

RESEARCH

## Louis Vuitton, Rolls-Royce win big with site performance: expert

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LOUIS VUITTON

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By RACHEL LAMB

Louis Vuitton, Rolls-Royce, BMW and Prada understand that affluent consumers expect a premium user experience in return for the prices that they pay for luxury goods and are making sure that their Web sites are up-to-speed with availability and response time.

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Prada, Rolls-Royce, BMW and Louis Vuitton have the quickest response time online, while Lamborghini, Porsche, Prada and Louis Vuitton have the most available Web sites, per a sweep by AlertSite. The survey was conducted in 12 U.S. cities and results were recorded every five minutes from early February until late March.

“Premium customers are the least patient potential shoppers and customers, and premium brands need to pay attention to delivering a premium user experience,” said Ken Godskind, chief strategy officer of AlertSite, Coconut Creek, FL.

“Of course, availability is important - it’s the first impression makes all users question how good a site is,” he said. “But availability goes without question, and everyone has those kinds of expectations.

“On the other hand, the slowdowns begin to impact user satisfaction, number of pages that people visit, the site loyalty and likelihood that they will visit again. There is a clear trend

that user expectations are always increasing.”

**AlertSite** was recently acquired by SmartBear, a company that helps businesses better their software and technology.

Slow starts, slow conversions

AlertSite’s research has shown that an hour of slow page-loads has an average business impact of \$4,000.

Rolls-Royce was the quickest of the car brands with 1.66-second page load, while Prada was the fastest retailer with a 0.98-second response time.

Brands such as Burberry, Calvin Klein, Mercedes-Benz and Audi showed the longest response time when loading pages. The average response time was 3.34 seconds for retailers and 5.64 for automakers.

“I was surprised that some of the pages loaded so slowly,” Mr. Godskind said. “The input is that user experience is critical for optimizing online success.

“A lot of luxury brands are used to a more boutique-oriented shopping experience and competing so head-on in the online world, so maybe there is still some more lessons to be learned from there,” he said.

However, some participants in the AlertSite survey noted that they could deal with a slow response time if it meant that consumers would get the correct information.

Automakers’ Web sites, for example, are not typically used for commerce purposes and therefore have many images and much information.

Web sites with rich media and a great deal of content seem to have the slowest response time, Mr. Godskind said.

Availability is a must

On the other hand, the need for Web site availability is a must for luxury brands.

One hour of unavailability had an average business impact of \$20,000, per AlertSite’s research.

The retail Web site with the most availability was Prada with 99.99 percent, while Lamborghini’s Web site topped luxury automakers with 99.94-percent availability.

Burberry, Calvin Klein, Maserati and Lexus proved to be the least available Web sites. The average Web site availability was 99.25 percent availability for retailers and 99.49 percent availability for car brands.

“The big takeaway is that premium brands need to deliver a premium user experience, a more seamless transition,” Mr. Godskind said.

“When you walk in the door of a BMW dealership, a guy hands you a cup of coffee and it’s just different than non-luxury places,” he said. “Organizations, especially those that are

more mature and who are injecting more of themselves into the online presence and delivering the user experience, come with user expectations.”

Final Take

*Rachel Lamb, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York*

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