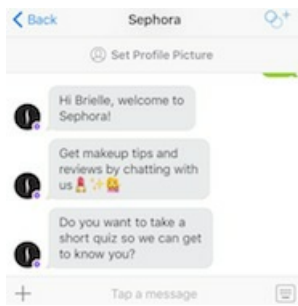


MOBILE

Sephora adds glitz to Kik in bet on chatbot commerce

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Sephora introduces its experience on Kik to users

By **Brielle Jaekel**

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LVMH-owned Sephora's debut on messaging application Kik is a reflection of the push towards conversational commerce through chatbots and how to drive sales with one-to-one experiences on mobile that mimic in-store interactions.

Users will now be able to purchase directly within the Kik app while conversing with a Sephora chatbot about anything regarding beauty, including reviews, product recommendations and tips. The experience takes on the form of a conversation with a friend or store associate, starting with a small quiz so that the program can serve appropriate content and products to the individual.

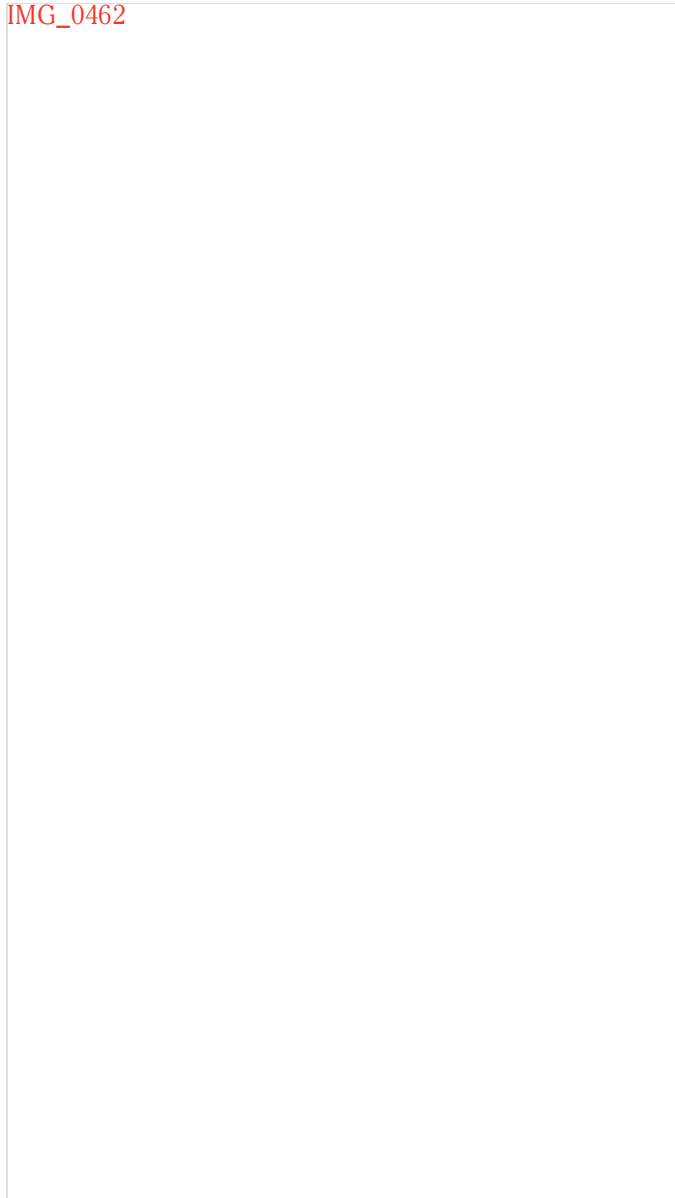
"With Kik, our clients can engage with us in a new way to learn beauty tips, watch how to videos, and read ratings and reviews which link to our site within the app," said Bindu Shah, vice president of digital marketing at **Sephora**. "That said, at Sephora, we always want to facilitate the consumer's path from discovery to purchase via the latest platforms which is precisely what our partnership with Kik allows us to do.

"Through our partnership with Kik, we saw an opportunity to engage with new and existing clients, particularly with the highly mobile/connected audience of Gen-Z and younger millennials, through a fun, new social platform," she said. "At Sephora, innovation and agility are core to our brand DNA.

"As part of this, our social marketing team continually tests emerging platforms that are a brand fit and that offer our clients new ways to engage with Sephora. Our Gen-Z clients are spending increasing amounts of time on messaging apps; with Kik we can be part of her messaging app experience."

Mobile messaging for retail

Kik users can start a conversation with Sephora to find and purchase the right products and receive helpful tips for them through mobile messaging. Users can start a conversation through a request or a simple hello.



To start off the experience, the chatbot gives an introduction by explaining how users can get makeup tips and reviews by chatting with Sephora. Users are then prompted to take a personal quiz if interested, so Sephora "can get to know you."

Participants must enter their age group, favorite makeup brand categories and products they cannot live without. A video at the end walks users through a tip that coincides with their interests, based on the responses given.

Automatic chat

To engage, users do not need to type the answers themselves. Sephora prompts specific responses via select buttons that pop up in the Kik keyboard.

For instance, when asked "most of your makeup fits within this brand groups," users can choose between select pop-up responses such as "A. drugstore brands, B. Sephora Collection, Benefit Cosmetics, Urban Decay, Christian Dior, Armani, Givenchy, D. bareMinerals, Josie Maran, Tarte."

These pop-up responses are not restricted to the personality quiz in the beginning, but for any question Sephora has for the user. For instance, users can often choose between responses such as see reviews, search for a product, tips and top-rated to let Sephora know what they would like to see.

Users can search for product categories and specific items to read reviews, and will be brought to a native page within the app to read and purchase.

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Sephora serves a wide range of high-quality imagery that fits in well with the native experience for tips and product previews. Users can see step-by-step images paired with directions for tips, as well as photographs of potential products of interest.

"A chatbot can dramatically increase sales for a brand like Sephora that has a wide variety of SKUs," said Beerud Sheth CEO of [Gupshup](#). "Chatbots act like the in-store sales assistant, always available, instant, highly knowledgeable.

"Chatbots enable the customer to make an informed choice, save time, no waiting, and possibly money too, personalized deals," he said. "Chatbots reduce customer friction, improve customer loyalty and drive cross-sell and up-sell.

"Chat is clearly the future of commerce. It is going to transform not just online ecommerce, but also offline commerce. Every customer touch point, whether it is before, during or after the sale, will be through chat."