

MULTICHANNEL

Chanel takes over ad space with game-changing Brad Pitt campaign

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By TRICIA CARR

French fashion house Chanel is not only sticking to standard print and television placements, but using digital and mobile banner ads to promote its groundbreaking Chanel No. 5 fragrance video campaign with actor Brad Pitt.

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The new No. 5 campaign that kicked off Oct. 14 features Mr. Pitt - the first male brand ambassador for the women's fragrance - in creative that the label is rolling out via print, TV, digital and mobile. The digital ads seem to be the differentiator in this effort since the brand is counting on its YouTube content to engage consumers rather than linking to ecommerce.

"In trying to target new wearers, I see this as a twofold move," said Nikki Baboun, associate strategist at [Siegel+Gale](#), New York. "First, with fragrances such as Chance and Coco Mademoiselle, Chanel has already cultivated a younger audience for its fragrances and may need to transition some of those wearers to its classic fragrance.

"Second, and more importantly, Chanel is just looking to draw attention and consideration from those who are not wearing any of its fragrances," she said. "With that group, Chanel is looking to make No. 5 enticing and the new signature scent of choice for this group of women."

Ms. Baboun is not affiliated with Chanel, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Chanel did not respond before press deadline.

Chanel for a day

Chanel placed oversized banner ads on The New York Times Web site and YouTube Oct. 15, which was the first full day of the campaign.



Chanel NYTimes.com ad

The ads contained the black-and-white campaign video with Mr. Pitt called “There You Are.”

The 30-second film depicts Mr. Pitt contemplating a journey through his dialogue. The No. 5 fragrance bottle is shown at the end of the video.

You Are There video

The remaining space on the banner ads was white with the No. 5 logo displayed in black bold text.



Chanel's YouTube ad

Consumers could watch the video on the ad or click to go to Chanel's YouTube page where the video is currently featured.

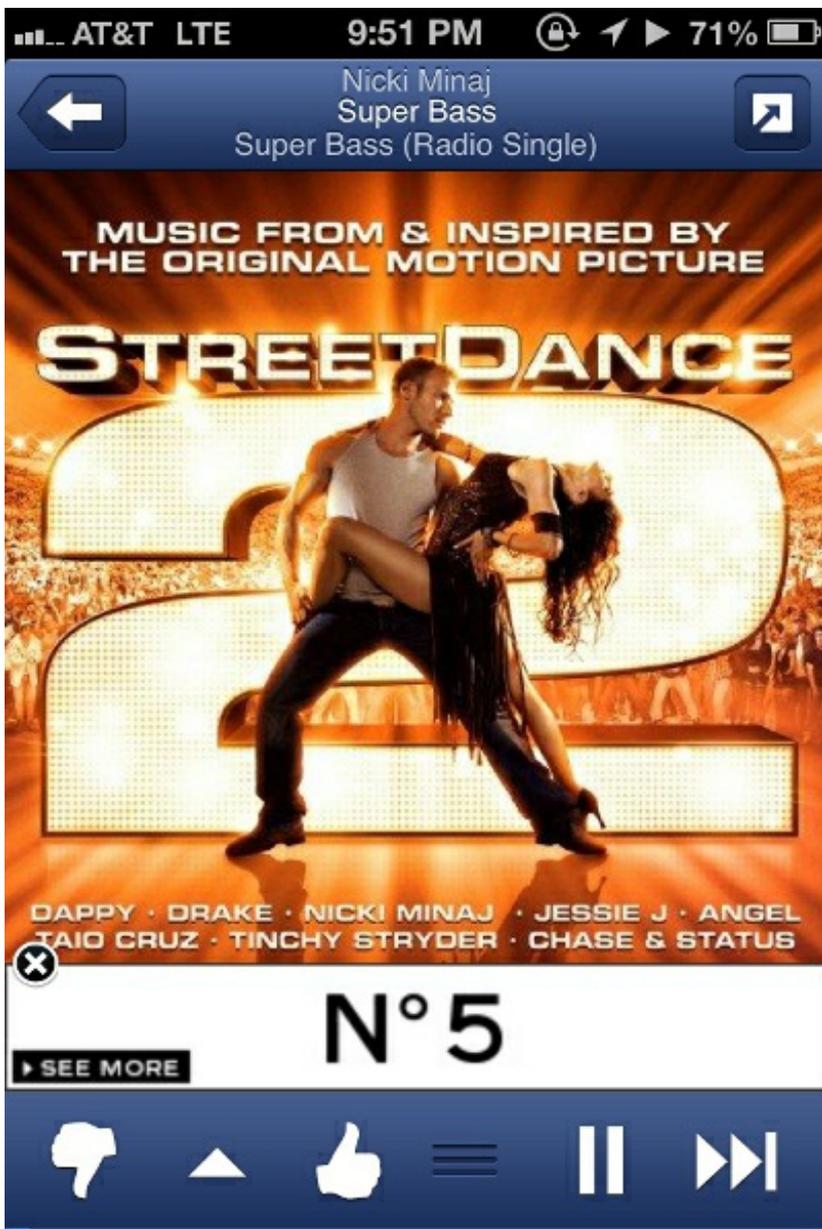


Chanel's YouTube page

Chanel is also promoting the digital campaign via its Web site, email, Facebook and Twitter.

The brand released its second No. 5 film Oct. 16 at 6 p.m. Eastern Time. Chanel hinted via email that there will be three brand films featuring Mr. Pitt.

Additionally, the label used mobile banner ads in the Pandora iPhone application to link to its mobile commerce site.



Chanel mobile ad

Print and TV placements are rolling out as well.

Fragrance free-for-all

Luxury marketers seem to spread fragrance campaigns wider than those centered on apparel and accessories due to the product's accessibility to the aspirational audience.

Apparel and accessories creative is often reserved for a brand's target audience of high-net-worth consumers and spread through high-end publications, email and a brand's Web site.

Fragrance campaigns are spread further through mainstream publications and television.

On the other hand, social media is a mainstay in any type of luxury brand campaign likely because the channel has the most immediate reach with aspirational consumers as well as brand loyalists.

Furthermore, Chanel is likely tapping the attention from press and consumers on Mr. Pitt by releasing the campaign on multiple platforms on the day of its launch.

“The effect of the Chanel ad placements was immediate with social media buzzing about it on day one,” said Elizabeth DeMaso, managing partner of [Brenes Co.](#), New York. “While there are mixed reviews on the creative product, it has certainly drawn attention and viewers.

“Using a male, and especially a male with the star power that Brad Pitt delivers, has guaranteed not only consumer chatter, but public relations coverage as well,” she said. “In terms of the long-term effect of the effort, it is hard to say.

“I suspect the viral element will continue the buzz for some time, but what seems clear is that Chanel is using this campaign as a way to maintain its position as the ultimate innovators in chic.”

However, the label took a nontraditional route in its ad placements. Rather than linking to a commerce page to purchase the fragrance, the ads link to its YouTube page.

Other marketers are linking to social media from digital ads.

For instance, Italian fashion house Gucci is honing in on social inspiration site Pinterest to leverage its digital banner placements by letting consumers “pin” fall/winter 2012 apparel and accessories directly from the ads.

Gucci will likely gain more control of its brand content on Pinterest through this effort ([see story](#)).

Chanel's heavy use of YouTube in its digital ad campaign could hint at the power of video to convert brand fans into loyalists as time goes on.

But, the success of YouTube-based ad content depends on the target audience, the content shown and the on-brand experience, per. Ms. Baboun.

"If Chanel was trying to speak to a younger consumer, linking to YouTube was on point," Ms. Baboun said. "Chanel did not take full advantage of YouTube and what viewers expect there.

"Given that it has done short films in the past, I would have expected a longer format of the video for YouTube," she said. "Lastly, this video is in the context of a branded channel that reflects Chanel's look and feel.

"For a luxury brand, this last point is especially critical, and even though it is YouTube, the entire experience must be in line with the brand experience."

Final Take

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