

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

Longchamp x D'heygere drives value with digital delivery

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On par with a new digital-first strategy, the brand has tapped a bevy of influencers to generate content, placing the lifestyle capsule in context on the go.

By AMIRAH KEATON

French leather and accessories brand Longchamp is powering its platforms with influencer content, to ensure the success of its most recent creative collaboration.

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The limited-edition run of foldable pieces inspired by Longchamp's Le Pliage, formed in collaboration with Belgian designer Stphanie D'heygere, has gone wide on social after a Jan. 3 launch. On par with a new digital-first strategy, the brand has tapped a bevy of influencers to generate content, placing the lifestyle capsule in context on the go.

"The on-the-go, metro, public transit focus of the campaign ties in seamlessly with the functionality of the capsule itself," said Lauren Bates, freelance copywriter, formerly of Blue Moon Digital, Denver.

"While this campaign is a bit of a departure from the traditional marketing I've come to expect from Longchamp besides the iconic bag, one might not recognize the brand from the jump that's kind of the point," Ms. Bates said. "This isn't about customer retention, this is about reaching a new demographic entirely."

Ms. Bates is not affiliated with Longchamp, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Longchamp x D'heygere

After an initial launch announcement in the latter half of last year, and a Jan 3. launch at the top of the new one, the brand is going global on busy streets and across town squares, to celebrate Longchamp x D'heygere.

The brand's rollout strategy rests on a few friendly faces with sizable followings.

Using a mix of content produced by the brand, alongside influencer-generated posts, Longchamp has managed to amplify its latest line, aligning the collection with a set of authentic personal brands. Talent are depicted conducting their respective city lives as usual.



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"While user-generated content is nothing new, this peer-reviewed way of approaching products resonates," Ms. Bates said.

"People trust individuals over brands and that's not just Gen Z," she said. "For years would-be-consumers have been swiftly falling out of love with brands and celebrities telling them why they should purchase xyz' product it wasn't relatable."

"UGC leaves room for a conversation that other product placement just doesn't."

A decision to tap the very designers themselves is revealed via a homegrown video starring the brand's Belgian collaborator herself.

The choice to publish the asset among others of varying "look and feel" runs the risk of landing one of two ways, either working to enhance efforts with an added level of authenticity or running the risk of appearing unrelatable by using faces from behind the scenes that may not be as familiar to consumers.

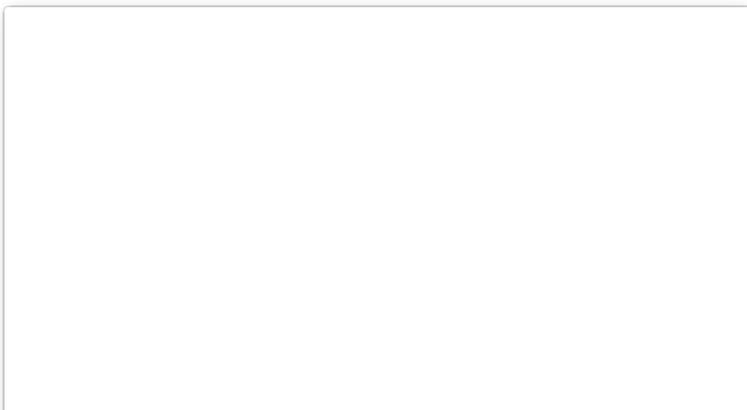
Longchamp's "Stephanie D'heygere's Appropriation Art" video

"While there will always be a place for behind-the-scenes relatability and transparency, UGC is having a moment,"

"So, I wouldn't exactly call them cohesive," she said. "Reaching different demographics means going where they are."

"Being that this campaign has a decidedly Gen Z aesthetic and feel, it is important to speak to that generation in the way they like receiving the information."

Nonetheless, the challenge of matching both Gen Z and an older generation of shoppers is tough.



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"Luxury is also tricky because much of the younger generation has been priced out," Ms. Bates said.

"And while Stphanie D'heygere is a millennial, the disconnect could still very well be present from the luxury side," she said. "However, the pairing does make perfect sense.

Highlighting the hits

Overall, Longchamp's influencer campaign helps to showcase what is arguably the capsule's most unique elements.

Made from recycled fabrics, Longchamp's capsule integrates a number of modular mechanisms. These designs equip the wearer with "on the fly" alterations via a simple zip or snap, a trend set to take over in 2023 ([see story](#)).

Both anecdotal and data-informed research seem to suggest the functional option's popularity.

"Often I have seen my on-the-go Gen Z counterparts preferring streamlined minimalist vibes," Ms. Bates said.

"Coming from experience, I think that anyone who has lived in an urban setting can relate to and respect the need for pieces that aren't only stylish, but versatile as well the way the pieces collapse into themselves takes everyday items a city dweller might need and makes them portable," she said. "The capsule is about repurposing, recycling and doing more with less.

"That message might not translate at first, but it's there."



Longchamp's newest capsule collection features pieces of multiple functionalities. Image credit: Longchamp

The collection is also constructed from recycled fabrics.

"Sustainability isn't centered in the conversation, but it is very much a part of it, from the recycled textiles to the unisex pieces, to the designer collaboration itself," Ms. Bates said.

"This capsule talks about sustainability without talking about it, something that I hope will just become an innate piece of the fashion industry doing more with less," she said. "Plus, a more Earth-centered narrative is something that younger demographics are swayed by."

Capsule aside, Longchamp's digital shifts the move began with the establishment of a TikTok channel in October of last year ([see story](#)) have been impressive.

"It will be curious to see where this year takes us as far as social and influencer campaigns go, but I do see a

narrative shift from BTS to UGC," Ms. Bates said.

"With the passing of Virgil Abloh, the departure of Alessandro Michele from Gucci there is a definitive pivot in storytelling," she said. "These iconic creative directors were excellent storytellers and not everyone is.

"Perhaps we are witnessing that linear form of storytelling behind-the-scenes / where they find inspiration shift from the creator to the muse the customer."

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