

Positioning High- and Low-Status Brands in Social Media: The Potential of Communication Style

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Abstract

Luxury brands pose a special case for social media adoption, as visibility is essential for aspiration while excessive closeness risks eroding exclusivity. This research examines how communication style can help luxury brands navigate this tension. Across two studies, we test the effects of socially close versus socially distant language in social-media posts. Study 1 shows that distant communication leads consumers to infer higher brand status, even when content is constant. Study 2 demonstrates that distant language increases perceived luxury value—social, uniqueness, and quality—which subsequently enhances brand attitude. Together, the results reveal that communication style is a subtle yet effective tool for maintaining symbolic distance while benefiting from social-media reach.

Track: Digital Marketing & Social Media