

INTERNET

Versace eases into user-generated content with separate photo hub

April 22, 2014



Versace Studs Ladies user-submitted photo

By SARAH JONES

Italian fashion label Versace is hoping to drive in-store traffic with a new club designed around its studded sunglass line.

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Luxury Daily

Versace's Studs Ladies Web site asks consumers to go to a Sunglass Hut store, snap a photo of themselves trying on the brand's eyewear and then post it to Facebook, where it will be picked up by the label and added to a wall of user-generated content. Many brands are wary of incorporating user-generated content on their own Web sites, but it can be beneficial for brands to have consumers' voices as part of their digital presence.

"UGC as part of a promotion is a great way to get people to take action in a timely manner and is a good way for Versace to kick things off," said Apu Gupta, CEO of **Curalate**, New York. "However, celebrating fan engagement should be an 'always-on' endeavor.

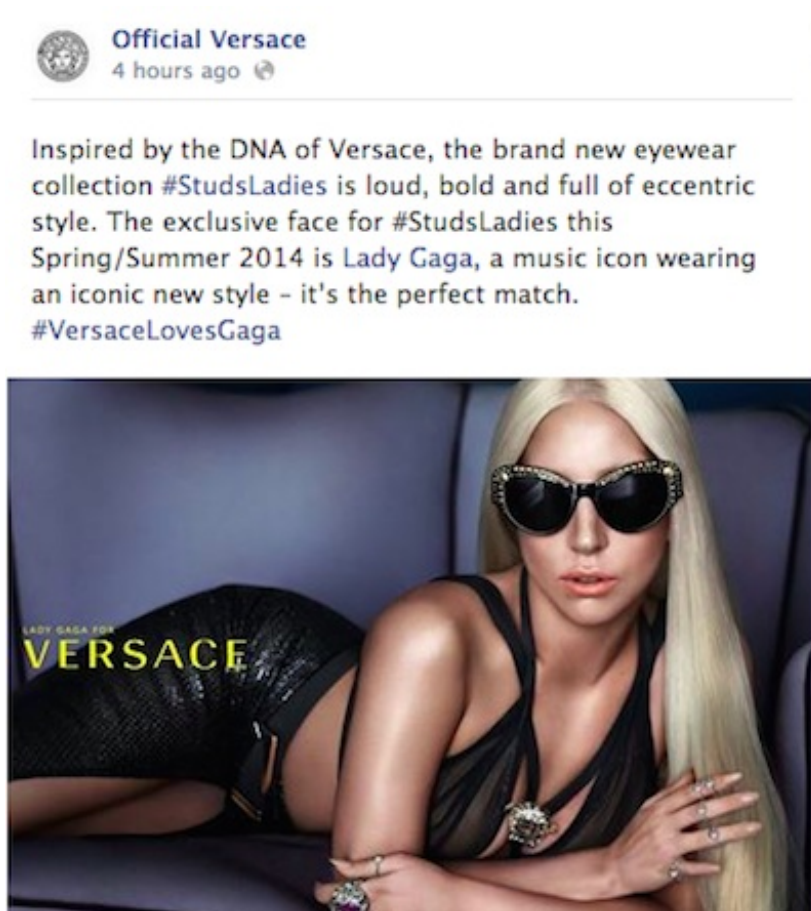
"Hopefully Versace will use this promotion to launch and then transition to an evergreen solution through which they encourage fans to share their Versace moments for a chance to be showcased on a Versace Web property."

Mr. Gupta is not affiliated with Versace but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Versace did not respond by press deadline.

Call to action

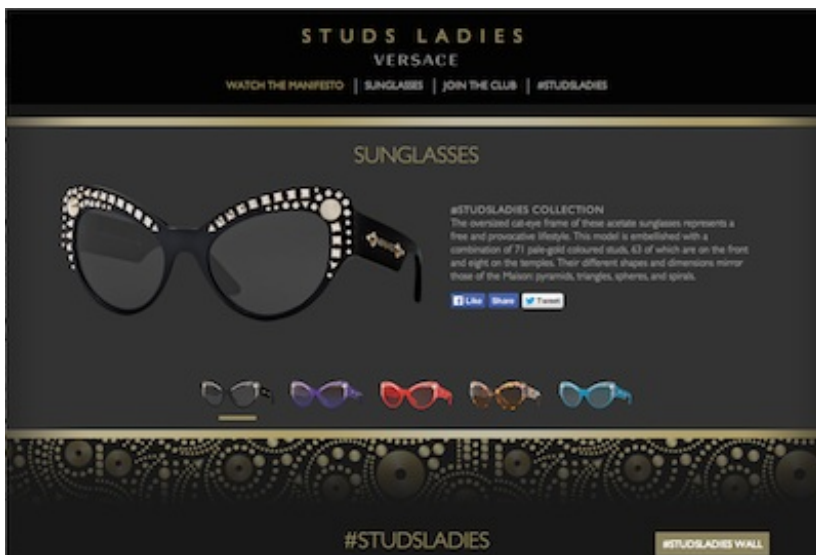
Versace unveiled its Web site on its Facebook page. First the brand liked the Web site so it would appear in its timeline. A few hours later, Versace posted a campaign image of Lady Gaga wearing the studded sunglasses, but did not include the link to the Studs Ladies site.



Facebook post from Versace

All of the content on the site is on the same page. At the top is a video the brand is calling “Manifesto.” In text, it tells consumers that some girls are pretty, cute or sweet, but that the brand doesn’t care because “My ladies are studs.”

Further down the page are images of the collection. Cat eye-style frames hold 71 studs in different shapes.



Versace Studs Ladies Web site

There is no ecommerce option on the Studs Ladies Web site, but the brand has created an incentive for consumers to seek out the shades in store.

To enter to win a trip to Italy to attend a Versace fashion show, consumers have to sign up as a member of the site, either with their Facebook account or with their name and email.

They then have to go to a Sunglass Hut store, try on Versace sunglasses and take a photo of themselves modeling the frames. So that the brand can find their image, they have to post it to Facebook in public mode.

At the bottom of the Web site is a gallery of black and white selfies from Versace fans wearing the studded glasses.



Versace Studs Ladies Web site

Versace has kept this campaign to Facebook, which has the most followers out of any of the brand's other social media accounts, at 2.3 million. The fashion label has only promoted it on Facebook.

"At a time when luxury brands are still on the fence about user generated content and its implications for brand equity, it's refreshing to see Versace embrace user generated

content," Mr. Gupta said.

"However, this promotion introduces too many steps for fans of the glasses, from registering on the Web site to going to a store to posting on Facebook to marking your photo as public," he said. "This is going to reduce participation.

"While Facebook certainly has an enormous audience, Instagram could have provided a more streamlined experience for users while still providing substantial reach."

Social content

Versace has begun to branch out into other social media accounts to build its following on other platforms.

The brand introduced a new collection of women's wrist watches through a dedicated Pinterest board to expand awareness for its entire range of timepieces.

Officially debuted at Baselworld in Basel, Switzerland, March 27 through April 3, Versace's Pinterest board allowed consumers not attending the watch fair to explore the new collection before it hits retail locations. Touting a new watch will also drive traffic to the Pinterest board where consumers may repin other watches available from Versace ([see story](#)).

Other brands have tied a call for user-generated content to a physical event or location to build relationships with consumers as they snap photos.

New York department store Bergdorf Goodman asked South by Southwest attendees to spot its social media manager wearing clothing from its new contemporary collections at the conference and share a photo of her on Instagram to enter.

Part of the prize package was a Monsur Gavriel bucket bag, which is so coveted by consumers that it has a wait list, guaranteeing interest from its target audience. Because the winner of this contest was judged on quality of photo rather than at random, Bergdorf was able to amass user-generated content that has value, since consumers tried to impress ([see story](#)).

One element that was missing from this contest was an ecommerce link, something that Bergdorf's scavenger hunt incorporated.

"While it would certainly be great if Versace could incorporate user-generated content into their main site, sometimes marketing priorities and IT priorities don't align," Mr. Gupta said. "In this case, I believe the bigger missed opportunity is not making the user-generated content shoppable.

"Curalate has worked with major brands to incorporate user-generated content into their sites and has seen shopping click through rates of 20 percent," he said. "User-generated content inspires people to buy. In this case, Versace could have linked photos to their partner Sunglass Hut to drive immediate revenue."

Final Take

Sarah Jones, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/gg7EAmCWOnA](https://www.youtube.com/embed/gg7EAmCWOnA)

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