

RESEARCH

1 in 5 UK HNWIs turning to TikTok for shopping inspiration as 'stealth wealth' sticks: report

May 8, 2023



What once was considered a "top-down" trend is showing signs of reversing as talk of stealth wealth influences commerce. Image credit: Loro Piana

By AMIRAH KEATON

As "stealth wealth" and "quiet luxury" permeate the zeitgeist, new research suggests that the phrases could be exhibiting some commercial staying power.

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According to data and insights firm Agility Research & Strategy, 1 in every 5 U.K. high-net-worth individuals (HNWIs) is using TikTok to gain inspiration for their luxury spending. Following a round of in-depth interviews with millionaires across the globe, The Global Millionaires 2023 TrendLens report flags related findings regarding current points of influence for affluent consumers.

"Despite its correlation with the Gen Z demographic, luxury brands must not underestimate the rise of TikTok as we have found that the platform is a key source of purchase inspiration for HNWIs across several markets," said Amrita Banta, managing director at Agility Research & Strategy, in a statement.

For the report, Agility Research & Strategy conducted the Global Millionaire Consumer Insights study, incorporating insights from interviews carried out with 761 millionaires: 104 based in the U.S., 100 in the U.K., 104 in Germany, 144 in China, 101 in Spain, 105 in France and 103 in Italy across February and March of 2023.

TikTok tracking

In yet another example of new-age digital media's ability to flip the script, a top-down trend is influencing luxury commerce decisions for the most well-resourced, per Agility Research & Strategy's latest report.

Of TikTok's 50 million total active users, the firm supposes that all age groups are using the platform to unearth trending luxury styles, pointing to 21 percent of the U.K.'s millionaires citing TikTok engagement as a source of luxury purchase inspiration.

For German shoppers, the figure reached even higher, at close to 4 in 10 millionaires using TikTok to get ideas about

buying luxury items.

Despite the digital leads, in-store browsing still remains a popular method of gaining insights for luxury shopping, says the firm's experts. U.S. HNWI's favor the boutique sessions most. Just over half of American millionaires, 53 percent, prefer to browse in-store as a means of sparking luxury shopping ideas.

Co-branded collaborations were also included as part of Agility Research & Strategy's retail inquiries.



Executed in collaboration with Balenciaga, Gucci tapped photographer Harley Weir for the Hacker Project campaign. Image courtesy of Gucci

When prompted as to what value collaborative drops like Balenciaga x Gucci hold amid today's market, 73 percent of the U.K.'s HNWI's admitted to purchasing co-branded luxury items in the past year, listing a desire to take advantage of an opportunity to experience the best of both brands as the primary driving force for these types of purchases.

The measure stayed consistent across averages for Europe at large, with two-thirds of HNWI's showing a preference for co-branding.

Meanwhile, luxury shoppers in China and the U.S. seemed less keen on this merchandise. Here, consumers who expressed a preference landed at 63 percent and 58 percent, respectively.

Subject to change

Offline, The Global Millionaires 2023 TrendLens report captures a level of economic prosperity and climate consciousness among global HNWI's.

Agility Research & Strategy ([see story](#)) shares that, despite growth for all key European economies expected to slow down in 2023, nearly 70 percent of millionaires surveyed expect their disposable income to increase this year ([see story](#)).

Nine out of 10 U.K. HNWI's plan to travel internationally in the coming year, as 20 percent of Americans anticipate seeking out U.K. destinations for visits over the next 12 months, though overall, airline tickets are not the main luxury spend category. Makeup comes out on top, as the number one category that U.K. HNWI's intend to increase their spending on.

Last year, this slot was reserved for leather handbags, with 27 percent of Britain's millionaires reporting intentions to increase year-on-year spending on luxury goods last year.

American millionaires are shifting their shopping focus to luxury watches, while Chinese HNWI's point to a planned increase in year-on-year spending on fashion accessories.

Interestingly, 42 percent of U.K. HNWI's have made pre-owned luxury purchases in the past year, compared to just 22 percent in the U.S. The shopping habits align with the fact that nearly 9 out of 10 U.K. HNWI's told Agility Research & Strategy that they would pay more for a sustainable brand, while just 67 percent of those in the U.S. said so.

"At Agility Research & Strategy, we have been closely monitoring HNWI's across the globe for a decade and use our findings to help luxury brands understand the mindset of affluent consumers," Ms. Banta said, in a statement.

"Our Global Millionaires 2023 TrendLens report clearly shows that HNWI's factor in sustainability when considering luxury purchases and therefore brands lacking ESG credentials could see a downturn in sales," Ms. Banta said.

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