

JEWELRY

Van Cleef & Arpels finds most authentic influencers in employees

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Van Cleef & Arpels took inspiration from the Brothers Grimm for its latest high-jewelry designs. Image credit: Van Cleef & Arpels

By BRIELLE JAEKEL

NEW YORK Similarly to many luxury brands, French jeweler Van Cleef & Arpels is highly meticulous about its authenticity on social media, and part of its strategy involves looking to a unique source for influencer marketing.

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During the fireside chat "The Emperor Has a Smartphone: How One High Touch, Hard Luxury Brand Is Working to Adopt a Digital Culture - And Yours Can Too" at Luxury Interactive on Oct. 15, an executive from the Richemont-owned house discussed how it taps into its own sales associates for influencer marketing on social media.

For Van Cleef & Arpels, social media allows it to be highly interactive and creative with its storytelling, but its focus on cohesiveness ensures it is true to its brand across all channels, Van Cleef & Arpels vice president of communications Kristina Buckley Kayel said in a conversation with moderator Jill Manoff, editor in chief of Glossy.

Employees slash influencers

While many brands work with outside influencers on social media to help drive engagement, Van Cleef & Arpels strives to avoid an inauthentic product sale tactic. The label does work with a few third-party social media personalities, but its process is strict.

More frequently, Van Cleef & Arpels looks to its own sales associates to drive social conversation.



Social sparkles. Image credit: Van Cleef & Arpels

Employees of local stores have their own Instagram accounts for the Van Cleef & Arpels brand under their name. There, associates can express their individuality, while also representing the heart of the brand.

To ensure cohesiveness, each post must contain certain hashtags so that not only can users explore the brand, but Van Cleef can also monitor employees' content. This way, the label can be sure it is being represented in an authentic manner.

Ms. Buckley Kayel used the term "freedom within the frame," expressing the notion of these employees being authentic to who they are, while also representing the brand.



Richemont's Van Cleef & Arpels recorded double-digit growth in the first half of 2017. Image credit: Van Cleef & Arpels

The executive also stated that while technology has grown, print is still a viable option for Van Cleef & Arpels. The house invests in imagery within print magazines and outlets such as *The New York Times*.

However, as with all advertising mediums, it is important to parallel the print marketing with efforts on other channels, each with strategies conducive to their environments.

Van Cleef campaigns

Meanwhile, the French jeweler hid secrets and invited consumers to uncover them in a high-jewelry collection and accompanying campaign.

Van Cleef & Arpels' Haute Joaillerie Le Secret collection of high-jewelry includes pieces with secret mechanisms and transformations. A short film, titled "Le Secret," uncovers these hidden transformations with assistance from a silver fairy ([see story](#)).

The jeweler's use of employees as social media faces may help move the needle more.

While influencer marketing is a hot topic in social media today, a recent report found that celebrity personalities do not hold as much sway as individuals who are perceived as regular people.

Sprout Social found that 61 percent of consumers would be apt to look into a product after a friend recommended it, compared to only 35 percent who would consider a purchase after hearing about it from an influencer. With consumers responding more to their peers, Sprout sees a big potential for the budget-friendly tactic of using a brand's own employees as influencers ([see story](#)).

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