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## A&L Luxuries brings sharing economy to high-end luggage sector

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*Image courtesy of A&L Luxuries, an online luggage rental service*

By JEN KING

Online rental service A&L Luxuries is tapping an underserved segment of the consumer market by targeting those who do not travel often.

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A&L Luxuries provides high-end pieces of luggage on-loan, including duffel bags and carry-on suitcases, as an alternative to buying expensive baggage. Although inspired by consumers who are not frequent travelers, the service is ideal for consumers looking to avoid the hassle of storing luggage when not in use or can be used to obtain additional pieces for an extended stay or due to purchases made abroad.

"I have never traveled much, but when I did I always wanted to have a nice piece of luggage with me and the idea came to me when a group of colleagues and I were talking and the topic came up of friends and family always asking to borrow luggage for weekend getaways and business trips," said Jamar Charleston, founder of [A&L Luxuries](#), Bound Brook, NJ.

"Three ideas sat with me for quite some time and after talking to my wife she really pushed the idea of creating a market that hasn't been tapped into," he said. "After a few months of preparation A&L Luxuries was up and running online."

### Luggage on-loan

Currently, A&L Luxuries offers travelers 18 luggage styles from top designers including Gucci, Tumi, Louis Vuitton and Prada, among other premium brands.

Each piece of luggage featured by A&L Luxuries includes a photo and detailed description of the bag in question to help consumers make an informed decision. When a suitable luggage type has been selected for a weekend getaway or business trip, the consumer chooses a rental term and sets a rental date.

A&L Luxuries then sends the luggage to the renter in a shipping box with a prepaid return shipping label. When the consumer returns home from his or her trip, he or she returns the luggage to A&L Luxuries through UPS and the United States Postal Service using the prepaid label.



*A duffel bag shown in a prepaid A&L Luxuries box; Image courtesy of A&L Luxuries*

Baggage can be rented from A&L Luxuries for a minimum of three days with rentals for up to 14 days. Rental agreements can be extended upon request.

A&L Luxuries has also structured its rental prices at an affordable rate, with terms beginning at \$25 and being increased dependent on the brand and style.

To promote its luggage rental service, A&L Luxuries has filmed a commercial demonstrating the process. The minute-long spot shows a couple preparing for a trip abroad.

As they pack up their passports, watches and clothing, a delivery man drops off two A&L Luxuries-branded boxes containing the baggage. The following scenes show the couple finalizing their packing before heading out the door to travel to their destination.

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"The business is entirely we based so creating a strong online presence and allowing potential customers to understand what our service is and how it works is essential," Mr. Charleston said. "Social media platforms plays a big role in gaining new customers. We also use Google ads, Bing ads and various other platforms to continue with the branding efforts."

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According to lifestyle magazine Robb Report, luxury spending is on the rise with 55 percent of affluent consumers having more of an interest in the industry than they did a few years ago.

This rise in luxury sector interest has made way for the sharing economy.

Robb Report's survey found that 37 percent of affluents, and 60 percent of the wealthy, have shared their homes, vehicles, yachts, jets, apparel, jewelry and/or watches. Affluents are becoming more comfortable with the development of a sharing economy, but feel most at ease renting out their home or lending a piece of jewelry or watch, at a rate of 80 percent and 40 percent, respectively.

The trend is reflected in the rise of services, many of which are offered via mobile connectivity, that streamline the sharing economy ([see story](#)).

For instance, credit provider American Express partnered with home-sharing service Airbnb to offer card members an on-platform loyalty program.

The first-of-its-kind booking experience uses American Express technology to allow card members to seamlessly use Airbnb for accommodations while traveling ([see story](#)).

While the sharing economy concept has proven most disruptive for the hospitality sector, retailers have also begun to

embrace the idea of fashion on-loan as an answer to changing consumer behavior.

For example, department store chain Neiman Marcus is looking to draw millennial shoppers in-store by offering designer fashions to both rent and purchase.

Rent the Runway has set up a store within the retailer's San Francisco location, which includes high-tech customer service features and styling help. Aiming to disrupt retail, this collaboration is meant to introduce a new generation of customers to Neiman Marcus while also appealing to consumers' mixed shopping habits ([see story](#)).

"The sharing trend is great in many ways, but the most satisfying point for me is the ability to provide a service allowing people to experience something they may not be able to experience if this service wasn't available," A&L Luxuries' Mr. Charleston said. "Spending \$1,500 on a duffle bag may not be logical for many people, but renting that same bag for the duration of your trip for \$100 is much more realistic.

"The feeling of traveling with stylish luggage is no different from a person who rents a sporty car and feels invincible while coasting up the highway on a sunny day," he said. "Whether renting a ball gown for the night, a luxury car for the weekend or a designer luggage for your trip, we all have the urge to feel good, look good and make a statement at times, A&L Luxuries is providing that feeling for a fraction of the cost."

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