

MARKETING

Millennials will not become boomers as they age: McLaren exec

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McLaren's designers are now using VR to sketch. Image credit: McLaren

By BRIELLE JAEKEL

NEW YORK As a newcomer to consumer-facing retail, automaker McLaren works to maintain a level of exclusivity while also being inclusive to all auto fans, an executive from the company revealed during a panel at Luxury FirstLook 2019, adding that its millennial audience has much different motivation behind its purchases.

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The panel, moderated by [Quintessentially's](#) global CEO Anastasia V. Seeböhm, also touched on the notion of mobile and how the tool enables brands to create the experiences that today's consumers, particularly millennials, seek out. Experiences make a much stronger impact on consumers, as a bad experience with a product may only last a moment but a bad time taking in an experience will resonate a lot more.

"We say that person is the new luxury," said Chris Paradysz, founder and co-CEO of [PMX Agency](#). "I'm the new luxury."

"The experience is a mechanism to get closer to me," he said.

Luxury Daily organized Luxury FirstLook: Digital Acceleration

Driving with millennials

Mr. Paradysz also discussed that audio is an important medium that often goes unnoticed. Most people put their headphones in during a morning commute to have some space for themselves, but many do not even have any audio playing.

This exhibits the importance of "me time" for consumers today.

Cedric Roget, CEO for North American of [Valmont](#), explained that within its spas, Valmont focuses on providing the utmost luxury experience for visitors to help with their "me time." The spa journey is extremely personalized.

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A post shared by Valmont North America (@valmontnorthamerica) on Nov 17, 2018 at 9:56am PST

Valmont Instagram

Andy Thomas, vice president of marketing at **McLaren Automotive**, explained that the automotive brand focuses on giving time back to the consumer by communicating through media that the individual wants.

Many customers only want to text, while others would rather talk on the phone or through email. Luxury brands therefore need to cater to how the customer wants to interact.

On top of that, it is important to craft one-of-a-kind experiences that consumers will cherish and remember. For instance, Mr. Thomas explained that McLaren organized a playful group outing in which 25 McLaren owners formed a group and took a ride to order through a drive-through window at a fast food joint.

Those customers remain in contact and communicate through a special group chat on the mobile platform WhatsApp. The automaker's strategy makes McLaren customers feel as though they are in a special club.



McLaren donates a special model to Elton John AIDS Foundation. Image credit: McLaren

This plays into the motivation of millennials. While the baby boomers often bought with a brand in mind, the younger generations are focusing on products.

Valmont's Mr. Roget explained that in the past baby boomers may have had their entire skin care routine dominated by one brand, but millennials and Gen Z clientele will buy a cleanser from one brand and a serum from another.

The need for exceptional experience is strong, but consumers today are still interested in goods. There are just different motivations behind it.

McLaren's Mr. Thomas believes that millennials will not age to become like their older cohorts and lose the values that drive them today, but they will maintain their characteristics.

"They are not going to become like the boomers, there's no signs of that," Mr. Thomas said. "I think that people still value things, but for all kinds of different reasons."

McLaren marketing

In support of the brand's experience strategy, McLaren offered consumers an accessible ownership option for its Senna model through a partnership with Lego.

A toy version of the car is available for \$14.99, a cost that is more than 50,000 times less expensive than the drivable vehicle's \$958,966 price tag. Previous Lego Speed Champions models for the P1 and the 720S have sold out and are no longer available, and the newest model is expected to see similar interest ([see story](#)).

The brand also pitted its sports car against motorbikes to celebrate its latest video game placement.

To promote the launch of Microsoft's Forza Horizon 4, a McLaren Senna took on three motocross bicycles at the Goodwood Hill Climb. McLaren has had a long-running relationship with Microsoft, with roles in a number of video games ([see story](#)).

"I like to think at McLaren, we're inclusive but exclusive," Mr. Thomas said. "I think it's really important to give anyone who is enthusiastic with the brand a chance and make them feel like they belong."