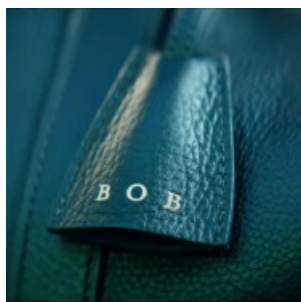


INTERNET

Mulberry barks up a new tree with latest collaboration and video

October 21, 2015



"Who's Bob?" Mulberry asks in its latest video.

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

Apparel and accessories label Mulberry is asking consumers, "Who's Bob?"

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As it turns out, Bob is the star of Mulberry's video announcing a collaboration with luxury pet outfitters Mungo & Maud. Branching out into petwear will likely generate business for Mulberry, as pet owners often see their dogs or cats as a family member and will treat them as such.

"Mulberry takes an interesting angle regarding luxury petwear because the video conveys this subconscious idea that the pet is taking the place of a significant other or an adult equivalent, compared to the more prevalent narrative of seeing a pet as one's 'child,'" said Jen Choi, senior social marketing manager at [Huge](#).

"The size of the dog and its place in the front seat, along with the products shown, help tell that story," she said. "This is certainly a more appealing approach for the sophisticated consumer vs. the trendy consumer."

Ms. Choi is not affiliated with Mulberry, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

[Mulberry](#) did not respond before press deadline.

Bob and Amy

The page where the video is hosted first displays text asking "Who's Bob?" "He's the love of her life," it goes on. "Together they're escaping the city and heading to the countryside. Meet the mysterious companion..."

The short film begins with a woman driving in a car. After about 20 seconds, there is a close-up of her hands on the wheel, revealing a pair of quilted gloves. There is then a cut to the backseat, where two bags sit and a red glow adds a moody ambiance to the video.

Mulberry presents: Bob

After the shot of the bags from afar the camera cuts in to reveal a close-up of one with the name "Amy" inscribed, with a cut back to the driver implying her name. The mystery comes to a forefront when we see the name "Bob" inscribed on the other bag, followed by another shot of the woman, who stares straight ahead before smiling slightly and gesturing to the left.

At that point, just as the music reaches its climax, there is a close-up of a black dog. Another cut shows a leather

collar with a name tag, which reads "Bob," attached to it. The dog is now sitting in the passenger seat, and the two drive on.

"I can see how they're trying to convey the idea that one's pet is in essence an important companion, who has a meaningful place in the target consumer's life and deserving of quality products because of that," said Ms. Choi. "The luggage name personalization not only facilitates the video narrative, but also connotes luxury."



Bob's Edit dog coat

The gloves, bags, collar and other products in the video are part of the Bob's Edit collection, Mulberry's second collaboration with Mungo & Maud. The collection also includes raincoats for dogs and humans as well as boots, scarves, a keyring and a fedora.

Colloquially known as "man's best friend," dogs make a compelling audience for luxury apparel because of their closeness with their human companions. Just as a luxury buyer may purchase high-end clothing for his or her significant other or children, many would buy for the four-legged members of the family.



Bob's Edit calfskin bag

At the same time, the video does not take itself too seriously, using the reveal of a dog in the passenger for laughs and products are not clearly identified in the video because of the lighting and short shot lengths. This, along with the lower price point for the products and the impending holiday seasons may convince even reluctant consumers and brand loyalists to purchase a Christmas present for fun indulgence for a pet.

Including products for people in the collection could also influence shoppers to add an extra item to their cart with the aim of having a matching pet as well.

"The Mulberry petwear products touted are also much more in line with luxury basics compared to overly trendy petwear products," Huggins' Ms. Choi said. "This approach seems to be aligned to Mulberry's initial history of creating products that were more elevated utility rather than trendy and whimsical."

The products could appeal particularly to those active on social media, a market segment that skew young. Targeting these consumers gives Mulberry an opportunity to spread its message virally and organically.

"Leveraging the relationship between consumers and their pets is an effective way to get customers posting about your brand," said Juliet Carnoy, marketing manager at [Pixlee](#), San Francisco. "People love posting about the products, places, people – and animals that they love.

"By asking customers to post photos of their pets in relation to its new product line, Mulberry can expect to increase customer engagement and brand awareness around its Mungo and Maud collection," she said.

Four-legged frenzy

Other brands have also created capsule collections for things that go bark in the night.

In May, British footwear and accessories label Jimmy Choo showed its whimsical side with an exclusive animation featuring a bull terrier named after the brand.

In the social film created to promote an upcoming capsule collection, artist Rafael Mantesso captures his dog "Jimmy Choo" leading a glamorous lifestyle filled with fashion and parties. Taking this humorous approach may endear the brand to a new generation of consumers ([see story](#)).

Even those that do not necessarily sell clothing for animals leverage the attachment people have to their pets in marketing efforts.

For example, New York-based department store Bergdorf Goodman combined its "puppies and purses" with an online feature touting designer bags in May.

For #Barkdorfs, the retailer collaborated with PurseBlog to capture pooches modeling different styles from the likes of Fendi and Chlo. These photos stand out from other fashion content on social media, due to their sense of humor and adorable stars ([see story](#)).

Mulberry's decision to differentiate itself from these brands in its presentation gives it a unique spin that sets the brand up for success.

"Emotional storytelling will almost always trump product functionality," Hugu's Ms. Choi said.

"Appealing to a pet owner's emotional connection and attachment with his or her pet should be no exception for this particular target," she said. "But again, the most interesting takeaway in this case is that the pet takes on less of a 'child' form, and more as an 'adult', which is a distinctive narrative."

Final Take

Forrest Cardamenis, editorial assistant, Luxury Daily, New York