

INTERNET

Bally turns to consumers for #ShoeTips and #Selfeets

November 18, 2015



#BallySelfeet photo

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

Swiss apparel and accessories brand Bally is putting its foot down with a new initiative and social campaign.

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The brand launched a "shoepedia" on its Web site, which will tell men everything they need to know about footwear. The Web site shows Bally's awareness of numerous trends, capitalizing on the rise of menswear through user-generated content and useful tips rather than merely products.

"We know, for some inexplicable fetishy reason, that consumers love to take selfies of their shoes," said David Benattar, CEO of [Hyperbolic](#), a New York-based creative agency. "Bally is capitalizing on that trend, and is gathering on its website brand relevant content that speaks with a clear voice."

Mr. Benattar is not affiliated with Bally, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Bally did not respond by press deadline.

Shoelapalooza

The Web site is divided into four sections: shoemaking, shoe care, shoe glossary and #BallySelfeet. The shoemaking and shoe care sections each contain multiple subsections and elaborate instructions and information.

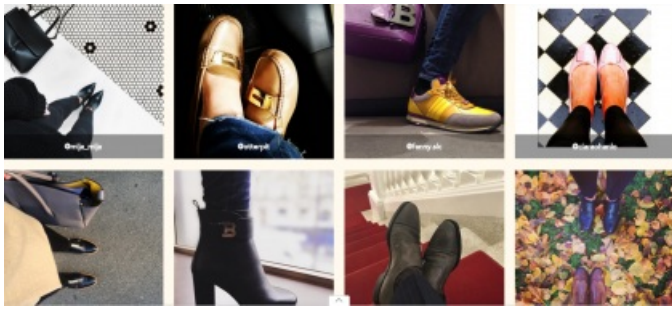
For example, "shoemaking" begins with "shoemaking steps," which provides a 12-point process that transforms "the starting block" into "the perfect shoe." Accompanying the textual information is a four-minute video that lets the viewer observe Bally's shoemaking process more carefully.

12 Steps to Perfect Shoes

Today's consumers are hyper-attentive to production methods and manufacturing processes, and Bally's transparency in its process shows that it both attains a high level of quality and craftsmanship and does so the right way. Embedding that message within an initiative that also has direct use for the consumer further authenticates the message without making it too forceful.

Beyond "shoemaking steps," users can learn about the 14 different kinds of leather Bally shoes are made from, with each containing a link to its appropriate section under the "shoe care" category. "Shoemaking" also includes "shoe construction techniques," which teach how to distinguish between the precision of The California Construction and The Moccasin Construction, among others.

The glossary teaches more than 100 terms and #BallySelfeet compiles Instagram photos of consumers wearing Bally Shoes. "Shoe Care," meanwhile, gives general tips for all shoes and tips related to the material, as well as how-tos to rescue footwear from various types of damage and a primer on various useful accessories such as shoetrees and shoehorns.



#Selfeet page screenshot

Luxury defines itself in part by value, and consumers too are looking for brands whose products will last them a lifetime. Providing detailed and specific shoe care instructions shows consumers that Bally can be that brand.

Similar to the #BallySelfeet, the best #ShoeTips from Twitter are also compiled on the "shoe rescue" section, giving consumers yet another chance to see themselves on Bally's Web site.

Lastly, a link to "the history of Bally shoes" will take users offsite to Bally's heritage site, where they will be greeted with a video and photo essay showing the evolution of the brand over more than a century and a half.

Bally heritage video

While heritage underscores a tradition of quality, user-generated content lets consumers feel like a part of shaping the brand. Putting the two together suggests that wearing Bally shoes is participating in a long-lasting and esteemed culture.

"At that price point, it's all about orchestrating this savant melange of heritage and innovation," Mr. Benattar said. "[It's about] telling a story that optimizes the brand cachet, the in-house craftsmanship built over decades of development, R&D and innovation and doing in a way that builds tremendous brand value.

"This is the role of storytelling and communications - targeting an uber-discerning consumer segment."

Shoe-ins

Bally has a history finding creative and unobtrusive ways of showcasing its craftsmanship.

For example, the brand presented attendees of its spring/summer 2016 runway show access to its craftsmen, both in-person and on live-streaming application Periscope.

Bally held its spring/summer 2016 presentation during Milan Fashion Week on Sept. 25 and invited its craftsman to be on hand while its models walked the catwalk. Through the use of Twitter-owned Periscope, Bally was able to live stream its handcrafted quality and its latest collection of women's apparel and accessories ([see story](#)).

The brand has also taken fresh approaches to marketing its heritage and history in recent months.

In one notable instance this August, Bally took a nostalgic trip to the 1960s with its autumn/winter 2015 campaign that takes place on a vintage-inspired film set.

Bally's campaign and the collection featured were both inspired by filmmaker Wes Anderson's work, which creates slightly surrealist worlds which make use of a sentimental color palette. This campaign strategy showed that Bally's apparel is timeless, by placing it in a vintage yet modern context ([see story](#)).

"Bally is in an historic player in the mens footwear market, a competitive segments with numerous well established players, and an ongoing flow of new entrants, including menswear designers," Mr. Benattar said. "We recently saw Cole Haan launching fashion, Church lifting up its design, Dior having a couple of successful classics and numerous strategic growth initiatives in the category.

"In men's footwear, it's difficult to give birth to an 'it' product. The typical American consumer doesn't buy that many pairs of luxury dress shoes per year, so any growth opportunity or consumer trends need to be leveraged."

Final Take

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