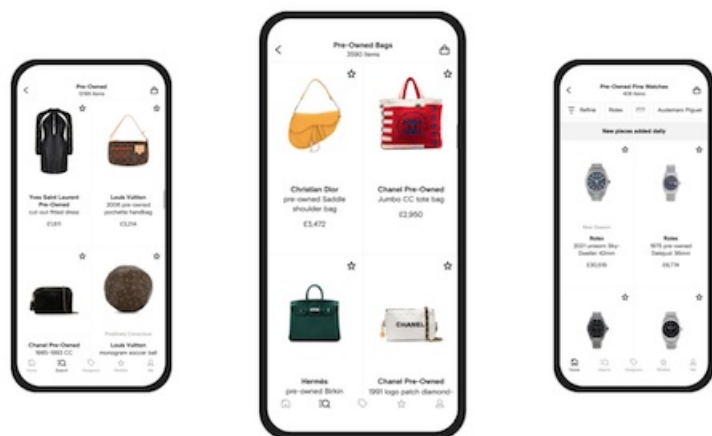


RETAIL

Successful ecommerce experiences translate to overall brand growth

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Farfetch offers a variety of luxury items. Image credit: Farfetch

By KATIE TAMOLA

NEW YORK Maintaining flexibility and an openness to innovation are some of the imperative techniques in fostering a successful ecommerce presence.

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During a session at the Women in Luxury eConference on June 2, a group of women executives in majority-female luxury sectors discussed the most effective ways to maintain and expand consumer bases through online offerings. The panelists spoke about the accelerated trends they have observed during the COVID-19 pandemic and how brands are actively working to adapt to both stagnant and changing consumer needs and translate ecommerce growth to their other offerings, including in-store experiences.

"For the customers that we've acquired in this past year, the key is really to retain them and ensure that the experience that they had is one that they want to repeat with us," said Silvia Campello, co-CEO of **Cosabella**, Miami. "We're going to be continuing in that path and that's key, both working on our own site with our marketplace partners, as well as with our store."

Women in Luxury 2021 was produced by Luxury Daily

In stores, online and beyond

Each speaker discussed how they have observed and adapted to disparate trends and realities that exist on the ecommerce landscape.

It has always been imperative for brands to immerse themselves online, and to attempt to understand the current Internet landscape.

Ms. Campello discussed how her mother Valeria, cofounder of Cosabella, identified the Internet as a crucial entity more than 20 years ago. The elder Ms. Campello would enter chat rooms to gauge understandings of how consumers received the brand, and actively promoted an awareness of the Internet within her company.



Consumers searching for lingerie have a wide range of options including comfortable yet alluring pajama sets. Image courtesy of Cosabella

"It was paramount for my parents when they founded Cosabella to ensure that we had security in many areas," Ms. Campello said, referring to how the company established itself in both wholesale and direct-to-consumer ecommerce.

Ultimately, the brand began to understand how to present and promote themselves online and how to translate that into growth.

"Over time, there was understanding across the world that brands needed to present themselves, their brand story and their full brand perspective on their own namesake brand ecommerce site, so we also took that step number of years ago and direct to consumer has grown exponentially, as it has for so many brands," Ms. Campello said.

Cosabella and other lingerie brands have thrived during COVID-19 ([see story](#)), but other fashion trends have also accelerated. At the onset of the pandemic, sales for homewear, beauty, leisurewear and jewelry were areas that drastically took focus.

According to Kelly Kowal, chief platform officer at [Farfetch](#), consumers also started to purchase at much higher price points online.

"[People were shopping at] high price points that would typically think would be reserved for the offline purchase," Ms. Kowal said. "What we're seeing is that people are becoming much more comfortable purchasing online luxury."

Post-pandemic, brands will now be able to further contemplate how to blend offline and in-store offerings which will be mutually beneficial for retailers and consumers alike.

"What we're really seeing is that the blend of online is incredibly important," she said. "Customers are doing a lot of research online, they're still going into stores, now that the stores are open and purchasing there, but that means that [the higher price point with online shopping] trend is very important because in the last few months, people are much more comfortable.

"We're not just thinking about the ecommerce experience."

As re-openings and vaccination rollouts continue, retailers and brands are also expecting ready-to-wear offerings to become popular again. This is not to say that demand for categories that surged during the pandemic will dissipate, but more so that a balance is likely to emerge.

"We're starting to see that balance back out again and you know more ready to wear is being purchased, you know, more dresses as the weather starts to become a little bit nicer and, we're seeing more comfortable patterns as we have in the past," Ms. Kowal said. "Not to say that the other categories still aren't really important they're incredibly important, but I would say it's now less about accessories and more about ready to wear, which is more common to what we had seen prior to the pandemic."

Nicole Reader, president/CEO of [Modern Mirror](#), reverberated the idea of a resurgence of demand for dressing up.

"We're definitely going to see surge of a lot of dresses, and possibly get back into some suiting because I think people are missing that," she said. "And people wanting to dress up and feel good."

Ms. Reader also expressed how although her platform is virtual, her brand is actively seeking to elicit positive feelings and emotions from her consumers beyond one digital experience.

"The whole focus and the goal was what can I build that's going to create at a very luxurious feeling in these

[consumers] in these luxury brands," she said. "And also help entice, elevate the experience, inspire the clients and also help the sales associates better connect with their clients and their consumers."

Online marketplaces are progressing in quite a few different directions, but despite each organization's disparate offerings, they all remain dedicated to observing consumer behavior, adapting to trends and needs and to enhancing the customer experience ([see story](#)).

Getting in the game

The pandemic has seen an increase in entertaining and innovative features in the ecommerce landscape, including gamification.



Gucci is one of the brands that has most eagerly embraced gaming. Image credit: Gucci

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

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 ([see story](#)).

"What I love seeing right now is how everyone is so digitally-focused, both from an online perspective but in a store expand perspective, and trying to create experiences," Ms. Reader said. "It's things like being able to take your 3D or virtual self that has motion and movements and be able to deploy it in a gaming system that the luxury brands have or make."

Brands do not have to limit themselves in choosing between a focus on online or in-store experiences. Those that are able to cultivate excellent offerings and experiences in ecommerce processes are more likely to see that translate to bricks-and-mortar sales as well.

Although ecommerce saw momentous growth throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the in-person shopping experience is arguably irreplaceable. According to a recent whitepaper from analytics platform Placer.ai, brands want to continue expanding offline offerings in an attempt to provide unique shopping experiences that will foster consumer loyalty and a mutually beneficial relationship ([see story](#)).

"Ecommerce plays such a huge part of what we do today but especially for luxury brands, the in-store experience is really important, so for us it was about truly building that experience for both in-store, and for online that helps crossover," Modern Mirror's Ms. Reader said. "It's about how can we just unlock the next the next level of personalization."