

Christian Louboutin And Sophia Webster Nail the Social Media Game

Nikara Johns

#LouboutinWorld on Instagram.
Courtesy Photo

How engaged are [Christian Louboutin's](#) fans on social media? Just log on to the label's website for a glimpse of the power of #LouboutinWorld.

"Hundreds of thousands [of images are] shared to social media by our fans and followers," said Alexis Mourot, group COO and GM of Christian Louboutin. "We wanted to give them a home in our world."

After the designer launched the hashtag in January, he teamed up with visual marketing platform Olapic to source and curate user-generated images of Louboutin shoes that are then displayed on the website. Louboutin personally approves the photos before they go live, said Olapic CEO Pau Sabria.

"You're seeing more brands coming to the realization that it's not just about putting out messages and posting content, but also reacting to and curating other peoples' content and spotlighting what other people are doing," said Denise Lee Yohn, author of "What Great Brands Do." "One technique that helps with that is the use of the hashtag."

The business impact is noticeable. Mourot said that in some countries in the Middle East, customers are visiting Louboutin boutiques brandishing their phones and asking to buy the styles on the #LouboutinWorld feed.

Emerging brands are also ramping up their social media efforts this year.

When [Sophia Webster launched her bridal line](#) last month, she wanted to make a major splash. So it's not surprising



that the British footwear and accessories designer — who has built a huge social media following since debuting her collection three years ago — went online to generate buzz. In many ways, her whimsical wedding line was made for Instagram: one style in the collection even has “Wifey for Lifey” engraved on the bottom of the soles. At press time, Webster’s bridal posts had garnered 35,000 “likes.”

But the designer isn’t simply putting up photos and expecting a reaction — she’s using them to engage with her consumers and encourage conversations among brides-to-be. The collection has also sparked interest in Webster’s own 2013 wedding, which was covered in *Vogue* and has been popular on Pinterest. In today’s fast-moving social media world, Sophia Webster and other brands are doing whatever it takes to understand their consumers and how they shop. “Social media is integral to my business. It allows me to communicate the brand’s sensibility in real time in a direct and personal way,” said Webster, who now has 284,000 followers on Instagram.

For other social media trends to keep an eye on this year, read the “Social Studies” feature story in this week’s print issue.

Video

Each day on Facebook, video now garners a whopping 3 billion views, which is venturing into YouTube territory, according to Facebook statistics. Brands are using the social media platform to get their ad campaigns in front of more eyes. Take, for example, [Adidas Originals’ Supercolor initiative with Pharrell Williams](#). The musician, who partnered with Adidas to update the classic Superstar style in 50 colors, filmed a behind-the-scenes video to support the launch that has already racked up 600,000 views on Facebook. The athletic brand is also pushing the campaign via Instagram and has received more than 250,000 “likes” on just four posted spots.

In March, New Balance launched its first soccer ad using the hashtag #NBFootball, releasing a spot that stars several players. With more than 1.5 million views on YouTube alone — the video was shared on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram — consumers are getting a peek at New Balance’s first boot collection, which will be available in July 2015.

In the luxury arena, Jimmy Choo has upped its social strategy by focusing more on video as well. For its spring ’15



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campaign with “Game of Thrones” star Kit Harington, Jimmy Choo posted the striking images and video of the actor on Facebook after a similar effort last fall. “Video is the most engaging format for social. You can be highly visual while layering in movement, storytelling and music that captures attention and creates a strong emotional reaction in a short space of time,” said CEO Pierre Denis.

To announce his new CR7 collection last year, Cristiano Ronaldo went straight to YouTube. The soccer stud captured consumer attention by dancing in his own shoes. The video earned close to a million views in just four days and has garnered almost 3.5 million views on Facebook.

Snapchat

The mobile photo-sharing app, which launched on iTunes in September 2011, allows users to take a “snap” that lasts from one to 10 seconds and is then hidden from the recipient’s device and deleted from Snapchat’s servers. But it wasn’t until “My Story” was introduced in October 2013 that brands took notice. With “My Story,” users can create a narrative of snaps that live for 24 hours before they disappear.

Rebecca Minkoff continually uses Snapchat to drive interest in the brand’s events all over the country. Most recently, Minkoff launched a Snapchat scavenger hunt at the South by Southwest festival, posting daily challenges for followers, with the winner receiving tickets to Neiman Marcus’ MakeSomeNoise SXSW party.

Sophia Webster is also a fan of Snapchat. “[It’s] refreshing because it’s so authentic,” said Webster. “This is because it’s hard to edit, and the post lasts for only 24 hours, so it’s not something you want to spend too much time on. Instagram is like your gallery and can be curated as such, while Snapchat feels like a snippet of real life.”

Free People is also using Snapchat to post behind-the-scenes videos. “It’s relatively new, especially for brands, so we’re excited to see where they go,” said Jed Paulson, director of marketing and e-commerce for Free People.