

RESEARCH

Consumers drive 99.36pc of social conversation surrounding luxury fashion: report

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Image courtesy of Michael Kors

By JEN KING

Despite boasting immense followings, a large percentage of luxury fashion brands are surprisingly inactive on social media, according to a new report by Brandwatch.

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Brandwatch's "Social Insights on the Luxury Fashion Industry" report has discovered that although a brand may place well by adopting social media, they are only scratching the surface of the opportunities available by mining social intelligence data. Luxury brands are often seen as latecomers in terms of embracing social and digital channels, but by fully taking into account the insights available from social media interactions, these labels can craft high-touch service in an online setting.

"The reasons luxury fashion businesses haven't yet embraced social may be different for each brand," said James Lovejoy, content researcher at [Brandwatch](#). "Many are stymied by their commitment to tradition and heritage – that's a really important part of a lot of these brands' image but that culture holds them back when it comes to social."

"Deloitte's Global Powers of Luxury Goods 2014 ([see story](#)) puts it well, there's a

difference between ubiquity and exclusivity. Brands may feel that by entering social, they become ubiquitous and lose their exclusivity and prestige," he said. "The reality is that people are already discussing many of these major brands on social – they're already ubiquitous. By engaging on social, brands are taking advantage of opportunities to steer their own brand image.

"The report provides an overview and deep insights on the luxury fashion industry through the lens of social media. It aims to provide brands with a better understanding of the social landscape that surrounds their industry. The key message to brands would be that there are strong opportunities for brands to connect with and understand their audiences on social."

For the [Social Insights on the Luxury Fashion Industry](#) report, Brandwatch explored the social presence and strengths of 32 fashion and luxury brands. From these brands, Brandwatch analyzed 721,140 social conversations, posted to Facebook and Twitter, to evaluate performance based on five key categories: social visibility, general visibility, net sentiment, reach growth and social engagement and content. The potential score a brand could receive was 500 points.

Driven by the masses

Today's consumers are increasingly social, using preferred social media channels to share their opinions about nearly every topic including favored brands. While luxury brands do participate on social, the conversation is driven by the consumer.

Brandwatch found that on Twitter brand tweets only account for .37 percent of the conversation while the remaining 99.63 percent comes from consumers. Indeed, a tweet from a luxury brand with a huge following will be more visible than the average consumer's, but brand tweets guide a conversation; 35.98 percent are retweets and 6.36 percent are replies.

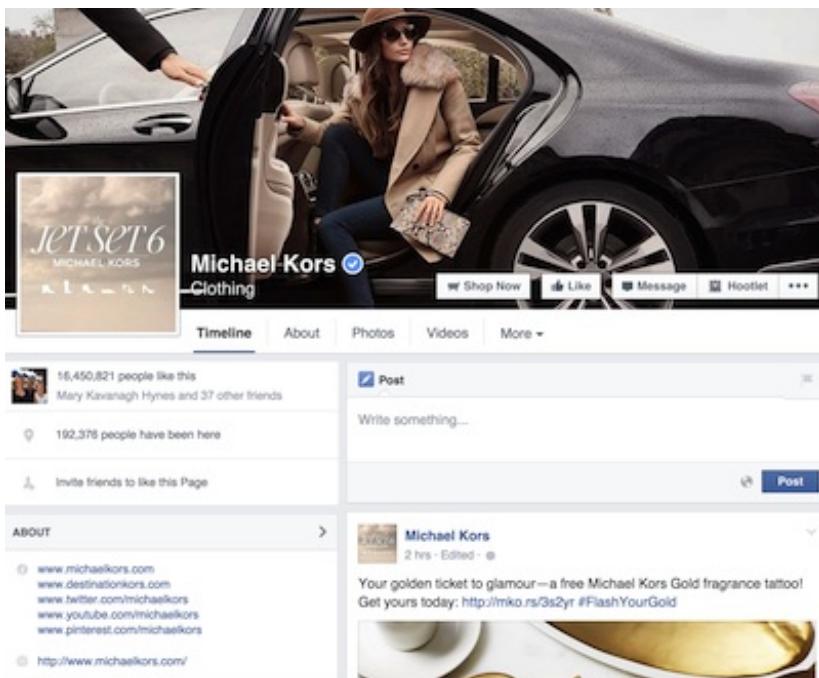
But for a guided conversation to begin, luxury brands must be more active on social media to increase these interactions. According to Brandwatch, the brands surveyed have an average follower community of 1,671,749, but they tweet only 1.57 times per day with replies and retweets even lower, at .08 and .11, respectively, on the average day.

Burberry's Twitter account

Facebook fares similarly, with surveyed brands having an average page like of 6,048,835 and posting about 1.54 times per average day and commenting to generate a dialogue with consumers about .4 times per day.

To compare to another industry to put luxury brand activities into perspective, brands in the food and beverage sector, for instance, tweet nearly 27 times and post less than two times on Facebook in an average day.

In terms of brand leaders on Twitter, the most active is Burberry, with 4.53 tweets per day, and the most responsive is Tiffany & Co. with 1.19 replies. On Facebook, Michael Kors is the most active and the most responsive with 11.29 posts and 6.41 comments per day.



Michael Kors' Facebook page

The timing of social media posts is also important for brands to ensure that their intended audience views the shared content. Brands are most active during working hours, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and while their consumer base is active at all times, many luxury brands do not extend posts to include Sundays and the hours between 9 p.m. and 11 p.m. each night, when individuals are more likely to have downtime.

Of the 32 brands surveyed for the report, Chanel placed at number one with an overall score of 346.22 out of the possible 500, showing that even a brand considered by many to be the industry's most prolific has work to be done.

Chanel's Twitter account

Expected brands such as Christian Dior, Louis Vuitton, Ralph Lauren, Burberry and Gucci all place within the top 10. Brands that placed lower than expected include Michael Kors at 18, Dolce & Gabbana at 24 and Hermes at 28.

When broken down by gender, Chloe led the social conversation among women while Breitling was the brand most tweeted by male consumers.

You're on video

Video is considered the strongest and most effective marketing medium used by brands to engage with consumers.

Brandwatch found that video and photo content perform best on Facebook, accounting for 96 percent of posts and receiving the most likes, comments and shares for luxury fashion brands. Videos alone account for 11.53 percent receiving 5,774 likes, 333 comments and 1,709 shares per day.

Researcher L2 has found that this is true for the luxury beauty sector as well.

Video bloggers in the beauty space generate more than 700 million views on YouTube per month, showing the value of filmed content.

These influencers now have more clout with younger consumers than most mainstream celebrities due to the authentic and approachable format video blogging allows, making collaborative partnerships with revered video bloggers worthwhile for beauty marketers. The L2 "Intelligence Report: Video 2015" also found that posts from popular video bloggers achieve two times the number of views as the monthly circulations of top magazines targeting the same demographic ([see story](#)).

Social media has provided brands with an outlet to tout their respective heritages and aspirational qualities.

"A lot of it comes down to brand integrity," said Adam Edwards, sector director at [Brandwatch](#). "We're talking about companies that make a lot of their profit by being aspirational, and everything that comes along with that - mystery, elusiveness and in some cases an intentional air of superiority."

"Social media requires those boundaries to be broken down into a more candid and conversational approach, which goes against this history of opposing behavior," he said.

Final Take

Jen King, lead reporter on Luxury Daily, New York

Embedded Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/Nc8pFaKMCr4>