

MULTICHANNEL

Louis Vuitton ramps up social media, mobile engagement efforts

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By PETER FINOCCHIARO

NEW YORK – Luxury icon Louis Vuitton is accelerating efforts to engage its legion of fans through social media such as Facebook and via streaming video on mobile phones, according to executive from the brand at Advertising Week.

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The fashion brand recently rebranded its Facebook page for its new “The Art of Travel by Louis Vuitton” campaign. The designer will use the page to broadcast an interactive Web cast of its spring/summer 2011 fashion show on Oct. 6, while also streaming the event live on iPads and iPhones at <http://www.louisvuitton.fashionshow.com>.

“Social media is very interesting and brings opposite personalities together” said Kamel Ouadi, global digital director at Louis Vuitton, Paris. “There’s this idea of openness and of community [that] lets consumers connect and share.

“[Social media] emphasizes the emotional aspects of a luxury industry [that] is sometimes perceived as arrogant and distant,” he said.

“When you put together opposites in the landscape like this, it’s a great source of innovation and emotion.”



The “Attracting Generation Luxur-Y” event was moderated by Joe Crump, senior vice president of strategy and planning at Razorfish, New York.

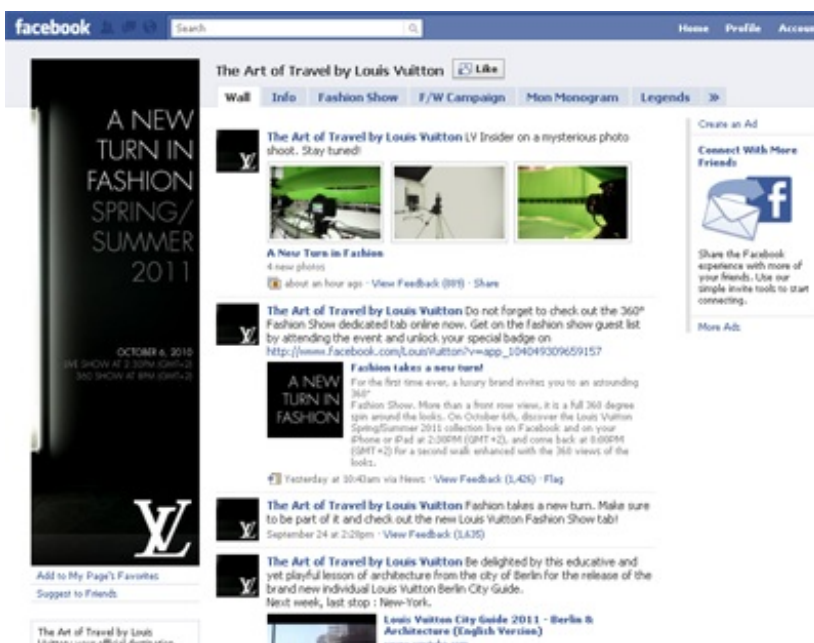
The other panelists were Paul James, global brand leader for St. Regis and the Luxury Collection at Starwood Hotels and Resorts, New York; and Scott Galloway, founder of L2 Think Tank, New York.

The Art of Travel by Louis Vuitton

Mr. Ouadi gave multiple illustrations of Louis Vuitton’s efforts to engage consumers in a new, digital world.

For example, the fashion brand uses its Facebook page to promote its major marketing initiatives and seasonal campaigns.

Here is a screen grab of the page:



The page is updated several times a week with multimedia content for Louis Vuitton fans.

In addition, the company became the first fashion brand to broadcast a live fashion show on Facebook in October 2009. Mr. Ouadi called the initiative a massive success.

“Social media have to feel and provide respect to the user – its about trust and authenticity,” Mr. Ouadi said.

“You certainly didn’t have to be in the list of 250 VIPs to see [the fashion show],” he said.

“Thousands were able to see the event live and people were screaming on their computers for joy.

“We got huge press coverage – print, TV and online.”

When Louis Vuitton broadcasts its fashion show for its spring/summer 2011 line in partnership with Marc Jacobs, it will let viewers adjust the camera view 360 degrees around the runway, adding an extreme element of interactivity and engagement.

Facebook users can sign up to be added to the even "guest list" from Louis Vuitton's Art of Travel page.

Here is a screen grab of the event invitation on Facebook:



Mr. Ouadi said Louis Vuitton's Facebook page is currently one of the top five luxury brand pages on Facebook.

Louis Vuitton Core Values

Mr. Ouadi also pointed to the success of its Core Values campaigns, which bring in prominent public figures to attach the Louis Vuitton brand to major events and cultural touchstones.

The most recent campaign, featuring rockstar Bono and his wife Ali Hewson, is supporting a number of charities for Africa ([see story](#)).

Another campaign that coincided with this summer's World Cup featured interviews with soccer legends Pele, Zenidine Zidane and Diego Maradona.

A third Core Values campaign, this time commemorating the 40th anniversary of the first moon landing, presented interviews with former astronauts Buzz Aldrin, Sally Wright and Jim Lovell.

Each of the Core Values campaigns includes interactive elements.

For example, for the moon landing campaign, online viewers could take control of cameras for three different videos of the astronauts, directing the action as they watch.

“Each experience is customized, unique and personalized and can be shared,” Mr. Ouadi said.

Journeys Awards

A related effort to engage consumers with the Louis Vuitton brand was its Journeys Awards, announced 2009 and awarded earlier this year.

The fashion brand teamed with acclaimed film director Wong Kar Wai for the contest, which encouraged up-and-coming filmmakers to submit short videos explaining what the concept of a journey meant to them.

More than 200 people submitted films, from which 15 were shortlisted and two awarded the top prizes, the Jury Award and the People’s Choice Award, voted for by viewers online.

Here is a video trailer for the Journeys Awards:

Consumers can view the short-listed films at the Journeys Awards Web site at <http://www.journeysawards.com/>.

Here is a screen grab of the Journeys Awards Web site:



Open luxury

Mr. Ouadi also briefly mentioned Louis Vuitton Moët Hennessy's new digital lifestyle Web site, Nowness.com ([see story](#)).

The executive stressed that the Web site emphasized a concept of “open luxury,” enabling users to fine-tune content that the site delivers based on their likes and dislikes.

Overall, Mr. Ouadi said luxury brands would have to be more responsive to the wants and needs of its consumers, providing exhilarating content to match the emotions the brand is trying to tap into in prospective customers.

“If you want to go into the digital world, you have to extend the experience and bring something new,” Mr. Ouadi said. “You have to bring value.”

Final Take

Peter Finocchiaro is editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York