

RETAIL

DFS launches localized social commerce via WeChat

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Sample of DFS' WeChat mini program. Image credit: DFS

By STAFF REPORTS

Exclusive to San Francisco International Airport, LVMH-owned travel retailer DFS Group has launched a mini purchasing program powered by Chinese messaging application WeChat.

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DFS' mini purchasing program launched on WeChat Sept. 1, ahead of the busy Labor Day holiday weekend, and targets travelers who prefer to shop via mobile, rather than stop into a duty-free shop. WeChat introduced the mini program in January to create rich experiences for its users who turn to the app for commerce and communication.

Duty-free on-the-go

The WeChat mini program allows users to discover and pre-order products based on their location. As of June 2017, WeChat had an active monthly user base of 936 million.

DFS opted to launch WeChat's mini program at its San Francisco International Airport locations. Accessed through WeChat's Discovery function, users will find the DFS menu where they can preview and pre-order more than 300 products across luxury categories.

Since the mini program is location-based, the platform will push tailored products specific to the location. For example, DFS will feature Napa Valley, CA wines.

When a pre-order is placed, consumers who are on the way to their departure or arrival gates can stop by DFS locations for pick-up. Payment is used through WeChat Pay for seamless purchasing.

"Here at DFS we believe in providing our customers with a luxurious and delightful shopping experience throughout their customer journey," said Mike Osorio, DFS Group regional president Americas, Pacific Islands and Japan, in a statement.

"The WeChat mini program allows us to extend this experience to a platform that is integral to our customers' day-to-day lives, while introducing them to exclusive, local and limited-edition products that can only be found at DFS," he said.



Sample product page for DFS' WeChat mini program. Image credit: DFS

DFS plans to roll out additional mini programs at other locations in the coming months including T Galleria by DFS, Hawaii; DFS, Los Angeles International Airport; DFS, John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York and DFS, Hawaii Daniel K. Inouye International Airport.

In May, collaborating with Tencent and DLG China, Swarovski was the first watch and jewelry brand to leverage mini programs to innovate on social commerce, highlighting its Mother's Day campaign.

Conceptually similar to Google's instant apps, WeChat mini programs take away the barrier to download additional applications from an app store, and instead allow brands to offer users new and additional functionalities without having to leave the WeChat ecosystem ([see story](#)).