

MARKETING

Gucci, Celine lead media impact value for 520 Valentine's Day

June 4, 2021



For 520, Valentino created a dedicated capsule collection, highlighting the Roman Stud collection. Image credit: Valentino

By KATIE TAMOLA

Luxury brands are beginning to realize new opportunities arising from a lasting tradition with China's 520 Valentine's Day celebration.

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According to a new report from brand performance cloud platform [Launchmetrics](#), luxury brands viewed the unofficial Valentine's Day as an opportunity for substantial sales following the COVID-19 pandemic. For the 2021 holiday, brands including Gucci, Celine, Yves Saint Laurent, Tiffany & Co. and more effectively utilized social media platforms to highlight limited-edition products that enticed several young Chinese consumers.

"With brands creating products and dedicated collections specifically for this occasion, the 520 holiday created multiple shopping opportunities and with it, a chance for brands to engage with the Chinese market and its consumers," said Alison Bring, chief marketing officer at Launchmetrics, London. "While creating campaigns specific to the market, brands leveraged local social media to reach the target consumer through the right channels.

"Platforms like Weibo, RED or Douyin are key for the Chinese audience," she said. "To help expand the reach and drive brand performance, they leveraged key Voices like Celebrities and KOLs one of the most influential on the purchase path of Chinese consumers."

520 Valentine's Day

The yearly unofficial celebration of Valentine's Day takes place on May 20, for when the day is pronounced as 520, it sounds similar to saying "I love you" in Mandarin. The event has become increasingly popular in China over the past two years.

Experts view the unofficial celebration as an ideal marketing occasion for fashion and beauty brands to reach a younger audience, specifically millennials and Gen Z.



The overall growth rate of luxury brands' WeChat communities in China rose by 44 percent in 2020, up from 2019's 37 percent, per a new report released by DLG (Digital Luxury Group) and JINGdigital. Image credit: Yusuke Hinata

After Chinese New Year was cancelled in 2020 due to COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions, brands prioritized 520 Valentine's Day as an important opportunity to counteract cancellation monetary loses.

Attention on the Chinese market is steadily increasing, and this year brands viewed the May holiday as a chance to capitalize on the momentum, creating limited special edition product series and content themed around love.

Italian fashion house Gucci emphasized the color red in its advertising, creating a capsule collection including handbags, shoes and accessories. The brand released four short films starring local brand ambassadors Ni Ni and Lu Han and actors Lai Kuan-lin and Lareina Song.

Gucci posted more than 66 percent of placements on the platform RED, also known as Xiaohongshu, with the remainder of placements published on Weibo and WeChat.

The campaign's number of placements, referring to the number of online media articles, blog posts, or social network posts which mention the brand, was 307, with a total media impact value of \$2 million.

French fashion house Celine launched a capsule collection centered on its Triomphe handbag to celebrate 520 Day. The collection appealed to a younger generation of logo and monogram lovers, filled with retro Celine logos and embroideries reading "je t'aime" which means "I love you" in French.

The campaign featured global ambassador and singer Lisa, from the popular K-pop group Blackpink, Chinese actress Gulnazar and the model Qiu Tian.

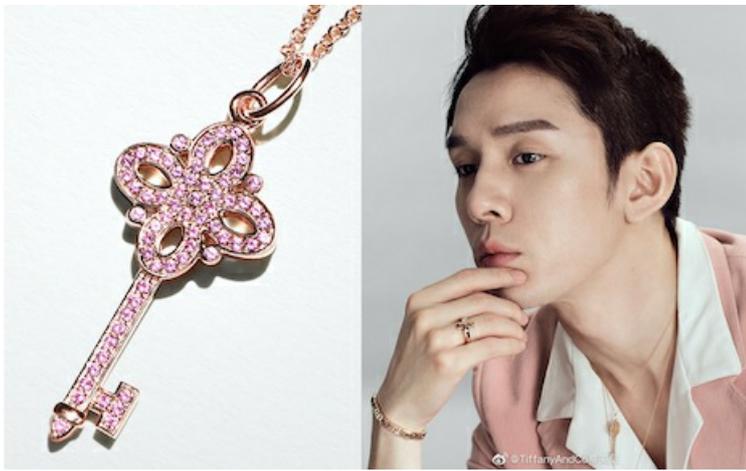
On April 29, Celine launched the campaign on its Weibo and WeChat channels with a total of nine posts across the two platforms. The number of placements was 211, with a media impact value of \$724,500.

Italian fashion house Valentino also created a dedicated capsule collection, highlighting the Roman Stud collection, centered around a mini version of the renowned handbag that was specifically restyled for the Chinese holiday. Five maxi studs were placed on both sides of the bag in addition to ten other studs on the detachable leather strap, totaling 20 studs, a nod to the number 520.

The campaign was launched on both Western and Chinese social media platforms and featured brand ambassador Guan Xiao Tong. The number of placements was 129 with a total media impact value of \$710,600.

Kering-owned Yves Saint Laurent launched three hashtags based on the Mon Paris line of perfumes in its 520 Day efforts. The number of placements for the campaign was 25, with a media impact value of \$724,000.

The campaign tracked more than 14.5 billion impressions on Weibo through the hashtags #YSL520GiftBox and #InvertParis. The most popular post of this campaign earned more than 25 thousand likes and more than one thousand comments.



Tiffany & Co. gave a classic product some new love for its 520 offerings. Image credit: Tiffany & Co.

U.S. jeweler Tiffany & Co. Launched the "Unlocking your 520" campaign, highlighting a new style to its renowned key necklace. The jeweler debuted an online exclusive, the Tiffany Victoria key necklace made with pink sapphires, on the brand's WeChat boutique.

The 15-second campaign video starred actors Gong Jun, Ou Hao and Cecilia Song as well as livestreamer Li Jiaqi. The campaign logged more than 1.9 million impressions on Weibo via the hashtag #UnlockYour520.

The WeChat campaign video received over 610 million views on Weibo in the first week of publication.

The number of placements was 119, with a total media impact value of \$1.4 million.

Reaching younger Chinese affluents

Millennials and Gen Z continue to utilize social media, and brands are constantly developing new features in attempt to capture and maintain consumer attention and business.

Weibo, a photo and video sharing application that several brands utilized for 520 Day campaigns, is immensely popular in China.

According to IResearch, Weibo has a significantly younger user demographic, for which more than 50 percent of mobile and PC users are below 30 years old. More importantly, it is commonly referred to as the Chinese version of Twitter.

In 2019, Weibo earned \$1.5 billion in marketing and advertising revenue and has continued to excel in providing advertising solutions for businesses on the platform ([see story](#)).

Brands are continuing to expand their online presences, observing how younger audiences like Gen Z react and engage and ultimately signaling their willingness to adapt to evolving needs.

With younger consumers accumulating and spending more wealth, especially in Asia, luxury brands will have to adjust to ensure marketing strategies and digital offerings remain engaging.

During the Technology in Luxury Conference, panelists discussed how changing demographics among ultra affluents are impacting luxury brands' approaches to marketing and retail. As luxury brands grow to understand how Gen Z consumers have different preferences and attitudes, they will have to adapt to build and maintain customer relationships ([see story](#)).

With expansive social media offerings and pandemic restrictions being lifted, brands will continue seeking opportunities to entice and retain younger Chinese consumers.

"These holidays give many a chance to gain awareness, all while building a stronger relationship with their Chinese consumers," Ms. Bring said. "It is also a chance to establish the brands' Chinese social media presence and form connections with local key opinion leaders that they can then leverage in the long run to drive brand performance."