

MARKETING

Influencer trends suggest huge potential for luxury brands: report

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SERMO's index looks at luxury and lifestyle influencers from around the world

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Social media has become the overwhelmingly most popular platform for influencer marketing and has provided huge boosts for luxury brands, according to Sermo's latest Global Influencer Index.

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The **report** lists the top influencers in the world when it comes to lifestyle, as well as noting the most important trends for luxury brands to keep in mind. Trends of note range from what social media platforms see the most engagement from users to the breakdown of top influencers by gender.

"I think the main thing for luxury is identifying which influencers to work with and how," said Tanya Hughes, president of **Sermo**, London. "There's been a huge proliferation of influencers recently and it's a very hard thing to keep track of.

"Influencers are important for luxury because it's all about marketing the right products to the right people," she said.

Influencer trends

Influencer marketing has been a hot topic among luxury brands for a number of years, and with the passing of time the reach of top social media influencers has only grown.

The most engaging influencers typically have millions of followers that brands can leverage to get their products out in front of a vast swath of consumers.

What is more is that those influencers are not just selling how-to videos or product recommendations, they are also selling a lifestyle.

This aspect of emulation is a unique strength of luxury and one that is perfectly suited to influencer marketing.

Sermo looked at the top influencers again this year after doing so for the past few years as well to identify trends in influencer marketing.



Influencers are particularly useful for luxury brands

One trend, for example, has shown that Instagram is by far the most popular platform for influencers in the world. Every major market except China sees the most influencer engagement from Instagram.

Other social media platforms are still heavy hitters as well, such as Snapchat, which has seen a big boost for luxury brands this year.

For example, Burberry put model Brooklyn Beckham at the helm of its Snapchat account to promote the Burberry Brit fragrance.

Burberry reposted an Instagram image of Mr. Beckham, the son of David and Victoria Beckham, obscured by the lens of a Leica camera as his photo was taken. In the original posting, Mr. Beckham expressed his excitement to photograph the Burberry campaign being shared via Snapchat ([see story](#)).

"I think there's an idea that luxury is hesitant or slow to use influencers, but that's not true," Sermo's Ms. Hughes said. "Brands such as Burberry and Sephora are huge on Snapchat, which is innovative and ephemeral and very millennial.

"A few years ago, everyone was working with bloggers, but now social media influencers have really started to own that area of influence," she said. "So we wanted to keep track of them, how to work with them and how that's changing things for brands."

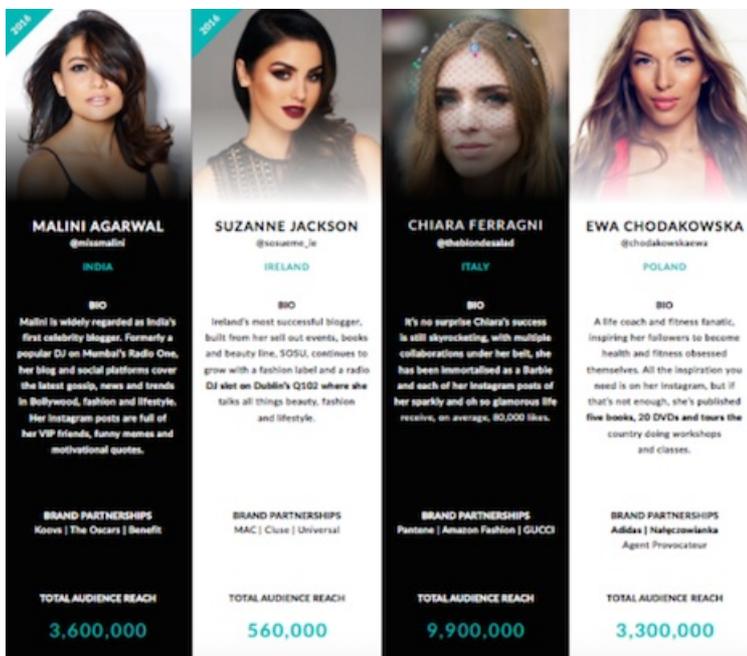
A global lifestyle

Outside of platforms, the demographic makeup of influencers is also changing.

While most influencers are still women, men have begun to show up more in the lifestyle tutorial category, particularly when it comes to grooming.

This presents an opportunity for luxury brands to reach more men through influencer marketing, rather than relying on other types of outreach.

Finally, influencers are becoming more international. As more luxury brands pay to fly influencers to different countries and create content based on those trips, brands are presented with a stronger opportunity to reach across borders and market to consumers around the world.



The index breaks influencers down by reach, country, and other important factors

Evidence for the primacy of social media influencers can be found all over, such as at this year's New York Fashion Week, where a majority of the social media engagement came from influencers rather than from the brands themselves.

#FashionBlogger was the top hashtag discussed in relation to Fashion Week, alluding to the rise of importance of fashion blogger Instagram influencers for NYFW (see story)

"Luxury is very innovative when it comes to influencers and they are kind of leading the way in terms of influencers," Sermo's Ms. Hughes said. "How-to videos on YouTube are absolutely dominated by makeup and hair, so luxury is a bit ahead of the curve."