

RESEARCH

Chanel, Zegna top competitors for perceived brand experience: study

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By TRICIA CARR

Marketers including Chanel, Prada and Ermenegildo Zegna were lauded by consumers not only for brand value, but for having the best customer experience in the business, according to a report by the Luxury Institute.

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The Luxury Brand Status Index found that affluent men and women have distinct brand preferences. One of the most influential elements of brand rank in the report is luxury marketers' increased attention to the consumer experience.

"Brands need to continue to outperform on product, but dramatically out-behave their competition," said Milton Pedraza, CEO of the **Luxury Institute**, New York. "Once you have a great product, people are what matter most."

"With technology as well as culture, these trends are changing the world and you are going to see a lot more of this," he said. "In the current world, you need to be humanistic as well as product-oriented."

"The survey shows that when using those elements, brands will rise in status."

The Luxury Brand Status Index polled consumers on 30 ready-to-wear luxury fashion brands. Respondents scored product quality, customer service, social status and ability of

the brand to deliver special customer experiences from 1-10.

Popularity contest

Brand prestige and popularity are two different matters, per the Luxury Brand Status Index.

First, the report found that Ralph Lauren and Calvin Klein were the top two brands purchased in the past year by male and female consumers.

In addition, Ralph Lauren was most-mentioned by respondents as a brand that they will purchase during the next year.

Ermenegildo Zegna also ranked second among men for intent to purchase.

However, men and women favored different brands in the report.

In fact, the Luxury Institute expanded its metrics for its latest report so that it could capture the reputation of luxury brands among consumers who earned more than \$150,000 per year as well as their interpretation of the brand experience.

The brands that are highly regarded by affluent consumers likely achieved their scores due to their increased focus on the customer experience, per Mr. Pedraza.

Perception matters

Luxury marketers including Brioni, Bottega Veneta, Burberry, Canali, Chanel, Louis Vuitton, Prada and Zegna scored highly.

For women, Chanel earned the highest score of 7.49, followed by Louis Vuitton with 7.29 and Prada with 7.21.

Chanel led the pack for its customer experience and delivering the best quality at its price point, per the Luxury Institute.

"I know that Chanel and Louis Vuitton are working very hard to deliver not just great product, but great consumer experience, as well as Prada," Mr. Pedraza said. "Those brands are not just about the product and store, but about the people."

"They are not only making efforts towards the consumer experience in-store, but also for the long-term brand experience and customer retention," he said. "I am thrilled that the brands we know are working on customer experience are getting validation of their strategies."

Burberry and Bottega Veneta are also notable mentions for their customer experience, per Mr. Pedraza.

Meanwhile, men ranked Italian labels Canali, Brioni and Zegna as the best luxury brands with scores of 7.84, 7.80 and 7.72, respectively.

Canali got the highest marks for product quality and its service experience. It was also one of the top three brands ranked by men that is most deserving of charging premium prices along with Zegna and Brunello Cucinelli.

“In the men’s survey, I was fascinated with Canali,” Mr. Pedraza said. “The price point of Canali is lower, but because of its relationship-building techniques and the quality delivered at a more affordable price, it has an advantage in this global economy.

“The brand works very hard on client experience, and the fact that it can be up there with Zegna and Brioni with its customer experience shows what it has achieved.”

Final Take

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