

MOBILE

Porsche Design revs up mobile savvy with branded BlackBerry

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By ERIN SHEA

Porsche Design is revving up its efforts to target affluent smartphone users through the sale of a new branded BlackBerry that is exclusively available at London-based department store Harrods at launch.

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The new P'9981 smartphone went on sale Jan. 2 at Harrods. The launch was promoted on Porsche Design's and Harrods' Twitter accounts using the hashtag #PorscheDesignBlackBerry.

"Porsche drivers are among the most loyal automobile owners in the world," said Jeff Hasen, chief marketing officer of [Hipcricket](#), Seattle. "It makes sense that some brand enthusiasts would want their phones to be Porsche-branded, especially since it will sell in Porsche boutique stores.

"Mobile devices are personal," he said. "They ring how we want them to, are accessorized to our particular tastes and oftentimes make fashion statements."

Mr. Hasen is not affiliated with Porsche Design, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

[Porsche Design](#) did not respond by press deadline.

Luxury device

The P'9981 smartphone retails for approximately \$2,000. It is available exclusively at Porsche Design shops including the shop at Harrods.

The smartphone has a QWERTY keyboard and a 2.8 touchscreen with a stainless steel frame and leather backing.

The phone includes the BlackBerry 7 OS that offers a faster and more responsive experience on devices, per BlackBerry.



P'9981 BlackBerry smartphone

The smartphone also comes with a 1.2 GHz processor, 8 GB of memory, 720p HD video recording, a 5 MP camera, Wi-Fi connectivity and a replaceable battery.

In addition, the phone also includes certain functions to make it unique to its user.

The P'9981 comes with the Wikitude World Browser that can find information about the user's surroundings such as restaurant locations and reviews. It integrates with BlackBerry Messenger so users can find out if any of their contacts are nearby as well.

Also, the phone features a customized Porsche Design user interface that includes a premium Porsche Design PIN number. This is unique to the P'9981 so that users can identify other P'9981 users.

Power of partnerships

Porsche Design and Harrods took to their social media accounts to promote the new smartphone.

Both marketers made sure to mention the device with the hashtag

#PorscheDesignBlackBerry to encourage other Twitter users to do the same.



Porsche Design
@PorscheDesign



We're starting 2013 with a big bang: Today is the exclusive launch of our new **#PorscheDesignBlackberry @Harrods** pic.twitter.com/YhMSXUno

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Porsche Design's Twitter

Harrods promoted the launch of the P'9981 on its Facebook page and Twitter account as well.

The screenshot shows a Facebook post from the page 'Harrods's Photos'. The post features a high-quality image of the Porsche Design P'9981 smartphone, which is a blackberry-style smartphone with a full QWERTY keyboard. The phone is shown at an angle, highlighting its sleek design and the 'PORSCHE DESIGN' branding at the top of the screen. Below the image, there are 'Like' and 'Comment' buttons. The post text reads: 'We are delighted to announce that the second version of the Porsche Design Smartphone will launch exclusively at Harrods on Wednesday 2nd January. The new-look P'9981 Smartphone will be available exclusively at the Porsche Design shop (Third Floor)'. To the right of the text, it says 'Album: Timeline Photos', 'Shared with: Public', and 'View Larger'.

Harrods' Facebook post

Before the holiday season, Porsche Design launched another product partnership with

spirits brand Johnnie Walker.

Johnnie Walker and Porsche Design created and marketed a collection of products that included limited-edition bottles and made-to-order bars for the home.

The Johnnie Walker Blue Label collection with Porsche Design allowed the brand to market in not only the spirits category, but the gifts category as well ([see story](#)).

These partnerships could help Porsche Design reach new consumers by having a presence in multiple markets.

Although BlackBerry is not as relevant in the United States as it once was, the brand has a strong following internationally in areas such as South Africa, per Mr. Hasen.

“The value of an association with a diminished brand like BlackBerry is questionable for Porsche Design,” Mr. Hasen said. “But the device will have limited distribution and visibility, so there is likely more upside than downside.”

Final take

Erin Shea, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

Embedded Video: <http://www.youtube.com/embed/QCe5oNABH10>

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