

MOBILE

## Bal Harbour Shops provides portable location-based reference for luxury shoppers

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By KAYLA HUTZLER

Luxury Miami shopping center Bal Harbour Shops is looking to engage consumers in between shopping sprees with a content- and video-heavy iPad and iPhone application.

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The app features news on fashion events and shop openings in the Miami area as well as global news surrounding the brands found in the luxury mall. Although, the Bal Harbour Shops is home to luxury stores including Chanel, Audemars Piguet, David Yurman, Dolce & Gabbana, Prada and Lanvin, the app does not offer any shopping abilities.

“The only advantage to having the Bal Harbour Shopping app on your iPhone or iPad is strictly for reference usage,” said Doo Kim, marketing and advertising executive at [Appitalism](#), New York.

“The app does provide the fashion guru with a wide variety of catalogs including recent fashion news, exclusive videos, limited edition and restaurants,” she said. “However, it lacks the integrity and incentive a shopping app should provide to the customer.”

Facing the facts

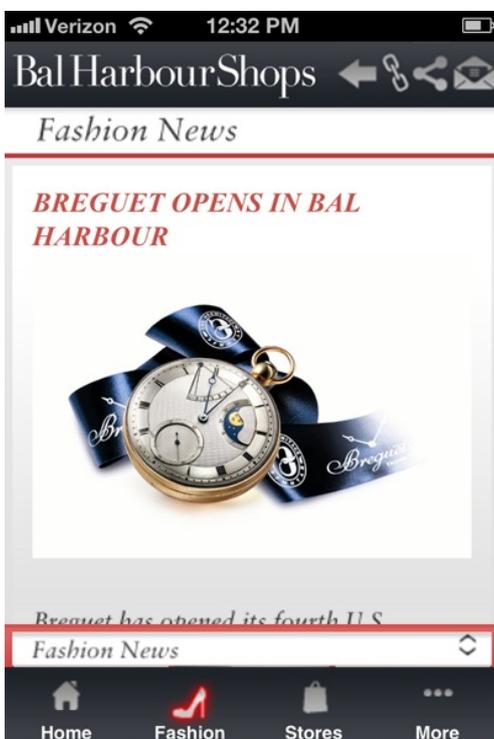
The Bal Harbour Shops app homepage is divided into four horizontal sections including

fashion news, exclusive videos, limited-edition and restaurants.

Each horizontal section features small icons and titles that can be scrolled through and tapped on to access a full-length article.



For example, the fashion news section currently features article about holiday shopping, watchmaker Breguet opening in the mall and designer Joseph Altuzarra winning a Council of Fashion Designers of America award.



Additionally, the limited-editions section features one-of-a-kind pieces from brands such as Bulgari, Tiffany & Co. and Harry Winston that are currently being sold in the brands' Bal Harbour locations.

The app does not feature any commerce options, though a phone number for the branded

location is provided.

The restaurant section features a small picture and description of the various restaurants and cafés located in the mall with a contact number.

A bottom navigation pane can be found on every page where consumers can choose from the options home, fashion, stores or more.

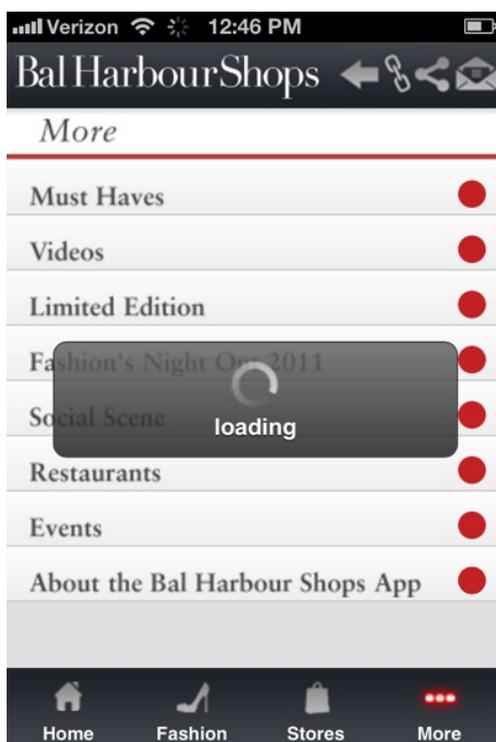
The "more" tab includes sections on the local social scene, upcoming events and general information about the Bal Harbour Shops.

Still loading

The Bal Harbour Shops app contains a lot of large, high-resolution images that make it appealing to the eye. However, this causes it to download slowly.

With no commerce abilities, the app's main use will likely be to find a store's contact information or the mall's event calendar.

However, the long loading time when consumers try to move from page to page could be frustrating and cause shoppers to look up the phone number elsewhere.



With the limited number of section options, the app can also be hard to navigate.

“From a design and functionality standpoint, the app is not utilized to its greatest potential,” Ms. Kim said.

“It’s a bit cluttered and tedious, and it takes a few tries to navigate the app successfully and the process time is slow to load,” she said. “Also, the tabs are confusing and do not offer enough information.”

Bal Harbour shops is promoting the app through a sliding banner advertisement along the bottom of its Web site at <http://www.balharbourshops.com>.

The banner ad has consumers fill in the email account that is associated with their mobile device and their name.

The company then sends an email link to consumers, which can be opened from the mobile device to prompt the app download.

Surprisingly, the app cannot be found when searched in Apple's App Store, which could add to frustration when consumers try to find it quickly.

Overall, Bal Harbour Shops may want to consider adding a few functions before pushing the app further.

“To build a loyal customer base for the app, Bal Harbour must consider adding more components to the application such as GPS store locations, creating your own unique shopping cart or even something so simple like offering us the full collection that we can find in store,” Ms. Kim said.

Final Take

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