

RETAIL

Service sits at the center of luxury retail: Mytheresa exec

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As shopping behavior shifts, consumers are looking for more ways to interact with brands. Image credit: Mytheresa

By NORA HOWE

NEW YORK More than ever, consumers want to engage with brands and build mutually beneficial relationships, and luxury retail can help facilitate this through out-of-the-box partnerships and curated experiences.

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During *Luxury Daily's* annual Women in Luxury econference on June 16, an executive from Mytheresa noted major shifts are occurring in the luxury retail market, particularly consumer expectations for service and digital marketing capabilities. At the convergence of ecommerce and luxury fashion, Mytheresa is positioning itself to meet and serve loyal luxury consumers in a new age.

"We have two main pillars in North America: brand awareness and consumer engagement," said Heather Kaminetsky, president of North America at [Mytheresa](#).

"The business started as a mom-and-pop shop in Munich in the 1980s and then in 2006, like every other brick-and-mortar store, it launched ecommerce," she said. "We started [prioritizing North America] last year with a real focus on building our brands and what we want them to be.

"It is also so important for our customers and for us to engage, so we create many goals about seeing our customers."

Women in Luxury 2022 was produced by Luxury Daily

Evolution of luxury retail

Across all industries and verticals, it is safe to say the consumer has changed.

Prior to the pandemic, many people refused to shop online, citing concerns over privacy and safety or the inability to touch, feel and try on what they are purchasing. Now, that behavior has completely flipped.

Considerably forced by the pandemic to move online, consumers began expanding shopping behavior to ecommerce, and simultaneously, online retailers shifted to meet consumers halfway.



Since the pandemic, consumers are looking to dress up more as they return to social events and other outings. Image credit: Mytheresa

Ms. Kaminetsky also suggested that trends in products themselves have changed drastically over the last two years. At the start of the pandemic, everyone wanted loungewear, but now that people are out and about again, they want to dress up.

The biggest shift, according to Ms. Kaminetsky, has been the landscape of digital marketing: how brands attract, acquire and message consumers online. She has found that, more than anything, consumers are looking to engage with brands in real-time.

In terms of Mytheresa, specifically, shoppers are looking to be serviced at the highest level and they are remaining loyal to those brands they feel exceed those needs.

"One of the reasons our customers love shopping with us is because of all the exclusives," Ms. Kaminetsky said. "We have just 250 powerful brands, which enables us to have solid relationships with those brands and thus we receive exclusive capsules and other pieces nobody else has."

Tolerance for shipping and returns has also shifted, likely due to the power of Amazon and its ability to condition consumers to expect instant gratification.



Brand collaboration is an effective and out-of-the-box strategy to keep consumers engaged. Image credit: Gucci

In the luxury sector, however, admitted there is a bit more tolerance when it came to waiting for products. For instance, if someone purchased a \$5,000 gown, they would understand if it took a week or so to arrive.

Now, consumers not only want that gown in three to five business days, but if it is not delivered in that time frame, they are likely to cancel the order.

Collaboration is key

A major opportunity for consumer engagement and brand awareness is creative, out-of-the-box projects and initiatives, namely, collaborations.

Looking at the duration of 2022 and beyond, Ms. Kaminetsky cites three major trends in the luxury sector: travel, brand collaborations and business development and partnerships.

Italian fashion house Gucci seldom shies from an opportunity to collaborate with other brands, especially streetwear labels. In 2020, the brand announced an unexpected partnership with outdoor recreation brand The North Face ([see story](#)), and then earlier this year, dropped a new collection with Adidas ([see story](#)).

To encourage circularity in fashion, Mytheresa partnered with The RealReal with various initiatives to increase resale engagement in the United States ([see story](#)).

In an unlikely partnership, Italian brands Fendi and Versace unveiled a collaborative collection, in which creative directors Donatella Versace and Kim Jones swapped roles ([see story](#)).

"You have different brands doing things together, which actually mirrors the music industry," Ms. Kaminetsky said. "While many consumers and people may question why they work together, assuming they are enemies, they are all going after the same customer.

"Brands that are collaborating and thinking outside of the box are very interesting to me," she said. "I think consumers are beginning to love it and collaborations between brands are really smart."

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