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## Consumers seeking more contextual storytelling from brands: Cond Nast

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*Brands are speaking a lot without saying a lot. Image credit: Cond Nast*

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Consumers have increasingly higher expectations around community, and luxury marketers need to foster these connections to be successful.

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According to Cond Nast's "[Share of Culture 2.0](#)" [white paper](#), brands must find a balance between performance marketing to drive sales growth and brand marketing to drive awareness. Seventy percent of marketers surveyed agreed that brands should integrate into their consumers' culture with an emphasis on trust, content, target, engagement, cultural relevancy and influence.

"We know that luxury consumer purchase behaviors are changing faster than ever, and marketers have been looking for new solutions to capture attention and drive sales," said Pamela Drucker Mann, global chief revenue officer and president, U.S. revenue at [Cond Nast](#), in a statement.

"We developed this whitepaper to explore the key motivational spend factors that drive revenue short and long term," she said. "Share of Culture is the new framework to help marketers rethink their playbooks."

In 2020, Cond Nast and Deloitte partnered to develop "share of culture," a metric that aims to capture the extent to which a brand has the power to shape attitudes and behaviors and create an emotional connection with consumers.

For its second Share of Culture report, Cond Nast surveyed 3,991 consumers about 87 brands across 10 categories. Factors determining share of culture include influence, leadership, trust, engagement, sustainability and quality.

### Tailoring conversations

Consumer interest for certain brand characteristics, such as authenticity and trust, has shifted from high demand to baseline expectations. To drive perception change and purchase, brands need to provide value through knowledge-sharing and action.

Influence is closely linked to every stage of the customer journey, while engagement and quality are key for mid- and lower- funnel activities. Brands must communicate leadership through their values, including sustainability values, so consumers can make emotional connections.

Many brands, however, are failing to deliver influence. While brands are highly visible and well-connected, they are not saying all the right things that resonate with consumers emotionally.

"The right message in the right environment" is more important than ever, as third-party cookie depreciation continues to pose challenges to marketers.

Cond Nast also examined the top attributes of different categories to identify missing qualities from sector and brand messaging.

For instance, luxury's share of culture is driven by authenticity, quality and uniqueness. The brands in this category stand out as cultural icons and being closely associated with celebrities or experts, but do not perform as well when it comes to giving back to communities.

Other categories are also struggling to find balance.

Although consumers may trust travel brands, a trouble spot is differentiating themselves. Beauty is inherently connected to authenticity, more than most categories, and diversity and inclusion efforts make a clearer and more immediate impact with these brands.

Recommendations for brands include aligning with cultural moments with more than advertising messaging. For Gen Z consumers especially, advertising must be relevant.

Innovative and values-driven efforts that position brands as leaders in their respective sectors should also be incorporated into contextual storytelling.

#### Community building

More luxury brands and retailers are investing in online communities to further consumer engagement.

Farfetch's approach to its new beauty platform is in line with its core value: using the power of community to remove boundaries in gender, identity, age, culture, race and more.

The retailer's first Beauty Global Collective, a community of brand founders, industry experts and creative leaders with the goal of reshaping the beauty sector, invites dedicated luxury customers to learn about new products, feel empowered by the range and connected to multiple beauty professionals and peers through dynamic interactions ([see story](#)).

Inviting consumers to be brand ambassadors through a specific model or more informal avenues, like reposting a photo of a consumer wearing that brand's product on its social channels, is another way way brands have fostered loyalty.

According to Yotpo, establishing and fostering a brand community through conversation and activities will go a long way ([see story](#)).