

CASE STUDY

# Macy's Breaks into Festival Fashion with its Own Summer Vibes Concert on YouTube



The popular retailer uses an at-home music festival to reach Millennials in their festival fashion micro-moments.

From holiday window displays to its famous Thanksgiving Day Parade, Macy's has been about shopping and entertainment for more than 150 years.

So when Macy's wanted to make a splash in the rising category of festival fashion, they naturally came up with an entertaining way to do it: [Macy's Summer Vibes](#). This landmark [online music festival](#), hosted on YouTube, used hot fashions and cool music to reach hundreds of thousands of Millennials in a spectacular way and turn their I-need-some-ideas moments into I-want-to-buy-it moments.

## Inspired by Macy's Consumers

"Engaging Millennials to shop at Macy's is an important focus for us," says Serena Potter, Macy's Group Vice President of Digital Media Strategy. "As they head to college and set up dorm rooms, then get that first internship or job out of college, we want to be their store of choice."

But in some cases, Macy's wasn't yet part of Millennial consideration sets. "We realized we needed to think outside the box to cut through the noise and capture their attention," says Potter.

Macy's started with a key insight about Millennials: They love music festivals but need ideas and help in building their own style of festival fashion. "We realized Macy's could bring them a one-of-a-kind experience: a concert with their favorite artists in the comfort of their own homes that would also showcase our great festival fashion looks. Macy's Summer Vibes offered an authentic experience that combined great music, great clothes, and a great cause."

## ABOUT MACY'S

- Macy's is an American chain of department stores known for its niche in popular culture and the diversity of its merchandise
- Headquarters: Cincinnati, Ohio; New York, New York
- [macy.com](#)

## GOALS

- Make a splash in the growing category of festival fashion while encouraging Millennials to become Macy's shoppers

## APPROACH

- Create Macy's Summer Vibes, an online music festival starring YouTube influencers
- Run TrueView Discovery video ads to get the message out to just the right audience
- Use Shoppable Cards to be there for viewers as their I-need-some-ideas moments turn into I-want-to-buy-it moments

## RESULTS

- 4+ million views of the festival and related videos on YouTube
- Lift of over 60% in festival product consideration after the concert aired
- 15% rise in searches for Macy's on Google and YouTube in the month after the festival

When brainstorming ideas, Macy's worked closely with its Google representatives to look at search and traffic trends, and understand how Millennials look for inspiration online. "YouTube was an easy choice," says Potter. "It's *the* video platform for consumers in their I-need-some-ideas moments, especially when it comes to fashion." In fact, people in the U.S. spent nearly twice as much time watching fashion and apparel shopping videos on YouTube in 2015 than they had the previous year.<sup>1</sup>

### Owning Two Important Fashion Moments

The Macy's Summer Vibes Concert was broadcast live on YouTube on June 2, 2016. The concert featured YouTube stars Todrick Hall, The Gardiner Sisters, AJ Rafael, and Macy Kate. (Yes, her mother named her while watching the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.)

"Summer Vibes was the first time that all of these YouTube influencers performed together," Potter notes. "The natural chemistry on and off stage was magical, and helped elevate the content to another level beyond what we expected."

Just before the concert, Macy's wheeled in racks of its festival fashion line and let the artists mix-and-match their own looks. "We knew this had to be authentic for everyone, so we wanted them to pick their own looks based on their unique style," says Potter. "They got really excited and had fun with that part of the project."

Viewers were excited too. "Customers have told us that they want help seeing how to put it all together: how to wear a shirt or a whole look a couple of different ways, so they can best imagine it on themselves," says Potter. "I always think it's great when you can really see which elements might work for you, or how you would rock them a little bit differently to really accentuate your own personal style."

"YouTube was an easy choice. It's *the* video platform for consumers in their I-need-some-ideas moments, especially when it comes to fashion."

<sup>1</sup> YouTube Data, U.S., classification as a shopping video was based on public data such as headlines, titles, and tags, etc., and may not represent all apparel shopping videos on YouTube, Sep. 2014 vs. Sep. 2015.



“Customers have told us that they want help seeing how to put it all together: how to wear a shirt or a whole look a couple of different ways, so they can best imagine it on themselves.”

And when their consumers found a look they loved, Macy's made it easy for them to make it part of their wardrobe. To help them move from I-need-some-ideas to I-want-to-buy-it moments, Macy's used YouTube [shoppable cards](#). Viewers who saw a look they liked could simply click to learn more and buy the items directly from the video.

“Shoppable cards really cross that bridge between brand and performance, from inspiration to buying it now,” says Potter. “They show the consumer they can actually get the fashions they see in Summer Vibes, right in that moment. Shoppable cards are easy to execute and they're a huge benefit to us as a retailer.”

## Getting the Word Out

Macy's used teaser videos and a variety of YouTube features to create excitement for the festival. Most notably, they used [TrueView discovery ads](#) to be there for consumers who had the most I-need-some-ideas intent. The focus on search helped Macy's better understand their consumers' intent in the moment and be there as they looked for music and fashion inspiration.

Macy's also tapped into the four influencers and their large social audiences to drive organic buzz and excitement before, during, and after the festival. That made good sense: 6 in 10 YouTube subscribers say they would follow the advice of a favorite creator over a favorite TV or movie personality on what to buy.<sup>2</sup> It

was one more authentic way for Macy's to offer their consumers inspiration in the moments they needed it.

Because giving back is also important to Millennials, Macy's made the concert a benefit for Got Your 6, a national coalition that empowers veterans to build stronger communities across America. For every view of the festival, Macy's donated \$1, up to \$100,000, to Got Your 6. The message was, "Together we can make a difference," says Potter.

### A Smash Summer Hit

Macy's set out with a big goal: To make a name for itself in festival fashion while showing Millennials a fabulous time. The results were "tremendous," says Potter. The concert had more than 1.5 million views on YouTube in the first two months after its broadcast. Add in related content like teaser videos, interviews, and backstage moments, and Macy's saw more than 4 million views—nearly half of them on mobile.

Most notably, through an online Google Brand Lift study, Macy's saw a **lift of over 60%** in festival product consideration after the concert aired. Searches for the keyword Macy's on Google and YouTube rose by 15% in the month after the festival.

"Our goal for this campaign was to create awareness that Macy's is the go-to place for festival fashion," says Serena Potter. By that standard, Macy's Summer Vibes was a smash hit. "We saw double-digit increases in brand awareness, and also brand interest and consideration—the triple threat."

"Macy's Summer Vibes campaign really connected with Millennial shoppers because it perfectly brought together key lifestyle elements that are important to them: fun, authenticity, giving back, and above all a fresh way of approaching their individual style," says Potter. "The results speak for themselves, and overall we were thrilled."

"Shoppable cards really cross that bridge between brand and performance, from inspiration to buying it now. They show the consumer they can actually get the fashions they see in Summer Vibes, right in that moment."

<sup>2</sup> Google-commissioned Ipsos Connect, "The YouTube Generation" study, U.S., Nov. 2015. YouTube creators subscribers aged 13–64, n=654.