

MARKETING

## How luxury fashion brands' new creative direction is affecting content production

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Regain time, freedom and creativity, at a slower pace, away from the bulimic turnover of retail: how could we not appreciate the new humanism embellishing the actual need of working with lower budgets?

Will the post-pandemic consumer really be more moderate and mindful?

But, most of all, how will high-end fashion brands harmonize the short life of content with the new carryover nature of collections into a reshaped editorial plan?

COVID-19 could potentially be the name of a capsule collection and, instead, it is a disruptive game-changer starting a conversation about "appropriate time."

Anyone working in the industry of content creation, either in house or as part of an agency, is now called to face a challenge.

Media, PR, social and digital merchandising calendars are getting thinner and thinner: If we lose an average number of four fashion shows, three collaborations or capsules with all related buzzworthy events, what could social media managers do?

How could they fill in the empty spaces that were once ineluctably destined to glittering shots of red carpets and bustling first row moments?

With the evidence of an increasing time spent on social media and the demand for more Instagram- and TikTok-engaging contents, what should they do?

And what about Web sites that have become both powerful windows where to scroll through collections, pick favorites, book in-store appointments and, at the same time, key shopping destinations?

Now, the scope of action seems to include a lower number of events and product launches in favor of a multi-level approach combining, on one side, farsighted collections driven by carryovers with, on the other, fresh and catchy content aiming to drive ecommerce conversion.

Within the above-mentioned context, lives the post-pandemic customer, more thoughtful and aware of the singularity characterizing high-end goods.

Keeping in mind both the specificity of background and audience, we could develop a dynamic content strategy based on the rotation of subjects and fine-tune the message frequency to make sure the brand stays visible and, at the same time, the customer journey runs smoothly.

Gaining such balance would prevent creativity from wearing out during the extended lifecycle of contemporary collections.

Surely, we will more often have to face the challenge where brand purpose has to be both consistent with the label's heritage and vision and, concurrently, generate relevant content that not only appeals to the individual customer but also to their community: actions, not just content, that should not be confused with charity initiatives.

Radiate meaningfulness and give it back to the community will become more crucial to the fashion industry and the way it communicates.

In this regard, we also have to mention special guests and supporters who, coming transversally from disparate industries such as music, business, technology and social activism, are keen on taking part in brands' purpose-driven initiatives.

Certainly, the spread of remote communication systems and streaming platforms facilitated these types of collaborations, with the removal of physical boundaries acting as an undeniable time saver.

The key to take real advantage of live streaming, going far beyond fashion shows, is to fully understand its potential and dynamics.

If today's scenario puts creative genius under the spotlight, deep-diving content can become a precious tool to tell the story of a specific collection and reveal how it was brought to life: the creative director drives the communicator inside their own inventive process, involving them into the introspective journey and sharing their sources of inspiration.

Here, having an empathic translator in the role of communicator is mandatory to make sure the deep and unique essence of the collection is properly captured and conveyed.

Moreover, a dedicated artistic community, or targeted art buying, could be put together to narrate the collection or its single elements, bringing them to life through a mixture of languages harmoniously interacting with each other: music, painting, graffiti and cinema could blend into some kind of storytelling artistic playground.

The above three elements could work effectively at the beginning of the funnel, leveraging on the brand's stylistic and creative equity.

When it comes to consideration, instead, playing with subjects' rotation is crucial to highlight key items of the collection and making them relevant to the target cultural tribes.

The easiest way to create dynamism was often to delegate specific influencers or brand ambassadors so that they could intercept different segments of the audience, contextualize messages and make them target relevant.

Now, the need is to have a meticulously articulated and comprehensive media plan reaching out more widely to all target personas and related cultural tribes, tailored to their specific styles and attitudes, with the clear objective to convert contacts in online purchases.

The above statement implies that more attention and cautiousness should be used in developing a mindful media plan based on a solid and precise segmentation of the audience and a consequent niche-specific communication strategy.

To appeal to various interlocutors, the same item will be narrated with a different twist in compliance with the main brand DNA.

High-end brands have often pursued the "hype" path until they had to face an abrupt stop on both space and time levels: it is now time for the luxury industry to embrace a less aesthetic and more strategic approach when building content-channel synergies.

Extraordinary budgets were previously allocated to shootings with the main goal of attracting people to physical

stores as new collections were launching.

Agencies were briefed to provide fast-moving, disposable assets meant to be quickly replaced with the next ones.

NOW THAT COLLECTIONS are moving at a slower pace, we need a more farsighted, longer-lasting media approach, with a funnel-oriented strategic structure leveraging on subjects' rotation and leading to an ecommerce conversion.

Within this context, also sets need to be conceived and organized with a new objective in mind.

"Appropriate time" will become an issue impacting not only on collections' design, but also on the process of content creation, as part of an increasingly challenging journey.

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