

JEWELRY

Carl F. Bucherer reconfigures digital, social efforts to build out awareness

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Li Bingbing was selected as Carl F. Bucherer's first global ambassador

By JEN KING

Swiss watchmaker Carl F. Bucherer has unveiled a new brand image that emphasizes the importance of a strong digital and social media presence.

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For the digital rebranding of its brand, **Carl F. Bucherer** worked with Digital Luxury Group on a series of efforts that have heightened the watchmaker's awareness through a revamped Web site, establishing a community of brand ambassadors and fortifying its placement on social channels, among other tactics. As a smaller house that has been family-owned since 1888, Carl F. Bucherer had to refine its digital properties to meet modern consumers on frequented platforms in a bid to stay relevant and modern in a highly competitive industry sector.

"Carl F. Bucherer's unveil of its new brand look and digital and social media focus was not an exercise in driving short term sales, but in building a luxury brand identity consistent across all touchpoints, while maximizing visibility and interest," said Tamar Koifman, head of sales and marketing at **Digital Luxury Group**.

"Together with the brand we've set up a great foundation for Carl F. Bucherer to continue its positive trajectory and we at Digital Luxury Group look forward to our continued partnership," she said.

The golden reveal

Lucerne, Switzerland-based Carl F. Bucherer's CEO Sascha Moeri acknowledged that if the watchmaker did not adapt digitally, its brand would fall behind and be unable to capture the market share of today's watch consumers.

"Today new opportunities lie ahead," Mr. Moeri said in a statement. "Our mission is to shape this future with respect to the brand's distinct heritage."

To achieve this feat, Carl F. Bucherer worked with Digital Luxury Group to highlight the brand's brilliance digitally through social interactions and curated content, such as the focus on its hometown and its impact on the brand's heritage.

Carl F. Bucherer: Made of Lucerne

The watchmaker's new, modern direction was then unveiled during Baselworld 2016, the horology industry's most-coveted event.

The launch of Carl F. Bucherer's new Web site brought 56 percent more traffic for 2016 than it had for the year-ago.

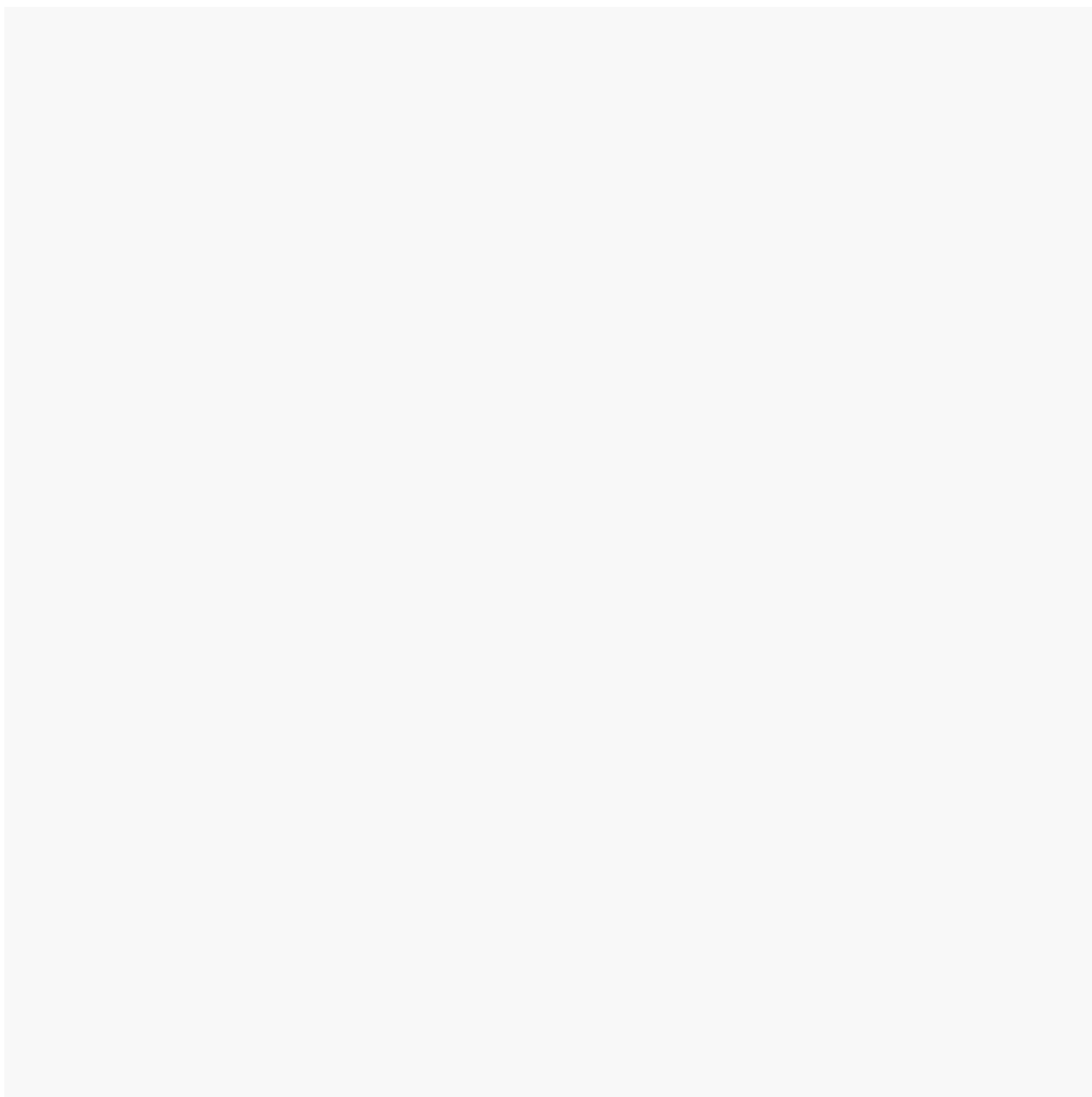
While a Web site is vital for a brand's digital successes, its awareness is increasingly dependent on the significance of its social media channels.

Since its rebranding efforts were completed, Carl F. Bucherer's social media follower growth, between Q1 2014 and Q1 2016, has increased by 123 percent on Facebook and an enormous 560 percent on Instagram.

In this time period, Carl F. Bucherer saw its social media interactions majorly increase as well. On Facebook the increase in interactions saw a jump of 1,091 percent, while Instagram interaction increased by 375 percent.

Additionally visibility was garnered through collaborations within the industry, such as horology enthusiast and social influencer WatchAnish and online watch publication Hodinkee.

During Baselworld, held in March, Carl F. Bucherer worked with WatchAnish to have its watch featured on its Instagram account. As one of the leading watch-focused Instagram accounts, WatchAnish boasts approximately 3.6 million followers.



Thank you @watchanish for stopping by Carl F. Bucherer's booth at @baselworldofficial and showing everyone how good the new Manero Flyback looks on a wrist. #CarlFBucherer #CFBatBW #ManeroFlyback #Baselworld2016 #watchanish #teamwatchanish

A photo posted by Carl F. Bucherer (@carlfbucherer) on Mar 20, 2016 at 5:26am PDT

Similarly, Carl F. Bucherer was featured on Hodinkee with editorial content meant to explore its brand heritage, offerings and its position at Baselworld. Through the use of the hashtag #BringMeToBasel, Hodinkee readers were encouraged to interact with the publication and the brand via social media for a chance to see Carl F. Bucherer's new watches in person at the festival.

A primary focus of Carl F. Bucherer's rebranding effort was to escalate its awareness and positioning among Chinese consumers, who have an affinity for fine timepieces.

To amplify its brand in the Chinese market, Carl F. Bucherer turned to popular celebrity ambassadors with hefty fan bases within China.

In March, just ahead of Baselworld, Carl F. Bucherer named Chinese actress Li Bingbing, as its first global brand ambassador.

At the time of her appointment, Mr. Moeri said, "We are absolutely delighted to be working with Li Bingbing. She is an enormously talented actress. A fascinating and strong personality, who perfectly represents our brand values."

With acting roles in Hollywood blockbusters and numerous Chinese films, as well as a Gucci campaign under her belt, Ms. Bingbing also has 37 million followers on China's Weibo.

Furthering its tie-in with Baselworld, Carl F. Bucherer also invited Gogoboi, a lifestyle influencer, with 5.3 million followers on Weibo, and actor Jin Dong, who has 4.3 million Weibo followers, to join the watchmaker at the annual festival.

Carl F. Bucherer has benefited directly from the massive social communities surrounding these three Chinese ambassadors. Between June 2014 and December 2015, the brand has seen a 478 percent increase in interactions on Weibo, and 100 percent on WeChat.

Carl F. Bucherer - A New Brand Image Powered By Digital

What's ahead

Carl F. Bucherer's digital rebranding comes at a time when the luxury watch and jewelry industry is seeing fragmentation due to lagging online services and an overall decline in global sales.

But, the global jewelry and watch market is expected to grow steadily over the next few years, with total revenues projected to reach \$410 billion by 2019, according to a new report from Fashionbi.

A growing ultra-high-net-worth population in emerging markets such as Mexico, Brazil, Turkey and India along with strong performance in Asia-Pacific and the United States are expected to driving forces in the jewelry sector's predicted rise. While the sector as a whole is anticipating growth going forward, key players have seen mixed results in the past year, with Tiffany & Co.'s sales plunging and Richemont's results up, pointing to the risks of deflated currencies and other macroeconomic hurdles ([see story](#)).

While Carl F. Bucherer's revamped online presence does not currently offer ecommerce, its continued efforts in China may see the need of online purchasing arise quickly.

Luxury brands can no longer forego a presence in China and hope to make up the difference with tourists, according to a recent report by L2.

Double-digit growth days are over in China, and even if it will continue to grow at rates that will make western countries envious, its domestic luxury market contracted in both 2014 and 2015. With China growing, brands will need to adjust to digital issues ranging from poor localization to varied pricing as they compete for a clearly finite market ([see story](#)).

"At Digital Luxury Group we work with a lot of luxury watch and jewelry brands," Ms. Koifman said.

"Despite news of a slowdown, it still remains an important market for many watchmakers, with many still seeing a significant portion of their revenues from Chinese, either in the Mainland or on their travels," she said. "As such, Chinese consumers remain an important audience for brands like Carl F. Bucherer."

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