

FRAGRANCE AND PERSONAL CARE

## Saks updates free gift with purchase concept to boxed beauty sample model

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Saks launched a new beauty rewards program Aug. 1. Image credit: Saks

By JEN KING

Department store chain Saks Fifth Avenue is introducing a new beauty rewards program that draws inspiration from the popularity of hand-picked samples seen in subscription boxes.

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The beauty industry has seen success in subscription services that offer trial and full-sized products for a set monthly price, through the likes of Birchbox and others that work to expose consumers to new brands and items that may have previously been unfamiliar. In Saks' case, the retailer is incorporating the product discovery concept seen in subscriptions, but applying it to its reward program tied to its credit card.

"Saks is excited to offer our new SaksFirst Beauty loyalty program, which lowers the threshold for rewards to \$250 – more closely aligned with the average customer spend in beauty," said Kate Oldham senior vice president and general merchandise manager of beauty for [Saks Fifth Avenue](#), New York.

"In addition, we're offering rewards more often – at every \$250 threshold up to and including \$1,000," she said. "At each new level, customers will receive a beauty box filled with beauty samples, and at certain thresholds, we're offering personalized benefits including an at-home makeover or beauty drawer audit.

"With SaksFirst Beauty, we can reward our dedicated beauty customers with perks that they might not otherwise have been receiving through our SaksFirst program – and show our appreciation for their loyalty more often throughout the year."

Spend and receive

Saks' new personal care rewards program, SaksFirst Beauty, was announced Aug. 1 on the retailer's social channels.

SaksFirst Beauty rewards start when a consumer spends \$250 on beauty products at Saks using the SaksFirst credit card. Three higher tiers, with spends of \$500, \$750 and \$1,000, are also available for Saks' top spenders.



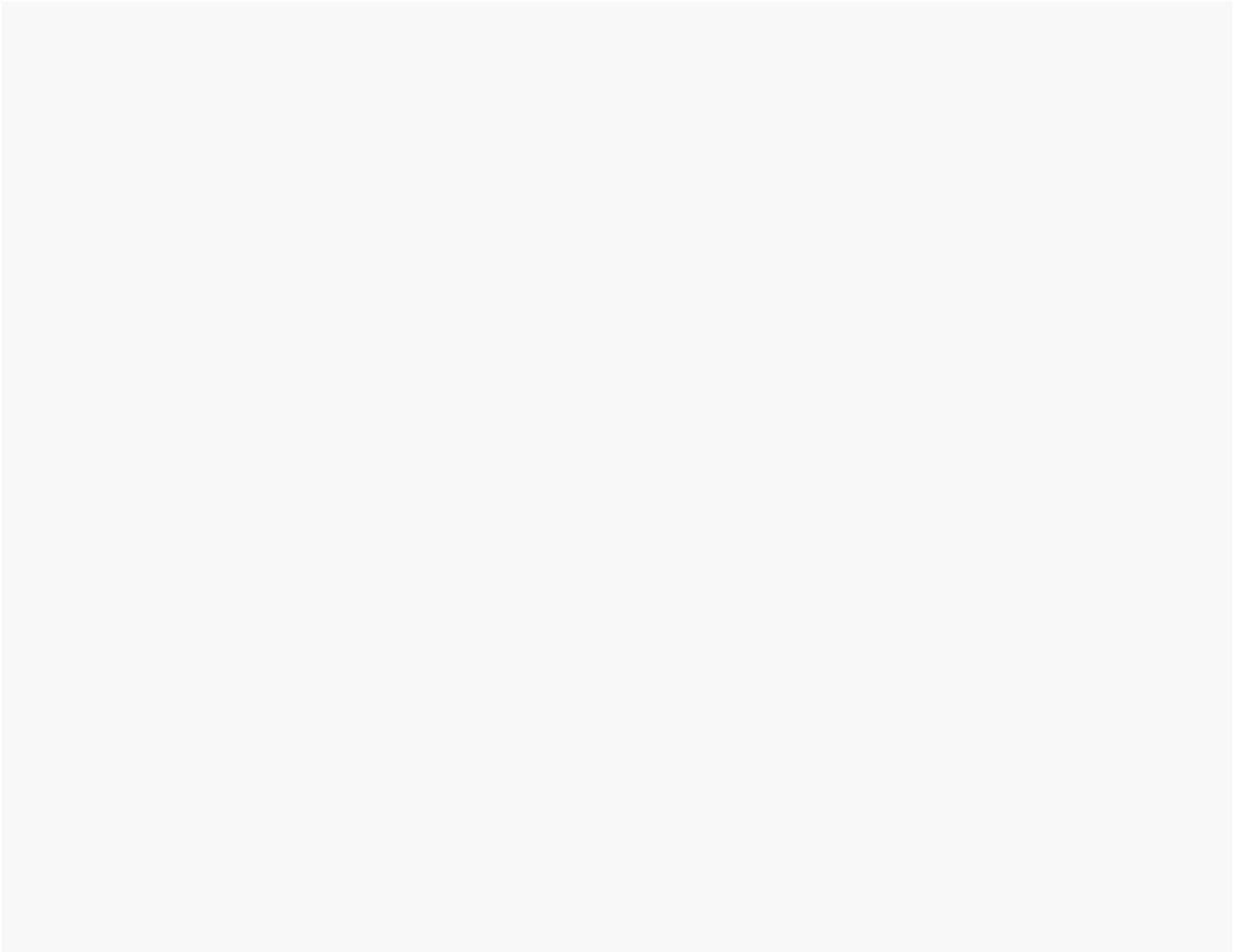
*SaksFirst Beauty Box N 1 includes 4 trial-sized samples. Image credit: Saks*

Once the \$250 threshold is met, the consumer is gifted deluxe samples, hand-picked goodies and personalized services.

Packaged in a branded SaksFirst Beauty box, a \$250 purchase earns the consumer samples sizes of Lancme Dfinicils mascara, Kiehl's Midnight Recovery botanical cleansing oil, Prada Olfactories Cargo de Nuit perfume and a mini tube of Yves Saint Laurent's Rouge Pur Couture lipstick.

In addition to the samples, the consumer will be gifted a welcome reward and be enrolled for First Look emails where Saks will share exclusive content and insider access.

For the second tier, or \$500 spent, samples include Bobbi Brown lipstick, Guerlain's Abeille Royale daily repair serum, Clive Christian's X fragrance and a bio lifting mask by Chantecaille. The second tier also includes skin boosting samples and the bonuses given at \$250.



Are you ready to unbox the mystery inside? Our big beauty reveal happens on 8/1. #SaksExclusive #SaksBeauty

A post shared by Saks Fifth Avenue (@saks) on Jul 28, 2017 at 9:04am PDT

SaksFirst Beauty's third level, when \$750 is spent, will send consumers La Mer's The Moisturizing Soft Cream, Kilian's Intoxicated fragrance, Sisley-Paris' black rose cream mask and a Chubby Stick lip balm by Clinique. The \$750 level includes the previously mentioned bonuses and a holiday reward.

The final tier, Beauty Box N 4 for purchases of \$1,000, consumers are gifted with Givenchy Le Rouge Perfecto, Giorgio Armani Maestro UV primer, a collection of mini House of Creed fragrances, a Dior Diorshow mascara, Estee Lauder's Advanced Night Repair intensive recovery ampoules and Cl de Peau Beaut protective fortifying emulsion SPF.

The \$1,000 level earns consumers all previously stated bonuses, but also includes an At-Home Beauty Service. The service is personalized to each eligible consumer and is performed by Saks' skilled beauty advisors.



*SaksFirst Beauty Box N 4 is given to consumers who spend \$1,000 at the beauty department. Image credit: Saks*

All SaksFirst credit card holders are automatically enrolled in **SaksFirst Beauty** and will continue to receive points for their purchases. Both in-store and ecommerce sales apply for SaksFirst Beauty and Saks' general rewards program.

Out of the box

By updating the gift with purchase concept to a subscription service-like model, retailers such as Saks will likely influence consumers' future purchases as they discover new products.

It is likely the hope of participating brands that the relaxed exposure from the box model will result in future purchases. For the consumer, the overall experience is likely to spur additional purchases in the future because the items were "hand-selected" for them ([see story](#)).

For now, Birchbox has established itself as the primary driver of this concept with branded partnerships that include Vogue magazine and British retailer Selfridges.

Also, U.S. beauty brand Estee Lauder looked to introduce its brand to a younger generation of consumers by offering its skincare and cosmetics in sample sizes.

Birchbox has deals with Estee Lauder Cos.-owned brands such as Bobbi Brown, M.A.C, Smashbox and Bumble & Bumble hair care, among others. But, Birchbox only began offering its subscribers samples of Estee Lauder-branded products this spring ([see story](#)).

In the end, brand participation in such programs is beneficial.

"Just as our customers are excited to receive rewards more often, our vendors are thrilled to have an opportunity to put their new or high-priority products into the hands of our shoppers," Saks' Ms. Oldham said.

"Any chance for new customers to touch and feel product is a win for our brands and for Saks," she said.

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