

INTERNET

Top 10 social media luxury marketers of 2011

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By RACHEL LAMB

It takes a special kind of luxury brand to reach out to consumers on an informal platform and maintain the persona of elegance and luxury. Luxury brands are increasingly relying on social media to reach affluent consumers via product pushes, campaigns and contests, but some marketers are just on another level.

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The most successful luxury brands use all types of social media such as Twitter, Facebook, blogs and YouTube to ensure that every consumer is successfully reached.

Here are the top 10 luxury branded social media marketers of 2011, in alphabetical order.



Bergdorf Goodman – The New York-based retailer sustained its consistency throughout

all quarters of 2011.

Bergdorf experimented with all forms of social media marketing, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, blogs, Tumblr and digital magazines.

The department store has “What’s happening this week,” daily style tips, blog posts, event alerts and endless images.

Bergdorf promotes designer apparel and accessories through its blog, 5th/58th, and provides links to brands’ Web sites and options to buy through the retailer’s ecommerce destination.

The retailer has also been offering step-by-step makeup lessons, using images. Consumers can interact and ask questions in real-time.

Bergdorf also started using shoppable videos using the winners from its 5F campaign.

In addition to its general use of Instagram, Bergdorf launched its Shoes About Town mobile app that acts as a digital bulletin board of New York, where consumers are able to send in pictures of their shoes to be displayed on the map.

Finally, Bergdorf’s holiday campaign “unleashed” dogs all around the retailer’s flagship location on Fifth Avenue in New York’s Manhattan district, and put it on YouTube.

The retailer also ventured into Google+, where it displayed the bulk of its holiday campaign including platform exclusives and in-store draws.



Burberry – British fashion giant Burberry maintained its social

media prowess in 2011 through a multitude of new and exciting offerings.

The best example is its trailblazing move on Google+. Arguably, Burberry was the first big-name luxury marketer on the platform.

Burberry explores facets of Google+ that cannot be used as visibly on other social media sites such as animated GIF images. It has implemented five blocks on the top of the page that looks as if it is snowing on a model.

Similar to Facebook, Burberry’s Google+ page has a profile picture. However, clicking on the image does not bring consumers to separate page with a gallery of images, but continuing to click on the picture lets the user scroll through the images without leaving Burberry’s profile.

In addition, Burberry’s Google+ feed has focused on its new Winter Storm makeup

collection, including solo product images, models wearing cosmetics and a makeup tutorial.

The label also dove into Facebook commerce this year, offering fans who “like” Burberry on Facebook the chance to buy its newest fragrance, Burberry Body, on-site.

Burberry’s variety of campaigns this year was first put up on Facebook so that loyalists could check out the newest digs.



Diane von Furstenberg – The apparel and accessories brand

made waves this year in social media.

For example, the brand has devoted an entire “Inside” section of its Web site that focuses on events, social media, style, news, Diane’s journal, videos and philanthropy.

Diane von Furstenberg spread word of charitable events happening in its retail locations throughout the year via Facebook invitations.

The brand also announced the winners of its “DVF Awards,” marking the accomplishments of women such as Elizabeth Smart and Hilary Clinton, through social media.

In addition, Diane von Furstenberg attracted social media-savvy fashionistas with a monthly Facebook commerce-enabled Wrap of the Month effort.

When Facebook fans click on the tab, they are welcomed with a short explanation about the Wrap of the Month program, underneath which shoppers can click through three different views of the dress on a model.

Scrolling further down, shoppers are met with a section that looks very much like the product page on a brand’s Web site.

In this section, fans can see the name of the dress, the pattern and a full product description.

When the consumer chooses to check-out, she is linked to the branded Web site where she may then enter payment information, likely to boost the brand’s ecommerce sales.



Dolce & Gabbana – The Italian label focused much of its energy on social media initiatives this year, which makes sense as it seems to be catering to a younger crowd.

For example, using multiple Twitter feeds and a bursting-with-energy blog, Dolce & Gabbana uses social media to include consumers on the goings-on at the brand.

In addition to its corporate Twitter handle, D&G also uses @iwork4dg, a brand “spy” that uses backstage photos, videos and insider style tips to give consumers a glance into life at Dolce & Gabbana.

Both founders, Stefano Gabbana and Domenico Dolce, have Twitter accounts.

Furthermore, the Italian brand has a blog, Swide, which promotes style tips, images, videos, travel and food tips, celebrity interviews and music selections.

Mr. Gabbana also has a Tumblr account, where he offers his own views, images and videos that lend a personal vibe to the upscale brand.

Dolce & Gabbana also introduced “The Girl Who Wanted to be Madonna,” a blog series on Swide featuring a Barbie personality who idolizes Madonna.

The series was based on a Madonna Barbie doll that the famous doll makers Maggia2000 designed exclusively for Dolce & Gabbana in one of the brand’s recent runway looks.

To top it off, Dolce & Gabbana is hosting a social media contest where consumers can send in clips of themselves dancing to a branded soundtrack and proclaiming their love for the brand. Chosen clips will be added into the music video of the featured song.



Marc Jacobs - Apparel and accessories designer Marc Jacobs uses Facebook and Twitter to engage with its fans in very personal ways.

With updates at least 10 times a day, users get to see where and how cofounders Marc

Jacobs and Robert Duffy spend their time running the company.

The feeds also disclose family pictures, videos of the Marc Jacobs staff and pictures from special events and personal vacations, such as a recent trip to Thailand.

The Marc Jacobs YouTube account also has many videos of staff, apparel and accessories collections and personal movies.

In fact, its holiday campaign, #MarcFam, incorporated consumers into the mix by offering a user-curated collage of photos on its Web site.

The brand is taking a few more steps into an already-popular social media atmosphere by teaming up with bloggers.

Marc Jacobs bought advertising on NOWMANIFEST.com and held a photoshoot with blogger Elin Kling to celebrate 10 years of the Marc by Marc Jacobs line.



Mercedes-Benz – The German automaker has been making

headlines this year and can attribute a lot of that to its social media marketing.

Mercedes also boasts the Reporter, a recently-launched blog featuring written content, videos, images, product information, philanthropy and a list of recent Tweets.

The automaker's Twitter account shows images from the headquarters in Stuttgart, Germany, model information and other insider content.

Mercedes frequently uses social media, most noticeably Facebook and YouTube, to bolster awareness of new products.

The German automaker features campaign videos, interviews and other footage on MercedesBenzTV, its YouTube account.

This year, it engaged consumers with a new Facebook application that features the German automaker's new C-Class coupe and integrates users' friends into the playing field (see story).

The Drive & Seek game placed the consumer in the role of special agent with short video clips explaining the game and featuring the C-Class coupe.

The Facebook app game was released on the branded page in July and consists of three activities that asks users questions and identify pictures with their Facebook friends.

Mercedes alerted fans to the new tab and the game with a Facebook post challenging them to see if they had what it takes to become a special agent.

Since most people log-on to Facebook when they are bored or want to waste time, Mercedes likely saw much activity.

Mercedes' game will also improve brand recall as consumers engage and learn about their friends throughout the game.

The brand also boosted its appeal by creating "Mercedes Stars" on its Facebook page that allowed consumers to vote on which charity Mercedes would grant money.



Michael Kors – U.S. apparel and accessories designer Michael

Kors improved personality visibility and brand experience this year through an editorially-based travel blog, Destination Kors.

Consumers can find insider travel tips, follow the designer and founder Michael Kors on his trips around the world and discover his inspiration from destinations on the blog.

This could serve as the brand's transition into a lifestyle brand rather than just apparel and accessories, according to some experts.

The blog, found at <http://www.destinationkors.com>, is made up of multiple colorful boxes that detail runway collections, inspirations, diary entries, social media, news and style tips.

The content is curated by Mr. Kors himself, according to the brand.

Furthermore, Michael Kors marketed the blog through various promotions on its Facebook page and Twitter feed, and regularly posts new articles on its branded social media outlets.

Showcasing celebrities in plenty of branded products could serve to entice consumers to its commerce-enabled Web site, or into a branded location.

In addition, Michael Kors took advantage of Facebook's interaction abilities, especially with polling, questions and video sharing.

For instance, the brand frequently engages with consumers by polling them on their daily activities and Michael Kors products.

The brand also gave its Facebook fans a head-start on shopping for the new arrivals on the Michael Kors Web site by letting them know about it two hours in advance.



Missoni – The majority of Missoni’s social media marketing was

to promote its Missoni for Target collection, and in doing so, the Italian designer pulled out all of the stops.

Before the partnership was official, the two brands built-up the anticipation surrounding the Sept. 13 Missoni for Target collection debut through a creative Tumblr blog that, at first glance, appears to have no real connection with neither Missoni nor Target.

The blog titled “All the Way Up Here” surfaced in the fashion world when it released exclusive first-glances of the Missoni collection.

The posts on the blog date back to May, with mentions of founder and designer Margherita Missoni as the author’s fashion idol.

When the Missoni for Target collection drew closer, Missoni broke out sneak-peaks from the campaign on its social media outlets such as Facebook and Twitter.

Furthermore, the brand released its television commercial and the behind-the-scenes commercial on YouTube.

In addition to the Missoni for Target line, the brand also introduced a few apps this year where consumers could take images and turn them into works of art resembling Missoni’s famed zig-zag stripes.



Norma Kamali – Norma Kamali certainly had a year with social media – in just one campaign alone, it saw 12,000 new Facebook fans and 225 million media impressions.

The campaign in question was for the launch of its 3D microsite found at <http://www.normakamali3d.com>, where consumers can look at videos and browse and shop the newest Norma Kamali collection in 3D.

Consumers were able to request a free pair of 3D glasses if they “liked” the brand on Facebook. The campaign was pushed through all of Norma Kamali’s social media outlets

such as Facebook, Twitter and blogs.

Another example of Norma Kamali's social media marketing was the cross-platform social media effort to gain customers and drive swimwear sales during crucial summer months.

Norma Kamali launched contests on its social media pages to help celebrate the one-year anniversary of the brand's less-expensive version of the "Bill" swimsuit.

The brand hosted giveaways on its Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr and foursquare pages.

Since the main reason Norma Kamali launched this site was to gain fans and highlight products, stretching a single initiative across not one but four platforms most likely had a great impact on the brand.

Moreover, many of the efforts forced fans to engage with the brand because they had to "like" the brand on Facebook or follow it on Twitter.



Oscar de la Renta – Oscar de la Renta made headlines this year by offering samples of its new fragrance, Esprit d'Oscar to Facebook fans. This was the brand's first scent in 10 years.

Consumers were required to "like" the brand's Facebook page, which enables the brand to connect with them both before and after the fragrance was sent out.

The brand also consistently shares photos via Instagram and Twitter, side from sharing photos starring the alluring and beautiful OscarPRGirl, of branded products, shots from inside the show room, locations in New York and Mr. de la Renta himself.

Oscar de la Renta went a step further than most brands by using Facebook commerce. Consumers who "like" the brand on Facebook are treated to exclusive branded products each month.

December's offering, for example, is the Oscar de la Renta quote bangle.

There is also an entire section dedicated to the "Live in Love" fragrance on the brand's Facebook page.

Consumers can shop for the scent, watch a campaign video and interact by posting a paragraph or two about what inspires them.

Final Take

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