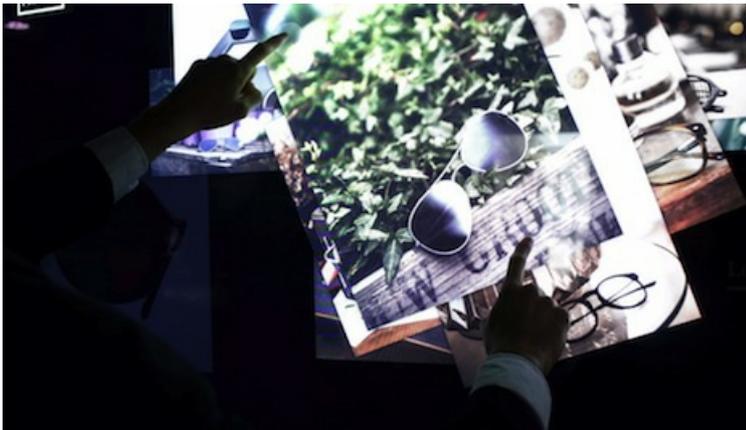


MARKETING

Armani, Neiman Marcus embrace SXSW to appeal to young affluents

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Armani's installation at SXSW

By BRIELLE JAEKEL

The luxury sector is expanding its presence further into South by Southwest as young affluent consumers flock to the festival, with brands such as Armani and Neiman Marcus implementing their own unique activations.

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As the South by Southwest festivals continue to grow in size and popularity, luxury brands hope to connect with the affluent customers who are willing to pay the high price to participate. A spinoff festival, an on-site fashion show and film screenings are just a few of the tools brands are wielding to participate in this year's SXSW.

Marketing and festivals

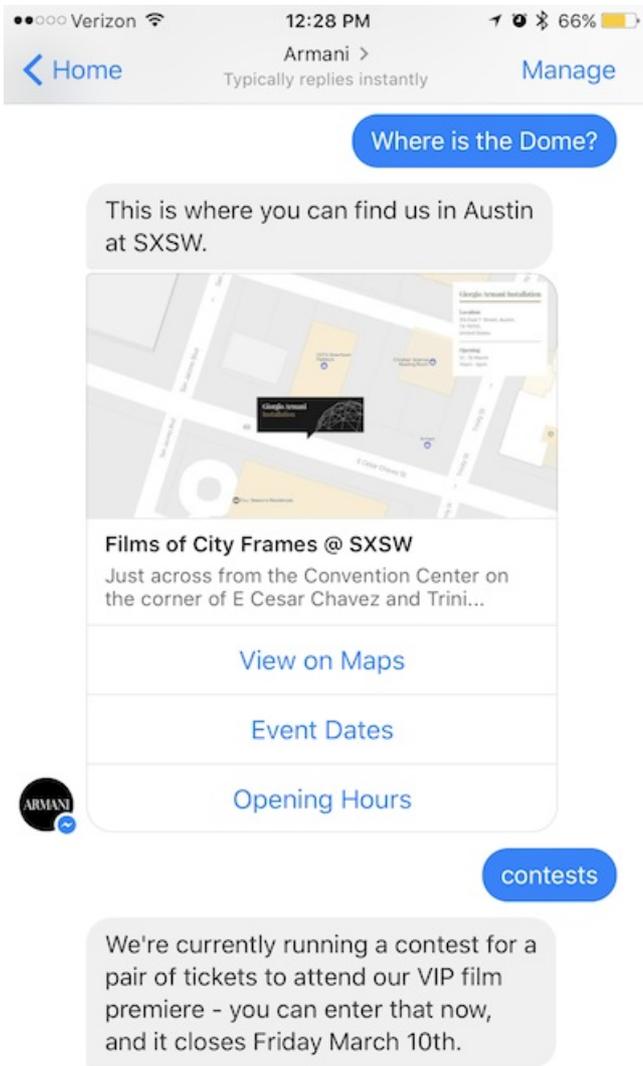
Mercedes-Benz is working with SXSW for its own collaboration at the International Motor Show in Frankfurt in September. The two will collaborate on what they are calling the "me Convention," a conference focused on trending issues for the future.

From Sept. 15-17 Mercedes and SXSW will be holding debate and discussion in the Festhalle Frankfurt, complemented by music and events throughout the city.

While at the actual SXSW event, Italian apparel and accessories brand Giorgio Armani partnered with actor Dev Patel for an evening during the film day of the festival. The night showcased films from five filmmakers who worked with Mr. Patel for Armani's City of Frames project.

The campaign focused on the idea of art as a form of empowerment, of cultural activism.

Armani hoped to make a dramatic impact with this third annual film project with the help of a special bot that went beyond commerce.



Armani's chatbot

Facebook Messenger bots have become increasingly popular in the luxury space. While many brands hope to leverage chatbots for retail initiatives such as driving sales and bookings, Armani took the opportunity to assist consumers interested in its "Films of City Frames" project to make a bigger impact ([see more](#)).

Fashion and music

Neiman Marcus kicked off the fashion portion of the SXSW festival on March 11 with a fashion show. The retailer turned downtown Austin, Texas, where the festival is held, into a mixture of runway show and a concert.

Gibson partnered with the retailer for the showing, bringing a series of musical performances to the show. The show featured Gibson products with Neiman Marcus apparel and accessories from the retailer's spring collections.

Models from Dallas, Houston and Los Angeles showed off Gibson guitars and headphones from Onkyo and the Philips Audio Lifestyle division of Gibson Brands while modeling Neiman Marcus apparel.

The department store has launched similar initiatives as part of SXSW in previous years. Last year, Neiman Marcus schooled fashion-forward females in the art of self-expression.



Neiman Marcus Make Some Noise

Neiman Marcus worked with Refinery29 to host the School of Self Expression during 2016's South by Southwest in Austin, TX, with workshops and presentations going on throughout the festival. By having a presence at one of America's premiere destination events, Neiman Marcus has been hoping to endear itself to a younger group cultured and stylish women ([see more](#)).

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