

COMMERCE

Brands push bespoke Valentine's Day gifts to help consumers get personal

February 13, 2015



Burberry Valentine's Day promotional image

By SARAH JONES

Recognizing that Valentine's Day gifting is an emotional affair, a number of luxury brands have sought to provide personalized touches to help consumers express their affection.

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From special Valentine's Day embossing of leather goods to on-hand calligraphy artists crafting unique cards, personalization efforts were aimed at consumers looking to give a one-of-a-kind sign of their love. These services have the potential to help these brands stand out from the crowd of gift guides and promotions.

"I think that much like other holidays where gifts are expected, people want to feel as if gifting options are speaking to the person as an individual as opposed to receiving an item that was intended with a mass aesthetic in mind," said Kimmie Smith, co-founder/creative director of [Accessory2](#), New York. "As Valentine's Day kicks off a new year of holidays, these items are meant to be from the heart with the notion that the person gifting you whether a loved one or a significant other actually knows something about you.

"By offering a bespoke or a custom gift, there is a significant feeling of selectivity in a gift

of this nature beyond it being a luxury piece that anyone can have within a store," she said. "It allows the person receiving the item to feel as if they have left their own mark on the brand.

"Unlike any other holiday, it is a time of year where people to think of that one great gift that embraces so many thoughts and notions at one time."

Be mine

Stationery brand Smythson hosted personalization events in-store at both its New Bond Street flagship in London on Feb. 7 and its New York boutique on Madison Avenue Feb. 6. For three hours, from 1:30 p.m. until 4:30 p.m., consumers could take advantage of an on-site calligrapher, who would write out cards specially for each customer.



Calligraphy at Smythson New Bond store

Smythson also highlighted its personalization services, including gold foil embossing for its leather goods, from iPhone covers and briefcases for him to key chains and jewelry boxes for her. Consumers can type in their own set of characters to be embossed, allowing for more creativity and individuality than a monogram.



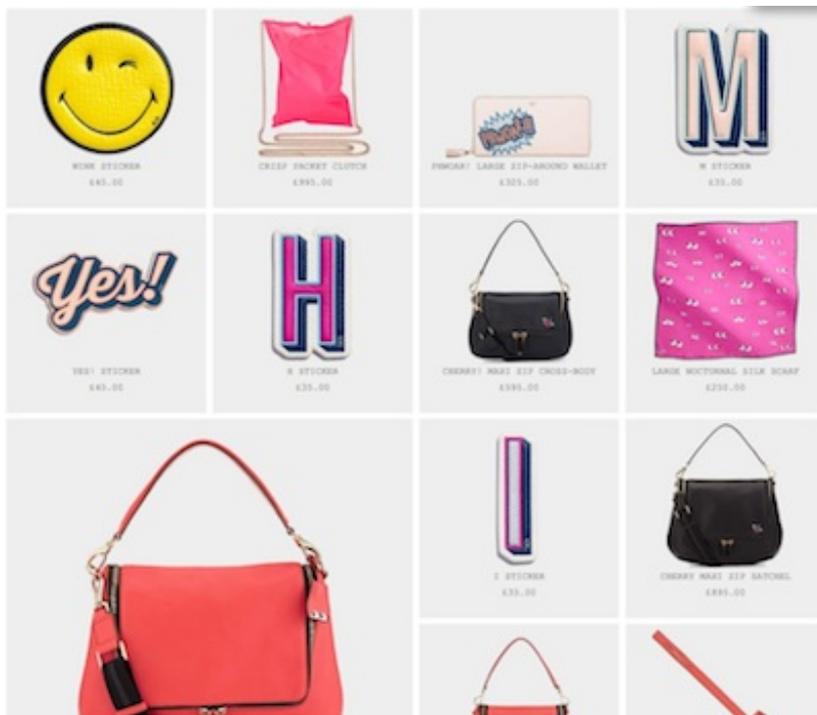
Smythson Valentine's Day gift guide image

Leather goods maker Anya Hindmarch keeps its bespoke business front and center, and now allows consumers to personalize items with a name or personalized message written in their handwriting. The brand also created special Valentine's Day graphics that can be embossed onto leather goods.



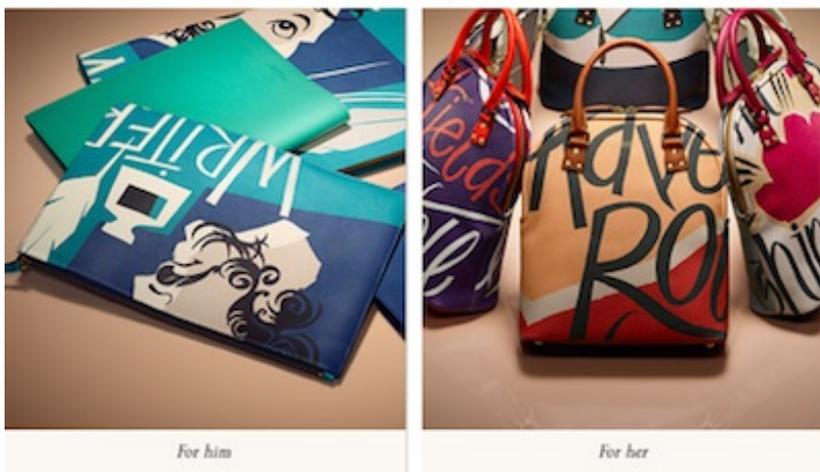
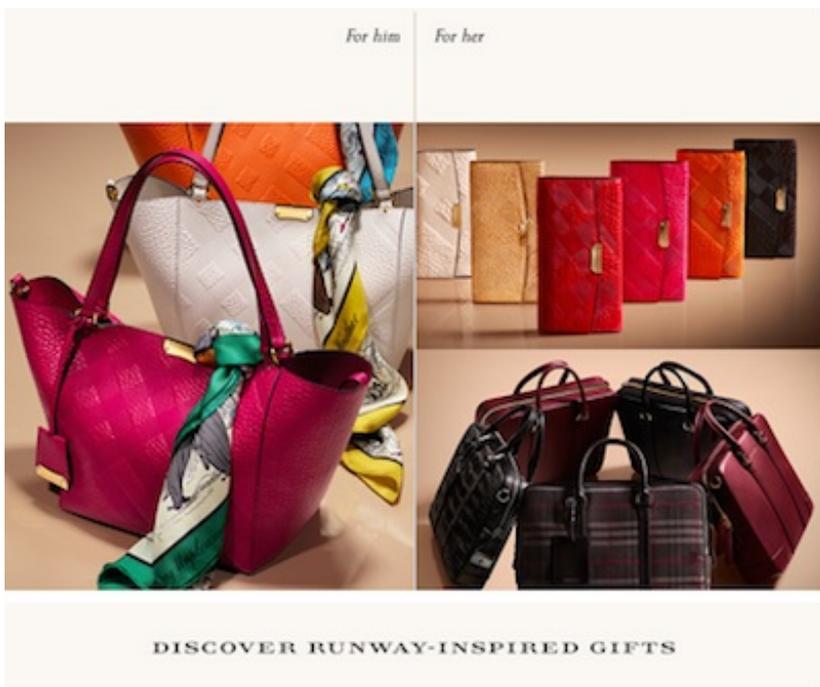
Anya Hindmarch Valentine's Day bespoke

For Valentine's Day, the brand not only highlighted this service, but also featured its leather sticker shop in partnership with Chaos Fashion as a way for consumers to express themselves. Stickers share sentiments such as "Yes!" and "I love it! What is it?" or show winking smiley faces or letters.



Anya Hindmarch Valentine's Day edit

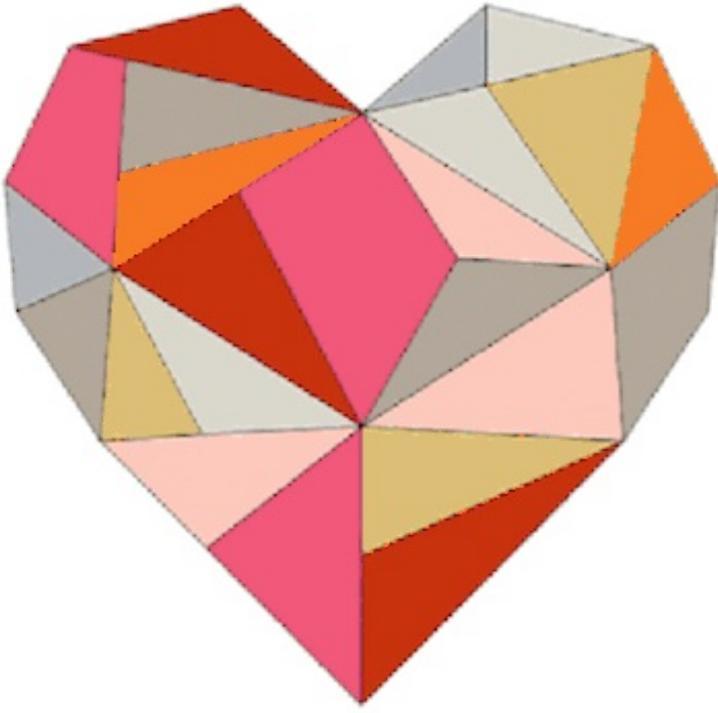
Within an email linking to its Valentine's Day gift guide, Burberry also suggested giving a personalized version of its heritage scarf, a service that launched online during the holidays season.



Screenshot of email from Burberry

Burberry's monogramming service allows for the personalization of the My Burberry women's fragrance, the Heritage scarf for men, women and children and the women's Color Block Blanket poncho, all items included in the brand's Valentine's Day gift guide. Consumers can select up to three initials in the Burberry font to be added to the product of their choice ([see story](#)).

Valextra dedicated an email to the personalization options available for the holiday. In the body of the email is a GIF of a faceted heart composed of many bright colors coming into focus and then beating.



Valextra GIF

Text tells the reader to “Bespoke your love.” On the click-through, consumers can shop an assortment of small leather goods based by color by sliding a selector across a rainbow of hues.

Monogramming service is available on request.



Valextra

February 10 at 6:05am · 🌐

BESPOKE YOUR LOVE... #Celebrate #Valentine's #Day with Valextra... #personalize a special #gift with the #initials of your #Valentine. Find the perfect gift on www.valextra.com



Facebook post from Valextra

Waterford told consumers to “Say I love you with an engraved gift!” Consumers can add wedding anniversary dates, a personal message, a monogram or a person’s name to stemware, tableware, home décor or collectable items.

Crystal Clear Ways to Say
"I Love You"

SHOP ENGRAVED GIFTS ▶

Free Engraving Now
 Through Monday 11am EST



ENJOY FREE ENGRAVING
Order by 11am EST, Monday, Jan. 26th

Personalize any of our engraved gifts with your anniversary date, a future wedding date or your own message. Or choose one of our many icons to get the message across for you.

Free Shipping On Orders \$99+



Engraved Drinkware Engraved Home Decor Engraved Collectables

Screenshot of Waterford email

"Heart shaped boxes of candy and cuddly teddy bears are typically staples for Valentine's Day, however, those are mostly appropriate for early stage relationships because the later stage relationships have 'been there, done that,'" said Dalia Strum, professor at the [Fashion Institute of Technology](#) and founder of [Dalia Inc.](#), New York.

"Valentine's Day is positioned as a time to express love and affection towards your significant other, and most recently, branching out to your loved ones," she said. "This holiday helps bring consumers back to their roots of purchasing based on emotion.

"In addition, social, digital and group gifting are going to be major revenue drivers for this holiday, up 48 percent from last year. Social gifting is a mind-set change, and we're going to see a rise of gift-giving 'just because' as well as influencing impulse purchases."

Personal touch

In previous years, bespoke efforts have similarly helped brands stand out, as consumers debated which token of affection to select.

For instance, last year, British fragrance maker Penhaligon's enticed consumers looking for a customized Valentine's Day gift by promoting its fragrance profiling service Feb. 12-14.

Affluent consumer preferences are turning more toward bespoke options with both

apparel and automotive brands increasing the range of products that can be completely customized based on personal taste. For Penhaligon's, the service is an essential part of the consumer experience and is likely to increase loyalties among first time participants ([see story](#)).

In 2012, LVMH-owned Champagne brand Moët & Chandon ventured into social video to promote its customizable St. Valentine's Day rosé bottles.

The video was called "Tag your love" and could be found on the brand's Facebook page. It showed how the brand spray paints messages onto the bottles and goes through a variety of different Valentine's day-themed notes that a consumer could write ([see story](#)).

For these brands, adding a personalization component to Valentine's Day gift guides may help attract attention from regular consumers.

"Personalization is a trending approach to provide a differentiating factor towards purchases," FIT and Dalia, Inc.'s Ms. Strum said.

"Regarding gift giving, customization is a major indicator that the consumer has put more thought into the present," she said. "It highlights how well the purchaser knows the receiver's tastes and preferences.

"These gifts develop a stronger emotional connection, are used more frequently and thereby increase visibility to residual purchasers."

Bespoke efforts may help brands remain on consumers' minds beyond the holiday.

"Personalization and customization is not a new concept overall and with these brands mentioned is not a novelty that is new in terms of exploration," Accessory2's Ms. Smith said. "Using the holiday as a reminder that someone could gift or receive this item on this day of love is a way to enhance a person's feeling about the brand.

"The awareness of these options will encourage potential shoppers to include them within their closets well past this significant day."

Final Take

Sarah Jones, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

Embedded Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/-SbNGgCZI1s>

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