

MARKETING

Have luxury brands learned their lessons about Chinese New Year campaigns?

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Gucci's 2020 Chinese New Year campaign features actress Ni Ni hanging out in Disneyland. Photo credit: Gucci

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- International luxury brands have a history of offending Chinese consumers with their campaigns during this holiday.
- It is important to gain favor with Chinese New Year Internet marketing in China, and a negative response could deal a severe blow to business.
- What did these five major brands do right and wrong in their 2020 campaigns?

'Tis the season for luxury brands to court Chinese customers on tiptoes.

As China's Lunar New Year (CNY) approaches beginning this year on Jan. 25 luxury brands are releasing dedicated campaigns that pay tribute to one of their biggest markets' most important holidays.

But **after a series of missteps** in their 2019 CNY campaigns, which received comments ranging from "**horror movie**" to "misrepresentation of Chinese culture," brands are becoming increasingly cautious.

It is admittedly hard to please such a judgy crowd every year, and for this holiday, it is a real task trying to originate content that is not zodiac signs, the color red, or loaded cultural symbols such as lanterns and chopsticks.

Maybe we should forget about **chopsticks** altogether.

In fact, there is rarely a winner in this game, and brands constantly find themselves losing ambassadors or having to issue apologies when things go wrong. That is because the campaigns for China's most important festival are not just for prospective customers they are also for China's throngs of plugged-in **netizens**.

But, as we enter a new decade, is it possible that these brands have learned their lessons? *Jing Daily* looks at five of this year's major Chinese New Year campaigns to see if any of them stand out.

Gucci

Gucci has multiple ambassadors and friends of the brand in Greater China and, thankfully, it uses the gorgeous

actress **Ni Ni** as the face of its one-minute CNY video.

In it, she hangs out with models such as Earl Cave and Zo Bleu Arquette in Disneyland, while snapping pictures with other visitors, going on a roller coaster, and genuinely having a great time in various Gucci outfits. It was directed by edgy American director Harmony Korine, whose lurid taste in cinematography serves as the perfect balance for a wholesome holiday hangout.

The only sad part is that Gucci is not the only brand that decided to feature the world's most famous mouse for the lunar year: **H&M** features Minnie in its 2020 CNY campaign, too.

Gucci Chinese New Year campaign: Disney x Gucci

Burberry

After having its 2019 campaign called "creepy," Burberry decided to ditch the family idea and return to what it should focus on its apparel.

The 20-second video stars the brand's 27-year-old Chinese ambassador, **Zhou Dongyu**, alongside **Chinese models** He Cong and Liang Jiyuan.

The spot has a tight rhythm of thumpy beats that resemble footsteps, making viewers feel like they are watching a catwalk show.

Aside from an obvious red theme for CNY, the holiday is also referenced with a subtle "mouse" element that has been enmeshed into Burberry's new interlocking "TB" print, which is honestly more memorable than a famous cartoon mouse.

Burberry Chinese New Year 2020 campaign

Christian Dior

Dior's campaign brings a breath of fresh air to viewers when red has become a default choice for this holiday.

The brand's Chinese ambassador, actress Sophie Zhang, and its fragrance ambassador, singer and actress Yang Caiyu, demonstrate Dior's limited CNY capsule collection, which features embroidered phoenix patterns and red flower petals on a white backdrop.

A lot of Chinese consumers may not immediately recognize the two ambassadors, but they bring the "**poetic and picturesque**" vibe for which Dior is famous.

It does not hurt that they also resemble the typical Dior handbag buyer in China: wealthy girls in their 20s and early 30s.

Prada

Despite going to the lengths of using a Chinese-American director for its 2019 CNY video, Prada suffered the criticism Burberry did with Netizens saying the campaign looked like a scary movie.

This year, Prada gave its campaign a human-centered angle by following Chinese model Chun Jing's journey to return to her familial home.

As many residents from big cities go home for the holiday, "Chunyun" (Spring Festival travel season, """) has been deemed as the world's largest human migration, and it has been estimated that more than 3 billion trips will be made this year.

The video is a snapshot of a modern Chinese Lunar New Year ritual that cleverly embeds holiday gifting ideas. It looks as if Prada has finally learned the importance of proper **cultural marketing**.

Prada coming home: Chinese New Year 2020 campaign

Lancme

Actresses Lily Collins and Amanda Seyfried, both wearing red pantsuits, step onto a boat that transports them from Paris to Shanghai.

Once there, they run through a bustling market to release a sky lantern bearing a mouse print that flies to a rooftop by the Bund and catches the eye of Chinese-Canadian actor and singer **Kris Wu** ().

By hitting on five major CNY marketing elements the color red, mice, lanterns, a hot Chinese celebrity and Western A-listers the video looks more like a numbers-based checklist than truly creative content.

But Kris Wu's massive fanbase, which has championed the campaign video and related posters on the walls of subways and airports by dutifully churning out the Weibo hashtag #KriswurepresentsLancme (#), do not seem to mind at all.

Step into a new era of happiness with Lancme: Chinese New Year 2020 campaign

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