

ADVERTISING

## Personification of beauty paints shared brand, consumer narrative

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*Tom Ford's Lips & Boys collection*

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By JEN KING

Following the example of named handbag collections, beauty marketers have begun to look inward when naming cosmetics to script narratives that are reflective of their brands and can be applied to a consumer's own life.

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**Luxury Daily**

Given the aspirational nature of cosmetics naming a lipstick, for example, after an influential friend, muse or lover of a brand founder personalizes the product in a deeper way than a stock color. Although Hermès' Birkin and Gucci's Kelly handbags were named after iconic women, their names cannot be readily applied to a variety of consumer to the same degree as a wide range collection.

"Personalization helps with the brand's narrative, especially with extra emphasis on the social and interest graph," said Dalia Strum, professor at the [Fashion Institute of Technology](#) and founder of [Dalia Inc.](#), New York.

"It creates momentum with experiences and inspiration to bring the product to fruition," she said.

Your name here

Nearly all luxury houses have some degree of personalization, from bespoke tailoring and cobbling to simple monogramming services. These tactics are an essential part of the experiential services touted by luxury houses, but not all consumer demographics are able to interact with a brand in this fashion.

To this notion, cosmetics, especially lipsticks, are one way to interact with an aspirational individual on a personalized level, even if the products are not a direct reference to the consumer. If a product is named after a loved one or someone influential in their own life, the consumer may be more inclined to purchase over a shade given a basic name describing its color.

For example, U.S. fashion label Tom Ford personified its latest lipstick collection using the names of men who have left an impression on the eponymous founder over the course of his life and career.

Personification of products is effective for humanizing a range and playing on consumer sentiment, but oftentimes the persona given to an item correlates with the gender the merchandise is geared toward. Similar to Mr. Ford's inspiration, female consumers may purchase particular shades from the "Lips & Boys" series based on personal experiences ([see story](#)).



### *Tom Ford's Lips & Boys collection*

To this effect, U.S. fashion label Marc Jacobs named the 20 shades in the Le Marc Lip Creme collection after iconic women who have influenced the eponymous designer's life.

As a way to ensure for brand cohesion, while still exploring the story of Marc Jacobs, some of the lipsticks were given names that brand enthusiasts may have recognized from advertising campaigns even if they were unaware of the personal connection between designer and his muses ([see story](#)).

For example, So Sofia and So Miley are named after director Sofia Coppola and singer Miley Cyrus. Although close friends of Mr. Jacobs, the women have also been involved in the brand's marketing effort with Ms. Coppola filming and starring in efforts and Ms. Cyrus working with Marc Jacobs on charity initiatives and as the face of its spring/summer 2014 ads.



*Marc Jacobs' Le Marc Lip Creme collection*

The personalization of lipsticks offers a different way for a brand to tell its history as well. Although simple in execution, it may cause the consumer to become more interested in who her lipstick is named after and further brand exploration.

French fashion house Chanel, for instance, is paying tribute to the influencers found in Gabrielle “Coco” Chanel’s life through a collection of named lipsticks. Each hue in the Rouge Coco lip color collection tells a story of the mademoiselle’s “life and legend.” More so, the colors in the collection celebrate Coco’s “intimate circles.”



*Promotional image for Chanel's Arthur lipstick from the Rouge Coco collection*

The five lines that make up the collection include Lovers in red, Family in nudes, Muses in corals, Best Friends in pinks and Artists in plum shades.

Lovers include Arthur and Dimitri, while Family features Louise and Adrienne. Muses represent Catherine and Misia, while Best Friends features Olga and Vera. In Artists, there

is Elise and Ina ([see story](#)).

Whether the purchased lipstick in Tom Ford's John in bright pop pink or Chanel's Elise is a plum hue, these names may have deep, personal meaning to the consumer's own narrative. Thus, a shared connection with a brand and its influencers may spark an ongoing relationship as that consumer's wealth matures.

"Consumers enjoy knowing the 'story' behind the product experience, so even if it's a small part - it could essentially become their story to allow them to better connect with the brand's lifestyle," Ms. Strum said.

A reflection of self

Likewise, handbags are often considered an extension of one's self and allows for the consumer to share a bit of her personality through a product in way that a pant or jacket cannot do. To this effect, many brands given gendered names to their handbags to allow for self exploration.

For example, France's Cartier released a new video on its social media pages featuring a short story about two bags, one male and one female, from its new Jeanne Toussaint & Louis Cartier bags collection.

The video's love story allows Cartier to promote the collection as more than leather bags. By embodying human emotion, the bags can create personal correlations for potential consumers ([see story](#)).

Once an emotional connection is created through a personified product, consumers may return to continue the experience.

"As customers, we have the tendency to refer to products by first name as they are not just products," Ms. Strum said. "They accompany us through our day-to-day activities, events and even vacations.

"We grow an emotional connection and attachment towards them, so by referencing them by name, they become essentials that we care for," she said. "Once a lipstick runs out, we have the emotional connection built in and must pick up another [Tom Ford Dahlia lipstick](#)."

Final Take

*Jen King, lead reporter on Luxury Daily, New York*

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