

SOFTWARE AND TECHNOLOGY

Gamification continues to offer brands a world of opportunities

March 19, 2021



In February, Gucci and Zepeto announced a collaboration to offer users stylish avatars. Image credit: Zepeto

By KATIE TAMOLA

Gaming, and all its intricacies, is giving luxury brands a world of new opportunities to reach additional consumers.

Subscribe to **Luxury Daily**
Plus: Just released
State of Luxury 2019 **Save \$246 ▶**

Luxury brands have ample opportunities to continue engaging communities of gamers, implementing products into the gaming universes and establish then strengthen relationships with consumers through this kind of virtual engagement. During a virtual session at the *Vogue Business* and TikTok inaugural **Technology Forum** entitled "The Future of Fashion and Gaming," viewers learned how Gucci has carved a prominent space for itself in various gaming worlds in an authentic way, reaching new consumers in innovative ways.

"Gaming is an industry in a community that is huge, it's global, it's diverse, it's inclusive, and in that sense it's an adjacent community to fashion and an increasingly a community that is intersecting with fashion," said Robert Triefus, executive vice president of brand and customer engagement at Gucci. "You see games today that have a strong correlation with the idea of expressing yourself as fashion does and empowers individuals to do.

"Three to four years ago, we began to think about what gaming could bring to our Gucci community and what it could bring in terms of experience, and we began to look at that idea of adjacency and that idea of intersection," he said. "We [began thinking] we could begin as a brand to understand the potential for gaming potential can be expressed in many different ways it can be expressed through an experience, it could be expressed through a placement of a product, and it could ultimately be expressed through a revenue-generating opportunity."

Gaming en vogue

During the session, Maghan McDowell, senior innovation editor at *Vogue Business*, and Mr. Triefus traced Gucci's initial strides into the gaming realm and how the brand has continued to expand its roles and opportunities in the metaworld a term the industry experts used for these gaming environments.

Gucci's disparate approaches to the gaming world reflect the fact that the connection between fashion brands and gaming is not one size fits all. There are several ways a fashion brand can infiltrate the gaming world.



Gucci Off the Grid for Sims. Image credit: Gucci

The Italian fashion label has traveled several routes from avatars sporting Gucci fashions to creating its own games where users can create specific and unique Gucci shoes. Regardless of the approach, Mr. Triefus highlighted the importance of brands maintaining authenticity when entering this kind of partnership.

"I've talked before about authenticity being a fundamental element or fundamental value of Gucci, so really understanding how to approach the relationship with a gaming community, because gamers are incredibly passionate, understandably, they can be passionate generally about being a gamer, or they can be passionate about a specific game, and the experience that they live through that game," he said. "We always thought and think first and foremost about how can we as a brand, enter that community in a legitimate, relevant, and ultimately therefore an authentic way."

Brands should not just barge into these gaming worlds, but instead, be thoughtful in both respecting gamers and in representing who they truly are. Gucci has crafted thoughtful strategies while being featured in gaming worlds including The Sims, Pokmon GO, Roblox and Zepeto.

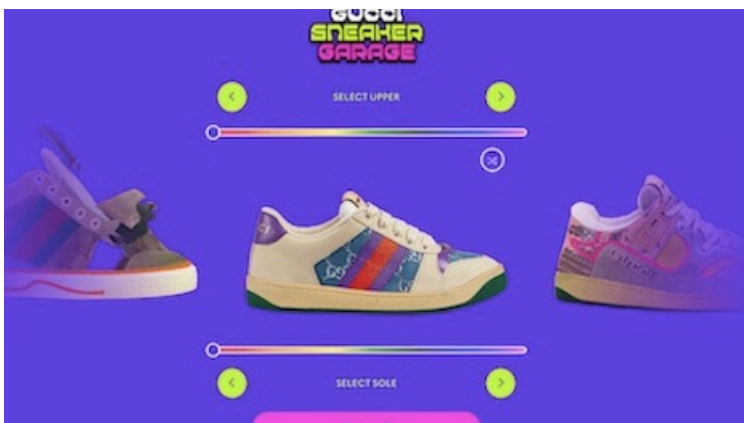
In 2018, Gucci was the first to partner with the mobile application Genies, which integrated avatar-to-avatar communication with artificial intelligence and enabled users to dress their avatars with luxury apparel from Gucci ([see story](#)).

Two years later, Gucci partnered with Grimcookies and Harrie, two Sims custom creators, to recreate its Off the Grid capsule collection for the iconic video game. Implementing sustainability points, players who downloaded items received a positive environment score, mood boost and a boost to their green eco-footprint ([see story](#)).

In February, the Gucci x Zepeto partnership reintroduced a popular outlet for consumers still experiencing the effects of the pandemic, once again offering the unique opportunity to be fashionable while interacting with people online ([see story](#)).

Through these worlds, users are able to customize their avatars with Gucci products, solidifying a relationship that is mutually beneficial in that the label is highlighted and gamers can utilize self-expression.

"We were able to create very original, authentic experiences that Gucci brought to life, that were appropriate both for the game, but also the characters that were ultimately wearing Gucci or carrying Gucci items," Mr. Triefus said.



Consumers are able to create their own virtual sneakers with the Gucci Sneaker Generator. Image courtesy of Gucci

The fashion label also created its own gaming world and concept with its Gucci Sneaker Garage, used to unveil its

first virtual sneaker, the Gucci Virtual 25. On the Gucci app's Sneaker Generator, users can build a Gucci sneaker using disparate designs and can then share their creations with other users.

"We are creating original unique digital products and with the Gucci Sneaker Garage, we have allowed the community create original sneakers," Mr. Triefus said. "And these are unique sneakers, they only exist in the digital world, but we then took the digital sneaker and we populated it in some other gaming worlds so you have this capacity to create unique items, and then go into different universes and bring those unique digital items to life in those different universes."

When Ms. McDowell asked if users would ever be able to transform their virtual customized Gucci creations into physical products, Mr. Triefus said that although that is not an option right now, the brand is not ruling out the possibility.

"Never say never," he said. "What is kind of great now about the virtual and the physical is that you can go both ways, and you can inspire and inform, physical manifestations and digitalizing them, so we're actually looking at both opportunities."

Gaming that keeps on giving

In the world of technological innovation, gaming continues to provide opportunities to brands to seize and maintain the attention of consumers.

Luxury brands can use gaming as a method in capturing the attention of consumers they may have otherwise not been able to reach. Gamification can be one tool that helps consumers return to a brand.

"The most successful brands today are the ones that create stickiness between the brand experience and the customer, that stickiness hopefully is based upon a pleasurable engaged experience that not only makes them stay longer, but potentially makes them want to come back again, or share that experience with friends," he said.

Mr. Triefus went on to explain that for many consumers, something as simple as virtual try-ons feel like a game. Virtual try-ons and avatars are beneficial gaming methods that brands that are looking to break into gamification can try.

He also went on to say that he sees a luxury non-fungible token (NFT) as inevitable, that in the near future, brands including Gucci can be expected to create and sell high-value digital-only assets.

Brands will continue to benefit from offering gaming worlds which lead to its digital and physical offerings overlapping. Gamification comes in many disparate forms, offers users expression tools, and will only continue to expand.

"We believe that in every gaming experience that we are creating, there is opportunity," Mr. Triefus said. "I think that gaming is going to become increasingly ubiquitous in the customer experience."