

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

## In today's crowded fashion world, quality beats quantity: Jason Wu

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*The fashion world today is very different than it was just 10 years ago. Image credit: Jason Wu*

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By DANNY PARISI

NEW YORK The modern consumer is so inundated with content and options that quantity is now taking a backseat to quality in how consumers make decisions.

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There are more brands in existence today than ever before, meaning that consumers, especially younger consumers, are exposed to hundreds, if not thousands, of options every day. At the [Initiatives in Art and Culture's Annual Fashion, Jewelry and Design Conference](#) event in New York, designer Jason Wu, who famously dressed Michelle Obama on multiple occasions, spoke about how brands can stand out in today's crowded market.

"What is most important for brands and individuals looking to share their vision with the public is understanding that it's not about more content," said Mr. Wu, founder of his [eponymous label](#) and creative director of [Hugo Boss](#).

"There's so much content, but it's going to be about quality content.

"It's a big pot of everything and there's a thousand things coming at you at all times. I concentrate on quality content that says something about me."

### Quality over quantity

Mr. Wu started in fashion more than 10 years ago, and at that time the environment was much different.

For one, Mr. Wu points out that WiFi had only just been introduced at his college, and that it is only in the last 10 or 15 years that the Internet has truly taken over the way consumers shop.

Now, consumers are bombarded with brands and content every minute of the day. Thanks to mobile devices and social media, consumers' lives are overflowing with options not just of what to buy but also how to buy it.



*Grey by Jason Wu. Image credit: Jason Wu*

"The biggest challenge for brands today is to really be able to stand out from the pack," Mr. Wu said. "Be open minded and don't think so traditionally, think about what would stand out because you're not only competing with others in your price range, you're competing with Zara and H&M since people are buying everything from everywhere."

But with all these options, it is easy for brands to lose sight of who they are.

As the constant churn of content incentivizes creating more content, posting on Instagram every hour and following whatever latest trend is taking over the zeitgeist, brands must remain consistent in who they are and what they are saying to stand out from the crowd.

"Without integrity and vision, there's no brand," Mr. Wu said. "People have so many options, they need to know what they're coming to you for."

#### Digital channels

In addition to shaking up how products are advertise to customers, the modern era has also led to a disruption in how those goods are purchased.

While in-store and online shopping are the most prevalent, recent years have seen the rise of subscription services.

Starting with the success of Birchbox, subscription boxes have become increasingly popular over the last few years, but it is yet to be seen if this retail model can translate to high-fashion.



*Jason Wu. Image credit: Luxury Daily*

A look at the current landscape seems to suggest so, with a large number of fashion-oriented subscription boxes popping up at a variety of price points. Stitch Fix, one such fashion subscription service, was one of the top 10 retailers for online apparel sales last year, according to NPD ([see story](#)).

Mr. Wu acknowledges the power of these types of services, pointing out that he is the first luxury designer to create collection for Stitch Fix.

"We did a collaboration with Stitch Fix," Mr. Wu said. "It's a collection of five pieces.

"It's a digital experience mixed with a personal experience," he said. "We have to look at things that are untraditional."

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