


HBO's "The White Lotus" collabs highlight the cross-channel commerce opportunity

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Emmy Liederman

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Brands are assuring consumers that if they can't be a money launderer's wife from North Carolina, they can at least shop the looks from her Thailand getaway.

HBO's hit show "The White Lotus," is extending its off-screen influence with a series of [retail](#) partnerships. Though the show revolves around miserable rich people on vacation, it keeps viewers engaged with fashion, scenery, and unattainable luxury. Brands including Banana Republic, H&M, and Kiehl's have seized the opportunity.

"As entertainment becomes more interactive and commerce becomes more experiential, the line between content and commerce is going to fully blur," said AJ Vernet, senior business development executive at Hatch.IM. "Brands and streamers that embrace this will win both hearts and wallets."

Partnering with paradise

Since season 1 dropped in 2021, the series' popularization of casual luxury has positioned retailers to embrace partnerships, according to Pearl Yeung, head of commercial strategy and partner at Electric.

"The show's depiction of resort wear and luxury vacation attire sparked a massive trend for high-end, chic yet casual clothing that was both aspirational and attainable," she said.

Tombolo's "Reptile Dysfunction" shirt worn by "White Lotus" character Lochlan was an instant hit, which proves the power of these collaborations, said Yeung.

While creating retail products based on shows and movies isn't a novel concept, fashion lines that are tangentially related to content and inspired by them is, said Rashaun Hall, VP of streaming and partnerships at Fuse Media.

Direct replicas "fall into the costume motif," which can be gimmicky and less sustainable than an inspired collection that is subtly connected to the show, said Hall.

"You can go to the NBC store at Rockefeller Center and get a T-shirt with a number of different TV shows, but content and commerce inspired by those shows is a relatively new revolution," he said.

Maintaining creative integrity

When approaching these partnerships, retailers must be careful to not compromise the nuance of a show—especially when the plot pokes fun at consumerism itself—said Allison Leu, creative director at DEPT.

"We know it's a satirical show poking at greed, wealth, and consumerism," said Leu. "It feels like a lost opportunity for something clever and tongue-in-cheek that could have happened."

Leu praised H&M for being the most thoughtful with their "White Lotus" partnership. The collection was designed by the show's costume designer Alex Bovaird, who broke down her creative process in an interview attached to the collaboration.

A peek at TV's shoppable future?

While HBO hasn't integrated these partnerships into the show itself, they could be a preview into how retail and Connected TV ([CTV](#)) will continue their convergence.

- 62.7% of US consumers discover new brands or products from TV, and well over a third (38.7%) searched online to consider buying something that they saw on TV, per a September 2024 EMARKETER survey conducted with Shopsense AI.
- Some 43% of consumers wish they could shop online using their TV, according to LG Ad Solutions' Shoppable TV report.

Announcements at this year's CES hinted at a near future where such "White Lotus" styles can be bought on the TV while watching the show.

- LG and startup TheTake, announced an upcoming "click to search" feature for LG's smart TVs, which they say will allow users to select items on screen with the LG remote and shop products with LG's webOS Pay functionality.

- TheTake also partnered with Samsung for new shoppable TV features announced at CES, including allowing viewers to shop for trending products in shows streamed through Samsung TVs.

When retail shifts to [on-screen commerce](#), streaming services must carefully consider how they might interrupt an audience's experience, said Hall.

"For a show with such a devoted following, it's all encompassing and you don't want to be taken out of that with a brand," said Hall. "Doing products inspired by that show makes a lot more sense."

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