

INTERNET

Zegna nabs early shoppers with Thanksgiving incentive email campaign

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By RACHEL LAMB

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Luxury Daily

Italian label Ermenegildo Zegna targeted consumers with an email offering free shipping on its Autumn/Winter 2011 collection as a Thanksgiving gift and was one of the few retailers to offer a turkey day-themed promotion.

Free shipping is far and away one of the most valuable incentives to offer luxury buyers, especially since they are paying high price points for goods and believe that they deserve a break, even if it is only a few dollars. Zegna likely made a lasting impression in consumers' minds in the early shopping days before the December holidays.

"Every single time you make contact [through email], you need to give them something of value," said Randy Dean, East Lansing, MI-based email consultant and trainer. "If you're going to promote something, it has to be something of value so that the audience builds affinity and wants to stay close to you."

"The holidays are absolutely one of the best reasons to make contact, especially to give thanks to people who have supported you throughout the year and increase your sales at the end," he said. "Obviously, the end goal is sales and profits, but it's not about short-term

sales and profits but long-term affinity and loyalty.”

Mr. Dean is not affiliated with Zegna, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

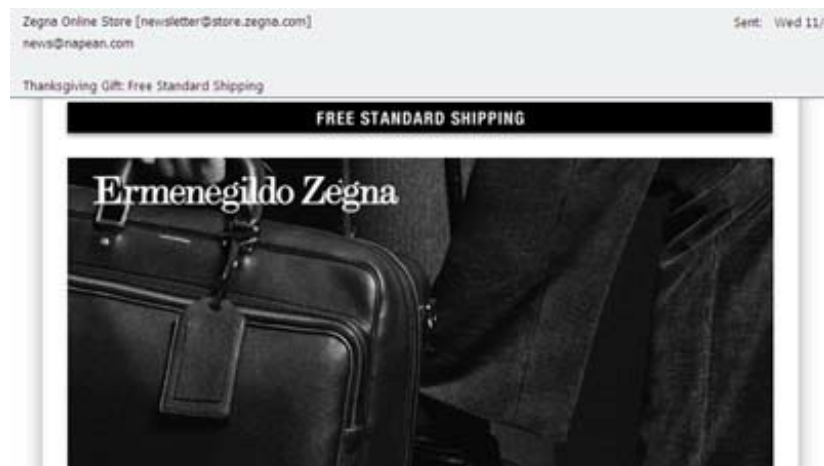
Zegna declined to directly comment for this article.

Cornucopious offerings

Zegna sent an email blast earlier this week promoting a “Thanksgiving gift” of free shipping to its U.S. loyalists.

The brand often uses email as a way to keep in touch with its digital audience and tends to reveal certain promotions exclusively to its subscribers via newsletter and then on social media networks, per Zegna.

The image on the email displays a male's pants, shoes and a briefcase. In addition to the image that can be clicked-through, the Zegna email provides links to its social media pages and the Zegna mobile application.



Email from Zegna

When consumers click through the email, they are brought to the Autumn/Winter 2011 collection on the Zegna Web site at <http://www.zegna.com>.

The landing page reminds consumers of free standard shipping at the top of the screen and displays the streaming runway show of the collection further down.

Clicking on the video takes consumers to product images of the collection where they can shop from the site.

Zegna does not display the free shipping promotion on its Web site unless users are on the Autumn/Winter collection page, so newsletter subscribers definitely get the advantage of being led directly there through the email.



The Zegna Autumn/Winter 2011 collection

The email adds exclusivity to the brand image and shows how much it cares about different cultures and local markets through creating adhoc campaigns and benefits for different customer segments, according to Zegna.

E-male

Free shipping and handling is one of the most savvy ways to connect with consumers. Even though this is a common practice during the holiday season, Zegna is one of the only luxury brands to offer a Thanksgiving Day incentive.

“Among the biggest irritations for luxury shoppers online are shipping and handling fees,” said Pam Danziger, president of [Unity Marketing](#), Stephens, PA. “Essentially, online shoppers are penalized for shopping.

“It is not just a special holiday treat, but a regular way of doing business,” she said. “They will have to be as competitive as necessary.”

For example, department store chain Nordstrom bolstered its reputation for customer service and brand loyalty by dropping its shipping fees in favor of standard free shipping and returns in the United States earlier this year ([see story](#)).

Indeed, a recent study by the Luxury Institute demonstrated that one of the most valuable CRM builders is free shipping ([see story](#)).

The only fly in the promotion ointment is if Zegna pushes it with its email subscribers.

Too many emails can result in a jaded and unresponsive email database, according to Mr. Dean.

“People are getting bombarded by email promotions all the time,” Mr. Dean said. “If you contact with promotions too often, the people on the list will eventually become less responsive.

“If you do make contacts via email, do a mix of promotional material and value-based content, because the value-based content causes greater affinity, and consumers will likely see you as a valuable resource to stay connected to,” he said.

Final Take

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