

Marketing Italian Jeans Through Social Networking

Marisa Iallonardo (May 25, 2008)



The Italian designer clothing company turns to social networking to market its products on the web. It might be hard to find the perfect fitting pair of Diesel jeans, but their music campaign makes it easy to find great new music, by largely unknown bands.

Recently, I came across an article in Women's Wear Daily about Diesel Jeans' newest campaign: Diesel: U: Music. I was excited about the venture, although the idea itself isn't a new one for the company. Seven years ago they launched a music competition where unsigned bands would compete for a chance to gain exposure and perform live in London. It helped then largely unknown bands like We Are Scientists and The Bravery generate lots more buzz. This year, though, they've ditched the competition idea and instead are allowing users to upload their own original music to <http://dum.diesel.com> [2]. To go along with it, they've set up a radio station out of South London, which will be broadcasting 24 hours a day until May 30.

In an article in British Vogue, Andy Griffiths, the head of communications for Diesel was quoted as saying, "Diesel-U-Music Radio covers everything we really value - music, community, DIY spirit and new ideas. It's about smart, creative people, whether they're established artists or bedroom DJs, in New Cross or New York, showcasing their unique view on the world and doing it with passion. And it's going to make amazing radio."

For those who love to find new music, it really is a great resource. What has been created is, as one Diesel spokesperson noted in the WWD article, a "social networking site for music." Much like



MySpace Music, which has been a launching pad for many great artists and much in the same vein as YouTube or Current TV, where users upload their own videos, the site allows bands to create their own page profiles, complete with blog posts, sample songs and room for user comments.

A quick scan on the bands page found groups from Peru, Japan, the UK, Slovenia and even Wyoming—with the music varying tremendously in sound and style. As someone who's been known to listen to French rap and Italian techno, this is perfect.

Now, if only they could make finding the right pair of jeans that easy.

I have a strange love affair with Diesel. It probably started some five years ago, when I went to Italy and all my friends—who, when it came to jeans, previously owned only Levi's, maybe a pair by Lee—were decked out in these tight, dark jeans with the letter "D" strategically placed over the back pocket. Although the northern Italy-based company, whose headquarters are in Molvena, a small town in the Veneto region (which I hear, has an amazing outlet store), has been around since 1978, their premium denim line was the thing to wear at the time and everyone it seemed—guys, girls, grandmothers (ok, I'm exaggerating, but hey, who knows?)—had a pair.

I loved them, instantly. They, however, didn't seem to love me back. Finding a pair that fit perfectly was a daunting task that took me to tons of different stores, in and out of countless dressing rooms and in and out of what felt like every style available that season. What made it worse, you see, was that I wasn't entering the typical U.S. retailer where you can walk in, try on 10 pairs of pants, walk out, and have no one be the wiser. (Can you tell I've done this before?) No, this is Italy, where the salespeople say "Salve" before you've even fully opened the door, where they lay out each pair of jeans on a table, explain the wash, the cut and what makes one pocket design different from the other. Where they don't take easily to the "No, grazie" and smile from an indecisive American girl. I thought my cousin Miriam was going to strangle me with a low-waisted, slim-fit, five-pocket, stitched-trimmed pair at any second.

Eventually, though, I did find them. And let me tell you, for me, it was well worth the hassle. They're dark, with a skinny leg and a wide waistband and even now, a few years later, I wear them constantly. Since finding those elusive jeans, I've kept tabs on the company and shop their stores often.

And now, after listening to different bands from the DUM site throughout the entire time that I've been writing this article, I can guarantee I'll be heading back to it often in hopes of finding groups from around the world, great songs and of course, the band that fits me best.

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<http://dum.diesel.com/> [2]

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