

RETAIL

## Nordstrom shows sense of humor by embracing viral confusion

December 7, 2016



*Image courtesy of Nordstrom*

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By STAFF REPORTS

Department store chain Nordstrom is showing it is in on the joke as one of its gift ideas went viral thanks to a social media frenzy.

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The retailer's leather-covered rock, part of its holiday-themed Love, Pop-In concept shop, was selling for \$85, a price tag that was ridiculed on publications such as BuzzFeed and the Huffington Post and led to a bevy of consumer posts. Rather than shy away from the conversation, Nordstrom joined in, posting to social media about its controversial product.

### Rocking out

Nordstrom's rock is sourced from the Los Angeles area, and comes in a vegetable-tanned American leather pouch. Produced by hand by Made Solid's Peter Maxwell, the stitched leather holder covers half of the smooth stone.



*Image courtesy of Nordstrom*

In the product description, Nordstrom leaves the rock up to interpretation, referring to it as a paperweight or a "conversation starter."

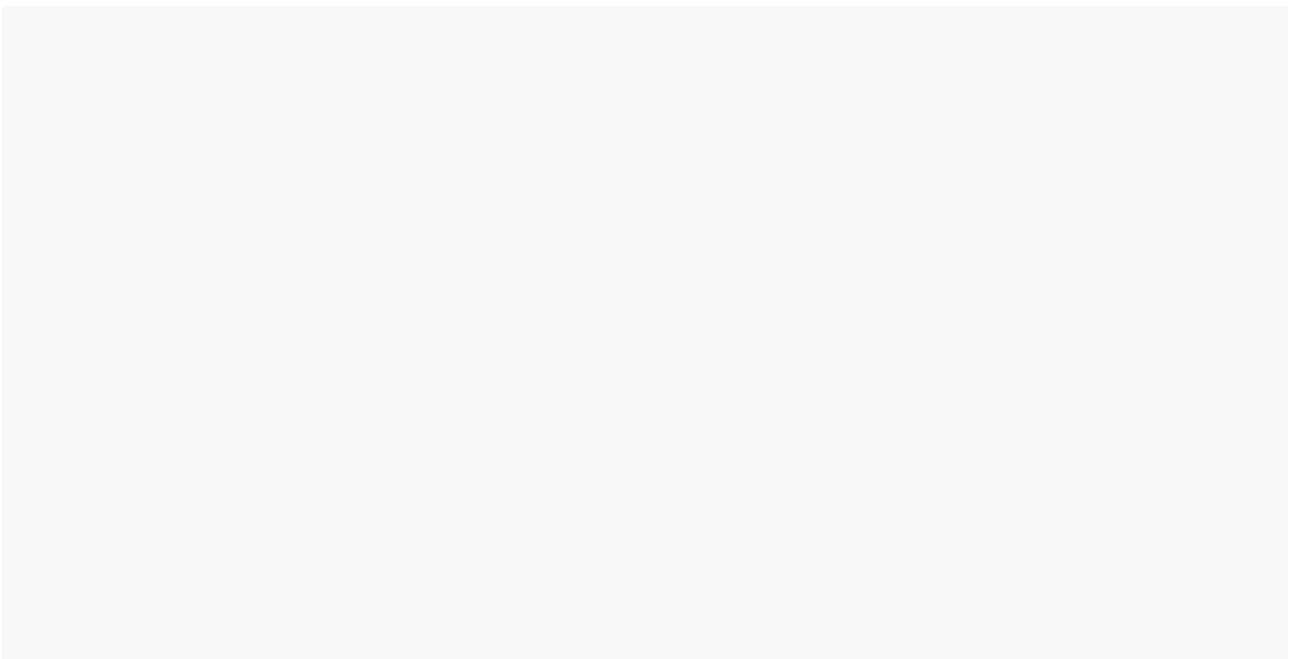
Start a conversation is just what the rock did. It spawned its own mock Twitter account and had reviewers on the product page making fun of its impracticality and seemingly unremarkable nature.

The original NordstromRock was fully wrapped in leather, but people kept cutting us open to make sure we were really worth \$85.

NordstromRock (@NordstromRock) [December 6, 2016](#)

One reviewer joked that she chose purchasing the rock over feeding her family for the month, taking a jab at the price tag. Another quipped that there were no instructions included, so they had to send it back.

Nordstrom got in on the action, sharing an image of its rock next to BuzzFeed's article, as well as making puns on the word rock, placing the stone next to a set of speakers and a spirit on the rocks.





This rocks @buzzfeed! #nordstromPOP

A photo posted by Nordstrom (@nordstrom) on Dec 6, 2016 at 3:59pm PST

Despite the Internet's confusion, both the large and medium sizes of Made Solid's rocks have sold out on the retailer's Web site, leaving only the small version available at press time.

While Nordstrom's rock is real, some fake products have gotten the Internet into a similar furor.

Online retailer Lyst went viral courtesy of a controversial launch of a collection marketing dogs as fashion accessories.

After unveiling its "Canine Collection" on May 9, the ecommerce site drew criticism from the RSPCA and concerned consumers, who were worried about the seemingly flippant attitude shown towards the dogs' well-being. After sticking to its narrative, Lyst revealed that the stunt was fake, and used its increased attention and mentions to spotlight the issue of "handbag dogs" ([see story](#)).

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