

INTERNET

Gucci is leaving Louis Vuitton in the dust online

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Gucci's spring summer 2018 campaign. Image credit: Gucci

By [Pamela N. Danziger](#)

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Among its luxury competitive cohort, Gucci is killing it online.

Gucci was just named one of the three [2017 Momentum Award winners](#) by SimilarWeb in the retail category, the only luxury brand to be so recognized.

Gucci joins Uniqlo.com and Stitchfix.com as leaders in the online world of retail, based on the company's algorithm measuring online traffic and engagement metrics.

Throughout 2017, Gucci's Web traffic more than doubled, going from 1.8 million site visits in January 2017 to 4.2 million visits in December 2017 a 130 percent increase in Web traffic overall.

By last year's end, Gucci greatly surpassed Louis Vuitton in online traffic, its next closest competitor in the online luxury space. And while Web site traffic does not necessarily translate into sales conversion, it certainly points to that.

In December 2017 alone, SimilarWeb tracked 4.2 million U.S. visitors to Gucci.com, as compared with 2.9 million for LouisVuitton.com.

SimilarWeb is a Tel Aviv-based market intelligence company founded in 2013, which tracks traffic across the entire digital world including more than 80 million global Web sites.

In announcing Gucci as a Momentum winner for 2017, the company said, "Their [success has surpassed other luxury good providers](#), and exemplifies strong digital execution that has allowed a century-old brand, established before digital sales, to evolve in a way that not only maintains relevance but continues to collect momentum."

Wishing to understand the implications of this data for the luxury sector overall, and Gucci and Louis Vuitton brands specifically, I spoke with Liron Hakim-Bobrov, SimilarWeb's marketing insights manager.

"While the luxury industry, as a whole, is growing online, some competitors are taking to the digital space better than others," Ms. Hakim-Bobrov said.

"For example, in 2017 Louis Vuitton started out the year very strong, but it decreased over the year, in terms of trends in traffic share," she said. "Gucci, on the other hand, more than doubled. Gucci is an example of a brand doing the digital space very well."

Looking across the leading luxury brands in the United States, including Gucci, Louis Vuitton, Chanel, Burberry, Versace and YSL, Gucci's online traffic market share increased 12.3 points, from 21.6 percent in January 2017 to 33.8 percent in December 2017.

Among these luxury players, U.S. online traffic comes primarily from direct and organic search.

"The luxury market is interesting in that about 80 percent of the traffic is coming to the sites directly or by brand search," Ms. Hakim-Bobrov said. "Which means 80 percent visitors to these sites know that they are looking for Gucci, Louis Vuitton or Chanel."

That means the remaining 20 percent of online traffic comes in other ways, including in order of importance: referrals, social media, email and display ads.

"This other 20 percent is the big opportunity for luxury brands to grow and gain users," Ms. Hakim-Bobrov said.

Gucci nails its referral traffic

What Gucci is doing especially well is leveraging traffic from referral or influencer networks, according to SimilarWeb's data.

Gucci got about 10 percent of its traffic last year through referral networks, with [Reward Style](#) being its primary source.

But in December 2017, 31.5 percent of the entire category's referral traffic is going to Gucci.com. Polyvore.com and Lyst.com are its two other important referral networks.

"A strong referral strategy allows the brand to utilize influencers to expand awareness in an otherwise highly branded market, where there are very few places to reach undecided luxury shoppers," Ms. Hakim-Bobrov said.

"Gucci.com is doing this quite well, using the most prominent influencer networks to reach a wider audience," she said.

Whereas Reward Style is Gucci's most popular influencer network, it does not show up on Louis Vuitton's top referral sources, which are led by [Purseblog.com](#), [Uncrate.com](#) and [Averagesocialite.com](#).

"Louis Vuitton is investing in other referral sources that are less prominent in the fashion world," Ms. Hakim-Bobrov said.

Social media is less important for luxury brands, but Gucci leads there, too

By contrast to referral networks, social media is a less important traffic driver to luxury brand Web sites.

Gucci, for example, received 5 percent of its traffic overall in 2017 from social media, but that is more than for any of the other luxury brands.

"When compared against the seven other luxury leaders, Gucci received 32.4 percent of the category's social traffic in December 2017," Ms. Hakim-Bobrov said.

As in referrals, Gucci's social media strategies are distinctive, with [Reddit.com](#) being its strongest social network accounting for 49 percent of its social traffic, as compared with 34 percent for Louis Vuitton.

"Overall we'd expect Facebook to be one of its key social networks, but for Gucci it's third most important after [Reddit](#) and [YouTube](#)," Ms. Hakim-Bobrov notes, pointing to its most popular subreddits sending traffic to Gucci as [DesignerReps](#), [FashionReps](#), [streetwear](#) and [malefashionadvice](#).

By contrast Facebook and Twitter are relatively more important drivers of traffic to Louis Vuitton.

THE LUXURY BUSINESS' two leading brands, Gucci and Louis Vuitton, are using two very distinctive online strategies, based on this study of the SimilarWeb data.

While online traffic does not measure sales conversions, it is logical to assume that the more traffic a luxury brand gets to its Web site, the more sales it will make. And on that measure, Gucci is way out front of its next closest

competitor, Louis Vuitton.



Pam Danziger is president of Unity Marketing

*Pamela N. Danziger is Stevens, PA-based president of **Unity Marketing** and Retail Rescue, and a luxury marketing expert. Reach her at pam@unitymarketingonline.com.*

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