

COLUMNS

Luxury Unfiltered: Luxury brands and clients no longer speak the same language

March 5, 2025

*Daniel Langer is the founder and CEO of consulting firm quit*By **Daniel Langer**

The relationship between luxury brands and their clients is facing an unprecedented crisis.

A recent Bain study revealed that nearly half of global luxury consumers believe brands are overpriced, uninspiring and indistinguishable from one another. This is confirmed in many practical market insights from quit Research. The result: A stark reality check for an industry built on aspiration and exclusivity.

This disconnect stems from a fundamental shift in consumer expectations. Today's luxury clients particularly millennials and Gen Z demand more than just fancy products. I have focused particularly on Gen Z in my research over the last three to five years, and this demographic is seeking inspiration, emotional resonance and authenticity.

Cultural capital is a must in a social media reality. Yet many brands remain stuck in outdated paradigms, failing to adapt to a digital-first world where social media sets the tone for cultural relevance.

This is where my ["Future of Luxury" podcast discussion](#) with Thomas Derksen, host of the "Made in China" podcast, author of multiple books and who has over 10 million followers on social media, and Damian Maib, founder and CEO of GENUINE, a leading e-commerce enabler agency and consultancy that connects global brands with the Asian e-commerce landscape, was so fascinating as we took a deep dive into why the message between brands and clients is often lost in translation.



The social media revolution

Social media has become the epicenter of modern luxury consumption. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, WeChat and others are cultural touchpoints where brands build relationships with their audiences.

Research shows that affluent consumers spend significantly more time engaging with luxury content on social media than other demographics.

However, many brands fail to meet these expectations. Instead of creating inspiring narratives or showcasing craftsmanship through engaging content, they flood feeds with generic product shots or uninspired campaigns. This lack of creativity alienates consumers who crave connection and exclusivity.

The sea of sameness

One recurring criticism from clients is what I often call the "sea of sameness." With so many brands offering similar products at similar price points and often using similar marketing tactics it's no wonder consumers feel uninspired.

To stand out in this crowded landscape, brands must prioritize differentiation through storytelling. Successful campaigns don't just sell products they sell dreams. They transport clients into a world where every detail is infused with meaning.

Cultural disconnects

Adding another layer to this issue is cultural nuance or lack thereof.

Take China, one of the most critical markets for Western luxury brands. While Chinese consumers gravitate toward digital innovation and interactive experiences, such as AR try-ons or virtual boutiques, Western markets often emphasize heritage and tradition and neglect the client journey.

Additionally, many global campaigns fail to adapt to cultural differences effectively. For example, while European clients may respond well to stories rooted in artisanal craftsmanship, younger Asian clients might prioritize modernity and technology-driven experiences.

Bridging these gaps requires a deep understanding of regional preferences. It's a skill many brands still lack.

A call to action

Luxury is no longer just about products, because the product is a given. Instead, the perception of luxury depends on creating moments that matter in an increasingly digital world where inspiration is currency and authenticity is everything.

To succeed globally, brands must learn to speak their clients' language by embracing storytelling that resonates emotionally across cultures while innovating relentlessly to stay ahead of trends. It is essential for survival in today's hyper-competitive market.

Luxury Unfiltered is a weekly column by **Daniel Langer**. He is the CEO of **quit**, a global luxury strategy and creative brand activation firm, where he is the advisor to some of the most iconic luxury brands. He is recognized as a global top-five luxury key opinion leader. He serves as the executive professor of luxury strategy and pricing at Pepperdine University in Malibu and as a professor of luxury at New York University, New York. Dr. Langer has authored best-selling books on luxury management in English and Chinese and is a respected global keynote speaker.

Dr. Langer conducts masterclass management training on various luxury topics around the world. As a luxury expert featured on Bloomberg TV, Financial Times, The New York Times, Forbes, The Economist and others, Mr. Langer holds an MBA and a Ph.D. in luxury management and has received education from Harvard Business School. Follow him on [LinkedIn](#) and [Instagram](#), and listen to his **Future of Luxury Podcast**.