

SOFTWARE AND TECHNOLOGY

## Retailers should continue to test Snapchat, but at a small scale

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*Burberry Snapchat campaign in progress*

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As Snapchat is just now establishing itself as an integrated purchasing platform, consumers lack significant intent to purchase, but that does not mean retailers should not test the waters with small campaigns that include direct calls-to-action.

While campaigns that consist of user-generated content see the most success on Snapchat, as the platform flourished as a platform without advertising, call-to-action-enabled campaigns still have the opportunity to see positive results. Alternatively, retailers without a paid campaign can see a favorable outcome with organic content that entices users to complete an action such as sharing a coupon code or having users Snap their purchases for a prize.

"In a recent field survey, Shift Communications found that commercial intent does exist on Snapchat, but is weak in comparison to other social channels," said Christopher Penn, vice president of marketing technology at Shift Communications. "Does this mean Snapchat should not be included in a retailer's marketing strategy at all?"

"Not necessarily," he said. "There is no harm in minimal investment, experimentation, and defensive plant the flag branding to ensure a retailer is ready if/when Snapchat does evolve."

"Direct calls to action, such as coupon codes or other trackable redemption mechanisms, work well because they allow a retailer to capture real actions taken. Snapping a coupon code that users can screenshot and redeem at the register will tell you how many engaged users took action."

### Snapping success

Snapchat is positioning itself as a go-to for everything platform, with users being able to shop, chat with friends and view news and entertainment content from their favorite publishers. But consumers are not completely on board with the quick shift to a commerce platform.

While advertising campaigns that include a direct and native purchasing aspect have a cool factor to them, not many users are making that transition over to continuously shop on the application. In the long run, Snapchat may become a significant shopping platform, just not at the moment, so retailer should be testing the waters to see what they can do.

Campaigns from brands such as Uber are attracting users through native purchasing by prompting interested

consumers to swipe up for more. Uber's campaign showcased current wait times for the users' locations and allowed users to swipe up to see more and continue on to download the app.

#### Involving the user

Native purchasing ads can drive sales through the seamless checkout experience, but campaigns that flourish on Snapchat encourage users to get involved in their own way. Many retailers offer prizes and promotions for those that engage with a campaign in various ways, a method that entices users through a prize and makes them excited to be a part of it.

High-quality visual ads on Snapchat, and most social media platforms for that matter, can be the most effective. Products that are visually appealing and look great in high-quality images attract a wider range of consumers, especially millennials.

"Savvy retailers are using Snapchat to engage their customers on a personal basis by offering special prizes, games or discounts to customers that Snap selfies that demonstrate their branded products," said David Naumann, vice president of marketing at Boston Retail Partners. "In contrast to this customer-curated content approach, unsuccessful Snapchat campaigns are broadcasted Snapchat images published by the brand.

"When brands publish content, it is perceived as advertising and when consumers publish content, it is perceived as more genuine, interesting and fun," he said. "The value of Snapchat as a marketing tool depends on the type of products retailers sell.

"Products that are visually appealing or have a wide range of uses are good candidates for Snapchat campaigns. Since millennials represent 70 percent of Snapchat users, products that appeal to this demographic are also good candidates for Snapchat campaigns."