

IN-STORE

Gucci emphasizes brand value with independent museum

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By KAYLA HUTZLER

Italian fashion empire Gucci is ending its year-long 90th anniversary celebration with the opening of a branded museum in the Palazzo della Mercanzia located in Italian city Florence's Piazza Signoria.

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The Gucci Museo contains three floors dedicated to recounting the brand's story through permanent branded exhibits. The increase in museum exhibits is a reflection of the emerging need for luxury brands to justify their high price points given the current economy.

"After creating and building a brand, it's critically important to nurture and sustain the value of the brand," said Rob Frankel, branding expert at marketing consultancy [Frankel and Anderson](#), Los Angeles. "This is where most brands fall down.

"They simply create it and hope it thrives," he said. "But when a brand takes steps to show that it believes its own brand is worth cultivating, it makes a statement to the public.

"By showing the public how it reveres its own heritage, the brand sets an example of how and why its brand should be valued."

Mr. Frankel is not affiliated with Gucci, but agreed to comment as a third-party expert.

Gucci did not respond by press deadline.

Food for thought

The Gucci Museo features one café, three shops and numerous exhibition rooms.

The Gucci café is located at the entrance of the museum. Gucci aims to entice tourists and locals alike into the space as a meeting place or regular coffeehouse.

Also located on the ground floor are three stores: a bookstore that will sell rare publications, a giftshop that will sell branded Gucci Museo items and an Icon store that will sell Gucci products such as handbags and scarves from the Icon collection.



Permanent museum exhibits include a travel-themed room that showcases Gucci luggage from the 1950s, '60s and '70s.

In addition, one room will be called Flora World to highlight the floral theme throughout the Gucci story.

Other rooms on the second floor are dedicated to evening gowns and one, titled Precious, that will display clutches and fine jewelry.

The third floor contains an exhibit that follows the development of the double G logo as well as a room that highlights various sports and leisure branded items.

In addition to the rotating art exhibitions, the museum will also screen films provided by the Martin Scorsese and Tribeca Documentary foundations.

Admission tickets are \$8. Gucci will donate half of the profits to the city of Florence to help beautify the city.



Museum quality

The Gucci Museo is likely a move to increase brand loyalists and customers by showcasing and highlighting the legacy and quality of Gucci products.

Indeed, a recent survey from the Luxury Institute found that 64 percent of affluent adults reported that luxury goods are priced too high relative to the value they deliver ([see story](#)).

Additionally, as new markets emerge, marketers need to ensure that the new pool of luxury consumers understand the history and legacy behind the brand.

Also, by explaining to consumers why luxury goods come at such a high price by highlighting the hand-stitching or historic quality of the brand, marketers can try to dissuade consumers from purchasing knock-offs.

Museum exhibits offer a way for brands to tell their story. The atmosphere of a museum emphasizes to consumers the quality and craftsmanship behind the products.

For instance, luxury brands such as Alexander McQueen, Louis Vuitton and Ralph Lauren have started to place their products in museums as a way to further storytelling and align with quality ([see story](#)).

“Other than stating a brand strategy, exhibiting a long track of success and accomplishment can be offered up as proof of the brand's value,” Mr. Frankel said.

“The longer a brand can be shown to be successful, the better its chances of maintaining its brand value, which is the central concept [that] a luxury brand wants to convey to its consumers,” he said.

Final Take

Kayla Hutzler, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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