

MOBILE

Mobile marketing equally important for luxury consumers, employees: Luxury Institute exec

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By KAYLA HUTZLER



NEW YORK – For luxury brands, integrating mobile marketing is just as important for employees as it is for consumers, according to a speaker at the Luxury Interactive conference.

Mobile should be a focus for luxury brands since data continues to prove that upscale consumers are downloading and using branded mobile applications at increasing rates. Mobile should also be used by sales professionals to increase productivity and create stronger customer relationships.

“In today’s highly commoditized luxury world, brands need to focus not only on outperforming the competition but also out-behaving them,” said Milton Pedraza, CEO of the Luxury Institute, New York.

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“Ritz-Carlton, Apple and Nordstrom are not perfect, but the probability that consumers are going to have an extraordinary customer service experience with them is high, as compared to their competitors,” he said.

The Luxury Institute conducts research on wealthy consumer behaviors and spending habits and helps determine customer experience best practices.

Sales drool

Beneficial customer relationships can be formed more easily and at greater rates when employees use mobile devices.

“Mobile devices are for building [personal] relationships,” Mr. Pedraza said.

To optimize the use of mobile by employees, Mr. Pedraza suggested a few tips for luxury brands.

When an employee can access a customer’s past spending habits and provide him or her with personalized suggestions and support, a long-term customer relationship can be formed.

Hence, brands should look to create a customer database that employees can access via search on a mobile device.

For example, luxury department store chain Nordstrom recently revealed plans to start using iPod touch devices to quickly and effectively help customers check-out and find products in-store.

Inventory information for the sales professional’s store location, as well as nearby stores, should be available at the employee’s fingertips, as well as the option to order a particular item for a customer.

Employees should also have access to customer relationship metrics through mobile apps.

“We believe that you need to use these mobile devices to deliver real-time feedback to your sales professionals on data capture, net sales, products sold and clients,” Mr. Pedraza said.

“This is not just data or a mobile device, it is a great tool for sales professionals to self-assess and increase productivity,” he said.

Appy hour

Twenty-nine percent of wealthy consumers are downloading and using luxury branded mobile apps, according to Mr. Pedraza.

There are three main things that wealthy consumers expect from these apps: fast

download time, exclusivity and customization options and easy access to customer service representatives.

“You need to find your point in mobile where you get the most leverage,” Mr. Pedraza said.

Overall, a brand’s ultimate goal should be to increase the customer experience.

Mobile apps should make it easy for consumers to research, shop, reach customer representatives and complete transactions.

“A brand’s focus should be to create extraordinary mobile experiences for both the sales associates and the customers,” Mr. Pedraza said.

“They can do this by focusing on what builds relationships and executing the fundamentals extraordinarily well,” he said.

Final Take

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