

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

## Montblanc updates retail strategy to account for consumers' multi-sensory expectations

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*Montblanc men's wallet and watch*

By JEN KING

Germany's Montblanc has unveiled a newly developed global retail concept that emphasizes the importance of a multi-sensory in-store experience.

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Montblanc partnered with Mood Media to enhance its in-store customer experience through the integration of interactive mobile marketing, visual, auditory and sensory solutions. As consumer behavior and in-store expectations have evolved, brands have found it necessary to respond accordingly for fear of being seen as outdated and irrelevant in the modern marketplace.

"Consistency of brand and customer experience is critically important from store to store, even across distant borders," said Scott Moore, global senior vice president of marketing at **Mood Media**. "A cohesive strategy helps retailers create emotional, long-lasting connections with their customers.

"Today's consumers, in particular for luxury retailers, don't just want to buy a brand, they want to connect with it and experience it, and they expect a seamless experience between online and offline throughout the globe," he said.

### In-store interactions

The collaboration between Montblanc and Mood Media has seen the transformation of the brand's boutiques across five continents, underscoring the importance of a consistent global retail strategy.

Montblanc's large-scale deployment includes innovative video and auditory solutions curated by Mood Media. One such change has been the replacement of Montblanc's in-store soundtrack, which Mood Media replaced with a custom-designed playlist.

Sound designers at Mood Media created a "bespoke soundscape" for Montblanc, basing the musical selection off the brand's values of luxury and modernity.

The music program was designed to appeal to the tastes of Montblanc's four key consumer profiles.



*Montblanc boutique in South Korea*

These include jazz and modern music for men, deep and chill house for younger consumers, soft, acoustic and jazzy sounds for women and retro music for "collectors," meaning those who may be eyeing Montblanc's special-editions.

Montblanc's music program comprises mostly instrumental works with a 2:1 ratio between instruments and lyrics. The lyrics were reduced as to not inhibit the communication between a sales associate and a consumer.

The brand's retail environment has also been enhanced by various types of video solutions, curated by Montblanc and Mood Media, to create a multi-sensory experience. Doing so enables consumers to become immersed in the world of Montblanc as they shop the brand's product range that includes writing instruments, watches, leather goods, jewelry and fragrances.

Montblanc's visual solution includes digital signage to enhance the interactive experience. The digital signage will display products and highlight Montblanc's narrative.

Visual components include two 75-inch synchronized display screens, a touch screen synced to Montblanc's iOS mobile application and another screen that offers insights into the brand's expertise and heritage as a watchmaker.

Also, at Montblanc's Hamburg Neuer Wall flagship in Germany, Mood Media has installed a high-brightness window display made of eight 55-inch synchronized screens.



*Montblanc flagship in Hamburg, Germany*

As of press time, a dozen Montblanc boutiques have been updated, a process that began more than six months ago. The deployment of the new solutions will continue to Montblanc's retail network of more than 500 storefronts across five continents.

Montblanc's goal is to have all its boutiques updated by the end of 2016.

"What makes this or any customer experience design successful is the fact that no aspect stands out - every piece of content or technology contributes to creating an immersive experience that immediately connects each customer with Montblanc's unique essence, made of excellence, lasting value and exquisite craftsmanship," Mr. Moore said.

"That said, we are especially proud of our visual solution the screen configurations and content are especially

impressive," he said.

#### The retail experience

A luxury brand's retail environment should be carefully orchestrated to make consumers want to participate in the store experience, according to panelists speaking at the French American Chamber of Commerce's "The Luxury Retail Store: Real Estate, Design and Customer Experience Trends" event.

During the presentation Nov. 12, one resounding theme was that the increase in luxury's presence online has removed the necessity of interacting with a bricks-and-mortar location, creating a need for a sense of theater and engagement to draw consumers away from other possible activities to shop. By going above the traditional store design, bricks-and-mortar retail can better compete with online channels for revenue ([see story](#)).

For example, department store chain Bloomingdale's opened its first fully mobile store in Palo Alto, CA, Oct. 2014 to appeal to the "digitally sophisticated" tech community in Silicon Valley.

Featuring smart dressing rooms, mobile checkout, consumer-facing tablets and sales associates armed with mobile devices, the store in the Stanford Shopping Center heightens the omnichannel experience for shoppers. This neighborhood is a good testing ground for new retail technologies, which Bloomingdale's may want to carry over to other locations ([see story](#)).

"Consumers are demanding that brands evolve to fit more closely with their mobile and digital lifestyles," Mr. Moore said. "Digital integration allows Mood to help clients create a more personalized and interactive experience that continues long after their customers leave the store.

"Our technologies can be used to engage, inform, inspire, immerse and promote," he said. "The digital solutions we installed for Montblanc manage to do most of these things, ensuring a contemporary and unique experience for each Montblanc customer."