

MARKETING

## Burberry leads omnichannel pack as luxury brands struggle to keep up

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*Burberry lead due to its focus on omnichannel tools. Image courtesy of Burberry*

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By DANNY PARISI

Burberry still leads the pack as far as luxury brands and retailers offering omnichannel shopping experiences.

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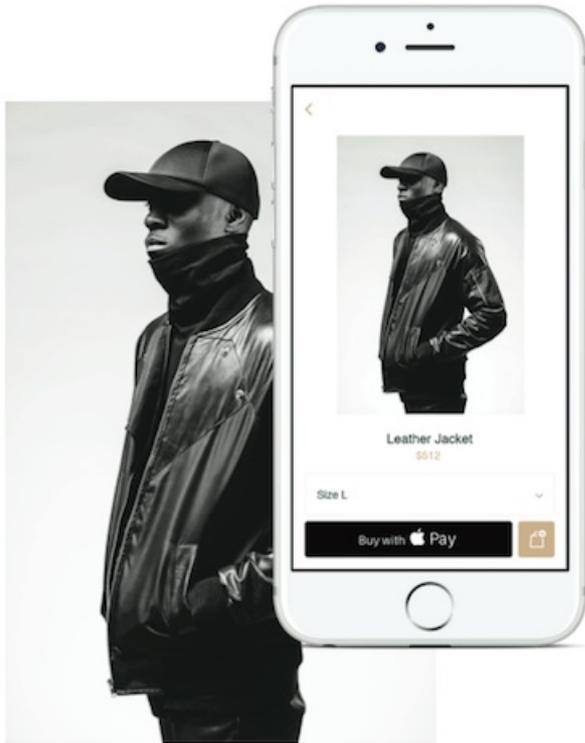
According to a new report from Newstore, which went undercover at 140 luxury and lifestyle brands to gauge their omnichannel experiences, an alarming number of brands are missing basic omnichannel tools such as a shared shopping cart between online and in-store trips and personalized follow-up messages. Of the ones that did offer these kinds of tools, Burberry stood out as a brand that has created a next-level shopping experience that uses every channel.

### Omnichannel tools

Multichannel or omnichannel shopping has been at the forefront of the retail world for a while now, and many brands have sought to create a solid experience that unifies shopping across channels.

To see how well brands are doing, Newstore sent shoppers undercover to 140 different brands, many of them luxury, with instructions to take notes on how those brands use multichannel shopping as part of the experience.

As a way of illustrating the ideal omnichannel experience, as well as the potential that brands are not yet living up to, Newstore describes a hypothetical customer, David, shopping at a hypothetical brand.



*Customers need to be able to transition seamlessly between online and offline shopping. Image credit: Newstore*

David does research on this brand before he enters the store on his smartphone and the sales associate is able to view his account on her mobile device and help him search for the things he wants.

Newstore describes the sales associate ordering him a shirt in a color the store does not stock and having it shipped to his house. She also is able to add another item that he would like to buy in the future to his digital shopping cart so that he can either purchase it later online or find it easily again in-store when he comes back.

Based on the data Newstore collected, Burberry was the clear winner. Citing its transparency, Newstore gave Burberry the top spot based on the seamless transition between the brand's online store, mobile app and physical stores and Burberry's dedication to making each channel equal in importance and communicative with each other.

Unfortunately, the rest of the brand's investigated by Newstore were disappointing and it gave the brands overall a grade of C in terms of including omnichannel tools.

#### Online to offline

Physical retailers differentiate themselves from online counterparts through lower price points, a wider assortment of goods and unique experiences, but as ecommerce is priced to match and product selections expand, bricks-and-mortar sellers are defined only by experience.

Engaging with customers on the shop floor is one of the best ways of improving that experience and mobile technology can help sales associates accomplish that goal more effectively. But a report from NewStore found that only 51 percent of brands empower their associates with smartphones or other mobile devices to help customers ([see story](#)).



*Many brands are lacking basic multichannel tools. Image credit: Newstore*

Burberry has excelled thanks to its embracement of the latest mobile and digital tools. For instance, Burberry is working with Apple's newly unveiled augmented reality tool kit to create an application designed to cater to tech-savvy fashion lovers.

At Apple's recent event unveiling the new line of iPhones, the company spent a significant amount of time talking about the new models' emphasis on augmented reality as well as the ARKit to help developers create AR apps. Burberry is the first major luxury brand to make use of this new feature with a new application ([see story](#)).

These kinds of decisions have led Burberry to be at the forefront of omnichannel shopping. Other brands, particularly in the luxury business, need to be able to compete and embracing tools that allow for a seamless transition between online and offline shopping is key.

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