

EVENTS/CAUSES

## Fairmont invites new perspective with visual storytelling partnership

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*Fairmont San Francisco*

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By FORREST CARDAMENIS

Canada's Fairmont Hotels & Resorts is giving consumers a different point of view with a photo exhibition.

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The chain has partnered with visual storytelling agency Namara to provide a behind-the-scenes look at global luxury hospitality services via a photo exhibition. Giving consumers a candid peek behind the curtain shows off the personal connection on which the hotel prides itself.

"This project is the first time in Fairmont's over 100-year history where guests can gain a glimpse into the stories of our Fairmont family, which is the foundation of our iconic luxury service," said Alexandra Blum, vice president of public relations and partnerships at [Fairmont Hotels and Resorts](#). "Using documentary photography to tell the stories of our colleagues is so meaningful for us because they are such an incredibly important part of the Fairmont guest experience.

"We wanted to be able to showcase that authentically and this journalistic approach to content development enabled us to do that," she said. "This exhibition showcases many stories that guests have never had the opportunity to see or hear."

### Photo-journey

Seven Namara photojournalists, who have contributed *The New Yorker*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *National Geographic*, *Time* and *The Telegraph*, shadowed Fairmont employees across nine different hotels, from San Francisco to Shanghai. Armed with their cameras, they captured moments of interaction between guests and employees, showcasing the personal care and concern each client receives.



This project is the first time that Fairmont, which was founded in 1907, has offered consumers a behind-the-scenes look at its business.

Fairmont's recently commissioned insights report found that guests value the hotel for its personnel, citing it as a highlight and an incentive to return ([see story](#)). Showcasing those moments between guest and employee is therefore a logical brand element to highlight.

"It was great to work on such a large-scale project with Fairmont. My subjects were very proud to be involved and very proud to be part of the Fairmont team," said Dominic Nahr, one of the award-winning photojournalists involved in the project, in a statement. "This approach to creating content not only gives companies a unique viewpoint from which to tell their stories, but it also helps to fund the artistry that each of us does on a personal level."



*Fairmont Lake Louise*

Additionally, working with independent storytellers to highlight the brand's customer service gives the initiative an authenticity and subtlety that will make it more likely to resonate with consumers who are unfamiliar with the Fairmont brand.

A selection of the photos will be on view at the Contact Photography Festival at the Murray Building in Toronto through May 20. Namara and the photojournalists in the project independently curated the exhibit.



### *Fairmont Istanbul*

At the exhibit's conclusion, a digital version will be presented at [fairmontmoments.com](http://fairmontmoments.com), where consumers can share and interact with the exhibit. Opting for a photo exhibition will help ensure the brand imparts its values on a new subset of consumers.

### New storytellers

Realizing that consumers want to hear about brand from independent parties, brands have embraced the opportunity to allow outsiders to tell their stories.

Recently, Italian fashion label Gucci provided an inside look at its latest advertising photo shoot by handing its Snapchat over to the campaign's star, actor and musician Jared Leto.

As a form of instant gratification for fans, the label announced Mr. Leto as the new face of its Gucci Guilty fragrance Dec. 11 and then immediately handed its Snapchat account over to the celebrity to document his perspective from the set. When campaign spokesmodels take on more of a role while promoting a particular brand, it lends a more authentic tone to collaborations ([see story](#)).

Other hotels have embraced photography's insurgent popularity in other ways.

For example, Mandarin Oriental, New York is spotlighting the panoramic views of Manhattan accessible from its hotel through a social media campaign.

The property has tapped photographer Alice Gao as the guest curator of #MyViewYork, as she documents classic New York scenes with her unique perspective. With the rise of visual social media, travelers are more focused on getting the perfect sharable shots, making the photogenic properties of a hotel a key selling point ([see story](#)).

"This project is about our colleagues and their dedication to delivering genuine, memorable service," Ms. Blum said. "A key theme that emerged for all the photographers as they visited our hotels around the world was how incredibly passionate and devoted our colleagues are to the brand and to our guests."

"It is hard to describe the connection that Fairmont colleagues have with their work and this project was the first time that we have been able to come close to telling that story in an impactful way," she said.

"Our first Luxury Insights Report found that guests have a genuine connection to our colleagues and often describe

them as an integral to their overall travel experience. These long lasting impressions provide a significant incentive for repeat guest visits. This project is a meaningful way to give guests an opportunity to connect with our colleagues on a deeper and more personal level."

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