

MARKETING

Luxury brands leverage livestreams, influencers for successful 618

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Beauty and skincare brands utilized livestreaming, influencer marketing and social channels for 618 Festival promotion. Image credit: Yves Saint Laurent

By NORA HOWE

Second to Double 11, or Single's Day, the 618 shopping festival is the largest mid-year ecommerce promotion in China, with sales surpassing \$53 billion this year.

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Since launching in 2009, the shopping holiday has evolved from a single-day JD.com-only promotion to a weeks-long universal ecommerce sales period, attracting thousands of brands and retailers. In its latest report, data analytics provider **Launchmetrics** and WeChat experience provider **ChatLabs** analyzed the five best-performing 618 global beauty campaigns.

From May 21 to June 25, Launchmetrics and ChatLabs analyzed the potential readership of posts based on the sum of followers for a post on Western and Chinese social channels, including WeChat and Weibo, as well as the audience for print and online articles.

Using Media Impact Value (MIV), Launchmetrics' proprietary machine learning algorithm, brands have a unified currency to measure the value of all marketing activities across voices, channels and markets by assigning a monetary amount to every post, interaction and article.

618 beauty

Japan's Shiseido generated over \$33 million in sales on Tmall during the first day of the 618 sales festival. Its success was due primarily to its aggressive livestreaming campaigns across all major social media and ecommerce platforms, including WeChat, Douyin and Tmall.

Shiseido generated the highest MIV of all 618 campaigns evaluated, having invested heavily in its promotional campaigns, working with high-profile influencers and media figures such as actress Liu Yifei.

Shiseido also created an interactive environment through its WeChat livestreams, where viewers could browse the Shiseido WeChat store while watching the livestream via picture-in-picture. Additionally, viewers were rewarded with points for sharing the livestream with friends, and those with the most points won prizes.

The brand encouraged viewers to sign up for upcoming livestreams in advance with limited-time deals and coupons. According to Launchmetrics, Shiseido effectively utilized WeChat's ecosystem, incentivizing viewers to invite WeChat contacts, sending reminder service messages and providing seamless shopping within its WeChat store.



Shiseido's pre-618 strategy focused largely on hosting live-streams and offering steep discounts. Image credit: Launchmetrics

French beauty brand Lancme achieved records on both 618 pre-sales and the first day of the 618 festival. In addition to livestreaming, the brand's official WeChat account was a significant area for exposure and community discussion of Lancme's exclusive 618 product releases.

Although its MIV impact was low, micro- and mid-tier influencers generated 65 percent of placements for Lancme's 618 campaign, most of whom posted on Xiaohongshu.

Lancme's WeChat livestreams generated over 100 million transactions during the 618 promotional period. Brand-run group chats run by sales associates reached 50,000 people with a 20 percent sales conversion rate.

The brand used the allure of special access to promotions and membership points to get more consumers to register membership through their WeChat Mini Program. Registration allowed the brand to better understand its consumer base and therefore personalize and target future content.

U.S. beauty label Estée Lauder's 618 campaign focused on promoting its new, limited-edition Sakura Ferment Micro Essence. The brand leveraged its key opinion customers (KOC) network on Xiaohongshu with nearly 45 percent of posts generated on the platform.

Another major point of success was Estée Lauder's livestream collaboration with mega-influencer Austin Li. Estée Lauder also collaborated with Douyin to create a video filter effect called "Bokiboki Cherry Face," eliciting the attention and participation of many Douyin drama, comedy and beauty influencers.

L'Oréal ranked number one in terms of sales volume among beauty brands for Tmall's 618 sales and 618 beauty sales overall, followed by Lancme and Estée Lauder. L'Oréal generated interest in its promotions primarily via its campaigns on Weibo.

Beauty influencers such as Austin Li and Xiaojuwo Yisen highlighted products by showing the effects of L'Oréal makeup and improvements in skin conditions after using the products. L'Oréal's Weibo campaign received 1.4 billion views and one million comments.

L'Oréal's 618 presale WeChat post received more than 100,000 reads and high engagement in the article comments due to a comments-based competition, with top comments focused on featured influencer Zhu Yilong. In an unusual move, the brand's own account replied to each comment individually on the post, creating a sense of community and giving each consumer individual attention.

L'Oréal's Mini Program also featured a 618-themed game that gave away coupons as prizes. Players could earn more

chances to play and win more prizes by sharing the game with their friends.

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Mr Xiao Mao promoted the live-stream on his Weibo account with a QR code that took users to Este Lauder's WeChat Mini Program. Image credit: Launchmetrics

France's Yves Saint Laurent ran extensive campaigns via its WeChat Official account and mini program. The brand set up gift contests, social shopping groups and educational livestream classes featuring prominent beauty figures, with influencer posts generating 46.9 percent of the brand's 618 social media campaign placements.

Unlike the other brands, YSL structured their livestreams as a series of educational courses and encouraged shoppers to "prepare" for the courses by purchasing specified YSL products in advance.

Key promotional methods

As the 618 festival is no longer limited to June 18, the weeks-long pre-sale period requires brands to plan and execute daily campaigns, influencer collaborations, key opinion leader (KOL) activations, flash sales and more.

Livestreaming is increasingly important for sales success, as Launchmetrics found it to be a critical element of ecommerce.

Short-form video sharing platform TikTok is hoping to emulate the success of livestreaming in China in the U.S. market, exploring an expansion of its livestream shopping events as social media moves in a more transactional direction.

TikTok is continuing to evolve in response to growing trends, joining other platforms that have introduced more social shopping features. In particular, livestreaming has proven lucrative in China and is one promising addition

that may entice luxury brands and advertisers on TikTok ([see story](#)).

According to Launchmetrics, Weibo remains the most important social media platform through which brands reach customers. For each of the brand campaigns researched in this report, Weibo consistently accounted for the majority of the gross MIV of the campaign.

Additionally, influencer balance makes for a healthy, successful campaign, as the campaigns examined in the report reflect a combination of top-tier influencers as well as KOCs to create winning sales campaigns.

In 2019, fashion influencers BoyNam and Peter Xu were responsible for a significant portion of impressions at Salon International de la Haute Horlogerie (SIHH). While the hashtag #SIHH2019 reached more than 100 million users on Weibo, the KOLs generated more than 23 million impressions on social media, including 1.2 million simultaneous views during the height of live streaming on Yizhibo ([see story](#)).

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