

MARKETING

Luxury brands seek to spoil mom with gifts, experiences

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Missoni's Mother's Day push. Image credit: Missoni

By SARAH JONES

Ahead of Mother's Day, luxury brands are looking to help consumers celebrate their moms with personalized gifts and pampering experiences.

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According to data from the National Retail Federation, Mother's Day spending in the United States will be up this year, reaching a record \$25 billion. Consumers are branching out into categories beyond flowers, and luxury brands are responding with both physical and intangible gift ideas designed to be different.

"The Mother's Day opportunity is huge for luxury brands," said Andrea Wilson, vice president of strategy at **Dentsu Luxe**, Fort Worth, TX. "With 86 percent of U.S. consumers planning on buying for Mother's Day, coupled with spending set to increase almost 9 percent more than 2018 [according to NRF], there is ample opportunity for brands to take advantage of the positive trend.

"Some of this increase is likely due to high consumer confidence in the U.S. economy, but also the impact of increased buying power of affluent millennials, who likely have still-living baby boomer mothers," she said.

"Because the large majority of consumers will definitely buy something for the holiday, the ability for brands to capitalize on the opportunity becomes dependent on finding ways to ensure consumer's see their product as the perfect, most unique and relevant gift.

Spoiling mom

NRF found that greeting cards and flowers remain the most popular gifts for those celebrating Mother's Day on May 12. Less popular but growing are categories such as fashion, with 38 percent planning to gift apparel or accessories.

Brands such as Anya Hindmarch and Loewe are promoting personalized leather goods. Meanwhile, Tod's is positioning its T-Ring bag as the present for "cool moms" such as influencers Leandra Medine and Arielle Charnas.

[View this post on Instagram](#)

The bag that easily carries all woman needs. #TodsTRing from business to mum duties all day long. #Tods

A post shared by Tod's (@tods) on Apr 23, 2019 at 10:08am PDT

Instagram post from Tod's

Emilio Pucci is prompting consumers to "spoil" their moms with a scarf. In an email campaign, M Missoni jokingly suggested buying fashion for mom, since daughters will be able to borrow from their closets, combining gifting with self gifting.

"The most powerful influencers in a mother's life is her children," said Chris Ramey, president of **Affluent Insights**.

"Celebrating the life of the person responsible for your existence is a long tradition," he said. "Affluence provides the opportunity to expand one's gratitude."

According to NRF's study, spending on jewelry is also up to \$5 billion this year, growing from \$2.3 billion a decade ago.

Jewelers are looking to present themselves as a gifting option through campaigns.

Lagos worked with blogger Eva Amurri Martino to showcase its jewelry and its #MyLagosMyWay philosophy.

[View this post on Instagram](#)

A beautiful stack of bracelets styled by @thehappilyeva just in time for Mother's Day. #MyLAGOSMyWay
#mothersday

A post shared by LAGOS (@lagos_jewelry) on May 1, 2019 at 2:57pm PDT

Instagram post from Lagos

Bulgari is using Mother's Day as a platform to give back. The jeweler is teaming up with Save the Children on a collection, with a portion of proceeds going to the organization.

Swarovski took a content marketing approach to Mother's Day, sponsoring a podcast on actress-entrepreneur Gwyneth Paltrow's Goop. The chat featured Ms. Paltrow with Ariana Huffington and Demi Moore talking about their journeys, including motherhood.

The crystal brand is also inviting consumers to share a photo, video or story from their first year as a mother for a chance to be featured on a digital billboard in New York's Times Square.

BMW is similarly spotlighting multitasking mothers with the hashtag #PowerMom, calling for consumer content in celebration of the day.

"There are two main reasons why real moms have become such a focus for Mother's Day marketing," Ms. Wilson said.

"The first is the underlying cultural movement taking precedence today," she said. "Over the past year or so, there has been a cultural celebration of imperfection and embracing the true idiosyncrasies and challenges of female lives.

"As motherhood is such an integral focal point for a large majority of women, empathetic emotional connections through humor, sadness, pride and even frustration have helped create bonds amongst mothers. Brands now have the opportunity to be a part of that bonding moment.

"The second reason is the resurgence of people-focused marketing. Brands are now able to, and are realizing the

impact of showcasing their understanding of consumers to consumers themselves. This is creating a stronger relationship between people and the brands they buy, increasing purchase consideration, affinity and loyalty."

Beauty is also seeing Mother's Day pushes. Last year, fragrance sales grew 9 percent during Mother's Day year-over-year, according to data from NPD Group ([see story](#)).

In the spirit of Mother's Day, Chanel gave some of its beauty products a makeover in an email campaign. Instead of photography, the brand displays gift ideas such as Chanel N°5 and its nail polish in childlike drawings.



Chanel's email included a GIF of childlike drawings. Image credit: Chanel

The email says, "A note, a drawing, a sweet gesture it's the thought that counts."

Michael Kors also opted for a handwritten touch, with a campaign starring Bella Hadid that shows the model penning a note to her mom.

[View this post on Instagram](#)

To Mom, with love: @BellaHadid wishes her mom a Happy #MothersDay! Shop Bella's top picks and find the perfect gift for mom in our Instagram Story. #MichaelKors

A post shared by Michael Kors (@michaelkors) on Apr 27, 2019 at 8:24am PDT

Instagram post from Michael Kors

Forty-four percent of consumers say that they desire a unique gift, and 39 percent are looking to gifting to create a memory.

With 81 percent of consumers looking to retailers for inspiration, brands have an opportunity to put themselves top-of-mind through campaigns.

For those who do not know what to get mom, brands promoted gifting options that enable the recipient to decide. Michael Kors and Neiman Marcus both suggested GiftNow, which sends a digital gift that the giftee can alter before shipment.

"While luxury means a lot of different things, its definition remains close to being 'different, special and unique.'" Ms. Wilson said. "Therefore, marketing tactics must make the consumer logically and emotionally believe that's true about the luxury product they are about to buy.

"This can be done through carefully crafted advertising, content and curated partnerships," she said. "Utilizing words like 'exclusive,' 'limited number' and 'reserve edition' in copy or on landing pages can ensure those points resonate.

"Brands can also offer products only to their VIP or top-tier customers early and limit the quantity of styles purchased. Marketers can also offer personalization, such as signed or personalized editions, engraving, initials, symbols, even favorite animals or objects, to help consumers create something unique for their gift recipient."

Making memories

Indicative of the growing emphasis on experiences, Mother's Day is also spurring outings, with 55 percent saying they plan to treat mom to an excursion.

Palmer House, a Hilton Hotel in Chicago is going all out for mom with a \$40,000 package that includes Tiffany jewelry as a welcome gift, two nights in a penthouse suite, a private tour of The Art Institute of Chicago's Impressionism wing and a brownie baking class with the hotel's pastry chef.

Blade is offering helicopter rides to Canyon Ranch Wellness Resort, where they will partake in pampering such as massages and yoga.

Hotels are also promoting spa days and brunches as consumers look to connect with mom over shared experiences.

As Mother's Day becomes more of an event to spend time with family and appreciate moms rather than buying goods, luxury hospitality brands are sticking to classic experiential offerings to entice consumers to spend the holiday with them.

Hotel and travel brands are seizing this moment to connect with affluents to celebrate their mothers, but many are lacking innovation. However, brands such as Four Seasons and Ritz-Carlton are making small tweaks to traditional Mother's Day themes to stay fresh ([see story](#)).

"Informed marketers are inspiring and teaching adult children the importance of thoughtful giving," Mr. Ramey said.

"A gift that any person might give undermines the special bond between a mother and her child," he said. "Mother's Day gifts come not from the purse, but from the heart. Anything less than a unique and authentic gift is poor form."

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