

MULTICHANNEL

Cord-cutting, streaming habits point to new runway delivery platforms

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Instagram post from Burberry for spring/summer 2016 LFW

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

VERSAILLES, France Disruptions in the television industry offer a major opportunity for fashion, according to the CEO of WME/IMG at The New York Times International Luxury Conference on April 6.

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It would have been unthinkable a decade or two ago that food shows would be so popular on television, and fashion could have the same breakthrough. The shift in the runway show to a more consumer-facing event and consumers' streaming and cord-cutting habits indicate opportunities for brands to reach consumers in new in-demand ways.

"It has to do with enabling content to be consumed by whomever wants to consume it in any form they want to consume it," said Ariel Emanuel, co-CEO of WME/IMG. "It's no longer just a TV show. Who knew when I started in the business, way way way long ago, that a 'small screen' right now would be a phone?"

"We have to, on my end, allow the business to adapt to how people want to consume content," he said. "Likewise, the definition of success has to change from what we traditionally think.

"If you have that in your head about how you start creating content, I think you can be successful. Then you only need to have a subscription service, some form of a paywall or an advertising mechanism that enable it to pay for itself and hopefully be profitable."

Anytime, anyplace

WME/IMG has recently tested a platform in Toronto and New York that will greatly expand the avenues through which consumers can consume content. At a New York Fashion Week roll out, 35,000 people attended the event, 94,000 downloaded the app and videos amassed over 10 million views.

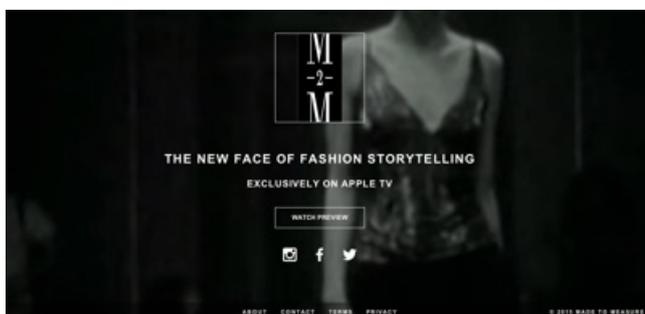


Tom Ford s/s 16 runway video

Through the new platform, consumers will be able to stream runway shows across a variety of different channels. Although the platform is not exclusive to fashion coverage Mr. Emanuel said that in May they will conduct a test connecting sports fans following elsewhere to the actual event it's potential in fashion is particularly noteworthy.

Mr. Emanuel points out that the popularity of runway streams on Twitter and Periscope, as well as the WME/IMG event attendance, evidence a great demand for fashion content. As he sees it, his job is to use technology and help shape the landscape in a way that allows designers to take advantage of their multiplying audience and bring the public into fashion shows.

He compares this growth possibility to food television, which was once a niche market but has exploded in popularity, particularly with reality and competitive shows. Fashion could follow the same path.



Made2Measure Web site

Made2Measure, a WME/IMG fashion network available on Apple TV ([see story](#)), already sustains itself on advertising alone. As the platform continues to grow and more designers see the demand in the consumer market for fashion content be it runway shows or something else the possibilities for content are endless.

Streaming has already broken down traditional viewing habits, and popular Web series and works by innovators such as Louis C.K. are breaking the traditional half-hour/hour rule for televised content. As on-demand, streaming and Web series expand, these molds will be broken, opening up fashion content, allowing for more creative content as designers see fit.

WME/IMG acts as a bridge between business and consumer. Mr. Emanuel spoke of making platforms flexible, so that designers could determine their content and decide who they want to see it and where it will be.



Chanel runway

One designer had a plan to have a designer entirely in virtual reality, but the plan could not be fully executed in time. The plan is to try again this coming September. VR is another tool for designers to use creatively, and WME/IMG is testing the technology to ensure that its clients have access and are able to continue to widen and fulfill their creative visions.

Runway makeover

With consumer access to runway shows expanding, some brands are asking whether the entire runway show model needs a makeover.

The debate surrounding the role of the fashion show today is escalating, as more designers opt to shake up the runway format.

A rise in digital integration at fashion shows means that the audience at home and within the venue consumes and creates media instantaneously, but typically that feeling of instant gratification ends there, as consumers then wait months for the collection to become available for purchase. In a world where shopping is often just a click away, this delayed path from runway to retail can feel dated, prompting a number of brands to attempt to fix the format ([see story](#)).

While some are ditching "see now, buy later" for "see now, buy now," other brands have innovated with different changes.

Italian fashion label Gucci is the latest house to alter its runway show format.

Gucci president and CEO Marco Bizzarri announced during his keynote at the International New York Times Luxury Conference on April 5 that the brand will begin showing its men's and women's wear together in a single show per season starting in 2017. Fashion is trying to find a winning format for the runway show, which causes creatives at large houses to stage numerous spectacles a year ([see story](#)).

"When you can go directly to consumer and there's no barrier anymore, I think retail whether this platform existed or not was under pressure with Walmart, Amazon sitting out there," Mr. Emanuel said. "I think the retail space is going to be under pressure, and they're going to need to find out how they play to survive.

"We all need to constantly look at our business or you're not going to exist," he said. "I'm not sure any of them have thought through this, I don't know if any have done it properly or not, that's not my business.

"I know we're trying to make sure we're ahead and we offer something to our clients. I think retail's under pressure, as a lot of businesses are, because the unintended consequences of a lot of technology is that existing models are going to be broken."