

MOBILE

Saks introduces user-generated content hub to propel purchases

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Saks' Like2buy images

By JEN KING

Department store chain Saks Fifth Avenue is heightening its sense of community through a new content hub that streamlines social media interactions with consumers.

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Luxury Daily

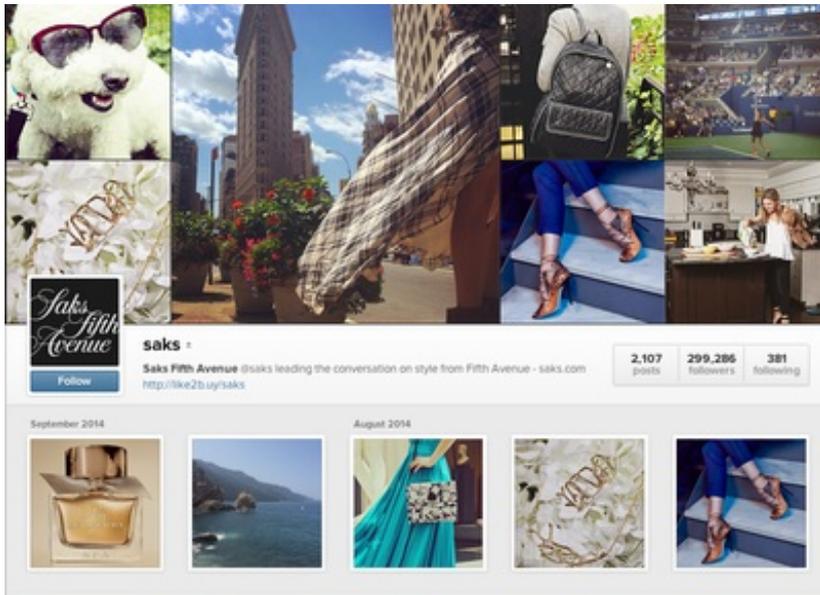
Using New York Fashion Week as a backdrop, Saks' content page, housed on the retailer's Web site, is set to launch on Sept. 4. The new aspect of Saks' Web site, dubbed as a "fanreel," will create a center for the retailer's fashion-forward consumers to gather and share via social media.

"During New York Fashion Week and the lead up to the European fashion weeks, there is a concentrated discussion around fashion and style," said Kathleen Ruiz, senior vice president of marketing and PR at **Saks Fifth Avenue**, New York. "We targeted this important timing to kick off our new social shopping experience, #SaksStyle and wanted to capitalize on the significant increase in real-time conversation to leverage the launch.

"The #SaksStyle hub is shoppable via Saks.com," she said. "It creates a 360° experience that turns Saks lovers into style icons whose shoppable selfies can inspire others to get their looks with a couple clicks."

Styled by you

Saks' user-generated content hub, categorized under the tag #SaksStyle, will collect photos of purchased items from Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and Tumblr to give consumers an idea of popular merchandise available at the retailer. Saks Fifth Avenue worked with Curalate, a marketing and analytics suite for the visual web, to create #SaksStyle.

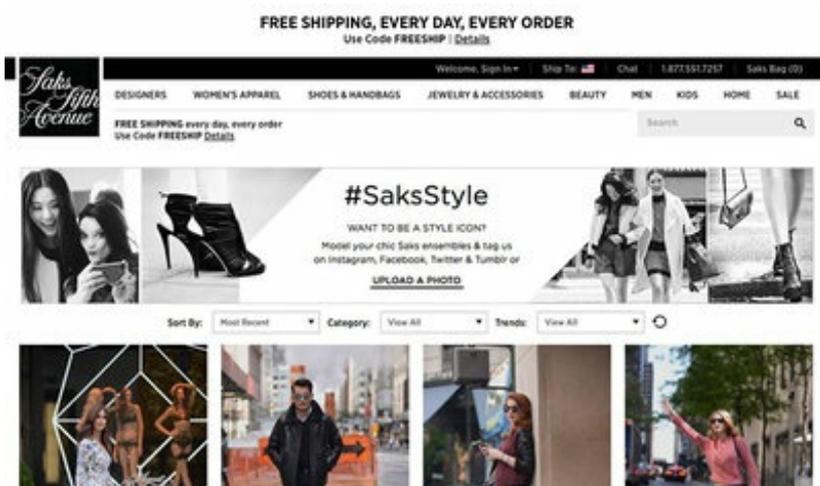


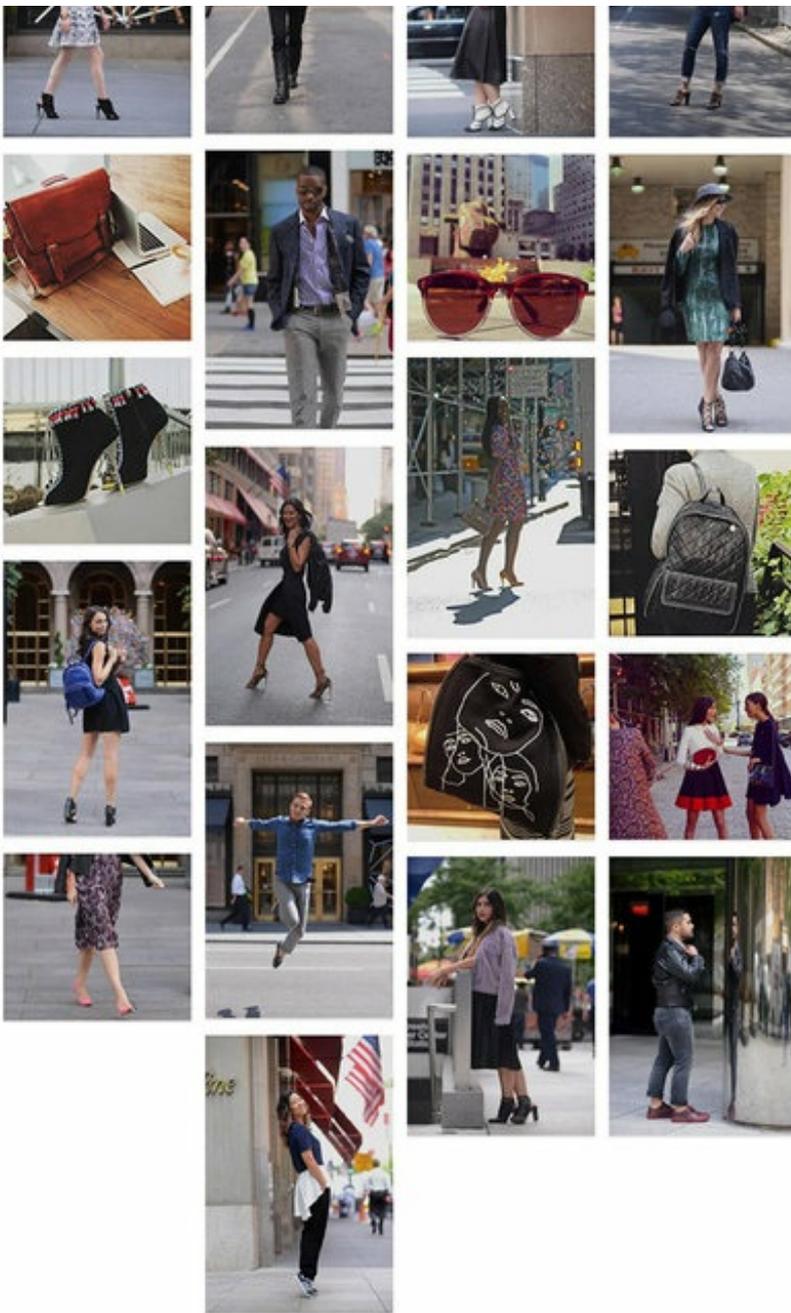
Saks' Instagram account

By shining a light on what items have been purchased, the retailer will be able to create an organic look book full of pieces bought by actual Saks consumers, rather than stylized by the department store. This element will work similarly to a peer review and may result in an increased percentage of featured items being purchased.

Updated daily, consumers will be able to filter the images on #SaksStyle according to product categories such as handbags or shoes. All images featured on #SaksStyle will be enabled for "likes" and the retailer is encouraging interaction through consumer comments.

Also, when the #SaksStyle hashtag is used on the aforementioned social media channels, the retailer will make the looks shoppable by providing the products link. When the exact product shown is no longer available, Saks will find a close replica to ensure all images have the shoppable component.





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Saks' #SaksStyle feed

To increase interaction for the launch, while also becoming part of the social

conversation surrounding Fashion Weeks around the world, Saks will deploy four photographers to capture street-style in New York, London, Milan and Paris. These images will then be shared on #SaksStyle where consumers can make a purchase through Saks' ecommerce or mobile commerce site.

#SaksStyle will also be incorporated into the retailer's in-store experience. Saks' stores will be outfitted with decals in the fitting rooms of women's ready-to-wear and contemporary departments to encourage consumers to take a photo of the outfit and upload to social media.

"The goal of the #SaksStyle hub is to reinforce Saks' innovative position in both the retail market and in social media by creating a sense of community within its customer-base with an expanded alternative shopping experience," Ms. Ruiz said.

"By compelling shoppers who actively participate in social media with an inclusive platform, we strengthen loyalty and broaden Saks' online visibility to a whole new range of consumers," she said.

Saks' #SaksStyle fanreel hub can be found [here](#).

Like it, buy it

Content hubs like #SaksStyle have helped brands eliminate the challenges presented by social media platforms, such as Instagram, that do not allow for direct commerce links.

For example, department store chain Nordstrom is enabling ecommerce through Instagram with a clickable link in the profile section of its account.

Nordstrom worked with Curalate to be the first to use its Like2Buy platform, which houses Instagram photos that link directly to a brand's existing ecommerce site. Instagram provides high engagement but has proved an obstacle for linking to purchase options, so this solution could give marketers a way to generate business from the social platform ([see story](#)).

Like Nordstrom, Saks also teamed with Curalate to interweave Like2buy to allow for shoppable links on its Instagram account.

Other brands have looked to user-generated content hubs, that narrowed in on a single product category to test the waters.

For instance, Italian fashion label Versace is hoping to drive in-store traffic with a new club designed around its studded sunglasses line.

Versace's Studs Ladies Web site asked consumers to go to a Sunglass Hut store, snap a photo of themselves trying on the brand's eyewear and then post it to Facebook, where it would be picked up by the label and added to a wall of user-generated content. Many brands are wary of incorporating user-generated content on their own Web sites, but it can be beneficial for brands to have consumers' voices as part of their digital presence ([see story](#)).

The introduction of #SaksStyle will create a better experience for consumers by transitioning the social media with purchase conversions.

"Increasingly, consumers are looking to their social channels to discover and engage with brands," said Apu Gupta, CEO of [Curalate](#), New York. "By bringing user-generated content into the ecommerce experience, the #SaksStyle hub leverages this behavior, turning casual fan images into compelling brand endorsements.

"Showcasing real people flaunting their "Saks style" in the real world is enabling Saks to celebrate their fans and inspire online shoppers, creating a new layer of social proof that will drive conversions, time-on-site, and click-throughs to product pages – a hat trick for any brand," he said.

Final Take

Jen King, lead reporter on Luxury Daily, New York

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/qE_3XxmGKrA](https://www.youtube.com/embed/qE_3XxmGKrA)

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