

MARKETING

Anheuser-Busch, GE promote user interactivity with Instagram's pinch-and-zoom feature

September 6, 2016



By STAFF REPORTS



Anheuser-Busch's Lime-A-Rita brand and GE are two of the marketers already leveraging Instagram's newest pinch-and-zoom feature, bringing an added degree of interactivity into otherwise static social media posts.

The photo-sharing application announced this week that the hotly anticipated pinch-and-zoom feature has made its way onto the iOS platform. A slew of brands, including GE, Ruby Tuesday, Kohl's, Noosa Yoghurt and Lime-A-Rita, have already implemented the new feature into several social media posts, enabling Instagram users to receive close-up glimpses of products and locate hidden surprises, suggesting that this technology could become well-suited to showcasing sneak peeks of new items.

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"The social landscape moves at an incredibly fast pace and we pride ourselves on adapting to the environment in real time, offering our fans valuable, engaging content that provides them with unique experiences," said Sydney Williams, global brand marketing at GE.

Zooming up social engagement

A growing number of brands are removing their ad spend dollars from Facebook's platform and turning to the new social behemoths of today instead such as the millennial-friendly Instagram and Snapchat.

P&G's decision to step back from Facebook ads that target specific consumers highlights how mobile data can drive precision advertising, which is not necessarily a good thing if scale is lost along the way ([see story](#)).

With Instagram being the photo-sharing app of choice for many consumers, investing ad spend into its latest features may be a wise idea for brands seeking to reach younger audiences.

GE, Lime-A-Rita, Noosa Yoghurt and Kohl's are several early adopters of Instagram's latest feature, which is only available on its iOS app. iPhone users can now pinch and zoom in on select posts, a functionality that was not previously available, to many individuals' disappointment.

While this new capability may be useful for consumers trying to get a better look at their friends' photos, it can also come in handy for brands provided it is used in the right way.



Kohl's joined the fun with a close look at its chambray shirt, a staple for fall

For example, Anheuser-Busch's Lime-A-Rita brand teased Instagram followers with its newest flavor by asking them to zoom in on its newest post. The image showcases several drink cans lying in a vat of cherries.

Once consumers pinch the app's screen and zoom in on the photo, they can catch a clearer glimpse at the flavor name emblazoned across the front of the cans, which is Cherry-Ahh-Rita.

Meanwhile, General Electric uploaded a photo of several of its locomotives in transit, inviting users to zoom in to see how many rail cars they can spot.

Kohl's pinch-and-zoom photo offers a better look at a chambray shirt, while Noosa Yoghurt's post employs a more humorous tone, asking followers to find a cow hidden in a farm field.

Social media's new rules

Whereas social media may have been treated as primarily a showcasing platform for brands, it can now be used as an ideal channel with which to foster one-to-one conversations with consumers.

This week, Starbucks cemented the pumpkin spice latte's status as a beloved beverage and social media caricature by rolling out a separate PSL Facebook Messenger chatbot, which allows users to interact with the drink by taking a quiz and discussing fall-themed topics ([see story](#)).

Instagram also made the news this month with another brand-friendly feature designed to enhance customer service efforts.



Noosa Yoghurt's humorous take on pinch-and-zoom capabilities

Lord & Taylor and Anthropologie are two of the retailers seeking to piggyback on the popularity of resolving customer service issues on social media by leveraging Instagram's new contact button, which enables users to visit a brand's bio and contact a representative directly via email, text or phone call ([see story](#)).

However, Instagram's pinch-and-zoom feature offers an aspect of novelty that will not go unnoticed by many users.

"We're excited about the new pinch-to-zoom capability as it allows our brands to experiment with their creative and engage their communities in unique ways," said Dan Grossman, vice president of platform partnerships at VaynerMedia. "Some of VaynerMedia's clients have already tested gamified posts by hiding 'Easter eggs' within the image."