

MULTICHANNEL

How luxury brands can translate Harrods' localized strategy

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By TRICIA CARR

London-based retailer Harrods has been spreading its localized marketing strategy via in-store and digital efforts tailored for affluent consumers, a strategy that can be translated to different markets if done carefully.

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Due to the hype around London at the moment, Harrods is milking its location in many of its marketing strategies that span in-store and digital channels. Its distinct efforts can be translated to international markets if brands have similar retail and social goals, but they should not rely solely on local happenings if the events will not generate national attention.

"Harrods aligned local events of world interest with efforts highlighting their city heritage to create brand awareness and positive affinity for London," said Andrea Wilson, Fort Worth, TX-based director of digital strategy and luxury practice lead at [iProspect](#).

"By aligning national pride efforts during key national pride events, both local customers and non-local audiences will grow buzz, interest and affinity for the brand.

"This should pay off for them, as interest in British heritage and icons are currently at very high levels."

Ms. Wilson is not affiliated with Harrods, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Harrods was not available for comment before press deadline.

No age restriction

Harrods has engaged quite a few digital strategies this year that highlight the events and culture in its home city, but in ways that incorporate social interactions with the brand.

The retailer is currently holding an online auction of four designer-made crowns by Paul Smith, Lanvin, Valentino and Roberto Cavalli.

Facebook users can rank the crowns and head over to Harrods.com for directions on how to bid via email. Proceeds from the auction will go to Macmillan Cancer Support.



Crowns by Paul Smith and Roberto Cavalli

Harrods is also catering to consumers who prefer digital over mail marketing with an e-catalog that showcases its online-exclusive fragrances.

The magazine contains fragrances that are available exclusively on Harrods.com and a British twist is added with an introduction to the book by London-based writer Fleur Fruzza ([see story](#)).



Harrods e-catalog

For its Diamond Jubilee digital marketing, Harrods chose Pinterest to tap into consumers'

creativity and inspiration. It held a contest that allowed users to design their own store window.

Consumers who “pinned” inspirations for the window around the theme “Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Street Party” had the chance to have a Harrods window inspired by their mood board. The winner was brought to London for the special unveiling ([see story](#)).

“It is very appropriate in this instance for Harrods to showcase its local culture,” Ms. Wilson said. “All eyes around the globe have been on London in the past due to the Diamond Jubilee and in the coming weeks due to the Olympics and have a natural curiosity to learn more about the host city.

“Harrods’ digital effort and presence allows non-local audiences to interact and learn more about its products and heritage,” she said. “It is a great way to align its brand with the buzz of the Olympics and the unique characteristics of British culture.”

In addition, Harrods’ email strategy has been in full force this summer in offering consumers the precise products they need for international and British occasions.

During wedding season, the brand created a wedding boutique that it marketed via a series of emails. The first of the series was sent April 5 with the subject line, “Wedded bliss: how to be the best dressed bridal party.”

Each email linked to the online Wedding Guide that led into the retailer’s e-boutique. The guide was split into sections that appeal to different consumer tastes ([see story](#)).

In May, Harrods created a summer fashion and beauty guide called The Season that was also a guide to dressing for festivals, balls, races and parties. It was also the subject of an email campaign ([see story](#)).



Garden section of Harrods' summer guide

These online marketing efforts by Harrods hint that the brand is looking to engage all age ranges on social media. The auction is likely for high-net-worth consumers, while a Pinterest contest is gear towards younger users.

“Tactically, its consistent digital presence showcases its efforts to all audiences, from local to global, to young and old,” Ms. Wilson said. “For example, I appreciate them using digital social tactics like Pinterest, Twitter and Facebook to ensure relevancy to a young audience across other markets besides London.”

That said, global brands that want to take a page from Harrods' book should do so with caution.

Local and global interest in London is huge right now due to the Olympics, but marketers in other major cities might not be so lucky to have an international event outside their doors.

“I believe luxury brand digital efforts need to relate both locally and on a broader scale,” Ms. Wilson said. “It is all about creating a relevant conversation with a consumer.

“Broad efforts are obviously a requirement for global reach, but localized messaging and presence will ensure higher levels of awareness and favorability,” she said.

We like to party

Meanwhile, Harrods' in-store strategy has been aimed toward a very young demographic.

The retailer targeted younger consumers to increase in-store transactions by creating a series of events that culminate in a fashion and music festival this weekend.

Harrods incorporated youth-oriented brands and festival music for The Harrods Festival of Fun to encourage male and female consumers to try on apparel, beauty products and accessories in its Way In, Designer Studio and Men's Denim Lab departments ([see story](#)).

Also, Harrods also engaging young consumers with an in-store sports challenge and Twitter contest in partnership with Nike centered on the sneaker brand's new movement measuring technology ([see story](#)).

For its youngest shoppers, the retailer is extending its Harrods Rewards program by installing a new membership for children and parents offering exclusive in-store events, contests and benefits that is launching with a Twitter scavenger hunt.

Mini Harrods, the new membership club for parents and children ages 2-10, will introduce a new line of benefits for the retailer in conjunction with the opening of the Toy Kingdom in July ([see story](#)).

Harrods is already a go-to store in the minds of the affluent demographic in London, so it makes sense that the brand would target younger consumers.

Harrods has one location, so its events can be very tailored to the goals of that specific location.

A retailer with many locations could attract a young audience if its in-store events are tailored to each store location. Research of the youth in each market could pay off in this strategy.

For instance, a retailer that knows which brands have already gained affinity from locals might want to incorporate them into an event, as Harrods did in its summer festival.

A luxury brand flagship could use local artists and bloggers to draw a young crowd.

“I think it is more than appropriate but critical to play this jingoistic card,” said Ken Morris, partner at [Boston Retail Partners](#), Boston. “Local is where it is at for food, clothing and other items.

“As we become more conscious of our carbon footprint, it becomes imperative that we think local,” he said. “Micro-merchandising is the new new in retail and best practice is to maximize your footprint by aiming at the demographics, psychographics and ethnography of a location.

“It needs to be tailored to the location except when you have the universal appeal of the Olympics and the Diamond Jubilee.”

Final Take

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