

EVENTS/CAUSES

Baselworld 2014 innovations propelled by social media

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Graff Diamond's Hallucination timepiece

By JEN KING

Each year at Switzerland's Baselworld Watch and Jewelry Show jewelers, watchmakers and fashion houses gather to showcase their latest creations to capture consumer attention by reaching new levels of innovation.

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Luxury Daily

From Graff Diamonds to Giorgio Armani, all exhibitors at this year's Baselworld, March 27 through April 3, aimed to wow consumers by going above and beyond expectations to show dedication to horology and craftsmanship. Social media played a pivotal role this year as brands pulled back the curtain on some of the happenings.

"Baselworld remains the hub of everything watches, regardless of side events that challenged its perennial domination," said Sophie Terrisse, CEO of [STC Associates](#), New York.

"It has successfully managed to be integrative of foreign and new-coming brands, while retaining its exclusivity and red carpet of the most renowned names in the watchmaking and jewelry world," she said. "If not the only place to debut, it is however the most legitimate place to gain visibility, in the fastest and most qualified way."

"Celebrating 'innovation' requires a bit of 'showing off' – although ever elegantly – in the industry. 'Innovation' covers such a broad concept of what is 'new,' versus what is authentic. If you want to be successful at Baselworld, you do need to 'show off' in every way, including 'innovative' ways."

Show and tell

In years past, exhibitors at Baselworld used a combined approach of fine watchmaking with elaborate displays to snag the attention of consumers.

Luxury watchmakers attempted to out-build each other's booths with giant structures and complex architectural designs at the 2013 Baselworld Watch and Jewelry Show April 25-May 2 in Basel, Switzerland.

Hermès, Swarovski, TAG Heuer, Rolex and other watch marketers reinvented their booths last year to make their brands stand out among the 1,460 exhibitors. However, since many brands upped their booth size and decoration, watchmakers had to do more to stand out ([see story](#)).

In contrast, for Baselworld 2014, exhibitors seemed to place less importance on booths and more weight on the timepieces displayed. Although many booths were ornate and well-planned, exhibitors did not show off their exhibits on social media, but rather highlighted timepieces.

Among the jewelers exhibiting at Baselworld, Britain's Graff Diamonds and Switzerland's Chopard stood out from competitors by unveiling unique timepieces that showed both innovation and brand codes.

Graff Diamonds for instance, created a "sculptural masterpiece," the Hallucination ladies' watch, valued at \$55 million. The watch is adorned with more than 110 carats of rare, multi-colored diamonds and is estimated to be the most expensive watch ever created.

Laurence Graff unveils the 110ct 'Hallucination'. Valued at 55 million dollars, this exceptionally rare multi-coloured diamond timepiece is estimated to be the most valuable watch ever created.



Graff Diamond's Hallucination post on Facebook

By designing such a timepiece, that took thousand of hours to create, Graff Diamonds made a viable claim for the status of "the world leader of important diamonds."

Chopard went for a more subtle route but incorporating the jeweler's values into its Baselworld debut. The jeweler debuted the world's first "fairmined" gold timepiece as part of its Time For Change collection, that shows Chopard's commitment to sustainable and ethical luxury.



Chopard
March 27

We are proud to present the world's first watch made of FAIRMINED gold, the L.U.C Tourbillon Qualité Fleurier Fairmined, - unveiled at Baselworld - The Watch and Jewellery Show: <http://chprd.co/TimeForChange>



Chopard's L.U.C Tourbillon Qualité Fleurier Fairmined debuted at Baselworld

The jeweler promoted a short video on Facebook that shows the details of the 25-piece reserve L.U.C Tourbillon Qualité Fleurier Fairmined timepiece in rose gold. The post also links to Chopard's Web site where consumers can learn more about Chopard's support of the Coodmilla cooperative in Colombia where the Fairmined gold was sourced.

Traditional watchmakers vied for attention by finding new materials and technologies to stand apart from other manufacturers.

For instance, Swiss watchmaker Hublot introduced a timepiece that celebrates the brand as a research pioneer by creating the world's first dial made from crystals of osmium, the rarest and densest metal on Earth.

A pioneer in the research and creation of unique materials, Hublot has achieved yet another world first: a dial made from crystals of osmium, the rarest and most dense metal on the planet.

The result: an exceptional lustre whose incomparable brilliance evokes that of the celestial sphere.

More info on <http://baselworld.hublot.com/>



Hublot's Classic Fusion Tourbillon Firmament Facebook post

Hublot included a microsite link on its social media. From here, at-home consumers can read the watch's specs, watch a short video and discover the constellation inspiration behind the watch's designs.

Taking a similar approach was Switzerland's Tag Heuer, which debuted the world's first tourbillon driven by belts. Tag Heuer unveiled the evolution of its Monaco timepiece at Baselworld and relied on social media to spread awareness.

Tag Heuer introduced the innovative Monaco V4 Tourbillon with a social video that outlines the construction of the watch beginning with a watchmaker examining the movements before assembly. The second part of the minute-long video uses digital animation to show how the belts drive the tourbillon's movement.

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/wULthj1mCps](http://www.youtube.com/embed/wULthj1mCps)

Tag Heuer Monaco V4 Tourbillon

In the fashion realm, brands such as Chanel, Louis Vuitton, Versace, Giorgio Armani and Fendi had timepieces on display in their exhibits.

For example, Giorgio Armani's collection Emporio Armani showed the Italian label's first Swiss-made watch line at Baselworld in a vault-inspired installation.

Coinciding with the first day of the watch and jewelry show, Armani launched a dedicated microsite that mimicked the physical vault in Messe Basel, Switzerland. Giving consumers an online platform to learn about the line that reflected the brand's display at the show will expand the reach of its exhibit at Baselworld ([see story](#)).



Armani's display at Baselworld 2014

Italian fashion house Fendi displayed the brand's first watches since the full acquisition of Swiss movement manufacturer Taramax. Fendi said in a Facebook post that the integration will allow the house to focus on "Swiss watchmaking craftsmanship and the Italian creativity."

Fendi also looked beyond timepieces by including a conceptual bespoke work of art created by the duo Humans Since 1982. The "A Million Times 72" piece is formed by moving clock hands on a motion display that create patterns and names as Baselworld attendees passed by.



Zooming in on "A Million Times 72", an artwork by Humans Since 1982 for #Fendi now on display at Baselworld 2014
pic.twitter.com/FhgOBgPlkZ

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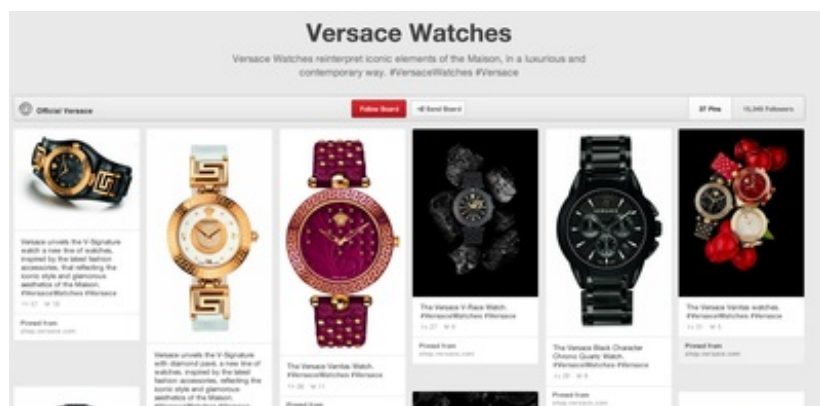
Fendi tweet for its Humans Since 1982 display at Baselworld

Social timing

Increasingly, social media has played a vital role in spreading awareness about debuts that occur, so that all brand enthusiasts can take part.

For instance, Italian fashion label Versace introduced a new collection of women's wrist watches through a dedicated Pinterest board to expand awareness for its entire range of timepieces.

Officially debuting at Baselworld 2014, Versace's Pinterest board allows consumers not attending the watch fair to explore the new collection before it hits retail locations. Touting a new watch also drove traffic to the Pinterest board where consumers may repin other watches available from Versace ([see story](#)).



Versace watches Pinterest board

During trade-only events, the use of social media is equally important.

For example, global watchmakers convened in Geneva Jan. 20-24 for the annual trade- and invite-only Salon International de la Haute Horlogerie to unveil new and innovative timepieces and explore their shared passion of fine watches.

Although only sixteen watchmakers participated in the official SIHH event, the Swiss city of Geneva became a gathering place for international watchmakers looking to tout new technologies and celebrate horlogerie. Whether a brand was participating at SIHH or hosting a private event elsewhere in the city, watchmakers relied heavily on social media to include enthusiasts to an event that otherwise would have been unseen by the public ([see story](#)).

Having a well-rounded social presence during an event can ensure that the consumer is aware of an event or new release no matter their preferred platform.

"Social media allows to expand the reach and the magnitude of the event," Ms. Terrisse said. "It enables to make the event more inclusive to those who can't attend – or literally can't cover the floor.

"The YouTube channel TheWatches.tv has made a great effort to make the industry – and consumers – part of the discussion on trends, progress and ideas," she said.

"And Twitter provides a constant media feed of the beat of newcomers. The Facebook hashtag is a further step to keep up with trends as they form and unfold."

Final Take

Jen King, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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