



The Luxe Avenue Charter

Beauty and luxury brands are facing a challenge today regarding their communication strategy: they must learn how to drive brand awareness on more than simply traditional media, and embrace the new opportunities brought about by social and digital media.

10 Keys Pillars to Understanding the Use of Social Media in Beauty and Luxury

Social media **P**LATFORMS are flourishing, with Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Pinterest, Wechat and Line being the most popular ones. They offer an ever-widening array of opportunities to advertize products, reach new audiences and differentiate from other brands. However, brands should not try to be omnipresent. Each platform is different and sends a different message. It is about using the right platforms that fit with the brand, its audience and the message it wishes to convey.

The **N**EW GENERATION OF **C**USTOMERS – the Millennials – represents a growing demographic on the beauty and luxury market and a guaranteed audience online. These customers are curious but impatient and portray a prevailing fear of missing out. Hence, brands must constantly stay on top of the trends to keep them satisfied. An increased consumer cynicism can be witnessed as they rely heavily on online product feedback to make purchase decisions. Brands must make themselves accessible through social media since Millennials prefer learning about and buying products online rather than in-store.

Social media procure an **I**NNOVATIVE BRAND **E**XPERIENCE. They revolutionized the way that brands can communicate with their customers, allowing them to connect on a personal level. Brands attempt to meet consumers in their everyday life in order to appear more accessible and get them to use their products routinely or simply to feel part of the brand journey.

Social media represent **N**EW BUSINESS OPPORTUNITI**E**S for brands that are willing to only exist online. They have made it very easy for small brands to reach audiences in unprecedented ways. As mentioned above, younger consumers tend to be very demanding and constantly looking for what is new and what is different, and therefore niche brands can be more appealing to them.

An **A**UTHENTIC message with less manipulative intentions than traditional advertizing emanates from social media communications. They procure so much information and choice that consumers are seeking the best products from the most honest brands and will easily ignore one if unsatisfied with its message. A study showed that 61 percent of women will not engage with any post that feels forced.

Mastering the art of **V**ISUALS is crucial on social media for it only takes 50 milliseconds for something to create an impression on people online. This should not be a problem for beauty and luxury brands but it is an important point to mention. Social media should be seen as a means to bring products to life and create a sense of excellence, exclusivity and urgency – luxury brands require a more sophisticated social media presence than other brands.

Today's consumers tend to trust **I**NFLUENCERS more than beauty and fashion editors or in-store experts. There is something human, aspirational and trustworthy about influencers – consumers can relate to them on a personal level, look up to them and seek inspiration in their truthful posts. As a consequence, influencers tend to have more followers and engagement than big brands on social media. There is great scope for improved reach when partnering with an influencer today.

Brands can easily develop a sense of belonging to a **C**OMMUNITY via social media engagement where consumers can share about the products. A dialogue between the brand and its audience is established helping maintain engagement, driving brand awareness and allowing brands to stay up-to-date with what is in demand. By giving a sense of having an insider access to the latest trends and to the heart of the brand, social media turn interest into purchase and enhance loyalty.

Such circumstances facilitate word-of-mouth (WOM) and user-generated content (**U**GC): the brand communicates about its products, the consumers give feedback – via the use of hashtags, comments and tweets – and the brands can (and should) respond to it as a way of providing customer service that better fits the lifestyle of Millennials. Eventually, trust is consolidated and loyal customers become 'free' brand advocates. This should not be undermined for WOM spreads very fast and trends evolve rapidly, therefore feedback can quickly change a reputation.

Nowadays, everyone can be online and competition is harsh. A significant **S**HIFT IN BUDGET, with a larger than ever portion dedicated to digital marketing, is necessary in order to break through this 'digital noise'. The US digital ad revenue is expected to reach nearly \$100 billion by 2021, compared to \$68.9 billion in 2016, driven primarily by the sustained migration of ad dollars from traditional advertizing to digital advertizing.

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