

JustFab CMO on Being Nimble in Uncertain Times

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TechStyle Fashion Group, a global fashion retailer that operates membership-based direct-to-consumer (D2C) brands—including ShoeDazzle, JustFab, Kate Hudson’s Fabletics and Rihanna’s Savage X Fenty—has become one of the fast-growing retailers with more than 5.5 million active members worldwide since it launched a decade ago.

We recently spoke with Daria Burke, CMO of JustFab, about how the company has adapted amid the pandemic and the fundamental role social plays in its marketing efforts.

How have you pivoted your marketing strategies in recent months?

We took a step back to reevaluate our marketing strategy and make necessary changes. At a high level, our in-house creative and media buying teams have allowed the brand to employ an agile approach that lets us shift strategies quickly and appropriately. Right now, we are being extremely thoughtful about creative and media spend, striving to reflect the position our customers are in.

Like other fashion brands, we felt the need to pivot quickly and adopt the mindset of our customers. This included shifting away from common spring trends and focusing on cozy layers, such as knit sweaters, slip-on sneakers and flat sandals that work with our current stay-at-home lifestyle.

Our team has also had to rethink how to capture content and deliver the best customer experience possible. Our photographers built at-home studios to capture Product-Detail-Page (PDP) and still-life photography, and we partnered with model and photographer duos who are sheltering in place together to do editorial shoots at home. The setting is very relevant and authentic, and it has allowed the brand to partner with and support freelance talent during this time.

Ensuring that our collaborators and content creators remain safe at home while still obtaining new imagery has allowed us to feature updated styles and keep marketing content fresh for customers.

What have you learned during this time?

Our understanding of what being agile and nimble in times of uncertainty looks like has been thoroughly tested by the pandemic. Core to any marketing strategy, whether in a global health crisis or otherwise, is ensuring that the plan is relevant and experiential for the consumer. During this time, our marketing team has learned how to pivot a full marketing plan due to changed consumer experiences.

With the goal of being resonant and deliver messaging that reflects our member mindset and the world, our marketing initiatives have been focused on reflecting our members' "need state," which has worked in our favor. Understanding and promoting inventory that consumers are wearing right now — loungewear, leisure, comfort clothing — has resonated with consumers, as the brand is adapting with them.

This situation is unprecedented, and so it has come with its fair share of challenges. Having to adjust so drastically and quickly has meant that maintaining balance and reasonable work hours has been the most challenging. Ensuring that our employees are working hard to maintain the positive experience of consumers while taking care of their own mental health and stress management is constantly top of mind.

There is a unique challenge of delivering great experiences for our VIPs and keeping up with a fast-paced ecommerce business while maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Finding that middle ground is a delicate balance and challenge that many are grappling with.

JustFab is a big player in the social space. Since the pandemic, have you been leaning on social media more?

We aren't leaning on it more, but we are making adjustments to be relevant to the environment. Our customers using social media more, which gives us new insight into how they engage with the brand and various platforms.

Social media has always been a valuable asset to all TechStyle brands, including JustFab. While we take advantage of traditional channels like linear TV and streaming, emerging and established social media platforms are a huge focus. TechStyle is the No. 1 ecommerce advertiser on Instagram Stories and runs approximately 100,000 ads on Facebook platforms annually, making it one of Facebook's largest ecommerce advertisers. These platforms allow our marketing team to target fashion-forward consumers who are interested in engaging with our brands. We have been an early adopter, frequently testing innovative ways to reach fresh audiences.

Are you approaching social platforms differently?

We are always alpha and beta testing new products and features on Facebook and Instagram, and given the current state of the world, are leaning into more comfortable, casual styles conducive to a stay-at-home lifestyle. Each platform has nuances, so we always ensure our content feels native. We were very early on Snapchat, so we quickly learned that shorter videos performed better, for example. Right now, we are very excited to explore opportunities on TikTok and are already learning about how influencers engage with their communities there and how it differs from platforms like Instagram.

Have your 2020 plans changed?

We've had to shift several spring initiatives out to later in the year. Among these initiatives is JustFab's 10-year anniversary, which marks an exciting and significant milestone for the brand. Though having to postpone various celebrations surrounding the anniversary is disappointing, we felt it was the right decision. We hope to celebrate at a more appropriate time, even if that means leaning on virtual tools. We also look forward to the chance to honor and celebrate our 2+ million

VIP members, many of whom have been with us from the beginning. Currently, our fall plans have not changed, and we remain optimistic about the second half of the year.