

MULTICHANNEL

Harrods employs consistent digital efforts to market wedding e-boutique

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By TRICIA CARR

Harrods, Four Seasons Hotels and Estée Lauder are using wedding-themed email and online campaigns to market products and services and experts agree that wedding-related marketing efforts can help a luxury brand reach a large audience made of affluent and aspirational consumers.

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Luxury Daily

London-based department store Harrods, in particular, is in the midst of an extensive digital campaign to promote its online boutique with a few affluent brands following in its footsteps. This is what Harrods knows: Luxury brands should start digital campaigns in early spring to capitalize on brides during this crucial wedding decision-making time.

“The beauty of weddings is that they are the one event in a person’s life where they can justify spending a lot of money and splurging on luxury goods,” said Christine Kirk, CEO of [Social Muse Communications](#), Los Angeles. “Luxury brands provide that element of exclusivity, romance and indulgence, which is exactly what couples are trying to capture on their special day.

“Weddings are about so much more than a one-day event,” she said. “There are bridal showers, bachelorette and bachelor parties, rehearsal dinners, and restaurants are needed as venues for these events, hotels for bachelorette party getaways, fashion brands

and accessories for the showers and rehearsal dinners.

“Brides look for inspiration everywhere and in this day and age, a brand does not need to be a wedding planning company or florist to capitalize on marketing to brides.”

Save the date

Wedding season runs March through September with June through August being the most popular months of the year to get married, per Ms. Kirk.

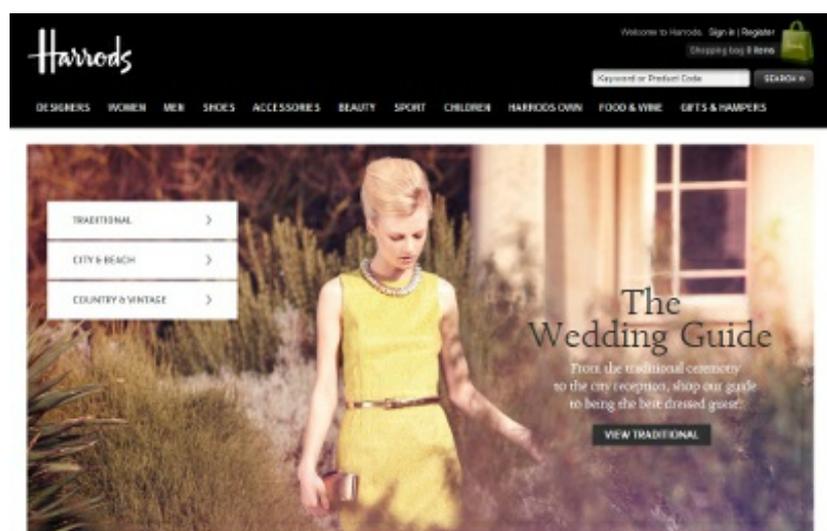
Ms. Kirk suggests using digital means and involving wedding influencers, bridal blogs and photo-sharing sites such as Pinterest to strengthen a campaign.

For a non-bridal brand that is employing wedding-themed marketing, it is always important to stay true to the brand and think carefully about what service or product is being offered. Luxury brands should proceed by engaging strategically.

For its part, Harrods is using this strategy to strengthen its e-boutique marketing campaign.

The retailer is pushing multiple sections of its e-boutique from opening slides on its Web site.

In addition, Harrods is spreading the word about its e-boutique via its [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) accounts and an email campaign.



Harrods' wedding e-boutique

Harrods began the first of a series of emails on April 5 with the subject line “Wedded bliss: how to be the best dressed bridal party” that linked to its wedding e-boutique.

The retailer also alluded to the series of wedding-themed emails that would follow.

This campaign seems to be marketing to anyone involved in a wedding by appealing to people other than the bride and groom.

Harrods sent a second email to market its e-boutique on April 7 with the subject line “Got wedding gift anxiety? Harrods is here to help” that focused on high-end wedding gifts such as silver tableware.

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Harrods' wedding gift guide email

Harrods sent its third wedding-themed email with the subject line “Want to be the best dressed guest this summer wedding season?” on April 13. This email presented color-coordinated outfit ideas.

Each email linked to the online Wedding Guide that leads into the retailer’s e-boutique. The guide is split into sections that appeal to different consumer tastes.

These emails most likely had consistent open rates due to the fact that they had something for everyone, per Denise Keller, chief operating officer of **Benchmark Email**, Los Alamitos, CA.

The email series is a good move by Harrods due to the fact that the guide provides consistent content for all types of people from the groom to the father of the bride.

A wedding email campaign should be highly-personalized. This can be done by collecting wedding-related information from subscribers upon email signup.

Ms. Keller suggests leaving space for a woman to specify that she will be a bride when registering for emails.

“Based on this email campaign, Harrods is showing it understands that if you offer good content without a hard sell, subscribers are more likely to buy from you,” Ms. Keller said.

“With a hard sell, the pressure is on and many readers push back by not buying anything,” she said. “With something like a wedding guide, which merely promises to give tips and advice to wedding parties, readers are far more likely to go in, read the guide at their leisure and make purchases of items referenced in the guide.”

Understanding a brand's customers and their preferences and communicating appropriately with each of those audiences is key when presenting a wedding-themed email campaign to luxury consumers.

"As sensitivity to marketing noise increases, the importance of sending relevant and well-timed marketing becomes even more critical," said Jennifer Kahn, marketing communications manager at [Emailvision](#), London.

"As a woman plans her wedding, sending her all of the information she needs to look good and feel good on her big day is something, as a customer, she will look forward to receiving," she said. "When she sees these relevant and meaningful emails come to her inbox or mobile device, chances are she will stop and take a read."

'Tis the season

Meanwhile, The Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts will soon be launching a digital campaign targeting brides.

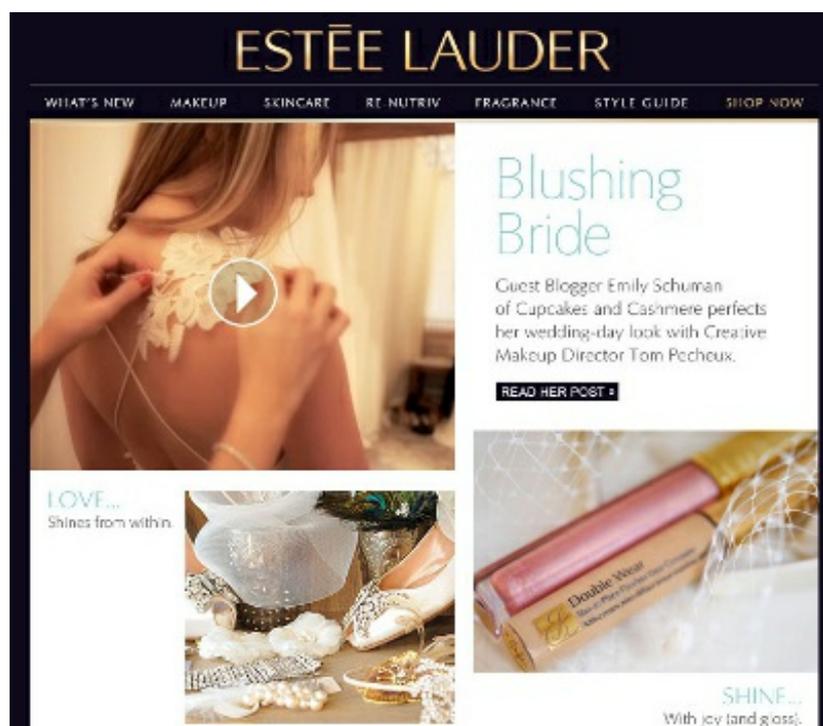
The campaign will feature actual Four Seasons brides, per the brand.

Additionally, luxury beauty brand Estée Lauder is leveraging its makeup line via email video.

The email titled, "Emily's Blushing Bride look with Tom Pecheux," linked to an online video that shows popular blog owner Emily Schuman of Cupcakes and Cashmere.

The blogger is getting married soon and the video shows the technique of her makeup look done by the brand's makeup creative director Tom Pecheux.

Estée Lauder shared the video via a guest blog post by Ms. Schuman on its Web site that is linked from a main slide on its homepage. The brand also shared the video on its [Facebook page](#).



The image shows a screenshot of the Estée Lauder website homepage. At the top, the brand name "ESTÉE LAUDER" is displayed in gold. Below it is a navigation bar with links for "WHAT'S NEW", "MAKEUP", "SKINCARE", "RE-NUTRIV", "FRAGRANCE", "STYLE GUIDE", and "SHOP NOW". The main content area features a large video player on the left with a play button, showing a woman's back being prepared for a wedding. To the right of the video, the text reads "Blushing Bride" in a light blue font, followed by a short bio of guest blogger Emily Schuman and a "READ HER POST" button. Below the video, there are two smaller product images: one for "LOVE... Shines from within" featuring a white lace veil and jewelry, and another for "SHINE... With joy (and glass)" featuring a Double Wear foundation tube.

Estée Lauder Blushing Bride email

Tapping into the consumer base that attends weddings is imperative to reach the \$40 billion market that is evolving rapidly, per Molly Leis, principal of **MRL Communications**, New York.

Incorporating a wedding strategy into a marketing plan may help luxury brands connect to their consumer in new ways.

If brands use an authentic voice that their consumers can relate to such as appealing to wedding-related interests of their subscribers, they will feel that that the brand understands them and a relationship of deeper trust and loyalty will begin to build.

“Luxury brands leverage digital marketing as a creative portal to engage consumers through romantic storytelling to drive ecommerce,” Ms. Leis said. “If consumers are shopping online, then digital marketing is the way to reach them.”

Brands should use this same strategy in a wedding campaign.

Wedding-related marketing strategies will drive repeat business with current consumers.

“Weddings involve multiple aspirational and emotional purchases for the bride and her guests,” Ms. Leis said. “Brands can leverage weddings to connect to their consumers on a much more personal level.”

Final Take

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