

ADVERTISING

## Facebook is new lookbook for luxury brands

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By ELIZABETH ZELESNY

A growing number of luxury brands and retailers have turned to Facebook as a tool for driving sales through digitally distributing their lookbooks. Should they?

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**Luxury Daily**

Luxury brands have started to build their Facebook-commerce and marketing strategy, and it seems like a natural digression for brands and retailers to post editorials via Facebook to decrease the costs of printing hard-copy lookbooks. The lookbook – a collection of photographs compiled to show off an apparel collection – has always had a connection with who’s who in the fashion industry, and now it is being opened up to consumers in a way of connecting directly with the brand.

“To me, as I look at it, it seems like a natural evolution of business,” said Pam Danziger, president of Unity Marketing, Stevens, PA. “Everybody that counts is online and everybody that counts knows how to use Facebook.

“It’s the reality of where we live today and the way we live today,” she said. “I think that’s a good for customers because Facebook has opened up and made it available to everybody.

“I think that these lookbooks are going to become dinosaurs because people can then

creative their own lookbooks on Facebook and that is a very good thing for the brands, designers and fashion business.”

Marc Jacobs, Gucci, Louis Vuitton, Tory Burch, Barneys New York, Dolce & Gabbana and Yves Saint Laurent use Facebook as a way to reach affluent consumers with their luxury goods.

For example, luxury brand Marc Jacobs updates its Facebook page regularly for recent product news and product sightings.

Yves Saint Laurent posted its spring/summer 2011 campaign on Facebook so that consumers can get up-close and personal with the collection.

## Facelook

It was not long ago that many luxury brands and retailers were hesitant to launch a branded Facebook page because they were concerned about how the social network would impact the brand experience that they cultivated.

It is becoming apparent that Facebook provides luxury brands high visibility with fans, which increases traffic to their Facebook pages, in-store and online.

Indeed, Facebook has become a social network that is not exclusively for college students anymore.

In fact, a very large number of people who are on Facebook are affluent and older.

With the evolution of Facebook into a media and retail platform, luxury brands now have the opportunity to reach out to younger and older consumers alike.

Releasing a montage of the brands latest collection via Facebook seems to be the latest trend in the luxury fashion sector.

But it is important that brands make sure the dialogue happening via Facebook is relevant to their customer experience strategy.

“Facebook is another way to have a dialogue with consumers and consumers with each other,” said Milton Pedraza, CEO of the Luxury Institute, New York. “If you created an extraordinary customer experience, whatever you do on social media will be amplified dramatically.

“If you have done silly things, that will also be amplified,” he said. “It’s folly to go on Facebook if your customer experience is lacking.”

One high-end brand that has successfully implemented a digital lookbook via Facebook into its marketing strategy is Burberry.

The British brand is allowing tech-savvy consumers access to view the Burberry Spring/Summer 2011 ad campaign via Facebook.

Burberry has also introduced its new beauty spring/summer 2011 collection via Facebook. The marketer has complemented the collection launch with YouTube beauty tutorials.

The combination of the digital lookbook of the beauty collection with the video tutorials builds a deeper connection with consumers to help drive sales.

French Fashion house Chanel has gone a step further with revealing its new lipstick collection through a dedicated section of its Facebook page that allows consumers to shop direct within the social network ([see story](#)).

Department store chains Nordstrom and Bloomingdale's post recent product launch news via their Facebook pages.

Consumers can put their two-cents in and comment about the products, which allows the brand to hear direct feedback from its loyal consumers.

Paper weight

Now that Facebook has essentially become the outlet for which brands are releasing new collections and products, is it necessary for them to distribute print lookbooks?

Ron Kurtz, principal at American Affluence Research Center in Atlanta said its imperative luxury brands still pay the high costs of printing lookbooks for affluent consumers.

"If brands discontinue or cut way back on their printed versions, they will miss over 75 percent of the affluent market," Mr. Kurtz said. "The opportunity for people to show their hard to their friends [will be lost].

"They need to understand who will actually be reached in this manner, what technology is needed to be compatible with the various different mobile and other receiving devices, and who they might miss if they do not publish hard copy versions," he said.

The Luxury Institute's Mr. Pedraza said consumers should have the opportunity to view a luxury brand's lookbook online because the consumers are the ones that must have a close relationship with a brand.

"I think the world has become transparent," Mr. Pedraza said. "Everyone receives everything and I think that's fine.

"In the end, the customer is the ultimate relationship and they should have as much of a relationship as anyone else in the value chain," he said.

Final take

*Facebook is the new lookbook*

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