

MARKETING

Top 10 luxury branding efforts of 2016

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Gucci's DIY service at its Milan flagship

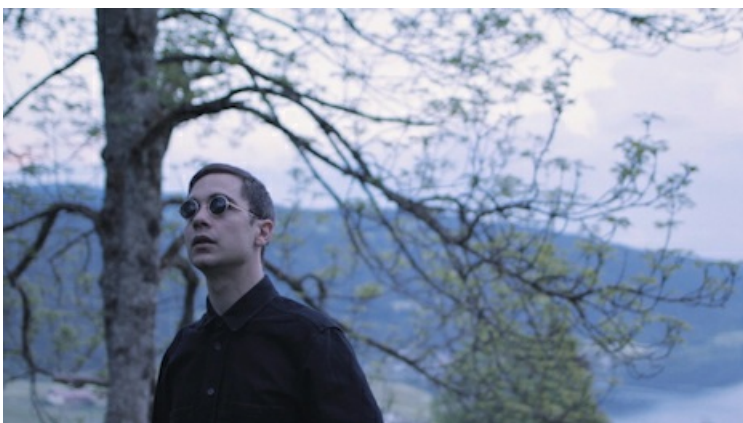
By BRIELLE JAEKEL

Luxury brands took strong stances this year in sharing their personal brand ethos through unique campaigns that lived online, in print and in person.

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From interactive digital elements to impressive limited-engagement events, brands stood out through respective takes on marketing. This year also brought on massive innovations and even further shift in the industry.

Here are the top 10 luxury branding efforts of 2016, in alphabetical order.



Gener8ion for Audemars Piguet

Swiss watchmaker Audemars Piguet captured the balance between innovation and tradition that goes into its Royal Oak Supersonnerie timepiece through sound.

Audemars Piguet commissioned French DJ and producer Surkin to portray the striking watch's chime in an audiovisual project under his creative entity Gener8ion. Through recorded ambient noise at Audemars Piguet's manufacture in Le Brassus and sounds from the natural world, "Sound Awakens" told the story of the brand's craftsmanship through a new point of view.

Surkin, who has previously collaborated with performers such as M.I.A., spent three days at Audemars Piguet's

manufacture and the surrounding landscape, recording hundreds of tones. He then took these back to Paris, where he mixed them to produce the final tracks ([see story](#)).



Bloomingdale's flagship illustration

Department store chain Bloomingdale's helped consumers express themselves through custom emojis.

The retailer's Bloomoticons app, developed in partnership with DabApps, lets users create messages using graphics that are reflective of the store's voice, including fashion items and phrases, and then share them on social media or in a message. This app enables Bloomingdale's to become a part of its loyal customers' conversations.

Bloomingdale's app opens on a page of emojis, inviting consumers to "discover." From there, the user can scroll through emojis and pick out her favorite, selecting it with a tap.

Images include the store's iconic brown bag, a cup of its Forty Carrots frozen yogurt and yellow taxicabs. Others include smiley faces, fashion items, food and sayings such as "chic," "xoxo" and "on fleek" ([see story](#)).



Image from de Grisogono's "Winter Tales in Gstaad"

Swiss jeweler de Grisogono transported consumers to the snowy locale of Gstaad in the Bernese Alps through a social travel journal.

Told in chapters, "Winter Tales in Gstaad" takes place at the Gstaad Palace, a hotel that dates back to the early 20th century, bringing followers along for the ride via videos, text and imagery. The second of de Grisogono's travel journals, this seasonal diary offers the jeweler an opportunity to connect with its audience in a more intimate way.

De Grisogono's story was told via content on its Web site and social media.

In the first chapter online, "The Arrival," de Grisogono's Violetta speaks conversationally to the reader, wishing them a happy new year and inviting them to join her during her stay at Gstaad Palace. Accompanying imagery shows a watch-bedecked arm ringing a concierge desk bell and a view of the Alps ([see story](#)).



Dior's Chteau de La Colle Noire in Grasse, France

French atelier Christian Dior brought its namesake founder's dream to fruition by restoring the Chteau de La Colle Noire in Grasse, France.

In 1950, the Chteau de La Colle Noire was purchased by Mr. Dior with the hope of using the property's 50 hectares as a nursery for flowers intended for the brand's perfumes, but with Mr. Dior's death soon after, his dream was never realized and the house sat mostly unused for 60 years. With the restoration of the property in Southern France, Dior has transported much of its fragrance division to the region.

Even today, long after his premature death, Mr. Dior's legacy lives on in all that his atelier creates. Restoring the Chteau de La Colle Noire in Grasse was symbolic and representative of this practice, as the late designer spent the occupation during WWII at Grasse.

During this time, Mr. Dior found inspiration in the flowers growing here, leading him to create his first perfumes. Today the Miss Dior, Eau Frache, Diorama, Diorissimo and Eau Sauvage are pillars of the brand's fragrance offering ([see story](#)).



The Trevi Fountain in Rome

Italian fashion house Fendi honored its connection with the city of Rome as the brand began celebrations for its 90th anniversary.

Fendi's story began in 1926 at a family-operated atelier on Rome's Via del Plebiscito, and today the label is known the world over for its boundary-pushing designs at the hand of creative director Karl Lagerfeld, who has been with the house since 1965. In a celebratory homecoming of sorts, Fendi is readying Rome's iconic Trevi Fountain, where the house staged its Haute Fourrure runway show on July 7.

Along with social content meant to build anticipation for the July 7 runway presentation, Fendi also created a microsite meant to serve as a hub for its 90th anniversary. Segmented into four chapters, from July 4 to the day of the show, the site also worked as a countdown for the presentation, giving consumers access to editorial content and images pulled from Fendi's social accounts to explore prior to the live-stream ([see story](#)).

Italian fashion house Gucci put creative control in the hands of consumers with the launch of a DIY program, launching first at its Milan boutique.

Consumers who visit the Milanese flagship on via Montenapoleone were able to customize the Dionysus handbag through the DIY service. As the program rolled out globally, Gucci began including other products that can get the DIY

treatments including the Ace sneaker, Princetown shoes, ready-to-wear pieces and men's made-to-order.

Gucci's creative director Alessandro Michele launched the DIY program May 25 as a way to express his philosophy of how the clothing worn by a person represents how they feel. The DIY program fortified this philosophy by creating authentic and free expression through Gucci products.

Likewise, Ms. Michele found inspiration in punk culture, which celebrates its 40th anniversary this year and is deeply rooted in a desire of self-expression ([see story](#)).



Canine Collection shoot for Lyst

Online retailer Lyst went viral courtesy of a controversial launch of a collection marketing dogs as fashion accessories.

After unveiling its "Canine Collection" on May 9, the ecommerce site drew criticism from the RSPCA and concerned consumers, who were worried about the seemingly flippant attitude shown towards the dogs' well-being. After sticking to its narrative, Lyst revealed that the stunt was fake, and used its increased attention and mentions to spotlight the issue of "handbag dogs."

Lyst's Canine Collection opened to "pre-order" on May 8. The site had listings for 33 breeds ranging from dachshunds to great danes, which it categorized by sizes x-small through x-large.

Much like fashion ecommerce, consumers could filter the "products" by color or size, which it claimed lets them pick out the dog that will best match their style sensibility ([see story](#)).



Rolls-Royce Black Badge insignia

British automaker Rolls-Royce Motor Cars showed its dark side to attract risk takers and self-empowered, self-confident youth.

"Black Badge," a darker, more confident and more powerful Rolls-Royce, took shape in a permanent Bespoke series targeting goal-oriented and self-made young affluents. The new series is a significant makeover for Rolls-Royce, but was implemented in response to a changing consumer base and habits.

Black Badge takes inspiration from driven, eccentric figures, namely Sir Malcolm Campbell, aviator Howard Hughes, Keith Moon, Yves Saint Laurent, Muhammed Ali, and of course brand co-founder Charles Rolls. Rolls-Royce draws a line from those individuals to today's self-made young consumers, who live life on the edge and have a "work hard, play hard" mentality ([see story](#)).



Selfridges Shakespeare Refashioned window display featuring Dries Van Noten designs

British department store chain Selfridges embraced literal retail theater with a celebration of the work of renowned playwright William Shakespeare.

In honor of the 400th anniversary of the Bard's death, the retailer launched a multichannel campaign, "Shakespeare Refashioned," updating some of his most popular plays through a fashion-forward filter. Through this celebration, which began on July 4, Selfridges was able to showcase its affection for the arts while highlighting its British heritage.

For this campaign, Selfridges opened a 100-seat theater on its lower ground floor, a first for a department store. Being built in partnership with LG, the theater housed theater company The Faction's production of "Much Ado About Nothing."

The Faction staged a modern interpretation of the play, placing it in today's society, complete with 24-hour tabloid coverage ([see story](#)).



Filming The Treasures of Chatsworth

International auction house Sotheby's created new spaces for art content to amplify the thriving market.

Sotheby's launched Museum Network on Aug. 29, where it hosted content created by museums and other art institutions from around the world. Sotheby's also conceived and produced original content for Apple TV, further propelling the brand into consumers' digital spheres.

Sotheby's Museum Network featured on the brand's Web site as well as its Apple TV channel. There, viewers had access to content created by such institutions as the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Tate and the National Place Museum in Taiwan.

Institutions founded by private collectors, including the Garage Museum of Contemporary Art in Moscow and Los Angeles' Petersen Automotive Museum were also able to share content through Sotheby's new channel ([see story](#)).