

# CAF

CENTRAL ASIA FASHION

## SPRING-2024

11-13.03.2024

Almaty, Kazakhstan

г. Алматы, Казахстан

# 33 МЕЖДУНАРОДНАЯ ВЫСТАВКА МОДЫ INTERNATIONAL FASHION EXHIBITION

Создавая новые возможности

Spring-2024



### New Media in the Fashion Business

Communication experts, fashion bloggers and social media promotion specialists at the business conference of the 33rd International Fashion Exhibition Central Asia Fashion discussed current trends in new media, the roles and responsibilities of influencers, features of the national “cancel culture”, new ethics in Kazakhstan, and also gave effective recommendations for interacting with the audience. Experts are confident that efficiency and a systematic approach are a priority today.



Participants in the panel discussion of the CAF business conference (from left to right): Sabina Rustembaeva, Madi Bekdair, Aleksey Bendz, Evgeniy Danchev, MAYgul Burgebaeva, Milena Yershova

### The «cancel culture» trend in the fashion industry

A participant in the business conference and panel discussion of Central Asia Fashion, a highly respected expert on PR and communications, creative director of 2B Agency, Aleksey Bendz, highlighted one of the main trends in new media and showed examples of the widespread development of «cancel culture».

*«This is a phenomenon when a call is broadcast to abandon a product or brand. Every year, more and more stories happen, including in the fashion industry. This is a kind of modern form of exile, and we are facing more and more of it today. «Cancel culture» officially began with American producer Harvey Weinstein, who was accused of sexual harassment by a huge number of famous actresses. As a result, the facts came to light, and he was sentenced to 25 years in prison»,* - the expert noted. As examples, along with world-class stars such as Kevin Spacey, Johnny Depp, JK Rowling and some fashion brands that lost contracts due to mass «cancellation», the specialist voiced local cases that resonated: the case of cutting down trees near a popular electronics chain, the case of an information attack against a famous businessman and frequent cancellations of performances by Russian artists who either support or do not express an opinion on the actions in Ukraine. However, according to Aleksey Bendz, there have not yet been cases of real, classical cancellation in Kazakhstan’s realities.





Speaker of the CAF business conference: PR and communications expert, creative director of 2B Agency Aleksey Bendz

At the same time, the specialist believes that the absence of an obvious crisis is not a reason to be unprepared for it. Therefore, the speaker of the business conference proactively voiced working recommendations: *«What to do if you are canceled in your professional activity or as an individual? First of all, don't panic, because otherwise you will only contribute to more hate. It's bad to act alone; you need to gather close people, discuss the situation, distribute responsibilities and communicate regularly. This should be priority number one. Next, you need to constantly be aware of everything: know what is happening, who writes what, how they comment, capture information with screenshots and collect all links in order to analyze the situation as much as possible. It is equally important, once you have received information, to soberly assess the situation. It is desirable that several people do this at the same time, so that there are different points of view. The next step is to think about the statement you will make to the public. It is important to always explain and talk to people.»*

In our country, business still largely operates according to the principle *«the dogs bark, but the caravan goes on»*. In modern conditions of information dissemination, such tactics no longer work! A very important point is to make sure that the message you want to convey to your clients, partners, and the government is heard. Keep in mind that this can be done in different ways: surveys, with the participation of experts, on social networks, in official news media



Participants in the panel discussion of the CAF business conference: (from left to right): Sabina Rustembaeva, Madi Bekdair, Aleksey Bendz, Evgeniy Danchev, MAYgul Burgebaeva, Milena Yershova

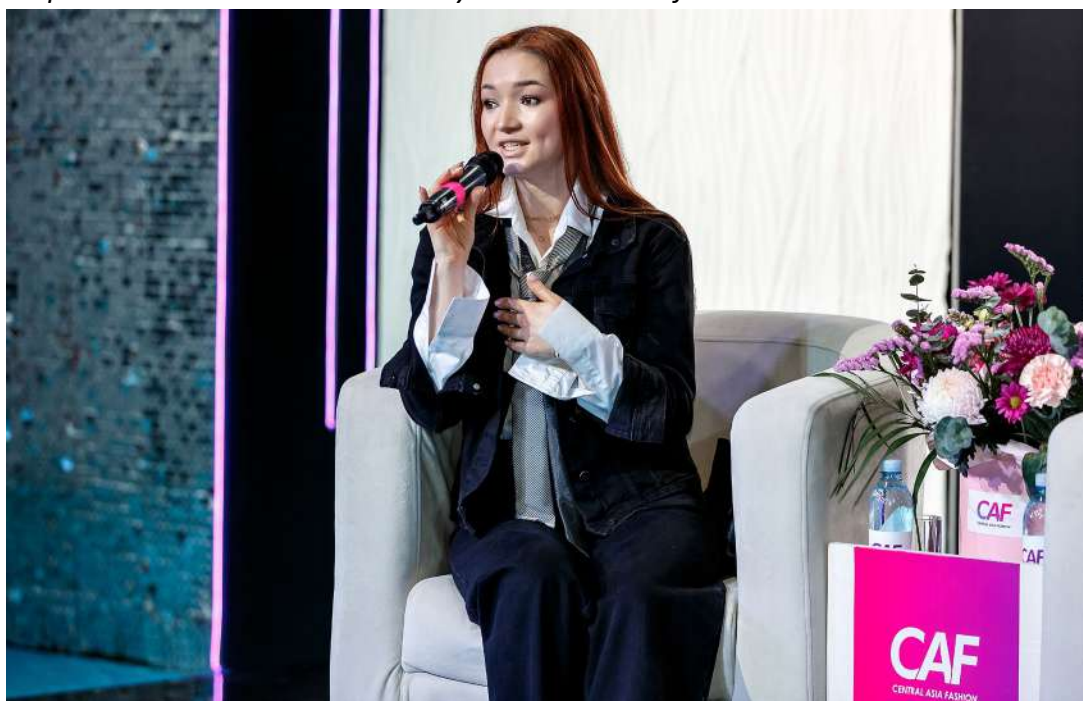
channels. You can also use help of media partners or other loyal sources. And another important point is that you need to act very quickly, in the next few hours after the onset of the crisis. To make a statement to the public it takes no longer than 3 hours, and usually a crisis lasts no more than 72 hours.

To avoid «cancellation», it is better to constantly monitor and study the information field, no matter what field you work in. The collection and analysis of information is important: what is happening in our local market and on a global scale, what cases and what trends are relevant now, what mistakes are made? We need to take into account the experience of colleagues in the industry and learn from the mistakes of others. If someone has a «cancellation» or an information crisis, then we certainly sit down and analyze the case: why did this happen, how to make sure that this never happens to us? When launching any campaign, it is important to test communication, creatives, and conduct a focus group.

We should never forget that in PR communications the so-called «rules of information hygiene» always work flawlessly. One of these rules is to be sure to check new partners. Take your time, study the information field about your new partners, look at the name of the company and the names of the first three managers, and what people write about them. You have to work with them, and you will have to share their possible mistakes. My main expert advice: work on your reputation and make an action plan in case of a crisis».

### **New roles and responsibilities of influencers**

Speaking about the role and responsibility of influencers in business promotion, the speaker of the CAF panel discussion, founder of the Blogging Empire school, fashion-beauty blogger Sabina Rustembaeva emphasized that opinion leaders have great potential and opportunities, but it is important to choose carefully, assessing the interests of the target audience of the business: «Influencers can truly have a significant impact on a brand's fate and sales. The most important thing is to choose your blogger. If, after starting to work with an influencer, something went wrong, this does not mean that the company has a bad brand or that it is the blogger's fault. Much of the success or failure of communication is that the duet may be chosen incorrectly. Each brand has its own philosophy, its own values and its own DNA. If the blogger, as a person, does not support the same values in their life, then the collaboration may not work. At the same time, the number of subscribers does not play a big role at all. This point is very important to understand and analyze at the start of work».



Speaker of the CAF business conference: Founder of the Blogging Empire school, fashion-beauty blogger Sabina Rustembaeva

At the same time, special guest of Central Asia Fashion, founder of MSB/Practical Internet Marketing School, author of courses, expert on systematic business promotion on social networks, MAYgul Burgebaeva, highlighted the main mistakes of business in working with influencers: «Business does not know how to analyze, it is not enough just going to the blogger's account and see what they publish and who is watching them. You need to enable and use analytics services correctly. For example, now Instagram hides the number of likes, and comments can be increased. Not everyone understands or takes this into account. And if a brand is going to work with a blogger, then it needs to competently analyze their account, professionally study the content and target audience...

I would advise brands in the era of new media the following: to work with micro-bloggers, that is, those who have from 5 to 20 thousand subscribers. My expert experience shows that these micro-influencers are fanatics who, first of all, think about their audience and valuable content».





Speaker of the CAF business conference: Founder of MSB/Practical Internet Marketing School, author of courses, expert on systematic business promotion in social networks MAYgul Burgebaeva

Madi Bekdair, a participant in the CAF panel discussion, an image stylist with international practice, the founder of the Community of Asian Stylists and the Conceptual Stylization School «Style.session», also shared his experience of cooperation with influencers and brands: *«I have had the experience of collaborating with millionaire bloggers three times and each times it was a disappointment. Bloggers from Kyrgyzstan with 1.2 million subscribers, then two top bloggers from TikTok with 4 million subscribers each, and the result of this cooperation is zero sales, zero client arrivals, zero subscriber growth.*

*As a result, I had to become a blogger myself. And now people invite me, not only as a stylist, but as an influencer, to advertise some products. As for responsibility not at the legislative level, but for what you take into advertising as a blogger, I personally always weigh the product that is offered to me, is it in my DNA or not? For example, can I advertise dietary supplements for weight loss? Yes, I can, because I've been a real collagen fan for a long time. I believe that it is the brand's responsibility to ensure a connection between the product and the blogger so that they really accept and wholeheartedly love what they advertise and recommend to their subscribers».*



Speaker of the CAF business conference: Image stylist, founder of the Community of Asian Stylists and the Conceptual Stylization School «Style.session» Madi Bekdair

Meanwhile, the speaker of the CAF business conference, Aleksey Bendz, recalled the new norm of responsibility for opinion leaders at the legislative level: *«The state's task is to regulate this market in some way. If a blogger takes a million tenge for work and simply puts it in their pocket without paying taxes, this is at least not fair. In addition, there is a law that says what can and cannot be advertised. And if a blogger, being primarily a public person, breaks*

*the law, then in the modern world it is simply not possible to do anything and hide it. Every person, especially if they are popular, has both a lot of fans and a lot of haters. They carefully watch every moment in order to bask in the glory of the blogger and at every opportunity to show what a bad person the blogger is. Therefore, here is my expert advice: before going to a blogger, look at what kind of person they are, study their history, was their name involved in scandals, how long ago and for what reason? Analyze how noticeable the effectiveness of working with this blogger was. Only after this the brand can decide on cooperation and make its choice consciously».*



Participants in the panel discussion at the CAF business conference (from left to right):  
Sabina Rustembaeva, Madi Bekdair, Aleksey Bendz

### **Positive or negative: how to manage the audience**

Discussing methods of attracting an audience and how a brand can stand out today in an information field overloaded with images and meanings, experts united in the opinion: the main thing is the quality of content, and the tone of voice today is situational.

Thus, Madi Bekdair, a participant in the panel discussion at the CAF business conference, told how he consciously chose the image of an «evil stylist» for himself: *«I always say that I will shoot and voice over in my «evil stylist» style. Yes, it will be the «bitter truth», painful, unpleasant, labor-intensive, and so on, but the result will be amazing. I consider this style of work to be my individual philosophy of cooperation with advertisers. The expression «evil stylist» in my case is in no way a reflection of reality and is in no way connected with my personality, but just a marketing play.*

*When the community director started upgrading my blogger marketing, he ended up saying that I was too light and sugary. In the fashion industry, everything is all about sparkles, about pink ponies and cute clouds. Therefore, if you want to stand out, then choose a different, preferably contrasting, public role. This is how the «evil stylist» became popular among the people, and people began sending their photos and videos to this section for analysis from all countries and cities. Marketing in action worked!*

*«Evil stylist» is not about people looking terrible, but about sarcasm, which, in the time-poor trend, hits the mark faster. This is a very good and perhaps the shortest tool for conveying important information».*

Fashion-beauty blogger Sabina Rustembaeva also shared her personal experience: *«There was a time when everyone tried to show only the good. I myself am from this type of people and have never shown difficulties in my life. But at some point, I realized that this no longer works. Because it is at this moment that a gap arises between the blogger and the subscriber. The subscriber looks at the blogger and thinks: of course, they live well, everything is fine with them, they «live in clover», and in fact does not see the same everyday moments, the same difficulties that each of us faces. This year the trend is for maximum sincerity, naturalness, lively aesthetics, life in itself. I think that this is the ideal time and the ideal trend that we need to follow, because we are all people»,* - emphasized a participant in the Central Asia Fashion business conference.





Participants in the panel discussion of the CAF business conference (from left to right): Sabina Rustembaeva, Madi Bekdair, Aleksey Bendz, Evgeniy Danchev, MAYgul Burgebaeva, Milena Yershova

MAYgul Burgebaeva, in her turn, recommended that businesses pay more attention to their presence in networks: *«When someone comes into business, especially small and micro, he does not want to study the target audience. It is not right. The second is a unique content. Many people still prefer not to shoot high-quality content themselves, but download pictures and videos from the Internet. And this is also a mistake.*

*The next rule is regularity of content. I constantly hear from business owners: «I don't have time, I'm busy with business». In reality, these are excuses, because today many of these issues are solved by neural networks, which in 5 minutes will write texts and make pictures».*



Participants in the panel discussion of the CAF business conference (from left to right): Evgeniy Danchev, MAYgul Burgebaeva, Milena Yershova

### **Top budget and effective fashion business promotion tools**

Meanwhile, a special guest of the Central Asia Fashion business conference from Moscow, business consultant, expert in increasing fashion market sales, author of books, creator of an online school for fashion market leaders, Evgeniy Danchev, spoke about the most effective tools in promoting fashion business in his experience.

*«The main tool for efficiency and impact and from the point of view of minimizing financial costs is communication with the target audience. Today you need to constantly work with the target audience: bonus program, points, discount programs, whatever! To be effective, there must be at least 30% of regular customers. In the fashion business, for some reason, owners forget that the client base needs to be regularly not only replenished, but also digitized. Correct and systematic work with the brand database is a real «safety cushion».*

*The brand needs to constantly remind itself and convey a message to customers or send messages, because customers have to be motivated to buy.*





Business consultant, expert on increasing fashion market sales, author of books, creator of an online school for fashion market leaders Evgeniy Danchev

*The second effective tool is advertising. And here it is important to use both classic types of business promotion and more modern ones. No matter what people say now, with the right approach and balance of power, advertising today works and is quite effective. Marketing is not about selling to everyone. There must be the right focus, positioning and its own target audience», - summed up special guest of the business conference Evgeniy Danchev.*



Participants in the CAF panel discussion (from left to right):  
Madi Bekdair, Aleksey Bendz, Sabina Rustembaeva, Milena Yershova, Evgeniy Danchev, MAYgul Burgebaeva

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