Global Consumers Vote Designer Shoes their Top Accessory

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Consumers around the world have unanimously voted â€˜shoesâ€™ the most important designer accessory in their wardrobe, according to a global luxury fashion accessories survey conducted by ACNielsen.

â€œCurrently, nearly half (49%) the worldâ€™s online consumers cite shoes as their favourite designer accessory â€“ and if mo were no object, two out of three (65%) would still choose shoes as their number one designer accessory purchase,â€• said Frank Martell, President and CEO, ACNielsen Europe.

â€œWhen it comes to designer fashion, shoes can represent the most affordable option for both men and women,â€• said Martell.

Indeed, popular television shows (Sex and the City) and films (In Her Shoes) often feature designer shoes as a prominent theme. Shoe designers Manolo Blahnik and Jimmy Choo have openly admitted that the Sex and the City series has made their shoes a household name. Luxury online boutique http://www.my-wardrobe.com/ has more â€˜clicksâ€™ and viewings for shoes than any other fashion item, including clothes.

The second most popular designer accessory globally is sunglasses â€“ 32 percent of consumers currently buy designer sunglasses, but if money were no object, nearly half (48%) would. One in three (37%) would buy a designer wallet if money was no object, compared to one in four consumers who currently buy designer wallets.

The ranking of the worldâ€™s top five â€˜most wantedâ€™ accessories today â€“ and in the future if money was no object - rem unchanged, indicating strong potential for these items.

1. Shoes
2. Sunglasses
3. Wallets
4. Handbags & â€˜Manâ€™ bags
5. Belts

â€œDesigner accessories are taking centre stage alongside clothing and every international designer is introducing and expanding their accessory range to build their brand name and image with new customers,â€• said Martell.

â€œLuxury fashion houses and designers know that the first â€˜brandâ€™ purchase is often an accessory, so regardless of it be a key ring or sunglasses â€“ as long as the consumer has bought into the brand values and the brand maintains its image and strength, these consumers will come back for more.â€•

Designer brands deliver â€˜social statusâ€™

â€œOverall, the survey indicated huge market potential for designer accessories, especially in the emerging fashion Meccas of Russia, UAE and Asia, where nouveau rich are clamouring to â€˜brandâ€™ or decorate themselves in public as a declaration of their new financial social status,â€• observed Martell .

â€œDespite many regional differences in how consumers around the world perceive designer brands, there is one fact everyone agrees on. Sixty percent of global consumers say that people wear designer brands to project status,â€• said Martell.

While nouveau rich Indonesians (78%) and Thai consumers (74%) from Asiaâ€™s tiger economies are the worldâ€™s most like to equate designer brands with social status, Italians ranked fourth globally for believing that designer brands projects social status. â€œSixty percent of Italians â€“ citizens of the worldâ€™s designer capital - believe that people wear designer bra for their status connotations,â€• noted Martell. â€œItâ€™s interesting here to note that many Italians are leading a backlash to th your faceâ€™ designer brand. More subtle Italian design houses like Loro Piana and Valextra whose clothes and accessories carry a â€˜no logoâ€™ policy are at the forefront of this trend â€“ while others argue that one of the worldâ€™s top designers, G Armani, has never visibly branded his clothes with logos and has always allowed his designs and quality to speak for

themselves.

(Giorgio Armani was voted the worldâ€™s most coveted designer brand according to the ACNielsen Luxury Brands Survey â€“ one in three consumers globally said they would choose Giorgio Armani clothes if money was no object, February 2006)

â€œWith obvious gender preferences towards handbags (among women) and briefcases (among men), itâ€™s worth noting tha both males and females express similar or equal â€˜want/desireâ€™ levels for the same accessories,â€• Martell.

If money was no object, 61 percent of males would choose to buy designer shoes, compared to 69 percent of women, and for sunglasses, 51 percent of women and 46 percent of men. And for designer wallets, there is equal appeal among both sexes - 37 percent of both men and women would buy this item.

However, regional differences highlight some interesting preferences.
- Briefcases are surprisingly most coveted among Latin American females
- Hand bags most coveted with Asian females
- In North America, sunglasses, stationery (Palm Pilot holders) and luggage are equally coveted by both males and females
- Wallets are more coveted in Asia than in any other region
- â€˜Man bagsâ€™ are most popular with Latin American males
- Latin American consumers would buy stationery accessories (Palm Pilot holders) more than any other region

Most coveted â€“ Designer Luggage

In terms of the most â€˜covetedâ€™ designer accessory â€“ itâ€™s luggage.

Designer luggage, usually the most expensive item in accessory ranges, is the most coveted item for consumers. While only seven percent of consumers currently buy designer luggage, 25 percent of consumers would buy luggage if money was no object.

For luxury fashion house Louis Vuitton, their brand image and values of fashion and quality are conveyed entirely through their handbag and luggage range.

Nothing conveys the message of â€˜jet setâ€™ and â€˜Look at me, I am richâ€™ like a matching set of leather designer luggage Louis Vuitton luggage set is iconic â€“ both in the world of fashion as well as in travel. It symbolizes the ultimate in designer travel. Not surprisingly, itâ€™s the oil-rich UAE consumers who top the ranking in currently buying designer luggage,â€• said Martell.

Designer luggage is equally coveted by both men and women, according to the survey. â€œDesigner luggage presents an opportunity for fashion houses to target this lucrative market for those who canâ€™t afford the Louis Vuitton travel trunk,â€• said Martell.

â€œIts evident from our survey that fashion accessories are no longer the sole domain of women. Designers have already noted this and have been quickly expanding or introducing menâ€™s lines to cater for this rapidly growing â€“ and profitable market.â€•

About the surveys â€“ The ACNielsen Global Luxury Accessories Survey and Celebrity Fashion Survey were conducted in February 2006 as part of ACNielsenâ€™s twice yearly Global Online survey among 23,500 regular internet users in Europe, North America, Asia Pacific, Latin America and Emerging Markets. The margin of error for this survey sample is +/-0.7% at 95% confidence level.

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