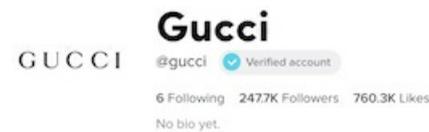


MARKETING

Can Gucci do the renegade? Luxury brands in the era of TikTok

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Gucci's TikTok. Image credit: Gucci

By [Ruth Bernstein](#)

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Even before TikTok became an essential digital tool helping us stay sane during this COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic, it had already established itself as an important cultural and entertainment hub.

Unlike Instagram and Facebook, which serve as sources of news and social activism, TikTok remains a place for humor and entertainment, even in the face of the global healthcare crisis.

It will be interesting to see what luxury brands, many of whom were just beginning to experiment with the space, will do with this social media and entertainment platform that is increasingly important to the young consumer.

Video gaga

TikTok's relevance in the current climate will only grow for luxury houses.

In the fallout from COVID-19, traditional marketing strategies and calendars are in danger of being thrown out of the window.

A focus on joy and expression a relief from challenging times for both brands and consumers could well see brands leaning further into the youthful vitality and optimism the platform represents

If they are not on TikTok already, all luxury brands should at least be aware of the impact that TikTok has on Gen Z. This is where the next generation of potential consumers builds community and displays their own creativity.

At its core, TikTok is fundamentally about participation.

Unlike other platforms that turn users into voyeurs, TikTok turns users into creators.

Yes, the app is a series of funny videos in an endless vertical scroll, but it is also a place where Gen Z taps into their desire for self-expression quickly making content that feels raw and honest and showing off their ability to riff on trends, culture, dances, news and anything in which the zeitgeist is currently interested or poking fun.

Controlling issue

User-generated content the defining characteristic of TikTok is exactly what makes some luxury brands hesitate to experiment on it.

TikTok's style of frequent, brief, user-created content flies in the face of the carefully crafted worlds that luxury brands have historically presented in their digital outreach.

When it comes to a platform such as TikTok, luxury brands should be cautious when handing over control and creative license of their brands.

The platform asks users to riff and poke fun, so brands engaging with the platform should be up for not taking themselves too seriously.

Luxury brands are built on careful creative control and any misrepresentation risks breaking the illusion and aspiration they are so carefully constructing. It is one thing for Home Depot to get spoofed on TikTok, it is another for Burberry.

There are other challenges luxury brands face with TikTok, where misinformation is rampant and the wrong messages or impressions can quickly snowball.

Guides to faking luxury products and looks proliferate on TikTok, which is a double-edged sword for luxury brands: debunking aspiration connected to luxury, while also building desire for it.

But the risk is worth the reward for most luxury brands that must establish a connection with Gen Z and prove to those young consumers that they can have a place within the legacy of luxury brands.



Gucci TikTok Accidental Influencer campaign. Image credit: Gucci

Fun to watch

It is fun to watch some luxury houses become more comfortable with letting loose on the platform and behaving in the spirit of TikTok.

Gucci has proven to be great at not taking itself too seriously, and its entry onto TikTok seemed natural given that it has already established a connection with the TikTok generation by outfitting TikTok idols such as Billie Eilish for awards shows and red carpets.

But even Gucci could be doing more.

The Italian fashion label could take the nascent idea of "hypehouses" and fuse them with its own house codes.

Gucci, with a decent digital credibility and a history of pioneering digital ideas, could easily put together its own house where creators get to play with products in ways that are constantly refreshing and rethinking the language of the brand.

Please copy and paste the link below in the browser for the Gucci TikTok:

<https://www.tiktok.com/@gucci/video/6795282042624953605>

WHEN DONE right, TikTok builds clout and aspiration with Gen Z, even if it does not lead to sales at its price point.

No matter what approach luxury brands take, they increasingly have to become comfortable with TikTok and how the young consumers living on it use their products and brands.

Ultimately, this use becomes raw material from which other creators can create.



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