

MOBILE

Hermès turns formal dressing into fun with tie-centric app

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Screenshot of Hermès Tie Break app

By SARAH JONES

French apparel and accessories house Hermès is giving consumers an interactive way to browse its tie selection with a new mobile application that aims to provide a respite from work or commutes.

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Luxury Daily

Hermès' Tie Break includes arcade games, GIFs, cartoons and animated tie designs, as well as tie tying tutorials and a gallery of autumn/winter 2014 tie patterns. Adding a touch of gamification to fashion will encourage consumers to interact with the entire range of Hermès' ties.

"The app goes far beyond just showing consumers a catalog of ties," said Shuli Lowy, marketing director at [Ping Mobile](#), Los Angeles.

"It allows consumers to explore different tie looks, learn how to execute various tie knots, see how tie patterns look on their current shirt, play fun 'tie breaks,' and view the process through which Hermès ties are made," she said. "It's a far more immersive experience.

"That immersive experience is what distinguishes a luxury product from an ordinary one. Consumers pay a premium for luxury products because they perceive something

extraordinary within them. Luxury marketers need to communicate that magic. The Tie Break app does just that."

Ms. Lowy is not affiliated with Hermès but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Hermès was unable to comment directly before press deadline.

Time out

Tie Break opens with a tutorial that explains the navigation of the app. Consumers can pull on images of various ties to reveal a "break."



Home screen of Hermès' Tie Break app

When the first tie is pulled, a larger image of the elephant print springs up, and the animals begin to turn around in place. A plus sign icon pulls up options to view the model, share

the break or add it to the favorites.

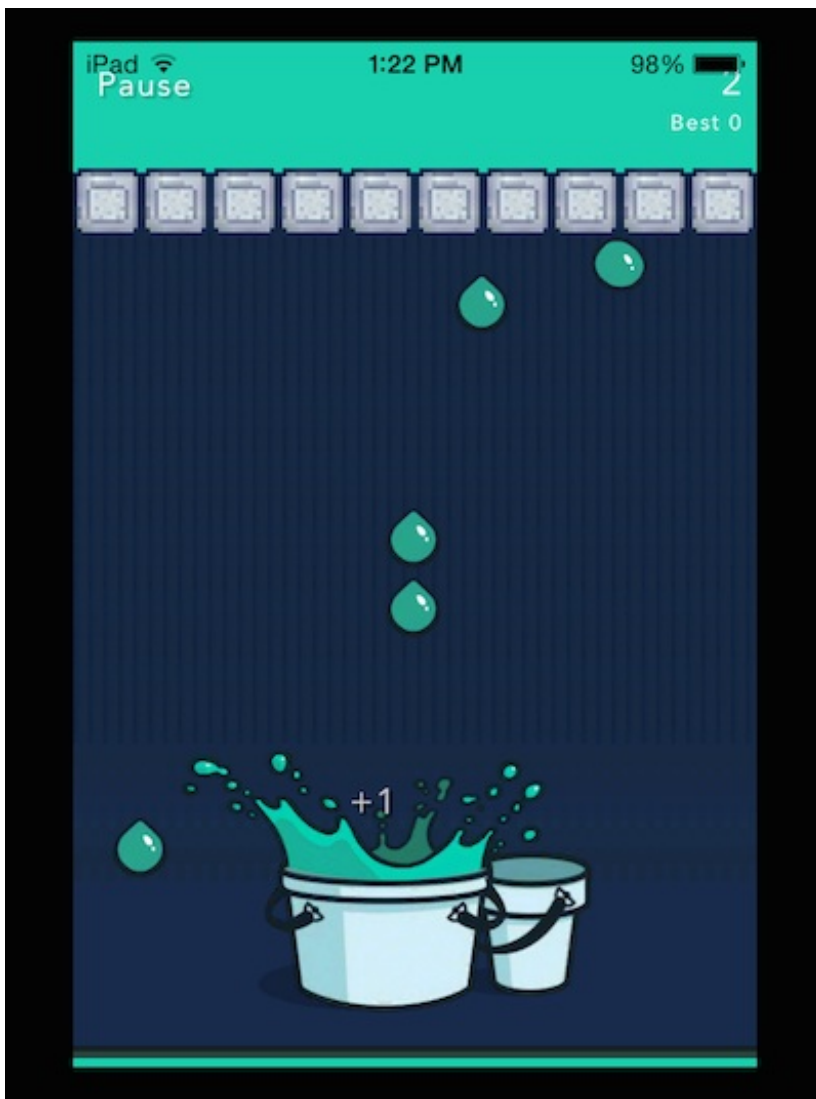
View the model lets the consumer flip through different color options in the same style. They can then click on a button to blow up the print and try it on their shirt.



Screenshot of Hermès' Tie Break app

A scarf pulls up a GIF of three models falling forward in succession in an endless loop, while another shows a cartoon of a man struggling with his bow tie.

Included in the breaks is an arcade style game "Drop," in which consumers have to try to catch paint drips in two buckets.



Screenshot of Hermès' Tie Break app

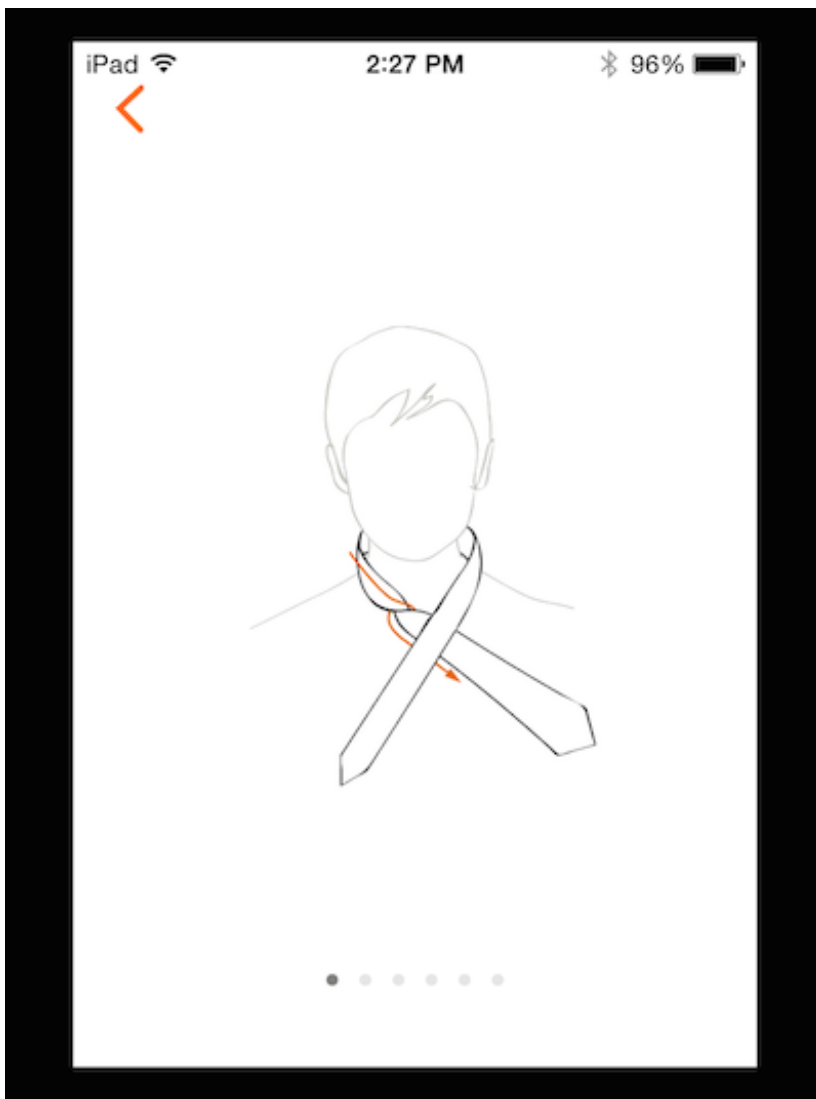
Once the consumer reaches the end of the available breaks, they are prompted to return the next day for more content.

The app can also be navigated through a menu. "Collection sample" brings up a wide range of prints for consumers to browse and pick favorites.



Screenshot of Hermès Tie Break app

“How to Knot” provides tutorials on tying a range of knot styles. Sketched diagrams give step-by-step instructions.



Screenshot from Hermès' Tie Break app

Another menu item “Know-how” launches a slideshow of images detailing the production of Hermès ties, from printing to measuring the completed square tip for quality control.

For its spring/summer 2015 collection, Hermès created a corresponding tie with the same name as the app. The back of the tie has a QR code that can be scanned with an Apple or Android device to take consumers directly to the app.

The app is available for free for **iOS** and **Android**. It is currently in English and French, with a Chinese language option coming soon.

Fun and games

This app is similar to one created for the brand’s scarf line, but adds a level of gamification.

Hermès is showing off its iconic silk scarf collection through a whimsical mobile application that displays the brand’s lifestyle while creating awareness among younger consumers.

Hermès’ “Silk Knots” app uses brisk videos and animated how-to-pictures to teach users the many ways that a silk scarf should be tied. Creating a playful app engages consumers and the educational component can establish a relationship ([see story](#)).

"The app is reminiscent of the Silk Knots app that Hermes released just under a year ago," Ms. Lowy said. "The two Hermès apps propel the brand's position as king of luxury silk accessories.

"Consumers that use the Tie Break app leave with an understanding that Hermes is not just another company that makes ties," she said. "Ties are the lifeblood of Hermès.

"The next time that consumer is in the market to buy a luxury tie, he/she will undoubtedly think of Hermes before other luxury brands whose tie collections serve as an 'also' product rather than a core specialty."

The brand often finds ways to engage consumers in a fun way while showcasing its collections.

For example, Hermès used an interactive frog video to add a touch of whimsy to its range of handbags.

Similar to the "The Frog Prince," lifelike frogs turn into leather bags in the same shade of green when clicked. By evoking a classic fairytale, and allowing for active participation in the content, consumers will likely be more apt to explore the entire collection ([see story](#)).

"The release of a second app from Hermès implies that the brand viewed the Silk Knots app as a success and therefore chose to continue with its mobile role out," Ms. Lowy said.

"Hermès' active focus on mobile implies that its target audience is younger-middle aged, which is a demographic comprised of dynamic mobile app users," she said.

"The new app's functionality is all focused on ties. It doesn't speak to a broad consumer base, nor does it solve a significant consumer need. Instead, the app entralls fashion enthusiasts.

"This model is typical of luxury brand apps. Their goal is not to achieve mass-market adoption or to hit the top app download charts. Rather their apps speak to a small but important group of influencers. It expands the product experience to an important touch point to position the brand as a forward thinking master of its craft."

Final Take

Sarah Jones, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/yWv3nZuwrQE](https://www.youtube.com/embed/yWv3nZuwrQE)

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