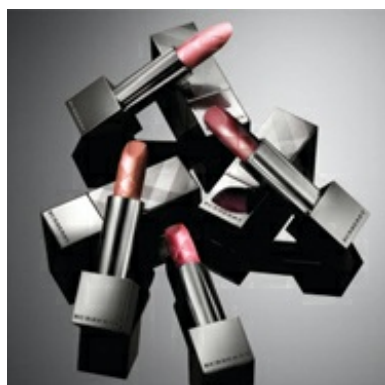


RESEARCH

Burberry, Estée Lauder make the cut in L2's beauty-specific digital IQ index

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By KAYLA HUTZLER

Although mass-retail beauty brands topped L2 Think Tank's Digital Beauty IQ, luxury marketers such as Burberry, L'Occitane and Estée Lauder squeezed into the top 20.

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MAC, Bobbi Brown, Lancôme and Burberry were among the top 20 and applauded for their focused digital strategies and social efforts. However, a number of luxury brands were also found at the bottom of the L2 study, including La Mer, Dolce & Gabbana and Laura Mercier.

“Focus and consistency are key,” said Andrea Derricks, L2 research lead for the 2011 Digital IQ Index: Beauty, New York.

“Genius and gifted brands are guided by strong digital strategies, which help them prioritize efforts and make sure that each digital program and initiative is designed to meet their marketing and business objectives,” she said.

“This focus results in a consistent, cohesive presence across the dimensions we measure.”

The L2 2011 Digital IQ Index: Beauty measured Web site functionality and content, digital marketing efforts such as search, display and email, social media presence in the United

States and Europe as well as mobile marketing efforts.

The brands were separated into five rankings including genius, gifted, average, challenged and feeble.

Beauty and the beat

In addition to the Estée Lauder brands, LVMH's Benefit Cosmetics, L'Oreal-owned Lancôme, L'Occitane, and Burberry all made the top 20 cut.

Benefit was chosen largely in part to its newly-launched Web site which highlights the brand's personality while still providing seamless ecommerce.

Additionally, Lancôme was recognized for its Facebook applications and YouTube channel.

L'Occitane was rated highly thanks to its mobile commerce platform, as well as its iPhone and Android apps.

Meanwhile, Burberry's high digital IQ was due in large part to the overall brand's dominant social media power.

"The beauty category offers brands the opportunity to showcase a lot of unique content, such as how-to videos, interactive diagnosis or makeover tools and tips from dermatologists and makeup artists," Ms. Derricks said.

"However, the bulk of the digital IQ site score still results from getting the small stuff right, which is important for any brand in any industry," she said.

"Seamless navigation, functionality such as on-site search and social media integration and convenient customer service access are all key components of a brand's site score."

Estée Lauder owned the four highest-ranking brands which included MAC, Clinique, Estée Lauder and Bobbi Brown.

MAC came in at No. 1 largely thanks to its social shopping features, while Clinique was lauded for its in-store iPad use and Estée Lauder for its mobile commerce.

Bobbi Brown received fourth place largely in part to its Facebook and Twitter social media accounts which often host sample giveaways.



“Bobbi Brown [also] excelled in digital marketing due to applying best practices tactics in email marketing such as automatic welcome, viewable on mobile and shareable via social,” Ms. Derricks said.

“A large amount of buzz [was also] generated by its Pretty Powerful campaign, a contest that asks participants to share their secrets to confidence and beauty,” she said.

Extreme make over

Despite the success of many luxury cosmetics, many upscale beauty lines were also found at the bottom of the list.

Estée Lauder-owned La Mer came in 50 out 55, largely in part to the deletion of its U.S. Facebook account last summer.

Although Burberry’s large fashion following increased its beauty digital IQ, the same did not hold true for Dolce & Gabbana make-up, which is owned by Procter & Gamble.

Dolce & Gabbana’s Web site was described as brochure-like and seemed to have undergo little innovation in the last year.



Also labeled as “slow to innovate” was Laura Mercier, which was placed in the challenged category.

LVMH’s Make Up Forever brand was also in the challenged category due to its lack of an

ecommerce site. Though, its interactive microsite was acknowledged.

“I think it comes down to prioritizing efforts under a cohesive digital strategy,” Ms. Derricks said.

“Feeble and challenged brands don't necessarily need to do more – they need to first determine their objectives and then decide how to meet them by strategically allocating digital investments,” she said.

“Abandoned Twitter handles and microsites do not help a brand's Digital IQ.”

Final Take

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