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To Truly Know a Brand's Voice



By Jodi Sweetbaum

How did you get started in brand advertising and learn the necessary skills?

Out of school, I started working on video and commercial production for MTV, and I quickly realized that I loved to be at the beginning of the thought, at the development of the creation. I began working with quite a few brands on the commercial side of the business, including Elizabeth Arden, and when a temporary spot opened up on its team, they asked me to sit in and help run commercial and print production—first temporarily, then full time. I became more and more involved with the head of Elizabeth Arden's creative department and its director—we really became a team, working together to develop the brand from a visual perspective, and I loved it. So learning the necessary skills was very intuitive for me at the beginning.

Since starting at New York-based creative agency Lloyd&Co., how has the dialogue between the fashion, beauty and luxury brands you work with and their consumers evolved? How has this evolution shaped Lloyd&Co.'s designs and branding strategies?

Today's brands must tell their stories across so many more platforms and touchpoints than ever before. They are constantly communicating with consumers and have more opportunities to highlight their voices. As luxury brands' dialogues with consumers have increased and changed, so has our methodology in telling their brand stories: we're getting even faster, tighter and more focused in our communications strategies. The challenge is making sure a brand's voice is cohesive and consistent throughout.



Remember that the brand always comes first.

Has the luxury industry changed? Absolutely, the industry has changed because the business of luxury fashion has changed. There is new pressure to deliver faster, more frequent collections, and it has become more difficult for fashion brands to honor their founders' voices.

Lloyd&Co. has worked with brands such as Gucci for years. When revisiting such long-standing relationships, how do you honor each client's voice, yet keep your work visually fresh? Our agency is unique in that we work directly with fashion designers, and each of these designers has a voice we connect with. Once you've developed this kind of trust and partnership—and you truly know a brand's voice—it becomes easier to push the boundaries a bit and create fresh, innovative work. At Lloyd&Co., we're grounded in the knowledge that we have the freedom to explore.

What challenges must long-established brands such as Bottega Veneta and Estée Lauder address in order to remain relevant? The greatest challenge facing today's legacy brands is appealing to the next generation of consumers. Everyone wants to attract millennials, but not every brand offers product lines within Generation Y's and Generation Z's price points—you have to be able to talk high and low, and give young consumers an opportunity to connect with your brand through less expensive lines. You also have to decide who you want to be relevant to and how you can communicate with this audience without losing your brand identity.

What trends in advertising are you most interested in? The use of digital. More specifically, I'm interested in using digital to create campaigns with

long-lasting impact—not just jumping on the latest tech trend or social media craze, because trends can be scary—but exploring how to make powerful work in this space.

What advice do you have for someone just entering the field of advertising and branding? Remember that the brand always comes first. Make sure you understand the ins and outs of the clients you're working with. If you don't know the brand, you won't be able to create great work for them—plain and simple.



As president and managing director of New York-based creative agency **Lloyd&Co.**, Jodi Sweetbaum has been responsible for marketing and branding strategy for all agency clients since 1996, including such brands as Cole Haan, Gucci and Yves Saint Laurent. While running the business side of Lloyd&Co., Sweetbaum brings a brand-centric approach to the agency's work across platforms, developing a strong, interactive dialogue between each client and the consumer.



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