

COLUMNS

# Why luxury brands should create a world of value for customers

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Daymon Bruck is chief creative officer and partner of The O Group. Image credit: The O Group

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By **Daymon Bruck**

The new codes of luxury are increasingly shifting to center around an individual's entire lifestyle, including diverse interests, areas of inspiration and global influences.

Smart luxury businesses are growing their brand's impact and awareness by leveraging opportunities to add value to a wider sphere of potential consumer interactions beyond the expected path to purchase. What do you offer a customer that can afford (mostly) whatever they want?

The answer is inside the potential for adding value to a consumer's life that's not tied to a product or service but to the impression and application of the brand itself.

With increased frequency, luxury brands are investing in the creation of brand equity through strategies and tactics that create value through educational experiences, providing select access to exclusive events and spaces and even impacting global culture across any number of partnerships and programs.

Brand building in the world of luxury essentially becomes more valuable over time, versus driving sales or website impressions more immediately. Luxury brands have been developing new ways to raise their profile across all consumer touch points, creating a world of cultural impact that adds value and increases the significance of a brand in the consumer's mind.

Here are some interesting and effective examples of how luxury brands are developing value through education programs, exclusive access and building cultural capital.

## **Education**

Luxury customers today want to get closer to the brands they love and support. For a passionate audience who are looking to take their appreciation and connection to the next level, providing educational experiences about the process of luxury craftsmanship or the insider details about a brand directly from the source offers a wealth of brand-building opportunities.

Here are a few educational programs that help these brands do that in unique and engaging ways:

[Chicago Hosts "Herms in the Making"](#)

Open to the public, Herms invites everyone to Chicago's Union Station to participate in a special exhibit, "Herms in the Making."

Visitors can meet its artisans and discover Herms' spirit of creation and innovation through its unique craftsmanship. Artisans from different areas of the luxury house bring their tools, materials, and expertise to engage with guests in many unique activities.



*An exercise in craftsmanship, the company is bringing a touring exhibition to Chicago Union Station from Oct. 27 - Nov. 1, 2023. Image credit: Herms*

The exhibition includes a variety of interactive games and experiences, from saddle stitching of a Kelly bag, and workshops focused on lessons in everything from dexterity to coloring and fragrance design. The public can also watch the films from the "Footsteps across the World" collection produced by documentary filmmaker Frdric Laffont, which express Herms' unique connection with sustainable development.

#### Bottega Veneta's Accademia Labor et Ingenium

Bottega Veneta deepens its commitment to artisanal craft with the launch of Accademia Labor et Ingenium, a new school to foster the next generation of artisanal talent. The name derives from the brand's founding values, as seen in its original company crest: Labor et Ingenium, "Craft and Creativity."

Accademia Labor et Ingenium serves as a permanent workshop, where Bottega Veneta new hires and external students can learn from master artisans through training activities, workshops, and courses. The classes are led by a community of Bottega Veneta master artisans and champion the collective ethos that has defined the company since its foundation in 1966.

"Accademia Labor et Ingenium is a key strategic pillar to preserve Bottega Veneta's unique savoir-faire," said Leo Rongone, CEO of Bottega Veneta, in a statement.

#### Dom Prignon Scholarship Fund

Dom Prignon announced that it is joining forces with the Culinary Institute of America (CIA), the world's premier culinary college, to support the first-ever master's in Culinary Arts degree program.



*Dom Prignon and CIA recently hosted a solo tasting among famed chefs in Manhattan. Image courtesy of Joe Schildhorn and BFA*

The Dom Prignon Scholarship Fund will fully support tuition for 20 students in the unique program, which integrates two years of unprecedented experiential learning at world-class restaurants and features residencies at the CIA's New York campus and the Champagne House in France.

The program is designed to prepare the next generation of leading restaurateurs for ownership and success. In addition to its scholarship support, a grant from Dom Prignon helped underwrite the development of the program by CIA.

## **Access**

The brand value of access is created by providing admittance and introductions to places, people and products that are not available to just anyone.

These rare and exclusive pathways have been increasing in number by brands who are countering the effects of wider access to standard-level luxury products and services. Higher-tier luxury consumers desire to be serviced and treated in a way that shows appreciation and acknowledges their continued support.

Here are three examples of brands creating special access for their elite customers:

### Tiffany & Co. VIP Floors

With the reopening of The Landmark this year, Tiffany & Co. included in the new design an entire top floor of VIP suites, accessible only by a private elevator for qualifying customers.

A full bar greets guests, who can wander freely into the library stocked with century-plus-old Tiffany "blue book" catalogs or various lounges in sitting areas with some of the best views in all of Manhattan. For his luxe redesign of Tiffany & Co.'s landmark Fifth Avenue flagship, Peter Marino requested carte blanche for just one space: the 10th-floor suites.

This invite-only arena, he reasoned, needed to feel residential like a private apartment where top clients could linger over a glass of Champagne or dinner as they browsed. Tiffany's nearly 200-year lineage is highlighted at every corner.

### Harrods Members-Only Club in Shanghai

This year, the iconic London department store Harrods will open a new private members club titled "The Residence" in Shanghai, the first of its kind outside the U.K.



*Marking a company first, the retailer extended its operations in Shanghai, opening a members-only club this year. Image credit: Harrods*

It will be in the Cha House on the second floor, a centuries-old heritage building found in the heart of the city. Limited to just 250 places, members will have access to the store's global concierge services and be able to sample and purchase rare spirits through a partnership with Scottish whiskey company Edrington.

"The Residence is Harrods' very first private members' club and is being created to serve a curated community of discerning members," said Michael Ward, managing director at Harrods, in a statement.

### Casa Cucinelli

With Casa Cucinelli locations in New York, Milan, London and Paris, Brunello Cucinelli has created a new concept store that is effectively like stepping into the designer's home. The latest Casa Cucinelli in New York, opened in 2019, feels like the perfect blend of a classic New York apartment mixed with an Italian soul.

The intimate, invite-only showroom makes shopping a thoroughly pleasurable experience.

"For anyone who utters the word home, the feeling of welcome and hospitality that we have always sought to pursue here in Solomeo is immediate," brand founder Brunello Cucinelli told *L'Officiel USA*.

## Culture

In creating cultural value, luxury brands must access, process and operationalize real-time information about trending topics and client sentiment across the globe.

The ability to influence and inspire audiences through cultural touchpoints is becoming the driving force of value creation for every major player in the luxury market. This is a very different skill set for brands than ever before and few have been able to utilize it effectively.

These are three brands that are adding their unique contribution to luxury cultural value:

### Van Cleef & Arpels Dance Festival

Launched in 2020, Dance Reflections by Van Cleef & Arpels is a program dedicated to dance, supporting creative artists and institutions linked to the world of choreography. In addition, the initiative stages a festival together with international partners each year: the first events took place in London in March 2022, and in Hong Kong in May 2023.



*Opening this edition of the festival is "Dance" by Lucinda Childs and performed by the Lyon Opera Ballet. Image credit: Van Cleef & Arpels*

For a U.S. edition, Dance Reflections by Van Cleef & Arpels is proud to be collaborating with prestigious New York institutions to showcase the artistry of choreographic creation.

### Axiom Space and Prada Collaboration

The first partnership between an Italian luxury fashion house and commercial space company, Prada and Axiom Space will collaborate to create spacesuits for NASA's lunar Artemis III mission.

As the first crewed lunar landing since Apollo 17 in December 1972, this Artemis mission, planned for 2025, will also be the first to place a woman on the Moon. "The constantly forward-thinking ethos of Prada for humanity has broadened to his desire of adventure and to brave new horizons: space," said Lorenzo Bertelli, marketing director

### Burberry Foundation Partners with Save The Children

Burberry Foundation has announced a partnership with Save the Children to launch Life Chances, a program designed to support young people impacted by the war in Ukraine. Life Chances is intended to help young Ukrainian refugees recover by furthering their education and career prospects, improving social and emotional well-being, and empowering them to become agents of change within their communities.

Scheduled to run exclusively in Poland until June 2025, the program is designed to support Ukrainian refugees aged 14-18. To support wider social well-being and cohesion, the program will also be extended to young people in Poland, with services being fully available in November 2023.

## In short

Deciding where to create value for a luxury brand can be difficult if a brand's brand positioning and values are not clearly identified.

As luxury branding consultants, we advise our clients to build a world of value around the core belief system and an established set of brand values. These programs, products and partnerships all need to have a transparent and authentic connection to the brand's identity, personality and ethos for them to create meaningful impact and value for their desired audiences.

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