

RESEARCH

Top ranking brands embrace the curated, digital Age of You: report

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Burberry autumn/winter 2014 campaign images

By JEN KING

Louis Vuitton, Hermès and Burberry were ranked among the top 100 global brands, according to Interbrand's 15th annual Best Global Brands 2014 report.

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Luxury Daily

The recent advancements in mobile technologies and consumers' desire to be ever connected with preferred brands has resulted in the "Age of You," which the world's top brands have been able to capitalize on through digital platforms and personalization. Brands that have successfully integrated products and devices have fared better than their counterparts who have failed to react to changing consumption trends.

"As consumers and devices become more connected and integrated, the data being generated is creating value for consumers, for brands, and for the world at large," said Jez Frampton, global CEO at [Interbrand](#), London.

"As a result, brands from all categories and sectors will get smarter—with products and devices working in concert with one another, across supply chains, and in tandem with our own individual data sets," he said.

"Brands that seek to lead in the forthcoming Age of You will have to create truly

personalized and curated experiences, or what we call ‘Mecosystems,’ around each and every one of us. Such brands will have to rehumanize the data, uncover genuine insights, and deliver against individual wants, needs, and desires.”

Interbrand's **Best Global Brands 2014** report ranks the value of brands based on three key aspects: financial performance, the role a brand plays in influencing consumer choice and strength to command a premium price or secure earnings.

For 2014, the top five Best Global Brands are Apple, Google, Coca-Cola, IBM and Microsoft.

Best in show

The market has transitioned from the “Age of Identity, the “Age of Value” and the “Age of Experience.” Interbrand’s report suggests that marketers have evolved to the Age of You, meaning that successful brands use individual data sets to create personalized and curated experiences or “Mecosystems” for each consumer.

Given that luxury brands have been slow to adapt to these changes, only a small portion made the cut. Seven of the most valuable brands from the luxury sector include Louis Vuitton, Gucci, Hermès, Cartier, Prada, Tiffany & Co. and Burberry.

Of these brands, Louis Vuitton, which placed 19th, declined 9 percent in value, but the French leather goods makers did place emphasis on its higher end products throughout the year. Interbrand suggests that to maintain loyalty among global consumers, especially in the Asia Pacific region, Louis Vuitton must leverage its strengths through design, innovation, style and authenticity.



Karl Lagerfeld for Louis Vuitton's Iconoclasts collection

Another French leather goods house's score is on the climb. Hermès placed just below the halfway mark at 46. Hermès is considered by Interbrand to be a “top riser” in the luxury category due to its 18 percent increase in brand value.

Hermès saw double-digit growth from 2013 through the first quarter of 2014 across its various sectors including equestrian gear, leather goods, silk and accessories. This may be a result of Hermès tapping into key market China by joining Weibo and WeChat to better connect with Chinese consumers.

Authenticity also plays a vital role in Hermès’ success rate. Hermès is once again

operated by a family member, Axel Dumas, who is dedicated to safeguarding the brand's legacy as the Age of You takes stride.



Hermès handbag campaign

British fashion label Burberry also placed well due to its digital touchpoints that have allowed the brand to stand out and pave the way for others looking to incorporate new innovations to better serve consumers. Interbrand's report ranked Burberry at 73 with an 8 percent increase in brand value after the brand saw double-digit growth.

This ranking is in part due to Burberry's successful integration of "catwalks to content" that blurs the lines between the physical and the virtual through curated user experiences. For example, Burberry celebrated the opening of its Shanghai flagship store with an immersive theatrical event.

To connect with consumers in the store's market, the brand will be posting content on Chinese messaging platform WeChat, with which Burberry has a digital innovation partnership. Leading up to the event, Burberry included its global followers in the preparation, posting a series of photos of the journey from London to Shanghai ([see story](#)).



Burberry's Shanghai boutique

Also, Burberry opened its first virtual Tmall store which created an authentic marketplace for its products in China while protecting the brand against counterfeiting.

Interbrand cites Burberry is truly embracing the Age of You by honoring its 160-year old heritage alongside the exploration of “creative, high-tech ways to engage and delight its many admirers.” This also stems from the leadership positions at Burberry, with Christopher Bailey joining the brand earlier in the year.

Automakers made impressions as well with Germany’s Audi being among 2014’s Top Risers at number 45 with a brand value increase of 27 percent. This position is a reflection of Audi’s record-breaking sales this year amounting to more than \$6 billion as well as its innovative technologies, such as the A7 self-driving vehicle.

The German automaker demonstrated its new autonomous vehicle on a designated testing road in Tampa, FL, ([see story](#)) and California ([see story](#)).



Audi's piloted driving in California

New entrants included British automaker Land Rover who placed at number 91. Land Rover has seen double-digit growth each year since being acquired by India’s Tata Motors in 2008 and for 2014, the automaker saw sales rise 15 percent year-over-year.

Apple's harvest

Apple, unsurprisingly, topped the list at number one with a brand value exceeding \$100 billion. Apple’s value is a testament to the power of brand building, according to Interbrand’s Jez Frampton, Interbrand’s global CEO.

L2’s founder, agrees and predicted that technology giant Apple will be venturing into luxury categories in the near future to capitalize on enormous profit margins and its pristine brand image at the L2 Forum 2013.

During the “7: The Forces Shaping Prestige in 2014” session, L2 Think Tank boss Scott Galloway pointed out that Apple’s acquisition of CEOs from Burberry and Saint Laurent indicates that the brand is forcefully moving toward the luxury sector. The founder also

warned that luxury brands will begin to face increasing disruption from outsiders ([see story](#)).

Mr. Frampton notes that Apple has achieved these gains “by creating experiences that are seamless, contextually relevant and increasingly based around an overarching ecosystem of integrated products and services, both physical and digital.”

Final Take

Jen King, lead reporter on Luxury Daily, New York

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