

MULTICHANNEL

Tod's exec: Influencer collaborations vital to cross-generational marketing

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By TRICIA CARR

NEW YORK - A Tod's executive at the Luxury Interactive 2012 conference last week said that though millennials are not an immediate source of revenue, the consumer group is a long-term investment for survival in the industry.

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Luxury Daily

During the “Effectively Marketing to Cross-Generational Consumers” panel, executives from Tod's, Tumi and The Luxury Marketing Council weighed methods used to reach millennials versus wealthier boomers. Best practice to reach the new generation without alienating a brand's core customers include selling with storytelling, keeping at social media and evolving brand content.

“Most of our revenue is still coming from boomers and mid-Gen X,” said Barbara Bisoni, senior ecommerce director at Tod's, New York. “If we do not keep millennials top of mind right now, they may get lost, and we may not be able to reach them.”

“We have to put together a matrix of touch points – there are different metrics for each,” she said. “There should be a different measure of ROI for email campaigns than Facebook.”

“Some efforts are brand awareness, and some are transaction-driven.”

Campaigning for Gen Y

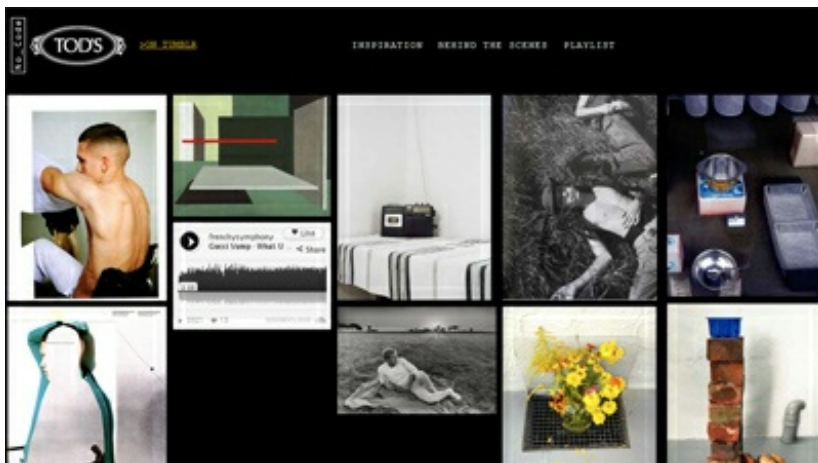
Tod's uses its online presence – namely Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest – to reach millennials.

These channels allow brands to talk to consumers on their platforms of choice. This is the way to which they want to be spoken.

The Italian brand also adds collaborations to the mix to up brand recognition among millennials.

For instance, it is using channels including print and Tumblr to market a new capsule collection called Tod's No_Code, a collaboration with Jefferson Hack.

The collection is a more modern, urban and edgy departure from typical Tod's collections. The campaign is an evolution of the Tod's usual lifestyle in that it is more contemporary and artistic, per the brand ([see story](#)).



Tod's No_Code Tumblr page

"This is more urban, more unisex and very young," Ms. Bison said. "It is different than what Tod's would typically look like."

Additionally, Tod's created a pop art-driven campaign aimed at millennials to push its Signature Collection.

The brand partnered with LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton's Nowness blog to publish the Electric Signature video that depicts the image behind the Signature Collection. The collection includes shoulder bags, totes and clutches in different colors.

Embedded Video: http://www.youtube.com/embed/FsxWYSBXsO4?list=UUAoSrfU_naDYSN4hVEaP8bg&hl=en_US

Electric Signature video

Electric Signature was created by avant garde artist Bart Hess. It is in black-and-white except for the colors in the Signature Collection bags ([see story](#)).

"It is important to remain true to your core values," Ms. Bioni said. "We work with certain bloggers that will help us hit a certain demographic but still is representative of the brand."

Even distribution

The panelists also discussed best practice to reach millennials and revenue-generating boomers at the same time.

“When marketing to millennials, the heritage does not convince them to buy,” said Chris Olshan, chief marketing officer at The Luxury Marketing Council, New York. “With boomers, they believe in heritage.”

Therefore, marketers need to resell to millennials without abandoning heritage.

One way to do so is to show that a brand cares about the environment and society.

Also, selling with storytelling works for millennials so that they can justify the purchase.

“Sacrificing your core beliefs will lose the boomers,” Mr. Olshan said.

However, if marketers stick strictly to heritage they can lose millennials.

“They do not want to conform to your brand,” he said.

Meanwhile, cross-generational marketing is already happening on social media, per Michelle Cutter, vice president of marketing and digital commerce at **Tumi**, New York.

Tumi created a digital campaign that focuses on all of the generations of its customers.

The brand gathered up its digital ammunition to push a new video series called Case Studies, a packing-tips effort that chronicles real-life individuals for whom packing plays a major role in their lifestyles, rather than focusing on celebrity pitchers ([see story](#)).

Embedded Video: http://www.youtube.com/embed/oTU0_su_zBg

Case Studies video with DJ Vice

Also, campaigns should be integrated on the Web and social media to reach all consumers. To reach millennials, a robust mobile strategy is also key.

For example, Tumi is spreading Case Studies via social media, Web and email.

Collaborations have also proven effective for Tumi. In addition to collaborating with personalities for Case Studies, a partnership with Ducati motorcycles helped the brand identify with millennials.

“Tumi has found that content works cross-generationally,” Ms. Cutter said. “Consumers want to engage with the brand and want to hear the brand’s story.”

“You need to be in all of those spaces to introduce them to your brand and tell them your story,” she said.

Final Take

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