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Effective promotional tools in the fashion industry: influencer marketing, glossy magazines, social networks

In the modern world, in order to do business successfully, a company must be in the information field and have various channels for communicating with the public. Experts of the Central Asia Fashion Spring-2025 International Fashion Exhibition discussed at a business conference which channels are currently the most effective for promotion and how to use them effectively.



Experts of the CAF business conference Spring-2025 discussed current promotion channels

Business viral content specialist Artem Kay opened the business session with general recommendations. According to him, it is important to consider the brand segment when choosing a promotional strategy: *«If you're in the mass market or mid-range, rather than the premium category with big marketing budgets, don't try to create a glossy account. This can be very expensive, because today content plays a key role in advertising, and there should be a lot of it. Competing with AI content, which is generated quickly and in large quantities, requires a constant flow of publications. Therefore, the emphasis should be on the quantity of content, not its impeccable visual aesthetics. Until you have significant budgets for advertising and working with bloggers, focus on creating regular publications in the form of video reels on Instagram, TikTok, YouTube Shorts - depending on your audience and region. If resources allow, you can invest in bright advertising campaigns and promote them through influencers, but in the beginning, stability and activity are more important».*



Viral
Content

Specialist for Business Artem Kay

Alena Khegay, creative director and partner at digital agency JAS, spoke about creating the required amount of content quickly: *«It's important for a brand to have its own in-house content team, as it now plays as important a role as strategy. It is best if the content creation process is fully controlled within the company. Today's fashion is closely linked to social networking, so the entire process - from developing a collection to promoting it - is built around current trends. It all starts with trendwatching: tracking trends with the help of influencers, then creating a collection that follows those trends and creating content around it. The minimum in-house team for a brand may include a creative director - a person who not only participates in the creation of a collection, but also oversees its promotion, works with influencers and ensures that it is in line with the brand's values; a copywriter responsible for the semantic content, ideas and scenarios; a designer who creates a visual style for the content; and a mobilographer».*

Speaking about glossy magazines, the moderator of the business session, fashion marketer and founder of the Hope Group agency, Shukhrat Mamasydykov, noted that this format is undergoing a transformation:



Fashion marketer, founder of the Hope Group agency Shukhrat Mamasydykov

«For example, the foreign GQ remains relevant thanks to its integration with digital platforms: they broadcast, conduct interviews and actively interact with the audience. Despite the fact that traditional print editions are losing popularity, publications are finding new ways to exist. Today, you can see journalists

approaching celebrities at events, showing off their looks and sharing exclusive information that captures the audience's attention. The question of the future of the glossy magazine remains open: will it remain in its usual format or will it move completely into the digital space, relying on social networks? »

Alikhan Musatayev, marketing director of the ZHANNA KAN GROUP and founder of the media agency M- agency, believes that glossy publications still work: *«People are tired of endless content on social networks and want to read quality material again. Image publications in magazines like Forbes, Tatler, Esquire, Marie Claire create long-term PR and increase brand trust. Social is fast marketing. They are here today and gone tomorrow. When a Kazakh brand is featured in such publications, potential customers in search engines immediately see that it is represented in prestigious media. And if a brand is featured in Forbes and Tatler, it means it has a budget. That creates trust, which creates interest, which can lead to sales».*

However, the expert questioned whether all brand owners should strive to have an entire team of creatives on staff:

«It's expensive and not everyone can do it. That's why brand owners should first develop their insight and understanding of what kind of content they want to create. It's best to start with small investments: for example, spend \$200 on targeted advertising on Instagram and see how it works. If you get leads, you can increase the budget and bring in a professional targeting specialist. This approach allows you to test tools and invest in what really delivers results. Having a large team isn't always justified - sometimes it's just an extra expense that doesn't result in sales. And the number of views does not equal the number of sales».



Marketing Director of ZHANNA KAN GROUP, founder of the media agency M- agency Alikhan Musatayev

Alexandra Samsonova, co-founder of the agency Smart Marketing and lecturer at the St. Petersburg State University of Industrial Technologies and Design, continued on the subject of budgets in advertising: *«When the budget is limited, it is important to use the available resources as efficiently as possible. Of course, it is great to have specialists in the team, but without sufficient funding this option is unlikely. Experience has shown that the most effective videos are those in which the founder himself becomes the face of the company. When an entrepreneur picks up a camera and starts talking about the collection, showing the production process, sharing details of the work, the audience responds much more actively. This is because viewers feel the leader's charisma, see his commitment and sincerity, and this builds trust. Sales through social networks depend directly on the quality of the content. The more lively and interesting the material, the more actively the owner is involved in its creation, the higher the audience engagement. Of course, if the brand only has 15 subscribers sitting in a room, you should not expect a large flow of customers. But regular, emotional content will help attract new subscribers, engage them in the brand's story and, as a result, increase sales».*



CAF Business Conference Spring -2025: (from left to right) Alena Khegay, Alexandra Samsonova, Artem Kay

Personal and fashion stylist, fashion&sport influencer Difuza Nurseitova shared her vision on the topic of advertising: *«Recently, I've been suggesting that brands go beyond standard advertising integrations and build deeper interactions. Instead of one-off collaborations, it is important to build trusting relationships with audiences. You can do this not only by using a blog and subscribers as an advertising platform, but also by using my expertise as a stylist. One of the formats for such interaction is a series of reels in which I not only talk about the brand, but show it from different sides: as an influencer who uses these things in life, and as a stylist who helps the audience understand how to organically integrate the brand's products into their wardrobe. Not everyone can immediately understand what this or that thing is for, and this approach makes the communication more natural».*

For companies just starting out on their creative and business journey, this approach is particularly useful. Emerging designers can work with young stylists, including students, creating mutually beneficial collaborations. The brand gets a client base, the stylists an opportunity to monetise their skills. Giving public lectures or hands-on seminars with current stylists becomes not only a promotional tool, but also a way to build an eco-friendly community around the brand.



Personal and fashion stylist, fashion&sport influencer Difuza Nurseitova

Alexandra Samsonova, returning to the topic of effective promotion, offered practical advice: *«Even the highest quality content will not work if the community has only 10 subscribers. It is especially difficult for small brands to promote themselves in big cities, where the market is overheated. Before you start advertising, you need to have at least a basic audience - around 700 subscribers; this applies to all platforms, be it Telegram, YouTube or VKontakte. Prepare at least 10-15 posts, launch an initial promotion to attract subscribers. If a person subscribes to your page, views the content but does not make a purchase, try to write to them personally. Ask them what they like, what they want, what attracts them to your brand. This will help you understand if they are really part of your target audience. It is also important to analyse the audience by demographics. For example, if you sell premium clothing and your subscribers are mainly young people aged 25 without sufficient income, you should think about adjusting your strategy. Check the data in your ad account: do your subscribers match your target customer profile? If so, adapt the advertising and content to their needs».*

But companies always measure not reach but actual sales. And if sales are falling, the first thing to do is to find out why. You can write to customers, ask them what they were not happy with, what they liked. Or stand at the checkout in an offline store and watch customers - these are simple actions that can provide valuable insights.

«Sometimes the problem is not with the advertising, but with the seller. For example, we have seen situations where conversions are good, there are lots of orders, but actual sales are falling. Why is that? We check with the secret shopper method - we place an order and see how quickly they respond to it. If the customer waits an hour or two, they may change their mind. Especially in the fashion industry, where purchases are often emotional. A woman may want a dress "here and now", but if she gets a delayed response, she may have already changed her mind or her mood has changed, which means there will be no purchase. Speed of response is an important factor that has a direct impact on sales. Therefore, always analyse not only marketing indicators, but also customer service, » - recommends Alexandra Samsonova.

As for working with bloggers, Alena Khegay shared some additional experience: *«In Kazakhstan, TikTok currently has over 14 million active users, while Instagram has around 12 million. In three years, TikTok has overtaken Instagram in popularity to become the leading platform. There is a stereotype that it is an exclusively teenage platform, but in fact it has an even larger adult audience than Instagram, simply because of the total number of users. I would also like to share a life hack: bloggers and influencers on TikTok, with the same or even larger audience than on Instagram, often offer advertising at an affordable price. For example, we had a case where we placed an ad with a TikToker with two million subscribers for only 150 thousand tenge. In addition, this social network has many creators who take content creation seriously, invest in ideas and try to make quality material because it is a way of self-realisation for them. Therefore, working with TikTok influencers is often not only cheaper, but also more effective».*



Creative director and partner of the digital agency JAS Alena Khegay

Experts at the CAF Spring-2025 Business Conference recommend that young professionals be proactive and flexible: find the necessary contacts on your own, offer your services and various forms of cooperation, such as barter. In the first stage, you can do without serious investments; it is important to raise your profile and/or create a strong personal brand. The phrase «first you work for a name, then the name works for you» is very relevant in the fashion industry.

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