

MULTICHANNEL

5 luxury marketing trends of 2012

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By TRICIA CARR

Trends emerged throughout 2012 to suggest that affluent consumers crave a mix of technology and tradition when interacting with luxury marketers.

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Luxury Daily

It is safe to say that all marketers looked to strengthen their presence on digital and mobile mediums this year to keep up with the consumer demand for cross-channel content. At the same time, affluent consumers are longing for special attention from marketers through traditional channels.

Marketing trends that manifested during 2012 show that luxury brands and retailers established a definitive voice on print, digital and mobile. Here are five luxury marketing trends of 2012:

Mobile enhances the traditional brand experience

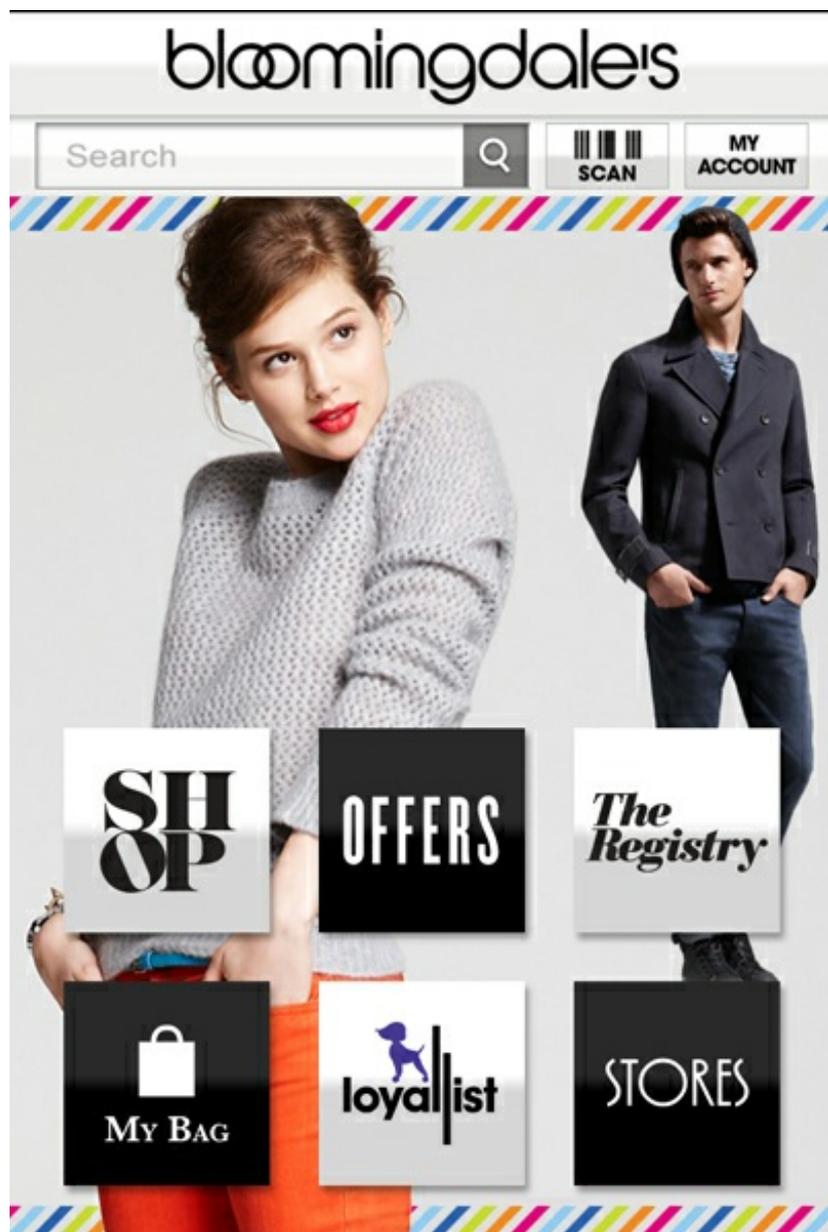
Consumers buy products and services from luxury brands because they seek a quality product as well as an experience.

Mobile is clearly a versatile medium, hence why so many marketers are present on the platform.

Therefore, retailers and hotel brands looked to enhance the physical brand experience with mobile to be more distinguished on both fronts.

Department store chain Bloomingdale's rolled out an iPhone and Android application in May so that consumers can use certain functions whether they are in-store or at home.

The in-store bar code scanner lets customers view additional product details and read customer reviews, enhancing the shopping experience through user-submitted content that is not otherwise accessible ([see story](#)).



Bloomingdale's mobile app

In the travel sector, Starwood Hotels & Resorts' Starwood Preferred Guest program updated its mobile app this year to create a seamless, guest-centric experience for all nine of its brands including St. Regis and The Luxury Collection.

SPG's app updates include content based on whether or not the user is planning, en route or already checked-in to a specific hotel.

There are quite a few new features that can leverage the Starwood brand, but particularly a new user interface that aggregates a user-specific look and content based on the consumer's booking and staying process ([see story](#)).

Technological displays bridge the digital-physical gap

Digital is a powerful tool for luxury brands and retailers, but smart marketers keep tabs on their relationships with customers across all channels and look to strengthen them through face-to-face contact.

Technology-enhanced events or displays were not only used to impress affluent consumers, but they also helped them to feel more comfortable with the brand from a cross-channel perspective.

Some marketers let consumers interact with the brand physically and digitally at technology-driven displays this year.

For instance, German automaker Audi opened its first digital showroom in London to personalize customer service and attract tech-savvy consumers to a more central, compact space than a traditional shop.

The in-store digital experience called Audi City will roll out to more than 20 international cities by 2015. Offerings at Audi City include one-on-one interactions with Audi customer service and new bespoke options.

Consumers can select vehicle options from a digital media system that include colors, equipment options and functions. There are more than 100 million possible configurations.

Then, consumers can view their bespoke vehicle on a 1:1 scale on large screens ([see story](#)).



Audi City

Known for its digital savvy, British fashion house Burberry opened its most technologically-advanced property in September that was developed as a physical expression of Burberry.com, fully immersing shoppers in a combined digital and physical experience.

The Burberry store is also more technologically-innovative when dealing with

merchandising and inventory ([see story](#)).



Regent Street store

Marketers are asserting their expertise through brand content

More luxury marketers are looking to immerse consumers in the brand experience by providing content –whether it be imagery or readings – that asserts them as an expert in their industry.

No longer can it be assumed that consumers are aware of the heritage of a brand or the craftsmanship behind its products and services with the new wave of affluent millennials present in the marketplace.

Therefore, marketers emphasized status and lifestyle through digital storytelling.

French fashion house Chanel remodeled its Web site to more effectively intertwine product browsing with content and imagery so that visitors become immersed in the brand world.

Photography and videos will continue to be more visible on the site as well as news items and blog posts from its various editorial ventures ([see story](#)).



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Chanel's Web site

Also, French label Louis Vuitton created buzz for this summer's Shanghai fashion show through a content-based digital initiative that followed a photographer from the brand's

base in Paris to the show's set.

The label looked to engage its consumers in the days leading up to the runway show by posting daily videos and images taken by photographer and blogger Todd Selby while he is traveling by train.

The Louis Vuitton Express campaign was hosted on a microsite and the label spread the content via social media ([see story](#)).



Moscow image

The future of social is commerce

Marketers have realized the potential for social media to build a strong brand community of loyalists, frequent customers and aspirational fans.

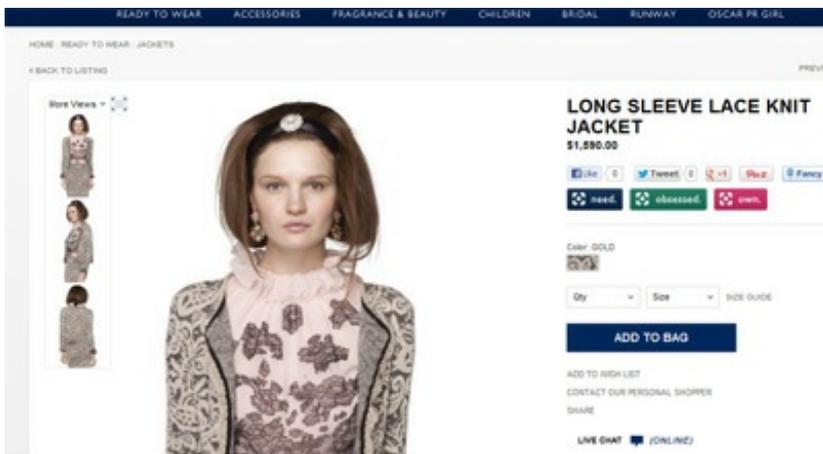
What some are also realizing is the medium's influence on sales.

Luxury marketers included subtle yet direct commerce calls to action into their social media strategies this year so that their followers could easily access certain products or share them with their friends.

Oscar de la Renta boosted brand affinity, connectivity and online transactions through its new Web site that it launched in August.

The site features unique social media interactivity, videos and exclusive content. The interactive elements intertwine the buying and social media experience to result in a new kind of ecommerce.

Consumers can select "need," "obsessed" or "own" on an item. Clicking on one of these options connects the Oscar de la Renta Web site to Facebook where consumers' friends can see if they own, want or are "obsessing over" a product ([see story](#)).



Oscar de la Renta product page

Additionally, precision-cut crystal maker Swarovski hosted a street-style contest for this year's Fashion's Night Out that centered on a user-made look book created through an exclusive partnership with 52Grams, a mobile platform where brands can curate shoppable look books from Instagram images.

The 52Grams look book showed all of the tagged Instagram images. If a user uploaded an image of Swarovski jewelry, 52Grams tagged the image with a link to the item on Swarovski's ecommerce site ([see story](#)).

To end the year, marketers including Michael Kors and Nordstrom were invited to test the Facebook Collections interface that lets users interact with products via image tagging.

Users can put an item on their Wishlist, add a product-specific comment and click to purchase an item from the respective retailer through the test functions ([see story](#)).



Michael Kors Facebook image

Marketers reaped the benefits of niche publications

New niche publications for the affluent audience emerged this year in which luxury brands took up the bulk of the ad real estate.

Print is a traditional medium that mature consumers probably read often, but it is also a platform that has maintained its sheen to all age groups due to its contrast against digital content.

Luxury brands and retailers that placed ads in niche print publications this year not only

tapped the luster and lifestyle of these magazines, but also reached a tailored group of consumers with compelling imagery.

Ralph Lauren, David Yurman, Estée Lauder, Dom Pérignon, Audemars Piguet, Breitling and other luxury advertisers scored key placements in the inaugural print issue of status publication DuJour.

The oversized 312-page publication flaunted a card-stock cover and luxury brand ads throughout, ending with a back-cover Hermès ad.

DuJour targets 3 million of Gilt's ultra-affluent consumers, an audience responsible for spending more than \$600 million annually ([see story](#)).

Also, Giorgio Armani, Ermenegildo Zegna, Tod's and Louis Vuitton were just some of the advertisers in Fairchild Fashion Media's first issue of M magazine that is geared towards an affluent male audience.

The inaugural M issue featured actor Bradley Cooper, fashion designer Karl Lagerfeld, fashion label Band of Outsiders and Brooklyn Nets' CEO.

Published quarterly, M includes content on lifestyle, fashion, politics, entertainment, sports and cars. M had a starting circulation of 75,000 sent to affluent men with a household income of \$200,000 ([see story](#)).

Final Take

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