

EVENTS/CAUSES

Harrods encourages consumer participation for Christmas celebrations

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Peter Pumpemickel and Father Christmas

By NANCY BUCKLEY

British department store Harrods is revealing its holiday festivities with a social video and several in-store events.

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Luxury Daily

The activities throughout the season began Nov. 7 with a weekend of events within the store. By hosting a holiday event in-store, Harrods will draw traffic from many different consumers throughout the season.

"In recent years, Harrods has become quite adept at leveraging social media as well as creating an in-store experience to engage new and existing customers," said Dave Rodgerson, a retail business development executive at [Microsoft Canada](#), Toronto.

"One of the other things I've noted about Harrods is their frequent and effective use of events to draw in new customers and create an engaging customer experience," he said. "This event, as has been the case with others, involves activities relating to food. A number of recent studies regarding millennials identifies their affinity for food."

Mr. Rodgerson is not affiliated with Harrods, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

[Harrods](#) was unable to respond by press deadline.

Playing make believe

Harrods' Christmas experience is both in-store and online. The social video starts the experience online with Peter Pumpernickel, the smallest mouse of Father Christmas' helpers.

Peter is too small to help the other mice prepare Father Christmas for his big night, so he hides from the other mice. When Father Christmas arrives he realizes Peter is missing and searches for him.

Father Christmas finds Peter in a corner and asks for his help. Peter is small enough to fit in a hole that leads to the lights outside the building. When Peter climbs through, he tightens the light bulbs and all of Harrods's Christmas lights begin to shine.

Without Peter, Harrods would not have been able to light up. Peter and Father Christmas watch the lights turn on as the snow falls over London.

The video ends encouraging consumers to discover the "Land of Make Believe" at Harrods this Christmas.

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/EvjpsH_jUD8?list=UUMDev_d47i6FBsGOiNTKD4Q](https://www.youtube.com/embed/EvjpsH_jUD8?list=UUMDev_d47i6FBsGOiNTKD4Q)

A Little Christmas Tail

Peter's tale encourages every consumer to take part in Harrods' Christmas celebration.

"[Harrods'] Christmas celebration overall is a great example of their success in both of these areas," Mr. Rodgeron said. "While the story of Peter Pumpernickl is a thinly disguised reimaging of 'Rudolf the Red Nosed Reindeer,' it's a wonderful update of that Christmas story.

"These animated models are quite likeable and I'm sure that there's an opportunity for Harrods to market the characters through social media and in-store. I was especially pleased to see their use of the Harrods trademark green jacket. It's a signature that customers will easily relate to the Harrods brand. Peter should become a very popular character that will connect with children and help to engage a new generation of Harrods shopper."

A behind-the-scenes video was also created to demonstrate the illustrations and creations that were used in the creation of Peter Pumpernickel's film.

Another video shared on Harrods' social sites helps consumers decorate their Christmas trees. The process begins with finding the right tree and setting it up in their houses.

First lights are put on and ornaments are added. Then a topper is placed on the tree and pine cones and berries are added. Finally presents are placed under the tree. The video encourages guests to find decorations at Harrods.

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/0o16SvX2yYs?](https://www.youtube.com/embed/0o16SvX2yYs?)

list=UUMDev_d47i6FBsGOiNTKD4Q

How to decorate a Christmas tree

In-store, consumers took part in a weekend of events to kick-off the holiday season. Starting on Nov. 7 customers were able to taste food, receive makeovers and go on outdoor adventures with their kids.

The outdoor adventure included a Christmas Journey with games, characters and festivities. Families were able to meet Santa's reindeer and Harrods elves.



Christmas Journey at Harrods

Also, a choir was present to provide a soundtrack throughout the weekend and Harrods Rewards members received 10 percent off their purchases.

Ho-ho-ho

Providing an annual holiday experience is expected by consumers from department stores. Such an event gives a time for consumers and the store to reconnect and celebrate the holidays together. Also, department stores are able to draw consumers in-store with a personal experience, something that cannot be provided by online retailers.

This is important because a new report by the Shullman Research Center found that consumers across demographic categories, especially the ultra-affluent, will be shopping at online-only retailers this holiday season.

Although consumers will also be spending time in department stores and other retail locations, the prevalence of online-only retail preference speaks to a growing demand for convenience. As consumers weigh their purchasing options, the outcome often comes out in favor of online shopping ([see story](#)).

Having an interactive and fun campaign gets more consumers involved and interested.

"The best retailers are those who are able to elevate shopping beyond the transactional process of sales into an engaging experience where they can develop a long term relationship with the customer," Mr. Rodgeron said. "It's no surprise that Christmas becomes a focus for retailers based on the sheer volume of business done during the season.

"What's often taken overlooked, is the opportunity for retailers to create stories that can give context to their events," he said. "Harrods has done this with their Christmas celebration by sharing the story of Peter Pumpnickl, and building events that engage and entertain their audience."

Final Take

Nancy Buckley, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/Nc4NNhPc0_M](https://www.youtube.com/embed/Nc4NNhPc0_M)

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