

The Power of Utilizing Leading Men

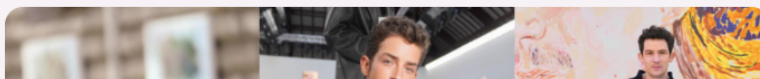
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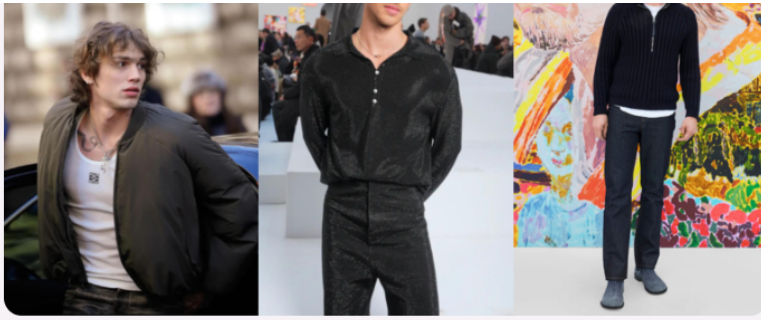


Brands have forever been invested in the significance and admiration of popular male icons who have established their place in the cultural zeitgeist. From today's on-screen stars like Jacob Elordi, Timothee Chalamet and Stéphane Bak to TikTok influencers like Vinnie Hacker and Victor Kunda, brands have been benefiting from these men who have the general sentiment of acceptance in the dominant culture. As such, it may come as a surprise that as of late, brands have been taking advantage of utilizing the power of the unexpected when approaching leading men, and in doing so are gaining loyal fanbases and much online noise as they reframe the dominant values around aspiration and desire.



Spanish fashion house Loewe has recently established itself as one of the leading luxury designer fashion brands for men, known for its art-inspired brand world and playful fashion themes. The brand's creative director Jonathan Anderson, has implemented clever and creative strategies to shift the brand's gender image (well-known for womenswear), to also become synonymous with menswear. Utilizing the power of unexpected brand faces and collaborators that capture the cultural zeitgeist, almost everything the brand puts out immediately trends online. This includes Loewe's recent lineup of influencers and brand ambassadors at their Men's show during Paris Fashion Week earlier this year. Loewe, perhaps the King of the unexpected, shows us how to select male influencers who align with the evolving ideals of masculinity whilst emphasizing their on-the-pulse cultural knowledge. By tapping into the niche appeal and of-the-moment influential men, the brand gains fandom excitement and generates significant online mentions by displaying its original cultural tastes. This strategic alignment contributes to a relevant brand image, fostering genuine connections with important subcultures.





Over the past year, Loewe has collaborated with celebrities ranging from Josh O'Connor to Manu Rios and new additions like TikTok influencer Vinnie Hacker. These partnerships have been established to bring to life their aligned values. For example, Manu Rios and Loewe are both of Spanish origins, reflecting the aspirational values of modern-day Spanish citizens. His personal brand emphasizes progressive cultural pride and style, which aligns with Loewe's surrealist celebration of Spanish craftsmanship. For Josh O'Connor, his award-winning role in "The Crown," brought international recognition and sophisticated personal branding, complementing Loewe's pursuit of a global audience drawn to timeless narratives. Vinnie Hacker, a standout on TikTok and in the male influencer sphere, represents an adventurous trendsetting aesthetic, amplifying Loewe's ever-evolving playful styles and brand codes. What these male ambassadors have in common is that they reinforce Loewe's commitment to modern, boundary-breaking values, engaging a diverse and socially conscious audience. Their collective impact, whether on-screen, through social media, or in the fashion world, seamlessly integrates with the sentiments and aspirations of Loewe.



Similarly, Italian fashion house Prada has also been utilizing this recent tactic to leverage trending social media native personalities, such as Troye Sivan. The Australian singer has been a fan favorite for many years but more so as of late on TikTok, particularly after his Grammy-nominated music video "Rush", a video that the artist has compared to a "celebration of queer party subculture".





His authentic representation and open embrace of his identity as a gay artist have made him an influential figure with a positive cultural impact, resonating with diverse young audiences. His relatable and personable approach on social media, like his internet debut and coming out video in 2013 on YouTube, to his conversational, storytelling-like content on TikTok, combined with a creative style that pushes boundaries, has established him as one of the most engaging GenZ influencers today.



Prada is featuring the artist as the face of the brand's 2024 Spring/Summer Menswear campaigns, as well as attending the front row of all of Prada's runway shows, alongside other adored icons such as Brooklyn Beckham, Taylor Zakhar, and Louis Partridge.



Calvin Klein has had a long-standing history of utilizing provocation to sell its mass-market staples. In the past, they'd feature the likes of Aaron Taylor-Johnson, Son Heung Min and Michael B. Jordan, now, as seen on the brands' most recent viral campaign with award-winning actor of "The Bear", Jeremy Allan White, it's all about the allure of the unexpected "boy next door". Calvin Klein has been attentive to what resonates with their target demographic and has leveraged their cultural cache to champion an unexpected sex symbol.

Get in touch to find out which leading males are being underutilized, and who are the next generation's up-and-coming leading men.

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