

MARKETING

Luxury bespoke nature can be helpful in disability community

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Farfetch is one of the luxury platforms looking to create a truly diverse and global audience. Image credit: Farfetch

By STAFF REPORTS

MADRID, Spain – Luxury has the opportunity to change the way disability is approached in fashion, and it started with including those it affects into the decision-making process.

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During the FT Business of Luxury Summit 2019, educator and advocate Sinéad Burke spoke about how diversity can no longer be a trend in fashion but a mainstay. Ms. Burke revealed that the disabled segment worldwide is around the same size of China and has the spending power of \$7 trillion.

Diversity and luxury

The educator spoke of her own experiences as someone with a disability and how the retail experience is extremely difficult for her.

Ms. Burkey urged fashion executives not to design content, experiences and products just for her community but for everyone.

Luxury has a unique opportunity when it comes to the disability community, as many products need to be custom made, a process often synonymous with the luxury industry. Diversity and inclusion can be a platform for innovation.

One of the reasons that diversity is not completely apparent through the fashion and luxury sectors is that the decision makers lack awareness or their own experiences.



Diversity is more than just a moral obligation, it is also good business strategy. Image credit: Tiffany & Co.

Inviting those with disabilities and others who are not often included in fashion strategy to come onboard and join a conversation about how to move forward is likely to make a big difference. With their own experiences, they can help contribute to a new way of retail and marketing going forward.

In an example of this, British fashion house Burberry took action to increase the diversity within its organization after a runway look drew criticism.

During Burberry's recent London Fashion Week show, the brand showed a hoodie with a rope that some thought looked similar to a noose. Following the controversy, Burberry is moving beyond its apology with a series of initiatives aimed at upping its sensitivity to inclusivity, including focusing on a diverse in-house team ([see story](#)).

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