

APPAREL AND ACCESSORIES

## Armani's use of Facebook Messenger touts film project premiere

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Actor Dev Patel participates in Armani's upcoming film

By BRIELLE JAEKEL

Italian apparel and accessories brand Giorgio Armani is hoping to make a dramatic impact with its third annual film project with the help of a special bot that goes beyond commerce.

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Facebook Messenger bots have become increasingly popular in the luxury space. While many brands hope to leverage chatbots for retail initiatives such as driving sales and bookings, Armani is taking an opportunity to assist consumers interested in its "Films of City Frames" project to make a bigger impact.

"There are more compelling chatbot use cases than just commerce" said Erez Baum, CEO and cofounder of Imperson, a chatbot technology company. "Armani's new marketing-driven chatbot highlights the fact that a chatbot isn't just about selling; it's also about promoting the brand, building awareness, and driving customer engagement.

"A chatbot is the vehicle of the brand's identity," he said "Chatbots should always highlight the brand's voice while offering dynamic two-way conversations, not linear, menu-based experiences that simply facilitate transactions.

"With it, brands can create affinity between themselves and their customers. Think of it as relationship capital. When a relationship is already in place, consumers will be better primed to purchase products or services from the brand in the future."

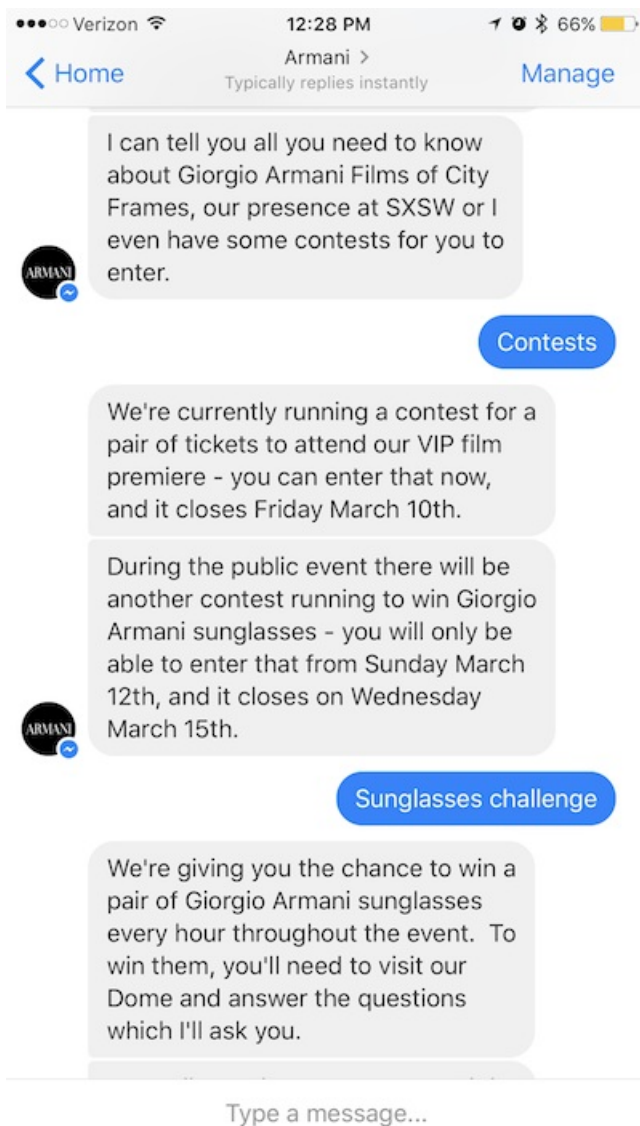
### Chatting beyond retail

Films of City Frames is Armani's film project that focuses on sunglass wear. The third edition will air during the annual SXSW festival March 10-19 in Austin, TX.

Armani is hoping to make a substantial following for the films, which promote its sunglass line. The brand is leveraging a chatbot on Facebook to usher in fans through contests and answer any questions they may have, to increase attendance at the festival.

Interested fans can message the Armani bot on Facebook Messenger with any greeting. The bot replies saying, "Hello, I'm the chatbot for the 3rd Edition of Giorgio Armani Films of City Frames project, which is launching at SXSW in Austin on March 11th."

The bot then informs the user that there are contests happening as well and asks what he or she would like to know.



### *Armani's chatbot*

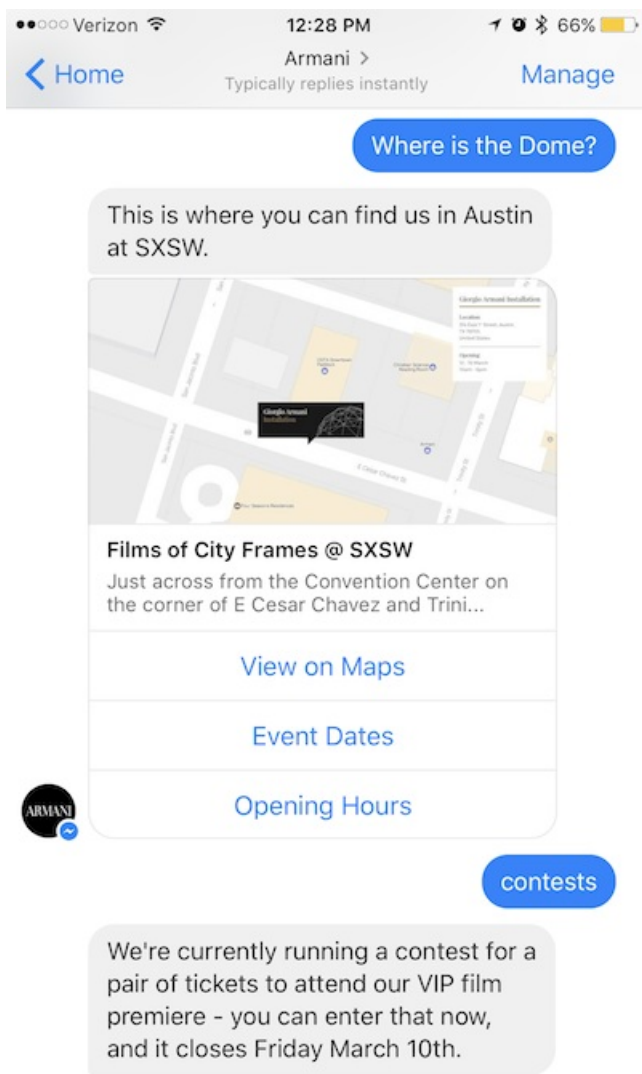
Through the use of messaging prompts, users can respond with various tasks. For instance, those interested in the contests can select the button labeled "contests" or type in the word themselves.

Armani's chatbot then details its two current contests in relation to the film project, one for a free pair of glasses and another for VIP entry to the film's premiere. Interested participants can click or message the name of the contest of their choice to participate.

For the VIP premiere tickets, users must answer five questions related to its previous Films of City Frames projects, which they can change at anytime until entries close. Participants must also message the phrase "I'm here" to prove they are located in Austin when they arrive for SXSW.

To win the free pair of Armani sunglasses, SXSW attendants must visit the label's Dome and answer the same questions as in the tickets contest, but in person.

The bot will also give directions to its Dome at the festival and any other information consumers have about the film, premiere, contests and festival.



Type a message...

### *Armani's chatbot*

#### Armani and film

The designer is no stranger in the film industry and recently weaved together art, sport and fashion in a short film that brought its basketball-themed museum exhibit to life.

Armani celebrated its Milan heritage in a multitude of ways that also raised support for the Special Olympics. Armani's short featured Milan basketball team Olimpia Milano art pieces coming to life to play a late night game at the designer's museum in the city, as a part of its sponsorship ([see more](#)).

The brand originally highlighted its Frames of Life eyewear collection with the narrative story told through text and a video in 2014.

Consumers were first introduced to a scrollable shoppable narrative before viewing the campaign video, both of which follow a man and woman while they try to run into each other again after "The Encounter." Through the campaign, Armani showed that eyeglasses are more than just accessories, but a part of life, affecting how consumers see the world ([see more](#)).

"However, chatbots still offer retailers a valuable opportunity to interact with consumers and build the connection between them and the brand through direct communication," Mr. Mroz said. "It's not surprising that Armani would roll out a chatbot that's less about transactions, and more about boosting brand awareness and user engagement.

"It's a long-term investment, but it's a chance to get in early with a large swath of young consumers who are spending a ton of time on messaging apps," he said.