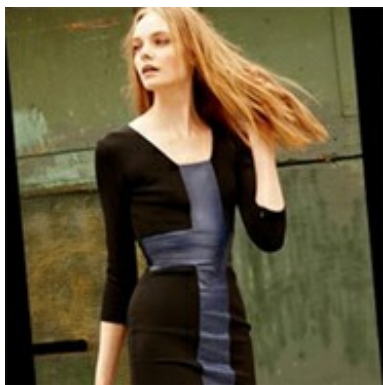


INTERNET

Neiman Marcus hosts contest to find new brand blogger

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By RACHEL LAMB

Department store chain Neiman Marcus launched a contest to find a fashion blogger that embodies the Cusp customer, an effort marketed primarily via social media and the retailer's online presence.

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Consumers can enter the contest through [Facebook.com/NeimanMarcus](https://www.facebook.com/NeimanMarcus), where they should submit a portrait and a personal biography. The contest is running through Nov. 15.

“Neiman Marcus is using its own extensive fan base to spread the word about its child company, Cusp,” said Lauren Formalarie, senior social analyst at [SayItSocial](#), Wilmington, DE. “By using a social digital strategy, it is steering away from the traditional corporate advertising by opening an opportunity to its biggest advocates.

“It is a win-win for both parties involved because fashion bloggers have the chance to win not only clothes, but an opportunity to be showcased by the leaders of their industry,” she said. “Neiman Marcus is creating a winning opportunity for itself, because it is branding Cusp through some of the most trusted and well-received fashionistas in any industry nowadays: bloggers.”

Ms. Formalarie is not affiliated with Neiman Marcus, but agreed to comment as an

industry expert.

Neiman Marcus did not respond before press deadline.

Face off

The Neiman Marcus contest can be accessed through the retailer's Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/neimanmarcus>.

Each entrant must submit a portrait that captures her personal style and the Cusp brand, a general personal bio including a blog URL and a statement of why she should be the next "Blogger on the Cusp."

Neiman Marcus Blogger on the CUSP

Twitter • Tumblr • Pinterest • Instagram • Shop Cusp

Tell us about you and your blog.

First Name: *
Last Name: *
Email: *
Address: *
City: *
State: *
Zip Code: *

Where Can we find you...

Twitter? *
Instagram? *
Pinterest page? *
Tumblr? *
YouTube channel? *
Blog? *

Brief Bio: *

Why do you believe you are a Blogger on the Cusp? *

1. Who is your favorite living style icon? *

2. Who is your favorite fashion blogger? *

3. Who is your favorite designer? *

4. What are you craving most from Cusp right now? (URL) *

Entry form on the Neiman Marcus Facebook app

They also must fill out a series of questions based on their personal style.

Five finalists will be chosen by Neiman Marcus judges in mid-October. These finalists will be given the opportunity to host a Cusp event for their friends at their local Cusp store or department at Neiman Marcus.

Each finalist will also receive a \$1,000 gift card. Finalists' portraits will be posted for voting on NeimanMarcus.com and Cusp.com.

The grand prize is a \$2,500 gift card to Neiman Marcus.

The retailer is promoting the contest through its Web site and social media pages.

"The reason social media is so powerful in this case is the sharing component and the viral nature associated with it," Ms. Formalarie said.

"When an industry leader puts an opportunity out there for others to vastly grow their own business, word is going to spread," she said. "Neiman Marcus will extend its network that

much more, while gaining additional points because it is showing customer loyalty in return.”

App-savvy

Other marketers have been using Facebook contests for different marketing efforts.

Actually, Neiman Marcus looked for new street-style photographers to take pictures at music festival SXSW for its NMDaily blog through a Facebook contest launched in February.

The retailer asked consumers to fill out a questionnaire and send a few samples of their photography. The winner attended the music festival SXSW as a correspondent for Neiman Marcus and her pictures were displayed on the retailer’s social media pages ([see story](#)).

Also, Italian fashion house Gucci is flaunting its Gucci Icon handbags through a do-it-yourself contest that requires consumers to download, construct and design their own paper bag.

The “Cut & Craft” campaign showcases the Bamboo, Jackie and Stirrup handbags by giving consumers a paper pattern to create their own version, which could be a tactic to get brand loyalists engaged for a longer amount of time. The label is hosting a contest on a Facebook application to give users the chance to have their bag shown to creative director Frida Giannini and featured as the cover image on Gucci’s Timeline ([see story](#)).

“Other marketers can see the value of social, when done right,” Ms. Formalarie said. “If you have the existing fan base, it does not matter what the industry is, but the chance to win is a viral element in itself and loyal fans are going to jump at an opportunity.

“If the concept of ‘everybody is doing it’ is not enough for large companies to dive head-first into social business, then wait until the use of only traditional marketing methods closes your doors,” she said. “Just know it is not about tweeting and Facebooking, it is about creating a social, digital strategy and ROI – and those are vital pieces to the whole social puzzle.”

Final Take

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