

ADVERTISING

Luxury marketers prepare for journey of holiday season

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Affluent consumers

By NANCY BUCKLEY

NEW YORK - Luxury marketers are looking toward the shopping experience retailers are creating this holiday season according to a panel at Luxury Retail Summit: Holiday Focus 2014 Sept. 9.

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Several marketers spoke about the call for consumer's engagement and journey both online and in-store for the upcoming season. The interaction between a brand and its consumer will be key to driving traffic to the brand and away from online retailers and department stores.

"These are people who are incredibly engaged and affluent," said Nadia Tuma, vice president and deputy director of **McCann Truth Central**, New York. "They need to be treated not as consumers, but as people."

Luxury Retail Summit: Holiday Focus 2014 was organized by Luxury Daily

Marketing plans

Gaining an understanding of the consumer is important for luxury brands.

Rony Zeidan, founder and chief creative officer of **RO-NY**, said that marketers are realizing that customers focus on the journey and the journey is an omnichannel experience. As for holiday marketing, campaigns depend on the brand, but the focus on digital and print will help round the experience.

The concept of the journey was also touched upon by Sophie Ann Terrisse, founder and CEO of **STC Associates**, New York. She believes that the emotional part of a marketing campaign can add to a journey and grab the attention of consumers.

"Most of the brands are focused on digital so a large portion of their strategies are focused on digital, from the break down from there, there is a lot of focus that has grown versus where it was last year on efforts like paid search and on site improvement," said Andrea Wilson, Fort Worth, TX-based vice president, strategy director and luxury practice lead at **iProspect**.

"So, once the consumer hears about their site, they are actually going to have an improved experience," she said. "[Marketers] are realizing that experience is one of the most important things to communicate with the audience."



Marketing panel at Luxury Retail Summit

In the holiday season, many consumers may shop online, but retail stores are still relevant.

The digital footprint that follows consumers through email subscriptions or iBeacon sign-ins has created a digital in-store experience as well, so consumers, even in store can be identified.

A retail experience also sets brands apart from online retailers or department stores that can dominate holiday shopping. Department stores and online retailers are aggressive in their marketing, so brands are prioritizing their in-store and online experiences to drive traffic.

"Customer engagement with technology and the brands is necessary: market to my

daughter, not my mother, we need to be prepared for that and be ready for it,” said Ken Morris, principal at [Boston Retail Partners](#), Boston.

For the 2014 season, consumers are likely to see a larger Black Friday and Cyber Monday presence, including expanded sales days. This season will be a few more days than in 2013, allowing more time for brands to reach their consumers.

New year, new ideas

In 2013, the holiday season saw some digital engagement concepts enacted by luxury brands.

For example, U.S. department store chain Barneys New York took its gift guide into Tumblr territory with a series of Graphics Interchange Format, or GIF, animations featuring holiday products.

The “GIF Guide” showed items moving in whimsical ways, and was published on both the store’s blog “The Window” and its Tumblr. Using GIFs instead of still photographs was a colorful way for the retailer to capture its audience’s attention, and prove it is a modern, tech-savvy retailer ([see story](#)).

Similarly, leather goods maker Hermès counted down the days of December with an interactive gift guide that inspired affluent consumers to choose from its wide range of products for the holidays.

The “Hermès on Ice” gift guide countdown was an interactive calendar starring Hermès’ iconic orange boxes. Since each box was personified and performed a short action, fans may have formed connections with the campaign and returned to the brand’s Web site to see each day’s animation ([see story](#)).

With increased technology, the consumer interaction will likely be better this year.

“I think there is much more emphasis on personalization and the capabilities that exist within mobile and web and the integration of the in-store,” Mr. Morris said.

Final Take

Nancy Buckley, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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