

LUXURY MEMO

Brands give love broad definition in contemporary campaigns

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Swarovski's Give Brilliant campaign

By SARAH JONES

As Valentine's Day approaches, luxury brands are celebrating love in all forms through marketing efforts that reflect the diversity of consumers' experiences.

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While depictions of traditional romantic relationships abounded, brands also encouraged individuals to celebrate their affection for friends, family members and themselves. Taking Valentine's Day beyond significant others may prompt consumers to show their love in more ways.

"There are probably several reasons for the diversity of love experiences this year," said **Gustavo Gomez**, a retail consultant based in San Diego. "First, there is the business need. By expanding the holiday beyond the traditional young couples and husbands, brands can widen the target audience by encouraging gift giving beyond the deeply romantic occasions to include friends, family and one's self.

"Second, for many people, Valentine's Day can be a sad holiday," he said. "It reminds a person that they are alone, with many Hollywood movies to encourage that feeling. The holiday needs reinventing to be more inclusive of all types of love beyond romance.

"Third, I think with the current political situation not only in the U.S.A. but many parts of the world, creative brands feel the need for positive energy. Their creatives tap into that feeling, and while it is commercial, it still sends the message that there is still love out there.

"And fourth, Valentine's day is a cultural ritual for many Americans. It is about flowers and chocolate. Great news for Godiva but maybe not for many luxury brands. Part of the strategy is to change the ritual of it. Make it less like a routine and more like a festive and unique day."

Love stories

Nina Ricci bypassed romance to celebrate the love that exists between best friends. Taking inspiration from its partner fragrances Nina and Luna, the brand developed a social media campaign that prompted user-generated content.



Nina Ricci's Best Friends campaign

Through an online generator, consumers can decorate a photo of them with their pal with emojis, submitting them to enter a contest ([see story](#)).

Tiffany & Co. also got consumers involved, soliciting consumers' memories. The brand's #TiffanyIsLove campaign, a continuation of its creative from 2016, asks fans to pick a date that sticks out in their mind.

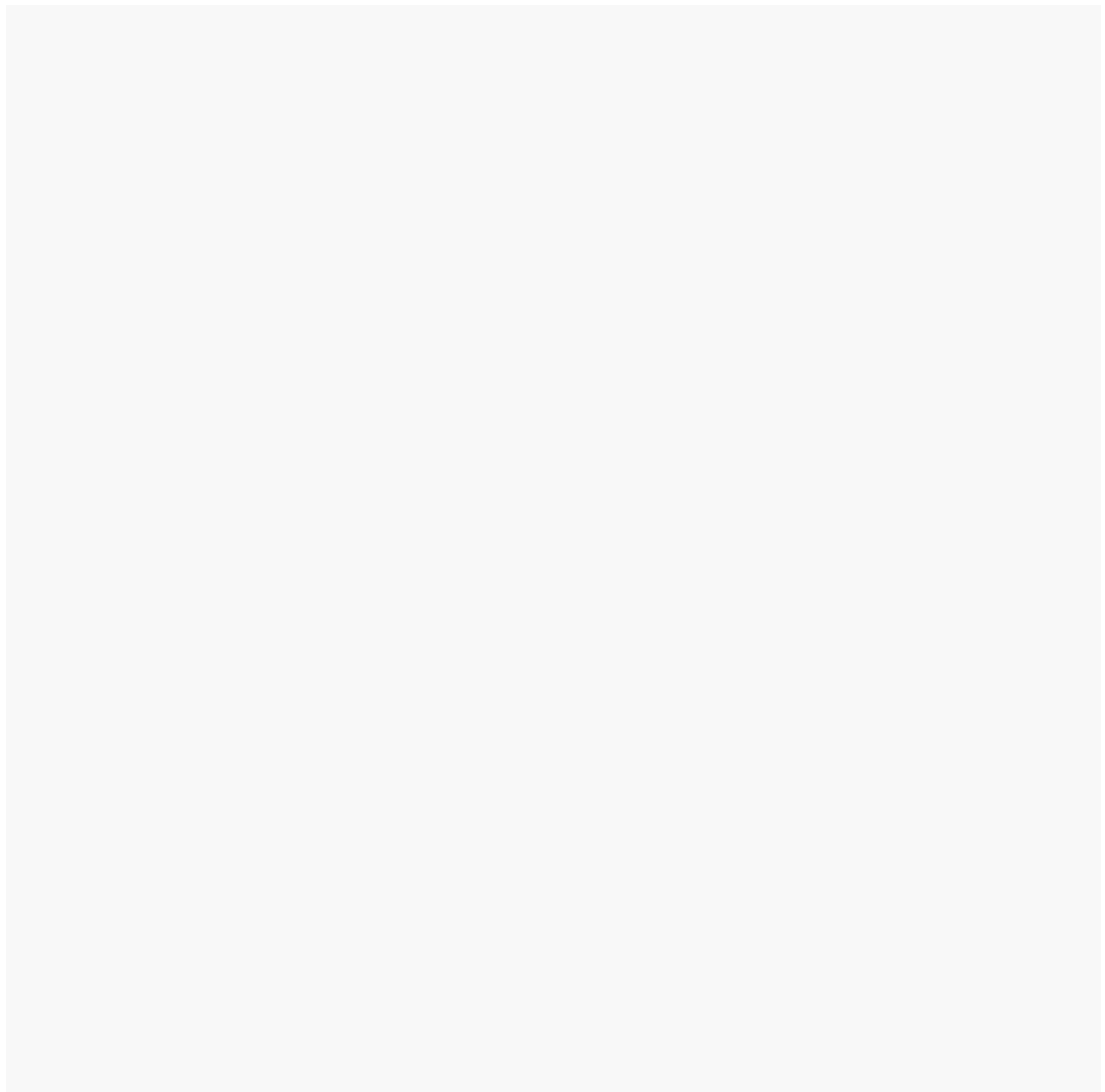
Is there a day you'll never forget? Share a memorable date and what it means to you with #LovesTiffany. Just the mention of a special date is a powerful reminder of memories we hold close to our hearts. #Tiffany
#TiffanyAndCo

A video posted by Tiffany & Co. (@tiffanyandco) on Jan 24, 2017 at 8:44am PST

In response to its examples, which include imagined wedding dates or life moments such as a move to New York or becoming an uncle, Tiffany's followers have shared personal stories. These include children's birth dates, proposals and events marked with Tiffany gifts.

Swarovski worked with ambassador Karlie Kloss' Kode with Klossy to create a dating symbol quiz. The jeweler's larger #GiveBrilliant campaign also spoke to the varied personalities of gift recipients, whether bohemian or edgy.

Chopard acted as the #MessengerOfLove, relaying ideas of romantic Italian excursions alongside gifting ideas in short animations. These clips featured gondola rides, scooters and landmarks such as the Ponte Vecchio and the Tower of Pisa.



#ValentinesDay is around the corner and it is time to prepare the perfect #ChopardGift for her... and for him.

A video posted by Chopard Official (@chopard) on Feb 8, 2017 at 7:38am PST

Offering its own traditional take on love, Smythson celebrated the art of the handwritten love note. The stationer gathered The Telegraph's Victoria Moss, Mr Porter editor Dan Rookwood and "Victoria" screenwriter Daisy Goodwin, asking them to share their favorite romantic poetry and sharing their picks in a blog post.

The brand also focused on its card selection, giving consumers the opportunity to personalize their messages of love through complimentary calligraphy at London stores on New Bond Street and Sloane Street on Feb. 11.

Other brands took the art of the love note into the digital realm.

Mot & Chandon targeted consumers headed for a romantic evening or a "Galentine's Day" fete among friends with bottles of ros complete with emoji stickers, giving consumers the opportunity to personalize their packaging. A corresponding mobile application allowed individuals to add Mot's emojis to their messaging keyboard ([see story](#)).



Mot & Chandon's emojis

Michael Kors also launched a custom emoji keyboard before Valentine's Day, prompting consumers to include its branded hearts and other insignia in their messages ([see story](#)).

Marc Jacobs also looked to mobile, but opted for a retro approach, creating a series of films that mimicked the phone sex hotline commercials from the 1990s. When consumers dialed the 1-800-LUV-MARC number, they were met with a live recording in a similarly sultry voice featuring a discount code ([see story](#)).

Dolce & Gabbana also aimed to seduce with a short film. "A Game of Seduction" recounts a couple's first encounter on the street, as they make eye contact through a compact mirror.

A game of seduction

The tension escalates, and the film leaves the pair as they are on the verge of a kiss.

"Many luxury brands have learned how to create great stories that are both meaningful while subtly displaying the product," Mr. Gomez said. "These stories drive feeling and build emotional bonds with customers.

"At the same time, there are many ads that are simply a beautiful pictures of the products," he said. "Both work and are being used for this holiday."

Budget conscious

According to a survey by the National Retail Federation, consumers in the United States will spend 18.2 billion on

Valentine's Day gifts this year, down from 2016's \$19.7 billion. The average shopper is more frugal, but are still expected to shell out an average of \$136 on gifts.

Reflecting a larger trend, 40 percent of consumers want an experiential gift. However, things are still the most popular thing to give, with experiences only being purchased by 24 percent of consumers.

Luxury brands have tried to tap into this desire for experience over commerce by placing merchandise in contextual content.

For instance, Cartier promoted its Love bracelet with a series that asked consumers how far they would go for love, attaching the jewelry to romantic gestures ([see story](#)).

Similarly, Georg Jensen incorporated its Valentine's Day ideas into vignettes that feature everything from a video chat date to gestures towards a pet ([see story](#)).

"What we see new this year in brand story-telling leading up to Valentine's Day centers around the deep emotion of love in all its variants: from couples, to friends and even to celebrating yourself with profound love," said Stacy DeBroff, founder and CEO of [Influence Central](#).

"By focusing on the intensity of love and romanticism, the subliminal message becomes, 'Isn't this worth an equally intense splurge?'" she said. "For luxury brands, the challenge, especially in uncertain financial times, becomes focused on getting all levels of consumers to stretch beyond the typical spends of chocolates, flowers, dinner out, inexpensive jewelry, etc.

"The emotional build-up of the marketing has been designed to lead consumers to emotional spending. For, indeed, what price can be put on love?"