

MARKETING

## International Women's Day sparks charitable, empowering efforts

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Net-A-Porter's T-shirts give to a cause. Image credit: Net-A-Porter

By SARAH JONES

Net-A-Porter and Pomellato are among the luxury companies celebrating International Women's Day through activations and advertising.

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Against the backdrop of the #MeToo movement and pushes for gender equality, luxury brands' efforts for the holiday on March 8 reflect the cultural zeitgeist. From cause-based campaigns to content initiatives, marketers joined the conversation, with many taking active steps to uplift women.

"When it comes to gender equity, is time for brands to stop marketing and take action," said David Doze, founder and CEO of **Pilot PMR**, Toronto. "We are beyond T-shirts and talks at this point.

"Gender equity is about setting and meeting targets re-establishing the ground rules much like Frances McDormand's comment at the Oscars regarding 'inclusion riders,'" he said. "Brands that hope to gain awareness and ultimately market traction through superficial alignment on this essential issue are risking it all.

"The road ahead is steep and the fall will be very far for the fakes...My advice to brands is that they take concrete action to accelerate the change that is already coming. Otherwise, they are part of the problem and their consumers will judge them accordingly."

### Equality and empowerment

Luxury conglomerate LVMH is marking International Women's Day through a female-focused iteration of its DARE program. Designed to encourage employees to be entrepreneurial, the initiative asks them to pitch innovative ideas for its operations.

This time around, the group centered the challenge on its EllesVMH effort to help women advance through the organization. Sixty participants came together to work in teams to develop startup-style projects that will help LVMH reach its goal of having 50 percent of its top management be female by 2020.

*DARE EllesVMH*

On March 8, the program's jury will award the winners in a ceremony.

Also looking to drive a conversation around women leadership is Diane von Furstenberg. The U.S.-based label is hosting a four-day event including panels, forums and open discussions meant to explore the idea of what having women in charge can do for the world ([see story](#)).

Italian jeweler Pomellato is also looking to empower women through a video featured on The New York Times. Accompanying the publication's article about the history of the women's movement, Pomellato's film features brand ambassadors including Jane Fonda, Chiara Ferragni and Angelica Huston talking about their own accomplishments and hopes for the future.

The film will be viewable on The New York Times, as well as Pomellato's Web site and social media channels.

"Women are the center of the Pomellato universe," said Sabina Belli, CEO of Pomellato Group, Milan. "And this initiative and this video gathering fabulous women from all walks of life aim to spread a positive message of female empowerment through the voices of women for women.

"They describe their biggest lessons in life, the obstacles they have overcome, what makes them happy, angry, what it means to be a woman and the topics society has to address in an urgent manner," she said. "It is a wholehearted coral message of hope and togetherness."

#### *#PomellatoForWomen International Women's Day*

Founded in 1967 at the height of the women's liberation movement, Pomellato has always been designed with independent women in mind.

"Pomellato jewels were created for a new generation of women ready to break with their bourgeois conservative parents and to look for an independent, autonomous life," Ms. Belli said. "Today, after 50 years, Pomellato continues to be a women's affair. It is in its DNA.

"We at Pomellato and I as a female CEO are aware that today the issues surrounding women in the world are not as yet resolved," she said. "Women's education, women's access to the work force and equality at the workplace as well as women's support in the fight against domestic violence are all important issues. With the Pomellato for Women campaign we want to celebrate and support the diversity and the authenticity of womanhood."

Dior is also mobilizing an ambassador for Women's Day, sitting down with Charlize Theron to discuss her thoughts on the experience of being a woman, including finding strength and taking advice from Elizabeth Taylor.

#### *Dior Celebrates Women*

Women for women

Beyond content, some brands have taken more of a cause-based approach to International Women's Day.

Retailer Net-A-Porter tapped labels including Stella McCartney and Chlo to design T-shirts that reflect their ideas of female bravery and empowerment. These will be sold to benefit Women for Women International, with all profits going to the organization that helps women in conflict-affected countries.

Charity-centric ecommerce site Olivela is also taking up a cause, partnering with NGO Care to tackle the issue of child marriage. Girls who are wed before they are 15 are more apt to be abused and they are less likely to have been educated.

#### *Olivela X Care*

The retailer, which sells merchandise from brands including Givenchy and Jimmy Choo, has asked influencers to curate an edit of items. These personalities, who include makeup artist Patty Dubroff and blogger Serena Goh, are aiming to raise funds to send a girl to school for a year, or 300 days.

In addition to donating through these boutiques, Olivela will donate 20 percent of all sales throughout the campaign to Care's Gift of Change: Child Marriage Prevention and Services.

"The entire initiative was inspired by a trip I recently took to Jordan, where I met Rafef, a 13-year old Syrian girl in a refugee center," said Stacey Boyd, CEO and founder of Olivela. "Rafef had escaped violence in Syria over five years ago with her family, arriving in Jordan with nothing and had been close to being sold into child marriage when Care Jordan was able to intervene and send her to school instead.

"I sat down with my team immediately upon returning home it's no understatement to say that time is running out every day for these girls," she said. "The result was Creating Choices.' What better opportunity than International Women's Day to launch a program enabling an education for 30 other girls?"

In a world where facts and figures are increasingly called into question, luxury brands will need to lead with emotion and values rather than rationality to succeed.

According to a new report from Positive Luxury, while storytelling and truth were the buzzwords of 2016 and 2017, respectively, 2018 will be dominated by the concept of "influence through emotion." As millennials' spending power grows, their preference for companies and brands that strive for environmental and social good is moving the needle for luxury brands, making CSR a boon for business ([see story](#)).

"Olivela was founded with philanthropic impact at its core, and today more than ever brands have a powerful ability to use their platforms to make a difference in a multitude of ways," Ms. Boyd said. "We are doing this by making a commitment not only to social good but also by creating partnerships and programs with like-minded brands.

"Studies have also shown that consumers are more socially conscious than ever before, and as a result they are helping to drive a big part of this conversation and shift."

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