

MOBILE

Mcommerce is No. 1 differentiating social experience: study

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By TRICIA CARR

Luxury marketers' mobile presence is one of the most important touch points for a social strategy and, to keep up with the evolving landscape, brands should be looking for ways to differentiate the mobile commerce experience, according to the 2012-13 Social Media Guide for Luxury Brands.

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Abrams Research, which produced the report, claims that luxury marketers should continue to focus on their social media strategies online and on mobile, since 74 percent of consumers are more likely to buy from a brand whose values are clearly defined on social media. However, mobile commerce is also a major area of focus that falls under social engagement.

“First and foremost, luxury brands now have to think long and hard about their mobile strategy,” said Dan Abrams, CEO of [Abrams Research](#), New York.

“Whether they like it or not, luxury brands now must engage in social media on all sorts of different platforms, but the rules are different for them, so they have to take that much more care in determining exactly how to engage,” he said.

“A poorly-executed social media strategy is even more detrimental for a luxury brands

than other types of businesses.”

The **Social Media Guide for Luxury Brands** focuses on how marketers can enhance their social and mobile presence while maintaining the luster of the brand and overcome the challenges in these wide-open spaces.

Home improvement

Luxury brands have the potential to be powerful on social media and mobile due to their deep-pocketed consumer base spending more time online than the general population as well as the worldwide desire for the luxury lifestyle, per the guide.

“Brands that think out their social media strategy carefully can balance that always-tricky line between a luxury brand's need for exclusivity and that desire to remain aspirational, with the inherent accessibility of social media,” Mr. Abrams said.

There are five rules that luxury marketers must consider to keep up with the evolution of social media, according to the guide.

One way that luxury marketers can keep up with the evolution of social media is to expand their ecommerce horizons.

Mobile commerce is growing – the total mobile commerce market is expected to grow 55 percent by 2016 – and marketers should be sure that these capabilities are included in a mobile strategy.

Also, social commerce is expanding beyond Facebook and location-based deals to more specialized platforms and networks.

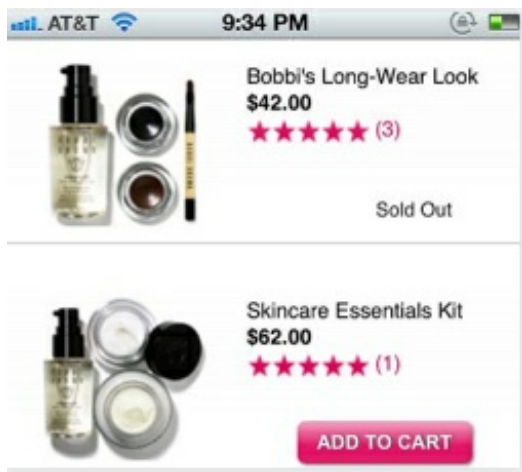
Marketers should consider having multiple storefronts, but take equal responsibility for each one. Also, mobile commerce should have a distinctive experience to keep up the status of the brand.

An example of mobile commerce versus ecommerce that Abrams Research examined is that of beauty brand Bobbi Brown.

The brand formed an engaging experience on its ecommerce site with before-and-after content, YouTube videos and makeup artist tutorials to target female consumers who do research before making a purchase.

In contrast, its mobile commerce strategy is geared more toward consumers who are making impulse buys or want to repurchase products of which they have run out.

Bobbi Brown's mobile commerce site is more visual than its ecommerce site and centers on product information. Also, the buy buttons are more prominent.



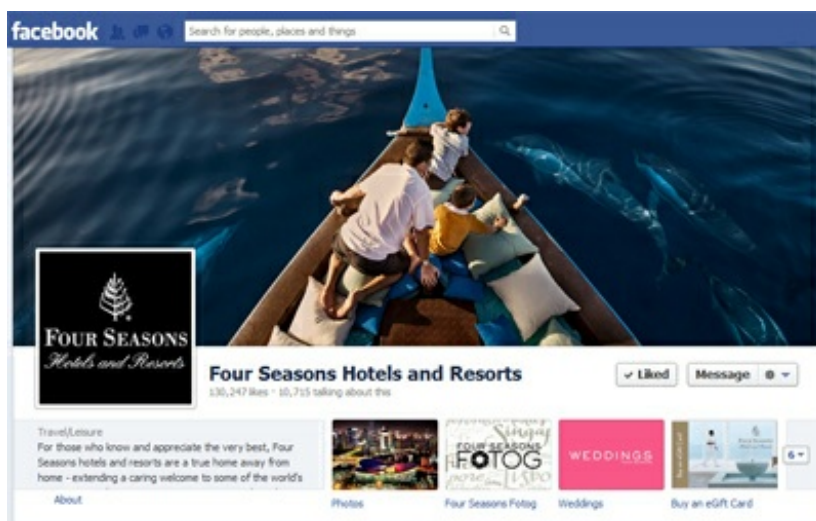
Bobbi Brown mobile commerce site

Another way to target affluent consumers on social media is to incorporate the platforms into the consumer experience and use them when performing customer service.

Abrams Research reported that consumers who engage with a brand on social media spend 30 percent to 40 percent more.

Luxury brands can enact a seamless service experience from bricks-and-mortar to social channels by consistently responding to all messages with helpful information, being creative and proactive in responses by offering multiple solutions and setting guidelines for how to respond to inquiries.

For example, Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts has incorporated customer service into its social strategy in a few ways. The brand interacts with customers via Twitter on the corporate and property levels and shares positive guest experiences and reviews on its main brand Facebook page.



Four Seasons Facebook page

Power play

Another imperative for luxury marketers on social media is that presence alone is not enough. Brands should create unique campaigns that are tailored to each platform.

For instance, there is a clear difference between social inspiration boards Pinterest and

Fancy. Ninety-seven percent of all United States-based Pinterest users are women who use the site for inspiration, while 60 percent of Fancy members are males who want to learn about new products.

Abrams Research gives three social media best practices to achieve uniqueness on each platform.

First, a brand's message should remain the same across social platforms, but the packaging should change.

Also, brands should develop content with the users of a specific platform in mind.

Last, it is better to not be on a particular platform than to misuse or neglect a brand channel.

One more rule for luxury brands on social media is to empower evangelists.

Best-practice tips include providing social share buttons, assessing how and why consumers might share posts, fitting posts with metadata meant to drive awareness and not sales, and moving conversations in unexpected directions.

Abrams Research examined marketer Oscar de la Renta. It created more brand loyalists on social media by entering channels such as Twitter, with the @OscarPRgirl handle. It also has a Pinterest to provide "content meant to inspire users to spread its message," rather than working to control the conversation.



Oscar de la Renta's Twitter page

In contrast, Zac Posen's social strategy does not encourage conversation and sharing, per Abrams Research. Consumers cannot take visual information from its Web site and share on social media and most of its Facebook content is taken straight from its Twitter account.

The last rule of adapting to the social media evolution is that each luxury brand should draw its own conclusion.

The goals for luxury marketers have not changed much, but there are many new ways to achieve them on social media.

Brands that have embraced social media are seeing positive results and those looking to enhance their participation should look for ways to extend, share and grow the brand

message, per Abrams Research.

“The biggest surprise is how much things have changed in just the last two years,” Mr. Abrams said. “In particular, the explosion of more visual social media like Pinterest and Instagram show how important images are, yet the scope and depth of the divide between those doing it right versus those doing it wrong remains enormous.

“The most successful brands are creating different and tailored strategies for each type of social medium, recognizing that, for example, Pinterest and Twitter require very different approaches,” he said.

Final Take

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