

MULTICHANNEL

Omnichannel strategies propel millennial interest, spur conversions

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Affluent consumers

By JEN KING

NEW YORK – Traditional online storefronts no longer meet consumer expectations as ecommerce has evolved, according to panelists at Luxury Interactive 2014 on Oct. 15.

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To meet the expectations of consumers, marketers must be consistent across channels and work to blend content with commerce to create concise engagement. According to panelists at “Content for Commerce Mixology – Become Your Brand’s Mixologist,” as the ecommerce game changes brands will need to adapt omnichannel strategies full of rich touch points to cater to the sentiments of millennials.

"About five years ago there was a really a lot of debate around luxury brands in the interactive space," said Sharon Osen, CEO of [Growth Generation Advisors](#) and former senior vice president of marketing and business development at [La Prairie](#), New York. "It was not how and how fast we can jump on board, it was more if.

"Particularly, in the last few years, there's been the debate between content and commerce," she said. "It's interesting to look back and see how far and how fast we've come.

"It's no longer a debate, but it's how we get it done, in the right way and how fast."

Millennial mixers

Panelists at Luxury Interactive 2014 agreed that content plays a large role in marketing to the millennial demographic. Opening lines of communication with this demographic is vital as millennials have significant spending power and make up 33 percent of the population.

Kathleen Guzman, managing director of [Heritage Auction](#), explained to attendees that her brand uses social media to engage with millennials because these consumers want to be an active part of a narrative.

Ms. Guzman shared that when Heritage Auction posted a collection of Hermès Birkin handbags on Facebook, before the items were open for bidding, there was an impressive response, including a millennial consumer who saw the post and went to Heritage Auction's bidding site the following day to purchase.

By using social media Heritage Auction was able to convert a new consumer into an established client.



Panelists during Content for Commerce Mixology – Become Your Brand's Mixologist

Ray Grady, senior vice president of [Acquia](#), agreed stating that millennials want to see products “in the wild.” This allows for a relevant one-on-one conversation that may turn into conversions.

Growth Generation Advisor's Ms. Osen explained that even though many brands do not recognize the potential millennials have, ignoring them will be perilous because they are considered key influencers among their own communities, especially their parents, the Baby Boomers.

Even with the potential of millennial consumers, [Uprise Art](#)'s founder Tze Chun acknowledged that her online gallery's original business model is not consistent with those who purchase artwork. When launched, Ms. Chun focused on young, urban living

art enthusiasts who wanted to get a jump on collecting.

Instead, older consumers who align more with the traditional collector characteristics were more active in purchasing through Uprise Art.

However, millennials used Uprise Art as an educational tool to learn about artworks and how to collect through social entry points. Therefore, Ms. Chen suggests creating encouraging and informative content to engage the millennial consumer if they are not yet at the conversion point.

Social games

Research on Baby Boomers and millennials support the idea that social should be an integral part of marketing across industry sectors.

Generational distances regarding social media use are not as wide as commonly thought, according to a report from the Luxury Institute.

Eighty-five percent of millennials surveyed for the report said they were inclined to use social media, compared to 73 percent of Generation X'ers and 60 percent of Baby Boomers. As luddites become further marginalized, brands must adopt a marketing approach that prioritizes individuals over segments and personas ([see story](#)).

Also, approximately 33 percent of millennial consumers are more likely to buy a brand if it has a Facebook page, as compared to 17 percent of non-Millennials, according to a recent study from Boston Consulting Group.

Younger consumers are very much interested in social media and use their friends and digital networks as persuasion to buy products. Therefore, marketing on social media could help brands to connect with a younger generation and build a relationship with the help of other brand advocates ([see story](#)).

For brands, social can help maintain conversations with established consumers, while the modernized approach is attractive to new, prospective clients.

"Social is really becoming a part of not just marketing, but actually sales and really thinking about how we can drive revenues," Ms. Osen, formerly of La Prairie, said.

"A few years ago social would not have been invited to the table but now it's a real key focal point of the conversation," she said. "[Now,] there's a lot of fluidity and intense collaboration."

Final Take

Jen King, lead reporter on Luxury Daily, New York

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