

MULTICHANNEL

Crystal Cruises uses storytelling for multichannel rebranding effort

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By TRICIA CARR

Crystal Cruises is looking to rebrand itself through a new multichannel campaign called Begin a New Story that focuses on consumer storytelling.



The campaign will reach affluent travelers with multichannel efforts such as print advertisements with digital watermark technology that bring consumers mobile-optimized content and a branded storytelling smartphone application that will be released next month. The all-encompassing marketing efforts will focus on the notion of the travel journal and encourage consumers to share memories from past cruises.

"The platform that we have chosen of the journal really allows us to use the voice of our current passenger who is experiencing Crystal Cruises today," said Nitsa Lewis, vice president of marketing at [Crystal Cruises](#), Los Angeles.

"My favorite line in our campaign is 'there are as many beautiful stories as there are drops in the ocean. What will yours become?'" she said. "We become the host to the stories people create on these vacations with every photo, every moment and every experience shared, whether it is on the ship or ashore."

Story time

The Begin a New Story campaign will focus on cruise destinations and once-in-a-lifetime experiences, rather than focusing on the amenities of the ship.

Begin a New Story will challenge travelers to start their own journal of memories on their own Crystal Cruise itinerary.

The campaign will use multiple channels including print ads with digital watermark technology, brochures, online banner ads, email, video and a smartphone app.

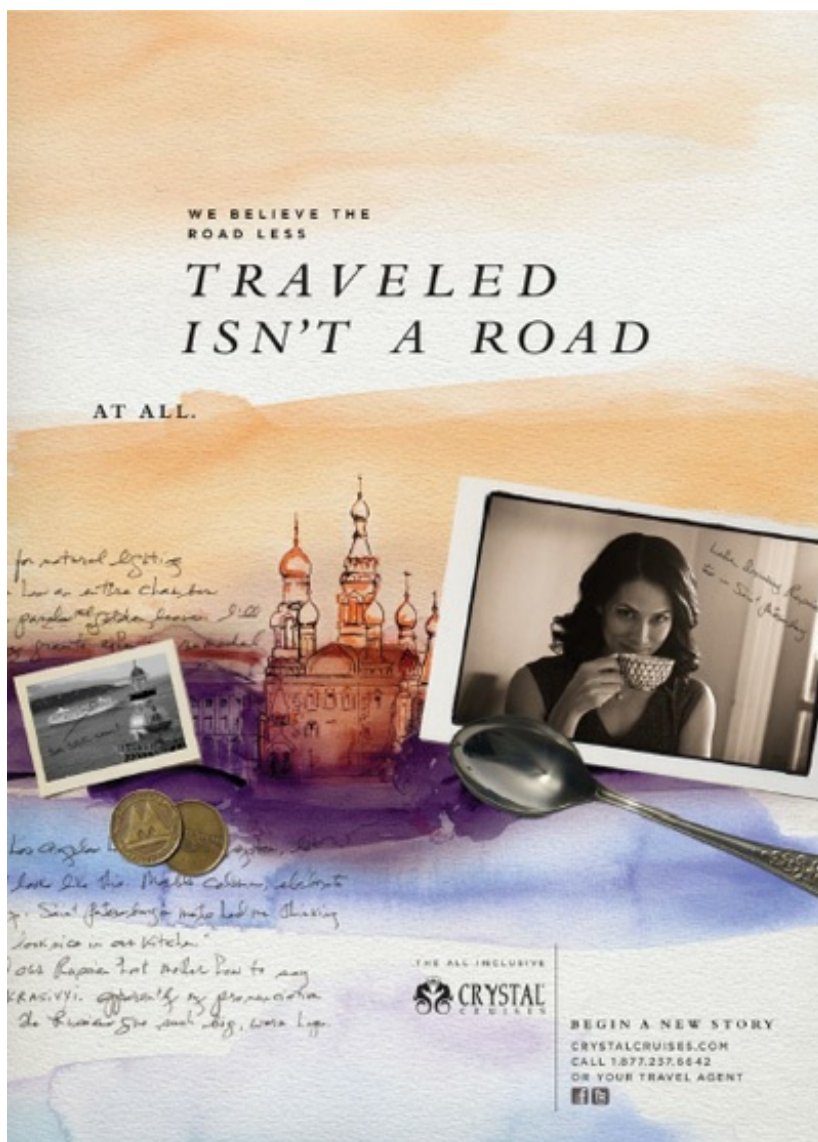
Print ads will appear in Condé Nast Traveler, National Geographic Traveler, Town & Country, Travel & Leisure, Coastal Living, Elle Décor, Food & Wine and Forbes Life.

Each print ad will be watermarked with Aurasma technology, per the brand.

Consumers can scan the ad with their smartphones to reveal a 60-second video that shows three travelers' experiences in select Crystal Cruises' destinations through watercolor animation.

The video will showcase three cruise destinations.

The brand asked eight watercolor artists to create images that will be used in all aspects of the campaign.



Crystal Cruises ad with watercolor painting

The films will be presented to consumers through digital channels such as the brand's Web site and Facebook page and on smartphones via the print add.

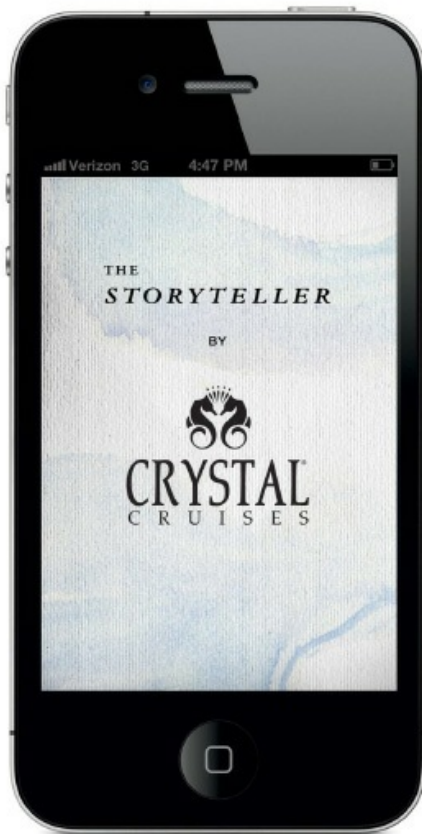
Crystal Cruises will also use its Web site and Facebook page to extend the reach of the new campaign.



Crystal Cruises Facebook page

In fact, the brand will create an app for its Facebook page that will be a never-ending journal. Users can create content and upload photos from real-life journeys on Crystal Cruises' ships.

In addition, Crystal Cruises will release a free app in May that extends on the campaign's storytelling theme.



Crystal Cruises app

The cruise line is launching its new campaign with ad agency Y&R California.

“What we have created is a word-of-mouth campaign,” said Joe Kayser, chief creative officer of Y&R California, San Francisco. “The brand found stories by real people and is encompassing them into a great campaign.

“What the brand has realized is that it needs to bring other travelers into its fold and look outside luxury cruisers,” he said. “Crystal can market to luxury travelers since this campaign gives them the ability to talk about experiences, not strictly relating to cruises.

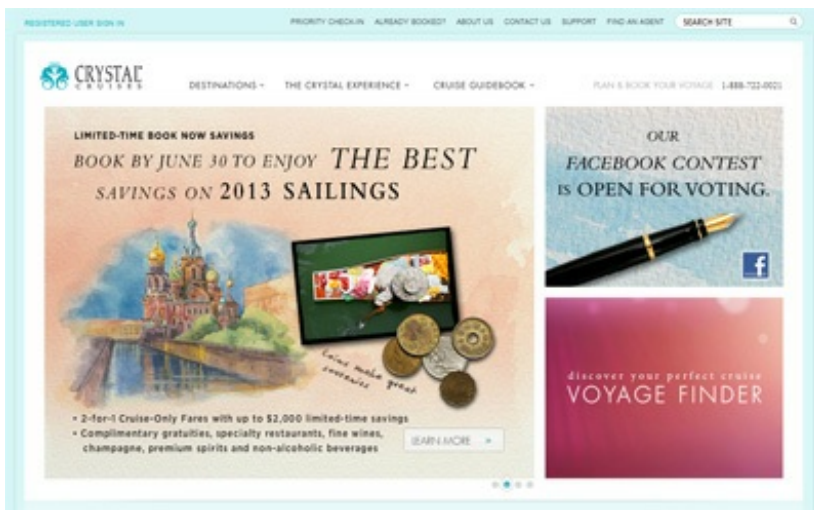
“These are luxury travelers who want the finest of everything and we wanted to make sure that when talking to this new customer, we let them look at cruising differently than they did in the past.”

Redefining luxury

Crystal Cruises is launching a rebranding effort via the new multichannel campaign, per the brand.

The brand’s Web site has been redesigned to include the watercolor drawings and distinct style of the new campaign.

In addition, consumers can now book cruises on the new site.



Crystal Cruises Web site

Crystal Cruises hopes to position itself as a cruise provider that offers a blend of discovery and adventure.

Other luxury brands have used multichannel campaigns for rebranding efforts.

For example, Trump Hotel Collection implemented a multichannel campaign earlier this year called Live the Life, which promotes living without compromise and encourages guests to seize opportunities in travel and life, per the brand.

The new lifestyle site encompassed the brand's voice and image with an aim to create a seamless guest experience ([see story](#)).

In addition, The Ritz-Carlton Hotels of New York released four new travel packages in line with the global hotel chain's recent rebranding centered around the slogan, "Let us stay with you."

The luxury hotel company began its rebranding initiative in the fall that invited consumers to create memories in Ritz-Carlton properties around the world that will stay with guests long after they leave the hotel ([see story](#)).

"Crystal Cruises did many things right in this campaign," said Heather Dillon, a Los Angeles-based public relations and social media consultant. "The moment that the brand extends the cruise experience beyond the water, it immediately captures the attention of the consumer because it shows that the brand truly cares about the guests' experience on and off the ship.

"Beyond that, it is brilliant that the brand is bringing back the concept of the timeless travel journal," she said. "Living in this digital age, we are so overwhelmed by the numerous apps and devices that document our travels that we have forgotten about good, old-fashioned travel writing.

"In addition, Crystal Cruises gets major kudos for integrating mobile and video into this campaign which, without a doubt, will increase exposure and engagement."

Final Take

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