

INTERNET

Armani expands reach of collection with live-streaming fashion show

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By ELIZABETH ZELESNY



Armani is expanding the reach of its fashion show for the

Fall/Winter 2011-2012 men's collection by streaming it live online on Jan. 18.

Consumers can watch the fashion show at <http://live.armani.com>. From a marketing perspective, Armani is able to reach more affluent consumers via the live streaming, upping the chances for sales of the merchandise.

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“Providing live-streaming fashion shows online is a great too because there is a huge interest in fashion shows,” said Laura Reis, president of Reis & Reis, a Roswell, GA-based marketing strategy consultancy. “What better way to leverage the Web and put it online for everyone to see?”

“Everyone can’t be there,” she said. “It is a great expansion of something that they are already doing anyway.”

The cost of streaming and bandwidth has come down significantly, and watching a live fashion show on a luxury brand’s Web site or Facebook page is the closest thing to being a guest at the show.

Since not everyone is able to attend a live fashion show, live streaming is increasingly becoming the norm for luxury brands.

Numerous platforms

There are different online platforms brands can use. Some brands use their own sites, as Prada and Dior Homme have done in the past.

Armani has chosen to stream its 2011-2012 men’s collection via the microsite live.armani.com, which is dedicated to showcasing current and past Armani collections.

Italian designer Gucci has also taken up live streaming. In fact, the brand created the event platform <http://www.GucciConnect.com>, which allows users to experience the Men’s Autumn Winter 2011 fashion show in Milan on Jan. 17.



Screengrab of GucciConnect

Users can watch the fashion show from four different camera angles, including the coveted front row seat view.

There is also a real-time virtual guest list that announces attendees as they arrive at the event. This also includes a live chat with other attendees before, during and after the show.

Committed fans can RSVP to GucciConnect.com to request a VIP e-ticket.

Some brands use their Facebook pages, for example Louis Vuitton and Tory Burch.

Social fashion

Italian apparel designer Zenga is bolstering its social strategy with a Facebook fashion show ([see story](#)).

In terms of which platform is best for luxury brands to showcase their shows, Ms. Reis believes brands haven't hit the nail on the head just yet.

"That's really unclear which is why you are seeing so many different platforms," Ms. Reis said. "I don't think everyone has the perfect platform.

"Companies and consumers are still getting used to them, and there is a lot of trial and error," she said. "We will see a lot more experimentation in 2011."

Live-streaming benefits

Streaming live luxury fashion shows is a great communication tool.

Affluents now can see the clothes in motion, hear the music and feel the atmosphere of the show.

Some brands even allow consumers to pre-order some pieces from their new collections.

"I think certainly with the Internet we are going to see more and more video content," Ms. Reis said. "Luxury brands streaming live fashion shows make so much sense because brands could always have a video to produce, but this has news value.

"There is a built-in interest for people to look at the latest fashion trends," she said.

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