

COLUMNS

## What Apple's new patent application for product packaging means

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By A LUXURY DAILY COLUMNIST

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Barely a ripple was made in the media last week when it was reported Apple had filed a patent with the US Patent & Trademark Office titled “Personalization of Devices While Packaged,” which, in a nutshell, allows Apple’s millions of product packaging such as iPhone boxes to provide intelligent connectivity that facilitates a useful, rich and magical consumer experience to people with one tap of their smartphone.

In the **patent filing**, Apple provides a specific example whereby a customer can tap her phone on the product package to instantly personalize the packaged device so that she can avoid lengthy manual steps of setting up a new device.

Thinking out of the box

This clearly indicates that Apple like other global brands is beginning to realize that contactless technologies such as NFC are creating exciting new ways to transform brand experiences with consumers that give new meaning and relevance to billions of once lifeless “things” such as product packaging.

The great thing about this filing from Apple is it is not only thinking about transforming its objects into a network of intelligently connected “things” but it is also crafting personalized experiences that deeply integrate with its products to make consumer experiences of tomorrow more intuitive, more magical than what they are today.

Think about the current consumer experience today when people buy a new Apple device. Many of these buyers will already be Apple customers, China excluded. Various manual steps are involved in setting up the new device before the customer is in a position to enjoy the product such as User Information, iTunes ID and so on.

Apple wants to completely remove these high-friction manual steps and replace them with one tap.

Things to do

The advantages of providing this capability are mutually beneficial to Apple and its customers as follows:

1. Apple can bring new services and experiences to its customers across millions of owned assets which in this filing is specifically related to its product packaging but could also be other physical objects including in-store materials and outdoor media assets that are accessed with one tap.
2. By Apple bringing one-tap connectivity to its entire object portfolio allows the company to understand how customers are interacting with the brand in ways that were previously unknown thanks to Internet of Things (IoT) platforms. The product package becomes a direct channel to interact with the customer in a way that is personal and magical.
3. Customers are happy because they avoid lengthy manual steps of setting up their device and do what they need to in a faster, more effortless fashion, i.e. one tap.

IT IS EXCITING that Apple is beginning to see the enormous potential of the Internet of Things in a way that delivers meaningful value to its customers.

This is yet another example of how contactless technologies such as NFC and BLE will provide ways for global brands to reimagine their billions of lifeless objects to be transformed into a network of intelligently connected “things” that create powerful experiences for people across the world with just one tap of their phone.

The opportunities afforded to brands using contactless technology are only limited by their imagination. There are billions of “things” that can be intelligently connected. Product packaging is just the beginning.

**[Please click here to read Apple's Personalization of Devices While Packaged patent filing](#)**

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