

INTERNET

Bloomingdale's revamps video content to grab consumer attention

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By ERIN SHEA

Department store chain Bloomingdale's is working with online video distributor Touchstorm to make long-form, branded videos Web-friendly and engaging for shoppers.

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The retailer is aiming to reach a wider audience through its existing videos by making them jump from hundreds to hundreds-of-thousands or millions of views. Now, consumers can easily find and watch branded editorial videos on trends and designers.

"Nothing can hook you and pull you in like video," said Sean Womack, senior vice president of marketing and production at **Touchstorm**, New York. "Hearing from people, seeing the product worn and moving, seeing how to put together a look — all of this engages an audience emotionally and builds a relationship with the brand."

"With branded editorial videos, retailers get the opportunity to be what they really are — experts in their fields — and they get to share it with an audience who is actively searching for that expertise, or an audience that is Googling it right at this moment," he said. "Video is social currency."

"Posting video online, especially information or trend-rich videos, gives an audience an opportunity to be in-the-know and gives them an asset which they can share with others."

Bloomingdale's declined to comment on this campaign.

Enhancing videos

Sharing information with others has always been a form of social currency, per Mr. Womack. However, this becomes amplified online.

Not only do these videos provide information, but there is also the opportunity to build a stronger relationship with the consumer through interactive tools.

Brands can add a click-to-buy component or have customers sign up for discounts and exclusive offers.

Bloomingdale's' videos are generally under two minutes. They give expert tips or explore a certain style or line.

In one video, Kevin Harter, vice president of fashion direction for men's, young world, home and Web, shows male viewers how to dress for spring with accessories and gives a style checklist.

Embedded Video: <http://www.howdini.com/embed/1787>

"How to dress for spring with men's accessories for 2012 Mad Men fashion trends" video

Embedded for success

Furthermore, there are ways for luxury marketers to enhance current video efforts.

First, know your online video strategy, per Mr. Womack.

"The right video mix for you will be determined by your audience, your brand and your competition," Mr. Womack said. "Luxury marketers, in particular, should create both deeply engaging brand advertising and informative editorial videos."

Also, there is room for entertainment through a series or webisodes.

Next, there is work for earned media with editorial content.

"Editorial videos do not sell, in particular, but they meet a consumer's need in the moment they have it - hence their searching - and if your video answers in an informative, on-brand and engaging way, then you have the opportunity to convert this view into the action you want," Mr. Womack said.

Luxury marketers should be sure to develop videos for an online audience, rather than for another medium such as television.

"Audiences will watch multiple videos in one session, so do not repeat yourself and do not create the same introduction that they have to watch over and over again," Mr. Womack said.

Finally, brands should find out what their consumers are searching for and create videos on those topics. Some topics can last beyond one season.

Similar campaigns

Recently Barneys New York created a video series capturing what happens in the store behind locked doors in an effort to drive more customers to its flagship Madison Avenue location.

The videos are a tongue-in-cheek promotion for all of the departments. They depict Barneys New York creative ambassador Simon Doonan and blogger Leandra Medine showing what happens after-hours ([see story](#)).

Also, BMW is using humor to appeal to consumers in a social video called “Three of a kind” that portrays the history of the 3 Series through a trio of uncanny characters ([see story](#)).

However, the Bloomingdale’s videos are structured to be more content-driven.

Touchstorm combined videos covering similar subjects to make them longer. It also removed the TV-like introduction so that viewers could get right to the beginning of the video.

Then, the videos were placed on the Bloomingdale's Web site as editorial content and not as a form of advertising.

This strategy has been successful since the retailer is currently in its second run of syndication, per Mr. Womack. The videos are featured on other sites such as AOL’s style page.

“Nothing in the toolbox is more engaging than video,” Mr. Womack said.

“The sight, sound and motion of video are immersive and allow an audience to transport itself into the brand’s world,” he said. “It deepens relationships through engagement.”

Final Take

Erin Shea, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York