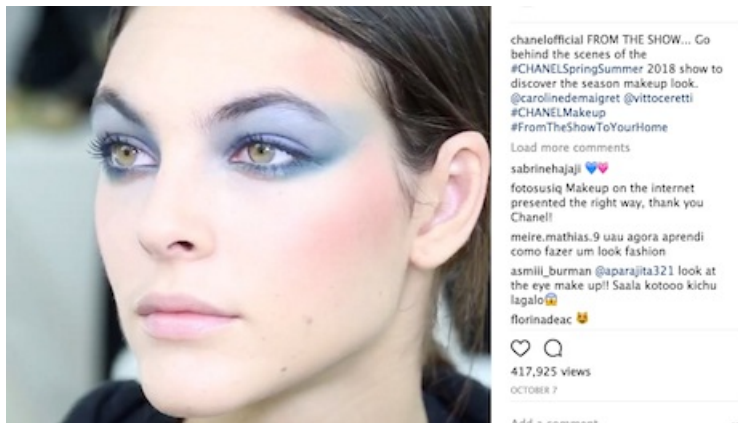


MARKETING

## What would an Instagram with no likes mean for brands?

April 29, 2019



*Chanel appeals to consumers with massive reach through Instagram video*

By BRIELLE JAEKEL

Reports are circulating about Instagram possibly hiding the number of likes from public view, as its platform becomes more known as a popularity contest. But the new design could have severe effects on luxury brands, who highly value the image-heavy application.

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

A recent report from *TechCrunch* showed leaked images of a new Instagram design that eliminates the ability to see the exact number of likes a post has received. The company confirmed the prototype to *TechCrunch*, citing that the application wants to reduce the mob mentality that the numbered likes have caused and allow users to focus on the content, but its decision could alienate the very users it hopes to help.

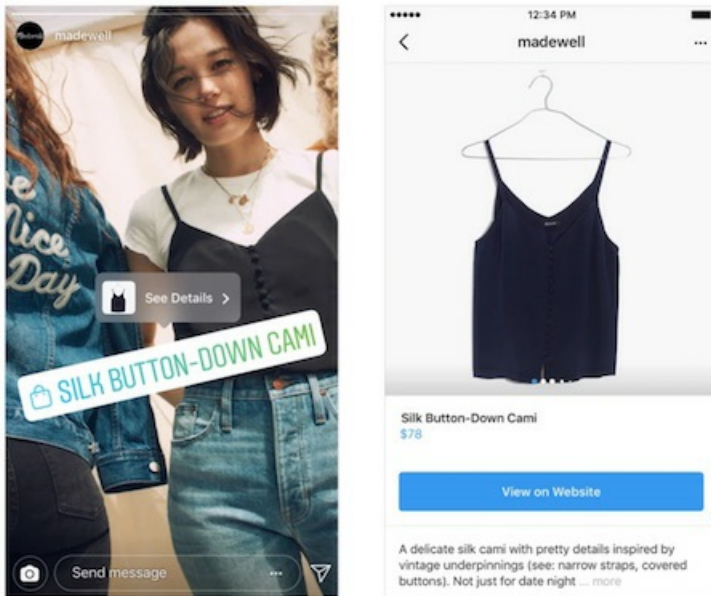
"Instagram's idea of getting rid of likes is a little out there," said Marci Troutman, CEO of SiteMinis. "While, yes, they are at the top of the popularity pole right now in social media, they need to be aware of the fact that consumers don't like large changes that affect their analytics on why they are using a platform."

"If consumers start to jump ship, the platform will suffer, and it makes sense the brand marketing would decline," she said. "Falls for giants can be fast or slow, but everyone can fall."

### Big change

Within 2019, a trend has come to light with Instagram users banding together to control who has the most liked photo on the platform.

An account surfaced in January with the name @world\_record\_egg, with one goal in mind: to dethrone Kylie Jenner. The account posted a picture of a brown egg, with the caption "Let's set a world record together and get the most liked post on Instagram. Beating the current world record held by Kylie Jenner (18 million)! We got this."



*Instagram has turned on Product Tags for Stories. Image credit: Instagram*

Around the same time a variety of copycat accounts surfaced, but the egg prevailed and now holds the position as not only the most liked picture on Instagram but also the one with the greatest number of likes on any online platform.

This trend revealed the value Instagram users have put on likes, and the platform is now toying with the idea of eliminating the number of likes to refocus its users on content.

Many reports have also come out on the harmful effects likes have on consumers' psyche, putting Instagram in a bad light.

For brands, this could produce both desirable and detrimental results.

Consumers will no longer be focused on how many likes a brand's content receives, and thus no longer be able to judge the brand's legitimacy based on just the number.

But these brands will still be able to track engagement, as the number of likes will still be visible on the backend of their accounts.

This could potentially affect the relationship brands have with influencers, and there will be a greater focus on stories and overall follower numbers, since these will likely not be altered.



Shop Now



▶ 865,969 views

Interpreting the latest collection from @Marni within the artwork of the Musée Bourdelle in Paris. #ad

*Vogue ran a sponsored ad for Marni's spring/summer 2019 campaign on Instagram*

While the new design has not been released to the public yet, a *TechCrunch* tip contributor found new design code on Instagram's Android app and was able to generate screenshots. Instagram then confirmed the prototype with *TechCrunch* but stated it is not testing the new design.

#### Instagram updates

With brands relying heavily on influencer marketing on social media today, the sale of fake followers poses a significant threat to those who gauge partners based on number of followers, causing Instagram's owner Facebook to crack down on the practice.

Facebook and its subsidiary have filed suit against four companies and three individuals from the People's Republic of China for allegedly offering the sale of fake followers. Those involved were said to do so on multiple outlets including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Apple, Google, Amazon and LinkedIn ([see story](#)).

This could also be an attributing factor for Instagram to look into putting the focus back on content rather than numbers.

Instagram is also making subtle but notable updates to its user experience, as the platform continues to pivot towards video.

Although Instagram originally launched as a photo-sharing service, video has been part of the platform since 2013. More recently, Instagram Stories and IGTV have made the Facebook-owned network a major player in video advertising, and Instagram is looking to capitalize on this by making it easier for users to consume and discover video content ([see story](#)).

"The end result of making a change this drastic for Instagram could be detrimental to the brand, I'm not saying it is a definite, but there is a chance," Ms. Troutman said. "Consumers like popularity contests, and brands need analytics.

"My suggestion would be for Instagram to do a poll on their platform and let their users tell them yea or nay on such a drastic change," she said.