

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

How fashion brands tackle video

March 6, 2017



A young man visits a skate park in one of American Eagle Outfitters' short films

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The fashion industry has always relied on striking visuals to sell its product, with fashion ad campaigns routinely crossing over with the realms of art and cinema.

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In the modern mobile era, this translates to an affinity for video marketing that highlights the industry's visual, tactile nature. But how are fashion brands adjusting to the changes brought to video marketing by the mobile revolution?

"Fashion brands' content historically has not been about the clothes or accessories," said Steve Babcock, chief creative officer of [VaynerMedia](#). "Its focus has centered around the people who wear the items, their philosophy, belief or style.

"That said, mobile video is by far a more potent way, compared to a photo, to help a consumer feel or resonate with a particular emotion," he said.

Video style

The range of approaches to video marketing from the fashion industry is almost as varied as the types of clothing that debut each season.

From the smallest of everyday apparel brands to legacy names with European credentials, fashion brands have embraced social video campaigns as a way to deliver visually striking campaigns full of storytelling and visual panache that also serve as a way of showcasing the products.

Take these three examples, from American Eagle, Urban Outfitters and Chanel, as a microcosm for the ways that fashion brands are taking on video and their varying levels of success.

American Eagle Outfitters

American Eagle's latest video campaign is an inspirational series of short films hosted on the brand's YouTube page and promoted through its various social channels.

The campaign is called CANdid and it is composed of a series of short films that profile various young people and their aspirations, failures and ultimate successes.

Each short film is filmed in a dreamy, naturalistic style and features the profiled young person narrating their life story over imagery of them in their daily lives.

Noticeably, the American Eagle attire is featured, but downplayed in the campaign. The young people who feature in each film are the real stars and American Eagle allows the clothing to serve as a complement to the stories.

Each video has a respectable amount of views on YouTube, ranging between 10,000 and 30,000 for each individual film and more than 100,000 for the introduction to the series.

An American Eagle short film

Most of this play comes from American Eagle's social media accounts.

"Video is a key tool in our marketing mix in order to engage consumers with compelling content, in a format they prefer across sites where they spend their time," said Kyle Andrew, executive vice president and chief marketing officer at American Eagle Outfitters. "As such, we've seen increased engagement with mobile video, particularly across social platforms."

Its status as a brand associated with Gen Z consumers means American Eagle has a leg-up on some other fashion brands when it comes to a social following. The brand has more than 700,000 followers on Twitter, and the videos are heavily promoted on that platform.

American Eagle puts out a similar video campaign high quality, part of a series, strong brand message every few months or so. The most recent was in September.

This brings American Eagle a healthy amount of views and engagements owing to the wide reach of its social media presence, and the high quality, film-like nature of the videos.

"We're seeing advertisers take a moment-marketing approach to their mobile video campaigns," said Elliott Reilhac, CEO of **TVTY**. "Moment marketing means that brands focus their video ad delivery around a particular event or macro moment that they know is likely to increase engagement."

"For example, in the American Eagle Outfitters campaign, American Eagle Outfitters could choose to push their video ads whenever #WeAllCan is trending on social media," he said. "They can also activate a video promoting their T-shirts whenever it's warm outside and consumers are more likely to be lured with imagery of a lighter outfits."

Urban Outfitters

Compare American Eagle's slow and steady style with that of one of its competitors, Urban Outfitters.

In many ways, the target demographic for both brands overlap: hip, young people with an active digital and social media life.

But Urban Outfitters tackles the same demographic over the same channel mobile video with a different style.

The brand has a much more prolific video output from its YouTube channel, UOTV.

Urban Outfitters is currently juggling a number of series, including UO Live, featuring live music recorded in studio specifically for the brand; UO Love Stories, highlighting real life couples from diverse backgrounds and orientations; UO Guides, which offers style tips to consumers; and UO Beauty, which is similar to UO Guides but specializing in makeup and cosmetics.

One of Urban Outfitters' instructional video campaigns

These videos have a much less cinematic quality than American Eagle's, focusing less on atmosphere and character than on quick content that feels more akin to a broadcast TV network than a short film festival.

In contrast to American Eagle's fewer videos with more resources poured into each one, Urban Outfitters puts out multiple videos a week in an attempt to court regular viewers who tune in whenever a new, short video is dropped.

This strategy translates to Urban Outfitters having few videos that reach the heights of American Eagle at 100,000 views. But many videos that consistently reach higher than the average American Eagle video, often hovering around 30,000 to 50,000 views per video.

"Video allows fashion brands to story-tell more of their mindset," VaynerMedia's Mr. Babcock said. "Mobile video is the most immersively consumed video, meaning that when a viewer sees the video in-feed, so long as the hook is

there, they click in with intent to watch.

"The video goes fullscreen and completely takes over their device," he said. "It's an extremely different consumption behavior from TV and desktop, where users divide their attention across multiple devices or windows.

"So, for fashion brands, they need to focus on their mobile video's hook and then they can tell their story."

Chanel

Finally, we have the titans of the fashion industry.

High-fashion houses such as Yves Saint Laurent and Gucci has always been a kissing cousin to the worlds of fine art.

Unsurprisingly, it is here that observers find the most lavish visual campaigns, with high-profile names attached and videos treated with the same care and visual flair as an art-house film.

Chanel has poured a significant amount of resources into its most recent video campaign: a high-profile video series delving into the history of the house's founder, Gabrielle "Coco" Chanel.

Chanel's documentary series on founder Coco Chanel

This campaign clearly goes for the all-out approach, with a high-profile subject matter and heavy promotion through digital channels ([see story](#)).

Chanel has plugged the series hard and, combined with the strength and reach of its historic brand name and the subject matter, has pushed each episode of the series to more than a million views on YouTube.

These videos also get heavy rotation on the brand's social media channels.

"Fashion brands have historically been caught up in their look and feel, but they need to understand how that translates to different platforms," Mr. Babcock said.

"For example, super glossy, high-fashion content might not play as authentically on Snapchat," he said. "Fashion brands need to be who they are through multiple lenses."

Fashion forward

The difference between the ways various fashion brands approach video marketing campaigns is affected by a multitude of factors.

In addition to personal style of the brand, size and demographic has to be taken into account.

American Eagle and Urban Outfitters, while differing in some ways, fundamentally are both creating more content at a lower cost to reach media-hungry younger consumers who are tearing through new media constantly every day.

As a legacy brand with more of a history behind it and a following made up of a wide variety of age groups but particularly older people who tend to have more disposable income and can afford it Chanel goes for the less-is-more approach.

This Chanel strategy is mirrored among other brands.

Larger, higher-end fashion brands will almost always go for less video content at a higher quality, while smaller, younger brands will meet their target audience where they are and bring a larger amount of fast, consumable content for their younger audiences.

"The first 30 seconds of a mobile video is when it's most viewable, with considerable drop-offs after that," TVTY's Mr. Reilhac said. "This means that fashion brands need to start off their videos with a powerful creative tone that instantly captures their season's highlights.

"As more content is consumed on mobile, marketers are also pushing towards developing vertically oriented videos," he said. "Vertically oriented videos absorb a larger portion of screens during our daily mobile content scrolls and provide a less disruptive experience.

"These changes are ultimately facilitating a more collaborative approach with which creative and media teams work alongside each other to captivate consumers."

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