

AUTOMOTIVE

## Young luxury consumers desire purchase inspiration and validation: Lamborghini exec

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*Luxury brands must inspire customers to continue their purchase journey at every step*

By DANNY PARISI

NEW YORK There are five major steps along the purchase path where brands can make an impact with consumers from generations X, Y and Z, according to executives from Italian automaker Lamborghini and its agency of record.

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Speaking at Luxury Roundtable: Engaging Gens X, Y & Z May 3 in New York, Lamborghini brand manager Rico Macaraeg and Simon Candy, executive creative director of Lamborghini's agency of record iris Atlanta, mapped out the five steps consumers take in purchasing a Lamborghini and how they target prospective buyers and improve their experience at each stage. These steps focus on ways that luxury brands can incentivize purchases and improve the ownership experience after a purchase has been made.

"Traditionally, there has been a two-way conversation between brand and customer," Lamborghini's Mr. Macaraeg said. "Not only do I care about my relationship with the brand, but my relationship with others because of the brand.

"Generations X, Y and Z are very social and they are inspired by and inspire their peers," he said.

*Luxury Daily produced Luxury Roundtable: Engaging Gens X, Y & Z on May 3.*

### The social cycle

Lamborghini is an iconic but exclusive brand. The ratio of people who know and recognize Lamborghini cars to people who own them is quite extreme.

But Lamborghini is not exempt from one of the most dominant trends of marketing to younger consumers: the value of social validation.

Young consumers today are not only thinking about their relationship with a brand, but how their relationships with others will be affected by the brand.



*At every step of the purchase process, brands can make a difference*

"The most common manifestation of this is social inspiration and validation. Consumers from generations X, Y and Z all frequently use social media to find inspiration for purchases, vet potential buys to their friends before making a transaction and show off their shopping haul once they have been made."

This behavior increases the younger and more natively social a consumer is, with Gen Z being the most likely to use social media during the purchase process.

Lamborghini has broken down the purchase process into five steps, with recommendations for how to target and engage customers at every level. While Lamborghini uses this model in the auto industry, Mr. Macaraeg notes that it is applicable to almost any sector.

The five steps are inspiration, validation, purchase process, purchase completion and active ownership. With each step comes the opportunity for brands to help customers along and note the ways that young consumers navigate that process.

For the inspiration step, Mr. Macaraeg recommends cultivating a community of shared values to inspire potential customers by what their peers say about the brand and not just what the brand says about itself.

While they seek validation for that inspiration, brands can create an experience for customers to confirm their idea, or work with influencers to help sell the associations of the purchase.

During the purchase process is a time for brands to focus on their cultural reputation. Lamborghini cites film and entertainment partnerships as an excellent move at this step.

For the final two, purchase completion and active ownership, it becomes all about giving customers tangible perks outside of just the product they purchased. When customers buy a Lamborghini, for example, they might not actually get their hands on the car for a few weeks or months if they get it shipped, but the brand can still offer them the immediate feeling of ownership of the car through messaging and instant perks.

Finally, brands need to offer customers some continuing benefit to being an owner of their product, whether that is membership in a club or periodic gifts and rewards for being a customer.

#### Purchase preparation

When targeting Gen Z, social media has to absolutely be at the core of any brand's strategy, given that so much of the generation's media is consumed through that channel.

This has been the operating strategy for more than a few luxury brands, who have adopted hyper-hip social strategies with far less artifice to appeal to social native young people. Versace took such an approach with an uncensored, unfiltered photo series.



*Brands can use influencer marketing to drive engagement*

Opting out of overly produced imagery, the brand instead tapped Instagram famous model Gigi Hadid as photographer, asking her to capture raw shots of her pop star boyfriend Zayn Malik and model Adwoa Aboah throughout one night. Photo-centric platforms such as Snapchat have made consumers accustomed to authentic imagery captured and posted in the moment, making this ad campaign an opportunity to speak in the language of social media ([see story](#)).

Once younger generations make these purchases, it is the common understanding that they cannot wait to begin sharing their new products on social media as soon as possible, but this is not necessarily the case.

"From the research, it seems to be a myth that X, Y and Z might immediately share their experience on social media," iris Atlanta's Mr. Candy said. "They want to engineer the share to make the best impact, choosing the right moment and the right context."

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