

MULTICHANNEL

## Steinway composes global campaign to reach cultured achievers

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*Instagram image from Steinway & Sons*

By SARAH JONES

Piano maker Steinway & Sons is reaching out to cultured consumers through an integrated multichannel campaign that tells the story of its uncompromising dedication to expression.

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Acting in harmony, the 163-year-old brand has launched a global print advertising campaign, a brand video that captures its artisanship, social work and a redesigned content-rich Web site that spotlights some of its famous owners. With a new flagship Steinway Hall in New York opening to the public on April 15, the brand is looking to appeal to a new generation of potential piano owners.

"We used to be a very active advertiser almost 100 years ago, and then the category changed and the environment changed and we stopped advertising for quite some time," said Darren Marshall, CMO at **Steinway**, New York.

"What we're trying to do now is really start recruiting new generations of people into the business of pianos and more importantly to help them understand the role that piano may have within their lives," he said.

### Communicating values

Henry Steinway founded the company in 1853 when he emigrated to New York from Germany and began producing pianos with his sons. Leading into the 20th century, the piano was the heart of the family home, since it did not have to compete with more modern forms of entertainment, such as phonographs or televisions.

Pianos played an integral role in consumers' shift from working to middle class, helping them lead the more refined lives they aspired to. Early advertising from Steinway dating to the 1920s through the '50s spoke to the role of culture and art in consumers' lives.

While Steinway took a hiatus from advertising, the brand's campaign today reflects the same emphasis on culture.

Steinway's print advertising campaign, "Handmade & Heartfelt," takes the Steinway piano out of the concert hall and into the home. Shot by portraitist Miller Mobley, the ad shows a woman seated at a grand piano in an aspirationally decorated house complete with floor to ceiling windows.

Within the ad, copy explains the brand's handmade qualities that have continued throughout its history, as well as speaking to its precision and passion. Throughout the text, paired words are bolded to highlight the key points of the brand's identity and differentiation.



### *Steinway Handmade & Heartfelt campaign*

"Nike uses NBA stars on the basketball court to talk about the importance of and the efficacy of their shoes," Mr. Marshall said. "And we have done that so often with great artists in the great concert halls, because that really proves the efficacy of our instrument."

"But what we also wanted to be able to make sure of was that people who value excellence realize that that level of excellence, sure it's important for Carnegie Hall, but I can have a piece of that in my home as well," he said. "So just to be able to remind them and make it feel relevant that they've got an opportunity to bring a Steinway into their home so that they can have a piece of the world's greatest culture in their homes."

Seeking the affluent audience that could consider a Steinway purchase, the brand has turned to lifestyle print and online media in the United States, the United Kingdom, China and Germany to advertise. The campaign is running in titles including Departures, WSJ. Magazine, Robb Report, Architectural Digest, Elle Decor and Luxe Interiors, as well as cultural publications such as Playbill.

Steinway also create a brand video, "Soar," which echoes the sentiment expressed in the print campaign by showing that its pianos are made "by artisans for artists."

Shot by British director Alexander Brown at the brand's factory in Astoria, Queens, the two-minute film opens with an employee fitting the keyboard into the instrument and then casually playing a modern composition by Young Steinway Artist Jean-Philippe Rio-Py. Steinway purposefully chose a more broadly appealing track to help the brand feel relevant to a larger audience.

As the contemporary piece plays underneath, footage of Steinway's artisans appears as they hand shape and assemble the pianos. A voiceover is layered in, which makes a contrast between Steinway's traits and those seen in other companies, using phrases such as "exacting to the millimeter in a close-enough culture" and "built of genuine hardwood and cast iron in a world of artificiality."

The voiceover also explains that it can take dozens of experienced artisans 12 months to create one piano.

### *Soar Steinway & Sons*

"The idea of 'Soar' really gets down to the insight that when an instrument is really perfect, it allows the artist to close their eyes and not even have to worry that it's there," Mr. Marshall said. "They can just purely express themselves with all of the colors of the palette to be able to bring their artistic vision to life..."

"Our brand allows people emotionally to lift off and go into another space," he said. "It's a transcendent type of experience that only art at its highest level brought to life via an instrument at its highest level can really appreciate."

This campaign film lives on Steinway's redesigned digital home. The brand is using specific sections of its newly revamped Web site as the landing pages for its display ads.

The new Web site features editorial content including videos and interviews with well-known Steinway owners, including Maroon 5's Jesse Carmichael and designer Josie Natori.

While Steinway pianos have traditionally appealed primarily to those who play, a new creation from the house could have others considering a piano purchase.

Spirio is billed as the first high definition player piano, using software to measure the velocity of the hammer hitting the string as an artist plays. The nuances of particular performances, including pedaling, are then recreated as a

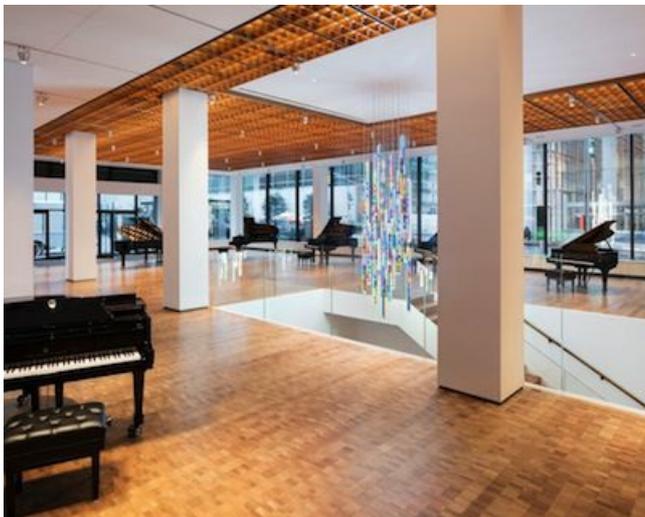
consumer plays a track off an iPad app.



### *Spirio piano*

The app holds a library of hundreds of performances by world-renowned artists playing pieces from Bach to Irving Berlin.

Consumers can peruse the Spirio and other Steinway pianos at the newly constructed Steinway Hall at 43rd Street and Avenue of the Americas, nearby to Times Square. This two-level flagship, the third New York location for the brand, contains retail and performance spaces, including a recital venue that seats 74.



### *Steinway Hall*

Home base

While a new concept for Steinway to be promoting its pianos as a cultural home furnishing, it has previously struck partnership with other interior brands.

For instance, when Sotheby's International Realty Canada was presenting Toronto's famed Integral House to potential buyers, Steinway was on hand.

The Integral House celebrates architecture, music and performance and is constructed in the shape of an integral mathematics symbol. The Canadian Opera Company and Steinway & Sons provided two opera singers and pianists to perform in the home's concert hall during the evening ([see story](#)).

Also, Steinway & Sons joined forces with lifestyle brand Lalique on a grand piano that unites the heritage of both houses.

The Heliconia piano takes its design from an archival botanical shape from Lalique, while also honoring the look of Steinway instruments. As Lalique works to showcase its full lifestyle offerings, which includes furniture and architectural pieces, reaching out into other product categories will further its diversification ([see story](#)).

"We're really pleased with the story that we're telling, with consumers' reaction to it," Mr. Marshall said. "We're able to bring a new generation of people, to remind them what Steinway is and always will be, and help them to feel warmly about why a Steinway should be part of their lives and aspiration."

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