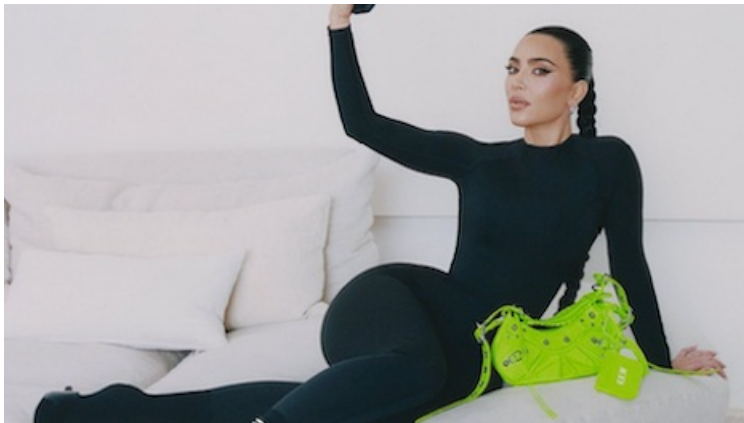


APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

## The Balenciaga effect: redefining the rules of success

February 9, 2022



Kim Kardashian stars in Balenciaga's latest campaign. Image credit: Balenciaga

By NORA HOWE

When people hear the name Balenciaga, they think subversive and unconventional a brand that breaks the traditional rules of marketing yet emerges triumphant.

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From wiping its social media feeds clean for every new project to collaborating with unexpected, and sometimes controversial, figures, the Paris-based fashion house plays by its own marketing rules and is apparently winning with flying colors. With an increasingly younger audience that values individuality and eccentricity, the luxury fashion industry could take some notes from Balenciaga on how to build a successful, albeit quirky, brand presence.

"While Balenciaga's strategy is certainly not mainstream, it is consistent and clear with its content," said Alison Bring, chief marketing officer at [Launchmetrics](#), London. "Balenciaga is using a less-is-more approach to build an experience with its consumers.

"Wiping its content entices consumers to build anticipation for an upcoming project," she said. "Only followers of the brand who visit Balenciaga's page will notice the change, in turn reserving the awareness for its brand-obsessed consumers."

Convention is overrated

The Balenciaga name has certainly infiltrated fashion discourse across the internet and around the world, but does this strategy actually work?

As with nearly all artistic projects, some may find Balenciaga's creative content interesting, unique and captivating, while others may find it jarring, unapproachable or simply weird.

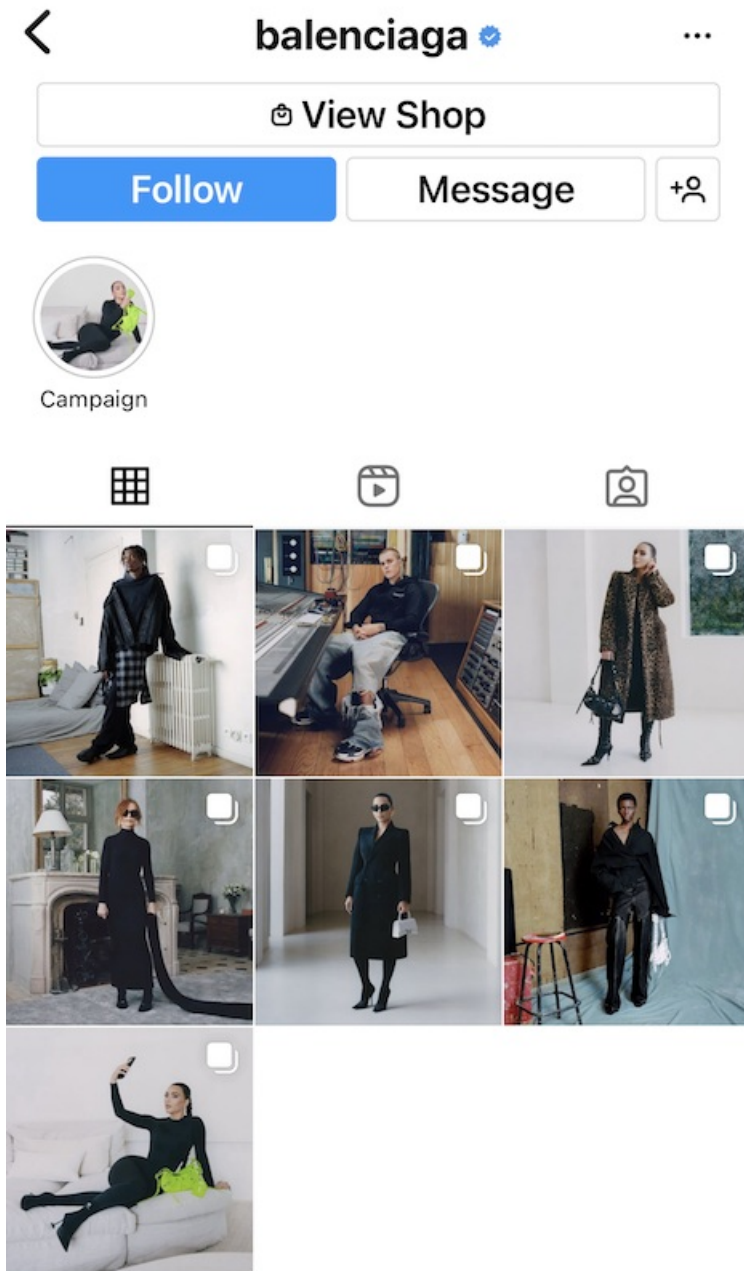
On TikTok, specifically, the brand often posts out-of-context videos, seldom with captions to explain what a user may be seeing, but nevertheless, they generate awareness with audience reactions ranging from confused to humored.

[@balenciaga Running - Full Stings-JP - Kyrie](#)

*This TikTok video currently has 5.9 million views and nearly 900,000 likes*

Despite the irreverence, Balenciaga has held the top spot as fashion's hottest brand for the past two consecutive quarters of the [Lyst Index](#).

"Balenciaga's unusual posts are made to be current and relevant," Ms. Bring said. "Its ability to align with its consumers' values is attributed to the brand invoking an emotional connection with its audience."



*Balenciaga wipes its Instagram account with each new campaign, opting for ephemeral rather than timelessness.*

For instance, the Kering-owned label gave a luxurious, and attention-grabbing, makeover to American television's most iconic animated family, The Simpsons.

Balenciaga released a short episode of "The Simpsons," running 10 minutes, which honored the program's revered clever, sarcastic humor and the transformative power of high-end fashion. It took a unique approach in highlighting the brand and attempting to expand its audiences ([see story](#)).

"The brand decided to push the relationship of fashion and entertainment to create an experience that its customers could be part of," Ms. Bring said. "Its content did not focus on promoting clothes, but on creating a notable experience."

"Within a week, the episode generated \$630,000 in media impact value from its YouTube post, alone," she said. "Balenciaga's choice to be true to its brand identity is what resonates with consumers, rather than diluting its message in the name of brands this is what makes them stand out."

## *Balenciaga x The Simpsons*

As it appears, Balenciaga has successfully grasped the dedication of its audience. It acknowledges that its fans and consumers crave to be a part of the brand's story, thus bringing them into it.

"The rules of marketing are rapidly evolving, and consumers are looking for brands that share the same values and attitudes as them," Ms. Bring said. "Balenciaga does this effectively by putting themselves in its consumers' shoes."

"In its FW22 digital presentation, 'The Lost Tape,' Balenciaga used a camcorder to document its entire show experience, from behind-the-scenes to post-show interviews," she said. "It understood that consumers want to feel part of the brand, and did so by giving them a firsthand experience of one of its shows."

### Power of the right celebrity

Arguably, one of the more traditional strategies Balenciaga implements is the use of celebrity endorsements and collaborations, from Kim Kardashian and Ye, formerly Kanye West, to Justin Bieber.

"Brand ambassadors do indeed help brands increase their performance, but it's more about having aligned values," Ms. Bring said. "Ye's unapologetic personality for obscure originality sits perfectly with Balenciaga's identity."

In addition to frequent public outings in which the American rapper and producer is dressed in head-to-toe Balenciaga, the two announced a new partnership last month Yeezy Gap Engineered by Balenciaga.

With Ye at the helm, Yeezy Gap brings together his creative vision and the values and history of an iconic American brand, Gap. Now in collaboration with Balenciaga creative director Demna Gvasalia, Yeezy Gap Engineered by Balenciaga aims to carry out both designers' visions for design ([see story](#)).

Ironically, the brand launched a campaign last week starring Ms. Kardashian, who filed for divorce from Ye in 2021 after seven years of marriage.

[View this post on Instagram](#)

A post shared by Kim Kardashian West (@kimkardashian)

*Kim Kardashian wearing a hot pink Balenciaga suit out in New York, prior to hosting Saturday Night Live*

In classic Balenciaga fashion, the brand wiped its Instagram and Twitter feeds leading up to the publication of a photo of Ms. Kardashian West wearing a black jumpsuit on a white couch contrasting with a neon green Le Cagole bag.

The reality star and entrepreneur also made headlines in September 2021 when she appeared at the Met Gala in a

black Balenciaga ensemble that completely covered her face.

"Her connection with the fashion label creates a window for the general public to view niche, high-fashion," Ms. Bring said. "Essentially, bridging the gap between high-fashion and the masses via Balenciaga."

The brand's latest campaign also features Isabelle Huppert, Tommy Blue, Marie-Agnes Diene and Justin Bieber.

"The key takeaway for brands is to carefully consider the celebrities you work with and if they fit with your overall value, because above all consumers look for relevancy and authenticity," Ms. Bring said.

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