

RETAIL

Barneys offers influencer lifestyle to loyal customers

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Barneys spotlights influencers like @your.gal.shan on its blog. Image credit: @your.gal.shan

By BRIELLE JAEKEL

Department store chain Barneys New York is releasing a new loyalty program that focuses on inclusive forms of payment and capitalizes on the lure of being an influencer.

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Since many loyalty programs today have leaned into the mobile era and are operated through applications, retailers often require consumers to pre-load money or open a brand-specific credit card, but Barneys is taking a different approach. Consumers can earn rewards no matter what form of payment they use, and shoppers will also have a chance to live the lifestyle of an influencer.

"The Barneys New York Influencer rewards program offers exclusive access to experiences, VIP services, rewards, perks, to all our customers, regardless of their form of payment," said Tom Miller, executive vice president of communications and marketing at [Barneys New York](#). "What sets it apart is that our members will benefit from exclusive one-of-a-kind experiences that they can only get at Barneys New York.

"This includes private designer events, complimentary beauty treatments, salon services at Sally Hershberger and Blind Barber at Barneys New York and complimentary experiences at Freds restaurants," she said.

Rewards in new retail

Leaning into the experiential retail revolution, Barneys is releasing its new loyalty program that focuses on gifting events, services and other perks rather than only discounts on goods.

Barneys New York Influencer rewards program follows in the footsteps of Sephora, another pioneer in loyalty and experiential offerings.

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Get into Fashion's newest sport: bag spotting! Here @thehautepursuit carries a cute little @loewe bag. Tap the mini Gate bag to shop and discover more on #TheWindow. Photographed by: @melodiejeng

A post shared by Barneys New York (@barneysny) on Mar 4, 2019 at 5:24pm PST

Instagram post from Barneys New York

Members will have access to one-of-a-kind benefits including private designer events, free beauty treatments, Sally Hershberger and Blind Barber salon services and experiences at the retailer's iconic Freds restaurants.

Similar to most successful loyalty programs in the modern era, promotions will be tailored to the individual shopper based on personal data. Members will also have access to expedited shipping, which is a major factor for department stores competing with Amazon.

Rather than just focusing on transactional-based rewards, loyalty programs should work to develop personalized, relevant engagement with consumers.

According to a report from Bond Brand Loyalty, 78 percent of upper-affluent individuals say that loyalty programs are a significant part of their brand relationships, more than the average 71 percent among all consumers. Successful loyalty strategies today are integrated into the overall customer experience, taking the programs beyond points to drive positive brand sentiment ([see story](#)).

Barneys' program is based on a tiered system and also includes early access to sales events and invites to in-store and online events.

Each "influencer" will earn one point per dollar on all purchases, with rewards culminating in Barneys gift cards twice a year. In addition, Barneys' loyalty program provides 2 percent cash back on all sales and 4 percent on purchases made with its branded credit card.

Users will be able to access various opportunities for bonus points throughout the year.

[View this post on Instagram](#)

Street style strolls with Fashion Director @MarinaLarroude. Tap her #ParisFashionWeek look to shop!
Photographed by @melodiejeng

A post shared by Barneys New York (@barneysny) on Mar 4, 2019 at 9:06am PST

Instagram post from Barneys New York

The Barneys New York Influencer program will launch on April 1. Members can sign up for free online and in stores.

Retail revolution

This is one of many new undertakings from Barneys New York that aims to put the retailer on top of the shifting retail market.

The department store brand recently launched a niche shop in its Beverly Hills location focusing on cannabis-related products, signifying that the shift experts predicted has arrived.

With the growth of CBD and hemp products, along with marijuana legalization in numerous regions of the United States, the entrance of cannabis in the luxury world is not a big surprise. Barneys is the first to open a luxury shop devoted to this segment, but a few of its contemporaries have adopted similar strategies ([see story](#)).

Changes such as these allow Barneys to connect with the modern consumer, who shops in a drastically different way than the clientele of the past.

With the ability to get almost any product at the touch of a finger and easier discount access, retailers have been forced to revolutionize the retail model in ways such as Barneys' Influencer loyalty program.

"Barneys New York already has one of the highest retention rates in the industry," Ms. Miller said. "The Barneys New York Influencer rewards program allows us to retain our current customer and build stronger relationships with newer customers.

"In particular, this feature allows us to reach a younger customer who may not want to open a credit card," she said.

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