

SOFTWARE AND TECHNOLOGY

Gucci outfits personalized avatars in digital luxury apparel

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Image credit: Genie Inc.

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Italian fashion label Gucci is tapping into the popularity of personalized avatars and mobile communication by being the first brand to partner with a new platform.

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Users of the mobile application Genies, which integrates avatar-to-avatar communication with artificial intelligence, will be able to dress their avatars with luxury apparel from Gucci. The label is among the most digitally savvy in the luxury world, as proven by its enthusiasm to discover new, mobile-first advertising avenues.

"During our beta launch Gucci was by far the most popular clothing users put on their Genies," said Evan Rosenbaum, cofounder and chief product officer at Genies, San Francisco. "This shows our users coincide with Gucci's target demographic.

"Gucci has a strong commitment to digital which makes them the perfect partner to be the first clothing brand on Genies," he said. "Gucci is on the cutting-edge of fashion just as Genies is at the forefront of avatar technology."

Gucci Genies

To create a Genie, app users operate wheels to select from over 1 million combinations of skin tone, eye color, hair style, clothing and accessories.

The average Genie user is between 18 and 25 years old and spends about 20 minutes creating their "clones" through the app, making it an attractive tool for brands and advertisers.



Gucci CEO Marco Bizzarri. Image courtesy of Genies Inc.

Genies can be used in several other apps, including Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp.

One of the ways Genies differentiate themselves from other avatars is that the algorithm can detect more than 180 mood changes to help develop individual personalities.

Not only can users dress their clones in Gucci apparel and accessories, but the platform also allows consumers to purchase clothing they see their digital selves wearing.

Branded characters

Looking to become part of consumers' conversations, an increasing number of luxury brands have rolled out label-specific emojis.

Brands including Michael Kors and Mot & Chandon are tapping the engagement possibilities of peer-to-peer communication, helping consumers have conversations with friends, family and romantic partners with specific messaging graphics.

Even those without a specific product to sell have looked to emojis to further develop a personality and community feeling. *Harper's Bazaar's* emojis speak to the magazine's reader base, offering images of everything from avocado to Champagne flutes and high heeled pumps ([see story](#)).

Traditionally, luxury brands have taken their time before participating in digital trends.

In 2015, a year after the initial launch of the Bitmoji mobile app, luxury apparel collections were introduced to its avatar creation platform.

Bitmoji Fashion allowed users of the app to dress up their virtual personas with in-season merchandise from the likes of Kenzo, Marc Jacobs and Alexander McQueen. This feature appealed to both an aspirational and traditional luxury audience, enabling consumers of all price points the opportunity to wear the labels that reflect their personal style ([see story](#)).

Acquired by Snap Inc. in 2016, Bitmoji remains one of the most popular apps available for download.

However, the makers of Genies hopes to take avatars to a new level.

"Compared to other popular avatars, we use 3D motion picture quality and advanced artificial intelligence to create digital clones to look and think just like you," Mr. Rosenbaum said. "Our avatars are designed to be a medium that people can understand in the new generation, compared to other avatars which are just static cartoons that look somewhat like you."

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