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How to target digital campaigns to affluent males versus females

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By TRICIA CARR

Luxury marketers should create tailored digital campaigns for affluent females and males since these demographics absorb online marketing differently, and can do so by appealing to the distinct online style of each group that leans more towards emotive marketing for females and to-the-point messaging for men.

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A difference in the online behavior of male and female consumers is that women are more likely to interact with a brand, while men use the Internet mainly for research. Luxury brands that want to tailor digital advertising, marketing and social media campaigns should do so in a more entertaining way for men, but should appeal to the emotions and the reasoning behind a purchase when aiming at females.

“Males and females interact with media and brands in different ways,” said Rachel Resnick, manager of client and media strategy at [Morpheus Media](#), New York. “Women are more likely to share, interact and recommend a brand, evidenced by the female-dominated Pinterest, while men use marketing more functionally for research.

“Brands can reach their target demographic of males or females by doing the proper research on audience composition to create the best mix of sites and channels and, also, catering the creative messaging appropriately for each gender,” she said.

Perfect placement

Brands need to decide on a goal before choosing the marketing channel for female- or male-centric campaigns. Goals might include branding, social community growth or sales.

“It is paramount that brands consider the psychographics of their audience as well as geography, demographics and other factors,” said Hope Distant, associate director of client and media strategy at **Morpheus Media**, New York. “Otherwise, there could be a huge missed opportunity to connect with potential consumers.

“Many brands are active in digital because they do not want to get left behind in this ever-changing landscape, but understanding where you should be is pivotal,” he said. “Digital media consumption is very fragmented, so your marketing mix should include most, if not all, digital channels your budget allows.

“While you can activate any one of these disciplines individually, their strength is in how each of them complement the other.”

In fact, a recent study from **iProspect** examined the affluent male’s online habits and found that 67 percent of affluent males are making multiple online purchases per month, with 40 percent of those shopping spending approximately \$30,000 a year ([see story](#)).

Nearly seven out of 10 affluent males report seeing ads on a computer and one in three reported seeing them on a tablet or smartphone. Furthermore, a majority are willing to engage with them at some point.

In addition, affluent males want their banner ads short and to-the-point and also enjoy interactivity and video.

Meanwhile, female consumers like to spend time interacting with a brand. For this, luxury marketers should turn to social media.

“Tailored campaigns deliver more efficient results since men and women consume marketing and interact with media differently,” said Susi Tully, vice president of **Inflexion Interactive**, Hoboken, NJ.

“Women are more likely to be on social media platforms and spend more time on them than men,” she said. “But brands should market on Facebook to target men if they evaluate objectives, brand positioning, target audience and medium experience and create the right combination for all.”

To use social media, brands should keep in mind that men have a tendency to discover things online on their own, while women can be influenced by their friends, per John Casey, founder of **Freshfluff**, New York.

One direction or the other

Brands that are looking to target men or women should incorporate a few key things into digital advertising and online marketing campaigns.

Men want to see solutions to their problems via digital advertising and marketing.

For example, if a man is looking to buy a cardigan, luxury marketers should show him a few ways to wear it as well as details about the materials and craftsmanship.

"Marketing to men needs to be more direct," said Dave Surgan, manager of digital media communications at **Morpheus Media**, New York. "It is about selling a solution with examples and a back story.

For example, German fashion label Hugo Boss is displaying a to-the-point brand message in a Facebook contest that lets users set the time on a virtual watch with one click of the mouse, and enters them to win a watch each day for 50 days (**see story**).

The image shows a Facebook interface for a contest. At the top, the Facebook logo and search bar are visible. Below that, the Hugo Boss logo and 'WATCH SPECIAL' are displayed. The main content area features the 'BOSS ORANGE' logo in the top right corner. The title 'LUCKY TIMES' is prominently displayed in large, bold, orange letters. Below the title, a large image of a BOSS Orange watch with an orange strap is shown. To the right of the watch, the text reads '50 WATCHES IN DAYS WIN NOW!*'. Below this, a smaller text block explains the contest: 'This is your chance to win one out of 50 cool BOSS Orange watches within 50 days. What is your time? It's your turn now! Simply press the button and set your time randomly. With a little luck, your time is drawn by the end of the day and you win an cool BOSS Orange watch. Good Luck! BOSS Orange Watch Collection in store'. A white box with the text 'PRESS THE BUTTON AND WIN!' is overlaid on the watch image, with two orange arrows pointing to the buttons on the watch. At the bottom of the main content area, there is a small text line: '* Participating countries: USA, UK, Germany and Denmark'. Below the main content area, there are two smaller images. The left one shows a group of people smiling and wearing sunglasses, with the text 'DISCOVER THE CAMPAIGN' below it. The right one shows three different BOSS Orange watches, with the text 'DISCOVER ALL WATCHES' below it.

Boss Orange Facebook contest

Also, men favor a more a more humorous or status-oriented approach, whereas women respond better to emotive marketing.

“There is no mystery that men and woman are wired differently and a brand's marketing approach should take that into consideration,” said Morpheus Media's Mr. Distant.

“Women are more apt to responding to messaging that aligns with their emotional side and men tend to respond to humor and messaging that puts them in a position of power,” he said. “Evolutionarily speaking, the male must ‘bring home the bacon,’ even though in many instances that is not the case.”

Men spend less time on sites, so they need to be grabbed quickly with a short brand message, per Inflexion Interactive's Ms. Tully.

On the other hand, women will spend more time on a site and seek out ways to improve their lives.

Michael Kors seems to be using this frame of mind in its Living the Kors Life blog, video and social media campaign that depicts the daily lives of company employees while pushing the wearability of its collections ([see story](#)).

Embedded Video: <http://www.youtube.com/embed/t19uRAONXlg>

Living the Kors Life video

Luxury marketers should aim to provide affluent female consumers with valuable information alongside product images and descriptions. This information might show how a product will make her feel when she buys it.

That said, brands should not bombard women with too much information. If a woman does not have time to read a long brand message, she can easily move on to the next digital brand message.

“Men value entertainment, so be creative if you want them to share [a brand message],” Ms. Tully said. “But make sure it represents the brand.”

“Women want to connect with others,” she said. “Figure out a way that your brand can help her do that better.”

In terms of social media, a campaign that involves social sharing applies to both genders at the moment, per Freshfluff's Mr. Casey.

Women favor Pinterest because it is a platform for them to share what they like visually with their friends and followers, who might be swayed to buy, wear or use the same items.

Meanwhile, men might be more prone to download branded game applications and then seek out the brand sponsoring the game for more information.

“Given how fluid digital platforms have become, it is vitally important to be adaptable at a moment's notice since some of today's social tools have short shelf-lives,” Mr. Casey said. “What works now might be replaced by something cooler, hipper, faster and more easily-shared next month.”

“The fluidity of digital and social media also means that there are no hard-and-fast rules

about what campaigns work best for a particular gender at a particular time,” he said. “The rules seem to be constantly shifting, almost daily.”

Final Take

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