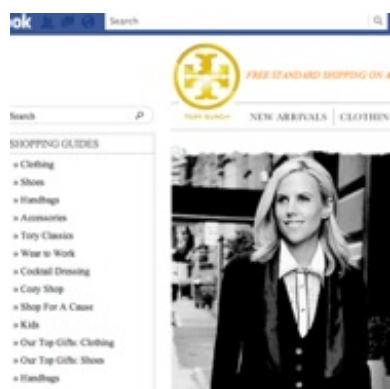


INTERNET

## Social shopping is the future of ecommerce: Tory Burch

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By KAYLA HUTZLER

NEW YORK – As social shopping and Facebook commerce begin to take off, luxury brands need to realize that social media is an outlet that can be leveraged to help marketers learn about their fans and reward them, according to fashion designer Tory Burch at Women's Wear Daily's CEO Summit 2011.



Social media is at the forefront of Tory Burch's marketing and promotional efforts, but the key to social success is to make it appear as non-promotional as possible. When used correctly, social media can create a two-way community with a brand's fanbase that is equally beneficial for the customers and the brand.

"This is the age of social media," said Tory Burch, CEO/chief creative officer of Tory Burch, New York. "We at Tory Burch have benefited from growing up in it.

"Our vision was to create a luxury brand that was accessible and socially-responsible," she said. "I'm so grateful for what we have achieved so far and social media has been critical to that growth.

"It's how we communicate with our customer and she in turn helps our brand."

**Tory Burch's** presentation at the Women's Wear Daily Apparel and Retail CEO summit was

broadcast live on WWD's Facebook page and took questions from fans around the world through the social platform.

### Making the case

The Tory Burch label launched around the same time as Facebook and ecommerce and, therefore, has pioneered digital innovation in the digital fashion world.

The brand launched its ecommerce store simultaneously with the opening of its first bricks-and-mortar store on Elizabeth Street in New York.



*John Aquino/Women's Wear Daily*

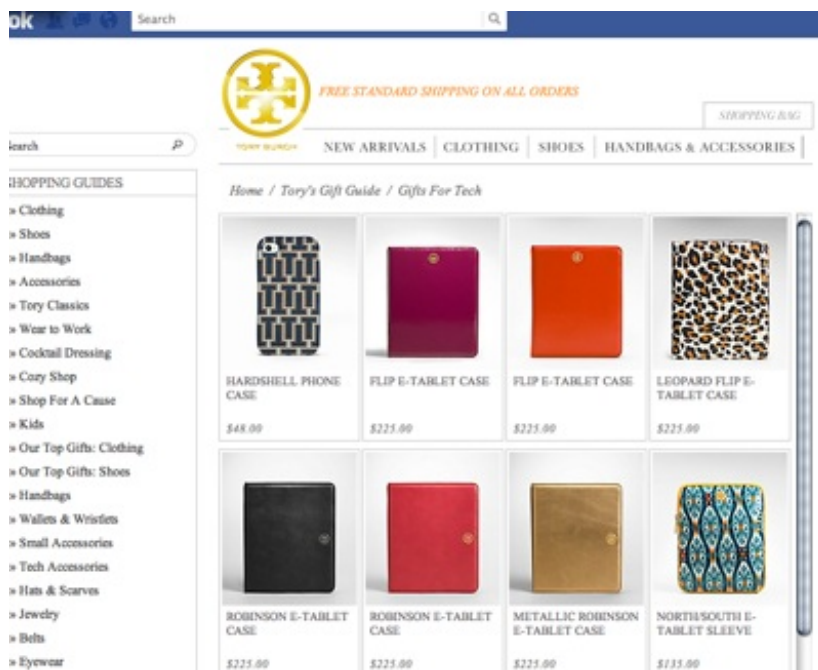
In 2008, Tory Burch launched its **Facebook** account and has since created a community of 260,553 fans. The label recently developed into a retail store with the brand's use of Facebook commerce.

The success of the Facebook-exclusive products really proved the power of the social commerce platform, according to Ms. Burch.

The Tory Burch Facebook shop was ultimately a way to give back and reward the brand loyalists, she said.

The Facebook shop features free shipping and sells items from all categories such as shoes, tech accessories and kids items.

Currently, the social shop highlights various gift guides created by the Tory Burch label, such as gifts for tech, gifts that give back, top-selling gifts and Tory's Holiday 2011 Gift Guide.



“We believe social shopping is the future of ecommerce and by embracing it early on we have time to test and tweak it,” Ms. Burch said.

### Knocking socks off

While Tory Burch’s Facebook is a joint effort of all the brand’s employees from social media to marketing to public relations, the brand’s Twitter account is very much controlled by Ms. Burch herself.

Tory Burch found through personal experience that an authentic voice on Twitter will connect with consumers better than a promotional voice.

Therefore, the designer does most of her own tweeting for the branded @ToryBurch account.

Consumers want to know what the brand finds interesting, what it is talking about at the moment and what is going on behind-the-scenes.



*Tory Burch at the WWD Summit*

Through non-promotional posts, the brand creates a conversation with consumers that helps Tory Burch learn what causes its consumer cares about, what types of products they

are looking for and what trends they are interested in.

For example, after a blog post from the designer about the tsunami in Japan last year, one fan said that the accompanying graphic design should be printed on a T-shirt. After that, another commented that the T-shirt funds should benefit a relief foundation.

A few days later, the branded Tory Burch Japan relief T-shirt was available online and in flagship stores globally. Tory Burch has since sold 16,000 shirts worldwide, the profits of which benefitting the victims from the natural disasters in Japan.

Meanwhile, Ms. Burch once tweeted from the John F. Kennedy airport in New York that she felt dirty after walking through airport security barefoot, and maybe she should design travel socks.

After an immensely positive response, the designer did just that and the brand now sells travel socks on its Web site at <http://www.toryburch.com>.

While social media continues to evolve and new markets have their own social platforms, a brand must research and think about what platforms on which it should be present.

A luxury brand should not be everywhere and needs to be wary of spreading itself too thin, according to Ms. Burch.

Indeed, Tory Burch is thinking about how it can use Google+ and Instagram in a way that is unique and different from its already-existing social media platforms.

“We are curious about new technology, innovation and new social sites,” Ms. Burch said.

“We want to understand our customers and understand what she is using,” she said. “We don’t just do something for the sake of doing it.”

Ms. Burch's entire presentation can be found on the Women's Wear Daily Web site and Facebook page. Please click [here](#) to view it.

Final Take

*Kayla Hutzler, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York*

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