

MULTICHANNEL

## Barneys chooses charity alignment, social contest for shoe floor campaign

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By TRICIA CARR



Barneys fifth floor shoe department

Retailer Barneys New York is raising awareness for the new shoe floor at its New York flagship store on Madison Avenue by supporting the Human Rights Campaign with shoe purchase proceeds and a Facebook contest.

The Perfect Pair campaign spans in-store and online, with Barneys donating 10 percent of sales from the shoe floor this week and \$1 for every participant in a contest. Consumers have the chance to win a \$5,000 Barneys gift card and to be featured on the retailer's Facebook page when they submit a love letter to their favorite pair of shoes.

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“Barneys is smart to try to tap into their customers’ passions and do it within social media so the stories can be shared,” said Marko Muellner, senior director of marketing at [ShopIgniter](#), Portland, OR.

“It is also smart to wrap the contest around an important cause,” he said. “This gives it authentic and emotional boosts and gives its fans a sense that Barneys provides value beyond amazing products, designers and experiences.

“Barneys is trying to do multiple important things with this campaign – grow its Facebook community, engage and reward fans and drive brand awareness.”

Mr. Muellner is not affiliated with Barneys, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

[Barneys](#) did not respond before press deadline.

Shoe splurge

Barneys unveiled its revamped shoe department July 16 that takes up its entire fifth floor.

To raise awareness and offer a philanthropic twist, the retailer began the Perfect Pairs campaign on the same day to support the Marriage Equality Program of the Human Rights Campaign. The initiative fights discrimination against LGBT people and works to widen marriage equality throughout the United States.

Barneys New York is donating 10 percent of in-store shoe purchases through July 22nd.

“With the Perfect Pairs campaign, Barneys is revealing a side to the brand’s personality that some consumers might not expect,” said Christine Kirk, CEO of [Social Muse Communications](#), Los Angeles.

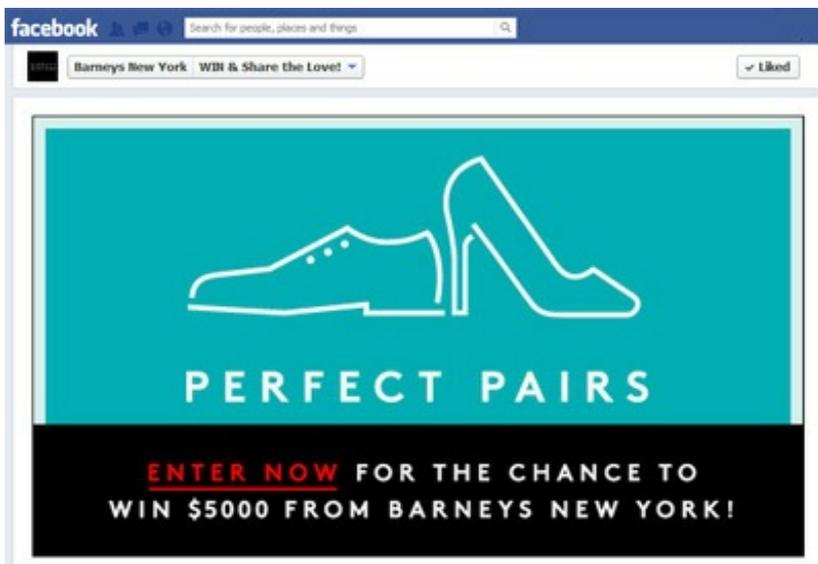
“Barneys is declaring itself a supporter of the LGBT community and same-sex marriage equality across the United States,” she said. “A hot-button topic for many, the brand is putting its stake in the ground on the issue, and could encounter some backlash for it.

“Many brands shy away from siding on ‘controversial’ issues for fear of alienating a certain customer or demographic,” she said. “However, by taking a stand on this issue, Barneys has pushed that risk to the side and can potentially align itself with its customers who feel the same way on this issue, thus building a stronger relationship between consumer and brand.”

The Perfect Pairs campaign is being spread via Facebook where users can submit a love letter to a favorite pair of shoes for the chance to win a \$5,000 gift card to Barneys.

Five of the letter submissions will be featured on Barneys Facebook page and users can vote for the winner.

Barneys is donating \$1 to the Human Rights Campaign for each letter submitted, up to \$25,000.



Perfect Pairs Facebook app

Meanwhile, the retailer is pushing its shoe offerings via the Influencers, a group of leaders in the fashion industry that is offering curated style lists. This program was part of the Barneys site redesign last quarter ([see story](#)).

The retailer sent an email July 16 that linked to lists from three faces of the shoe industry including Manolo Blahnik, Tabitha Simmons and Gianvito Rossi. These lists are also the subject of one of three opening slides on its Web site and a Facebook post.



*The Influencers email*

Posts on Barneys' blog The Window will also be dedicated to shoes. The Perfect Pairs content is written by people in the fashion industry and focuses on moments when shoes influenced their lives.

Foot traffic

Barneys seems to be pulling all the stops in its Perfect Pairs campaign to get the most physical and digital traffic as possible.

In fact, many luxury retailers use multichannel campaigns to encourage interactions on all touch points.

For example, department store chain Neiman Marcus held the Sole Seekers social media challenge to celebrate the 20th anniversary of footwear manufacturer Christian Louboutin and also encouraged consumers to shop the Capsule Collection in select stores ([see story](#)).

While marketers sometimes miss the mark and launch a campaign either offline or online, those using both types of channels will likely lead to greater results for the brand and the consumer, per Social Muse's Ms. Kirk.

"With this Facebook contest, Barneys is employing several strategies and accomplishing several objectives," Ms. Kirk said. "The Perfect Pairs campaign began as an in-store initiative, and with this Facebook contest, it is seamlessly tying together the offline and online program, which allows for more consistent brand building and customer loyalty."

All of Barneys' Perfect Pairs efforts focus on shoes, but the brand may want to relate the channel content more effectively.

"The fact that the campaign includes in-store and time-specific elements is even more reason to go bigger online and in social media," said ShopIgniter's Mr. Muellner. "Twitter and Facebook are great for building real-time excitement and driving awareness in an effort to get people to buy new shoes at retail locations and to drive participation in the contest.

"These aspects of the program are not included on Facebook and with a richer landing experience, not just an entry form, they could easily be used to make the program even more successful," he said. "With a slightly more critical eye, the program could be richer from the outset in an effort to drive more participation early and to sustain the program through to the end.

"For example, let fans upload photos [or] use existing Facebook photos or Instagram in their submissions to make the contest more fun and generate richer content to be used elsewhere."

Final Take

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