

MOBILE

## Bloomingdale's ignites in-store Hot event with mobile, social additions

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By TRICIA CARR



Bloomingdale's New York  
flagship store

Department store chain Bloomingdale's is incorporating new technologies and an SMS contest into its semi-annual Hot event in a partnership with Microsoft that could boost its appeal to a younger audience.

The 11-day event begins Sept. 6 and combines mobile, social media, television and physical components. Bloomingdale's is using smartphone engagement to complement an otherwise 360-degree approach to attract attention from younger consumers who might only interact with the brand via its ecommerce site and social channels.

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"Smart brand marketers are combining text and richer experiences," said Jeff Hasen, chief marketing officer of **Hipcricket**, Kirkland, WA. "SMS provides reach and Bloomingdale's is wisely adding interactive elements that have a cool factor and personalize the fashion experience.

"SMS is also a gateway to an opt-in relationship that can drive loyalty and sales," he said. "Affluent consumers expect and appreciate relevance and a personal touch."

Mr. Hasen is not affiliated with Bloomingdale's, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

**Bloomingdale's** was not available for comment before press deadline.

Colliding technologies

Bloomingdale's is reaching its consumers from a few different angles for its Hot event this time around.

The retailer partnered with Microsoft for an SMS contest that takes place each day of the semi-annual event.

Consumers can text "ITSON" to 51515 for the chance to win a Microsoft prize pack. It includes a Windows tablet, Microsoft Wedge Touch Mouse and Keyboard, and Windows 7 and Microsoft Office 2010 featuring OneNote.

The grand prize will be awarded Sept. 16. One winner will receive the Windows tablet and accessories, an Xbox 360 with Kinect for Xbox 360, an Arc Touch Mouse and a Nokia Lumia 900 Windows Phone.



### *SMS contest*

“SMS is easy, relatively painless and inexpensive,” said Paula Rosenblum, managing partner at [RSR](#), Miami.

“It also avoids any sense of connectedness to any particular phone carrier or manufacturer,” she said. “I do not think I would make a habit of it, but for a special event, it is probably OK.”

Also under the Microsoft partnership, consumers will be able to patronize Swivel, a 3D virtual dressing room by FaceCake Marketing Technologies Inc. that uses Kinect for Windows, at 20 Bloomingdale's locations.

Consumers can try on select fall apparel and accessories with Swivel and view them in the outfits on high-definition flat screens in the store. They can share their looks via email and social media channels.

This could add to the Bloomingdale's mobile experience since consumers will likely send the looks to friends who will access them on smartphones and social media applications.

Meanwhile, the retailer will display Microsoft Research's "Printing Dress" installation at its 59th Street flagship store in New York. The dress is made of paper and a projector will show a live Twitter feed on its skirt.

Fairy-tale ending

Bloomingdale's is also partnering with broadcasting network ABC to create an in-store shopping experience with a charity component.

The efforts center on the fall premiere of fantasy drama, "Once Upon a Time."

During the Hot event, consumers can purchase select pieces worn by the show's cast members at Bloomingdale's locations or on the retailer's ecommerce site.

There will be appearances by one or more cast members at the 59th Street flagship store.

In addition, consumers can bid for the chance to meet the cast on the set of "Once Upon A Time" in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. Proceeds of the auction will go to the Child Mind Institute.

Bloomingdale's will likely distinguish itself during its Hot event by combining all of the channels that young, affluent consumers use.

"I think Bloomingdale's needs to continually re-demonstrate that it is more than just a division of Macy's and that it is trendy, edgy and hip, especially since the brands themselves have been demonstrating their own hipness," Ms. Rosenblum said. "Doing something with the intersection of fashion and technology helps create that impact.

"It will help the brand reach a new generation of affluent consumers and that is important," she said. "It may, in fact, reach more aspirational Bloomies shoppers than actual shoppers, but that is fine.

"It is a nice way to gain some cachet with an emerging customer base."

Final Take

*Tricia Carr, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York*

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