

MULTICHANNEL

How luxury brands can target deep-pocketed brides

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By RACHEL LAMB

With wedding season just around the corner, luxury marketers should start to prepare marketing efforts for high-end products, venues and services. Above all, emotive marketing is the most important aspect of marketing toward affluent brides this year.

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Similar to any marketing strategy, a multichannel approach is the most useful for any brand looking to advertise itself to wealthy brides-to-be. Some marketers have gotten a head-start and are using varying marketing channels to get ahead of the game, especially since mediums come in handy during different points in the game.

“With an overwhelming number of choices to be made, brides seek inspiration and guidance,” said Elizabeth DeMaso, managing partner at DeBrenes Co., New York.

“As a marketer, it is important that the advertising is inspirational and has a tangible theme – we are selling fantasy,” she said.

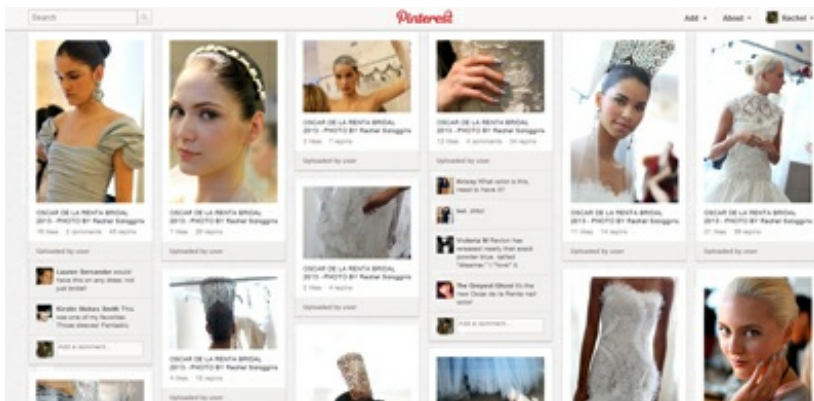
“Bridal purchases are emotional, even more so when there are big budgets involved, so every detail makes an impact.”

Wedding belles

The digital medium is very important. This is especially true in the inspiration and

research stages, per Ms. DeMaso.

One channel that brands are using is social media. For example, Oscar de la Renta live-pinned its bridal show last week on Pinterest.



Oscar de la Renta's Pinterest boards

The brand drew attention to the bridal show weeks in advance and showed its collection of gowns for the bride and bridal party.

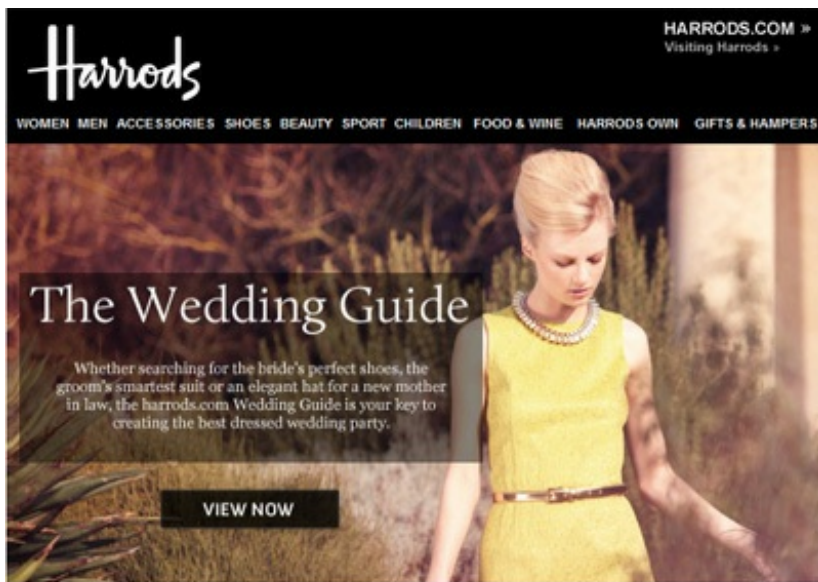
Furthermore, a social channel that could be taken into consideration is Facebook ads.

Facebook is aware when a consumer changes her relationship status to “in a relationship” or “engaged” and brands looking to target an affluent fiancée could benefit from the ad network.

“Information found on the Web can really help start the process as she makes decisions around engaging a wedding planner, making registry decisions and discovering new bridal trends,” Ms. DeMaso said.

High-end marketers can also use digital in another way.

London-based retailer Harrods is in the midst of an extensive digital campaign to promote its online wedding boutique ([see story](#)).



The Wedding Party



The Bride

The Groom

Bridesmaids

Mother of the Bride

Harrods email

The retailer is pushing multiple sections of its e-boutique from opening slides on its Web site and sent out a dedicated email 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.

Indeed, luxury brands should proceed by engaging strategically.

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

Meanwhile, De Beers is stepping up to its competition through an application for the iPhone and iPad that serves as a wedding jewelry finder as well as a consultant on diamonds and the brand (*see story*).



De Beers bridal app

Save the date

Other brands are opting for a more traditional way to market to brides.

For example, Cartier has started a print campaign pushing its products. To draw the attention of high-end consumers, it has chosen placement in luxury-focused magazines including Conde Nast's Tatler and Hearst Magazines' Town & Country.



Cartier bridal

Some brands take it a step further with magazines dedicated to brides.

For example, St. Regis, Mandarin Oriental and Carolina Herrera are the inaugural advertisers in Modern Luxury Brides South Florida & The Caribbean publication, set to launch June 8.

The niche luxury publication will publish two times per year in June and December.

Modern Luxury offers its partners and luxury brands a comprehensive marketing campaign, including print ads, an online presence, event listings, a digital edition, social media and placement at events and parties.

Consumers who are looking in bridal magazines are a little further along in their planning stages. That is, they often rip out pictures to start going after particular wedding features, not just dream stages.

“The one channel that all brides, rich and poor, often indulge in are bridal magazines,” said Clara Henning, senior strategist at Siegel+Gale, New York. “This is the most visual and tangible of channels and also the easiest to help pull images and inspiration for one's planning.

Happily ever after

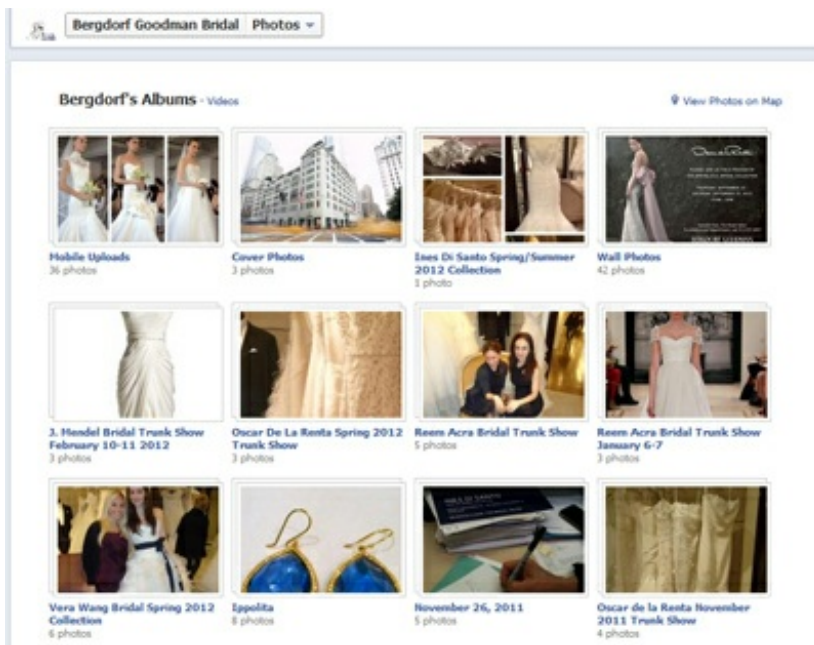
The most important part of any wedding marketing, no matter what channel, is personalization.

“These affluent brides seek a more personal experience, one that reflects their personality and individual taste,” Ms. Henning said. “They also have higher standards of quality and want the reassurance of knowing that they are working with the best to create an unforgettable and inimitable day.”

Therefore, personalization is key.

If retailers are trying to bring consumers in-store, then they should have personal assistants and salespeople at the clients' beck-and-call to make sure they have everything that they need.

For example, consumers can Facebook-friend department store Bergdorf Goodman, which allows them to communicate directly with a representative. This personalization likely increases the amount of consumers brought into Bergdorf.



Bergdorf Bridal

Also, if a salesperson has a special relationship with a consumer who just got engaged, a personalized note and invitation to come into a store or shop online could be well-received by a happy bride-to-be.

“When brands market to affluent brides they should remember that brides are not looking to buy products per se, but to create an unforgettable and inimitable experience,” Ms. Henning said.

“From a messaging perspective, this means that brands need to tell that story, painting a picture of happiness and perfection with the bride as the hero of the story and the brand as an indispensable ingredient to create that happily-ever-after moment,” she said.

Final Take

Rachel Lamb, associate reporter on Luxury Daily, New York