

FRAGRANCE AND PERSONAL CARE

YSL Beauty expands 'Abuse Is Not Love' campaign

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The campaign, originally started in 2020, is seeing a refresh to address potential blindspots in its original release. Image credit: YSL Beauty

By ZACH JAMES

France's YSL Beauty is recentering a legacy domestic violence awareness initiative through a new lens.

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Called "Abuse Is Not Love," the push platforms intimate partner violence (IPV) in an inclusive way, making it clear that women and heterosexual couples are not the only people affected by the widespread issue. Bringing more attention to a topic that is seen as taboo by many through an established maison, such as YSL Beauty, the brand hopes to educate a target of 2 million people by 2030; expanding its focus to a greater number of couples could help achieve that.

"YSL Beauty recognizes that change begins through awareness and education, and this initiative delivers on the idea that there is beauty in vulnerability," said Christine Pizzo, head of design & creative in the Americas at [Designit](#), Boston.

"YSL Beauty's initiative is turning the luxury beauty industry on its head by shining a light in the dark places bringing awareness to the fact that IPV is all too common, letting the world know how important it is to have discussions around what a healthy relationship looks like and the importance of removing the filter from our lives," she said. "YSL is acknowledging an issue rarely shared, but often experienced."

Ms. Pizzo is not affiliated with YSL Beauty but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Raising awareness

The campaign, originally started in 2020, is seeing a refresh to address potential blindspots in its original release.

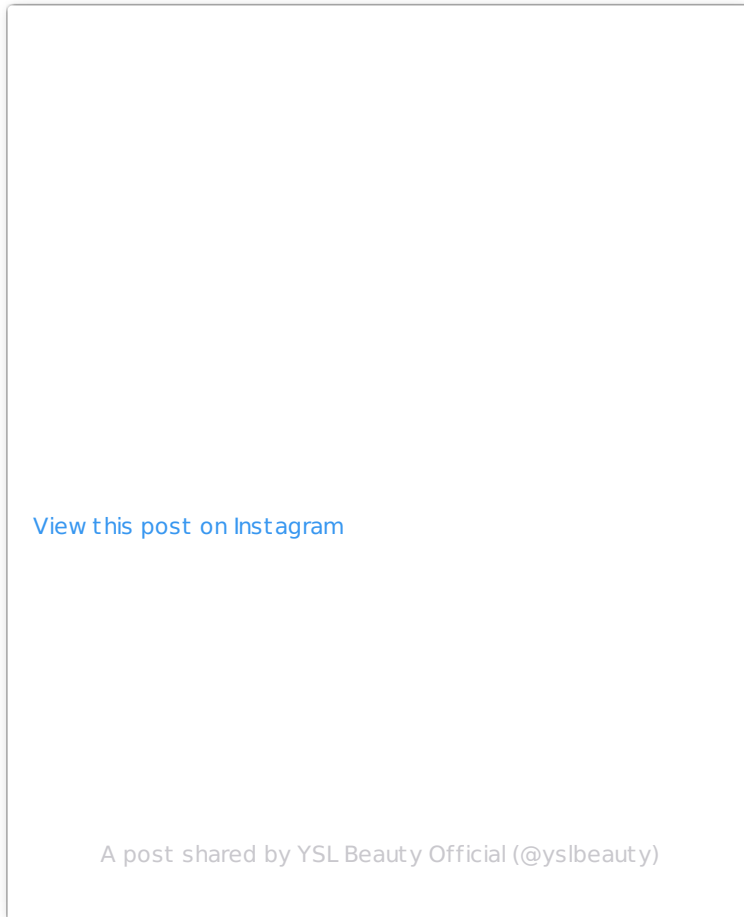
In the brand's push since then, it has written a research paper published by Harvard Business Review appealing to corporations and managers to apply their learnings from the article and share them with their workers. It also has donated to 24 non-profits in just as many countries to grant a greater platform to the issue; 10 other markets are planned to receive aid in the near future, according to the initiative's website.

Experts and brand ambassadors speak on the topic in Abuse Is Not Love's newest release

The campaign breaks down the signs of IPV into 9 items: "ignoring, blackmailing, humiliation, manipulation, jealousy, control, intrusion, isolation and intimidation." A series of YouTube videos has been released on the maison's channel; each of the 9 entries further explains its corresponding point.

In its research, YSL Beauty has found that 1 in 3 women experience IPV in their lifetime. This new endeavor showcases that this phenomenon is not exclusive to one gender or heterosexual relationships, as 31 percent of the 6,000 members of the LGBTQ+ community surveyed stated they had at least one interaction designated as IPV.

Of the respondents, 55 percent said they felt they did not have the support they would need in a situation such as what the push is focused on.



While women are usually the focus of campaigns like Abuse Is Not Love, YSL Beauty is showing that everyone is affected by IPV.

"A brand's promise of support without action is just another form of manipulation, something that the LGBTQIA+ community has experienced enough of," said Ms. Pizzo.

"This initiative by YSL Beauty goes beyond those all-too-common empty platitudes and 'rainbow-washing' from other corporations to address a critical need in the LGBTQIA+ community: they recognized that IPV exists across all types of relationships, yet resources are disproportionately centered around cisgender, heterosexual relationships," she said. "What's gravitating and credible about YSL and Abuse is Not Love' is not only the long-term action plan but the employee education, taking the responsibility personally."

"YSL putting their legacy on the line to stand next to us and change more than the narrative is what we need more brands to do, especially those with the respect and reach to create lasting progress."

Those interested can receive training on how to spot the widespread problem through the initiative's website. According to a ticker on the top right corner of the site, 493,000 people already have, nearly a quarter of the way to the decade-long goal.

Ambassador aid

As part of the program, YSL Beauty's brand ambassadors have spoken in favor of Abuse Is Not Love, grating it an even larger platform by expanding its reach through multiple internationally known names.

American actress and singer Zoe Kravitz voiced her support in a video released in late 2021.

Ms. Kravitz points out the abusive behaviors a partner may utilize in the video

English Albanian singer and Grammy-winner also Dua Lipa spoke in favor of the campaign.

"I am a vocal supporter of women's rights and today, 600 million women in the world are living in a market where Intimate Partner Violence is not considered a crime," said Ms. Lipa, in a statement.

"This is an issue that deserves attention and it is time to take action," she said. "I am proud to support my YSL Beauty family in this important initiative."

Gucci's Chime program, which pushes for female empowerment and gender equity, celebrated its tenth anniversary earlier this year ([see story](#)) with a series showcasing its star-studded supports, including Salma Hayek Pinnault, John Legend, Idris Elba, Julia Garner and 31 others spanning many industries.

The Prada Group has gone for a much lower-key approach, working with UNFPA, the United Nations sexual and reproductive health agency, to support gender equality endeavors in the African countries of Kenya and Ghana ([see story](#)).

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