



BRANDBASTION

Apparel Brands:

How to avoid common pitfalls when advertising on Instagram

New exclusive study: Over 9,000 comments analyzed across 63 Instagram ads from apparel brands.

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Foreword



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Apparel ads on Instagram: Growing rewards but greater risks

Traditionally, apparel brands leveraging e-commerce as a major factor of their business model have focused on customer reviews as a strong influencer of consumer purchasing decisions, with good reason as well. A 2017 [consumer insights study](#) by BrightLocal shows that consumers read an average of seven reviews before trusting a brand. Efforts are quickly made to boost review scores, with brands sending out promotional clothing in return for a review and placing a stronger focus on quality control before dispatching goods.

User engagement, on the other hand, is still a widely untapped resource and is therefore the focus of this report. Engagement on both paid and organic content on social media acts much in the same way as reviews. However, due to the ease of input, and the social normalization of leaving comments very frequently, the volumes are far higher. As highlighted by this report, the open nature of the feeds allows for potentially harmful engagement to be left en masse. As examples, all comments highlighted in this report are genuine and, at the time of writing, are still present and visible alongside the selected ads.

Whether this is seen as a headache or an opportunity is entirely up to the systems and procedures a brand chooses to set in place for its community managers and customer service team. Managing comments manually can be a time-consuming, costly and frustrating endeavor. But, with a degree of automation, the feeds can swiftly be turned from an annoyance to an asset.

Comments can be utilized to provide better online customer service, assess the impact of social media marketing campaigns or public relations incidents, identify negative perceptions of products or a brand, identify new sales opportunities, and drive higher positive sentiment and conversion rates. Any fashion brand, present on Instagram, which ignores these points is missing a major opportunity of modern day marketing.

01

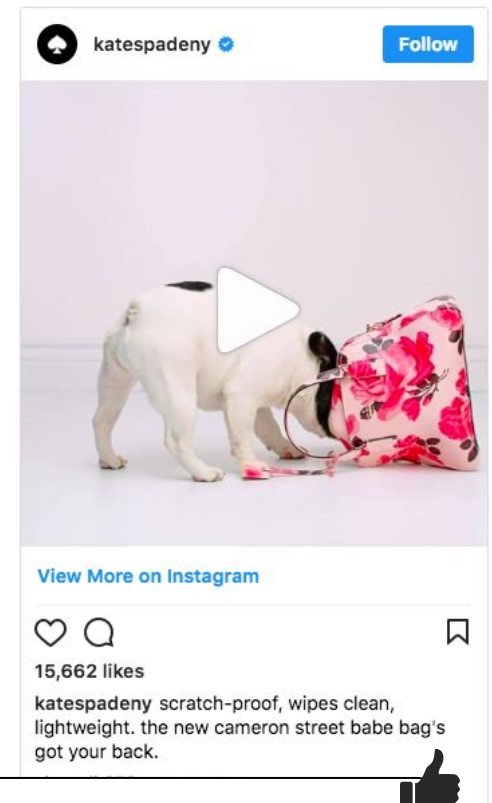
Unaddressed positive comments

On average, it takes five positive comments to erase the effect of a single negative comment. As users' eyes are naturally drawn to negative outbursts, unaddressed positive comments are often drowned out. Engaging with positive comments can help highlight and promote them, effectively combating the 8% of negative comments found in our data. None of the ads analysed showed brands engaging with positive comments.

A study commissioned by Facebook shows evidence of “massive-scale emotional contagion through social networks”. Simply put, people can pass on positive or negative emotions to others. Engaging, by liking and responding to positive comments, can encourage a ‘snowball effect’. Herein, once a trail of positive comments has accumulated on an ad, a trend of positivity can be encouraged and grown exponentially by a brand.

Which ad generated the most positive engagement?

Among the ads analyzed by BrandBastion, the ad that generated the highest amount of positive reactions was Kate Spade’s ad targeted at women, featuring a cute puppy interacting with the product.



I'm not even in the market for a purse but after seeing this Ad, I'll now be saving up for a Kate spade purse. Great marketing

What to do?

- **Monitor sentiment** and listen to audience reactions across different types of campaigns to gather qualitative data on which creatives resonate best with each audience.
- **Engage (like and respond) with positive comments.** Pay particular attention to positive comments from known influencers and overtly passionate fans to further encourage positive feedback. Like positive comments to increase the likelihood of them being ranked as “Top Comments”, thereby gaining maximum visibility.

Industry average:


An apparel Instagram ad receives on average **27%** positive engagement, while negative engagement makes up only **8%**


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02

Unauthorized sellers and spam

Ads with high reach will immediately attract scammers and private sellers advertising their own products. By not dealing with such comments, brands are essentially paying for users to draw business away from their content. On multiple analyzed accounts, the promotion of counterfeit merchandise was also present. This can not only harm brand image, but also conversion rates and cause potential legal infringements.

 <http://alphajob.info/?send=289>
work from home and its free to sign up

 Contact me for a psychic reading today love specialist results in three days

  BUY KICKS HERE 

Which brands were most affected by spam and unauthorized sellers?



Industry average:

On average, **5%** of apparel Instagram ad comments are threats including spam, malicious links, unauthorized selling and promotion of counterfeit goods.

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What to do?

- **Hide harmful comments from ads.** Unauthorized selling and spam on ads may result in consumer safety issues and a damaged brand reputation. When a comment is hidden it's still visible to the commenter and his/her Facebook friends, although hidden from the general public. Spam, competitor promotions, highly profane comments and unauthorized sellers can harm ad performance. Hiding these comments in real-time enables advertisers to maintain control over their campaigns.

03

Unaddressed sales opportunities

Users who post questions about a product or how to purchase it, have already expressed interest and therefore represent a consumer segment who have a high potential for conversion. The majority of queries found in the analysis were left unanswered.

Any chance to make a purchase more convenient is an absolute priority in comment management. Any response rate lower than 100% is missing out on opportunities for conversions.

On the ads analyzed, only **17%** of inquiries and sales opportunities were responded to. Out of 39 brands, only 5 responded to some extent, with **lulus.com** and **H&M** having the highest amount of replies to inquiries.



Where can I find that skirt?



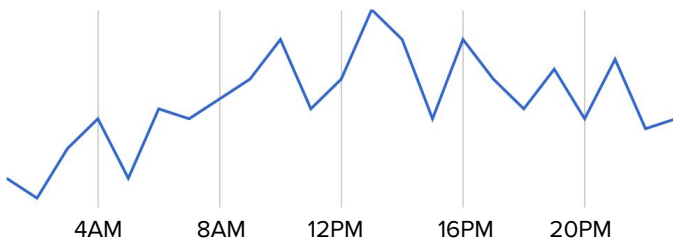
Where is the link to this dress?! I want it!



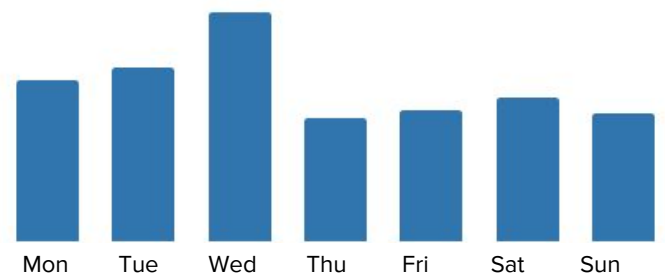
lulus.com Hi there! Our buyers are currently working on a restock date for this cute set, be sure to sign up for a restock notification! xo



Timeline of customer inquiries by hour (PT)



Timeline of customer inquiries by weekday












When analyzing over 9,000 on 63 apparel ads on Instagram targeting women in US, we found that the amount of inquiries posted peaks towards the middle of the week. Posting hour peaks at 13 PM (PT).

What to do?

- **Respond promptly** to comments in which users are asking questions to show that you offer great customer service and capitalize on driving sales from consumers who have a high potential to convert.

Sexist or inappropriate talk about models' appearance

Here are real examples from the ads analyzed. These comments are still visible and have the same reach as the ad.

| | | |
|--|--|---|
|  'tis no woman |  get this dirty satan worshipping jew off my feed |  That booty for sale to ? |
|  Wow such a nice "model" no butt and no hips. |  You could have saved money on the model and just put the jeans on the stool. They have the same size legs. |  Let's get these two dumb sticks, fill them with drugs and film them dancing like the dumbasses they are |
|  Her boobs move around and show sagginess |  Underneath it all she's a super hoe ready to be naked any chance she gets. |  Does this woman still get her period? |

32 out of 63 ads analyzed included sexist comments, mentions about different body parts or the general appearance of the models and celebrities featured. These comments often include profanities and are visible for all customers to see.

Which brands were most affected by sexist or inappropriate comments?



What to do?

- **Quickly remove inappropriate comments** including body shaming or sexism, as some viewers' perception of the brand will be impacted, as well as their likelihood of converting. These type of negative comments can create a snowball effect and negative trends can escalate quickly.

Industry average:

Apparel ads featuring models are a strong target for these type of comments. **56%** out of all ads analyzed received sexist and inappropriate comments

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05

Ethnic inclusion and diversity

I am a huge fan of your clothes and have been for years, but it's too bad that you still use only one body type for your advertising campaigns. Please catch up to your competition and start showing your clothes on different body types (both men and women.)

Love it. Missing persons with disabilities however @gap!

Not very diverse when you don't also include varying body types..

"woman campaign" but it's only skinny white girls. women are all different, from race to body shape. representation matters, be more diverse.

So use some diversity in your very weak ad. Diversity is power not one sided.

Even if 2017 was the fashion industry's most inclusive year yet, ethnic inclusion and diversity is a recurrent topic found in the comment section of ads.

Industry average:

17% out of all apparel ads analyzed included comments from consumers asking brands to consider diversity when advertising.

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Which brands received comments about ethnic inclusion and diversity ?

BANANA
REPUBLIC

G A P

DKNY

EVERLANE

Madewell

ZARA

What to do?

- **Address key prospect concerns** expressed in comments within the campaign creatives. If a specific ad generates high volumes of negative comments, consider pausing the ad to protect the brand and allocating more budget towards ads that generate positive reactions.

Conclusion

Clothes, Comments & Conversions

2018 has seen a rise in strong emotional responses to apparel ads placed across Instagram and as a result, higher comment volumes. However, engagement is no longer a singular, unilateral metric, which all clothing brands should only strive to increase. Consumer engagement must now be monitored, interacted with and enacted upon to gain better results from campaigns and avoid P.R. crises (such as H&M's infamous monkey hoodie in January).

Regardless of the issue, be it a model backlash or just poor reception of new articles of clothing, the first point of call for modern day consumers reacting to ads is the comment feed. We have seen, through our analysis, that these comments are no longer just a by product of an ad. They now make up an integral part of the creative and should become a major focus point for fashion industry based brands. Much in the same way as graffiti left on a billboard, comments will be read by the vast majority of consumers viewing the ad and can have a significant impact on how they perceive and respond to the content.

As well as highlighting an area which can be problematic for ad performance, the findings also present an opportunity for apparel brands. As an example, when exploring the issue of unaddressed sales opportunities (page 6.), we found that only 5 of the 39 major clothing brands analyzed, are responding to comments at all. None of the ads analyzed showed brands engaging with positive comments. A strong comment management strategy leads to improved RoAS, ROI, sentiment levels and there is still room to become an early mover in this space.

The big question still remaining, is how to enact the suggestions made in this report at scale. This is where a solution such as BrandBastion's fits in. Utilizing a combination of industry leading A.I. technology, in combination with a team of apparel-industry trained content analysts, BrandBastion can empower brands to manage unlimited volumes of comments across paid and organic content. Using a solution such as this should be a key consideration for any apparel brand looking to improve their Instagram ad performance in the near future.

Get in touch!

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BRANDBASTION

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BrandBastion manages social media engagement 24/7 for the world's top brands

BrandBastion specializes in managing user-engagement at scale for brands, advertisers, publishers and organizations. We have five years of experience with processing user generated content, taking actions and providing detailed insight across many different industries. We're an official Instagram Partner and offer coverage in 43 languages. BrandBastion works with 300+ accounts such as Netflix, TechCrunch and DealDash.

Platforms covered:



BrandBastion is an official Instagram Partner