

FRAGRANCE AND PERSONAL CARE

Beauty brands adapt to life in lockdown

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LVMH's Dior diverted its production site to switch from perfumes to hand sanitizers for French health authorities and hospitals. Image credit: Dior

By DIANNA DILWORTH

As luxury fragrance and beauty brands struggle to find their way in a marketplace mostly shut down by coronavirus lockdowns, many are turning to soothing and uplifting digital marketing campaigns that offer consumers a clean and healthy oasis from bad news.

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Whether it is an email pushing product or an Instagram campaign offering makeup tips as a way to take people's minds off of the pandemic, personal fragrance and cosmetics companies need to stay connected to remain relevant in the minds of their audience.

"Brands can position themselves for post-COVID growth by engaging with their fan base on emotional levels that don't directly push for purchases," said Aleni Mackarey, chief operating officer of Base Beauty Creative Agency, New York.

"When they can, consumers will be eager to support brands they grew to know and love through Tik Tok challenges and interactive social content during the quarantine," she said.



Lancôme's That Clean feeling campaign. Image credit: Lancôme

Messaging to community

Consumers are anxious right now and beauty brands have an opportunity to bring calm.

Chanel has promoted its bath gels as a way to create a home spa and escape the bad news.

Lancôme is promoting its facial cleaners as giving you "that clean feeling."

"The messaging put out at this time should empathize with the fact that we are all staying at home under quarantine," said Sonia Summers, founder/CEO of Beauty Barrage, Newport Beach, CA.

"Some brands have done Instagram Live yoga or meditation and self-care routines," she said. "Digital marketing works best right now, so long as it is embracing what we are all feeling right now."

Some shoppers are looking to luxury beauty brands to do what they can to help out.



Donation of hand cleansing gel with sanitizer.

Bvlgari intensifies support to Italian authorities to fight Covid-19.

Bulgari has diverted production from its partner's fragrance-making factory in Italy to manufacturing hand-sanitizing gels for Italian hospitals and research institutes battling the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus. Image credit: Bulgari

LVMH and Kering are among luxury groups that have used their resources to help develop much-needed medical supplies.

For example, LVMH turned its perfume-making facilities for Guerlain, Parfums Christian Dior and Parfums Givenchy into hand sanitizer factories. The company is donating these gels to hospitals in France, and its Bulgari jewelry brand is doing something similar in Italy to help local health authorities.

Kering and its brands such as Gucci also imported surgical masks and donated them to French doctors ([see story](#)).

These moves are making an impact on the communities where the companies are based, and help shine a positive light on their ability to come through in tough times.

"Clients will be watching today, next week, next month to see the brand's commitment to the health and well-being of all, from cash donations, to product development for the front-line medical teams, to how and what they communicate," said Rebecca Miller, principal of Miller&company, New York.

"Brands must drill down to the essence of what their brand stands for, their values supported by their actions," she said.

"Many consumers are in a survival mode and they need to be reassured they can trust the brand, from fair labor practices, to the raw ingredients as well as the expected results the product promises. This is no time for hype, rather honesty."



Aleni Mackarey is chief operating officer of Base Beauty

Virtual events

As consumers are stuck at home, many are looking for new forms of entertainment and are glued to Instagram 24/7.

Fragrance and beauty brands can use this channel as a chance to entertain customers and potentially drive ecommerce sales.

"Brands need to create more content since people are now home and they are looking to connect with brands they admire," Ms. Summers said.

"Online usage went up 20 percent in early March and is only growing," she said. "Livestream was up to 526 percent in just the second week of March. Brands need to embrace these tools."

Virtual events can include stylists giving demonstrations on popular products such as new spring makeup tips.

"With more time at home, the consumer craves content now more than ever," Ms. Mackarey said. "Brands should appeal to her desire for the world to move forward, stay positive and return to normalcy, but also for her need to be less spendy."

"We want to help people maintain as normal a routine as possible while they stay home, so we have created a way to serve the beauty and wellness community during this time when it isn't safe or possible to attend events," she said.

Supply chain management

The outlook for the COVID-19 pandemic is unknown.

However, the luxury fragrance and personal care sector should still be thinking about the big picture in the supply chain right now.

These brands should be thinking about raw ingredients used in their products, where their products are being manufactured, inventory levels and distribution models.

In doing so, they should sketch out multiple scenarios with the requisite financials and infrastructure, and be

prepared to execute these plans.

"They must assess the viability of their current business model, consider possible increased online sales, the loss of brick-and-mortar sales, increased and or alternative production capacity and origins, inventory levels and sales and marketing costs to bring their products to market in what will be a new environment," Ms. Miller said.

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