

MARKETING

## Gucci's UK search volume up as brand cultivates millennial loyalty

March 20, 2019



*Gucci is one of the most influential brands in digital media. Image credit: Gucci*

By SARAH RAMIREZ

Online searches for designer fashions have grown 46 percent over the last four years in the United Kingdom, as digital inquiries become a stronger indicator of brand value.

Subscribe to **Luxury Daily**  
Plus: Just released  
State of Luxury 2019 **Save \$246 ▶**

According to a report from Pi Datametrics, high-end streetwear brands have seen significant increases in online searches as the casualization of fashion becomes more mainstream. Italian label Gucci saw the most dramatic growth among true luxury brands during the period studied.

"There are multiple factors that can affect the demand of a brand online, both internal successful marketing campaigns and product launches or external positive and negative press," said Louise Linehan, brand and content manager at **Pi Datametrics**, Brighton, UK. "Through influencer marketing and the power of the celebrity via social media, Gucci has managed to successfully align itself with a loyal subculture of millennials, and associate its brand with a much coveted premium lifestyle."

Pi Datametrics examined more than 440 million searches, originating from Google U.K., across 315 brand names from January 2015 to December 2018.

### Search trends

With 6.28 million search inquiries in 2018, British brand Ted Baker had the greatest search volume in the U.K. among fashion brands. Gucci and French fashion house Louis Vuitton rounded out the top three.

Gucci's search volume in 2018 exceeded 6 million, up from 1.7 million in 2015. Search volume for the brand grew 249.8 percent during that four-year period, compared to Louis Vuitton's more modest 82.1 percent growth.

Over the last four years, Gucci had a compound annual growth rate of 51.8 percent. Inquiries peaked in November 2017, not long after the Kering-owned brand announced its plans to go fur-free ([see story](#)).

Gucci has been among the luxury brands to embrace the streetwear aesthetic. The label also benefitted by being worn and name-dropped by several pop culture fixtures, including singer-actresses Rihanna and Beyonc.

[View this post on Instagram](#)

A post shared by badgalriri (@badgalriri) on Mar 8, 2019 at 5:15pm PST

### *Rihanna wears Balenciaga*

French fashion house Balenciaga has similarly leaned into streetwear, and has seen significant interest in its high-end sneaker releases in particular. The label's search volume jumped 294.9 percent in the last four years, though it still falls behind Gucci in terms of inquiries with 3.34 million searches in 2018.

Strictly streetwear brands saw some of the biggest upticks in search.

Streetwear label Supreme achieved a 450 percent compound annual growth rate in searches from 2015 to 2018. Off-White, which Pi Datametrics considers an emerging label since it had fewer than 300,000 searches in 2015, has seen search volume grow 188 percent year-over-year.

Searches for Off-White peaked in September 2018, when its founder Virgil Abloh showed his first menswear collection for Louis Vuitton.

"Off-White has forged an ongoing partnership with the similarly aligned, albeit lower ticket brand, Nike, and is garnering huge brand recognition as a result of its collaborations," Ms. Linehan said.



*Off-White's collaboration with Nike has expanded its brand recognition. Image credit: Stadium Goods*

U.S. fashion labels, however, lost traction in recent years among U.K. consumers.

Michael Kors saw searches fall by 44 percent year-over-year. Similarly, searches for Ralph Lauren dropped by 21.1 percent year-over-year.

Both brands have seen their reputations dinged by heavy discounting in recent years.

#### Gucci goods

Although Pi Datametrics focused exclusively on search volume, Gucci has also built a reputation as a digitally savvy brand that connects with younger affluents in exciting ways.

Gucci has turned to digital media to create unique brand experiences beyond its stores. For instance, users can leverage an augmented reality feature on the Gucci mobile application to virtually personalize their space with pieces from its Gucci Decor collection ([see story](#)).

In a more lighthearted move, Gucci is tapping into the popularity of personalized avatars and mobile communication by being the first brand to partner with a new platform. 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 ([see story](#)).

"It hasn't all been smooth sailing, and Gucci has come under scrutiny in the public eye a number of times in recent years," Ms. Linehan said. "However, its ability to harness this exposure and turn it into an opportunity is key to the success of the brand, and is what sets it apart from the rest."