

MARKETING

More social media opportunities on the horizon for luxury brands

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Image from the Michael Kors Collection spring/summer 2019 campaign. Image courtesy of Michael Kors

By SARAH RAMIREZ

CAPE TOWN, South Africa Even though traditional media still holds marketing value for luxury brands, companies need to leverage social media and influencers to better engage with audiences.

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During a talk at the Cond Nast International Luxury Conference on April 11, the editor of *Wired UK* and social media experts discussed the evolving relationship between luxury brands and social media. Understanding data is a must for brands to meet their goals.

"What brands are finding some of the brands that are just coming to the market and getting more involved with social media, and some that have been there is that it's no longer about posting to post," said Alison Bring, chief marketing officer of **Launchmetrics**. "It's really thinking through that creative strategy and having really unique content built into that channel that's performing better.

"Brands should really think about why the customer is there, and what they want an action to be," she said. "Is it awareness, is it a discovery or a purchase, and leveraging different voices to create that."

Engaging with influencers

Whether brands want to engage with affluents, fashion consumers or both, mobile has to be part of their marketing strategy.

According to Morin Oluwole, global head of luxury at Facebook and Instagram, the average affluent consumer uses four electronic devices. They are also younger, can still develop brand loyalty and look to social media, particularly Instagram, to learn about new trends.



Salem Mitchell was one of three influencers in Bally's campaign with Vogue. Image credit: Bally

Following the success of Instagram Stories, which were launched in 2016, similar Stories features were introduced to Facebook and WhatsApp. Hundreds of millions use these features on each social network on a daily basis.

Instagram has also focused on its Shopping features.

Users can now save shopping posts, essentially creating a shopping list within Instagram. Other new features include shoppable videos and Checkout ([see story](#)).

The social media company is also looking to further its resources dedicated to influencer marketing.

"We've been late to the game as a company, which is ironic because you see most influencer activity happening on Instagram," Ms. Oluwole said. "In the past, we didn't want to become the middleman or middlewoman."

Launchmetrics' Ms. Bring encouraged brands to let data guide their social media decisions, including influencer choices.

"If you know exactly who your customer is, you can find an influencer who shares the same values, who engages in the same topics and can really be this middleman between you and the audience you're looking to target," she said. "Use the data to inform who you are working with and then trust the influencers to build content that they know is right for their audience."

[View this post on Instagram](#)

A post shared by Silvia Njoki (@silvianjoki) on Mar 5, 2019 at 11:07pm PST

Africa-based influencers like Silvia Njoki can offer brands a high ROI

Ms. Bring also noted that for luxury labels looking to grow in Africa, there is a low-cost barrier to working with African influencers. However, they still offer a high ROI.

"Invest more in your owned media," she said. "Don't be afraid to engage with local influencers because they know the audience."

Social successes

Metrics and measurement are also important aspects of social media and influencer marketing.

Luxury brands that find the right mix of voices can maximize their impact and earn millions in media exposure, according to data from Launchmetrics.

While brands at New York Fashion Week focus more on influencer engagement, mainstays at Paris Fashion Week still rely on traditional media to reach the masses. With a MIV of \$7.1 million, Michael Kors outperformed fashion labels Ralph Lauren, Tom Ford and Calvin Klein at NYFW ([see story](#)).

Messaging is also the next wave of social media marketing, according to Facebook's Ms. Oluwole.

Facebook-owned Instagram is an important medium for luxury brands, thanks to its highly visual nature, and Facebook serves as a tool for greater discussion.

Direct messaging on Instagram will now be integrated into Facebook Messenger inboxes for brands who have a presence on both platforms. In addition to the streamlined messages, Facebook will be allowing businesses to participate in groups on the platform with their page name ([see story](#)).

"Facebook is dedicated to helping luxury brands," Ms. Oluwole said. "What does the luxury consumer want?"

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