MOBILE

Burberry pushes big-ticket items via Pandora mobile ads

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By TRICIA CARR

British fashion house Burberry is pushing its straight-off-the-runway men's items as well as big-ticket apparel, accessories and coats from ads in the Pandora iPhone application that seem to strengthen brand awareness more than trigger mobile purchases.

Images from Burberry's latest eyewear campaign are shown while users listen to music, which might encourage clicks from the broad demographic of Pandora app users who are more likely able to afford sunglasses than other items. The ad brings consumers to a mobile-optimized site that lets them browse and purchase the most pricy items from the label's fall/winter 2012 collection including womenswear, menswear, accessories, coats and childrenswear.

"As in-app advertising continues to gain popularity among brands as a key engagement market, apps that provide entertainment, essential information or social connection are the most effective outlets for messaging to a large and attentive audience," said Scott Forshay, mobile and emerging technologies strategist for Acquity Group, Austin, TX.

"Additionally, by choosing a streaming music app, the brand can reinforce its lifestyle-driven marketing approach – an approach that has always been successful for Burberry given its younger affluent demographic target," he said.

"Following a 'right audience, right place, right time, with right message' approach, placement in the Pandora app ensures the brand is in the right place to engage an audience."

Mr. Forshay is not affiliated with Burberry, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Burberry declined comment.

Music to my ears
The Pandora app shows an image of the artist while a song is playing. When an ad appears, it is shown over the artist image.

The Burberry ad showed an image from the label's latest eyewear collection in which a woman is wearing a pair of aviator glasses.
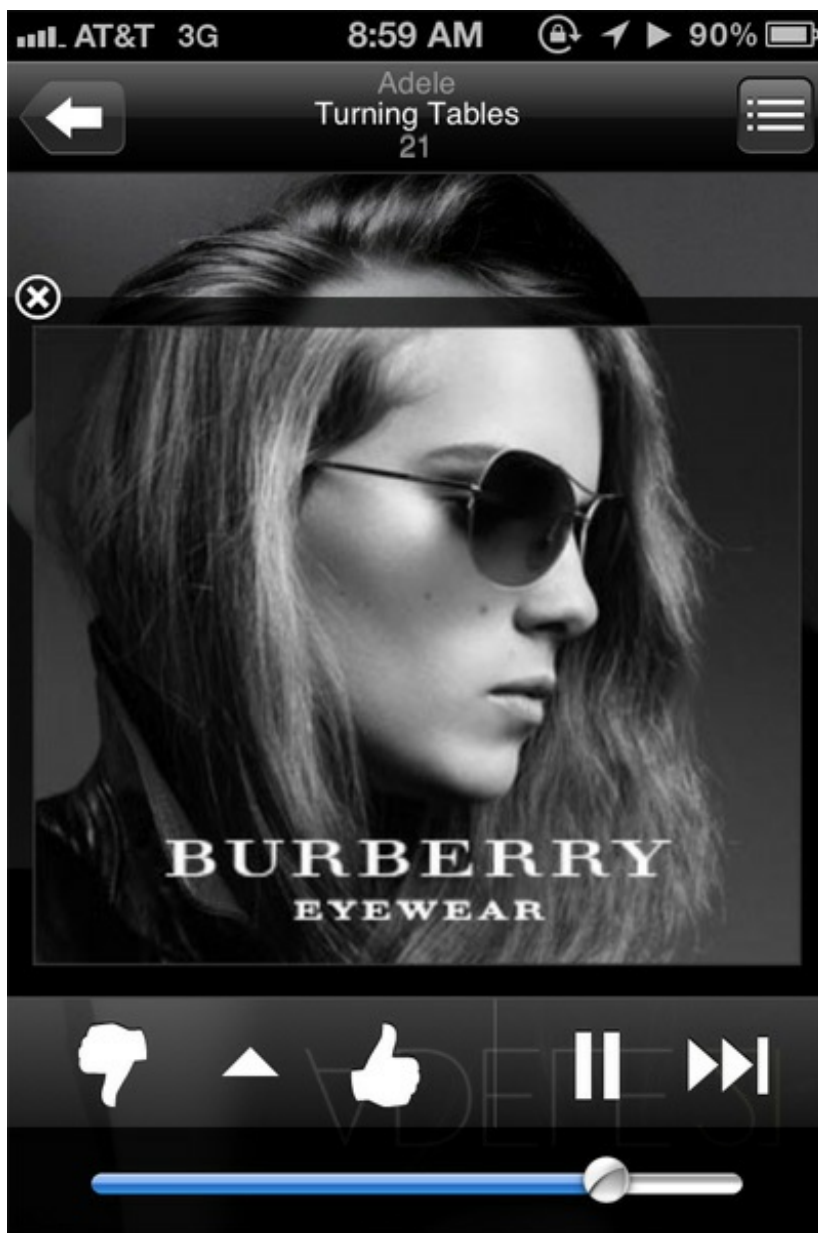
Pandora ad

When users click the ad, they are brought to Burberry's mobile-optimized, commerce-enabled Web site.

When the ad was placed, Burberry's mobile site featured the men's runway collection that

was available for purchase as well as a highlight video from the fashion show.

Burberry mobile site

In addition, users can scroll down to view womenswear, menswear, coats, women's accessories, men's accessories and childrenswear.

Each item has its own page that displays multiple images, color options, a description, materials and care instructions. Users can select size and quantity and add items to the shopping cart.
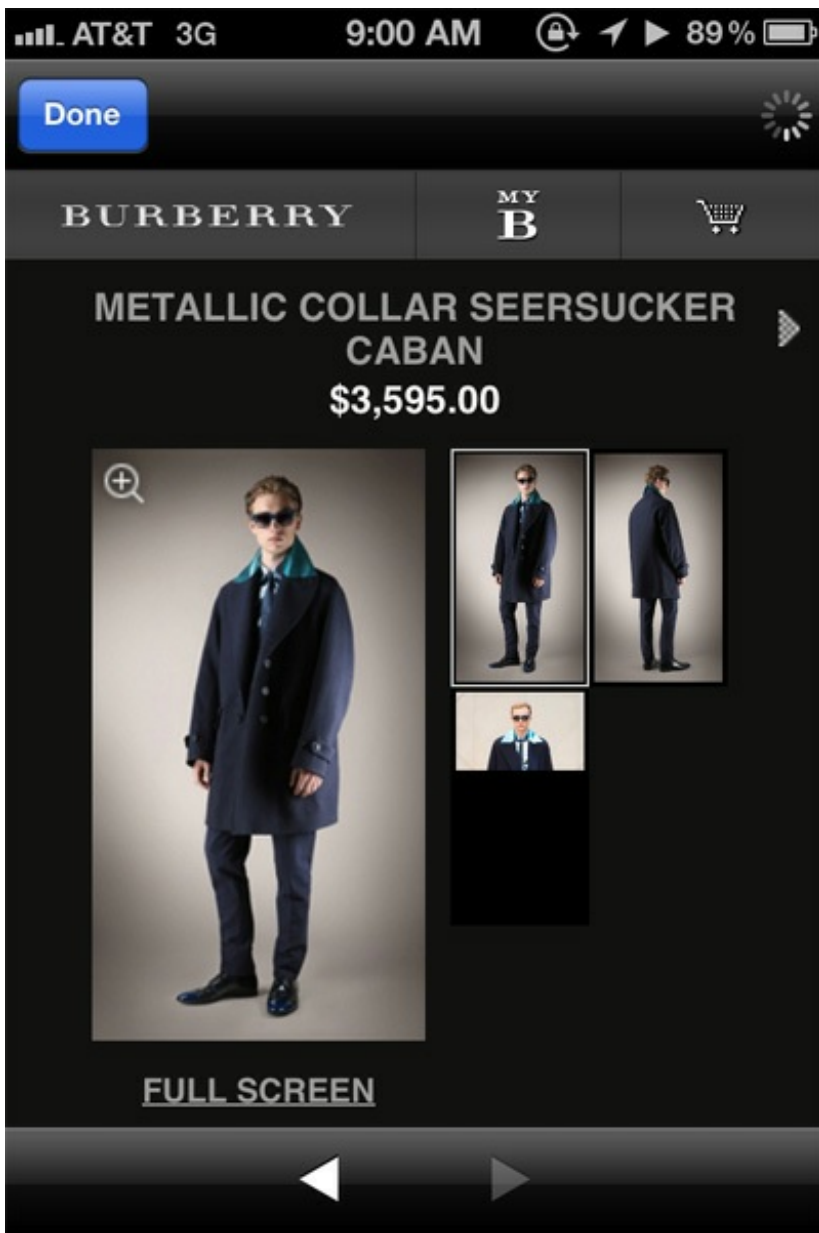
Item description page

The items that are most prominent on the mobile site are the label's big-ticket apparel items.

To get to the eyewear displayed in the Pandora ad, users must enter the women's accessories section and scroll down to the last item on the screen, which is "sunglasses."

This move is not surprising from Burberry, per Mr. Forshay.

"The brand and, for that matter, its audience knows full well who the brand is," Mr. Forshay said. "Burberry is a premium brand and its audience has no misconceptions of that fact.

"The brand has always given emphasis to authenticity and transparency in its digital strategy, understanding that building a loyal customer base is unachievable if they employ bait-and-switch strategies," he said.

There is also a store locator that uses an iPhone's GPS on the mobile site. It lists nearby stores and gives the option of showing the location in the browser with Google maps.

All eyes on Burberry

Burberry has tried quite a few advertising channels during the second quarter including digital, mobile and out of home.

Most recently, the label opted for a completely-digital strategy for its eyewear campaign that includes music, videos and images on Vogue.com. Burberry is tapping up-and-coming British musicians for this campaign.

Clicking on the expandable banner, side tower and scrolling masthead ads brought consumers back to the eyewear section of the Burberry Web site. There, consumers can choose one of the musicians, listen to their music and read their bios (see story).

Also, Burberry placed a banner ad in the TV Guide mobile application that links to its mobile commerce site. The ad appeared at the top of the page, alternating between the brand name and "explore the collection" (see story).

Meanwhile, Burberry reached commuters and tourists at New York's iconic Grand Central Terminal by placing out-of-home advertisements inside the train station that show a look from its spring/summer 2012 menswear collection (see story).

Burberry likely knows where its consumers are and wants to catch them at all touch points. The only drawback to these types of ads is that they reach a mix of mainstream and affluent consumers.

In Burberry's Vogue.com ad, it had a better opportunity to engage consumers due to the capabilities of the site. The content also linked right to the items and music that were being advertised.

The Pandora mobile ad displayed eyewear – a product type that many aspirational consumer have the means to purchase – but the ad linked to the mobile site that highlights mostly big-ticket items.

While the mobile content might deter smaller purchases, it is mainly an opportunity for these consumers to interact with the brand by watching a runway video while they are on-the-go.

Furthermore, if an affluent consumer does reach the ad and has the means to purchase items, it might not happen immediately from the mobile site as there does not seem to be a clear call to action.

"Overall, the ad unit visuals are crisp and on brand, but they fail to provide a compelling call to action," Mr. Forshay said. "Certainly a brand like Burberry will not advertise promotions, but there are other more subtle and sophisticated ways to drive action among an affluent target audience base.

"Rewarding those who choose to engage with the ad with exclusivity and priority brand access is always a sound strategy for brands of this ilk," he said. "Playing marionette with the heartstrings of the luxury consumers requires an understanding of what makes the

audience tick and playing to their desires for exclusivity.

"In this execution, the brand fails to seduce and take advantage of the opportunity at hand."

Final Take
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