

INTERNET

Christian Louboutin ups digital prowess with first Asian social channels

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By TRICIA CARR

French footwear label Christian Louboutin established channels on Chinese social network Sina Weibo and video-sharing sites Youku and Tudou to expand its digital footprint.

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The brand is looking to engage with its Asia-based fans through their social platforms. Luxury marketers should incorporate these networks into their current strategy since, despite its ups and downs, China remains a key global market for sales.

“As the Chinese become the world’s largest luxury goods spenders, reaching Chinese consumers in the context of the social streams where they spend their time is significant,” said Marko Z. Muellner, vice president of marketing at [ShopIgniter](#), Portland, OR.

“Luxury marketers have seen success with their social efforts to American and European audiences, so it is a natural extension of the brand to apply Facebook, Twitter and other social successes to Chinese social networks,” he said. “Of course, brands need to do this smartly, not just copying and pasting their American or European efforts, but tailoring content for the Chinese consumer context.

“Done right, luxury marketers have enormous upside within their reach as the Chinese

luxury market continues to expand.”

Mr. Muellner is not affiliated with Christian Louboutin, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Christian Louboutin was not available for comment before press deadline.

Aiming East

Christian Louboutin recently established its first profiles on social network Sina Weibo and video-sharing hubs Youku and Tudou.



Sina Weibo

The label has already accumulated large fan bases on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

For example, Christian Louboutin recently reached one million fans on mobile-social platform Instagram.

The brand has also seen growth on Facebook and Twitter where it has 1,840,639 and 616,859 fans, respectively.

Expanding to Asian social platforms is Christian Louboutin's next step to build up its global online presence, per the label.

The goal of the Sina Weibo, Youku and Tudou channels is to share relevant information and brand stories as well as talk directly with affluent users of these platforms.



Youku

The label will transfer its YouTube content to Youku, for example, by translating them with simplified Chinese subtitles.

Christian Louboutin is refreshing its focus on digital in Asia. The label plans to launch ecommerce for consumers in Asia-Pacific and a corporate Web site and dedicated “Stop Fake” site in simplified Chinese by 2014.

The brand currently operates three boutiques in China, three in Hong Kong, one in Singapore and one in Indonesia.



Tudou

Social savvy

Christian Louboutin is likely stepping up to its competitors with its latest move since 59 percent of the fashion brands studied in a recent report from L2 Think Tank maintain an account on at least two Chinese social media sites.

Due to regulations in the market, apparel and accessories marketers must look beyond Facebook and Twitter to reach socially-connected consumers in China ([see story](#)).

Burberry, for example, is present on four Chinese social media platforms.

Luxury marketers in all categories should keep in mind that consumers in different areas of the world have distinct usage patterns on social media.

“Different demographics in different countries access different networks,” Mr. Muellner said. “Consumers in some countries make lots of friends, and others are much more limited.

“It really differs and smart marketers need to do their homework to understand the cultural nuances of their target consumer audience, where they spend their time and, again, the context in which they are engaging with the brand,” he said.

Marketers such as Christian Louboutin should take note of user behavior on Asian social networks and tailor their strategy accordingly.

“Having said that, Christian Louboutin is smart to be proactive and begin reaching out to Chinese luxury consumers in Sina Weibo and video sharing sites Youku and Tudou,” Mr. Muellner said.

“They will learn along the way and these valuable lessons will help them pull further ahead of other brands that are too trepid to enter the market,” he said.

Final Take

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