

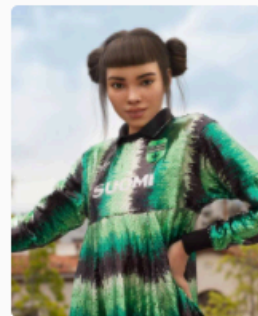
RESEARCH

5 Notable Virtual Influencer + Brand Partnerships

The virtual influencer industry continues to grow as more and more brands pour dollars into these valuable, virtual partnerships.

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Virtual Humans Mentioned



In pursuit of message control, higher engagement, direct access to younger generations, PR opportunities, and new, innovative mediums, brands turn to virtual influencers to get the job done. Yes – fictionalized, CGI humans designed for social influence are proving a useful alternative to human influencers in executing successful, massive brand campaigns.

Virtual influencers are valuable. In her first five years of life, [Hatsune Miku](#) earned \$120MM in total revenue through releasing music, merchandise, hologram concerts, and a collection of open-source, sharable media all along the way. The company behind [Lil Miquela](#), transmedia X18K USA studio creating character-driven story worlds, earned a \$125MM valuation within three years of launch in pursuit of similar ambitions. Nearly every emerging startup in this space

has successfully raised well-justified capital to create, apply, and grow virtual humans into real world, revenue-generating utilities.

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Brands, creators, and investors alike are unified in their belief in this industry. From Samsung to KFC to Vogue, all the way to fashion brands such as Balmain, Louis Vuitton, Tommy Hilfiger, Marc Jacobs, and more, virtual influencers are valuable centerpieces to any brand's growth strategy. [Virtual influencers](#) are the new media world order, digging deeper into public consciousness with every post.

Now, for your inspiration, here are a few top examples of successful brand + virtual influencer partnerships:

1. Shudu Gram Models for Balmain



shudu.gram
London, United Kingdom

Profili Gör



Instagram'da Daha Fazlasını Gör



18,029 beğenme



Yorum ekle...



1. Shudu Gram Models for Balmain

In Fall 2018, French luxury fashion house Balmain launched a campaign starring three digital women. Two of the models, Margot (pictured left) and Zhi (pictured right), are exclusive to the Balmain brand, while the third, [Shudu Gram](#), is a free agent popularly known as The World's First Digital Supermodel.

The utilization of virtual models in the Balmain campaign evoked a wide range of reactions from consumers and journalists. Most were drawn in by the artistry involved in creating an ultra-realistic, virtual human fitted in high-fashion clothing, while others showed extreme aversion to humans being “replaced” or “put out of work” by these new, virtual humans. On another front, the decision to craft Shudu as a black woman has been praised by some as advocating for inclusion of black beauty and diversity in fashion, while others argue job opportunities are being taken away from human models of color.

Spokespeople from Balmain, as well as CGI artist Cameron-James Wilson, insist campaigns such as these are meant to create a new realm within the modeling industry and showcase a different kind of art rather than compete with, or phase out, human models.

2. Noonouri: IMG Model and Fashion Star



noonouri 
Paris, France

[Profili Gör](#)



[Instagram'da Daha Fazlasını Gör](#)

10,878 beğenme

Yorum ekle... 

2. Noonouri: IMG Model and Fashion Star

Like Shudu, [Noonouri](#) was designed to be a star of the high fashion world. She's worked with Kim Kardashian, Tommy Hilfiger, Balenciaga, and even Vogue China in multiple cover shoots, among others. No one is confused if this big-eyed, cartoon-like character is a real person or not – she's a virtual human, and she looks it.

Noonouri is a living example of the intentionality through which some virtual influencers are created. Her designer, Joerg Zuber, has a life purpose in mind spanning beyond simple collaborations with sought-after fashion brands. He not only hopes to create a following behind Noonouri, but to create a platform promoting social justice issues close to his heart, such as animal cruelty and feminism. Noonouri has the ear of fashion consumers, brands, and elite, making her an excellent vehicle to successfully promote such causes, branded or not.


3. The World Health Organization taps

Knox Frost


Knox Frost is a virtual influencer with a history of promoting health and wellness, particularly on the topic of mental health. As younger generations show slow adoption and, sometimes, total disregard for social distancing recommendations amid COVID-19, the World Health Organization took note of an opportunity to reach these younger audiences through official partnership with a virtual influencer. Virtual influencer audiences such as Knox Frost's trend far younger on average than human influencers.

The standout pro to the Knox Frost + WHO partnership is the PR wave it brought WHO. The partnership was featured by [AdAge](#), [AdWeek](#), [Mashable](#), [BuzzFeed News](#), [Insider](#), [DAZED](#), [MediaPost](#), and more. After the right virtual influencer partnership, PR benefits are how your brand wins in the second half, as WHO successfully demonstrated.

4. Lil Miquela Joins Samsung's #TeamGalaxy







Lil Miquela is shown from the chest up, wearing a black, form-fitting, sleeveless top. She has her hair styled in two buns with bangs. She is holding a Samsung smartphone in her right hand, which is wearing a blue glove. A microphone is visible on the right side of the frame. The background is a warm, yellowish-brown color. The text "#TeamGalaxy" is overlaid in white on the image.


lilmiquela 
2.8mn takipçi

[Profili Gör](#)

[Instagram'da Daha Fazlasını Gör](#)

42,326 beğenme

Yorum ekle... 

4. Lil Miquela Joins Samsung's


#TeamGalaxy


For their global #TeamGalaxy campaign, Samsung recruited virtual influencer, singer, and activist [Lil Miquela](#) to perfectly embody the campaign's tagline, "Do What You Can't".

Miquela's very existence is a testament to the creative depths technology enables us to reach. Even her rapid rise to 1M+ Instagram followers in a few, short years since her creation validates the possibility that anyone, through technology, can do what they previously thought impossible.


This successful partnership with virtual influencer Miquela enhanced the Samsung brand image by showing total cognizance of technological trends and intelligent pairing of the campaign's techy messaging to the right influencer for the job. One can imagine why Samsung continues to maintain this fruitful, innovative partnership for over a year now.

5. Guggimon and Janky Hype Steve Aoki On Tour







steveaoki 
8.9mn takipçi


[Profili Gör](#)



[Instagram'da Daha Fazlasını Gör](#)

19,528 beğenme

Yorum ekle... 

5. Guggimon and Janky Hype Steve Aoki On Tour

Superplastic.com characters [Guggimon](#) and [Janky](#) prove job opportunities for virtual influencers don't end at 'Brand Ambassador' or 'Fashion Model': they also make great hype men. Just last month, world famous DJ and producer Steve Aoki tapped the pair to be his official hype stars during his Color of Noise tour. In an Instagram post featuring the trio, Aoki also announced a toy collaboration with Superplastic, whom the pair probably calls "Daddy" based on the nature of their content and captions.

The partnership has many layers with players benefitting on all sides. Janky and Guggi's stage appearance will promote their personal brand recognition, increase their social authority, and drive follower growth. The toy licensing partnership between parent company Superplastic and Steve Aoki will drive revenues to both parties, bringing the Aoki brand to fans' bedside tables in the form of a Superplastic toy. Lastly, Aoki gains heavily on the innovation and PR front for employing two virtual influencers to join him on stage and in his social media posts. In all, the partnership is a huge win all around. Rather unfortunately, due to Coronavirus, the Color of Noise tour was [ultimately cancelled](#). In theory, the

partnership had potential to be a huge success. Here's hoping it still proliferates one day.

The virtual influencer industry continues to grow as more and more brands pour dollars into these valuable, virtual partnerships. If you have questions about how to work with or create a virtual influencer, you can [contact me here](#).

CHRISTOPHER TRAVERS

Christopher is an expert on the virtual influencer industry. He loves creating unmatched experiences, executing on ambitious growth strategies, and facilitating magical, memorable moments for others.

Concepts Discussed

Virtual Influencer

Branding

Brand

Partnership

Virtual Humans Mentioned











