

ACCESSORIES

## Montblanc's Maria von Scheel-Plessen: Luxury Woman to Watch 2021

November 23, 2020

By LUXURY DAILY NEWS SERVICE

*Luxury Daily* annually honors smart women executives who show the potential to make a difference next year in the luxury business. This year's list features 26 honorees who have set ambitious goals to achieve in a luxury market that, while growing, is also challenged by rapid changes in consumer behavior and technology.

Here is one honoree:



Maria von Scheel-Plessen, global head of media and advertising, **Montblanc**, Hamburg, Germany

*"The focus is a lot on brand safety, which is often challenging for activations such as programmatic buying"*

What do you most like about your job?

I am most inspired by the heritage and craftsmanship in luxury goods, visiting ateliers in which our products are being created with employees whose skills are very rare these days, e.g. fine watchmaking.

It is an exciting industry to work in as we embrace smart products and ecommerce revenue accelerates.

The combination of historical brand value and technological development inspires me.

What is the biggest challenge in your work?

As I am managing 22 markets, the challenge lies in local specificities.

When formalizing a global advertisement and budget allocation strategy from HQ, it almost cannot be global as we need to respect local demands. Especially in Asia, the launch of new apps and platforms happens so quickly, we need to have glocal approach.

Another exciting challenge is to embrace the old and the new when working on the digital side of luxury.

We need to respect heritage, but also refer to modernity and adapt to consumer demands. The focus is a lot on brand safety, which is often challenging for activations such as programmatic buying.

How have you adapted to the new order of things with the public health crisis?

The pandemic has put things back into perspective. It demanded for the need to go from quantity to quality in terms of consumer behavior during a difficult economic situation.

Luxury is rather seen as a long-term investment and the focus shifted towards limited editions and premium materials, e.g. diamonds and gold with rising value.

Very important is also the emotional connection to the user and the focus on brand desirability and meaningful communication rather than short-term sales.

Personally, it has been a time of proving agility and empathy with a completely remote team management. But it is also a good time to reflect and appreciate everyone and everything around you.

What is your work priority for 2021?

Digitalization of offline/retail, continue to focus on technology and having the right tools at hand to track a 360-degree ecosystem including offline revenue. Enabling a seamless customer journey and very customized communicational approach.

Focus on supporting women to settle in the luxury and tech industry. I founded a Lean-In circle, which enables a constant exchange and mentorship opportunity. We need more initiatives to embrace diversity.

What is your proudest achievement in luxury?

The setup of attribution modeling for online and offline revenue tracking in our key markets. As luxury has a strong retail network, this has been a key milestone to evaluate the impact of digital advertisement on offline sales, defining the number of consumer touch points and ROI.

The achievement of bringing digital transformation on the agenda and start an omni-directional conversation on various international stages.

How do you see luxury evolving in 2021?

I see a demand from very strongly, but not only Gen Y and Z towards sustainability, going away from fast fashion to the focus on luxury "evergreen" pieces with stable value, e.g. Montblanc Meisterstueck, Herms Kelly or Birkin bags.

Gifting will continue, which is crucial in luxury.

Further I would expect a change in the business model of luxury, looking at growing ecommerce demand. This goes hand in hand with a change in business ethics, e.g. mobile working.

I see a hybrid of pre and post COVID status and hope for a soon rebound on key markets.

Looking at this, I am full of excitement and optimism to work for an industry which makes products to last.

[Please click here to see the entire Luxury Women to Watch 2021 list](#)