

MARKETING

## Ambassadors, storytelling propelling brands' social media success

August 25, 2021



*Brands continue to utilize famous faces and target younger audiences. Image credit: Gucci*

By KATIE TAMOLA

While there are myriad ways for a brand to make itself and its offerings known and visible on social media, some tactics are proving to earn more engagement than others.

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According to a new study from intelligence platform **BrandTotal**, luxury brands are finding great success through storytelling, targeting younger audiences and highlighting ambassador relationships. Luxury brands have managed to get the most consumer engagement despite not having the highest paid social share of voice (SOV), as they stray from targeted paid ads and aim to offer a wider message, expanding their audiences.

"Most paid social media advertising is dark' meaning highly-targeted paid ads aimed at a specific audience," said Alon Leibovich, CEO and cofounder of BrandTotal. "Because they're precisely targeted to an end user, these ads aren't viewable by the general public.

"Luxury brands are less focused on lower funnel campaigns, opting to focus more on the top-of-the-funnel," he said. "As a result, they rely less on dark personalized ads, employing storytelling that speaks to a broader audience for awareness."

BrandTotal tracked social media ads on Facebook, YouTube and Twitter, analyzing all paid and organic ad campaigns from 36 fashion brands, including Louis Vuitton, Gucci and Chanel, from March-June 2021.

### Sending a message

Although mass-market brands dominated the share of voice, or the total media exposure of a paid brand message, they did not earn the highest engagement. While Nike held 20 percent of SOV compared to Adidas at 12 percent, and H&M at 11 percent, none of them broke the top five brand leaders by engagement.

The top three brand leaders by engagement were Louis Vuitton with 14.5 million engagements, Gucci with 8.7 million and Chanel with 4.5 million.



*Louis Vuitton had the highest consumer engagement of all the brands studied in BrandTotal's report. Image credit: Louis Vuitton*

Brands have learned the importance of tapping disparate social media platforms, with different organizations finding success in different places. Instagram was the channel most used for paid ads by Givenchy, Boss and Armani, while YouTube was the most used platform for Burberry, Gucci and Prada.

Mass-market fashion brands relied heavily on dark ads, which are highly targeted paid ads aimed at a specific target audience and are not viewable by the general public. While 69 percent of Nike's paid ads were dark, Louis Vuitton, Armani, Boss, Prada and Chanel used dark posts for less than 20 percent of their paid advertising.

Luxury brands continue to shift focus to raising awareness and reaching audiences through storytelling. For all of Gucci's posts that were available to the public, 75 percent were awareness-oriented and only 6 percent list conversion as their primary goal.

Several brands are also continuing to target, prioritize and reach younger audiences, specifically Gen Z and millennials. Gucci aimed 60 percent of its ads at 18-24-year-olds, while Burberry aimed 80 percent of its ads at this age group.

"Because younger audiences Gen Zs and millennials are digital natives, they are more likely to convert when targeted across these platforms," Mr. Leibovich said. "Older audiences can be granularly targeted across these platforms, though conversion may vary."

As social media platforms continue to surge in popularity and usage, brands will continue to focus on storytelling, aligning with consumers and expanding their audiences.

#### The face of a brand

One way brands have successfully tapped into new audiences and encouraged growth is through famous faces.

Ambassadorships, whether with A-list celebrities or beloved TikTok stars, are pivotal when it comes to reaching consumers.

For luxury brands seeking a famous face to attach to its product, the current landscape provides a myriad of effective ambassadors.

The world of brand ambassadors and celebrity partnerships is constantly evolving, with luxury labels relying on some of the world's most famous faces in acting, entertainment, sports and social media to extend their reach. Whether literally the star of a show or an influencer dominating Instagram, consumers continue to seek star power and authenticity from their ambassadors across the board ([see story](#)).

In April, French fashion house Louis Vuitton announced South Korean band BTS as the brand's latest ambassadors. With multi-platinum singles and albums, as well as a Grammy nomination, the band is one of the most influential groups in pop culture. The partnership aimed to merge luxury and contemporary culture, adding a modern chapter to the house ([see more](#)).

Louis Vuitton had the highest consumer engagement of all the brands studied in BrandTotal's report. The French fashion house's tweet earned almost 800k likes and 310k retweets, sparking mammoth engagement.

**#BTS** for **#LouisVuitton**. Joining as new House Ambassadors, the world renowned Pop Icons **@bts\_bighit** are recognized for their uplifting messages that impart a positive influence. Louis

Vuitton is pleased to welcome members RM, Jin, SUGA, j-hope, Jimin, V and Jung Kook.  
[pic.twitter.com/WzRHWb3piB](https://pic.twitter.com/WzRHWb3piB)

Louis Vuitton (@LouisVuitton) [April 23, 2021](#)

When something works people notice, and right now brands are cognizant of the power of partnership.

"Ambassadors work, according to our data," Mr. Leibovich said. Ambassadors and influencers will continue to be centerpieces of luxury fashion campaigns moving forward."

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