

RETAIL

Net-A-Porter and Mr Porter are 2016 Luxury Retailer of the Year

December 15, 2016



Net-A-Porter ad campaign

By STAFF REPORTS

Online retailers Net-A-Porter and Mr Porter are Luxury Daily's 2016 Luxury Retailer of the Year for their introduction of traditionally ecommerce-averse brands to an online audience.

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Net-A-Porter and its brother site Mr Porter placed ahead of first runner's-up Nordstrom and second runner's-up Barneys New York thanks to their coveted exclusives and innovations in service and selling. These four retailers demonstrated a willingness to integrate digital touchpoints into the shopping experience, additions that luxury stores are facing increasing pressure to implement.

The Luxury Retailer of the Year award was decided based on luxury marketing efforts with impeccable strategy, tactics, creative, executive and results. All candidates selected by the Luxury Daily editorial team and from reader nominations had to have appeared in Luxury Daily coverage this year. **Judging was based purely on merit.**

Nothing but net

Net-A-Porter and Mr Porter have carved a niche in luxury ecommerce, convincing brands that previously did not sell online to give it a try.

In 2016, Net-A-Porter and Mr Porter became the first solely online outlets to retail IWC Schaffhausen's timepieces. Similarly, Tiffany chose Net-A-Porter as its exclusive ecommerce partner, making the retailer the only place to buy its jewelry online aside from the brand's own Web site ([see story](#)).



Tiffany's collaboration has expanded to watches

Other highlights included an exclusive capsule of Gucci merchandise and the debut of Prada's ready-to-wear collections online ([see story](#)).

Net-A-Porter also showed a willingness to adopt new forms of retail, teaming up with digital fashion rental service Armarium to bridge the gap between borrowing and investing. Net-A-Porter enabled Armarium users to purchase full-price apparel and accessories directly to complete their look ([see story](#)).

Reflecting this idea of the luxury shopper who buys at multiple price points, the retailer also launched a collaboration with retailer J. Crew and established a demi-fine jewelry category on its site, with pieces that start at around \$30 ([see story](#)).

Aside from its product selection, Net-A-Porter also branched out in its advertising efforts. In a break from its tradition of a single campaign face, Net-A-Porter recruited five up-and-coming models of different races and looks for its fall/winter seasonal ad effort, which includes still imagery and a video component ([see story](#)).



Net-A-Porter's advertising campaign

Net-A-Porter and Mr Porter also beefed up their content, upping their posting frequency on both its namesake site and Mr Porter from weekly magazines to daily updates. Looking to be a resource for more than just fashion, Mr Porter brought back its Style Council recommendation column ([see story](#)).

Mr Porter also found a new way to deliver content, creating a two-screen shopping experience for the Apple TV centered on its videos ([see story](#)).



Mr Porter's Apple TV app

Service strategy

In 2016, Net-A-Porter and Mr Porter built on their existing customer service by making the extremely important people, or "EIPs," into a formal loyalty program. This included giving these high-spending clientele the ability to preview select merchandise before it became live.

"In 2016 Net-A-Porter has demonstrated strong growth by showcasing our unparalleled product offering, customer retention rate and service, and our unique content offering as not only an online luxury retailer but a media company," said Marilyn Webber, global director of marketing at Net-A-Porter. "Our product offering in 2016 championed hero brands such as Gucci and Prada as well as a variety of new contemporary lines to appeal to a new customer base.

"We have continued to strengthen customer relationships through our EIP programs, tech advances such as upload previews and SMS shopping updates, and by creating intimate events for customers, friends of the brand and press in new and existing key markets," she said. "We strive to pursue custom content through our customer emails, push notifications, editorial content and comprehensive campaigns highlighting Net-A-Porter's seasonal direction."

Continuing its focus on delivery and 24/7 availability, during the summer months, Net-A-Porter and Mr Porter struck up a partnership with Blade to deliver packages to the Hamptons and other hamlets on Long Island's East End. The retailers' same-day delivery service is offered year-round for consumers in the Greater New York area, with an extended practice to the Hamptons available in the summer months ([see story](#)).



Net-A-Porter's Blade helicopters

"Our efforts to connect with our customer on a personal level and appeal to their everyday lives is integral for the growth of our business," Ms. Webber said. "We continue to offer a vast variety of product across categories with exclusive collections, brand collaborations and a 'wear-now, buy-now' edit that meets our customers' needs year round.

"While Net-A-Porter has established itself as the ultimate destination for luxury fashion and lifestyle, we continue to push the envelope by tapping into new markets through targeted activations and events, constantly elevating our marketing campaigns through new creative direction across a myriad of platforms and by offering unprecedented customer service through our global personal shopping and customers service teams," she said. "In 2016, we have focused on captivating new customers, enhancing our technology, and executing a strong social and editorial content strategy for our site and

media platforms."

Yoox Net-A-Porter Group has seen its revenues climb as other retailers struggle in a difficult climate ([see story](#)).

Nordstrom sees anew

First runner's-up Nordstrom found creative ways of reaching out to a younger generation of shoppers.

Whether hosting a party for 2,000 undergrad students based on a Snapchat contest ([see story](#)), or popping up at music festivals with experiential pods ([see story](#)), the retailer proved it is able to communicate via millennials' preferred channels. The retailer has also proven it does not take itself too seriously, playing into the mass confusion surrounding a leather-clad rock for sale ([see story](#)).

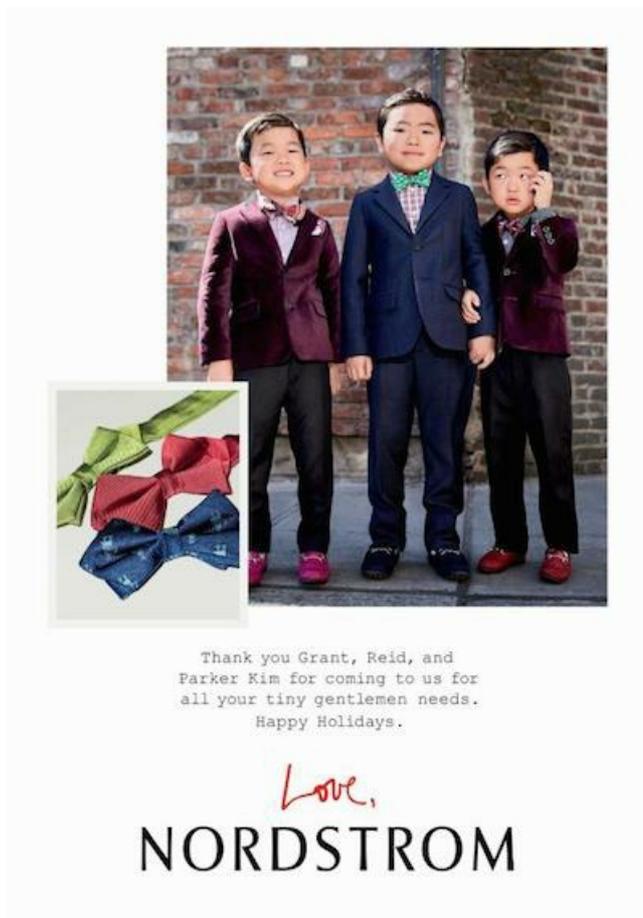


Inside Nordstrom's pods at South by Southwest

The Luxury Institute's third annual Luxury Multi-Channel Engagement Index, released late in 2015, found that Nordstrom has one of the highest satisfaction levels among affluent shoppers.

Nordstrom topped the rankings of more categories than any other retailer. Among them: its convenient refund/return policy, carrying relevant products and styles, having a navigable Web site, including helpful ratings and reviews and good shipping policies online, convenient locations and in carrying products that are complimented by others. It also beat out national retailers in prices and having good personalized shopping ([see story](#)).

This focus on its customers is evident in the chain's holiday campaign, which features letters of appreciation to real shoppers ([see story](#)).



Love, Nordstrom campaign

The retailer's individualized assistance is now being delivered by more than just its associates. Aligned with the holiday season, Nordstrom launched a chatbot to provide gifting suggestions ([see story](#)).

Nordstrom is also testing out various personalization efforts through digital such as a solution that will notify store associates that a mobile application user has crossed the geofence into the store so they can ready a dressing room. The department store has seen positive adoption with its innovative technology and convenient programs such as curbside pickup ([see story](#)).



Nordstrom's Anniversary Sale leveraged social media content in-store

Nordstrom, which styled the nominees and presenters at the 70th annual Tony Awards, built upon its placement with a live shopping experience. As performers appeared wearing items from the retailer, viewers could click to buy from their couch ([see story](#)).

Along with service, a focus on product curation led to additional locations for the retailer's Space shop-in-shop concept for emerging designers ([see story](#)) and Herms' first accessory-centric pop-up, which will be up for almost a year ([see story](#)).

A Los Angeles Nordstrom also paved the way for Tesla to engage with affluent shoppers through an in-store gallery ([see story](#)).

Barneys comes home

In 2016, second runner's-up Barneys New York reopened downtown, marking the occasion with a charitable auction, an ad campaign celebrating the multifaceted makeup of New York and a steady stream of content. Included in its editorial features was the launch of a digital city guide, a feature that has since added ideas for destinations including Miami, Los Angeles, Seattle, Paris, Chicago, Boston and San Francisco.

Barneys outfitted its newly opened Chelsea store with iBeacons, using the devices combined with RichRelevance's Relevance Cloud to deliver personalized notifications and content such as articles, videos and look books to shoppers' mobile devices when they are within the flagship. At the time, Barneys said it was the first luxury retailer to use iBeacons in a bricks-and-mortar space ([see story](#)).



Inside Barneys' new Chelsea flagship

Aside from returning downtown, Barneys honored its heritage, by publishing its first book in its 93-year history ([see](#)

story).

Unafraid to push boundaries, the window displays at Barneys' Madison Avenue and Chelsea stores this year have included lifelike mannequins, deconstructed vintage cars and art gallery-style displays.



Chanel window display at Barneys

Barneys also used its position to garner attention for causes, such as gender equality ([see story](#)). The retailer's holiday campaign invited consumers to use social media as a platform to enact Love, Peace and Joy ([see story](#)).

Diversifying its product selection and embracing the fashion industry's changing norms, the retailer invited vintage ecommerce site Resee.com for a pop-up and was one of the multi-brand stores that carried Burberry's first see-now, buy-now collection right off the runway.

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