

INTERNET

Shangri-La uses Instagram to keep consumers warm this Christmas

December 8, 2015

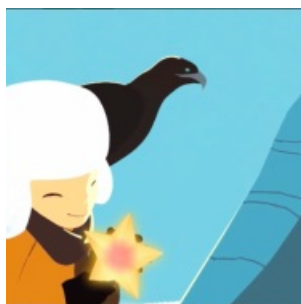


Image from day 2 of Shangri-La's Instagram advent

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts is spreading a #WorldOfWarmth among its Instagram community through a participatory holiday tale.

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The brand has unveiled an advent calendar on the social media platform offering its 32,000 followers a chance to win prizes for watching and interacting with brief Christmas videos. The continuity of the videos will encourage users to come back, which will in turn help the material go viral.

"We used media insights to understand our audiences in China and abroad, and both WeChat and Instagram met the brief to achieve two of our key objectives," said Luca Deplano, vice president of brand communications at **Shangri-La**, Hong Kong.

"The first was to leverage mobile as the most preferred communication device used by our audience, and second was that both platforms gave us the opportunity to put engaging story-telling content at the heart of our global communications," he said.

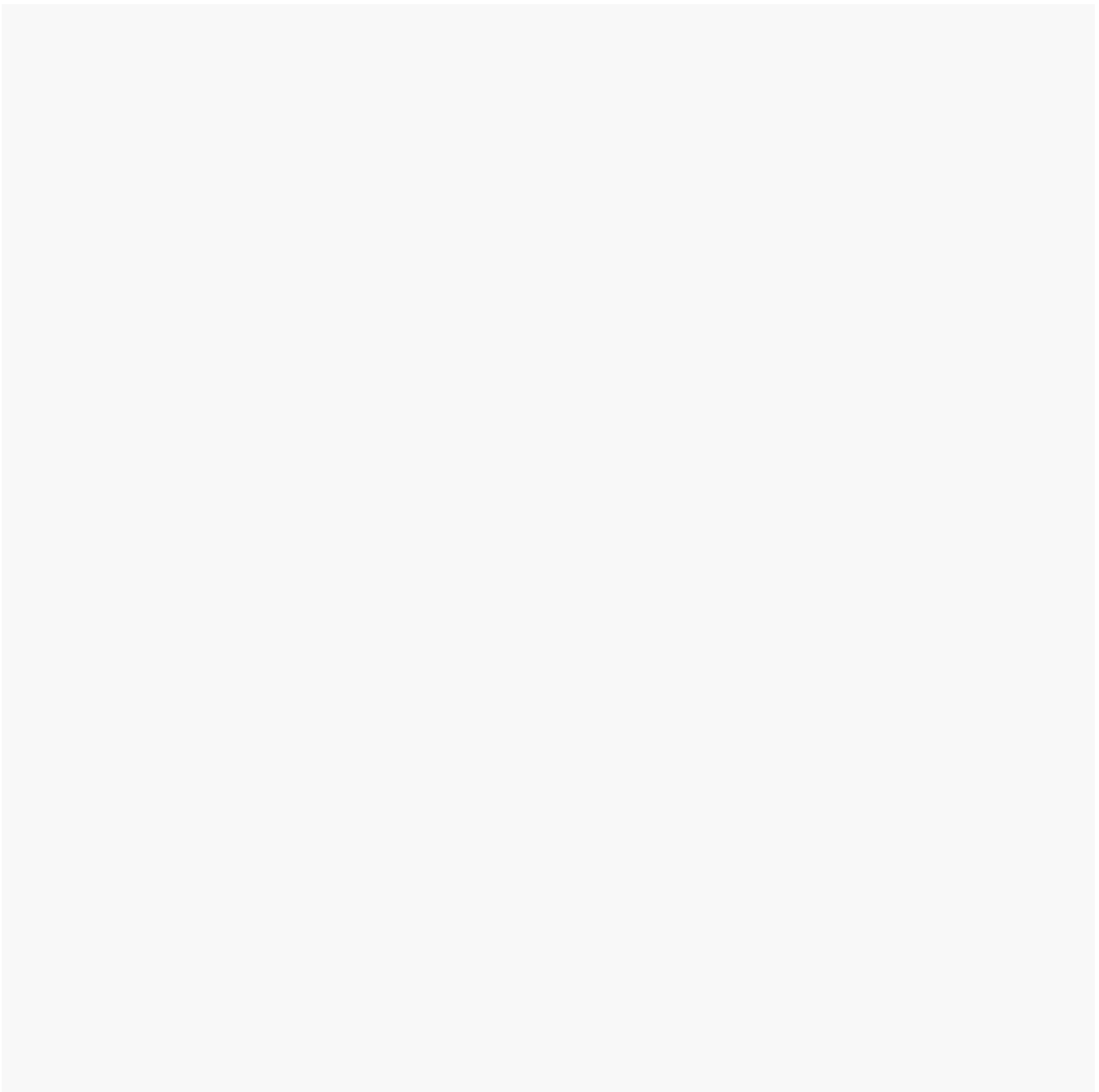
"We wanted to create content that reflected our brand values of hospitality from the heart. Over the course of a month, these short animations tell a longer story in a beautiful, charismatic, and rewarding way that reflects these values."

A very Instagram Christmas

Each of the videos includes the Shangri-La Christmas star, which glows an iridescent orange when it is held. Viewers are encouraged to screenshot and regram the moment in which the star "glows with warmth" and tag #WorldOfWarmth and @ShangriLaHotels.

Participants have a chance to win 2,000 Golden Circle Award points. Two-thousand points is enough for a free night at a standard room at a number of Shangri-La locations, for an upgrade to an executive suite or for two \$100 dining vouchers.

"Golden Circle and its point system is a way we can create even more enriching brand experiences for both new and loyal members of our family," Mr. Deplano said.



A video posted by Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts (@shangrilahotels) on Nov 30, 2015 at 5:11pm PST

The first video depicts an astronaut picking out a star, which begins to glow when he picks it up. He looks at the camera, smiles and sends it to earth.

In the next video, the star falls into Mongolia, where a traveler moving through the snow on horseback catches it. The star again glows when it is held, and the traveler then sends it away with a bird.

The bird drops it into Beijing's Temple of Heaven, where it is retrieved by one of the temple's famous lion statues. The lion licks it, causing the star to glow with warmth again before traveling onward once again.

Through Christmas, Shangri-La will unveil one video per day showing the travels of the Christmas star.

Asking a consumer to return repeatedly to a brand's site can be risky. The promotion may not inspire them to keep returning, the overt advertising could turn them off or they could simply forget. Opting for Instagram instead of a microsite minimizes this risk because consumers will see the videos and be reminded of the contest in the course of daily social media use.



Shangri-La Christmas cartoon for its London property ([see story](#))

Although holiday and seasonal promotions are extremely common among hotels, many U.S.-based chains are opting for more secular celebrations rather than overt Christmas signifiers out of sensitivity for minority groups that do not celebrate the holiday.

Unlike in the rest of China, Christmas is a popular holiday in Hong Kong, so Shangri-La's Christmas-countdown fits the brand rather than being an attempt to cash in on the holiday's popularity.

Holiday giveaways

Other hotels have also used giveaways to spur continual engagement among consumers.

For example, this season Hotelier Dorchester Collection is promising presents under the tree to entice consumers to book for the holiday season and beyond.

The brand has launched a festive microsite that lets consumers explore its collection and provides chances to win prizes. The social component of the Web site will keep Dorchester in contact with prospective guests and win new consumers drawn by the allure of giveaways ([see story](#)).

Giveaways are a popular theme for hoteliers this holiday season.

Like Dorchester and Shangri-La, the Peninsula Hotels is offering its patrons the "Golden Ticket" to holiday cheer.

The hotel chain has expanded on its SnowPage promotion with a festive microsite that includes a list of holiday offers and other festive activities in each hotel, as well as a behind-the-scenes video. The interactivity and design of the site will strengthen the bond with consumers and position a holiday stay at a Peninsula hotel as a memorable experience ([see story](#)).

"We don't necessarily think of a seasonal campaign as a way to differentiate from the competition," Mr. Deplano said. "The primary objective of a campaign such as this is to communicate our brand values.

"As we believe in hospitality from the heart, genuinely wishing people well at such a festive time of year is just something that our brand and our people naturally do," he said.

Final Take

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