



The Power Of Silence In Luxury, Part Two: Make Quiet Your Strategy

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In the first part of Quiet Please! The Power of Silence in Luxury, we discussed why knowing *when* to speak is vital for luxury brands. Let's see how to integrate it into your marketing strategy.

Relevance + Respect = Trust

To build trust with consumers, luxury brands must master two things: relevance and respect.

How To Be Relevant

The holy grail of marketing, as author Greg Licciardi explains, is delivering the right message to the right person at the right time in the right context—that's how transactions are generated. In other words, relevance.

The likelihood is that your HNWI customers are time-poor people bombarded with hundreds of requests every day. Their time is precious; they don't want it to be wasted.

On social media, this means not clogging followers' feeds with off-topic content. I'm sure somebody might want to watch a video from a Premier League footballer making the perfect carbonara. But, possibly, not everyone. And not at any time.

To achieve relevance, today's brands have powerful tools at their disposal. Website analytics, CRM tracking, segmentation and clickstream analysis can help gauge consumer sentiment. With these insights, you can deliver relevant reactive advertising at exactly the right moment.

Paradoxically, one of the best times to be relevant in your customers' lives is during moments of frustration. Our company partnered with FlightAware, a digital aviation



company that tracks flights across the world. Using data, the company could identify when customers were stuck at airports due to flight delays. It sent non-intrusive adverts to customers' mobiles during these delays, asking, "How's your flight today?" The campaign performed exceptionally well because it arrived at just the right time, offering a solution when it was needed the most.

Sports marketing also gives brands an opportunity to be relevant. LVMH's sponsorship of the Paris 2024 Olympics might seem at odds with luxury marketing's soft approach. But the sponsorship worked because the brand was there during emotionally charged moments for consumers who were cheering their favorite sportspeople, watching them suffer setbacks or crying with joy when their country's national anthem was played on the podium.

Various studies have shown that watching fast-paced sports can improve viewers' cognitive function, visual processing speed and attention span. A Louis Vuitton trunk at the Olympics or Emirates' logo emblazoned on an AC Milan jersey are more likely to be noticed during such heightened moods. Sports stir up strong emotions, making them perfect for branding that requires deep involvement to help support luxury's price positioning.

How To Win Respect

Knowing *when* to speak is just as important as knowing *what* to say.

Take our recent campaign with Apple News. Analysis showed users engaged with Apple News during quiet, reflective moments. Using this knowledge, we created a series of contextually relevant adverts that appeared on their mobiles when they were unwinding by reading the news. The upshot is the adverts felt like a welcome, relevant presence rather than an interruption.

It's arguably easier for luxury brands to be *sotto voce* because they can let their heritage and craftsmanship do the talking. However, in the wrong hands, being silent can signal disdain and superciliousness. That's why injecting human interest narratives, and even some humor, into your marketing can create relatability with consumers.

Respect is also earned by listening. Nobody wants an education on your brand. Try hosting an informal onboarding session for new customers, asking them questions about their personal preferences and what they think about your product. Then, tailor your services to match this feedback until the customer feels you know them as intimately as a friend.

Let Referrals Do The Talking

Many luxury brands will worry that toning down marketing will result in a drop in reach and engagement rates. It's a legitimate concern, especially for younger brands breaking through.

However, the best acquisition channel for luxury brands is referrals. As discussed previously on *Forbes*, estimations show that between 25% and 35% of new luxury business can come from friends, peers or associates of existing clients who endorse your product. When referrals work, brands don't need to say too much, as consumers become brand advocates, providing glowing reviews or letting others know.

The act of referrals also aligns with current trends: Today, people are more likely to trust their peers (rather than large institutions or experts) for information on new innovations, according to the 2024 Edelman Trust Barometer. Start by identifying which customers are your key opinion leaders (KOLs), empower them to champion your brand and let them lead the marketing on your behalf.

Use Authentic Ambassadors Over Garish A-List Campaigns

Celebrity endorsements can catapult awareness of your brand. In luxury, these



partnerships need to be much more subtle than contrived campaigns that crowbar the celebrity into every tweet and social post.

The most effective brand ambassadors are real clients. For example, at VistaJet, we only work with public figures who already use our service, such as F1 driver Charles Leclerc or Jon Rahm.

When, say, a star such as Beyoncé is photographed wearing Gucci, it reinforces the idea that she is a fan of the Italian fashion house. It makes the endorsement more authentic and powerful than a paid campaign, which pays celebrities millions of dollars to promote a brand they don't really care about.

Using Strategic Silence On Social Media

Many brands overextend on social media. In their bid to expand their reach, they risk alienating new consumers who don't want to be deluged with irrelevant content, as well as eroding their identity with off-brand posts.

At the other extreme is Bottega Veneta, which deleted all social media accounts in 2021, replacing them with a quarterly online magazine. (Today, it has just one official social account available on the Chinese platform Weibo).

Allowing fans to carry your narrative is a dangerous move. But it appears to be working for Bottega Veneta: Its revenue rose 4% last year, despite the luxury slowdown.

When executed properly, commitment to relevance can still resonate. In today's age of oversharing, that's more powerful than it ever has been.

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