

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

10 things to know about the global surge in menswear

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Zegna: Sheer growth in menswear

By **Tammy Smulders**

In the last year, the world has seen a surge in the menswear market. Once only mentioned in passing in the world of fashion, men's apparel is now outgrowing women's across key markets.

Brands are both chasing and leading the "Menaissance," playing catch-up with increasing demand and leading it through massively increased ad spend.

Traditional women's design brands from Stella McCartney to La Perla have either launched or announced their intention to launch menswear collections. Other brands such as Jimmy Choo, Whistles and Club Monaco are piloting men's-only stores.

Menaissance has evolved since its origins in the 1990s, when dress codes began to relax across industries, and metrosexuals despite only having been invented in 1994 were suddenly everywhere.

Those trends grew out of increased gender equality, a shift toward more egalitarian values in the West and the cultural optimism of the era. Those factors might not be as prominent today, but they paved the ground for the emergence of our current Menaissance.



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We conducted a global study of higher-spending men in key developed and developing markets the kind of urban spenders who do not only have the tastes, but also the means to influence markets on a large scale.

Our research found a multifaceted picture of today's upmarket male consumer: at once addicted to social media and online shopping, yet in many cases using those tools to access a classic aesthetic.

Here are 10 things that marketers need to know about the global Renaissance:

1. A show of taste

Prior research from our company had shown that men and women approached fashion and luxury spending differently.

In this survey, just 34 percent of men singled out "Personal Reward" as their prime motivation.

Showing taste and style was the main motivator. Their preference for brands also reflects this: niche luxury brands won out 55 to 45 in the poll.

This ties into a broader theme reflected in the men's choice of brands and icons, which favored mature, classic good taste over younger, flashier celebrities.

2. Experiences matter like never before

As material wealth increases, personal experiences are expected to win out as the preferred luxury spending.

This was confirmed in the survey: 51 percent of men surveyed would rather receive \$10,000 toward a holiday than any other kind of luxury.

Brands, too, are catering to this experiential shift with new store events and designs to appeal to men's tastes.

3. Behind a great man stands a stylish woman

Twenty-seven percent of men surveyed still prefer to go shopping for clothes with their partners, but 26 percent identify their partners as the primary influence on their wardrobe.

4. Expressions of success and maturity

Our higher-than-average spending male consumers did not care much for typical fashion iconography sultry looks and skinny models. They preferred mature and stylish popular politicians and actors, such as Justin Trudeau and actors George Clooney in their forties and fifties.

5. Get in the inner circle

At any one time, the men in our study had four go-to brands to which they would return. They preferred brands such as Ralph Lauren and Ermenegildo Zegna personally, but mentioned Hermes, Chanel and Rolex as the most iconic luxury brands.



Renaissance man

6. Online influence

In our sample, 55 percent said they were most likely to identify a luxury brand online 30 percent on social media, 25 percent elsewhere, similar to a fashion magazine's online presence.

Facebook and Instagram were equally popular, but Instagram won out for fashion blogs.

7. Replete researchers

Customer journeys are complex, with online research at home supplemented by in-store exploration and sending pictures to friends and partners from inside the stores.

Nevertheless, there was method to the madness.

The majority of the respondents maintained actual bucket lists, either online or mentally, of products to which they would revisit and aspire. This is reflected in the content they prefer how-to's (46 percent) and trend reports (52 percent), and the trend of preferring minute details and niche brands.

8. Corporate ethics are not top of mind

The increased attention paid in recent years to sustainability, whether workers' rights or the environment, has not reached the majority of men in our survey.

In fact, just 7 percent said they actively sought out information around luxury brands' sustainability practices.

A further 40 percent did not care much, while 53 percent were purely reactive a scandal in the press might affect them, but they would never seek out information on their own.

Some avoided products imported from countries they associated with bad corporate ethics track records, such as China, especially for higher-priced items, but most expressed a sense of resignation.

9. Appeal to men on the go

Forward-looking brands are going all-in on in-application ads to keep up with men's shifting attention and media habits.

Recent U.S. Nielsen data shows that men spend an average of 39 hours using mobile applications on a monthly basis up from 22 hours in 2012.

Apps also account for the vast majority of mobile data used.

The consumers surveyed and interviewed in the our research were all exposed to menswear and luxury content on a daily basis through their app, many of whom cited this kind of content as their main style inspiration.

10. Men are increasing their spending

The Renaissance is not just something fashion professionals talk about or hope for. It also is not just a shift in attitude.

In the United Kingdom alone, menswear has grown by 22 per cent over the last six years.

Our survey reflected this trend: 54 percent of men surveyed said they had increased their spending over the last two years.

Overall, on a weighted average basis, it is a 6 percent increase in spend by men year on year, versus 3.5 percent increase in spend by women.

Men also expect to keep spending.

Despite expressing a somewhat negative outlook on the economy, they remained comfortable about spending money on luxury and fashion.

Methodology

LuxHub surveyed 600 respondents in the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, United Arab Emirates and France, with an average age of 36, ranging from 19 to 74.

Respondents included in the analysis had a minimum spend on fashion and luxury of \$2,000 per year.

The study also included focus group research held in London, as well as expert interviews with retailers and other in the menswear industry.

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