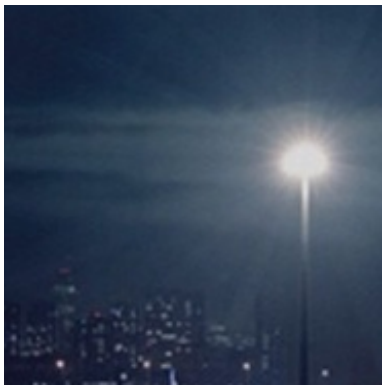


MOBILE

Rolls-Royce shifts to narrative storytelling on Instagram

April 17, 2015



Rolls-Royce "The World is Waiting" Instagram post

By JOE MCCARTHY

While Rolls-Royce Motor Cars may not directly trigger sales through Instagram, the social platform has become a place for prospective buyers to get ideas for bespoke requests and cultivate their enthusiasm.

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The brand is leveraging this committed Instagram community to build excitement for an upcoming bespoke model unveiling April 23. As the date approaches, the brand is trying to string together a compelling narrative with Instagram content.

"Instagram is very important for us," said Gerry Spahn, corporate communications manager of **Rolls-Royce North America**, New York. "We have a lot of community followers, people who are either very exuberant owners or just incredibly excited aficionados."

"There are two audiences on Instagram," he said. "Our owners who are excited about sharing their lives, and the aspirational side, people who want, dream about or are close to owning a Rolls-Royce."

"Many owners participate on social media, but particularly as the age of our owners has dropped significantly, we have more people who are open to sharing on social media."

Worth the wait

Rolls-Royce's Instagram page primarily showcases various models in exotic locations.



Rolls-Royce Instagram post

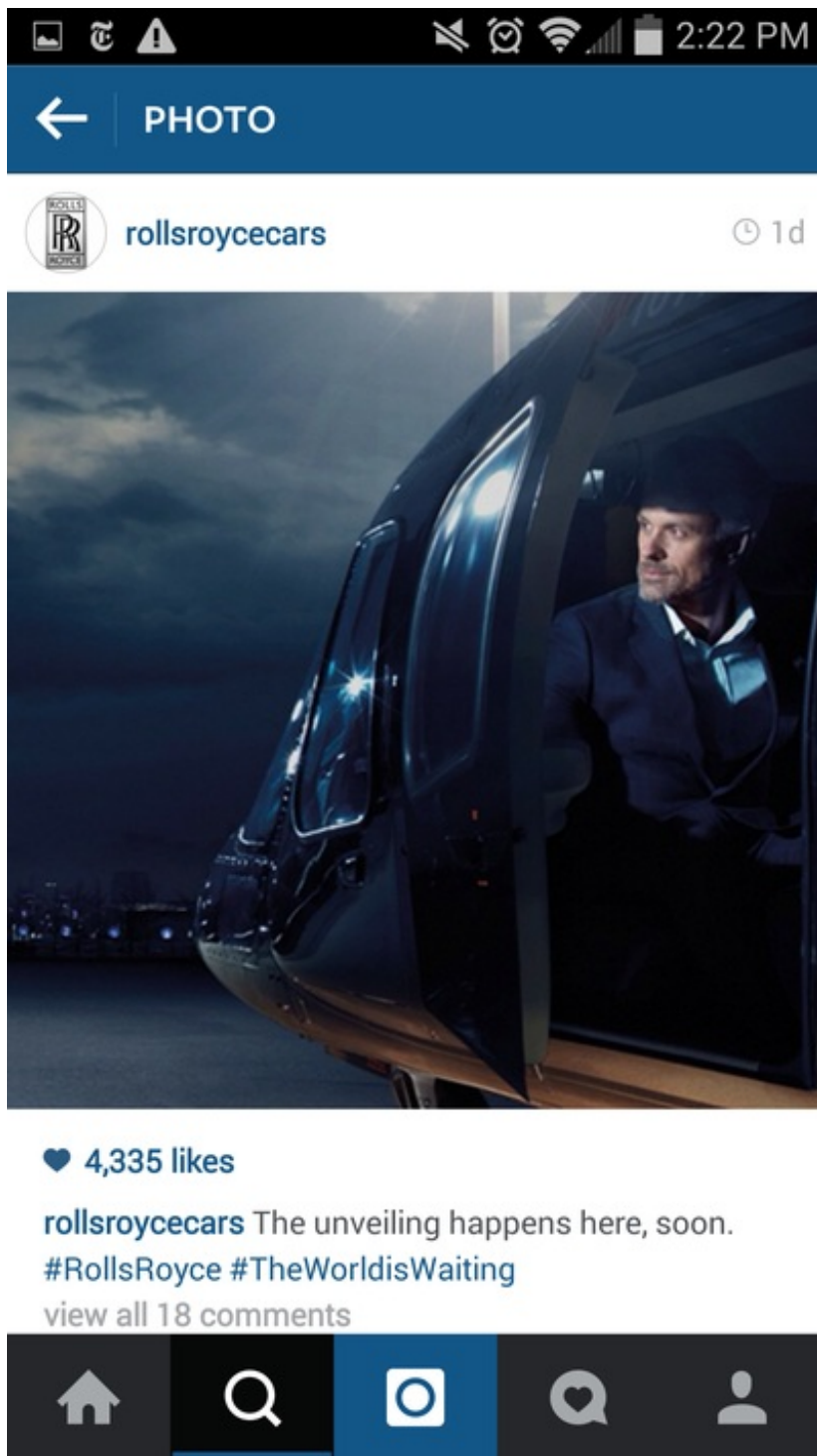
Mr. Spahn noted that the average age of Rolls-Royce drivers has dropped from the high 50s to the low 40s, ushering in a wave of youthful enthusiasts who embrace social media.

The #RollsRoyce tag on Instagram retrieves nearly 900,000 posts from fans. For prospective buyers looking for inspiration, this search may yield intriguing ideas for customization.

Around 80 percent of Rolls-Royce buyers request some level of bespoke detailing.

The brand is now experimenting with content by introducing a sparse narrative leading up to the unveiling of a bespoke model.

Posts began April 15 with an image including one of the first people on the brand's feed and the caption, "The unveiling happens here, soon." The man in the image sits aboard a helicopter looking at something to his right.



Rolls-Royce Instagram post

Although the caption suggests that the unveiling will occur exclusively on Instagram, there will still be the typical hard release of the model. However, by announcing the unveiling on Instagram, the brand guarantees that followers will show up on the date.

The following day, Rolls-Royce released a short video that features a man boarding a helicopter in snowy weather. The video then cuts to a road on which a woman is driving. The next scene shows the man beside the woman in the car and the video concludes with the man walking somewhere.

The mysterious nature of the video may further pique interest.

Next, the brand showed a stark urban landscape with the date of the unveiling, April 23.

In the ensuing days, the automaker will post more pieces to the puzzle.

Bespoke engagement

Automotive brands have embraced social media at a higher rate than brands in other product categories, according to a report from L2.

Average community growth for auto brands on Instagram jumped 152 percent, and the platform generates an average engagement level of 2.68 percent. While communities on other platforms have grown at similar rates, the second highest average engagement level is .21 percent on Pinterest ([see story](#)).

Perhaps more so than other product categories, digital is reshaping the consumer journey to a new car. Consumers spend hours watching video, reading consumer reviews, learning technical features and taking all sorts of virtual tours before making a decision and heading to a pre-determined dealer ([see story](#)).

For Rolls-Royce, the salient quality of social media may be aesthetic.

"Instagram does allow for people to share how they express themselves," Mr. Spahn said. "Almost all of our cars are bespoke – they photograph so beautifully."

Final Take

Joe McCarthy, staff reporter on Luxury Daily, New York

Embedded Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/5vTLEDuZWMY>

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