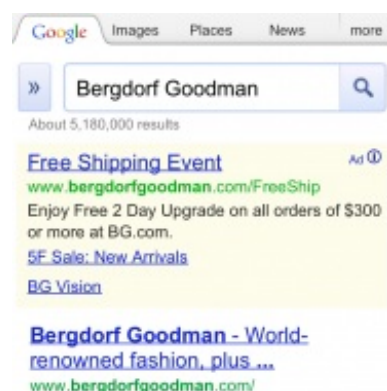


MOBILE

Mobile SEO builds brand awareness, keeps top of mind

May 22, 2012



By RACHEL LAMB

An often-overlooked tactic, search engine optimization on mobile devices is a simple way that luxury brands can keep top of mind and build awareness on a medium that is constantly by consumers' side.



Depending on a brand's audience, mobile SEO could be more important than Web SEO. Not to mention, visibility on mobile could encourage impromptu mobile or in-store sales.

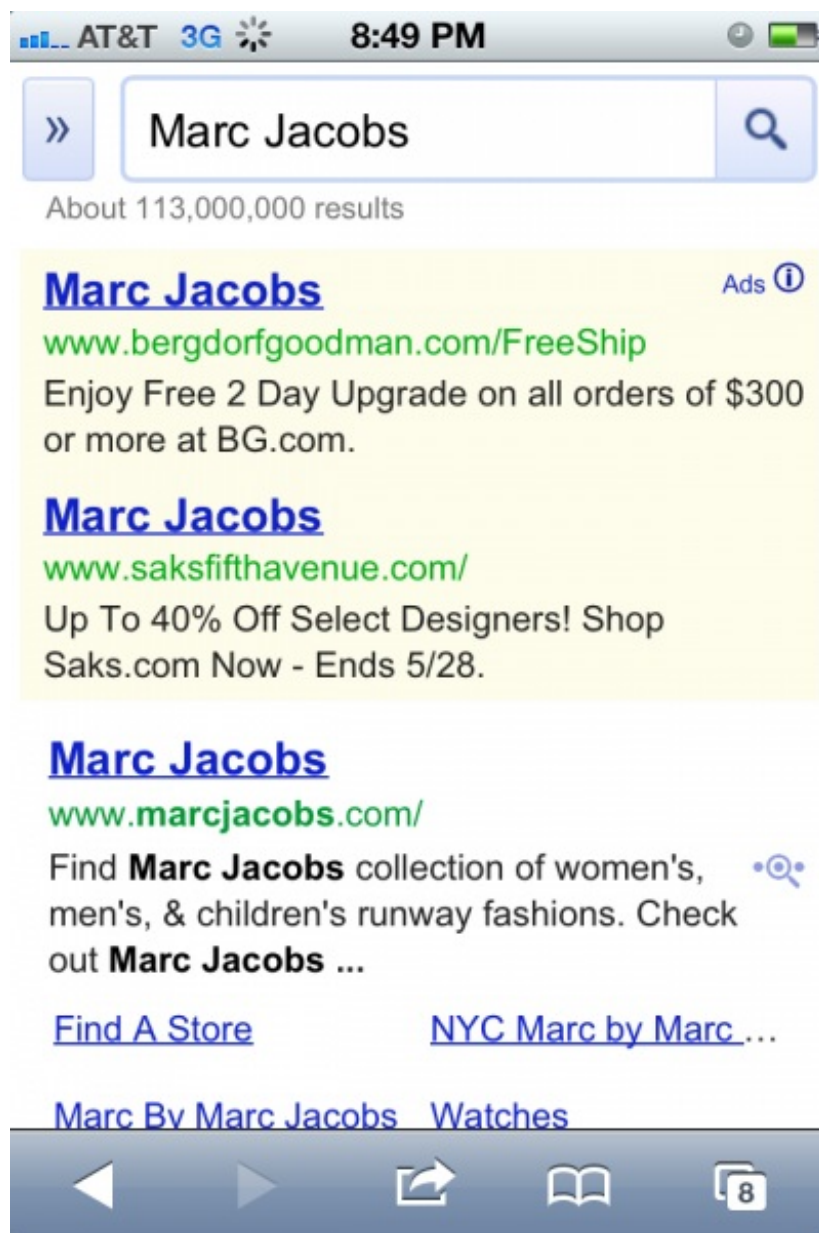
"SEO is an extremely valuable marketing tactic," said Andrea Wilson, Fort Worth, TX-based director of digital strategy and luxury practice lead at **iProspect**. "Search engines are where an active request for a brand or product occurs, and is the instance when someone is actively stating a request for information, typically at the end of the buying funnel."

"More and more often, these requests are being done from the convenience of a mobile device, so it is imperative a brand is answering that query for information by actively building their mobile site to be SEO-friendly," she said. "Once the consumer finds the site, the other reason why mobile SEO is so important is to benefit the consumer experience while on that mobile site."

“Giving them easy navigation, appropriate content, product availability and store details will ensure a positive consumer experience.”

Mobile branding

Some luxury marketers are still not using SEO in their mobile efforts. Just because brands have SEO on the Web does not mean that it always transfers over to mobile devices.



Marc Jacobs uses mobile SEO

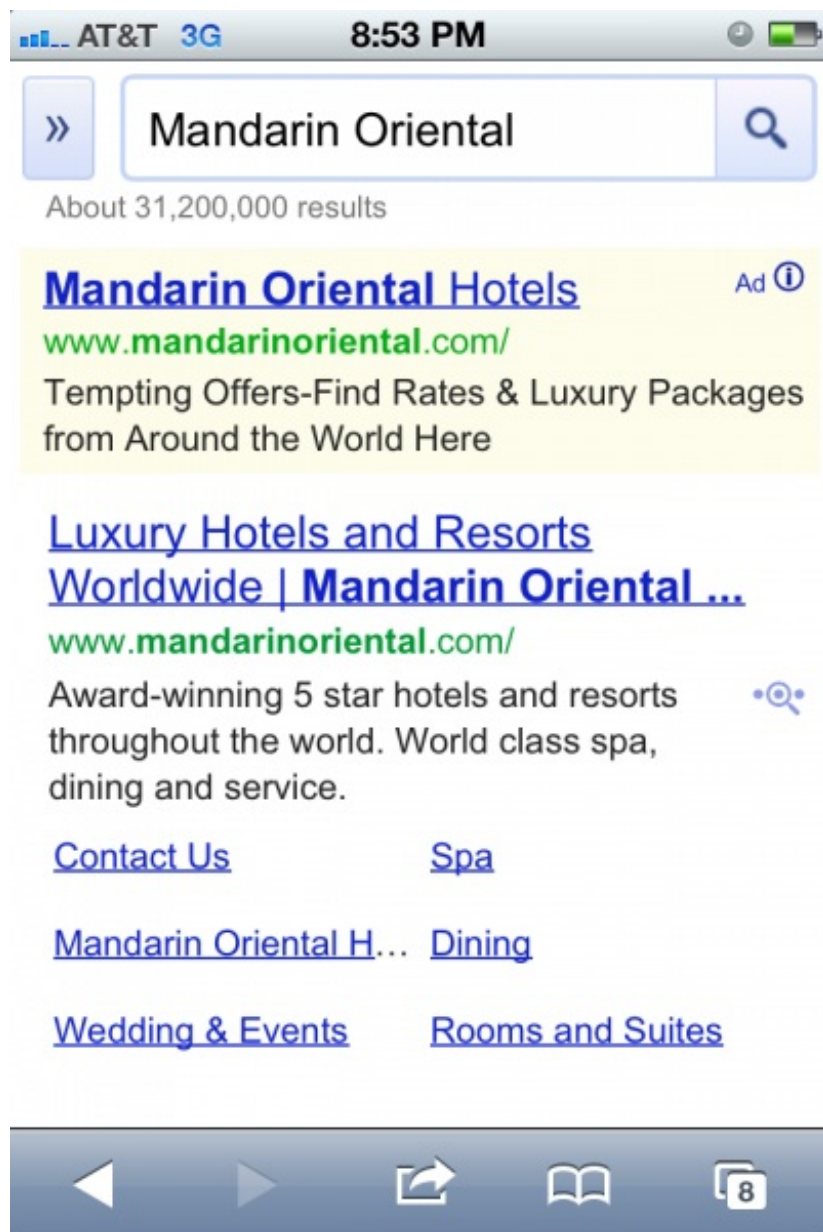
The reason for the late adoption could be two-fold, per Ms. Wilson.

First of all, centralizing the brand story and messaging on just one major platform is easier, so brands can focus on the depth of the Web site on a computer screen.

Mobile screens are small and there are less capabilities, so those limitations might prove challenging for luxury brands that have high standards for the look and feel of their visuals.

Secondly, luxury brands likely see more sales in-store and from their ecommerce sites, so pouring budget into a platform that might not see direct revenue could be hard to get

approved.



Mandarin Oriental uses mobile SEO

“Mobile is a very valuable tool for product research prior to purchasing as well as store location queries, so it is very important for all brands, not just luxury brands, to ensure their pages are visible and prominent in the search engines,” Ms. Wilson said.

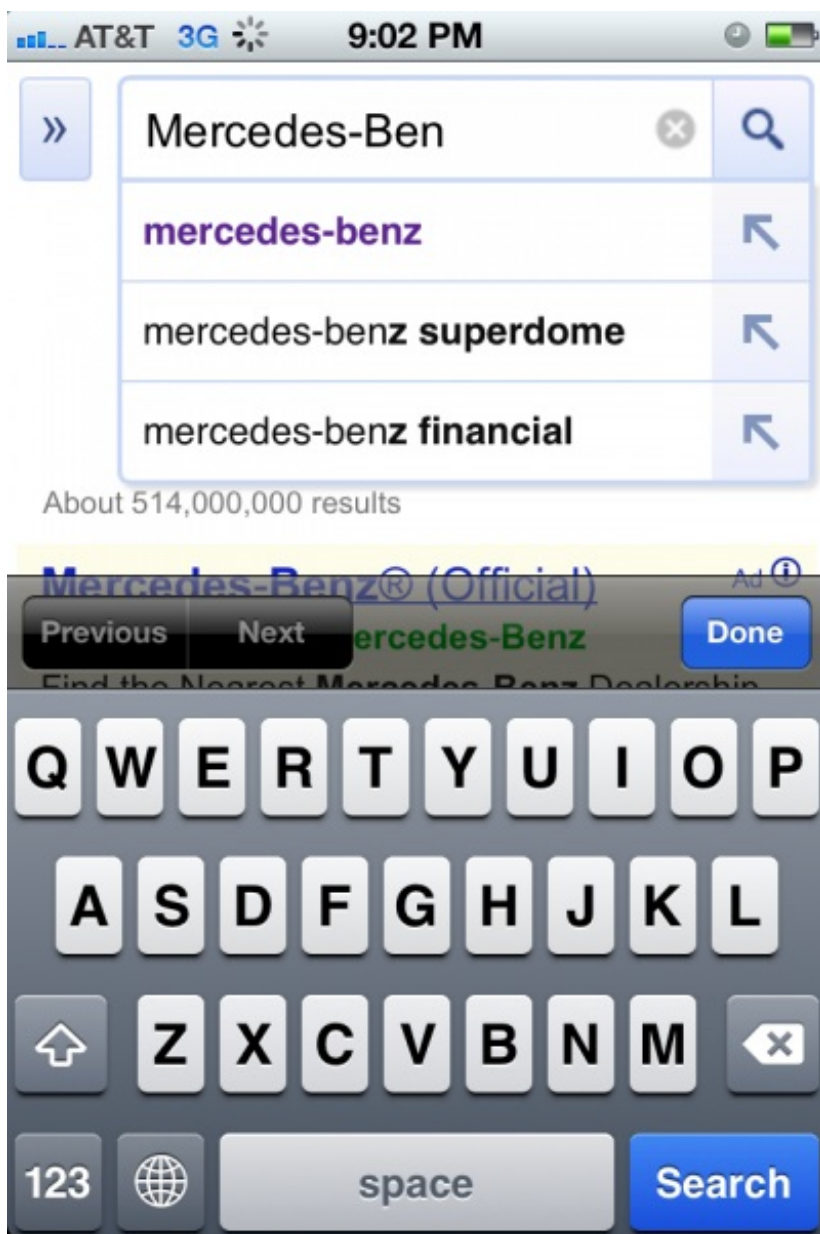
Also, the luxury industry is typically a wait-and-see group with brands being hesitant to make the first move.

Marketers that target high-end individuals may want to wait until like brands have seen success before moving forward.

Increasing visibility

Nonetheless, the importance of mobile SEO cannot be understated and should be implemented by luxury brands.

The first step is to research to see how a particular brand’s listings are in mobile search engines.



Search options when entering "Mercedes-Benz"

This way, marketers can see what keywords consumers are using, how they appear and how they can best position themselves on the channel.

Brands should next review internal mobile site analytics to see the percentages of traffic and kinds of engagement they are seeing.

From this, marketers can see if the current experience is positive, what percent of traffic likes to use mobile and if this is a growing opportunity for the brand.

"The combination of usage and positive usability should be a big focus, since your end-goal is to have consumers find, visit and positively react to your site on their mobile device," Ms. Wilson said.

Ultimately, brands need to gain more visibility on the mobile space. Brands that use paid search and SEO are likely to become more visible on a channel that is rapidly growing in transactions.

"Depending on your audience mix and behaviors, mobile SEO is a piece of the overall

SEO picture, which includes your Web site, press releases, social media presence and digital assets,” Ms. Wilson said.

“It is certainly not more important to do than any other item, but it needs to be part of the puzzle, since mobile usage continues to grow, especially with affluents,” she said.

“If brick-and-mortar store revenues are important to a brand, which I would assume is the case, then ease in finding store locations via mobile is a key need of the marketing plan.”

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