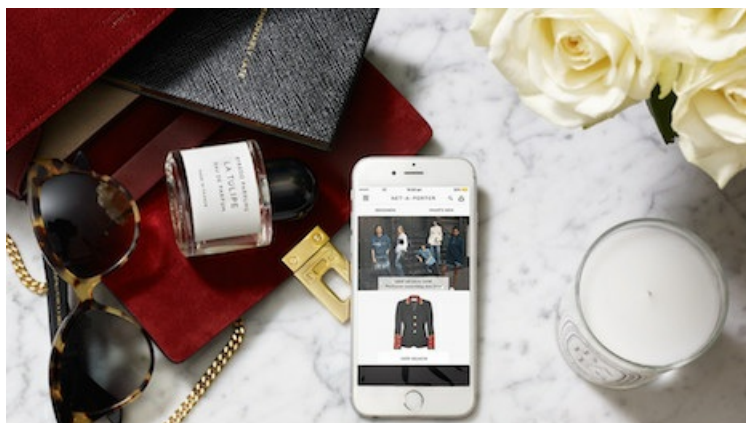


MARKETING

The bar has been raised for digital experiences: Webby exec

September 27, 2016



Net-A-Porter app is an example of mobile utility

By BRIELLE JAEKEL

NEW YORK A Webby Awards executive at the Mobile Marketing Association's SM2 Innovation Summit stressed the importance of standing out in the digital realm now that consumers, brands and small businesses alike all have access to the same content creation tools.

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During the Sept. 26 session, Creating Truly Original Mobile Experiences, the executive explained that due to the advancement of technology, tools to create high-quality digital experiences are readily available to anyone. The pervasiveness of these resources has molded digital aesthetics and experiences to look exceedingly similar, meaning luxury brands will need to innovate and strive for uniqueness.

"The bar has been raised," said David-Michel Davies, CEO of Webby Media Group. "There is an incredible set of tools out there to create mobile experiences that are amazing.

"But what that means for everyone else is that we are no longer competing just against each other," he said. "We are competing against sandwich shops.

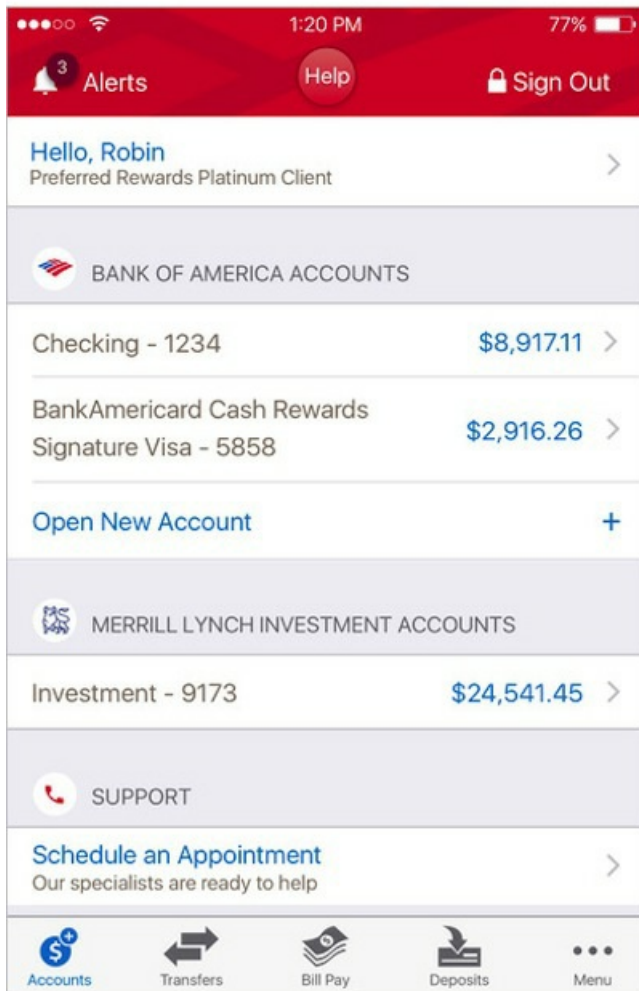
"We are competing against the building blocks that everyone else can use to make something really incredible."

Uniform marketing

Brands and luxury marketers are no longer the gatekeepers to exceptional digital technology or content creating tools. It no longer takes a team of people working with a large amount of resources to create high-quality mobile and digital experiences.

Local businesses such as liquor stores, diners and sandwich shops now have the ability to create exceptional experiences on mobile and desktop that not only look great, but prove helpful to the consumer as well. This content overload is diluting the marketing sector in general and due to the remarkable availability and popularity of certain digital coding and tools, many cross-brand experiences are starting to look the same.

New Help button to find answers quickly



Bank of America's app represents a similar aesthetic on numerous bank apps

Resources are giving individuals who only have a small working knowledge of how to use a computer the ability to design high-quality Web sites that are effective across devices.

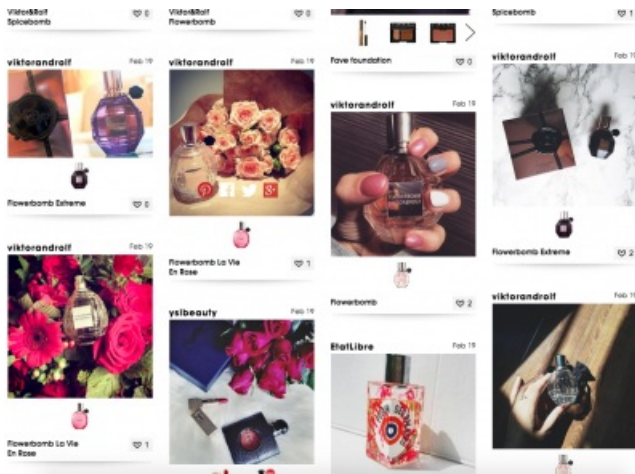
Utility and entertainment

Luxury brands have to focus on creating unique and compelling experiences that stand out to the consumer and are entertaining and/or helpful. While there is an excessive amount of content overload, brands that leverage comedic content can pick up enough traction to go viral and make a dent.

In terms of brand tools on desktop and mobile, experiences that provide a service or are useful to consumers can be the biggest drivers for return users.

For instance, LVMH-owned Sephora works to combine editorial content and shopping efforts for effective utility. Its latest mobile offering was an Android application that enables users to shop its inventory, scan products in-store to access how-to tutorials and watch videos, underscoring the beauty giant's efforts to drive commerce with education-based content.

The cosmetics retailer brought its app to Android users in a bid to make its mobile shopping experiences readily available for consumers on all devices. Sephora also introduced the Pocket Hair Stylist, a digital tool created to teach consumers about various hair styles and trends, the tutorials of which can be customized based on hair type ([see more](#)).



Sephora's innovative beauty board

Similarly, technology-driven retailer Swoonery looked to squash the challenges of purchasing fine jewelry online with the launch of its first mobile app.

Launched in February 2016, Swoonery set out to use innovative methods that connect its clients with relevant pieces of jewelry from nearly 60 fine and high-jewelry designers. On its Web site, Swoonery uses behavior profiling, machine learning and purchasing tools to appropriately recommend pieces by personal preference, creating an intimate consumer-retailer dialogue, an intrinsic element of jewelry purchasing that has been, by and large, been neglected by the industry ([see story](#)).

"Now you see mom and pop restaurants, liquor stores and gas stations with the type of mobile experiences that we all wished we could've had just a couple of years ago," Mr. Davies said. "This really got us thinking, if a sandwich shop can have such a great mobile experience, what do the rest of us need to do who are making experiences for brands where we are not hoping just to reach a few guys on the G train to find the phone number - but trying to reach hundreds of thousands, if not millions of people with our experience and our marketing."

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