

INTERNET

Is Twitter an effective traffic driver to luxury stores?

April 29, 2011



By RACHEL LAMB

Twitter is often used as a forum where brands can communicate with consumers to inform them of special deals, in-store events and online exclusives. But does it actually do its job – drive sales to retail and online locations?

Sign up now

Luxury Daily

Brands, retailers and hotels such as Bloomingdale's, Stella McCartney, Bluefly, Bergdorf Goodman and Four Seasons are actively tweeting messages that drive in-store or online conversions, which is the main reason these companies even use the social media site. The messages are short and to the point, with all signs pointing to sales.

“When we talk to luxury consumers, they consider Twitter the second-most prominent social media channel for them, aside from Facebook,” said Milton Pedraza, CEO of the Luxury Institute, New York.

“I think that consumers see a lot of a service or an opportunity to report to a brand and get an immediate response,” he said. “They usually don’t use it to get main brand information, but it’s a great source for product referral and product feedback, both to and from the brand and consumer.”

Titter

Some brands find that Twitter is the easiest way to link to products on Web sites or to tell their customers about online-only finds.

For instance, Bluefly, an online retailer of discount designer accessories and apparel, enthusiastically tweeted about a must-have bag available on the commerce-enabled Web site.



Tweet from Bluefly

An excited, cheery tweet could act as the fire lit under the customer that is on the edge of buying an item.

"The nature of Twitter is relevant and instant," Mr. Pedraza said. "In that sense, it has its uses.

"It is not a place where you're going to send a lot of product information, but you will get influenced on a transaction, purchase, referral or review very quickly and that's what the greatest use is going to be over time," he said.

Meanwhile, Four Seasons uses Twitter to communicate to its customers about upcoming events.

To promote its Mother's Day package, the hotel is encouraging its customers to look at details and possibly snag the deal.



Tweet from Four Seasons

By hitting a sweet spot for many consumers – humor and, of course, their mothers – Four Seasons succeeds in hooking potential guests.

Also, this could just be the brand's way of reminding customers who could have forgotten about the package.

Either way, the possibility of money spent at the hotel or on its site is great.

Luxury brands that tweet can also benefit from consumers who check their Twitter accounts via smartphone.

If an on-the-go affluent consumer happened upon a Stella McCartney tweet encouraging her to shop the new collection, the brand could benefit from a last-minute mobile purchase.



Tweet from Stella McCartney

This is also where having a mobile-optimized site comes in handy for easy access of products, which will lead to buying.

Bricks click

Brands can also use Twitter to send customers to retail locations.

Retailers such as Bloomingdale's and Bergdorf Goodman use the social network to alert customers about in-store events.

Bloomingdale's woos Miami-based consumers with free makeup lessons from an executive at a popular brand, based on a recent tweet.



Tweet from Bloomingdale's

New York-based department store Bergdorf Goodman takes it a step further with an embedded image that shows products in the store.

VBH's new Brera come in a delightful mix of colors <http://plixi.com/p/96776827> 212 872 2577

1 hour ago via TweetDeck ☆ Favorite ↻ Retweet ↩ Reply



Tweet from Bergdorf Goodman

The retailer also tweeted about an in-store event featuring these bags beforehand, further encouraging consumers to come to the store, shop and possibly meet a fashion industry icon.

This is appealing to the affluent consumer because Twitter is a personal experience, especially if a customer is directly messaged, is re-tweeted or mentioned by the brand.

Connecting personally with a brand will encourage loyalty in all mediums.

"Twitter allows the brand to communicate on a more personal level with the consumer, as well as to provide up-to-the-minute brand news," said Isabella Josefsberg, community manager at Spring Creek Group, Seattle.

"Twitter can be used by brands to solidify the brand personality and reputation, as well as to help consumers connect with the brand," she said. "Twitter also allows consumers who are fans of the brand, but may not necessarily have the means to purchase luxury items, to participate in the brand experience."

Final Take

Rachel Lamb, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

© Napean LLC. All rights reserved.

Luxury Daily is published each business day. Thank you for reading us. Your **feedback** is welcome.