Giorgio Armani and Gucci The Worlds Most Coveted Fashion Brands

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Giorgio Armani, Gucci and Versace the top three â€˜most covetedâ€™ fashion brand, according to a global brand survey from ACNielsen

Italian fashion powerhouses, Giorgio Armani and Gucci are the worldâ€™s most coveted designer brands according to a global online survey of 21,000 consumers in 42 countries conducted by ACNielsen.

â€œGiorgio Armani and Gucci topped ACNielsenâ€™s Global â€˜Most Coveted Fashion Brandsâ€™ ranking by scoring consist responses from online consumers in every part of the world - a remarkable testament to the power and universal appeal of these two luxury fashion brands,â€• said Frank Martell, President and CEO,ACNielsen Europe

One in three consumers from the online world said they would purchase Giorgio Armani or Gucci if money was no object. The global online survey was conducted on the Internet in November 2005, asking 21,000 consumers in 42 markets across Europe, Asia Pacific, UAE, North and Latin America about their current and aspirational fashion brand purchasing.

While 12 percent of global Internet consumers today purchase Giorgio Armani and/or Gucci, 30 percent said they would buy these brands in the future if money was no object.

â€œGiorgio Armani and Gucci clearly understand that strong brands make for profitable businesses. They are not merely selling fashion â€“ they are selling an image - something consumers are willing to pay a premium for.â€•

Giorgio Armani knew the importance of building and maintaining a strong brand when he started his business 35 years ago. Years later, Tom Ford, the designer associated with the resurrection of Gucci in the nineties, also recognized that creating a strong desirable brand would be paramount to Gucciâ€™s success. â€œBoth these brands embody attributes their consumers desire to be associated with.â€•

â€œRegardless of where they live, when consumers in Italy, China or UAE purchase a Gucci bag or a Giorgio Armani suit they are prepared to pay a premium because they are buying the image the brand represents. In Armaniâ€™s case, consumers know they are getting quality, sophistication and style â€“ timeless values with global appeal. For Gucci, itâ€™s the combination of heritage, together with its sexy, modern appeal. Theyâ€™re different brand values from Armani, but with sustainable global appealâ€•.

â€œGiorgio Armani and Gucci have achieved global reach and success because they consistently ensure the â€˜valuesâ€™ the designs represent will transcend cultures and age groups to appeal to consumers in every part of the world. Not an easy feat in the fickle fashion industry where trends and fads are the order of the day,â€• added Martell.

Giorgio Armani and the revived Gucci label never stray too far from their core style and values. â€œConsumers who pay for something distinctly Armani and Gucci know that theyâ€™re investing in fashion that can be worn over several seasons or several years without dating. â€œConsumers are investing in these brandsâ€™ timelessness.â€•

Emerging markets - tomorrowâ€™s fashion Meccas

The future survival of leading fashion houses depends on brand longevity and it is no surprise that designer fashion houses have been investing in their future by building commercial and brand presences in the emerging markets of Asia, UAE and Russia.

â€œBuilding, and more importantly, sustaining a strong and distinct brand image from the outset remains the most important challenge to any designer brand entering a new market,â€• said Martell.

Global results from the ACNielsen survey reveal that Christian Dior â€“ which has also successfully rebranded with a youthful image and is a favourite among the international young â€˜ITâ€™ crowd - has high commercial potential in UAE, Russia and Latin America.

Versace too, has very strong growth potential in the new emerging markets of China, Russia and India â€“ as well as the USA, possibly because of its â€˜I have arrivedâ€™ appeal combined with its â€˜glamourous lifeâ€™ celebrity image, particularly appealing to the upcoming nouveau riche. However, among more conservative consumers of the affluent Gulf States of UAE, the coveted brands which appeal to future consumers are Giorgio Armani and Chanel.

â€œCurrently, UAE consumers are buying Dior, Armani and Yves Saint Laurent. Of these, only Giorgio Armani ranks highly for future aspirational purchase. If Dior and Yves Saint Laurent want to grow market share and attract a future generation of consumers in the UAE, they may want to invest more now in building their brands,â€• observed Martell.

Future big spenders in India would like to fill their wardrobes with Gucci, G. Armani, LV and Dior, while in China, the most coveted aspirational brands are Chanel and Versace, followed by LV and G.Armani.

â€œEleven percent of Indianâ€™s online consumers say they buy Armani now, but 38 percent would buy Armani if they could afford it. And while nine percent of online Indians currently buy Versace, 34 percent aspire to buying Versace in the future.

Fashion consumers remain loyal to homegrown designers

Not surprisingly, consumers in the worldâ€™s fashion capitals (USA, Italy, France) remain loyal first and foremost to their own country designers.

North American consumers remain loyal to top US designer Ralph Lauren, who topped the US online consumerâ€™s choice for current and most coveted fashion brand of the future. However, European labels most coveted for future purchase were Gucci and Giorgio Armani.

Historic French design houses, Yves Saint Laurent (despite now being owned by an Italian fashion conglomerate), Chanel, Dior and Hermes have the strongest following in France now â€“ as well as for future purchase. Meanwhile, fashion conscious Italians clearly rank Giorgio Armani, Prada, Emporio Armani and Versace among their most coveted fashion brands now â€“ as well as in the future.

The ACNielsen Online Consumer Confidence Survey, the largest twice-yearly global survey of its kind, is aimed to gauge consumersâ€™ current confidence levels, spending habits/intentions and current major concerns. The most recent wave of the survey took place last month (November 2005) and polled over 23,500 consumers â€“ regular Internet users â€“ in 42 markets in Europe, North and Latin America, Asia-Pacific region, Africa (Republic of South Africa) and the Middle East (UAE).

About ACNielsen
ACNielsen, a VNU business, is the world's leading marketing information provider. Offering services in more than 100 countries, the unit provides measurement and analysis of marketplace dynamics and consumer attitudes and behavior. Clients rely on ACNielsen's market research, proprietary products, analytical tools and professional service to understand competitive performance, to uncover new opportunities and to raise the profitability of their marketing and sales campaigns.

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