

MULTICHANNEL

Bergdorf Goodman is 2011 Luxury Retailer of the Year

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By RACHEL LAMB

New York-based department store Bergdorf Goodman is 2011 Luxury Retailer, the most prestigious award in luxury marketing for a retailer.

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Luxury Daily

The Neiman Marcus-owned retailer beat out first runner's-up Bloomingdale's and second runner's-up Net-A-Porter. The arms race for Luxury Retailer of the Year was a fierce one, and the combination of humor, voice, elegance and brand awareness propelled these retailers to the top.

"There's one word to describe all of Bergdorf Goodman's retailer marketing efforts this year: class," said Mickey Alam Khan, editor in chief of Luxury Daily, New York. "

"Whichever marketing and retail vehicle Bergdorf uses, it positions itself with sophistication and class," he said. "A luxury retailer must reach out to customers without tarnishing its marquee or the brands it sells, and Bergdorf gets that."

The Luxury Retailer of the Year award was decided based on luxury retail marketing efforts with impeccable strategy, tactics, creative, execution and results. All candidates selected by the Luxury Daily editorial team had to have appeared in Luxury Daily coverage this year.

New York state of mind

Bergdorf Goodman raised the bar in all channels, but none more so than digital.

The retailer's social media marketing is a seamless experience that effectively transfers the elegance and luxury of an in-store experience to an online platform.

Bergdorf often posts on its Facebook and Twitter accounts to engage with followers.



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Bergdorf on Twitter

The retailer asks consumers for their weekend plans and fashion tips in addition to posting store goings-on, branded products, sales and New York-themed lifestyle tips.

Bergdorf recently started using its Facebook account to post a monthly "What I'm wearing today" feature that tracks five consecutive outfits of an employee. Consumers can comment on the images and mostly are directed to the Bergdorf Web site where they can buy the items themselves.

The branded Twitter feed also hosts makeup tutorials and question-and-answer sessions with celebrities and style experts. All a consumers has to do to participate is tweet @Bergdorfs or include a pre-provided hashtag.

Bergdorf was one of the pioneers when using Instagram, a photography application that it uses to filter images and give them different backgrounds and colors.



Bergdorf using Instagram

These images are posted on Bergdorf's Facebook page and its Twitter feed. Also, consumers can follow the Bergdorf Instagram account by downloading the app.

Bergdorf also launched its Shoes About Town app where consumers can send pictures of their shoes to the brand. The images were put on a large map of New York so that consumers can see the shoes all over New York's Manhattan.

The retailer used another location-based mobile effort by taking out a banner ad in the popular social word game, "Words with Friends."

Bergdorf alerted consumers to an in-store event to meet shoe designer Nancy Gonzales and connected the banner ad to Facebook so that consumers could RSVP.

Luxury experience

Bergdorf attempted to drive in-store traffic in a number of ways this year.

For example, the reason behind the Shoes About Town app was to build hype, excitement and traffic around the retailer's new shoe salon.

Another way that Bergdorf promoted the shoe salon was to send out a catalog that detailed the shoes located in the store.

Along those lines, Bergdorf routinely sent out season and pre-season catalogs to build hype for the upcoming collections.

The retailer included QR codes and encouraged consumers to go online, to the brand's blog 5th/58th and to go in-store to check out the new collections.

All these efforts to get consumers in-store was likely a good move: Bergdorf was continually recognized for its outstanding customer service this past year.

In quite a few studies, including a Secret Shopper test conducted by the Luxury Institute, Bergdorf was continually lauded for its excellent customer experience and service, especially in-store but across all channels.

Since customer service is the cornerstone of the luxury industry, this is quite a compliment to Bergdorf.

Along with service goes experience. Bergdorf frequently hosts in-store events for men and women to drive in-store traffic and possibly increase transactions.

The retailer often refreshes the store experience by adding and rearranging branded boutiques.

For example, Bergdorf built Chanel's largest shop-in-shop this year that was modeled after Coco Chanel's Parisian apartment.



Bergdorf's eveningwear boutique

Furthermore, the brand is wooing ladies looking to buy something special for gala season with its new eveningwear boutique.

The retailer is also known for its holiday windows. The spectacle, which is a year-round process to create and make, is one of the most trafficked retailer windows in New York.

Exciting and unexpected themes, creatures and ideas are what drive customers to Bergdorf's windows during a time when the streets of New York are filled with shoppers.

Bergdorf certainly uses a cross-channel approach to drive consumers in-store to where the experience is truly shown, but it still does its best in social media, out of home, mobile, print, direct mail and Web site marketing to make that same experience seamless no matter the location of the customer.

First runner's-up: Bloomingdale's

New York-based department store Bloomingdale's received first runner's-up for Luxury Retailer of the Year.

What pushed Bloomingdale's to the front of the pack was its unexpected use of technology and mobile in catalogs, out-of-home ads and in-store experiences.



Bloomingdale's taxi

Bloomingdale's frequently sends out mailers and catalogs to consumers to try to increase in-store sales.

The brand does this through in-store exclusives by way of QR codes and coupons.

Combining mobile and mailers may increase sales on a number of channels, including in-store, mobile or online.

Bloomingdale's often incorporates mobile calls-to-action in its out-of-home ads.

For example, to spice up its spring collection campaign, Bloomingdale's included a QR code and a short code on a telephone booth ad so that passers-by could opt-in to text messages or scan the code and go right to the mobile site.



SMS from Bloomingdale's after a QR code scan

On the site, users could watch a campaign video and buy the featured products.

Bloomingdale's used the same idea by placing the QR codes and SMS calls-to-action in one of its mailers.

Say cheese

The retailer is also using mobile to bring consumers in-store.

As NBC prepared for its fall lineup, Bloomingdale's paired with Goldrun to develop an augmented reality experience where consumers could take pictures with stars in the department store.

Consumers simply had to download the app and could have their pictures taken standing next to stars from shows such as "The Playboy Club," "Whitney," "Free Agents," "Prime Suspect" and "Up All Night."



Consumers posing with NBC stars in Bloomingdale's

All of this mobile activity was likely driving consumers to the mobile commerce site, which is probably why Bloomingdale's updated its optimized site to smooth out the shopping process.

Consumers now have an easier time browsing and buying luxury products via the Bloomingdale's site.

Another marketing technique that allowed Bloomingdale's to stand out above the others was that it played a huge role in corporate social responsibility this year.

The retailer is lauded for this effort because of its multichannel course of action.

Bloomingdale's took its Ready, Set, Pink! campaign to another level with a variety of in-store events, a themed catalog, discounts and limited-edition products.

This situation was win-win, since Bloomingdale's likely built brand loyalists who feel connected to the fight against breast cancer, and consumers' money was donated in part to the Breast Cancer Research Fund.

Second runner's-up: Net-A-Porter

Net-A-Porter not only revolutionized ecommerce in the luxury world, but knows how to market itself so that it is still relevant long after high-end fashion brands have their own shoppable Web sites.

Normally, the retailer spread word of its new collection via its ecommerce sites, social media and emails. But this year, Net-A-Porter launched its first print campaign.



The spreads ran in luxury-focused magazines in the United States, Australia, Germany, the Middle East, Hong Kong, Singapore and Canada.

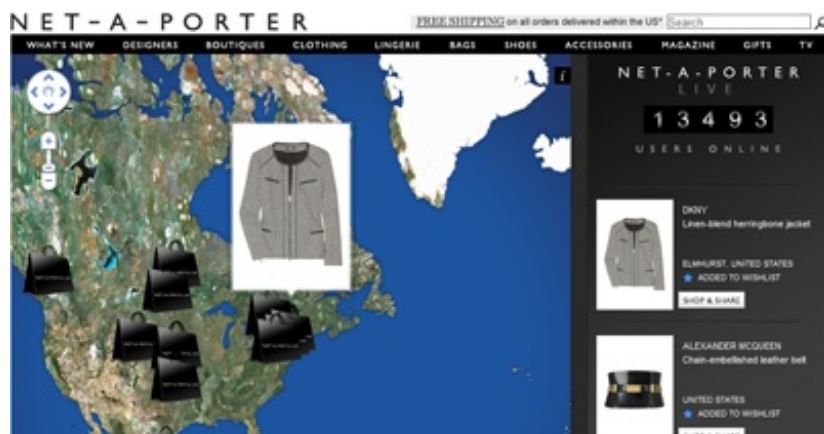
Net-A-Porter killed two birds with one stone by incorporating Aurasma technology into the ad campaign.

Consumers could hold their iPhone or iPad onto which they downloaded the Aurasma app, and the ads come to life with a video that features clips or interviews taken with the models at the campaign shoot.

Not just window shopping

Indeed, Net-A-Porter continued to bolster its digital presence with the addition of an interactive global map that highlights consumer purchases in real-time.

The microsite is a large globe on which shopping bags pop up where a customer is purchasing a product or adding an item to her shopping bag.



The live, interactive Net-A-Porter globe

Net-A-Porter hoped to build a global community using the same technology that it uses in its London offices.

The retailer is now building brand awareness by becoming the only one to offer the upcoming Karl by Karl Lagerfeld line.

Net-A-Porter is marketing this new collection with a mobile app that allows users to play games, edit pictures to make them look like the designer and enter for a chance to win credit to the retailer.

Print was not the only way that the online-only brand broke out of its shell this year.

During Fashion's Night Out in London and New York, Net-A-Porter used pop-up digital displays where consumers could use a mobile app to scan items, learn more about them and buy them through the phone.

Final Take

Rachel Lamb, associate reporter on Luxury Daily, New York

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