
Rules for Engaging with the British Royal Family

Having a positive relationship with the British Royal Family can boost a brand's turnover and increase the desire to own its products. British Royalty has the potential to be the ultimate influencers but not all royals are equal in their impact on a brand.

There are four ways fashion brands can engage with British Royalty:

- Gifting of merchandise
- Sales of merchandise or services
- Acknowledging the relationship via PR or advertising
- Royal warrants

Gifting of Merchandise

Gifting of merchandise to any member of the Royal Family is forbidden. Clause 2.2 of the Royal Gift Policy prohibits the use of gifting: "[Gifts offered by commercial enterprises in the UK should normally be declined](#)".

However, there have been examples of brands engaging with individuals before they became part of the Royal Family. British handbag brand Strathberry had the foresight to gift several bags to Meghan Markle in 2017 while she was dating Prince Harry. A month after their engagement in November 2017, Meghan was spotted on her first public engagement with the Prince carrying a [Strathberry tote](#). In February 2018, the Royal couple visited Scotland with Markle again wearing a [Strathberry bag](#). The PR impact for the brand was tremendous, with merchandise selling out in minutes, sales increasing by more than 200% and a waiting list for the bags in the thousands.

Sales of Products or Services

Two members of the Royal Family who garner much publicity are Kate Middleton, the Duchess of Cambridge, and Meghan Markle, the Duchess of Sussex. Traditionally senior royals do not shop in person and members of The Royal Family have to abide by [strict guidelines](#) when purchasing products or services. By extension, brands have to follow a strict protocol when selling to these Royals.

Members of the Cambridge and Sussex households contact several brands and request items. Once the brand has confirmed availability, a discreet delivery is made. The respective Duchess then has a private fitting. [Natasha Archer](#) and [Virginia Chadwyck – Healy](#) are known to assist the Duchess of Cambridge. Typically one to three outfits and accessories are selected. Only the chosen items are paid for and the rest is returned.

It is speculated that both the Duchess of Cambridge and the Duchess of Sussex receive a lucrative discount based on public exposure.

Acknowledging the Relationship via PR or Advertising

Many brands benefit from their association with members of the Royal Family through newspaper and magazine articles, and from posts and images on social media. However, brands themselves are forbidden to directly acknowledge this relationship via PR or advertising.

In 2014, luxury British jewellery brand, Annoushka, was accused of [breaking advertising standards](#). Ducas was using pictures of Kate Middleton wearing her pearl drop earrings to promote sales at the brand's Bicester Village outlet. The display also showed images of Emma Watson and Rihanna in a series of video stills. However, Buckingham Palace ordered the images of Kate to be removed, as the display breached Advertising Standard Authority guidelines that firms' adverts must not use images of royals "being publicly involved" with their goods or services. John Ayton, Executive Chairman and co-founder of Annoushka, had the images taken down from the Bicester Village display.

Royal Warrants

[Royal Warrants](#) are an acknowledgement of a brand's long-standing business relationship with one or more members of the Royal Family. Royal Warrants mean that a brand can display the Royal Arms and Warrant on its products, stationery, advertisements and other printed materials per the [Lord Chamberlain's Rules](#).

In keeping with protocol, only three members of the Royal Family can issue warrants - the reigning monarch, the Queen, the consort, the Duke of Edinburgh, and the heir apparent, the Prince of Wales.

To qualify for a Royal Warrant, a brand has to supply goods or services for [five years](#) and maintain an ongoing relationship with the Royal Family. Warrants are typically reviewed every five years. Under the Merchandise Marks Act of 1887, it is illegal to fabricate one.

Warrants cover a diverse range of goods and services and there are approximately 800 Royal Warrant holders. Prominent fashion warrant holders are listed here:

- Aston Martin Lagonda
- J. Barbour & Sons - Barbour
- Bentley Motors
- Burberry
- Cornelia James Limited
- DAKS
- Ettinger
- Gieves & Hawkes
- Henry Poole & Co Saville Row
- Hunter Boot

- Jaguar Land Rover
- John Lobb
- John Smedley
- Johnstons of Elgin
- Launer
- Lock & Co Hatters
- Penhaligons
- Pringle of Scotland
- Frank Smythson - Smythson of Bond Street
- Turnbull & Asser

As a point of note, Ettinger, founded in 1934, is one of the finest luxury leather goods manufacturers in the United Kingdom and the only one with a [Royal Warrant](#) to HRH The Prince of Wales.

Former Royal Warrant Holders

It is also possible for a brand to have a Royal Warrant [withdrawn or cancelled](#). Harrods was granted a Royal Warrant in 1910 but it was withdrawn in 2000 after a fallout over the [death](#) of Princess Diana. In 2017, British luxury lingerie brand [Rigby & Peller](#) lost its Royal Warrant of 57 years due to publicly discussing the Queen's fitting.

Who are the Royal Family

The head of the Royal Family is [The Queen](#). Her consort is the [Duke of Edinburgh](#)

[Prince Charles](#) and [Princess Diana](#) of Wales had two male children. Former [Jigsaw](#) employee Catherine (Kate) Middleton married their eldest son Prince William in 2011. After the wedding, Prince William became the [Duke of Cambridge](#) and Catherine assumed the title Her Royal Highness, [The Duchess of Cambridge](#).

The younger son, Prince Harry married the American actress Megan Markle in 2018. Following the wedding, Prince Harry became the [Duke of Sussex](#) while Meghan acquired the title. Her Royal Highness, [The Duchess of Sussex](#).

Impact On Fashion

The Queen is revered as "[the undisputed British style icon](#)". Despite the [presence](#) of an official dressmaker; [Barbour](#), [Hermes](#) and [Launer](#) are widely associated with the monarch.

Newsweek has estimated the Duchess of Cambridge's fashion patronage is [worth £1 billion](#). Matthew Williamson, who aspires to "[make women feel like peacocks](#)", has spoken of the impact on his brand: "[The dress she was wearing sold out straight away. We just couldn't make enough, we sold out of everything we had!](#)". It is apparent the "Kate Effect" has limitations. [Temperley London](#)'s significant endorsement has not prevented an operating loss of £5.2 million.

Fashion platform [Lyst](#) has ranked the Duchess of Sussex as the [number one searched- for influencer of 2019](#). Australia's [Outland](#) saw global sales and online traffic spike by [2374 per cent and 3,000 per cent](#) respectively after royal endorsement.

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