

MULTICHANNEL

Place consumers at center of everything: Neiman Marcus exec

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Neiman Marcus store entrance

By NANCY BUCKLEY

PALM DESERT, CA - Luxury brands often have no choice but to evolve with their digitally savvy consumers, but staying ahead of technology requires a long-term and omnichannel approach, according to an executive from Neiman Marcus at eTail West Feb. 18.



Brands and retailers are almost required to uphold the standards expected by consumers when they engage on digital spheres and in-store. Maintaining these standards requires an omnichannel approach that integrates all aspects of a brand.

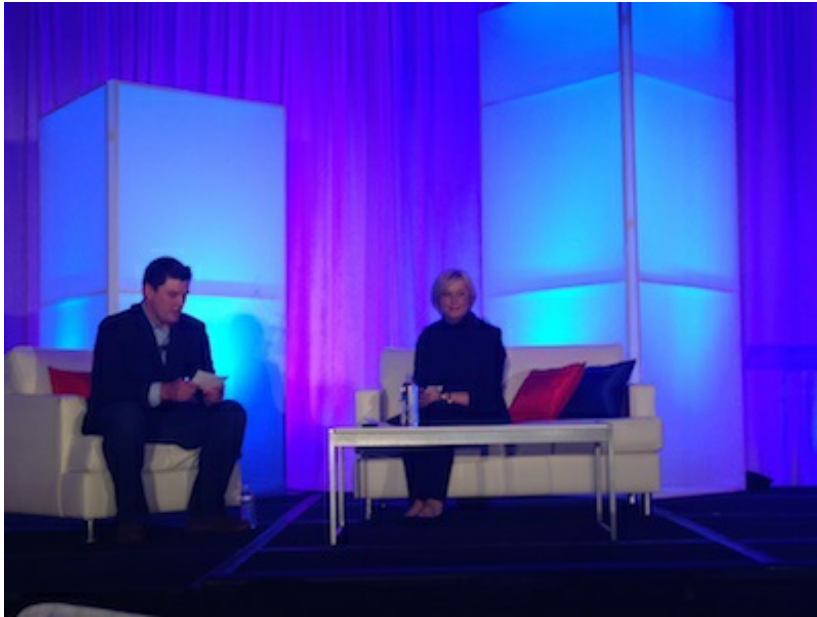
"We are focused as a company not on a short term project, but on a longer term project and bringing all touch points and understanding the customers behavior at every point," said Catherine Davis, vice president of marketing at [Neiman Marcus](#).

Consumer base

Omnichannel within a brand requires the right people to be involved in the right things and all departments of a brand to understand and be part of campaigns. Realignment of a brand can lead to this.

At Neiman Marcus the incentives for in-store associates and online teams were altered to

encourage cross-company discussions. These changes led in-store individuals to recognize problems and suggest solutions on the digital side.



Ms. Davis at eTail West

Without the competition, the brand itself can think more specifically about the consumer and what she might want to be experiencing and how to adapt to her demands.

“The most important thing with anyone with retail locations is to listen to sales associates.” Ms. Davis said. “They are on the front lines and they know the problems and often times they devised solutions at an individual or store level that we need to adopt at a global rate.”

Neiman Marcus also saw changes at its executive levels where individuals from solely online worlds took on retail responsibilities creating opportunities for digitally inclined team members to take their knowledge and skills and apply it to in-store campaigns.

Last year, Neiman Marcus released an iOS mobile application that blends content and commerce to promote interaction with consumers on-the-go.

In addition to shopping features, Neiman Marcus’ NM app houses the retailer’s blog and Instagram feed. This separates the retailer from many of its competitors whose mobile apps serve only as commerce platforms ([see story](#)).

The mobile app influences channels and bridges the gap between the store associate experience and the online options. Neiman Marcus plans to have more options with its app with mobile payments and mobile point-of-sale in-store.

All about digital

Neiman Marcus has enacted several in-store digital campaigns that help to create an omnichannel experience.

For instance, the department store launched interactive retail tables that will allow consumers to browse inventory using touchscreen technology in three select stores.

The tables are currently active in the Austin, TX, Chicago, and Topanga, CA locations of the department store, where they can be found in the luxury shoe salons. They will assist consumers in browsing inventory that may not be available in-store but can be accessed online or at other Neiman Marcus locations ([see story](#)).

Also, Neiman Marcus updated its mobile app to provide a quick and easy shopping option for consumers through a new “Snap. Find. Shop.” feature.

Neiman Marcus has paired with mobile visual search firm Slyce to create a shopping feature that allows consumers to snap a photo of an item they like and have the app find a similar item sold by the retailer. Snap. Find. Shop. will likely appeal to the younger, more tech-savvy consumer who is interested in finding the latest trends and styles ([see story](#)).

Applications can benefit brands and retailers to connect with loyal consumers.

"The app is great for us because it transcends channels," Ms. Davis said. "We wanted to use the app to be the bridge and part of what is incorporate in app is access to a sales associate in the store you can find an associate in a department you want to work with and reach out through the app."

Final Take

Nancy Buckley, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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