

MOBILE

Why mobile is important for both consumers and sales reps

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LONDON – Luxury brands can increase CRM and further engage

with their customers by creating a mobile experience for both sales associates and customers, per an industry expert at the Luxury Global conference.

Mcommerce is expected to hit \$23.8 billion in 2015, and research has shown that luxury consumers are more likely to buy from the brand, rather than distributors and other retailers, if they have a relationship with a brand representative. Therefore, brands need to educate both the consumers and the people that sell the products to help keep these customers.

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“Luxury brands need to apply just the right amount of leverage at the right place to be

effective,” said Milton Pedraza, CEO of the New York-based Luxury Institute at the Luxury Global conference. “Building a relationship is the trim tab of a luxury company.

“It’s very important to create a mobile experience for both the sales associates and the customers, and to execute this extraordinarily well,” he said.

For the customer

Research has shown that brands who have a relationship with a brand representative are 29 more likely to buy a product from the brand, as opposed to the 14 percent who do not have a relationship with a sales associate.

Brands should make it easy for the customer to research and shop.

For instance, Tiffany & Co.’s engagement ring mobile application makes it easy to find rings, save them on the phone and decipher ring size by putting life-size scale versions of rings on the phone that consumers can measure by laying other rings over them.

Brands should also allow customers to interact cross-channel.

For instance, Ralph Lauren’s marketing for Rugby transcends from mobile to in-store. Brands can use the “make your own shirt” feature in the app and learn more information or buy the product in-store.

Another important facet of mobile convenience for the customer is allowing them to buy without much hassle and to help them if they do.

CRM is important to a luxury brand's reputation, and easy transaction and service support this.

“Brands should make it so pure and simple so you can buy it without much hassle,” Mr. Pedraza said.

“One of the most important things is that Tiffany’s app has a feature where consumers can reach an actual human,” he said.

For the sales associate

Perhaps even more so than the customer, the sales representative should be comfortable using mobile, per Mr. Pedraza.

Customers are the most valuable part of the business and if brands do not know how to care for something so precious, then what is the point, Mr. Pedraza said.

Brands should make it easy for associates to access customer data, collect data and access data to better service the customer.

This can enable the brand to personalize service for the customer in a way that is real-time and relevant.

Using mobile can showcase products and videos in a new way as well as help associates look up important information.

For instance, Nordstrom recently started using mobile checkout ([see story](#)). This will not only help speed-up the checkout process, but expedite the entire process.

Instead of going in to the stockroom to see if the store has a particular item, a sales associate can now check via and either bring it out or tell the customer where they can find it if they do not.

Brands should educate sales associates about these processes.

The most important thing is to get customers to trust the brand. Asking questions and allowing them to opt-in to email using mobile will help to gain their compliance.

“People who trust the brand will give out important data such as email addresses and credit card information,” Mr. Pedraza said.

“Customers will not give out personal data if they do not feel safe,” he said.

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