

RETAIL

Brands play safe with classic gifts this Mother's Day

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Moda Operandi's Mother's Day campaign promotes jewelry for Mom. Image credit: Moda Operandi

By DIANNA DILWORTH

Mother's Day is around the corner and luxury marketers are running digital campaigns in hopes of boosting sales at a time when retail is suffering more than ever.

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This year brands are relying on upbeat simple messages promoting classic luxury items as a way to celebrate the holiday despite these difficult times.

"Gifts for moms don't need to be extravagant," said Rania V. Sedhom, managing partner at [Sedhom Law Group](#), New York. "Instead, this year, they revolve around something mom can utilize now to make her feel appreciated and happy.

"Marketing is centered around thoughtfulness and gratitude for moms, especially for those moms who are not living with their children," she said. "Brunch with flowers and chocolates or event tickets, at least those to be used soon, are not possible. Video dining and personal gifts are in."



Dior Makeup is pushing its classic lipstick line for Mom. Image credit: Dior

Marketing gift ideas

Retailers and brands themselves are running digital campaigns including social media and email to promote classic gift ideas such as jewelry, handbags and perfume.

Moda Operandi is promoting lockets, birthstones and "everyday diamonds" as gifts for mom by showing off women wearing the jewelry.

Gucci is presenting a collection of pastel handbags such as the light blue GG Marmont small shoulder bag for \$1,980 and a \$250 card case.

Additionally, the brand is highlighting its 1955 medium Horsebit tote bag along with a special podcast episode with actress Gugu Mbatha-Raw in conversation with activist Scarlett Curtis on feminism as a source of inspiration.

Swiss watchmaker Frederique Constant is promoting classic luxury with women's watches inspired by old Hollywood glamour highlighted in its promotion.

Dior Makeup is promoting its iconic lipstick Rouge Dior alongside the fragrance J'Adore as presents.

Chanel is offering its No. 5, Gabrielle Chanel and Coco Chanel perfumes, makeup and skincare lines no discounts, of course.

Saks Fifth Avenue is suggesting handbags, eyeshadow, lipsticks, high heels, a jumpsuit and floral springtime pajamas.

"It is always nice to get something for someone that you know they will love but would never buy for themselves," Ms. Sedhom said.

"In this climate, several consumers are too scared to spend thousands, or even hundreds, on a gift when their employment future is uncertain," she said.

"But several items are affordable and indulgent simultaneously. For example, a nice bar of soap from Chanel or Herms doesn't cost too much, smells nice mom needs aromatherapy during this stressful time and is something your mom is likely not going to buy for herself.

"Items that smell nice and or look beautiful that can be used now are taking precedence."



Gucci Mother's Day promotion that focuses on its classic Horsebit tote. Image credit: Gucci

State of retail

Retail has been hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic, and the outlook looks gloomy.

Sales in the United States suffered massive drops in March and output at factories dropped to 1946 levels.

Clothing and accessories brands dropped 50 percent in March.

With bricks-and-mortar closures set to continue this month, retailers around the country are clambering to drive shoppers online to make up for the loss from the dominant retail channel.

Holidays such as Mother's Day offer brands an excuse to lighten the mood and promote gift-giving at a time when consumers need to hear positive messaging.

"Marketing campaigns that are sensitive to what is happening now while infusing hope go a long way," Ms. Sedhom said.

"It is depressing to walk outside, at least in New York, and see everyone with a face mask," she said. "But Christian Siriano put a smile on my face when he sold his sketches of women wearing beautiful gowns with a matching face mask.

"Ad campaigns with messages of love and human connection that put relationships first, whether through pictures, stories or the products themselves fare better."



Frederique Constant promotes a classic style watch for Mother's Day. Image credit: Frederique Constant

Loyal connections

While digital marketing and online sales offer retailers a lifeline, sales associates with personal relationships with customers are also getting involved this year.

"Some high-net-worth individuals are contacting sales associates for more unique items than can be found on Web sites," said Martin Shanker, CEO of luxury consultancy [Shanker Inc.](#), New York.

"For example, in the jewelry category, clients are demonstrating interest in purchasing for special occasions in addition to Mother Day," he said. "Some high-net-worth clients simply do not want to put some purchases on hold.

"Unlike other merchandise categories, a majority of jewelry purchases are based on special occasions such as holidays and lifecycle events like birthdays and anniversaries," he said.

"Since retail is temporarily closed, it's family jewelers who are more likely to have access to their inventory to obtain unique pieces during this lockdown period."

The trend highlights the importance of retailers having authentic relationships with their customers.

High-net-worth individuals who have worked with specific personal shoppers and sales associates for years will likely want to help give a commission to these employees who are likely suffering furloughs during store closures.

"Some of the most successful luxury brands will benefit by developing sales teams to develop deeper client relationships," Mr. Shanker said.

"Even before this crisis, we have been emphasizing and helping sales teams make this critical shift with clients," he said.

"Those retailers and associates who have authentic consultative relationships with clients on topics outside of just obtaining products but earn the status of true advisors will be in the best position to recover faster."



GUCCI GG Marmont small shoulder bag
\$1,980

Pastels push the color focus throughout the Pre-Fall 2020 collection, in soft, vibrant hues. Made in matelassé chevron leather with a heart on the back in a light shade of blue, the now recognizable small GG Marmont chain shoulder bag has a softly structured shape and a flap closure with Double G hardware. Designed to be worn multiple ways, the chain strap slides to change between a shoulder and a top handle bag.



GUCCI GG Marmont card case
\$250

The GG Marmont card case is crafted from quilted matelassé leather in a shade of light pink that mirrors the pastel hues that add a soft yet vibrant note of color to the Pre-Fall 2020 collection. The shape is defined by the line's emblematic Double G hardware—an archival symbol from the '70s that has become a hallmark of the House.



GUCCI Thin belt with Double G buckle
\$350

The emblematic Double G continues to be a defining feature of Gucci's collections, here it is set on a women's thin leather belt.



GUCCI GG Marmont small shoulder bag
\$1,390

This softly structured small GG Marmont chain shoulder bag is finished with a zip top closure and the recognizable Double G. The chain shoulder strap has a leather shoulder detail for added comfort..

Gucci's Mother's Day campaign promotes springtime leathergoods. Image credit: Gucci

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