

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

## Balenciaga leads Lyst Index, as unique campaigns propel brands

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Balenciaga returned to the top of the Lyst Index. Image credit: Balenciaga

By KATIE TAMOLA

French fashion house Balenciaga has topped the Lyst Index of fashion's hottest brands for the first time since 2018, dethroning fellow Kering-owned label Gucci.

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Italy's Gucci, which had landed the top spot for four consecutive quarters, slipped to second while French fashion house Christian Dior and Italian fashion label Prada ranked third and fourth, respectively. Several thriving labels, including Balenciaga and Prada, reaped the benefits of prominent ambassadorships and eye-catching, unique campaigns.

"Balenciaga is back at number one this quarter following a supercharged three months of heavy-hitting campaigns and partnerships from the revival of haute couture to the activations around Fortnite and the Met Gala the brand spoke powerfully and authentically to a variety of different groups of fashion lovers while being strongly rooted in culture," said Jenny Cossons, chief partnerships officer at [Lyst](#), London.

The [Q3 2021 Lyst Index](#) is based on global Lyst and Google search data, conversion rates and sales, as well as brand and product social media mentions and engagement statistics worldwide over a three-month period.

Make it meaningful

From campaigns and brand ambassadors to increased transparency, brands are constantly being called to act thoughtfully and meaningfully.

Meaningful activations can also be entertaining and humorous, as evidenced in Balenciaga's recent delve into the world of "The Simpsons."

"Shortly after the quarter ended, the momentum continued with The Simpsons' collaboration at Paris Fashion Week," Ms. Cossons said. "All of these efforts were deftly amplified across digital channels, to maximize conversation and engagement."



*Marge Simpson was the star of the show for Balenciaga in a hilarious, emotive vignette. Image credit: Balenciaga*

The short episode of "The Simpsons," which drove widespread conversations online, simultaneously stayed true to the program's revered clever, sarcastic humor and the transformative power of high-end fashion. The film, commissioned by Balenciaga, takes a smart and unique approach in highlighting the brand and attempting to expand its audiences ([see story](#)).

Prada, which gained a spot on the list from last quarter, also saw great success by tapping a different kind of star power in a more dramatic campaign.

In August, Prada set sail with its new ambassador, actor Jake Gyllenhaal, in its newest fragrance effort.

Directed by Johan Renck, the film follows Mr. Gyllenhaal pushing himself to the edge the Luna Rossa yacht. The Luna Rossa Ocean fragrance and campaign explore how technology can help people reach new horizons ([see story](#)).



*Jake Gyllenhaal for Prada Beauty. Image credit: Prada*

Prada also recorded a 66 percent increase in revenue for the first half.

In-person events also helped fuel success for some of the top brands, as several labels including Dior and Versace held runway shows while the Olympics put several brands and products on an international stage.

The Met Gala also served as a paramount in-person event, as brands dressing public figures saw their engagements thrive. Searches for Balenciaga, worn by both Kim Kardashian and Rihanna at the event, increased by 505 percent following the Met Gala.

Rounding out the top 10 labels on the list are Louis Vuitton, Nike, Bottega Veneta, Versace, Fendi and Saint Laurent.



Louis Vuitton remained a top brand on the Index. Image credit: Louis Vuitton The top five women's products were the Prada raffia tote bag; Versace's Medusa Aevitas platform pumps; Bottega Veneta's terry slides; Nike's React Vapor NXT sneakers and the JW Anderson chain loafer mules.

For men, the top five products were Adidas Yeezy foam runner shoes; Oakley's Radar EV Path sunglasses, Prada's Cloudbust Thunder sneakers; Teflar's shopping bag; and the quilted down jacket from ERL.

Brands must do and be everything

Unique digital activations, immersive in-person experiences and jaw-dropping moments are requirements for luxury labels looking to differentiate themselves.

In August, Louis Vuitton which ranked fifth on the Lyst Index celebrated its founder's 200th birthday by inviting fans to explore a digital world, leveraging enticing storytelling and graphics to share its brand history.

The unparalleled approach from Louis Vuitton combined the exciting, eye-catching features of video games with immersive pieces of brand history. After an introduction at the "Louis 200" landing page, users navigate interactive boxes that illustrate a different aspect of brand history, including "Louis: The Game," a joyful opportunity to participate in a fantasy world while learning about the heart of the brand ([see story](#)).

Meanwhile, Italy's Fendi and Versace created a unique fashion moment with The Swap. Inspired by friendship and mutual respect, the Fendi by Versace and Versace by Fendi collections aim to disrupt traditional order and celebrate Italian fashion.

For "Fendace," Donatella Versace and Silvia Venturini-Fendi stepped away from their respective houses to gain new insight on each other's creative visions, while Fendi's artistic director Kim Jones helped facilitate the design journey ([see story](#)).

To remain at the top, successful brands must continue being cognizant of their omnichannel offerings and transparent brand positioning. In short, brands have to consider everything.

"For the hottest brands, digital is no longer a siloed department, but an essential thread that runs throughout their marketing and operations, enabling them to meet consumers and delight them with unique experiences wherever they are," Ms. Cossons said.

"To be a fashion standout, brands must offer something compelling and unique through their products and how they promote them," she said. "After the challenging 18 months we've all had, consumers are responding well to anything infused with a sense of fun, positivity and wonder."