

RETAIL

DFS Group tells personal stories to spur loyalty program enrollment

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DFS' "Loyalty Is Everything" campaign

By SARAH JONES

LVMH-owned luxury travel retailer DFS Group is exploring the concept of loyalty with help from influencers and its own employees.

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The company's fall "Loyalty is Everything" effort gathers personalities including designer Tory Burch, blogger Susanna Lau and model Caroline de Maigret to discuss their devotion to everything from their hometown to new experiences. While designed as a promotion for DFS' Loyal T program, none of the individuals speaks directly to their relationship with the retailer, allowing their stories to resonate on a human level.

"Loyalty programs are changing the retail landscape and consumers are 'loyal' to a certain product or brand because of that experience, not just the points or rewards they get from the program," said Brittany Mills, director of digital marketing services at **Mobiquity**, New York.

"By having a full campaign dedicated to loyalty and their program, DFS is letting their customers know that the Loyal T program is not just based on rewards but a full experience and worth the customers time to sign-up," she said.

Ms. Mills is not affiliated with **DFS Group**, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

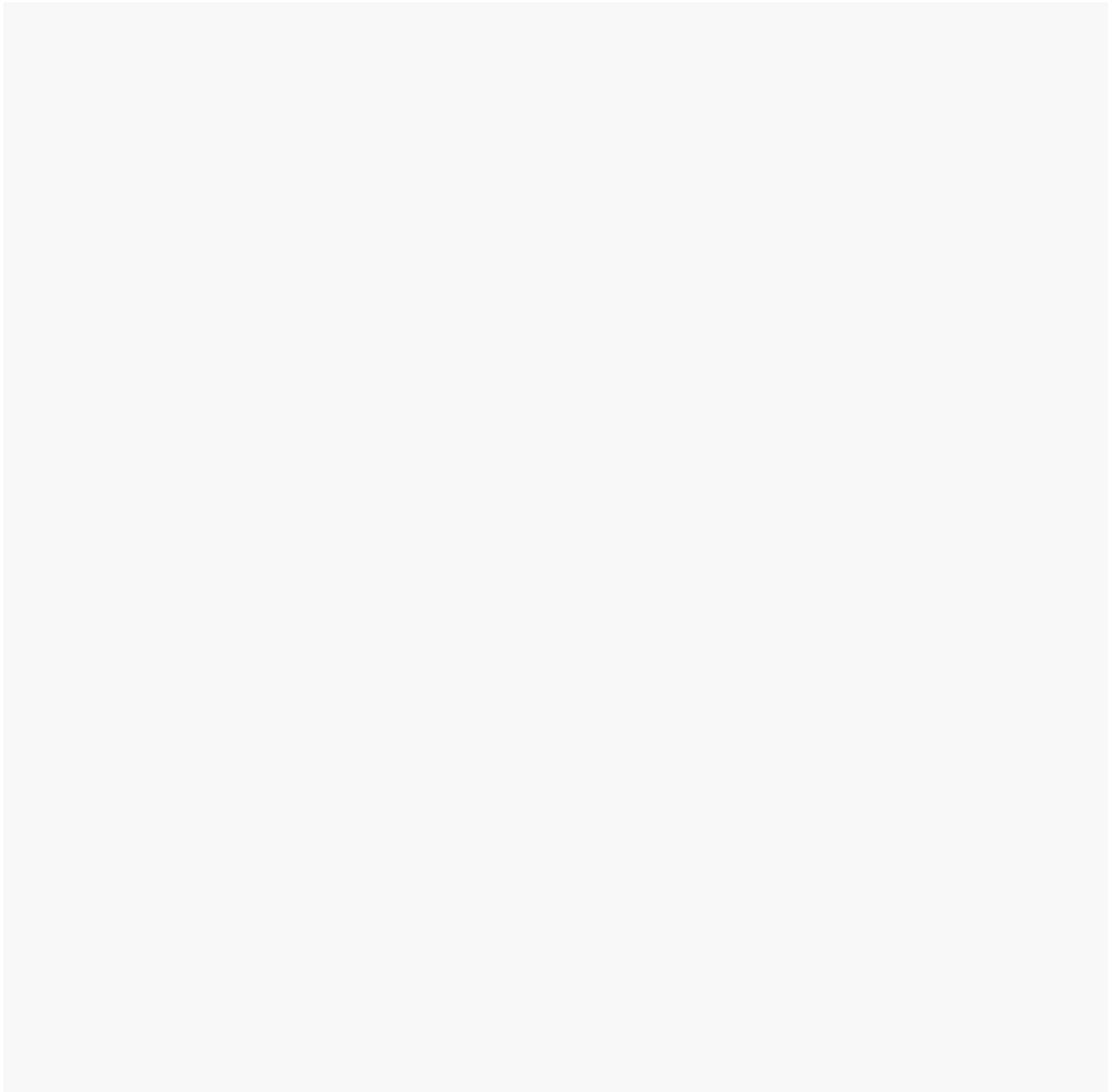
DFS Group was unable to comment directly before press deadline.

Show of loyalty

DFS introduced Loyalty Is Everything on its social channels and its online content hub T Journal starting Aug. 1. Each featured individual is seen in a short video, with a corresponding text interview delving into their packing preferences and travel habits.

"This season we were particularly inspired by the many relationships that make up the unique T Galleria by DFS experience from customers to sales staff, brands to retailers and influencers to fans and we wanted to celebrate the value of loyalty, which is at the core of all these experiences," said John Gerhardt, senior vice president, creative branding direction, at DFS Group, in a brand statement.

"Every person has a story to tell about where their loyalty lies and we were thrilled to explore that concept with our cast while taking an entire season to celebrate and thank our customers for the immense loyalty they show us every day when they shop at T Galleria by DFS," he said.



Loyalty is everything! Stay tuned for the launch of our latest campaign featuring @ToryBurch, @SusieBubble, @CarolineDeMaigret, @HanaTam, @HaoYunXiang and our #DFS employees.

A video posted by DFS & T Galleria (@dfsofficial) on Jul 31, 2016 at 6:40pm PDT

In voiceover, Ms. Burch talks about how friends and family are integral to the running of her eponymous clothing label. While she explains the value system named for her father, she is seen with her employees at her office.

DFS visual manager Alexius Dorsey describes her move from New York to Hawaii and the lifestyle shift that accompanied it. She is seen on a beach as she reflects on her loyalty to the calm she has found in Honolulu.

Also discussing her home, Ms. de Maigret explains her dual affection for Paris and New York. While Paris has her heart and acts as her "water," New York is her "Champagne."



Caroline de Maigret for Loyalty Is Everything

Chinese model Hao Yun Xiang shares his passion for learning new things as he is seen sailing. The freedom allowed out on the water allows him to explore the world and be himself.

London-based Ms. Lau describes what individual style means to her, from rebelling against school uniforms by expressing herself through outfits on the weekends to her more is more attitude today.

Loyalty Is Everything: Susie Bubble for DFS & T Galleria

Further giving a glimpse at the personalities of its employees, beauty specialist Helen Shum talks about her affection for her family and her dogs, beauty specialist JeCarlos Palomo explains his dedication to an active lifestyle and shopping specialist Ice Chan speaks to trying new experiences when traveling.

At the bottom of each interview on T Journal, DFS includes a link to enroll in Loyal T. This multi-tier program gives exclusive benefits to members based on their expenditures, including personal shopping, hotel delivery, prestige lounge access and entry to private events.

"Each influencer is representing what they are loyal to and how it shapes their business and life," Ms. Mills said. "By sharing that through this campaign, they are saying that DFS meets those values."

In DFS' downtown T Galleria and airport stores, consumers will be able to explore the campaign through interactive visual merchandising inspired by cartoons. In digital, the campaign will run through October on DFS' social channels and its T Galleria Web site.

Joining in

Others in the service space have highlighted frontline employees to inspire feelings of loyalty.

Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts started a conversation about the true meaning of loyalty to celebrate the five-year anniversary of its Golden Circle rewards program.

Running until May 2016, #LoyaltyIs gave back to Shangri-La's faithful guests with new benefits, partnerships and exclusive offers, as well as delving into the concept of loyalty with an influencer campaign. The hotelier's largest consumer campaign to-date turned consumers themselves into brand ambassadors with a user-generated content contest, allowing them to be part of the story ([see story](#)).

Consumers, particularly those who would be spending significantly in duty-free retail, may need an extra push to join a loyalty program.

The affluent classes are quickly losing interest in loyalty programs, according to research from Collinson Group.

In August 2014, only 18 percent of consumers said they "can't be bothered" with loyalty programs, but that number doubled in the latest survey. With the traditional method losing its steam among desirable prospects, retailers will need to re-think how they engage and cultivate loyalty among their consumers ([see story](#)).

"Luxury shoppers want to feel like they are getting something exclusive and a unique experience and they expect the same thing with loyalty programs," Ms. Mills said. "This campaign helps to highlight that through the influencers' stories and their association with the campaign."

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