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Louis Vuitton, Gucci see growth with gamification opportunities

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Louis Vuitton skin for the League of Legends game. Image credit: Riot Games

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With more consumers becoming gamers, luxury brands are among those capitalizing on opportunities to situate themselves in the mobile gaming world.

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[The State of Mobile 2021 report](#) from App Annie highlights the opportunities brands now have in utilizing gamification with in-game partnerships, and the benefits of doing so. Gamification continues to give brands the opportunity to reach new audiences while implementing features that represent the cores of their brands.

"Brands can leverage gaming in a number of ways whether gamifying the loyalty program, building a game within their app tied to strategic in-store or digital promotions, sponsoring an e-sport team or producing partnered in-game assets for popular mobile games or physical goods based on the mobile games," said Lexi Sydow, head of marketing insights at [App Annie](#). "These mechanics ultimately cultivate deeper relationships with customers and drive retention.

"A good first move is getting a lay of the land leveraging market estimates to understand the most popular games across each target market, how trends vary across these markets and key demographics, Gen Z vs Millennials vs. Gen X and Baby Boomers, and what games have the highest cross-app usage with your brand's app and your competitors' apps," she said.

Getting in the game

Brands are not only putting themselves in video games, but also forming partnerships and producing virtual capabilities that represent who they are.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, several brands found engagement growth within their apps after implementing more in-app game experiences and partnerships. Partnerships with popular mobile games offer consumers interactive experiences and help brands reach new audiences.



Honor of Kings character Yao in a skin developed exclusively by Burberry. Image credit: Burberry

In the first quarter of 2021, gamers downloaded about a billion titles every week, while total consumer spending on gaming reached \$22 billion.

Luxury brands are taking notice of gamification opportunities, aiming to attract millennials and Gen Z with mobile-gaming options that make shopping a more interactive and personalized experience.

Gamification is offering brands a world of opportunities, enabling consumers to express themselves with character skins and additional cosmetic items.

Fashion labels Louis Vuitton and Prada were some of the first brands to engage with gaming, while Burberry and Gucci are currently the luxury labels most consistently utilizing gamification.

As far back as 2012, Prada used characters from Final Fantasy XIII-2 to model the Prada's spring/summer 2012 men's collection in British fashion magazine Arena Homme+.

More recently in 2019, Louis Vuitton implemented in-game skins for video game League of Legends. When Riot Games brought League of Legends to mobile phones in the United States at the end of last month, it invited gamers to purchase skins, champions and other cosmetic items.

The collaboration appears to be fruitful for Louis Vuitton, with its app seeing the most downloads worldwide during the pandemic, from the period of January 2020 to March 2021, with a spike in August 2020 of more than 120,000 downloads.

British fashion label Burberry is also delving into the gamification world, designing two skins for the heroine of the video game Honor of Kings. The skins represent Burberry's continued appreciation of the relationship between humans and nature.

According to App Annie, Honor of Kings was the top game by global consumer spend in 2020.

This was not Burberry's first foray into gamification, as it promoted its Summer Monogram collection in 2020 with several new digital efforts including a video game.



Gucci's vintage-style video games. Image credit: Gucci

Not to be left behind, Italian fashion house Gucci is attempting to create its own gaming microcosm, promoting an arcade element included in its app which is ranked second for worldwide downloads among a selection of luxury

retail apps during the pandemic, from January 2020 to March 2021. App Annie also stated that based on cross-app usage, this gamification from Gucci likely helped support growth.

Luxury apparel and accessory brands are not the only organizations looking to capitalize on gaming.

Last week, U.S. fashion label Carolina Herrera released a campaign film and complimentary online game as part of its promotional efforts for the new 212 Heroes fragrance for men ([see story](#)).

What to expect next

App Annie believes that more brands will continue to embrace gamification in their app development in continued efforts to reach new consumers.

As brands continue to contemplate how to make a gaming presence, opportunities will continue to arise.

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

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.

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 ([see story](#)).

During the [Technology in Luxury](#) Conference on March 31, panelists spoke about the risks and opportunities for brands exploring the gaming space. With more consumers around the world identifying as gamers, luxury brands have an opportunity to engage with a large, captive audience.

As consumers become ficker and jump between more channels, luxury brands will have to work to reach audiences across as many channels as possible a change from when most heritage labels avoided mass advertising on television or out-of-home ([see story](#)).

As brands across the board continue to branch out virtually, consumers will have their eyes on which labels choose to get gamified next.

"More than ever, mobile is the most important channel for engaging customers and growing your top line, as gaming is a mature industry with a wide-reaching and captive audience providing a powerful opportunity for non-gaming brands to get involved," Ms. Sydow said. "I expect we'll see strategic partnerships and brand x mobile gaming collaborations grow substantially in 2021 and beyond."