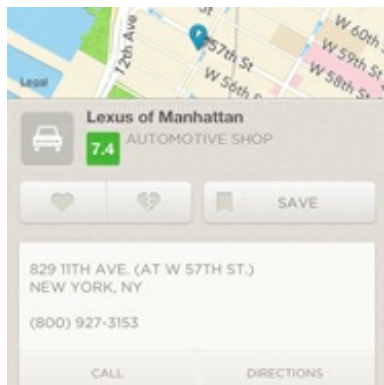


INTERNET

What is the up-and-coming social strategy for luxury marketers?

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By ERIN SHEA

Luxury marketers should continue to build up their presence on social media platforms that they already use and look to expand to new platforms only if their audience is there, experts say.

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Social media became an increasingly important platform on which marketers engaged with their fans in 2012. Now, marketers that have been active on standard social outlets should look for new and relevant platforms to engage consumers only if their target audience is already active on that platform.

“If social media is not already one of the tools in your luxury marketing tool kit then you are already way, way behind,” said Christine Kirk, CEO of [Social Muse Communications](#), Los Angeles. “There are plenty of luxury brands already engaging with new platforms such as foursquare and Pinterest.

“However, it is important for a luxury brand not to just jump onto a social media platform because it is new and shiny,” she said. “What a luxury brand should be concerned with when determining which social media platform to become a part of is if their audience is using that platform.

“If not, the effort is just a waste of a brand’s time and resources since they will not get the results they are looking for.”

Uncharted territory

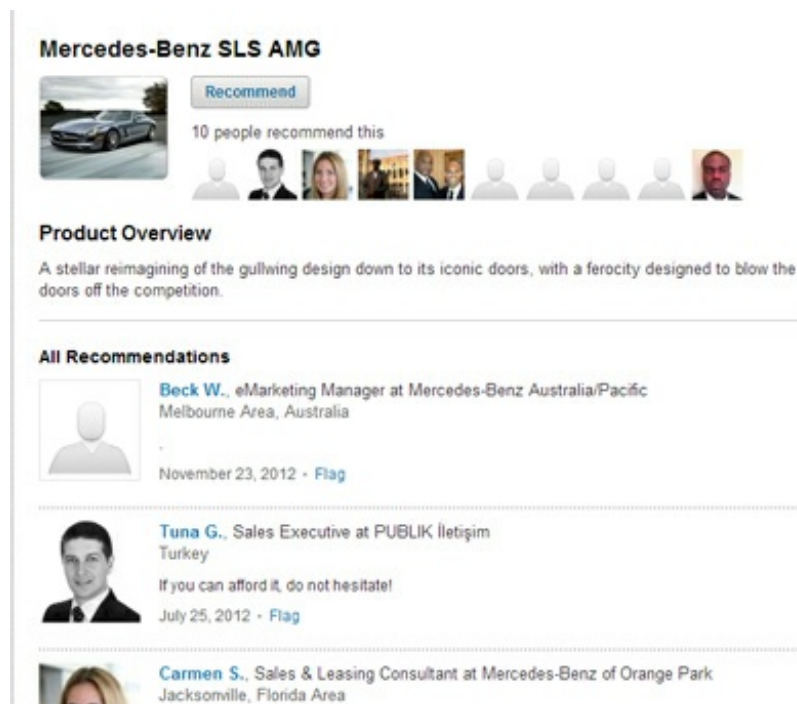
In 2012, many luxury marketers created accounts on various social media platforms that were previously ignored.

For instance, a couple of brands took to career-oriented social network LinkedIn to showcase products.

Luxury marketers such as Jaeger-LeCoultre and Mercedes-Benz USA are pushing products through redesigned LinkedIn.

LinkedIn features a new section on brand pages where they can showcase products and services. In turn, users can make recommendations and share products and information through posts on their profiles

The user recommendations are then displayed on the product’s page ([see story](#)).

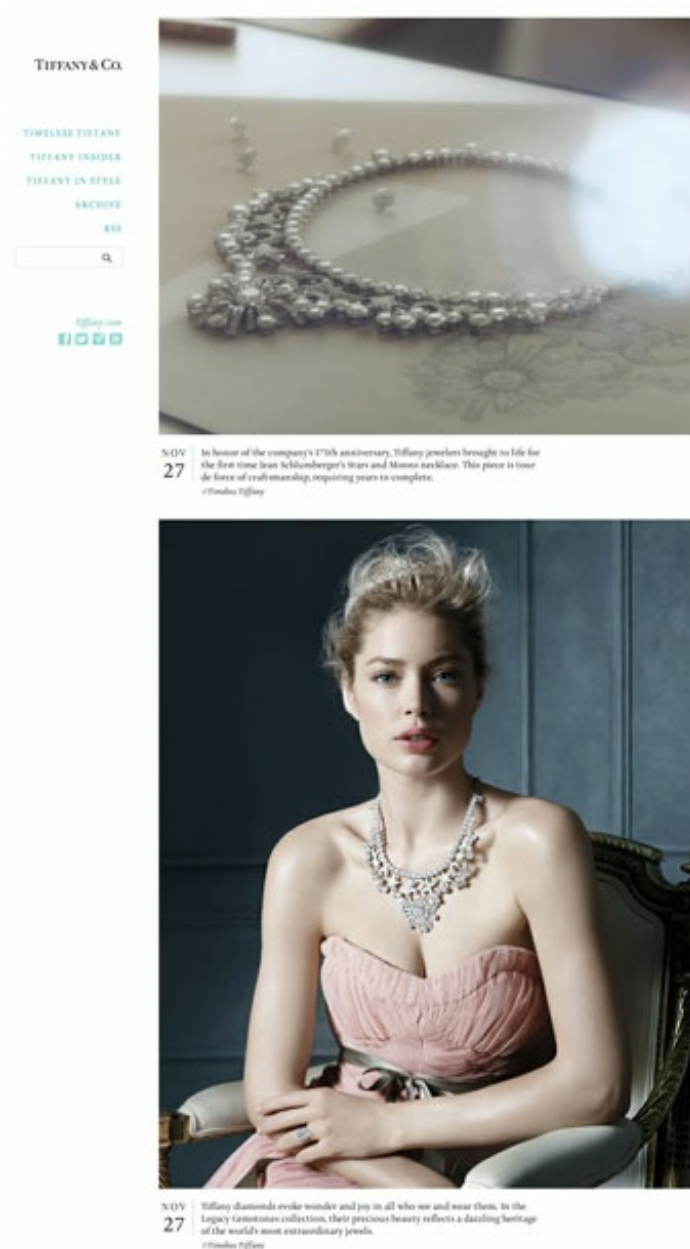


The screenshot shows a LinkedIn product page for the Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG. At the top, there is a product image and a 'Recommend' button. Below this, it states '10 people recommend this' and shows a row of 10 user profile pictures. The 'Product Overview' section describes the car as 'A stellar reimagining of the gullwing design down to its iconic doors, with a ferocity designed to blow the doors off the competition.' The 'All Recommendations' section lists three users: Beck W., eMarketing Manager at Mercedes-Benz Australia/Pacific; Tuna G., Sales Executive at PUBLIK İletişim; and Carmen S., Sales & Leasing Consultant at Mercedes-Benz of Orange Park.

Product recommendations on LinkedIn

In addition, jeweler Tiffany & Co. upped its social media prowess through the creation of a Tumblr page on which it exclusively premiered a new social video and images of its Legendary Gemstones 175th anniversary collection.

The “From Out of the Blue” Tumblr page launched in dedication to the brand’s 175th anniversary and shows its heritage through images and commentary ([see story](#)).



Tiffany & Co. Tumblr

A variety of social media campaigns on various platforms can help strengthen a brand and further engage its audience, if done correctly.

“Luxury marketers must be ardent about social media and how they are going to leverage the amalgam of platforms to integrate holistically into their marketing mix,” said Kendra Bracken-Ferguson, cofounder and managing director of **Digital Brand Architects**, New York.

“Balancing a plethora of platforms is essential in creating a comprehensive digital marketing strategy,” she said.

However, experts agree that brands should get involved on other platforms only if their target audience is active there.

“The key for digital marketers is to follow your customers,” said Marko Z. Muellner, senior director of marketing at **ShopIgniter**, Portland, OR.

Brands should take the time to explore a new medium before diving in head first just

because it is currently trending.

“Luxury marketers need to stay focused on their brand promise and on the popular consumer trends that enable them to deliver on it,” Mr. Muellner said.

Old platform, new tricks

Luxury marketers should also look to new technology that is being incorporated into platforms that are already being used such as Facebook check-ins and applications.

For instance, Toyota Corp.’s Lexus enhanced its year-end December to Remember Sales Event through a mobile initiative that allowed consumers to influence a donation through Facebook or foursquare check-ins.

Consumers could visit a custom URL at <http://lexuscheckinforcharity.com> to be directed to a Facebook application on which they could register to have their check-ins tallied through Jan. 2. Each check-in triggered a \$10 donation made by Lexus to the Boys & Girls Clubs of America with a check-in at any Lexus dealership doubling a consumer’s donation tally for the day ([see story](#)).

“Facebook is the most fully-formed end-to-end marketing ecosystem,” Mr. Muellner said.

“Digital marketers can and should be developing strategies in Facebook that include reach and frequency with a mix of organic and paid media, surprise and delight with interactive content and an effort to drive sharing and opt-in choices,” he said.

Additionally, luxury marketers must learn how to tailor their message to what the audience wants on a specific social media platform.

They must also remember that strategies differ between media.

“Luxury brands must take the time to master and harness each platform to suit the needs of both the brand and the consumer, keeping in mind that one size does not fit all,” Digital Brand Architects’ Ms. Bracken-Ferguson said.

Overall, the goal of any luxury marketer’s social media campaign is to engage consumers and lead them to purchases.

“Every luxury brand needs to be thinking about how they can reach key customers, compel them to explore deeper, and get them on the path to purchase or to opt-in to ongoing communication,” he said.

Final take

Erin Shea, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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