

ADVERTISING

## Chanel chooses Blake Lively to introduce Mademoiselle handbag collection

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By RACHEL LAMB

French powerhouse Chanel is matching elegance and classic beauty to promote its new Mademoiselle handbag collection by using Blake Lively as its newest brand ambassador.

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**Luxury Daily**

Ms. Lively, an actress on the CW television show "Gossip Girl," was announced as the brand's Mademoiselle ambassador in January. The first campaign pictures were released earlier this month.

"It is an honor to be selected by Karl Lagerfeld to represent the new line of Mademoiselle handbags," said Blake Lively in a statement to the press. "Like all girls, I grew up with a fascination for everything the house of Chanel represents: timeless elegance, grace, sophistication, intelligence and feminine power."

**Chanel** declined comment for this article.

Mademoiselle Lively

Ms. Lively was chosen by Chanel's creative director Karl Lagerfeld to represent the brand because of her fresh, youthful image and her innate sense of fashion.



*An image from the Mademoiselle campaign*

At the age of 23, she is a seductive and charismatic blonde, just as the legendary actresses of the '50s and '60s were, Chanel said in a statement to the press.

The future ambassadress attended the Chanel show for the first time in Paris in July 2010, while wearing a branded jacket.

Ms. Lively and Mr. Lagerfeld met during the red-carpet event. The two of them immediately bonded and Ms. Lively was chosen to be the face of the brand.



*Mr. Lagerfeld with Ms. Lively at the campaign shoot*

“It’s important for the brand to think about how effective their alignment is, and do the core values and the attributes of the organization align with that of the potential spokesperson?” said Rex Whisman, founder and principal at BrandED Consultants Group, Denver. “Too often, organizations think that just because someone is famous or popular that is going to generate a lot of attention and result in sales, and that’s not always the case.

“I’m a firm believer that alignment needs to take place in order for a campaign to be successful,” he said. “There can be surprises that on the surface may not seem like a great fit, but when the mission and the core values of the brand and its ambassador are in sync, then it will result in success.”

**BrandED** is a consulting firm. It is not associated with Chanel and Mr. Whisman commented as a third-party expert on brand ambassadors.

The collection

The Mademoiselle handbag comes in five sizes in calfskin, lambskin, alligator skin and shagreen.



*An image from the Mademoiselle campaign*

The line is available in black, midnight blue, red, pink and orange.

The bag's chain can be worn wrapped around the wrist, on the shoulder or across the chest. There is a small charm with the iconic interlacing C's.

Choosing a spokesperson

Ambassadors are an extension of a brand, therefore companies should be very careful when determining who it wants to represent and share its image and values.

A celebrity that makes a public mistake or is involved in a scandal could translate badly for a brand that it is representing.

For example, Buick made sure that it pulled its Tiger Wood advertisements after the golfer's stint in the limelight turned sour last year.

Additionally, if a brand and its ambassador are not properly aligned or seem like an awkward fit, it could confuse customers.

Just because a celebrity is famous does not mean that he or she will make a good brand spokesperson.

A company needs to think about how the person will carry the brand's image across all platforms such as mobile, print, television and online.

Another important aspect is how the ambassador appears on social networking sites. As consumers are relying more on Facebook and YouTube to interact with brands, the spokesperson should be able to translate well onto the social scene.

In the past, a lot of the connections are made with celebrities because of their acting ability and their ability to project a strong image on TV, but the medium, just like print advertising, is being diminished and the ability to provide the right persona online is important and making the best use of social networks, according to Mr. Whisman.

Brands need to keep in mind the target consumer, and if that doesn't happen, the partnership is going to seem forced and inauthentic.

"Brands who pick the right spokesperson can benefit greatly," Mr. Whisman said. "Natalie Portman and Dior and David Beckham for Armani are perfect examples.

"When a brand chooses someone that correctly carries over the brand's image and values that resonate with the target consumer, it can't do anything but help them," he said.

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