

MOBILE

The difference between affluent male and female mobile customers

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By TRICIA CARR

Luxury brands should bring tailored marketing strategies for male and female consumers over to mobile, but some efforts are more effective than others to trigger mobile commerce.

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Brands that want to encourage mobile transactions should work to create a different application experience for male and female consumers and be sure to make that experience relevant for their existing consumer base. In contrast, mobile strategies such as QR codes and SMS messaging do not need to be reworked for each shopping style, but should continue to be as tailored as an entire marketing strategy.

"Rather than rely on stereotypes, the brands that are succeeding are understanding each customer's desires and communicate accordingly," said Jeff Hasen, chief marketing officer of [Hipcricket](#), Kirkland, WA. "This is especially true with luxury brands since the expectations for stellar customer service are heightened."

User appeal

Mobile apps are one area of a mobile strategy that should be created based on the shopping habits of each gender.

“Men and women have very different buying habits,” said Isabella Lin, fashion and lifestyle category manager at [Appitalism](#), New York. “A new market assessment report from the Market Intelligence Survey results shows that 81 percent of women find shopping as a relaxing, enjoyable day, compared with only 43 percent of men.”

This key difference across all retail environments should be reflected in a mobile commerce strategy.

Men view shopping as a chore. Therefore, an app targeted at males should be a replacement for the shopping experience.

Apps for men might allow them to purchase luxury goods and services without leaving home and supply them with powerful imagery.

Luxury automakers seem to have incorporated a few male-friendly components to their apps.

For instance, Toyota Corp.’s Lexus introduced its new GS 350 model with an app that sets competing models side-by-side so that consumers can see differentiating features from both vehicles.

This app could eliminate multiple dealership visits while encouraging male consumers to interact with the Lexus brand ([see story](#)).



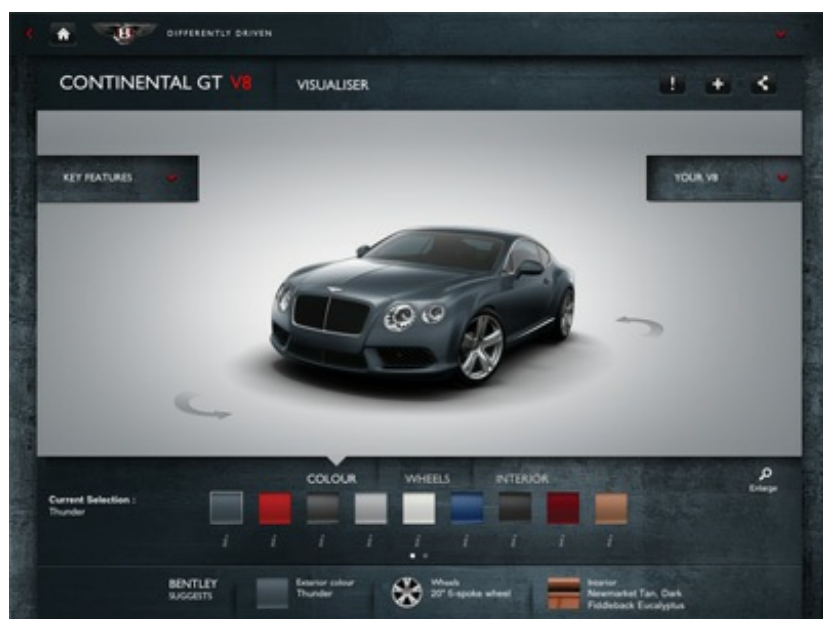
Lexus compared to BMW

Also, British automaker Bentley Motors released its first model-specific app dedicated to the Continental GT and GTC models that lets users design their own vehicles and shows history via films, photography and stories ([see story](#)).

The app includes a customization tool called the Visualiser that lets users change a model’s color, wheels, hood color and interior as well as a photo gallery, videos and specifications for both models.

The heavy use of imagery by Bentley could help males make purchasing decisions prior

to leaving home, but it might be that only brand loyalists take the time to view all of the content.



Visualiser section

Moreover, a goal of luxury brand apps for men should be mobile commerce, since men are looking for a replacement for the physical shopping experience.

In contrast, women generally shop for enjoyment and need many details to make a purchasing decision.

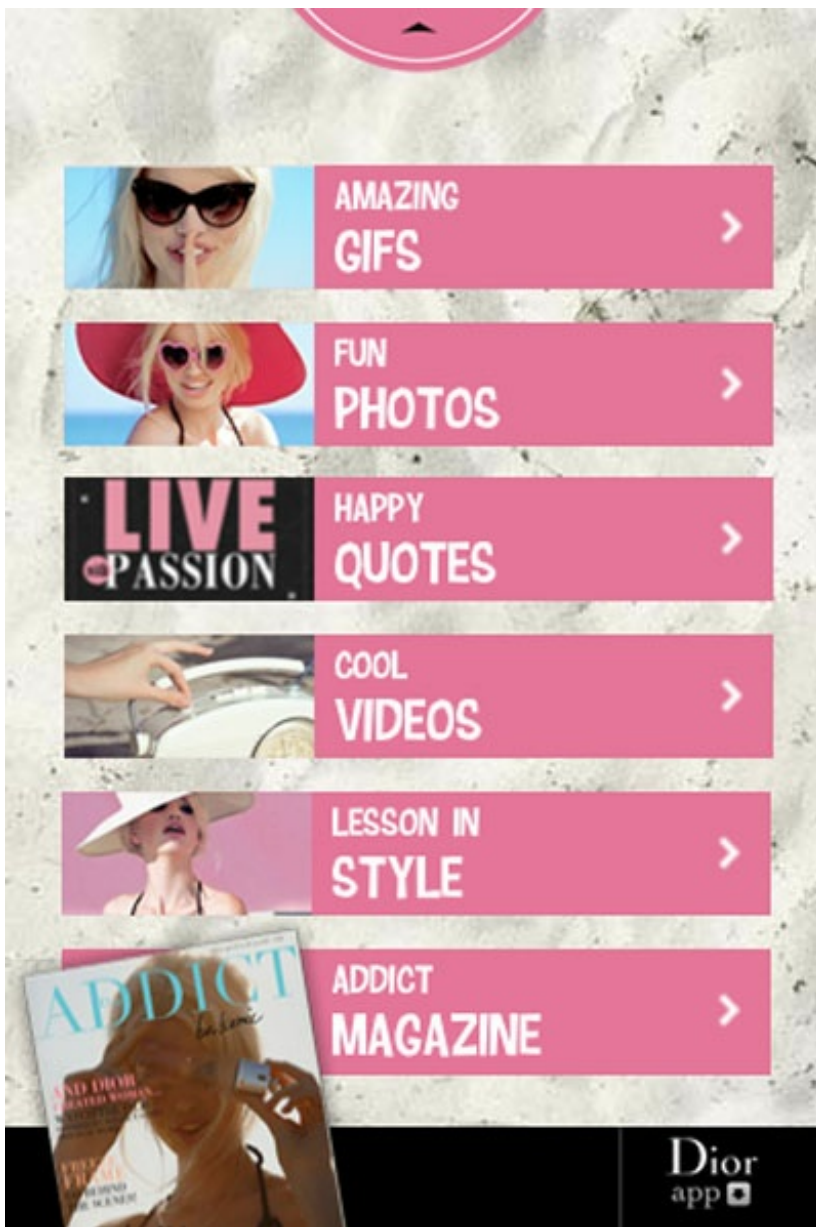
“Nearly half of all women enjoy shopping as a relaxing and enjoyably reward day, while more than a quarter treat shopping as an activity undertaken to cheer themselves up,” Ms. Lin said.

Apps targeting female consumers should aim to improve brand credibility.

Luxury brands have the opportunity to create a detailed design and engagement strategy for women. These consumers will be more likely to spend time with a brand and use the information and experiences on mobile to weigh the pros and cons of a purchase.

A recent example of a female-oriented app strategy is French fashion house Christian Dior's Dior Addict app.

The brand stuck with its upbeat, summer-focused campaign for the Dior Addict fragrance in an iPhone app that shares campaign components such as images, videos and quotes by the designer ([see story](#)).



App menu

The more detail added in a mobile app strategy, the more trust a brand can build, per Ms. Lin.

To evolve an app strategy to target men, luxury brands could create two sections: one that leads directly to imagery and commerce aimed at men, and another to explore the brand for women. An app could lead to either of these sections from its opening screen.

“Although men are paying more attention to visual, women who focus on fashion and luxury brands are more evolved to get a visual feeling,” Ms. Lin said.

One for all

Luxury marketers can benefit from a tailored mobile strategy, but the habits of these groups of consumers while interacting with QR codes and SMS is generally the same.

Men and women will each be more receptive to QR promotions that speak directly to them, said Matt McKenna, founder and president of [Red Fish Media](#), Miami Beach, FL.

For example, Michael Kors used mobile call-outs that were specifically targeting female

consumers on windows in select stores to promote its Mother's Day campaign this year ([see story](#)).

"You could expect a greater response rate from a message that is specific to men – say a new delivery of designer ties," Mr. McKenna said. "This would generate a much higher conversion rate, especially when the message can be segmented and delivered to the appropriate audience, which should be done ahead of time in a brand's CRM when planning the call to action."

Furthermore, there is not a significant difference in response rates from men and women for SMS campaigns, per Hipcricket's Mr. Hasen. In fact, SMS should primarily give consumers exclusive offers.

Since SMS messaging is an opt-in channel, brands should be sure to make the message worthwhile to male and female consumers. Also, different messages should be sent to men and women.

"Mobile provides personalization options for brands that can lead to trial, sales and loyalty," Mr. Hasen said. "Smart marketers segment their SMS databases to provide relevant information and offers."

Final Take

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