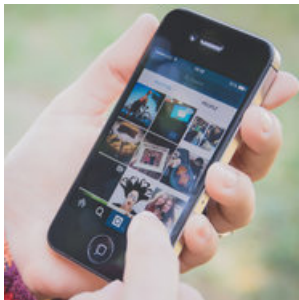


MULTICHANNEL

Creativity will be the hallmark of a successful brand

October 14, 2015



Instagram is an attractive advertising channel for media marketers

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

NEW YORK As marketers try to appeal to the next generation of consumers, they need more than data, according to a New York University professor at Luxury Interactive 2015 on Oct. 13.

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Brands must also convey less tangible values through the vast array of channels and social media outlets at their disposal. Social media outlets offer brands creative ways to reach consumers, expedite the transaction process and convey brand values.

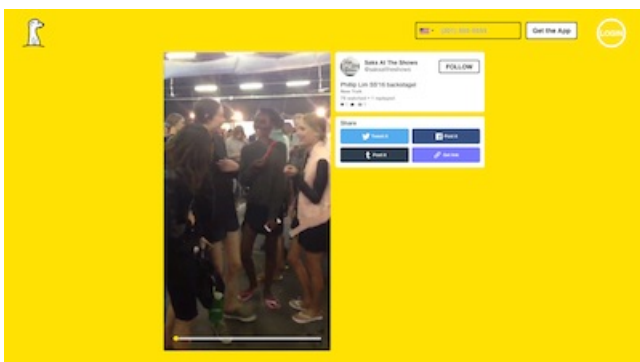
"If you limit yourself to tools that are metric and about data, you are not getting the whole picture," said [Thoma Serdari](#), Ph.D., founder of [PIQLuxury](#) and adjunct professor of luxury marketing at New York University, New York.

"Brands need to deliver mythical, exchange, emotional, ethical and identity values," she said. "You do that by taking all the metrics that your platforms are giving you and really investing in a design person for your team. You need to have creative strategy."

Creative content

The seven markers of creative strategy that Ms. Serdari identifies are: attention span, visuals, discovery, tunnel, turf, feed and steps to the shopping cart.

Studies have shown that attention spans are shrinking, meaning Web pages have to immediately capture the attention of the user and intuitively lead to the next step. Relatedly, users want to get what they are looking for much faster, which could lead to changes in current platforms or opportunities for new start-ups to swoop in.



Saks at the Show Meerkat

"I don't believe in social' anymore," Ms. Serdari said. "I'm interested in a feed.' I think the next thing Facebook is going to come up with is differentiating feeds. I follow design, I follow business intelligence, I follow a handful of other things, but when I get the feed and it's all confused, everything in one, it's no good.

"I want to very quickly search my feed in each one of the things that interest me," she said. "You have to cater to a customer who knows what he or she wants and who wants to find it quickly."

That means layout and design should also be doing some of the consumer's work for them. Bergdorf Goodman, for example, allows users to add items to their cart directly from an Instagram photo, cutting out the work and time the consumer needs to purchase the desired products.



Bergdorf Goodman Instagram

Luxury brands have always been sophisticated with use of visuals, but with platforms such as Instagram gaining popularity, the average consumer is also becoming more visually literate and refined. Marketers need to continue to be creative and intelligent with the use of visuals to stay ahead of and even keep up with Instagramming, Snapchatting, Periscoping consumers.

Accordingly, the growth of some of these outlets has queued brands to take steps to improve social media output.

"We have seen fashion companies using YouTube only to show their fashion shows and that is extremely boring," Ms. Serdari said. "Someone more creative can use YouTube to show product in a very interesting way. Periscope, which is great for journalism, is not just for journalists."



Michael Kors Snapchat

"[And] Snapchat is such a quick and interesting video that a lot of brands realized they need to build their creative teams with producers," she said. "Every single thing that comes out of Snapchat is so well designed, every single thing that happens is humorous, is unexpected, is very surprising and fresh, and it actually makes you want to something because these things are very short."

Indeed, media company Hearst is now hiring a Snapchat producer.

Why has Snapchat taken off? It likely has to do with short videos to match short attention spans. Net-A-Porter is one brand that has already adapted to this change, using videos ranging from 10- to 30-seconds on each product page, with a majority of users watching them beginning to end.

One channel that does not yet have the name recognition of Instagram or Snapchat is Fyuse, which records images

as the recorder moves and then allows viewers to tilt their phone to enable 360-degree viewing.

Another creative outlet is Monegraph, which acts as a liaison between creative consumers and brands, giving a way for brands to connect more directly with consumers and use their creativity. A consumer can take a picture of a product and add it to their feed and mark it with hashtags, with which the brand can find and purchase the photo for use in its own campaign or Web site, an initiative that takes branded hashtags on Instagram to the next level.

Ahead of the curve

Some trailblazers have already begun using these social media channels in creative ways.

Last month, British fashion label Burberry teamed up with Snapchat to give the platform's users an exclusive first look at its spring/summer 2016 runway collection the night before it debuts.

The first "Snapchat Show" aired on Sunday, Sept. 20 at 7 p.m. BST, showing the line as last-minute tweaks were being made at the house's design studio. Creating a layer of exclusivity, the preview was only be available for 24 hours following its airing, forcing interested consumers to tune in quickly ([see story](#)).

As social media platforms lend themselves to a purchasing journey more readily, they represent an opportunity for brands in yet another way.

Social media buy buttons could be the next frontier of mobile commerce as they quickly gain momentum on various platforms, with savvy retailers likely to extend into numerous outlets to gain the most benefit.

Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Snapchat are generating widespread discussion regarding commerce in social media, as they introduce buy buttons and purchasing options for consumers to shop advertisers' merchandise. It is probable that retailers will lean towards the one or two platforms that best reflect their brand, but it cannot hurt to spread into all channels, as this is an up-and-coming field ([see story](#)).

"Measurement and metrics are not enough," Ms. Serdari said. "What we're missing are things that have to do with the general environment and how many different channels there are for you to reach your consumer.

"A few years ago people were really badmouthing luxury brands because they hadn't stepped up to take advantage of digital space, but some brands, like Hermes, have done it very very well," she said.

"It's not a matter of finding someone who knows how to play with the apps or interpret the strategy you can get from corporate or even interpret the metrics correctly. It is about getting a team that can tell a story very pertinently with what they get from the brand."

Final Take

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