

How Kendra Scott's CMO drives traffic through brand awareness on social

Article

“Consumer acquisition costs have gone up. Data is harder and harder to access. It’s trickier to figure out how to target our consumer in the right way.” That’s Kendra Scott’s CMO Michelle

Peterson, summarizing the state of marketing right now.

The jeweler has found success both online and in-store by knowing its brand identity, pushing a viral TikTok presence, and working with the right influencers.

Brand meets performance: “We can’t think about [brand and performance marketing] as separate,” said Peterson, noting that brand marketing and performance marketing are the same since they both impact metrics.

- Because it’s hard to measure the effectiveness of upper-funnel marketing, Peterson said the marketing team’s “singular metric” is driving traffic, both online and in-store.
- To break down silos, the same person focuses on upper-funnel media and performance marketing. “I want the consumer to have a consistent brand and effective journey throughout the purchase,” said Peterson.

A TikTok rush: Starting a couple of years ago, **Kendra Scott went viral on TikTok** from college students going through the sorority rush process, specifically schools in the southern US like the University of Alabama.

- This content was entirely native. Customers who cared about Kendra Scott represented the brand without incentive.
- The brand responded by featuring rush content of its own, interacting with rushees, and even gifting some product.

A strong brand identity allowed Kendra Scott’s social team to respond quickly on TikTok without waiting for signoff or approval from execs. “You can activate a brand plan and you can move very quickly in social, posting content and being part of relevant conversations when everybody understands the brand,” said Peterson.

A TikTok ban could crush the rush: “We are obviously concerned,” said Peterson. “A lot of our connection with consumers comes through TikTok. It’s why we’re watching whatever app consumers would move to next.”

The brand is experimenting with BeReal, though it hasn’t taken off for Kendra Scott, as well as ByteDance’s Instagram-like platform Lemon8.

Persona of influence: Rather than casting a wide net of influencers, Kendra Scott has shifted to “really going deep with a couple of influencers” and focusing on “story-driven”

partnerships, Peterson said. The brand also has a college influencer ambassador program, which has created a life cycle funnel for customers and influencers to grow up alongside the brand.

“We want that to be a more authentic and organic experience for our consumer,” said Peterson, who noted the brand is more likely to get conversions from passionate ambassadors rather than a large number of affiliate link posts.

“We’re both building their brand and our brand together,” Peterson said.

Michelle Peterson will be speaking about shifting marketing mix in response to measurement and targeting challenges at CommerceNext. [Learn more here.](#)

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