

INTERNET

How social media transformed New York Fashion Week

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By ERIN SHEA

Social media has helped New York Fashion Week evolve into a global event and now plays an integral role for luxury marketers to engage their audience during the shows.

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Luxury Daily

Brands should look to engage users on various social media platforms to drive consumer engagement, especially during the upcoming New York Fashion Week Feb. 7-14. Since the runway shows are short and can only have a limited number of attendees, brands should make use of social media to get the most out of the week.

“Social media completely changed the Fashion Weeks a few years ago, turning them from an insider, industry-only event into a public spectacle, watched by millions of fashion fans online,” said Yuli Ziv, founder/CEO of [Style Coalition](#), New York.

“Today, as social media becomes more mainstream, it is one of the key components of the shows’ production, extending these offline events into digital campaigns,” she said.

“Savvy brands utilize the time of spiked attention to engage their followers and build closer relationships.”

Social buzz

Brands need to have successful strategies on and off the runway for Fashion Week. This includes generating interest and engagement with consumers before and after the actual runway shows.

“Large events, like Fashion Week, are designed to create a buzz,” said Jeff Barrett, president/CEO of **Status Creative**, Grand Rapids, MI.

“As a brand, if you can engage your audience before the event, they will be infinitely more likely to share and discuss your content after the event,” he said.

Marketers can make this happen in multiple ways.

For example, brands should be interacting with their followers through Twitter by asking questions, giving retweets and making use of hashtags.

“[Audiences] want to talk to brands and interact with them,” Mr. Barrett said. “Social media accounts should be prompting questions to their audience and responding.

“They should be rewarding their audience with well-timed acts of kindness,” he said.

Mercedes-Benz USA, the official sponsor of New York Fashion Week, has been engaging its followers on Twitter in Fashion Week trivia to win invites to certain shows during the upcoming event.



Mercedes Fashion Week tweet

Brands and designers should remember that they do not necessarily have to give any secrets away by promoting their runway shows before the actual event.

“What is important is creating anticipation way in advance of the show and sharing the process with the fans, so that when Fashion Week comes, the audience is genuinely feeling a part of it,” Style Coalition’s Ms. Ziv said.

“It does not mean exposing any secrets or ruining runway surprises, but perhaps slightly opening the door into the world of creativity so many fashion brands have cultivated,” she said.

Hashtag heaven

Mercedes-Benz USA's Twitter account and the Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week Twitter account are already making use of the hashtag #MBFW.



MB Fashion Week Twitter

Brands should also look to create their own unique hashtags to further engage their consumers and those who are attending their shows.

“Hashtags are a useful way to categorize and organize tweets around a specific topic,” said Christine Kirk, CEO of [Social Muse Communications](#), Los Angeles.

“Brands should consider creating their own branded Fashion Week hashtag to help consumers identify the brand’s involvement in Fashion Week and also to help calculate social media ROI,” she said.

A unique, branded hashtag will also allow consumers to follow a brand specifically and not get lost in the #MBFW hashtag for the entire event.

But brands should use the event hashtags to be included in the large, online conversation.

“Brands utilizing common hashtags are joining the ongoing conversation and will benefit from the scaled audience following the stream,” Style Coalition’s Ms. Ziv said.

“However, it is smart to utilize a brand-specific hashtag in addition to the general one, so the audience can potentially follow brand specific conversation,” she said.

Mightiness of mobile

During New York Fashion Week, marketers should especially look to mobile platforms to engage both consumers and the press.

The overwhelming number of collection presentations that take place during New York Fashion Week leave luxury fashion houses competing to win praise from the press.

Editors and critics are no doubt using mobile devices for personal and work-related duties and therefore, fashion marketers should look to use the channel on which attendees are comfortable to provide them with information and interactivity ([see story](#)).

Also, affluent consumers are often eager to keep up with trends that emerge during runway presentations.

Fashion marketers should not hold back on providing consumers with live-streaming and engagement tools on mobile devices since the capabilities of mobile seem to trump those of desktops in this case ([see story](#)).

Social media via mobile devices can help brands give consumers the experience of Fashion Week. Consumers can get a behind-the-scenes experience, even if they are not there.

“The story of Fashion Week is one best told visually,” Social Muse Communications’ Ms. Kirk said. “From the clothes and the shoes, the glitz, the glamour, the runways, to the makeup chairs and models, these are all aspects of Fashion Week that brands should be sharing via social media.

“Brands should focus on using social media channels to give behind-the-scenes access of Fashion Week to consumers,” she said.

Also, marketers should make sure that mobile platforms are used to make Fashion Week social media posts timely and consistent and should be aware that consumers will be expecting social media posts before, during and after the event.

“Brands should absolutely be creating reasons and incentives for people to post before, during and after Fashion Week,” Status Creative’s Mr. Barrett said. “Keep the engagement consistent and do not fall off or go away.

“Have specific times that people can expect engagement,” he said. “It will go a long way in keeping people excited.”

Final take

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