

OUT OF HOME

Bloomingdale's measures out-of-home ad performance with MMS and QR codes

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By RACHEL LAMB



Department store chain Bloomingdale's has upped its out-of-home advertising strategy by including QR codes and an MMS call to action on phone booth advertisements to connect consumers with videos and content about new fashion trends.

Consumers can text the keyword COLOR2 to short code 91919, scan the bar code with their smartphone or visit <http://www.bloomingdales.com/color> from their smartphone device. Either way consumers choose to start the conversation offers engagement opportunities for Bloomingdale's.

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“Today, any major brand that’s trying to get to the customer needs to make sure that whomever is looking at the ad needs can engage with it,” said James Citron, CEO of Mogreet, Santa Monica, CA. “50 percent of consumers looking to make a purchase transaction look at their phone and 40 percent of consumers see an ad and pick up their phone to consult with it.

“With SMS and MMS, you can reach every single consumer in the country whether they are on a feature phone or smartphone, meaning that approximately 290 million Americans can engage in Bloomingdale's with MMS,” he said.

“But with QR codes, you’re limited to only the people who know what QR codes are and how to use them. Therefore, including both in an ad is essential to widen the audience.”

Bloomingdale's declined comment on this story.

Mogreet's Mr. Citron could not confirm that his company powered the MMS portion of the campaign for Bloomingdale's. However, Mobile Marketer reports show that brands such as Steve Madden have used the short code 91919 for their MMS initiatives. Steve Madden's efforts were in fact powered by Mogreet.

Luxury Daily suspects New York-based ScanBuy powered the QR code aspect of this initiative, as the ScanLife application is depicted on the Bloomingdale's phone booth ad.

Color me happy

Consumers that text in or scan the bar code are taken to the “Hot” page where they can view videos that show color trends for men and women’s fashion and home decorating.



Bloomingdale's short code



Bloomingdale's hot site

Consumers can email the videos to friends or upload them onto Facebook and Twitter to the mobile site.



Video in the Bloomingdale's mobile site

Moreover, there are links to the Bloomingdale's commerce-enabled optimized site so that consumers can buy the products shown in the videos.

Previously, Bloomingdale's promoted its "Hot Contest" via its "Hot" microsite.

Consumers uploaded pictures of their personal style onto the brand's Facebook page and fans voted on them.

The images were also available on the mobile site with links to the Bloomingdale's social media page so that people could vote from their smartphones.

The winners were flown to New York and received a shopping spree at the Bloomingdale's location on 59th St.

QR snobs

Bloomingdale's uses QR codes in a number of different ways.

Earlier this year, it embedded codes into its direct mailers allowing customers to access

its mobile site and browse the retailer's extensive collection of women's scarves ([see story](#)).

Brands have to be careful when using bar codes. If consumers have an initial unsatisfactory experience, they may be deterred from using them.

For instance, the code could be trouble to scan or the content is not optimized for mobile. Nonetheless, brands that use bar codes have found a great deal of success from them.

There are some places in the world where millions of people walk by billboards, bench ads and telephone booth ads every day and brands do not have a way to track how many people see them, interact with them or even take anything from them.



Bloomingdale's ad with QR codes and MMS call to action

QR codes make out of home ads more measureable by providing a quick and easy response mechanism for consumers.

“Bloomingdale's because as a lifestyle brand, they are not in the business of doing heavy discounting, they're in the business of showing compelling content and showing lifestyle imagery, which is best done communicating via video,” Mr. Citron said. “If you see an MMS code, you can see a real lifestyle content pushed through the device which is what customers attached to brand want to see before purchase.

“We are moving away from black and white texting industry to full site sound and motion with mobile video, and they do a really good job of that,” he said.

“The call to action piques the interest of consumers, and when they take out their phones they want something unique and distinctive with exclusive or compelling content, and that’s how you extend the brand relationship outside a traditional ad or someone walking into a store one day.”

Final Take

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