

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Dolce & Gabbana takes editorial approach to hype handbag

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Dolce & Gabbana's Devotion handbag is the star of media-produced content. Image credit: Dolce & Gabbana

By SARAH JONES

Italian fashion label Dolce & Gabbana is promoting its Devotion handbag line with help from magazine media.

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In a digital push for the collection, Dolce & Gabbana called in talent from publishing group Cond Nast and Hearst's *Elle* magazine, asking them to interpret the handbags. As consumers grow increasingly skeptical of advertising, brands are turning to native partnerships for efforts that are less overt.

"Dolce & Gabbana knows that both the *Elle* and Cond Nast editorial teams define fashion and style," said Vincent Krsulich, senior vice president of **Martini Media**, New York. "With all the talk of influencers and micro influencers and social media, when you think about it, *Elle* and Cond are the ultimate influencers.

"The editors sit at the top. The edit teams are passionate, knowledgeable and beyond interested in the art and form of fashion," he said. "The teams do their job because they love it.

"Dolce & Gabbana is tapping into that passion and authenticity - key ingredients to brand building."

Mr. Krsulich is not affiliated with Dolce & Gabbana, but agreed to comment as an industry expert. **Dolce & Gabbana** was reached for comment.

Love stories

Dolce & Gabbana's Devotion bags made their debut earlier this year during the brand's Milan Fashion Week show.

At the start of the Feb. 25 presentation, drones floated down the catwalk carrying handbags, allowing the focus to be on the accessories rather than an entire look. Dolce & Gabbana has previously integrated technology into its showcases, responding to the growing digitization of fashion ([see story](#)).



Dolce & Gabbana's Devotion bags were showcased on drones. Image credit: Dolce & Gabbana

For its interpretation of the Devotion, *Elle* took inspiration from this marriage of high-fashion and high-tech. In a trio of short films, *Elle* retells classic fairytales, replacing the couples with a Devotion bag and a drone.

One finds the Devotion taking on the role of Juliet as she meets Romeo on her balcony. The purse opens its flap, sending love letters raining down on her star-crossed lover.

The drone then flies up to meet his sweetheart, who showers him with affection.

Elle also reinterpreted the Chinese folktale Liang & Zhu. In the tragedy, the pair that could not be together in life are reborn as butterflies.

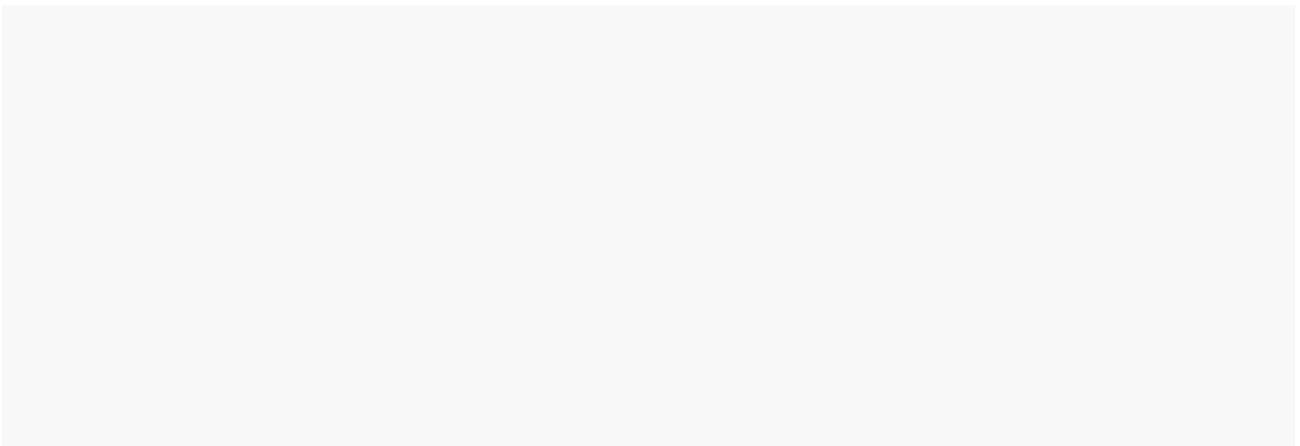
In Dolce & Gabbana's film, the drone appears first as a butterfly flitting around a scene from the Silk Road. He later reveals himself in his true form.

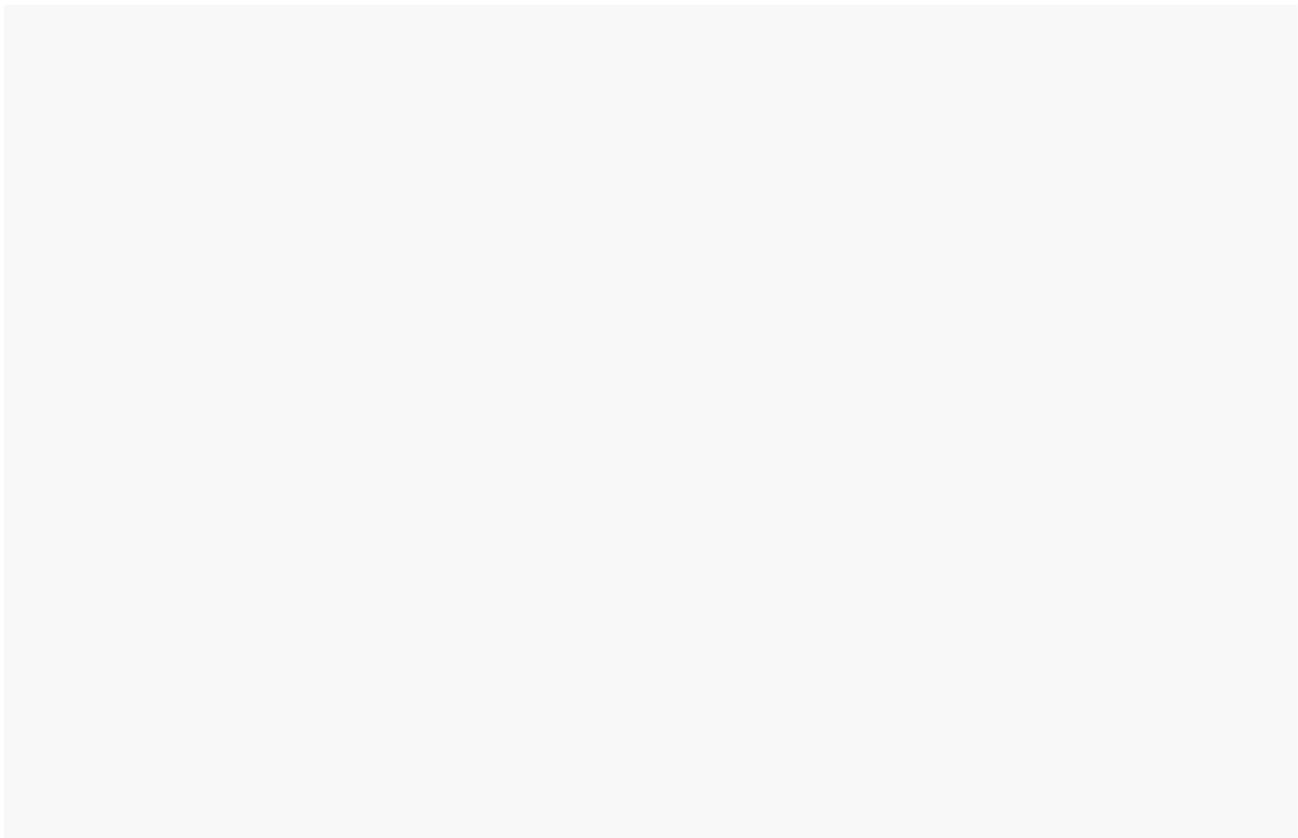
Elle for Dolce & Gabbana's Devotion bag

Rounding out the trio is a recreation of the Arthurian tale of Lancelot and Guinevere. The Devotion bag is a damsel in distress locked in a tower guarded by a fire-breathing dragon.

Dressed as a knight, the drone swoops in to rescue her.

Cond Nast took a different approach for its film. The media group zeroed in on the bag's heart clasp, creating a rapid succession of various heart iconography throughout history.





There is one special heart Discover the interpretation of the Devotion Bag through Cond Nast's eyes. Link in bio.
#DGDevotionBag #DGWomen

A post shared by Dolce & Gabbana (@dolcegabbana) on Jul 14, 2018 at 3:01am PDT

For Dolce & Gabbana, this push may help it to appeal to the millennial audience it has recently been seeking ([see story](#)).

"These whimsical and innovative efforts first help the Devotion bag stand out from the crowd, perhaps attracting a bit of a younger audience," Mr. Krsulich said. "The use of drones taps into this generation's technology-first reality.

"Devotion certainly gives the consumer a sense of uniqueness," he said. "In short, this becomes about an experience and not just about 'a bag.'"

While most native endeavors live primarily on the editorial partners' platforms, Dolce & Gabbana's media partnerships are compiled on its own channels.

Going native

During a panel at Luxury FirstLook 2017: Time for Luxury 2.0, an executive from New York Times' T Brand Studio made a bold prediction, claiming there is a chance that traditional advertising studios will become obsolete in favor of in-house brand studios.

The content overload in today's market is causing native advertising to become increasingly important as a way for brands to connect with consumers. With the influx of publishers and media brands creating these in-house studios for brands to create truly native advertising, there could be a major shift in the industry ([see story](#)).

Alliances between luxury labels and media brands are becoming more common and more complex.

For instance, Gucci teamed with Cond Nast men's magazine *British GQ* to highlight the stories of creative individuals.

The second installment of their collaborative series "The Performers" follows five influential men as they travel to a place that shaped them. Rather than one-off articles, today native content partnerships often revolve around ongoing campaigns or series, allowing a brand and publication to make more of an impact ([see story](#)).

Similarly to Dolce & Gabbana, Gucci's series also lived on its own channels, as well as *British GQ's*.

"In my opinion, more brands will want to host the creative built by partners," Mr. Krsulich said. "The move to ecommerce means that brands need to continue to drive people to their digital store and give customers experiences while they are there.

"When done correctly and creatively, the impact can be powerful on a brand's site, perhaps more impactful than on a publisher's site," he said. "That said, I would have the content live on both the publisher's site and the brand's site.

"The publisher's site attracts what I would call micro influencers, or in old-school speak readers, with the intent to purchase when 'influenced' properly."

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