

INTERNET

Mandarin Oriental pushes guest-generated content with Fans of MO platform

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Kevin Spacey is a fan

By NANCY BUCKLEY

Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group is creating its own social channel with user-generated content that encourages guests to share their experiences.

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Luxury Daily

The channel hosts a space for both the celebrity fans and guests to post images and descriptions of experiences to share with other fans. "Fans of MO" will offer the hotel brand an opportunity to learn its guests' favorite aspects of staying at its properties and be able to duplicate those experiences for others.

"This doesn't change the celebrity-driven campaign, it adds to it," said [Melanie Nayer](#), luxury hotel and brand expert.

"Consumers are the core of the hospitality industry and Mandarin Oriental's new social sharing sites give guests a unique voice that not only allows them to share their experiences, but helps build brand advocacy for the hotel group," she said. "What's great about this particular platform is that you can also book the experience directly from a user's quote. That adds an entirely new dimension to user-generated content, and one that

I think Mandarin Oriental hotels will ultimately benefit from."

Ms. Nayer is not affiliated with Mandarin Oriental, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

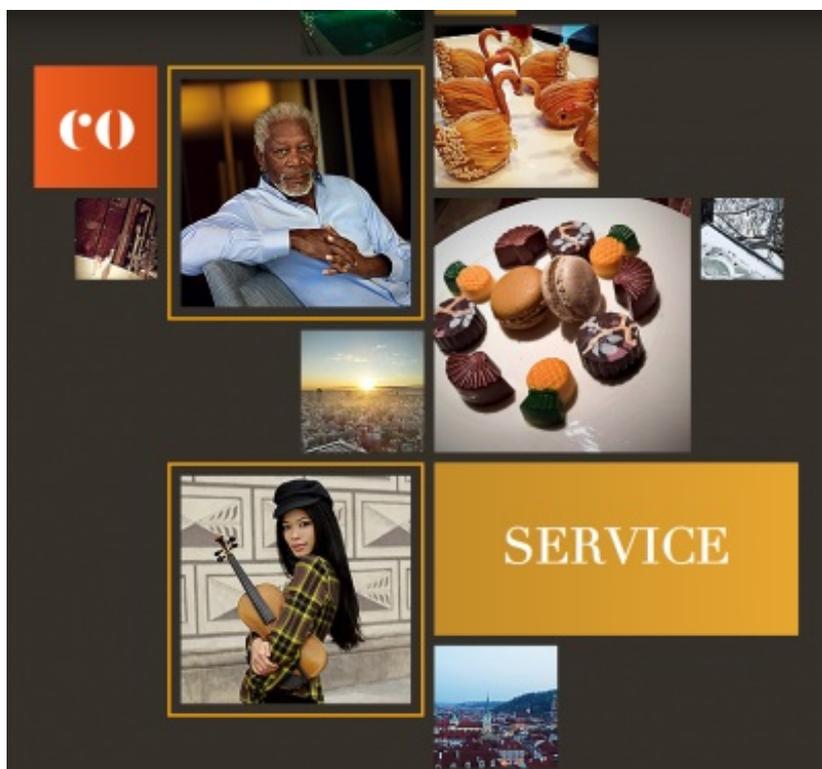
Mandarin Oriental was unable to comment by press deadline.

Everyone is a fan

Fans of MO allows consumers to post their own image or experience to the platform. This experience can be property-specific and mention things such as food, service, spa and wellness, destination or art and design.

Consumers who are looking to book a vacation can search the user-generated content by each category or by the specific property.

About a year ago, Mandarin Oriental added actor Morgan Freeman to its celebrity endorsement campaign that provides a rolling series of approvals for properties.



Fans of MO

The "He's a Fan, She's a Fan" campaign leverages the vast fan bases of actors and actresses, artists, designers and musicians. The brand is able to impart a sense of authenticity by targeting celebrities who visit properties on their own accord rather than wrangling the hottest celebrity ([see story](#)).

This campaign is being expanded further with Fans of MO by asking non-celebrity guests to talk about their favorite properties and experiences. The turn toward everyone being a fan was seen in Mandarin Oriental's latest social video where it celebrated fans of all sizes by chronicling the adventures of doll-sized people through Shanghai.



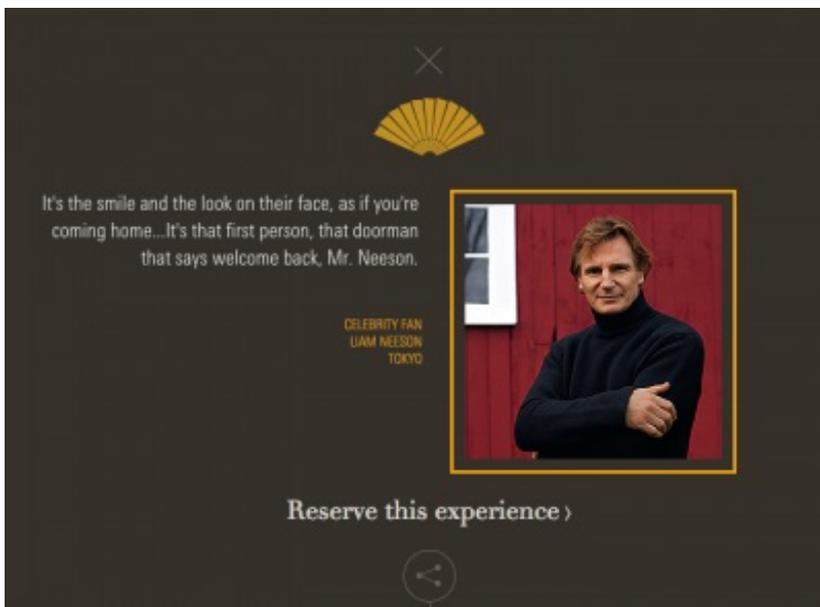
Search options on Fans of MO

Posted on the brand's Facebook page, the video honors "big fans, little fans, Mandarin Oriental Fans." Mandarin Oriental's storytelling through a subtly branded short film allows the doll-sized people to be the main focus, grabbing the attention of guests looking to engage on a whimsical level ([see story](#)).

On Fans of MO, users who do not post an image are separated by their initials in colorful boxes. The platform is set-up like a timeline, and consumers can scroll down as the line seems to continue on forever.

Facebook post about new platform

If interested in a post, the user clicks upon it and it expands to takeover the whole screen. The image and comment from the guest is shown and below users can click to reserve the experience themselves. The user is brought to the specific property's site to book a trip.



Liam Neeson's fan experience

Also, users have the opportunity to share the experience on Twitter, Facebook or Pinterest or email it to themselves or others.

Socializing virtually

When on vacation many guests are already sharing their experiences on social media, so creating a space that encourages guests to share on both mainstream social media and Mandarin Oriental's own site generates a platform that allows guests to learn from experiences of one another.

The Ritz-Carlton has done something similar by giving its consumers a central location to share brand memories that will likely spur more social media interaction.

The newly minted "Your Memories" section on the brand's Web site aggregates social posts with the #RCMemories hashtag and invites manual uploads from consumers. As consumers see the images of other engaged Ritz-Carlton travelers, it may foster a sense of community ([see story](#)).

A branded social media platform allows consumers to take a larger role in brand marketing.

"Thanks to today's social media landscape, consumers - regardless of the industry - are not just brand advocates, they're becoming brand marketers," Ms. Nayer said. "With this new social media platform, guests of Mandarin Oriental are able to share their favorite experiences, and the hotels have an additional vehicle for promoting their experiences and amenities."

Final Take

Nancy Buckley, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

Embedded Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/-L9RaXUMHPY>

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