

INTERNET

Burberry steals a march on copycats with commerce-enabled men's runway show

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By RACHEL LAMB

British apparel and accessories designer Burberry is offering online male consumers a chance to buy straight from the runway following a live streaming of the brand's Men's Prorsum Spring/Summer 2012 collection on Saturday, stealing a march on copycats.

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Luxury Daily

Burberry is streaming the runway show from Milan at <http://www.burberry.com> in a one-two punch that responds to instant consumer gratifications and also accelerate the concept-to-store process to undermine high-street knockoffs. Select apparel from the show will be available to order after the show with a seven-week delivery time.

"This collection started with our iconic heritage as the foundation," said Christopher Bailey, chief creative officer of Burberry, London.

"We really wanted to emphasise this feeling of artisanal and decorative pieces that had been touched by hand, celebrating craftsmanship but always with this playful element," he said.

"We have taken our icons and played with texture to personalize and give them a real character and charm using color to highlight the intricate detail that goes into crafting

them."

Milan to show ya can

Burberry already employs a click-to-buy tactic after runway shows for its women's collection, but this is the first time that the brand has done it for male consumers.

Males who wish to own bags and outwear from the collection before they hit the stores and ecommerce sites can order directly from Burberry.com after the show.

Although Burberry has already The show is set to broadcast at 5 p.m. in Milan on June 18, noon in New York.



Selection from the Burberry Prorsum pre-Spring 2012 collection

Select customers from the Burberry retail location in the SoHo district of Manhattan are invited to watch the runway show in-store and buy products via iPad with the help of a sales associate.

"Burberry is creating emotion and desire and giving them the opportunity to shop – what every good marketer does," said Christopher Ramey, president of Affluent Insights, Miami. "There is an inverse relationship between sales and desire, and the longer it takes to leverage desire, the less likely you are to manifest into a sale.

"So, creating desire and making the customer part of the fashion show and engaging them and allowing them to purchase it before anyone can see it is very compelling," he said.

"That's exciting and that's how you create apostles."

Burberry has streamed its fashion shows in the past, but has never offered products straight off the runway.

In February, the brand broadcast its show on a big screen in London's bustling Piccadilly Circus and in flagship stores around the world ([see story](#)).

Consumers could also watch via mobile device and on Burberry.com.

In fact, many luxury brands live-stream their fashion shows via social media or other digital means.

Giorgio Armani, Vera Wang, Oscar de la Renta and Ermenegildo Zegna often stream new collections to attract potential consumers ([see story](#)).

Unlike its competitors, Burberry is one of the few brands that allow viewers to buy products immediately following the show.

Scene stealer

Runway shows provide an exclusive behind-the-scenes glance into a luxury brand's world. Before, only the elite and special consumers were able to see runway shows first-hand.

By providing live, online streaming video coverage, consumers can feel as if they are part of the brand experience. Brands use this as leverage to reach their optimal target audience.

However, Mr. Ramey does not believe that this can dilute a brand, despite the fact that mainstreaming a brand's fashion show could make the show more accessible and therefore less desirable to luxury consumers.

"This was true five to 10 years ago but not anymore," Mr. Ramey said. "The opportunity to wear something before anyone else sees it is truly engaging the consumer, their biggest fans.

"What a great way to create another story about apparel," he said.

However, there are some pitfalls.

Burberry must be able to execute, Mr. Ramey said. The brand totally loses credibility and the uniqueness of the offer if it does not follow through.

The brand also must market correctly.

As of Wednesday, July 15 afternoon, Burberry has incorporated a countdown on Burberry.com, building hype for the show.



Burberry site with countdown

Since Burberry has more than 6.6 million fans on Facebook, it would probably be beneficial to market there and on its other social media pages.

Indeed, Burberry is pushing these efforts through Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

“One aspect they are famous for is their Facebook page and it’s a great opportunity to grab email addresses and create an email database,” Mr. Ramey said. “I’d leave it just to digital.

“You do want to have some sense of rarity to make it special, and they should have enough leverage on Facebook to market there,” he said. “And it’ll bring more people to the Facebook page and Burberry.com.”

Please watch Burberry's SS 2012 men's collection live here:

Embedded Video: <https://tpc.google syndication.com/safeframe/1-0-8/html/container.html>

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