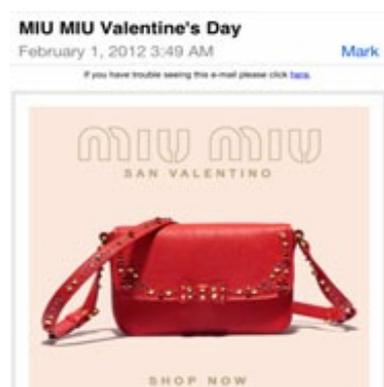


MOBILE

Mobile-optimizing St. Valentine's Day emails crucial to spontaneous transactions

February 2, 2012



By RACHEL LAMB

Since many luxury brands are sending emails with gift ideas and promotions to their most loyal customers, it only makes sense that marketers should optimize the messages for mobile to entice impulse buys this St. Valentine's Day.

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Brands whose Valentine's Day campaigns are centered around online transactions need to ensure that the messages their customers receive are timely and can be viewed on almost any device. Messages sent to consumers checking email on their smartphone on-the-go or tablet users lounging on the couch have a better click-through rate and, along with that, mobile commerce or ecommerce transactions.

"Holidays, especially Valentine's Day, present a great opportunity for luxury brands to engage with loyal and new customers by sending spur-of-the-moment, day-of and weeks prior to the holiday offers and promotions personalized to the consumer," said Holly Krenek, marketing manager at Digby, Austin, TX.

"Valentine's Day is one of the most targeted, sales-driven holidays for luxury brands," she said. "If brands optimize emails and push notifications through their own rich app with

special offers or promotions for their consumers, it makes the shopping experience that much more enticing, driving sales and customer loyalty.”

Shot across cupid's bow

Email is an opt-in channel, so it is likely that consumers who subscribe to a newsletter are brand loyalists and are likely to buy products from that retailer.

“Smartphone optimization and tablet optimization are very important to luxury brands as consumers research, plan and purchase across multiple devices,” said Deb Hall, managing director at web2mobile, Toronto. “Email is still one of the most popular applications on all devices, so the better email marketing experience across devices will result in more conversion.

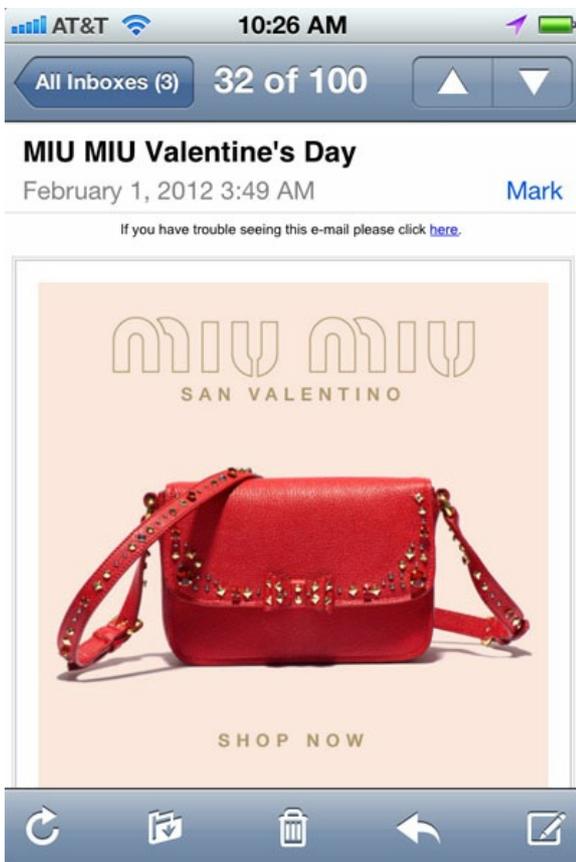
“Email leads users at the top of the purchase funnel and as consumers move through the purchase cycle, mobile plays an important part in the purchase process,” she said.

Site optimization post-email is important because not only does it make the experience more convenient, but there is also a sense of security entering personal credit card information on an optimized site.

Indeed, consumers who click through an email into a non-optimized site may exit the site or go to a competitor whose site can be better seen through mobile devices.

For example, 52 percent of adult mobile consumers employ their devices while in a store to get help with purchasing decisions, according to findings from a study by Pew American & Internet Life Project.

On the other hand, some brands have gotten the hang of email marketing. One retailer that uses mobile-optimization to their advantage is Miu Miu.

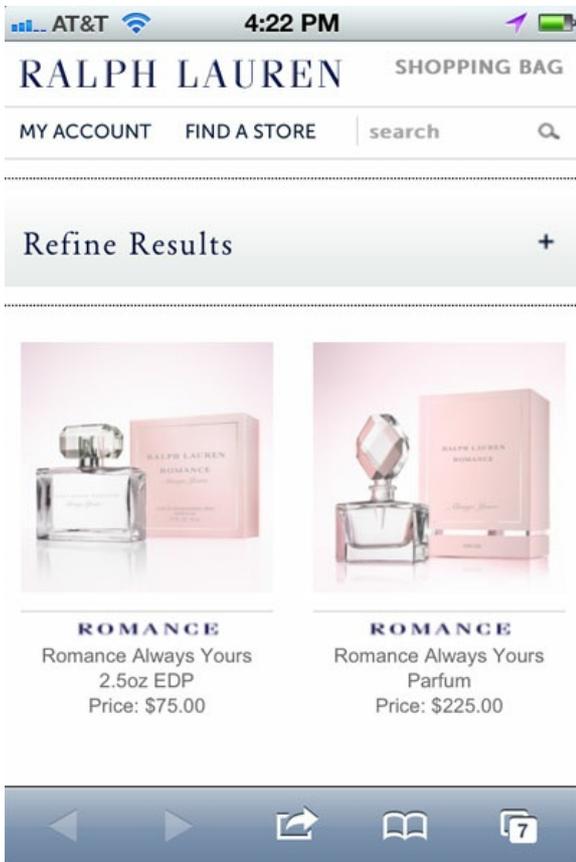


Miu Miu's Valentine's Day email

The brand uses huge, colorful images in the middle of its emails. This serves to not only make sure that the image is clear on a smaller mobile screen, but puts the product as the focus as the email.

Additionally, Ralph Lauren's Valentine's email is bright, colorful and consistent with the brand's Web site.

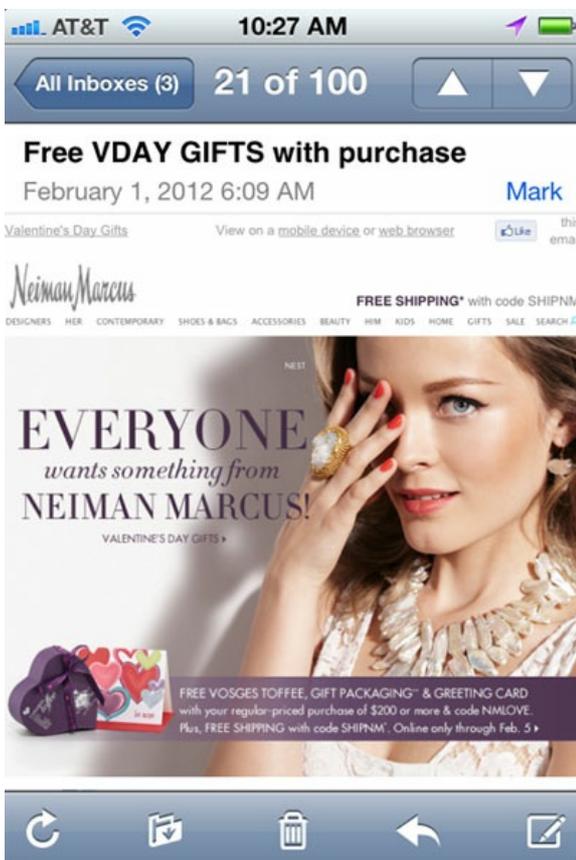
Clicking through the email brings consumers to a mobile-optimized page where they can fully see Valentine's Day gifts with a chance to buy.



Ralph Lauren's optimized site

Retail in the details

One retailer that will likely benefit from optimization is department store chain Neiman Marcus.



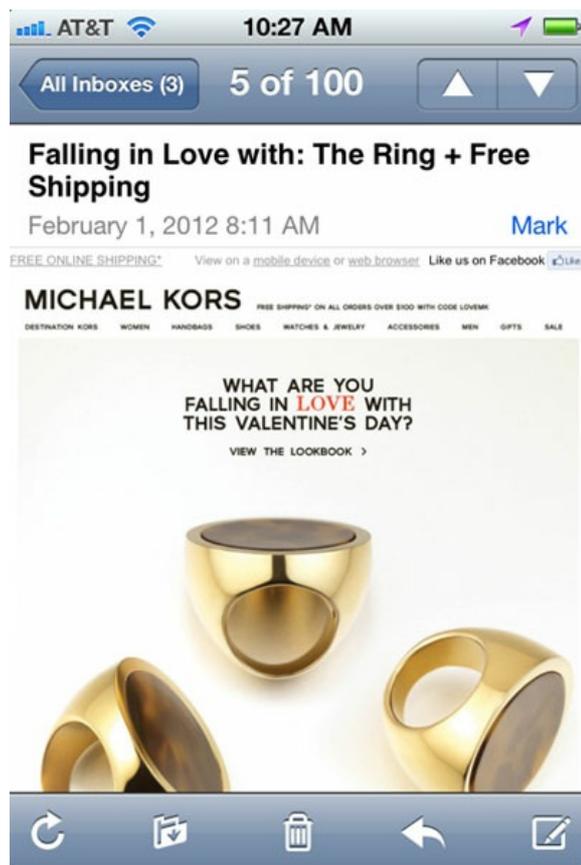
Valentine's Day email from Neiman Marcus

The images are clear and large in the email, but when a consumer clicks-through the email, she is not brought to the retailer's optimized site.

This could frustrate consumers who now need to pinch-and-zoom to see or buy any products.

Meanwhile, email is a huge part of the Michael Kors #FallingInLoveWith Valentine's Day campaign.

However, the script on the email is quite small and clicking through the email brings consumers to a tiny site where ecommerce could be a burden.



Michael Kors email

"Many on-the-go consumers today have their smartphones in-hand, check their emails while out and about and will be more willing to shop in-store or online if they are receiving personalized offers from their favorite luxury brands via a mobile-optimized email," Digby's Ms. Krennek said.

"It's crucial for communication purposes to make sure messaging is mobile-optimized so the consumer can read the message clearly and enjoy the promotional experiences from the brand," she said.

"It is also critical to have any links in the email be deep-linked to the retailer's mobile-optimized Web site so that same great search, browse and buying experience is maintained throughout the entire buying experience."

Final Take

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