

INTERNET

Swarovski has right formula for building long-term loyal customer

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By ELIZABETH ZELESNY



Precision-cut crystal glass-maker Swarovski has successfully

built a social media empire of fans to communicate with on Facebook, which is an effective way to build brand loyalty and ultimately drive sales.

Luxury marketers can learn from Swarovski, which leverages social media platforms as a place for socialization, building brand loyalty and as a successful outlet to drive repeat sales from loyal customers.

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“Brands should have a clear strategy and strong governance,” said Alisa Leonard, director of experience planning at iCrossing, New York. “This is especially true for luxury brands because there is such a large community of pace-makers, and harnessing them and

inviting them in as part of your brand strategy is really key.”

ICrossing is a global digital marketing agency that combines technology to help brands find and connect with customers.

Social media Web sites such as Facebook provide a more personal touch and have opened up a uniquely powerful marketing channel.

Prestige brands such as **Swarovski** have started to understand the unique value of a platform such as Facebook.

Facebook functionalities

Relationships are key in marketing strategies and Swarovski obviously understands that. The way that the brand communicates to its loyal fans on Facebook shows that Swarovski is not looking for a one-time buyer. It is looking for a long-term loyal customer.

“Luxury brands have to have a very strong value proposition for being in social media and that is underscored by a strong content plan,” Ms. Leonard said. “Another key piece is strong community management—if you don’t have that day-to-day activity, the community will not know how to take it.

“Make sure that you have a strong community manager to drive community behavior,” she said.

Swarovski is extremely successful in terms of using this strategy to its fullest potential. The brand updates consumers about latest product releases, videos and events.

The brand issues regular news items and celebrity quizzes. Swarovski currently has almost 1 million "Likes" on its Facebook page.



Swarovski Facebook page

Aside from the numbers, there is an active community on the page that regularly comments and updates the wall, without detracting from the luxury nature of the brand.

Swarovski is able to use these conversations to see what it is doing right and wrong, and it can tailor future initiatives based on what its fans want. At the end of the day, it is all about the fans, because those are the customers that will buy from Swarovski more than just once.

The brand brings consumers into the world of Swarovski through eye-catching photos, videos, contests and content.

There is a section titled “Welcome” where users can click through to explore the various functionality of the page. Swarovski calls this its “Alluring world.” Consumers can browse and find out more about Swarovski, who is wearing it and where the brand has been popping up recently.

All that consumers can see in this section brings them closer to the brand and its products and makes the probability of purchase higher. The content is chosen quite strategically to increase purchase intent and to stay top-of-mind with loyal followers.



Swarovski's "Alluring World"

Additionally, Swarovski uses its Facebook page to let consumers know what type of cause marketing efforts it has in the pipeline. The brand is focused on raising awareness of various types of cancer via its Swarovski Elements initiative.

Consumers that take cancer especially close to the heart can find out more about Swarovski's involvement to help fight the disease.

Ultimate aspiration

What Swarovski is doing particularly well is sharing photos of celebrities adorned with its products.

This presents aspiration of the products, especially for the female audience.

Celebrities have quite an influence on the American population and what is in style.

Seeing a popular celebrity adorned in Swarovski jewels is sure to pique the interest of

fans. And, if a fan shares the picture or "Likes" it, his or her entire Facebook list of friends is notified. Talk about viral marketing.

Reflect yourself

Swarovski has implemented a feature into its Facebook page which fans can transform profile pictures into a work of art.

Users simply allow access to the "Swarovski Reflect Yourself" application. Next, users format their profile pictures to a crystallized, illuminated image.

Once the profile picture is completed, users have the ability to share the image with friends.

An interactive element like this on a brand's Facebook page can allow for long amounts of time that consumers are engaging with the brand. Then, once a consumer makes a crystallized image and shares it with friends, the virality is unprecedented.

Friends of friends of friends will now see the image and possibly go on to engage with the feature on Swarovski's Facebook page.

Not only is Swarovski engaging existing fans, but the brand is also spreading the word virally and possibly adding new fans.

Building a community

Swarovski has embedded social media into almost every aspect of its marketing strategy. It cross-promotes what it is doing in print, online, TV, digital and mobile via social media. Its Facebook page is almost like an entry point into the world of Swarovski and what the brand is doing and plans to do.

Ms. Leonard believes building a strong community on Facebook drives purchase intent and more loyal behavior like spreading the word.

"When you are engaging in social media, those who are engaging tend to be the biggest advocates," Ms. Leonard said.

"Having a strong community management plan is so key," she said. "Building a quality community and giving them a platform for a voice helps them become active agents for advocacy."

Final take

Swarovski cinema spot

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