

EVENTS/CAUSES

Brands extend breast cancer initiatives long beyond October

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The Peninsula New York, 2012

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

Each October for Breast Cancer Awareness Month, luxury brands across sectors work to raise awareness and proceeds for a cure, but how did this initiative become so popular, and what makes it effective?

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Whether it's hotels lighting up pink or beauty and skincare brands offering pink products and donating a percentage of the revenue, it is by now inevitable that charitable engagements will outnumber Halloween promotions in the luxury world. Luxury brands have always been called upon by consumers to be socially conscious, a call only strengthening as millennials accrue wealth, and it's that requirement that prevents such initiatives from feeling like gimmicks or cheap attempts at good publicity.

Think pink

Among the most ambitious campaigns this year is Peninsula's "The Art of Pink" campaign, the fifth consecutive year in which the brand has joined the fight to end breast cancer. The Art of Pink will bring specially commissioned pink-inspired artwork by internationally acclaimed artists to Peninsula hotels throughout the world this October in recognition of Breast Cancer Awareness Month.



The Peninsula Hong Kong, 2015

The hotel chain will exhibit and auction photography by Chen Man, paintings by Qin Feng, cartoons by Chiratorn Chirapavoti, sculptures by Nathalie Decoster and other works by such names as Choi Jeong Hwa and Grimanesa Amors, with proceeds going to local breast cancer charities ([see story](#)). Different hotels will have different offers,

promotions and artwork showing the dedication and thought the brand put into the cause.

Similarly, the Ritz-Carlton hotel in San Francisco has turned pink for the month of October to raise awareness of breast cancer, for the second year. In addition, the hotel will be offering pink afternoon tea every Saturday of the month, where it will offer an array of delicious foods alongside its food, for \$65 per person, with \$10 donated to the Breast Cancer Emergency Fund (BCEF), which helps alleviate financial needs of low-income breast cancer patients.



Ritz-Carlton San Francisco in pink, 2014

For those who prefer something a little stronger than tea, the hotel will also offer a "Pink Promise" cocktail made with bourbon, cranberry, pineapple juice, orange juice, lemon juice and ginger ale, with \$1 per cocktail donated to the BCEF. Patrons are also called on to donate gently used luxury handbags, which will then be auctioned off for the same charity.

While a pessimistic person might see those initiatives as attempts to score positive publicity, Peninsula's ongoing dedication and the scale of this year's initiative prove the brand's dedication.

Likewise, Ritz-Carlton's Community Footprints dates back more than a decade and focuses on supporting child well-being, environmental responsibility or relieving hunger and poverty through a wide range of initiatives. The program continues to grow, too; Community Footprints has now inspired "Lasting Contributions," which will get newlyweds off to a good start by allowing them a chance to participate in a number of volunteer-initiatives ([see story](#)).



Bloomingdale's give pink get more promotional image, 2014

While it may not be fighting for breast cancer awareness around the year, Ritz-Carlton has nonetheless shown its dedication to community aide and philanthropic causes; Breast Cancer Awareness Month merely provides an excuse for one particular cause.

Sharing is caring

Outside the hotel industry, Este Lauder Cos.' Crme de La Mer has introduced a limited-edition lip balm that retails at \$55 for 32 ounces, with \$10 going to the Breast Cancer Research Foundation. While limited-edition may sound like a charitable donation with a cap on how much La Mer will give, the brand has already proven itself to be socially responsible.



La Mer breast cancer awareness lip balm

In June, La Mer furthered its conservation efforts this year by partnering with National Geographic to promote ocean exploration and preservation.

Crme de la Mer has dedicated its energy to improving ocean conservation for the past 10 years, donating more than \$2.6 million since 2008 ([see story](#)).

For newer brands that do not yet have the clout of an internationally recognized name, a little creativity has gone a long way in preventing a genuine effort look like a gimmick.

Private aviation brand Wheels Up has recently unveiled its 45th aircraft, a pink Beechcraft King Air 350i, to raise awareness for breast cancer.

The plane is part of a larger #WheelsUpGoesPink campaign, which also includes charitable donations. Unlike many breast cancer awareness campaigns, however, Wheels Up's initiative will last more than a month and the pink plane will stay in the fleet indefinitely, a constant symbol of breast cancer awareness ([see story](#)).



Wheels Up pink plane

Perhaps above all, these initiatives often give the consumers a chance to engage in worthy causes. Luxury brands show throughout the year that they are willing to play a part in a number of necessary goods; Breast Cancer Awareness Month represents a chance to ensure that consumers do their part, too.

Similarly, other brands have created products that are useful and necessary long after the calendar turns.

For instance, Kering-owned fashion label Stella McCartney has designed a new lingerie line supporting survivors of breast cancer.

Debuting right before Breast Cancer Awareness Month begins on Oct. 1, a portion of the proceeds from a cheery pink lace bra will benefit the Linda McCartney Center in the United Kingdom and the National Breast Cancer Foundation in the United States and Australia. Breast cancer strikes close to home for designer Ms. McCartney, whose mother, Linda, passed away from the disease in 1998 ([see story](#)).

Final Take

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