

MARKETING

Lower spending does not stop brands from highlighting Father's Day

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Bertuti Father's Day Facebook image

By FORREST CARDAMENIS

With Father's Day around the corner, brands are taking steps to encourage consumers to show their appreciation with a finely crafted gift.

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With Sunday, June 19 being Father's Day for a majority of countries with high luxury spend, brands are reaching out to consumers via email and more creative means to forge a connection. While Father's Day is a gift-giving occasion, the luxury industry's slant toward women and the sentiments of consumers moderate its significance compared to Mother's Day.

"According to the National Retail Federation (NRF), US consumers spend more than \$21 billion for Mother's Day and nearly \$13 billion for Father's Day each year," said Ivy Shtereva, director of marketing at [Yes Lifecycle Marketing](#). "Although these numbers pale in comparison to the more than \$626 billion consumers spend during the holiday season, for many brands the 'parental holidays' represent a significant source of revenue during an otherwise uneventful time of year.

"Our own data and analysis suggest that, while Father's Day still brings in less revenue than Mother's Day, it's gaining traction with consumers; email-driven revenue from Father's Day-themed campaigns increased by nearly a third from 2014 to 2015."

Like Father, Like Son

Department store chain Saks Fifth Avenue is making the biggest splash, announcing on June 6 that it has partnered with the Italian Trade Commission to highlight Italian craftsmanship in an effort that will kick off this coming Father's Day.

Saks' initiative includes a 23-page Father's Day catalog entitled "The Italian Renaissance." The Italian Renaissance spotlights the best-known Italian brands, from Bulgari to Ferragamo, whose products are modeled in the Italian countryside, as well as a Father's Day gift guide.



Saks Father's Day catalog

The initiative will extend beyond Father's Day but marks the second year in a row that the Italian Trade Commission is partnering with Saks to celebrate Father's Day.

Berluti has also found a partner in Milk Magazine to help spur Father's Day sales. Berluti and Milk Magazine have created a Pinterest board on the shoemaker's newly launched Pinterest account depicting father-son pairs dressed in Berluti.

The "Like Father, Like Son" effort aims to generate sales by creating sentiment and "highlighting the ideas of transmission and generation." Users can create a board with the same theme for a chance to win a pair of Berluti sneakers in a move that could attract aspirational consumers and create a more authentic connection around Father's Day.



Fortnum & Mason Cards and Caviar Hamper

As with all holidays, email marketing remains a major tactic. Bergdorf Goodman, Louis Vuitton, Harry Winston, Hugo Boss, Fortnum & Mason, Smythson, Michael Kors and Van Cleef & Arpels are among the brands that have already sent emails to subscribers encouraging Father's Day gifting.

While Bergdorf Goodman highlights an array of products for the "game day dad," the "dapper dad" and the "globetrotter dad," Van Cleef & Arpels takes the opposite approach, sending a message touting its craftsmanship, with a link leading to a search for the brand's men's jewelry.

"From our experience, marketing for Mother's Day and Father's Day are generally similar a lot of brands try to appeal to their consumers with subject lines, designed to elicit emotional response, for example "Make Dad Smile!" or "A gift for Dad that he'll really love," Ms. Shtereva said. "At the same time, Father's Day also generates a fair number of more to-the-point subject lines "Father's Day Special!", "3 Great Gift Ideas for Dad" and more.

"Successful marketers will take a look at past performance of their Father's Day-themed campaigns in order to identify the theme and tone that best resonate with their audience," she said. "In some cases it may be a subject line that promotes free shipping just in time for the holiday, while in others, emotive language may win out."

While the chance to sway consumers for a sale should not be missed, brands are fighting an uphill battle with Father's Day. A new Ebates survey shows that a third of United States consumers will spend between \$1 and \$50 on

dad while 29 percent will spend between \$51 and \$100; for mom, 30 percent will spend \$51-\$100, with another 27 percent ranging upward to \$250.

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Louis Vuitton Father's Day email

While the spend will surely be higher among luxury buyers, it shows that aspirational purchases are harder to invoke on Father's Day, and the high spend on mom likely carries across all income brackets. Moreover, surveyed dads want a vacation, tickets to a sporting event or power tools, with watches down in fifth place.

"The brands need to spend some time discussing the topic with the dads/granddads who may receive the gifts and the gift givers who my gut tend to be the children in the families and not the wives but I don't know this is a fact," said Bob Shullman, CEO of the Shullman Research Center. "What the NRF puts out are spending metrics and very little else."

Favorite parent?

Despite the smaller prospects, some brands are still going the extra mile to dazzle dad and his family.

Department store chain Bloomingdale's is showing fathers in a three-dimensional fashion through interactive displays at its New York flagship.

Beginning May 26, Bloomingdale's applied 3D wallpaper to its windows facing Lexington Avenue to celebrate "Dimensional Dads," part of the department store's push for Father's Day gifting. Interactive window displays are ideal to grab the attention of passersby who may have not planned a shopping excursion, but will be swayed to enter based on the street side experience ([see story](#)).

Marketers were not quite as straightforward with Mother's Day, where a particular theme seemed to unite disparate campaigns.

This Mother's Day, retailers tapped into nostalgia to reach consumers' heartstrings and wallets.

The universality of Mother's Day has turned it into a noteworthy shopping occasion, with consumers all trying to say thank you to a person who has meant so much. The competitive field ensures that marketers are operating at the top of their game for the occasion ([see story](#)).

"Many brands treat non-major holidays as an afterthought and, as a result, are not able to capitalize on the major opportunity these events present," Ms. Shtereva said. "Marketers need to embrace seasonal planning and dedicate the time and resources to develop a comprehensive marketing strategy that utilizes energy moments from the premiere of Game of Thrones, to Father's Day, Halloween, or the Olympics. This will enable them to create relevant communications that speak to consumers all year long and thus increase engagement and, consequently, revenue."