position and based upon various metrics. Each general manager reports to a district manager, who in turn reports to a Regional Vice President of Operations, who in turn reports to the Senior Vice Presidents of Store Operations, who in turn reports to our Chief Store Operations Officer, who in turn reports to the Chief Executive Officer. Each store team receives additional support from time to time from recruiting specialists for the retail and salon operations, regionally based human resource managers, a field loss prevention team, salon technical trainers, management trainers, and vendor partners.

7

Table of Contents

Ulta Beauty stores are open seven days a week, typically eleven hours a day, Monday through Saturday, and seven hours on Sunday. Our stores have extended hours during the holiday season.

Salon services

A typical salon is staffed with eight to ten licensed salon professionals, including a salon manager, six stylists, and one or two estheticians. Our most productive salons have a guest coordinator and an assistant manager. Our salon technical trainers and vendor partner education classes create a comprehensive educational program for approximately 8,800 Ulta Beauty salon professionals.

Training and development

Our success is dependent in part on our ability to attract, train, retain, and motivate qualified associates at all levels of the organization. We have developed a corporate culture that enables individual store managers to make store-level operating decisions and we consistently reward high performance. We are committed to continually developing our associates and providing career advancement opportunities. Our associates and management teams are essential to our store expansion strategy. We use a combination of existing managers, promoted associates, and outside hires to support our new stores.

All of our associates participate in an interactive new-hire orientation through which each associate becomes acquainted with Ulta Beauty's mission, vision, and values. We train and educate our new store managers, prestige beauty advisors, and sales associates on our beauty products and services, our policies and procedures, opening and closing routines, guest service expectations, loss prevention practices, and our culture. We provide continuing education to salon professionals and retail associates throughout their careers at Ulta Beauty. Our learning management system allows us to provide ongoing training to all associates to continually enhance their product knowledge, technical skills, and guest service expertise. In contrast to the sales teams at traditional department stores, our retail sales teams are not commissioned. Our prestige beauty advisors are trained to work across all prestige lines and within our prestige boutiques (sets of custom-designed fixtures configured to prominently display certain prestige brands within our stores), where guests can receive makeup demonstrations, skin analysis, and assistance in selecting the products and services that suit them best.

Distribution

Our vision is to develop an expanded and optimized end-to-end supply chain that improves operational efficiency, performance, and guest experience. This includes enhanced systems and processes as well as a modernized distribution center network to support our new store program and rapid e-commerce growth. We currently operate five distribution centers and will open a sixth distribution center in Fresno, California in fiscal 2018.

Inventory is shipped from our suppliers to our distribution centers. We carry more than 20,000 products and replenish our stores with such products primarily in eases (i.e., less-than-case quantities), which allows us to ship less than an entire case when only one or two of a particular product is required. Our distribution centers use distribution management and distribution control software systems to maintain and support product purchase decisions. Store replenishment order selection is performed using pick-to-light processing technologies. Product is delivered to stores using a broad network of contract and local pool (final mile) carriers.

Information technology

We are committed to using technology to enhance our competitive position. We depend on a variety of information systems and technologies to maintain and improve our competitive position and to manage the operations of our

growing store base. We rely on computer systems to provide information for all areas of our business, including supply chain, merchandising, POS, e-commerce, marketing, finance, accounting, and human resources. Our core business systems consist mostly of purchased software programs that integrate together and with our internally developed software solutions. Our technology also includes a company-wide network that connects all corporate users, stores, and our distribution center infrastructure and provides communications for credit card and continual polling of sales and

8

Table of Contents

merchandise movement at the store level. We intend to leverage our technology infrastructure and systems where appropriate to gain operational efficiencies through more effective use of our systems, people, and processes. We update the technology supporting our stores, distribution infrastructure, and corporate headquarters on a regular basis. We will continue to make investments in our information systems to facilitate our growth and enable us to enhance our competitive position.

Intellectual property

We have registered trademarks in the United States and other countries. The majority of our trademark registrations contain the ULTA mark, including Ulta Beauty and two related designs, Ulta.com and Ulta Salon, Cosmetics & Fragrance (and design). We maintain our marks on a docket system to monitor filing deadlines for renewal and continued validity. All marks that are deemed material to our business have been applied for or registered in the United States and select foreign countries, including Canada.

We believe our trademarks, especially those related to the Ulta brand, have significant value and are important to building brand recognition.

Government regulation

We are affected by extensive laws, governmental regulations, administrative determinations, court decisions, and similar constraints. Such laws, regulations, and other constraints may exist at the federal, state, or local levels in the United States. Many of the products we sell in our stores, such as cosmetics, dietary supplements, food and over-the-counter (OTC) drugs, medical devices, and styling tools, including our Ulta Beauty branded products, are subject to regulation by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC), the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), state regulatory agencies, and State Attorneys General (State AGs). Such regulations principally relate to the safety, labeling, manufacturing, advertising, packaging, and distribution of the products.

Products classified as cosmetics (as defined in the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (FDC Act)) are not subject to pre-market approval by the FDA, but the products must generally be safe and must be properly manufactured and labeled. Certain products, such as sunscreens and acne treatments, are classified as OTC drugs, and certain ingestible products, such as vitamins and minerals, are classified as dietary supplements. Both OTC drugs and dietary supplements have specific ingredient, labeling, and manufacturing requirements. The labeling and packaging of these products is subject to the requirements of the FDC Act and the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act. Products such as wrinkle reducing lights may be classified as medical devices and, in addition to being subject to labeling and manufacturing requirements, may also be subject to premarketing review by the FDA. Finally, products such as styling tools (e.g. blow dryers and curling irons) are regulated by the CPSC, which has strict requirements with respect to reporting possible product defects.

Further, claims we make in advertising, including claims about the safety or efficacy of products, pricing claims and environmental claims, are subject to regulation by the FTC and State AGs who generally prohibit unfair or deceptive practices.

Labor and employment and taxation laws, to which most retailers are typically subject, also impact our day-to-day operations. We are also subject to typical zoning and real estate land use restrictions and typical advertising and consumer protection laws (both federal and state). Our services business is subject to state board regulations and state licensing requirements.

In our store leases, we require our landlords to obtain all necessary zoning approvals and permits for the site to be used as a retail site and we also ask them to obtain any zoning approvals and permits for our specific use (but at times the responsibility for obtaining zoning approvals and permits for our specific use falls to us). We require our landlords to deliver a certificate of occupancy for any work they perform on our buildings or the shopping centers in which our stores are located. We are responsible for delivering a certificate of occupancy for any remodeling or build-outs that we perform and are responsible for complying with all applicable laws in connection with such construction projects or build-outs.

Table of Contents

Employees

As of February 3, 2018, we employed approximately 13,700 associates on a full-time basis and approximately 21,000 associates on a part-time basis. We have no collective bargaining agreements. We have not experienced any work stoppages and believe we have good relationships with our employees.

Seasonality

Our business is subject to seasonal fluctuation. Significant portions of our net sales and profits are realized during the fourth quarter of the fiscal year due to the holiday selling season. To a lesser extent, our business is also affected by Mother's Day, Valentine's Day, and the "Back to School" season.

Available information

Our principal website address is www.ulta.com. We make available at this address under investor relations (at <http://ir.ultabeauty.com>), free of charge, our proxy statement, annual report to shareholders, annual report on Form 10 K, quarterly reports on Form 10 Q, current reports on Form 8 K, and all amendments to those reports as soon as reasonably practicable after such material is electronically filed with or furnished to the SEC. Information available on our website is not incorporated by reference in and is not deemed a part of this Form 10 K. In addition, our filings with the SEC may be accessed through the SEC's website at www.sec.gov. You may read and copy any filed document at the SEC's public reference rooms in Washington, D.C. at 100 F Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20549. Please call the SEC at 1 800 SEC 0330 for further information about the public reference rooms. All statements made in any of our securities filings, including all forward-looking statements or information, are made as of the date of the document in which the statement is included and we do not assume or undertake any obligation to update any of those statements or documents unless we are required to do so by law.

Item 1A. Risk Factors

The risks described below could materially and adversely affect our business, financial condition, results of operations, or future growth. We could also be affected by additional risks that apply to all companies operating in the United States, as well as other risks that are not presently known to us or that we currently consider to be immaterial. You should carefully consider the following risks and all of the other information contained in this Annual Report on Form 10-K before making an investment in our common stock.

The health of the economy in the channels we serve may affect consumer purchases of discretionary items such as beauty products and salon services, which could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition, profitability, and cash flows.

Our results of operations may be materially affected by conditions in the capital markets and the economy generally, both in the U.S. and internationally. We appeal to a wide demographic consumer profile and offer an extensive selection of beauty products sold directly to retail consumers and premium salon services. Uncertainty in the economy could adversely impact consumer purchases of discretionary items across all of our product categories, including prestige beauty products and premium salon services. Factors that could affect consumers' willingness to make such discretionary purchases include: general business conditions, levels of employment, interest rates, tax rates, the availability of consumer credit, and consumer confidence in future economic conditions. In the event of a prolonged economic downturn or acute recession, consumer spending habits could be adversely affected and we could experience lower than expected net sales.

In addition, a general deterioration in economic conditions could adversely affect our commercial partners including our vendor partners as well as the real estate developers and landlords who we rely on to construct and operate centers in which our stores are located. A bankruptcy or financial failure of a significant vendor or a number of significant real estate developers or shopping center landlords could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition, profitability, and cash flows. Additionally, volatility and disruption to the capital and credit markets in the recent global

Table of Contents

recession had a significant, adverse impact on global economic conditions, resulting in recessionary pressures and declines in consumer confidence and economic growth, which, in turn, led to declines in consumer spending. Reduced consumer spending could cause changes in customer order patterns and changes in the level of merchandise purchased by our customers, and may signify a reset of consumer spending habits, all of which may adversely affect our business, financial condition, profitability, and cash flows.

We may be unable to compete effectively in our highly competitive markets.

The markets for beauty products and salon services are highly competitive with few barriers to entry. We compete against a diverse group of retailers, both small and large, including regional and national department stores, specialty retailers, drug stores, mass merchandisers, high-end and discount salon chains, locally owned beauty retailers and salons, online capabilities of national retailers, pure-play e-commerce companies, catalog retailers, and direct response television, including television home shopping retailers, and infomercials. We believe the principal bases upon which we compete are the breadth of merchandise, our value proposition, the quality of our guests' shopping experience, and the convenience of our stores as one-stop destinations for beauty products and salon services. Many of our competitors are, and many of our potential competitors may be, larger and have greater financial, marketing, and other resources and therefore, may be able to adapt to changes in customer requirements more quickly, devote greater resources to the marketing and sale of their products, generate greater national brand recognition, or adopt more aggressive pricing policies than we can. As a result, we may lose market share, which could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition, profitability, and cash flows.

Cybersecurity breaches and other disruptions could compromise our information, result in the unauthorized disclosure of confidential guest, employee, Company and/or business partners' information, damage our reputation, and expose us to liability, which could negatively impact our business.

In the ordinary course of our business, we collect, process, and store sensitive and confidential data, including our proprietary business information and that of our guests, suppliers and business partners, and personally identifiable information of our guests and employees, in our data centers and on our networks. The secure processing, maintenance, and transmission of this information is critical to our operations. We rely on commercially available systems, software, tools, and monitoring to provide security for processing, transmission, and storage of confidential information. Despite the security measures we have in place and continual vigilance in regard to the protection of sensitive information, our systems and those of our third party service providers may be vulnerable to security breaches, attacks by hackers, acts of vandalism, computer viruses, misplaced or lost data, human errors, or other similar events. Any such breach could compromise our networks and the information stored there could be accessed, publicly disclosed, lost, or stolen. Any such access, disclosure, or other loss of information could result in legal claims or proceedings, liability under laws that protect the privacy of personal information, disrupt our operations, damage our reputation, and cause a loss of confidence in our business, products, and services, which could adversely affect our business, financial condition, profitability, and cash flows.

Our comparable sales and quarterly financial performance may fluctuate for a variety of reasons, which could result in a decline in the price of our common stock.

Our comparable sales and quarterly results of operations have fluctuated in the past, and we expect them to continue to fluctuate in the future. A variety of factors affect our comparable sales and quarterly financial performance, including:

- general U.S. economic conditions and, in particular, the retail sales environment;
- changes in our merchandising strategy or mix;
- performance of our new and remodeled stores;

- the effectiveness of our inventory management;
- timing and concentration of new store openings, including additional human resource requirements and related pre-opening and other start-up costs;
- cannibalization of existing store sales by new store openings;
- levels of pre-opening expenses associated with new stores;
- timing and effectiveness of our marketing activities;

Table of Contents

- seasonal fluctuations due to weather conditions;
- actions by our existing or new competitors; and
- hurricanes, tornadoes, wildfires, earthquakes, mudslides, and other natural disasters.

Accordingly, our results for any one fiscal quarter are not necessarily indicative of the results to be expected for any other quarter, and comparable sales for any particular future period may decrease. In that event, the price of our common stock may decline. For more information on our quarterly results of operations, see Note 13 to our consolidated financial statements, “Selected quarterly financial data (unaudited),” and Item 7, “Management’s Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations.”

If we are unable to gauge beauty trends and react to changing consumer preferences in a timely manner, our sales may decrease.

We believe our success depends in substantial part on our ability to:

- recognize and define product and beauty trends;
- anticipate, gauge, and react to changing consumer demands in a timely manner;
- translate market trends into appropriate, saleable product, and service offerings in our stores and salons in advance of our competitors;
- develop and maintain vendor relationships that provide us access to the newest merchandise on reasonable terms; and
- distribute merchandise to our stores in an efficient and effective manner and maintain appropriate in-stock levels.

If we are unable to anticipate and fulfill the merchandise needs of the consumer, our net sales may decrease and we may be forced to increase markdowns of slow-moving merchandise, either of which could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition, profitability, and cash flows.

If we fail to retain our existing senior management team or attract qualified new personnel, such failure could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition, profitability, and cash flows.

Our business requires disciplined execution at all levels of our organization. This execution requires an experienced and talented management team. If we were to lose the benefit of the experience, efforts, and abilities of key executive personnel, it could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition, profitability, and cash flows. Furthermore, our ability to manage our retail expansion will require us to continue to train, motivate, and manage our associates. We will need to attract, motivate, and retain additional qualified executive, managerial, and merchandising personnel and store associates. Competition for this type of personnel is intense, and we may not be successful in attracting, assimilating, and retaining the personnel required to grow and operate our business profitably.

The capacity of our distribution and order fulfillment infrastructure and the performance of our newly opened and to be opened distribution centers may not be adequate to support our historical growth and expected future growth plans, which could prevent the successful implementation of these plans or cause us to incur excess costs to expand this infrastructure, which could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition, profitability, and cash flows.

We currently operate five distribution facilities, which house the distribution operations for Ulta Beauty retail stores together with the order fulfillment operations of our e-commerce platform. In 2014, we began a multi-year supply chain project, which focused on, among other things, adding capacity and system improvements to support expanded omni-channel capabilities. In order to support our historical and expected future growth and to maintain the efficient operation of our business, it is likely additional distribution centers will be added in the future. We opened our fourth

and fifth distribution centers in 2015 and 2016, respectively, and expect to open our sixth distribution center in 2018. Our failure to effectively upgrade and expand our distribution capacity on a timely basis to keep pace with our anticipated growth in

12

Table of Contents

stores and the performance of our newly opened distribution centers could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition, profitability, and cash flows.

Any significant interruption in the operations of our distribution facilities could disrupt our ability to deliver merchandise to our stores in a timely manner, which could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition, profitability, and cash flows.

We distribute products to our stores without supplementing such deliveries with direct-to-store arrangements from vendors or wholesalers. We are a retailer carrying over 20,000 beauty products that change on a regular basis in response to beauty trends, which makes the success of our operations particularly vulnerable to disruptions in our distribution infrastructure. Any significant interruption in the operation of our supply chain infrastructure, such as disruptions in our information systems, disruptions in operations due to fire, natural disasters, or other catastrophic events, labor disagreements, or shipping and transportation problems, could drastically reduce our ability to receive and process orders and provide products and services to our stores, which could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition, profitability, and cash flows.

Our e-commerce platform may be unsuccessful.

We offer most of our beauty products for sale through our Ulta.com website. As a result, we encounter risks and difficulties frequently experienced by internet-based businesses, including risks related to our ability to attract and retain customers on a cost-effective basis and our ability to operate, support, expand, and develop our internet operations, website and software, and other related operational systems. Although we believe that our participation in both e-commerce and physical store sales is a distinct advantage for us due to synergies and the potential for new customers, supporting product offerings through both of these channels could create issues that have the potential to adversely affect our results of operations. For example, if our e-commerce platform successfully grows, it may do so in part by attracting existing guests, rather than new guests, who choose to purchase products from us online rather than from our physical stores, thereby reducing the financial performance of our stores. In addition, offering different products through each channel could cause conflicts and cause some of our current or potential internet customers to consider competing distributors of beauty products. Offering products through our internet channel could also cause some of our current or potential vendors to consider competing internet offerings of their products either on their own or through competing distributors. As we continue to grow our e-commerce platform, the impact of attracting existing rather than new guests, conflicts between product offerings online and through our stores, and opening up our channels to increased competition from pure-play e-commerce companies could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition, profitability, and cash flows.

We may not be able to sustain our growth plans and successfully implement our long-range strategic and financial plans, which could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition, profitability, and cash flows. In addition, we intend to continue to open new stores, which could strain our resources and have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition, profitability, and cash flows.

Our continued and future growth largely depends on our ability to implement our long-range strategic and financial plans and successfully open and operate new stores on a profitable basis. There can be no assurance that we will be successful in implementing our growth plans or long-range strategic imperatives, and our failure to do so could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition, profitability, and cash flows. We intend to continue to grow our number of stores for the foreseeable future. Our continued expansion places increased demands on our financial, managerial, operational, supply-chain, and administrative resources. For example, our planned expansion will require us to increase the number of people we employ, as well as to monitor and upgrade our management information and other systems, and our distribution infrastructure. These increased demands and operating complexities could cause us to operate our business less efficiently and could have a material adverse effect on our

business, financial condition, profitability, and cash flows.

13

Table of Contents

We are subject to risks relating to our information technology systems, and any failure to adequately protect our critical information technology systems or any material disruption of our information systems could negatively impact financial results and materially adversely affect our business operations, particularly during the holiday season.

We are increasingly dependent on a variety of information systems, including management, supply chain and financial information, and various other processes and transactions, to effectively manage our business. We have also identified the need to expand and upgrade our information systems to support historical and expected future growth. The failure of our information systems to perform as designed or breaches of security could have an adverse effect on our business and results of our operations. Any material disruption of our systems could disrupt our ability to track, record, and analyze the merchandise that we sell and could cause delays or cancellation of customer orders or impede the manufacture or shipment of products, the processing of transactions, our ability to receive and process e-commerce orders, and/or the reporting of financial results.

Our e-commerce operations are increasingly important to our business. The Ulta.com website serves as an effective extension of Ulta Beauty's marketing and prospecting strategies (beyond catalogs, newspaper inserts, and national advertising) by exposing potential new customers to the Ulta Beauty brand, product offerings, and enhanced content. As the importance of our website and e-commerce operations to our business grows, we are increasingly vulnerable to website downtime and other technical failures. Our failure to successfully respond to these risks could reduce e-commerce sales and damage our brand's reputation.

Increased costs or interruption in our third-party vendors' overseas sourcing operations could disrupt production, shipment, or receipt of some of our merchandise, which could result in lost sales and could increase our costs.

We directly source the majority of our Ulta Beauty branded product components and gifts with purchase and other promotional products through third-party vendors using foreign factories. In addition, many of our vendors use overseas sourcing to varying degrees to manufacture some or all of their products. Any event causing a sudden disruption of manufacturing or imports from such foreign countries, including the imposition of additional import restrictions, unanticipated political changes, increased customs duties, legal or economic restrictions on overseas suppliers' ability to produce and deliver products, and natural disasters, could materially harm our operations. We have no long-term supply contracts with respect to such foreign-sourced items, many of which are subject to existing or potential duties, tariffs, or quotas that may limit the quantity of certain types of goods that may be imported into the United States from such countries. Our business is also subject to a variety of other risks generally associated with sourcing goods from abroad, such as political instability, disruption of imports by labor disputes, and local business practices. Our sourcing operations may also be hurt by health concerns regarding infectious diseases in countries in which our merchandise is produced, adverse weather conditions or natural disasters that may occur overseas, or acts of war or terrorism in the United States or worldwide, to the extent these acts affect the production, shipment, or receipt of merchandise. Our future operations and performance will be subject to these factors and these factors could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition, profitability, and cash flows or may require us to modify our current business practices and incur increased costs.

A reduction in traffic to, or the closing of, the other destination retailers in the shopping areas where our stores are located could significantly reduce our sales and leave us with excess inventory, which could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition, profitability, and cash flows.

As a result of our real estate strategy, most of our stores are located in off-mall shopping areas known as power centers. Power centers typically contain three to five big-box anchor stores along with a variety of smaller specialty tenants. As a consequence of most of our stores being located in such shopping areas, our sales are derived, in part, from the volume of traffic generated by the other destination retailers and the anchor stores in power centers where our stores are located. Customer traffic to these shopping areas may be adversely affected by the closing of such

destination retailers or anchor stores, or by a reduction in traffic to such stores resulting from a regional or global economic downturn, a general downturn in the local area where our store is located, or a decline in the desirability of the shopping environment of a particular power center. Such a reduction in customer traffic would reduce our sales and leave us with excess inventory, which could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition, profitability, and cash flows. We may

14

Table of Contents

respond by increasing markdowns, initiating marketing promotions, or transferring product to other stores to reduce excess inventory, which would further decrease our gross profits and net income.

Diversion of exclusive salon products, or a decision by manufacturers of exclusive salon products to utilize other distribution channels, could negatively impact our revenue from the sale of such products, which could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition, profitability, and cash flows.

The retail products that we sell in our salons are meant to be sold exclusively by professional salons and authorized professional retail outlets. However, incidents of product diversion occur, which involve the selling of salon exclusive haircare products to unauthorized channels such as drug stores, grocery stores, or mass merchandisers. Diversion could result in adverse publicity that harms the commercial prospects of our products (if diverted products are old, tainted, or damaged), as well as lower product revenues should consumers choose to purchase diverted product from these channels rather than purchasing from one of our salons. Additionally, the various product manufacturers could, in the future, decide to utilize other distribution channels for such products, therefore widening the availability of these products in other retail channels, which could negatively impact the revenue we earn from the sale of such products.

We rely on our good relationships with vendor partners to purchase prestige, mass, and salon beauty products on reasonable terms. If these relationships were to be impaired, or if certain vendor partners were to change their distribution model, or are unable to supply sufficient merchandise to keep pace with our growth plans, we may not be able to obtain a sufficient selection or volume of merchandise on reasonable terms, and we may not be able to respond promptly to changing trends in beauty products, either of which could have a material adverse effect on our competitive position, business, financial condition, profitability, and cash flows.

We have no long-term supply agreements with vendor partners and, therefore, our success depends on maintaining good relationships with our vendor partners. Our business depends to a significant extent on the willingness and ability of our vendor partners to supply us with a sufficient selection and volume of products to stock our stores. Some of our prestige vendor partners may not have the capacity to supply us with sufficient merchandise to keep pace with our growth plans. We also have strategic partnerships with certain core brands, which have allowed us to benefit from the growing popularity of such brands. Any of our other core brands could in the future decide to scale back or end its partnership with us and strengthen its relationship with our competitors, which could negatively impact the revenue we earn from the sale of such products. If we fail to maintain strong relationships with our existing vendor partners, or fail to continue acquiring and strengthening relationships with additional vendor partners of beauty products, our ability to obtain a sufficient amount and variety of merchandise on reasonable terms may be limited, which could have a negative impact on our competitive position.

During fiscal 2017 and fiscal 2016, merchandise supplied to Ulta Beauty by our top ten vendor partners accounted for approximately 64% of our net sales. There continues to be vendor consolidation within the beauty products industry. The loss of or a reduction in the amount of merchandise made available to us by any one of these key vendors, or by any of our other vendor partners, could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition, profitability, and cash flows.

If we are unable to protect our intellectual property rights, our brand and reputation could be harmed, which could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition, profitability, and cash flows.

We regard our trademarks, trade dress, copyrights, trade secrets, know-how, and similar intellectual property as critical to our success. Our principal intellectual property rights include registered and common law trademarks on our name, "Ulta Beauty," "Ulta," "All Things Beauty. All in One Place.TM" and other marks incorporating our name, copyrights in our website content, rights to our domain name www.ulta.com, and trade secrets and know-how with respect to our

Ulta Beauty branded product formulations, product sourcing, sales and marketing, and other aspects of our business. As such, we rely on trademark and copyright law, trade secret protection, and confidentiality agreements with certain of our employees, consultants, suppliers, and others to protect our proprietary rights. If we are unable to protect or preserve the value of our trademarks, copyrights, trade secrets, or other proprietary rights for any reason (including any cybersecurity incident that results in the unauthorized use of our intellectual property rights), or if other parties infringe on our intellectual property rights, our brand and reputation could be impaired and we could lose customers.

Table of Contents

If our manufacturers are unable to produce products manufactured uniquely for Ulta Beauty, including Ulta Beauty branded products and gifts with purchase and other promotional products, consistent with applicable regulatory requirements, we could suffer lost sales and be required to take costly corrective action, which could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition, profitability, and cash flows.

We do not own or operate any manufacturing facilities and therefore depend upon independent third-party vendors for the manufacture of all products manufactured uniquely for Ulta Beauty, including the Ulta Beauty Collection and Ulta Beauty branded gifts with purchase and other promotional products. Our third-party manufacturers of Ulta Beauty products may not maintain adequate controls with respect to product specifications and quality and may not continue to produce products that are consistent with applicable regulatory requirements. If we or our third-party manufacturers fail to comply with applicable regulatory requirements, we could be required to take costly corrective action. In addition, sanctions under various laws may include seizure of products, injunctions against future shipment of products, restitution and disgorgement of profits, operating restrictions, and criminal prosecution. The FDA does not have a pre-market approval system for cosmetics, and we believe we are permitted to market our cosmetics and have them manufactured without submitting safety or efficacy data to the FDA. However, cosmetic products may become subject to more extensive regulation in the future. These events could interrupt the marketing and sale of our Ulta Beauty products, severely damage our brand reputation and image in the marketplace, increase the cost of our products, cause us to fail to meet customer expectations, or cause us to be unable to deliver merchandise in sufficient quantities or of sufficient quality to our stores, any of which could result in lost sales, which could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition, profitability, and cash flows.

We, as well as our vendors, are subject to laws and regulations that could require us to modify our current business practices and incur increased costs, which could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition, profitability, and cash flows.

In our U.S. markets, numerous laws and regulations at the federal, state, and local levels can affect our business. Legal requirements are frequently changed and subject to interpretation, and we are unable to predict the ultimate cost of compliance with these requirements or their effect on our operations. If we fail to comply with any present or future laws or regulations, we could be subject to future liabilities, a prohibition on the operation of our stores, or a prohibition on the sale of our Ulta Beauty branded products. In particular, failure to adequately comply with the following legal requirements could have a material adverse effect on our business, financial condition, profitability, and cash flows.

- Comprehensive healthcare reform legislation under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and the Health Care Education and Affordability Reconciliation Act (collectively, the Acts) was signed into law in 2010. This healthcare reform legislation significantly expanded healthcare coverage and future changes could significantly impact our business.
- Our rapidly expanding workforce, growing in pace with our number of stores, makes us vulnerable to changes in labor and employment laws. In addition, changes in federal and state minimum wage laws and other laws relating to employee benefits could cause us to incur additional wage and benefits costs, which could hurt our profitability and affect our growth strategy.
-