



The Cole Haan / Slack collaboration trainer | Photo source Cole Haan

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## TRAINERS DESIGNED ON SLACK



### Cole Haan has collaborated with Slack on the ZeroGrand shoe, which was designed entirely on the messaging platform

**Spotted:** Not since Croc released a KFC-themed shoe that smelled like [fried chicken](#) have we seen such a strange shoe collaboration, but Cole Haan may have now gone one better with its Slack-inspired trainer. That's right: Cole Haan and workplace chat application Slack have teamed up to produce a new trainer.

The ZeroGrand shoe, which was designed entirely on Slack, is a white trainer, trimmed in four colours, each representing one of the four on Slack's logo. The Slack logo is also found on the heel. The shoes will also [feature](#) "luxé cushioning in the outsole, footbed, and sockliner" and a "springy arched outsole". It retails for around €100.

While the idea of footwear that smells like chicken may have a certain appeal (the KFC Crocs sold out in an hour), will anyone want to wear shoes that remind them of a corporate messaging app? Indeed, social media has, unsurprisingly, had a fair amount to say on the issue. One person joked on Twitter that, "When it comes to work-life balance, I draw the line at putting Slack on my shoes ..."

Collaborations have become the name of the game in marketing, even between brands that may on the surface appear to have nothing to do with each other. In fact, the Cole Haan website suggests that the collaboration is primarily about marketing. The website [notes](#) that "Our limited-edition collab isn't just two great brands coming together – it's a vibrant example of how Slack is everything you need to get your work done."

Other collaborations, including many covered here at Springwise, aim to connect brands to social causes — such as the partnership between [Hornitos Tequila](#) and two charities supporting immigrants. We have also recently covered a collaboration between designer Mikiya Kobayashi and

automotive company Aisin Seiki to create a [wooden scooter](#), and a design firm that has made [chairs](#) using grain waste, from Danish brewer Carlsberg.

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## **Takeaway:**

Collaborations like this are not new – in fact, they have become a regular part of marketing culture. For cynics, they are a way of “training” consumers to like particular products, by linking one product to another brand that hopes to occupy the same cultural niche. Of course, trainers already occupy a special place in fashion culture, with fanatics who follow every new trainer dropping and collecting hundreds of shoes that are never worn. Certain brands, such as Allbirds or Flyknit, have particularly resonated with startup culture and seen in this light, the Cole Hann / Slack collaboration is just another link.