



HOW LFW CONNECTS ONLINE/OFFLINE CUSTOMER JOURNEYS

Many designers and brands are re-evaluating how they connect with their consumers through London Fashion Week. Traditionally an industry insiders' event for buyers and press, its wider influence now goes far beyond the exclusive guestlist attending a 10-minute catwalk show.

The intense commercial activity around the event demonstrates that, in a highly competitive fashion industry, it's become increasingly important to create innovative experiences that make the most of the resources required to design and produce collections.

IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCES

Brands are constantly finding new ways to host inspiring experiential events, most recently [Anya Hindmarch revealed her latest London Fashion Week event](#), which features an immersive art installation with tickets available to the public. The space will also feature a café and concept store with exclusive merchandise and the new collection, providing an immediate way for visitors to buy into the brand.

For the first time, London Fashion Week also introduced a new format that enables the opportunity for the public to enjoy the event and catwalk shows, taking place within the official show space at 180 the Strand. Now, visitors will also be able to shop the fashions immediately from a physical store on the site.

Two ticket types are available: one allowing a range of access to industry insider talks and shopping events, and the other, from tickets to catwalk shows with complimentary champagne.

The increased accessibility of Fashion Week, and the pairing of experiential with commerce as seen abundantly across fashion and retail, is likely to have a big impact on the featured designers. The key reason being that providing inspirational content, alongside an instantly shoppable concept store, shortens the customer journey from incentive to purchase.

DIGITAL INNOVATION

In a world constantly connected through social media and the increasing consumption of digital content, online has become a powerful channel to amplify the impact of Fashion Week events. Consumers can see new collections instantaneously and brands have direct access to the end consumer, which allows said brands to build a relationship with consumers.

Digital now plays a key role in accompanying fashion week, whether this means abandoning the traditional or experimenting with digital formats which complement and enhance it. Here are some examples to illustrate the point:

LIVE STREAMING

In 2010, Alexander McQueen became the first designer to livestream his show, and now it's possible to watch most catwalk shows in real time, if not via livestream through platforms such as Instagram. This presents endless opportunities for fashion lovers to see the shows as they happen due to the improved functionality that also enables users to shop fashions directly from Instagram. Examples, such as [Burberry making Riccardo Tisci's first collection available to shop immediately](#), demonstrate the commerciality and accessibility of the platform for brands.

AUGMENTED REALITY

Designers such as Prabal Garung and Band of Outsiders, [have previously partnered with Intel](#) to live broadcast shows in virtual reality, enabling viewers to be fully immersed in the fashion show and recreating that front row feel. In the future, developments in technology could enable consumers to purchase items directly within the augmented reality channel.

Rebecca Minkoff went beyond live streaming and augmented reality by partnering with shopping app Zeekit to create a virtual fitting room for customers – enabling them to preview how their favourite items would look on an uploaded photo of themselves immediately following the fashion show. A great example of how brands are using technology to personalise runway model fashions to shoppers' own look.

CHATBOTS

Brands including Burberry and Tommy Hilfiger have introduced chatbots powered by artificial intelligence to increase the shoppability of their shows. Burberry's activity enabled users to

explore collections and interact with a gamified model maze, providing a path to purchase through e-commerce pages.

'SEE NOW, BUY NOW'

These digital innovations have played their part in shortening the fashion purchase cycle and driving the 'see now, buy now' revolution. Burberry is a significant supporter of this new shopping trend, and [seamlessly integrated social and digital into its live show in 2017](#), connecting offline and online by removing the usual six-month delay in delivering a runway collection to stores.

Other brands such as Moncler, have scrapped the usual fashion calendar in favour of monthly product launches, whilst Rebecca Minkoff has transitioned to showing collections that are in-season, amplifying its e-commerce and direct retail operations to become instantly shoppable to consumers.

This has a knock-on effect even for those brands that choose to stick to the status quo, because the mechanism of pre-ordering online is now crucial in connecting the demand created through the spectacle of fashion shows to product sales.

QUICK RESPONSE CODES

Although the embedded barcode technology of QR codes has not yet experienced widespread adoption since it's arrival as far back as 2011, we've seen the revival of the technology in New York Fashion Week. In a collaboration between Shopify and 11 Honore, a product catalogue was offered to attendees which included QR product codes.



This enabled users to scan with their smartphone, providing a direct interaction and connection with the brand which streamlines the journey to checkout for consumers on the go. Accompanying this we also saw a physical pop-up store which offered shoppers designer items which were seen on the runway.

INSPIRING ACTION

The most successful Fashion Week shows don't simply build consumer awareness. They also inspire people to take action in key moments across their customer journey, whether offline or online. This includes everything from visiting the brand website to browse existing collections or to pre order from the new season, to purchasing items from complementary concept stores alongside the event. As the format of Fashion Week is constantly reinvented through technology, the increased shoppability surrounding collections ensures buyers can instantly convert their inspiration to a purchase, as the audience is no longer confined to those sat in the front row but includes the worldwide shopper, ready to spend. That's encouraging news for fashion brands and retailers who invest in supporting this customer journey, less so for those that don't.

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