

RETAIL

## Sephora launches social network-inspired community platform

August 14, 2017



*Sephora is starting a conversation via its Beauty Insider Community. Image credit: Sephora*

By JEN KING

LVMH-owned beauty retailer Sephora is encouraging peer-to-peer communications through the launch of its new Beauty Insider Community.

Subscribe to **Luxury Daily**  
Plus: Just released  
State of Luxury 2019 **Save \$246 ▶**

Instead of spurring a dialogue between brand and consumers, as many marketers often work towards, Sephora is taking a different approach to generating conversation among its enthusiasts. The beauty industry relies heavily on peer recommendations, and consumers often put more stock into influencers and friends' opinions rather than brands themselves, making Sephora's Beauty Insider Community an accurate read of current trends.

"Peer-to-peer conversations are a necessity especially in the beauty sector because we value advice and perspective from people we can relate to as well as people we aspire to be," said Dalia Strum, professor at the [Fashion Institute of Technology](#) and founder of [Dalia Inc.](#), New York. "Most importantly, when its community based, there isn't a defined sales agenda.

"This also provides an opportunity for experts to position themselves as thought leaders and provide advice and recommendations," she said.

Ms. Strum is not affiliated with Sephora, but agreed to comment as an industry expert. [Sephora](#) was reached for comment.

### Talking about beauty

Sephora launched the Beauty Insider Community on its Web site and mobile application on Aug. 11.

The beauty retailer describes the effort as being "Real people. Real time. Real Talk." The content generated on the Beauty Insider Community page will help Sephora consumers find beauty inspiration, ask questions and get recommendations from like-minded consumers.

Available only for those enrolled in the retailer's Beauty Insider loyalty program, an existing Sephora member is asked to complete her profile. Similar to a social media platform, Sephora asks the consumer to upload an image and create a nickname.

By making a profile, a Sephora consumer is able to share with larger community her personal interests, groups, looks, beauty characteristics and easily connect with other members. The profile also enables personalized product recommendations, access to her Beauty Insider status and the opportunity to enroll in free beauty classes, revisit saved items and recent purchases.

Once her profile is finished, the Sephora consumer can join groups to find others interested in similar beauty interests and concerns. Consumers can also browse featured groups such as Trending Now and Skincare Aware.

At launch there are approximately 40 different groups for consumers to interact with.



Homepage for Sephora's Beauty Insider Community. Image credit: Sephora

Sephora's Beauty Insider Community also encourages consumers to ask questions and post answers. For example, one relevant conversation on the Beauty Insider Community is Sephora's upcoming and highly anticipated introduction of ColourPop cosmetics to its offerings.

Playing off social influencers, Sephora also frames Beauty Insider Community as a source for inspiration. Consumers will be able to post and browse looks and videos from Beauty Insider members.

Also, the hub will be a place for consumers seeking advice. Consumers will be able to read product reviews and share recommendations.

According to Sephora, the Beauty Insider Community serves as a centralized aggregation of its existing community platforms on its Web site such as BeautyTalk, Beauty Board and its rating and reviews section. This is the first time these points have been brought together in one place.

Sephora plans to unveil additional features for the Beauty Insider Community on Aug. 22.

#### Personal push

In July, Sephora shared that it has seen six times the engagement than in the past due to its use of digital personalization features.

The beauty retailer recently introduced a host of new features to its online store focused on personalizing the purchasing process for individual consumers.

New features include individual recommendations based on previous purchases and a personalized welcome when past users visit the online store again. Sephora is banking on the growing trend toward smarter online shopping experiences to help drive up ecommerce sales ([see story](#)).

Also, Sephora is putting more power in the hands of consumers by hosting several products from Volition, a startup that allows users to vote on what cosmetics they want to see created.

Volition gives customers a larger degree of autonomy and the ability to influence the creation of new products. With this new partnership, customers can have an influence on what kinds of Volition products get made and potentially sold through Sephora ([see story](#)).

"[Sephora's Beauty Insider Community] will be filled with relevant data that Sephora could learn from," FIT and Dalia, Inc.'s Ms. Strum said.

"By evaluating the qualitative data through the user-generated content along with their demographic information, Sephora can learn more about its consumer and find ways to build more meaningful relationships," she said.

---

© 2020 Napean LLC. All rights reserved.

Luxury Daily is published each business day. Thank you for reading us. Your [feedback](#) is welcome.