

MOBILE

Ritz-Carlton pushes app engagement via Condé Nast Traveler mobile ad

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The Ritz-Carlton Naples, FL

By JEN KING

The Ritz-Carlton hotel chain is aiming to inspire travelers browsing the content on Condé Nast Traveler's mobile Web site to engage with the hotelier and download its application.



To ensure that the reader took notice of its effort, Ritz-Carlton took a dual approach by using a sidebar ad and a larger pop-up, both of which posed a question.

Questions increase the likelihood of a click-through as they can create a dialogue with the target consumer.

"When a campaign's goal is intended to drive a specific action, the general recommendation is to create the most direct route to that action," said Shuli Lowy, marketing director at [Ping Mobile](#), Los Angeles.

"Any added step will facilitate drop offs. If a brand is attempting to drive bookings, then the link should go directly to a booking page," she said. "Consumers appreciate an alignment of an ad's call to action with the suggested action on the landing page.

"The campaign could have been more transparent by either focusing both the ad and the

landing page on the hashtag promotion or on driving bookings. At the very least, the ad could have featured both on the landing page."

Ms. Lowy is not affiliated with The Ritz-Carlton, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

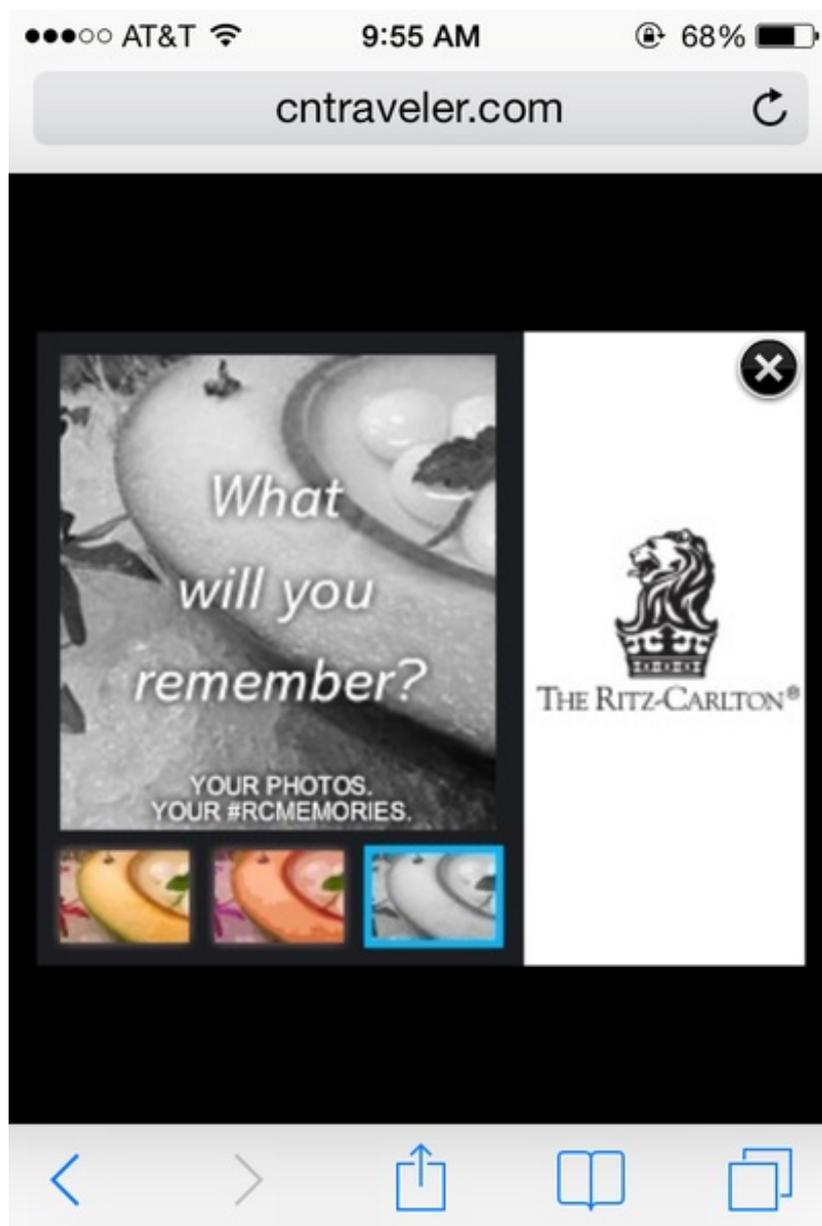
The Ritz-Carlton did not respond by press deadline.

Memories in the making

Mobile readers of Condé Nast Traveler's Web content will have to take notice of The Ritz-Carlton's effort as it pops up onto their device's screen.

Ritz-Carlton's pop-up features five tiles. On the right side, the brand's emblem is shown while the left shows a series of four images, all of which are the same.

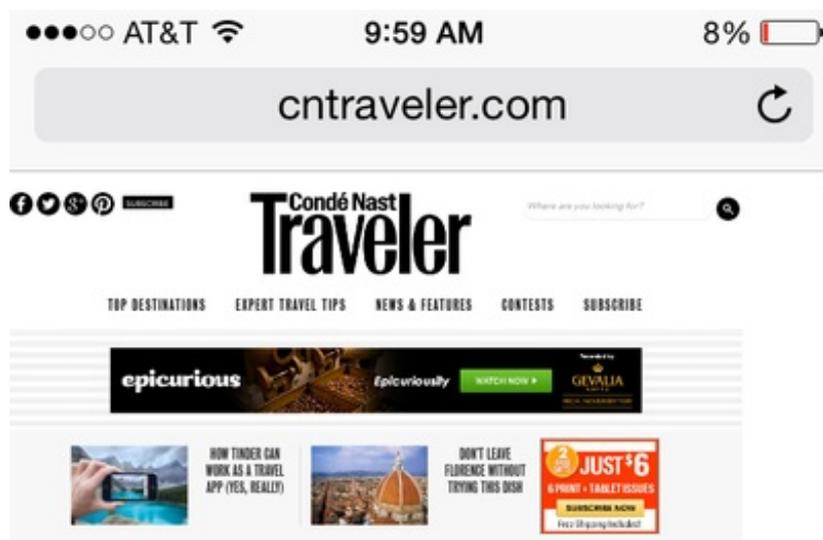
The four images show a portion of a dinner plate, the largest of which is in black and white. Below are three smaller thumbnails with different filters to emulate a consumer adjusting a photograph to be posted on social media.



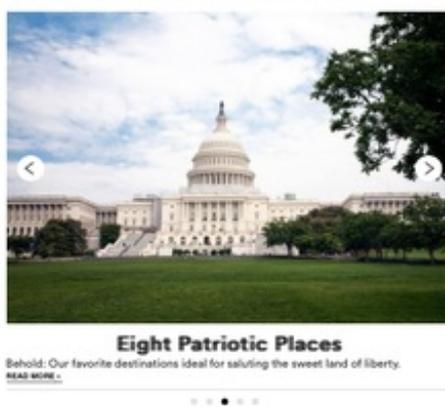
Ritz-Carlton ad

Text that asks the reader, "What will you remember?" is overlaid on the black and white photo with smaller copy that reads "Your Photos. Your #RCMemories."

The version in the banner position is similar but shows a plastic pail and shovel on a rocky shore. Instead of the hotel's logo being a focal point, the reader's eyes gravitate toward the sand toys.



Photos & Slideshows



Ritz-Carlton ad

A click-through does not land on a gallery of #RCMemories photos or even The Ritz-Carlton's social media pages. Rather, a click-through lands on the hotelier's mobile Web site where the consumer is prompted to download The Ritz-Carlton application ([see story](#)).

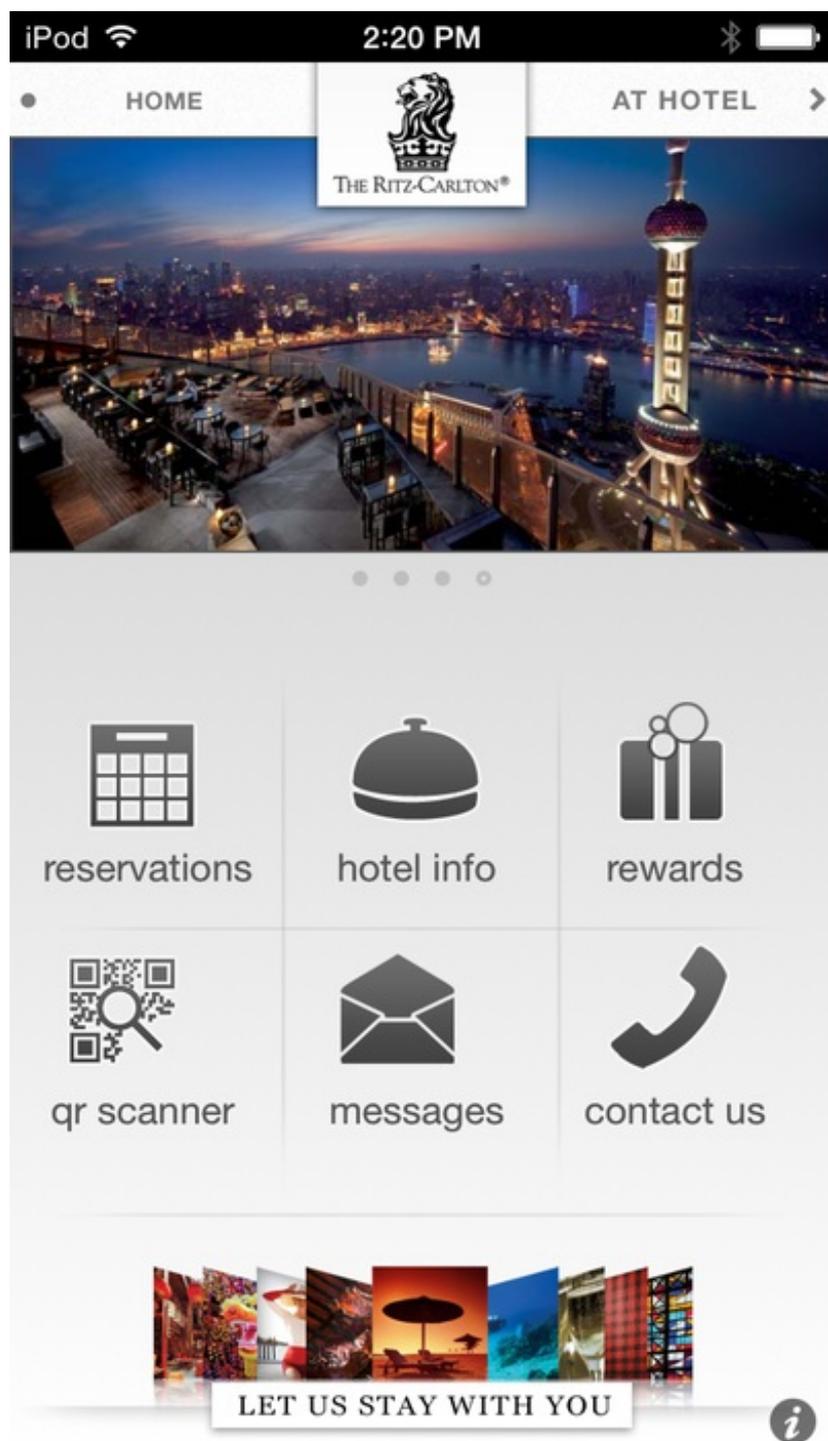
"Mobile apps provide faster browsing and more functionality than mobile Web sites," Ms. Lowy said. "Driving an app download is also valuable for a brand because it facilitates a more permanent brand presence on a device as well as enables the brand to push messages to the consumer in the future.

"Brands that have both a mobile Web site and an app will usually feature an invitation on the top of their mobile site that encourages browsers to download or switch to the app," she said.

On the latest version of the hotel's app, consumers can book a reservation, find out

information for a specific property, access their reward points, scan branded QR codes, receive message from Ritz-Carlton and contact the hotel directly.

A secondary section titled “Let Us Stay With You” allows guests to submit stories about their travel memories with the hotel.



Ritz-Carlton app

In contrast, the mobile landing page does not feature this aspect of The Ritz-Carlton’s app experience. The hotel may have benefited from outfitting the landing page with this content to further engage consumers.

This content can only be viewed via the full version of The Ritz-Carlton Web site, but is not optimized for a mobile device.

Must-have mobile

With this in mind, it is even more apparent that hotel brands must embrace mobile Web sites to engage with on-the-go consumers.

Luxury hotel brands are ramping up mobile investments to regain sales lost to online travel agencies, according to L2's latest report.

According to Business Insider, OTAs account for 64 percent of mobile hotel bookings, and are poised to maintain their advantage. Also, brands recognize the need for speedy and engaging mobile sites and 89 percent are making investments, up from 63 percent in 2013 ([see story](#)).

To maintain competitiveness, hotel brands must have a well-executed mobile strategy in place.

"As of late 2011, more than 65 percent of same day hotel reservations were being booked through mobile—and that number has been consistently increasing," Ms. Lowy said.

"Because hotel bookings are both a time and location sensitive purchase, consumers are more likely to book them on-the-go, which naturally means through mobile.

"Several large OTAs are now only operating on mobile such as Hotel Tonight," she said.

"Hotels have witnessed a quick and massive paradigm shift from desktop to mobile and virtually every major hotel brand is now operating on a mobile first approach.

"It is extremely important for hotel brands to have a smooth mobile experience—particularly when it comes to browsing and booking hotel rooms. Consumers who cannot easily find and purchase what they are looking for on brand's mobile site will go to another site."

Final Take

Jen King, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/9btSeJ0h0V0](http://www.youtube.com/embed/9btSeJ0h0V0)

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