

SOFTWARE AND TECHNOLOGY

Gucci empowers esports talent with new Gaming Academy'

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Gucci is looking to foster a healthy gaming environment within the world of esports. Image credit: Gucci

By NORA HOWE

Italian fashion house Gucci has partnered with esports competitive gaming platform **FaceIt** to propel top gaming talent through the development program Gucci Gaming Academy.

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Designed to empower young esports talents while creating a healthier competition environment, Gucci Gaming Academy provides support through dedicated coaching sessions, teamwork activities and mental health resources. To celebrate the new program, Gucci released "Bellhop," a short film directed by Tom Newman, portraying the influence of Guccio Gucci as well as the importance of mentorship.

"Gucci is at the forefront of the luxury industry's foray into the world of gaming," said Nicolas Oudinot, executive vice president of new business and CEO of Gucci Vault, in a statement.

"As part of our mission to build meaningful relationships with communities in a genuinely authentic way, we are dedicated to supporting the up-and-coming generations of players to help manage the challenges they may face as a result of participating in esports."

Gucci Gaming

The campaign marking the launch of the new program depicts a young and eager bellhop during his first day at the Faceit Pro League (FPL) hotel, an environment in which esports professionals circulate. He is guided through the steps to success by real-life esports commentator James Bardolph.

The hotel setting is also an allusion to the early life of the house founder, when Mr. Gucci worked at The Savoy Hotel. Each task the bellhop encounters is a lesson learned along the journey of achieving his dreams.

"Gucci has effectively blended its founder's first foray in the luxury space while promoting their new Gaming Academy," said Rebecca Miller, founder/CEO of **ARTful Communication**, New York. "Outside of being well shot, the script, actors, branded product and environment demonstrate inclusivity without a hint of pretentiousness."

"The film is a wonderful talent agent for Gucci."

A Gucci-dressed bellhop learns the tricks and trades of FPL Hotel

"The FPL is like a ship," Mr. Bardolph tells the young employee. "The expectation is you pull your weight and do everything in your power to keep the vessel tip-top as any other crew member would do.

"Communication is paramount a great communicator listens and puts people at ease and a bellhop always remembers what people hate," he continues. "We are on this voyage together and building chemistry is vital to being successful.

In classic Gucci style, the film boasts brightly colored ensembles, intricate details and dramatic editing. The bellhop pushes carts filled to the top with Gucci luggage, each tagged with different esports players' names.

"You must be meticulous in everything you set out to achieve," Mr. Bardolph says. "Most importantly, have humility."

Beginning with the multiplayer gam Counter-Strike: Global Offensive (CS:GO), players will be chosen from the FPL, FPL Challenger and FaceIt Matchmaking System, with four rising stars already selected as the academy's first class of mentees: Lukasz "mwky" Pachucki, Mrti "shadiyy" Gtmani, Brajan "DGL" Lemecha and Rokas "EspiranTo" Milasauskas.

Selection for the Academy is based on in-game performance, as well as interviews to assess applicants' personal values, including their aptitude for teamwork and approach to conflict resolution.

Players will receive full-time mentorship from coaches, mental health support, premium hardware and access to other programs to enhance in-game performance and well-being.

Gucci Gaming Academy's ambassadors include commentator James Bardolph, pro CS:GO player Christopher "GeT_RiGhT" Alesund and esports player Stephanie "missharvey" Harvey.

As part of the program, they will offer mentorship through monthly one-on-one sessions with players.

Gucci Gaming Academy is comprised of group and individual activities to improve the esports athletes' skills, within and outside their respective titles, as well as additional benefits such as monthly financial support, access to professional coaching, expertise from the World Health Organization on health topics, psychologist-facilitated sessions on performing under stress, fame and teamwork and more.

We are teaming up with [@gucci](#) to launch the Gucci Gaming Academy, a new programme designed to support the development of up-and-coming gaming talents and help accelerate their career path. <https://t.co/XUBFURLfP7>

Welcome to the Gucci Gaming Academy - a pic.twitter.com/tj3NFftWXy

FACEIT (@FACEIT) [May 22, 2022](#)

The program aims to support talent who aspire to enter professional contracts. Once approached by other professional and Academy teams, players may leave Gucci's program.

All in on gamification

Gucci's new partnership with FaceIt marks just another step in its multiyear gamification strategy, which now boasts an impressive portfolio of gaming collaborations and projects.

In 2018, Gucci was the first to partner with the mobile application Genies, which integrated avatar-to-avatar communication with artificial intelligence and enabled users to dress their avatars with luxury apparel from Gucci ([see story](#)).

Two years later, the brand partnered with Grimcookies and Harrie, two Sims custom creators, to recreate its Off the Grid capsule collection for the iconic video game. Implementing sustainability points, players who downloaded items received a positive environment score, mood boost and a boost to their green eco-footprint ([see story](#)).

In the first half of 2021, Gucci partnered with social app Zepeto in a gaming-centric push to engage consumers, allowing users to dress their Zepeto 3D avatars in pieces from Gucci's latest collections ([see story](#)) and then Roblox for an interactive virtual exhibit celebrating Gucci Garden Archetypes ([see story](#)).

In the latter half, the label delved further into the gaming world through a collaboration with 100 Thieves, a gaming organization and lifestyle brand.

Gucci and 100 Thieves drew on their shared values of freedom and self-expression in creating an exclusive backpack ([see story](#)).

With the Gucci Gaming Academy, Gucci continues its strategy toward gamification with a special interest in fostering young talent.

"Heritage luxury brands are experiencing the same talent challenges as mass brands," Ms. Miller said. "Entry level jobs are no longer appealing as few companies have funded well-defined training or career paths to attract prospective employees, nor demonstrate their value to the business."

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