

FRAGRANCE AND PERSONAL CARE

Technology offers personalization opportunities

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Fashion influencer Luanna Perez for Furla, fall/winter 2016 Milan Fashion Week

By NANCY BUCKLEY

NEW YORK Consumer data is often first thought to be creepy, but if used in the correct manner, it can elicit a new level of personalization among brands and consumers.

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Speaking at the Women in Luxury conference on May 9, a panel of top women executives in luxury spoke about the female luxury consumers and the digital disruption impacting every business. Technology allows brands to have a level of personalization that has been lost since the days of local shops knowing your name and preferences, but only if used in the right manner.

"We as marketers have to stop marketing and show up and be real," said Suzanne Hader, chief marketing officer at **John Hardy**, New York. "The difference between marketing and storytelling is the difference between showing and not telling."

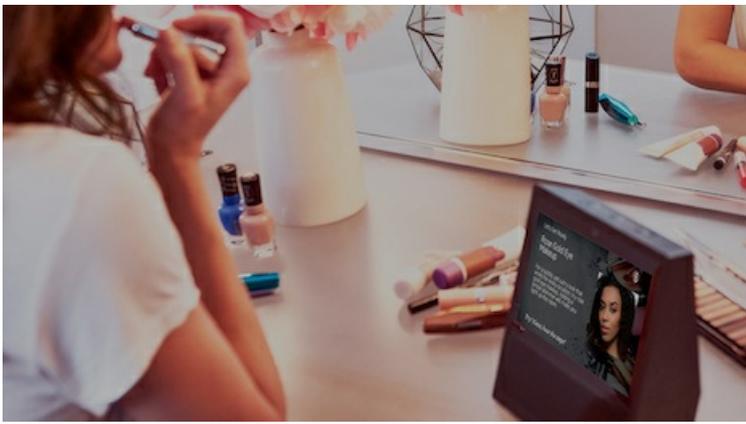
Women in Luxury was produced by Luxury Daily, with venue sponsor UBS

Times are changing

When ecommerce was first evolving, brands suspected that consumers would never buy makeup online, but beauty sellers were proven wrong.

Then brands assumed no consumer would buy high-priced items online, but now they do. Consumers are not price sensitive if they are digitally inclined and do not require the physicality of purchasing a personalized item.

Providing a personalized, high-touch service to consumers is quintessential to modern marketing. Offering this experience requires an omnichannel fusion of digital and in-person channels that allows consumers to feel connected to the brand.



Coty's AR mirror is a perfect example of blending digital and physical retail. Image credit: Coty

"The online experience needs to match what it would be in-store in a personalized way," said Alison Karp, executive director for L'Equipe, L'Oreal, [Wavemaker](#).

In the 1950s a person could enter the local shop and the salesperson would know her name, her family, her likes and dislikes, and use that information to help her shop on a very personal level. Technology offers the data for companies to know such personal details about consumers, but using it to market or lure a person to the brand can be seen as creepy and an invasion of privacy.

"I think that if you are using the data as fuel to get more knowledge about the consumer to provide her a better experience," said Poupak Sionit, chief marketing officer [Glamsquad](#). "Using it in the right way for the right services and personalizing it for her is when someone appreciates it."



Glamsquad can be used for any occasion. Photo courtesy of Glamsquad

Glamsquad brings freelance makeup experts into a consumer's home to create a personalized experience, however, prior to the in-person experience, technology is used to learn more about the client and her likes and dislikes.

"Today we are services, but tomorrow we are a new avenue of retail for people," Glamsquad's Ms. Sionit said. "The idea of in the home and what people experience in the home is going to get bigger and bigger; it is a new retail avenue for brands."

As for now, most brands reach inside consumers' homes through social media.

"Social becomes one of the places we can tell our story," Wavemaker's Ms. Karp said. "We need to make sure on

each social platform we are doing what makes sense for the platform.

"When you go to Facebook you want to see something specific," she said. "When you go to Snapchat you want a lens or a filter."

Aligning the story with the brand and the brand with story comes through collaborations with social media influencers, other brands and celebrities. However, it is important to note when using an influencer that the engagement between the person and the brand is organic and not forced.

"Finding something where you have true alignment around how you show up in the world, when the match is right with a media partner or influencer who really understand you, it is magic," John Hardy's Ms. Hader said.

Influencers direct brands

Social media influencers have recently gone from social media stars, to brand ambassadors, to leaders within brands.

In 2015, Lancme recruited British cosmetologist Lisa Eldridge as the brand's new global creative director of Lancme makeup. Ms. Eldridge had consulted with brands such as Shiseido and has collaborated with brands such as Prada, Chanel and Donna Karan for runway presentations and for advertising campaigns, in addition to her personal YouTube and blog ([see story](#)).

Similarly, in 2017, Este Lauder appointed makeup artist and influencer Violette as its global beauty director. In her new role, Violette works on developing new products and guides women in finding their beauty look.

While from a different generation than the beauty label's eponymous founder, Violette shares qualities with Este Lauder such as a sense of individuality and the perspective that beauty is a means of empowerment ([see story](#)).

Not every influencer is appointed a director, but nonetheless, influencers have powerful impacts on brand marketing.

"Influencers have evolved. A lot and it is about authenticity," Ms. Sinoit said. "It is top of the funnel, it is driving engagements and awareness."

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