

MARKETING

## Luxury takes laid-back approach to Father's Day promotions

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*Neiman Marcus took an experiential approach to Father's Day ideas. Image credit: Neiman Marcus*

By SARAH JONES

Ahead of Father's Day on June 18, luxury marketers are touting everything from tangible gifts to one-of-a-kind experiences to draw holiday spending.

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While American consumers typically shell out less in honor of dads than they do for Mother's Day, Father's Day this year is expected to draw record sales in the United States. Despite this increased budgeting for Father's Day gifting, marketing initiatives centered on dads pale in comparison to Mother's Day promotions.

"Brands tend to echo their customers' sentiments," said Evan Magliocca, brand marketing manager, [Baesman Insights & Marketing](#), Columbus, OH.

"The fact is that Father's Day simply isn't as important to most customers as Mother's Day is for gifting," he said. "It's also somewhat overshadowed by graduations.

### Experience first

Only 45 percent of consumers are planning to buy a gift for their own dad, with just 16 percent expected to shop for their husband, according to a survey from Ebates.

However, according to the National Retail Federation, consumers are planning to spend a total \$15.5 billion for Father's Day this year. This amount is the greatest expected total spend in the study's 15-year history and is up about \$1 billion from 2016.

Even though Father's Day spending is growing, it is still behind Mother's Day expenditures, which this year were poised to break records with a total \$23.6 billion.

While spending is up, the greatest share of gift purchases is going to experiences rather than goods. About a quarter of dads desire intangible gifts such as tickets to a sports game or concert, and gift givers are obliging, with 48 percent planning to take a father to dinner or on another outing.

Taking this experiential shift into account, Neiman Marcus prompted bookings at its in-store restaurant through an

email sent to newsletter subscribers. This invited recipients to plan a day of shopping and dining to celebrate dad. Turnbull & Asser also saw Father's Day as an opportunity to drive in-store traffic. Through June 17, the tailoring label is offering a father and son fitting complete with a dram of whisky at its Bury Street location in London.



*Turnbull & Asser is reaching out to fathers and sons. Image credit: Turnbull & Asser*

For the ultra-affluent looking to spoil dad, VeryFirstTo planned an \$80,490 Ultimate Father's Day Trip. Those who book the 14-day excursion will have the opportunity to cage dive with sharks, test drive new electronics from Apple and Android before they hit the market and visit Las Vegas for gambling and a magic show.

NRF's survey also showed a 20 percent growth in purchases of items such as cologne, aftershave and other personal care products from last year. About one in five shoppers are planning to buy beauty items for fathers in their lives.

Brands including Burberry, Tom Ford and Ralph Lauren included fragrances in their gift guides.

Forty-six percent of shoppers plan to gift dad clothing, and this category also features prominently in product suggestions.



*Still from Longchamp's Father's Day email. Image credit: Longchamp*

Taking on the cliché gifting, an email from Longchamp depicts an animated man making faces at a series of silly ties. Eventually, he is handed a bag from the brand, and is successfully surprised and delighted.

"During most holidays, brands tend to go over-the-top with gift guides and extensive experiences," Mr. Maglioca said. "Sometimes those are cumbersome for customers.

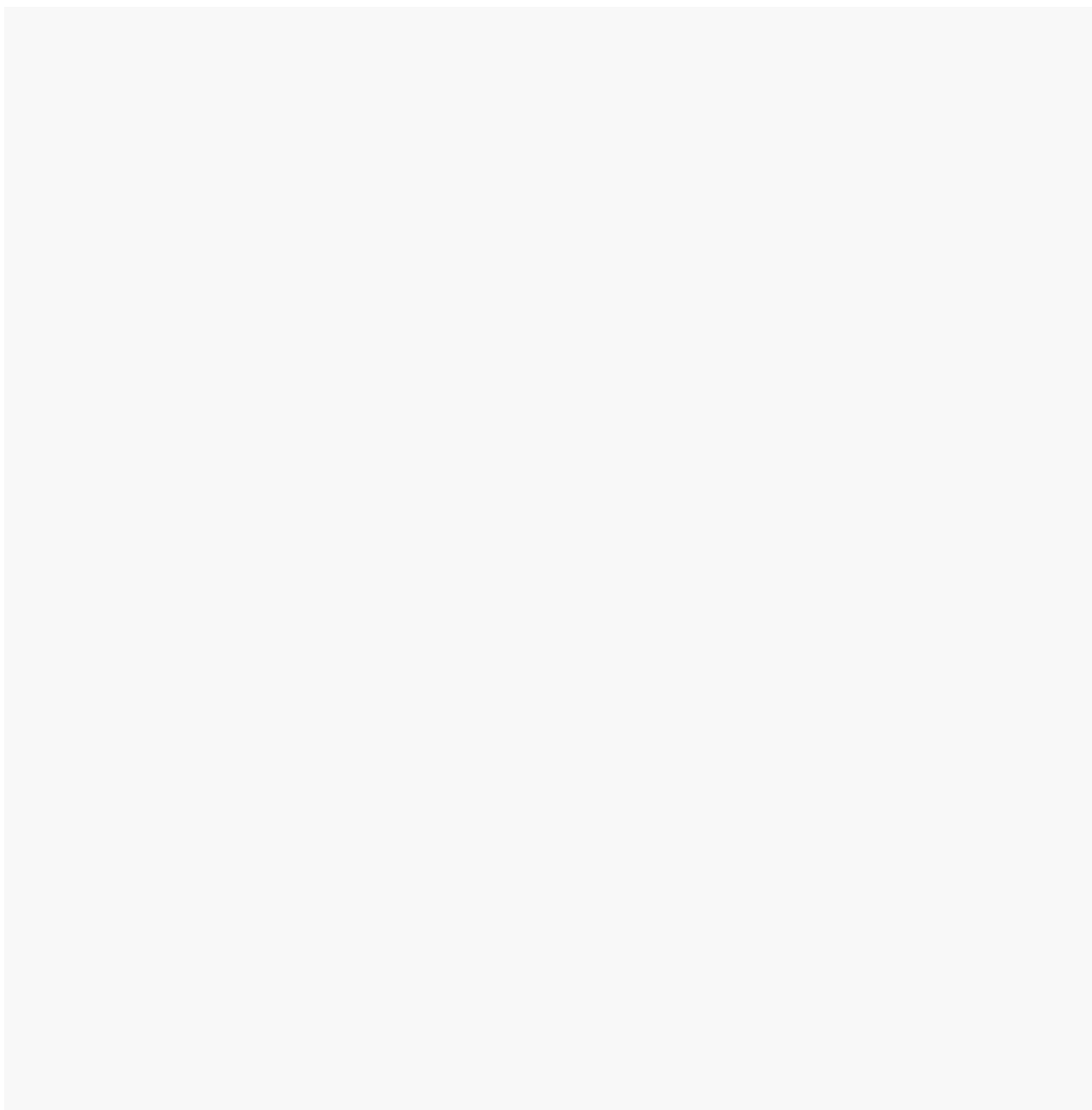
"For Father's Day, keep it simple in design, powerful in emotional connection to dad and succinct in product curation."

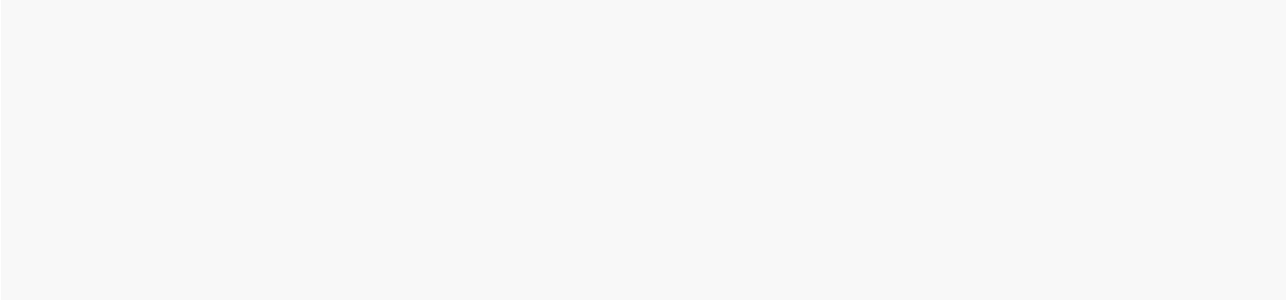
#### Telling stories

While Mother's Day traditionally includes many emotional odes, brands are often much more to the point about honoring dads, choosing email campaigns and product suggestions over storytelling.

One outlier was Carolina Herrera, which featured Justice Joslin, the face of its CH Priv scent, talking about his own dad in a short clip.

Menswear label Cerruti similarly tapped the influencers behind the Instagram handle @Ringards to showcase its newly released Signature cologne. In videos posted by the four men, they depict rituals in their lives such as swimming or traveling, sharing them with a note about Father's Day gifting.





Nous sommes trs heureux de vous prsenter notre nouvelle collaboration #cerruti1881signature X #Ringards l'occasion de la sortie de la nouvelle fragrance @cerruti1881. Retrouvez sur chacun de nos comptes (@le\_petit\_francais, @nicolassimoes, @rsimacourbe et @romaincosta\_) les versions longues des vidos et n'oubliez pas que la fte des pres approche si vous n'avez toujours pas d'ide de cadeau !

A post shared by Les Ringards (@ringards) on Jun 15, 2017 at 9:56am PDT

However, while Father's Day might not err on the sappy side, brands still seek to instill an emotion in buyers.

With the impact of their purchases a growing concern of consumers, menswear retailer Mr Porter is looking to make an impact leading up to Father's Day. From June 8-18, the ecommerce site is donating its profits from the sale of select white shirts to Jessica Seinfeld's Good+ Foundation, which benefits anti-poverty programs.

While Father's Day 2017 was less about innovation or large-scale efforts, previous years have seen initiatives devoted to dad.

Last year, department store chain Bloomingdale's showed fathers in a three-dimensional fashion through interactive displays at its New York flagship.

Bloomingdale's applied 3D wallpaper to its windows facing Lexington Avenue to celebrate "Dimensional Dads," part of the department store's push for Father's Day gifting. Interactive window displays are ideal to grab the attention of passersby who may have not planned a shopping excursion, but will be swayed to enter based on the street side experience ([see story](#)).

"Brands need to understand their brand identity and their customer," Mr. Maglioca said. "Both of those are more challenging than they sound.

"Yet if they're aligned and executed correctly, those connections enhance experiences," he said. "Most brands don't sell experiences directly, but they tap into emotions that connect the brand to the occasion and the customer."

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