

INTERNET

Chanel explores brand roots via social video

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By JEN KING

French fashion house Chanel is showcasing its brand history through the latest edition in its social video series that takes consumers through the history of the founder's life.

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The fifth video of the series explores Chanel's founder Gabrielle "Coco" Chanel's early life, influences and motivations. Exploring the early life and influences of a brand's founder via social content can personalize a brand while engaging consumers.

"Looking back at a brand's history isn't always beneficial for the brand or for the consumer, unless there is a true story to tell," said Brittany Mills, vice president of client solutions at [Nervewire Inc.](#), New York.

"Using the history of a brand to highlight products doesn't capture the fascination that people have with luxury brands and why they are so iconic in society," she said.

"I can tell that this is going to be an interesting series that doesn't just focus on the products, but the story behind the brand and the legend."

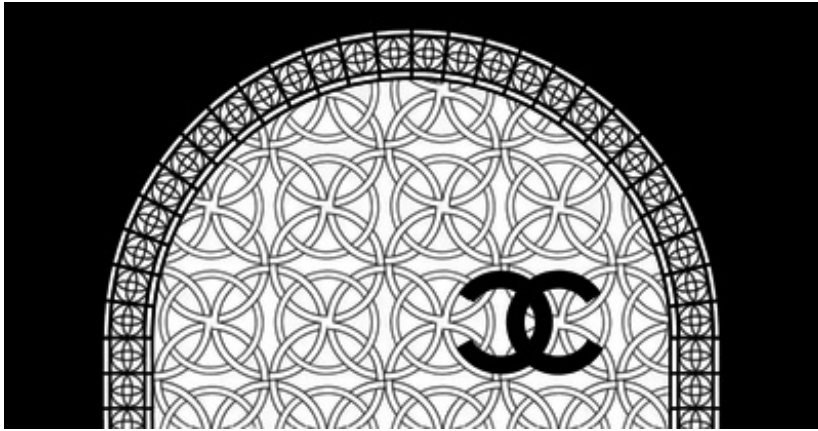
Ms. Mills is not affiliated with Chanel, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

[Chanel](#) was unable to comment before press deadline.

Once upon a time

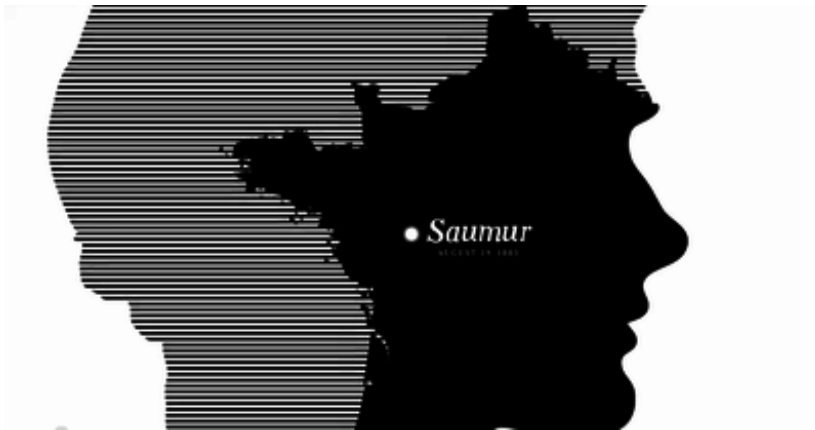
Chanel's fifth chapter of its "Coco - Inside Chanel" video series takes a look at Coco Chanel's life prior to founding her brand.

The video is entirely animated using black and white graphics and sketches inlaid with Chanel's linked "C" logo.



Video still

Coco - Inside Chanel begins with an optical illusion that spirals to reveal a silhouette of a woman's profile. As the image changes, the woman's face is shaped like France with a mapped point of Saumur, where Ms. Chanel was born.



Video still

The narrator repeats the phrase "once upon a time" for different points in Ms. Chanel's life.

The 3-minute video discusses Ms. Chanel's parents and how her mother died at 32 and her father left her and her siblings shortly thereafter.

Ms. Chanel lived in a convent orphanage for seven years which accounts for her sense of austerity and taste for black and white while the religious atmosphere sparked her interest in Baroque style.

In the video, viewers learn how Ms. Chanel earned her nickname "Coco" while singing in a cabaret at night.



Video still

Viewers also learn how Ms. Chanel sewed during the day, dressed in masculine attire and redesigned hats as she began to revolutionize women's fashions.

The video also explores her relationship with Boy Capel, the man who helped her open her boutiques in three French cities.



Video still

The final section of the video shows what aspects of women's fashion that Ms. Chanel worked to change such as shortening skirts to reveal ankles, removing corsets and updating popular hairstyles to a short bob.

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/2G88zqPxJ00](https://www.youtube.com/embed/2G88zqPxJ00)

Coco - Inside Chanel

Viewers learn how Ms. Chanel reinvented herself and created her brand in an artful and aesthetically interesting fashion.

Showcasing her rags to riches story is likely to inspire aspirational consumers and engage brand enthusiasts familiar with Ms. Chanel's early struggles.

Happily ever after

Choosing to showcase the founder of a brand's early days allows a brand to engage consumers on a personal level while maintaining brand DNA.

For example, Italian footwear label Salvatore Ferragamo raised global awareness for the story of its founder through the brand's first comic book that tied in with an in-store

exhibition.

The 26-page “Making of a Dream” comic book was drawn and written by animator, illustrator and cartoonist Frank Espinosa, who read Mr. Ferragamo’s autobiography to inspire the work. The graphic novel is debuting a month after “The Amazing Shoemaker” exhibit opened at the Museo Salvatore Ferragamo that takes visitors through the life of the designer ([see story](#)).

Similarly, Bugatti Automobiles is celebrating six brand legends with limited-edition vehicles to evoke an appreciation for the company’s history.

Les Légendes de Bugatti will honor these figures at events over the next year, starting with Jean-Pierre Wimille. Distilling a history in segmented events gives fans and consumers multiple opportunities to interact with the brand ([see story](#)).

By creating content that shows a brand's history the brand is able to paint a picture of how it would like to be presented to consumers.

"Chanel also alludes to myths that are centered around the brand and setting the story straight. I am sure consumers (myself included) would watch this just to know the truth behind the brand," Ms. Mills said.

"If there is a true story to tell, yes, a series is perfect for keeping the viewers attention and making it a good fit for social sharing," she said.

Final Take

Jen King, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/mJPWtEyFqGE](https://www.youtube.com/embed/mJPWtEyFqGE)

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