

MOBILE

Luxury retailers push in-app purchases via Valentine's Day guides

February 4, 2013



By TRICIA CARR

Bloomingdale's, Nordstrom and Saks Fifth Avenue optimized their Valentine's Day shopping guides for mobile smartphone and tablet applications to encourage consumers to make emotional purchases on-the-go.

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Luxury Daily

Retailers can certainly benefit from providing seasonal gift guides on mobile apps so that consumers can browse the same products on their desktop, smartphone and tablet. Though in-app purchases will not make or break sales during a gifting holiday such as Valentine's Day, it is vital for the shopping experience to be optimized for mobile to keep up with the shift from ecommerce to mobile commerce, experts say.

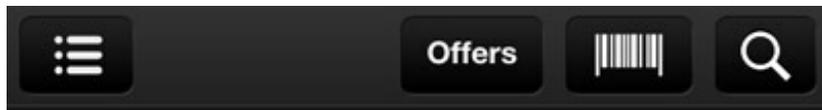
"Mobile Web usage is surging and is predicted to overtake the fixed Internet by 2014," said Michael Goldberg, senior director of marketing and communications at [Martini Media](#), New York. "That's because it is accessible anytime, anywhere."

"Consumers are on their mobile devices while they are doing other things like watching television, commuting, even dining out," he said. "It tends to be the first place people go for shopping ideas and recommendations when they are in the decision process – typically in-store."

“Personally, if I am shopping for a Valentine's Day gift for my wife, I like the fact that I can privately search for ideas on my phone versus leaving a record of visiting high-end jewelry store sites on our shared desktop, only to have my wife get her hopes up when I buy her candy and flowers.”

Love to shop

Saks Fifth Avenue is pushing its Valentine's Day Gift Shop via its iPhone and iPad apps.

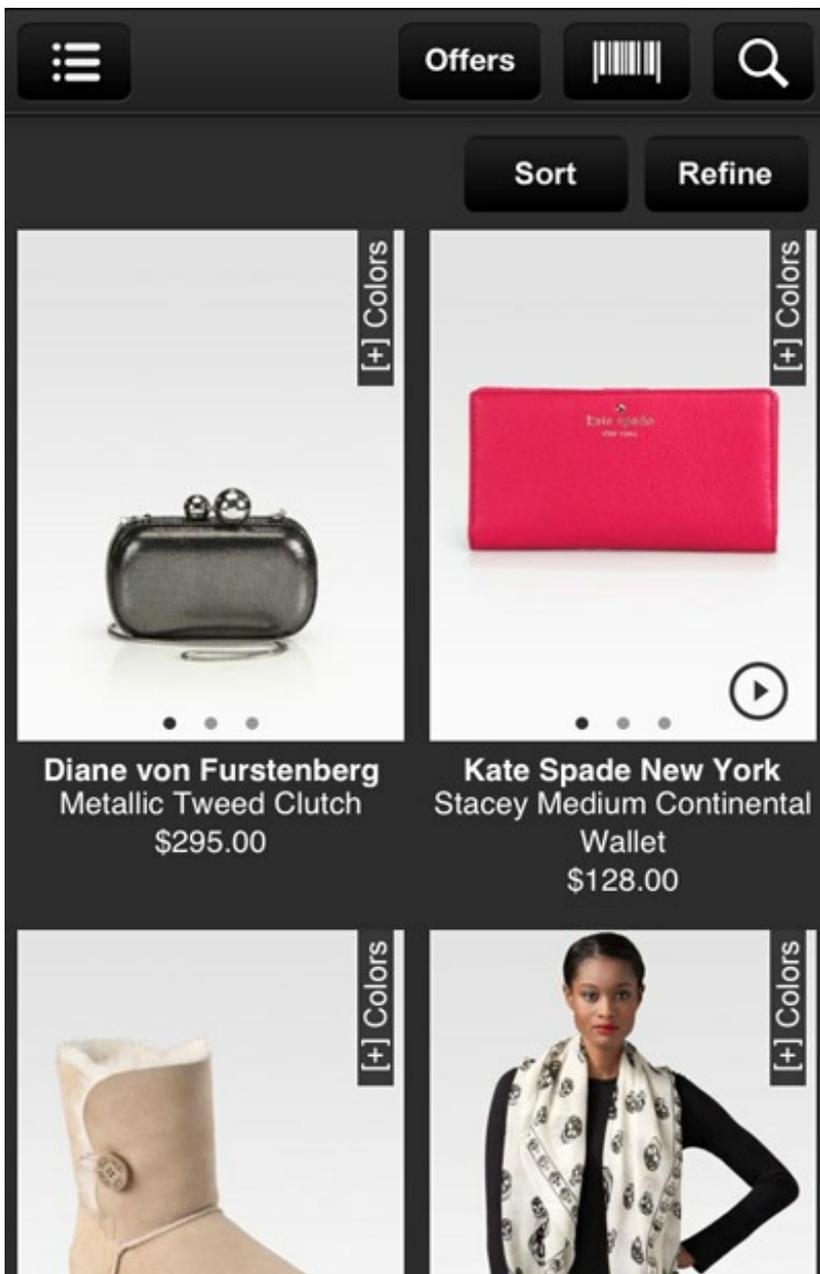


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Saks mobile app

The guide features a collection of apparel, accessories, shoes, jewelry and beauty products that consumers can browse and purchase via the apps.

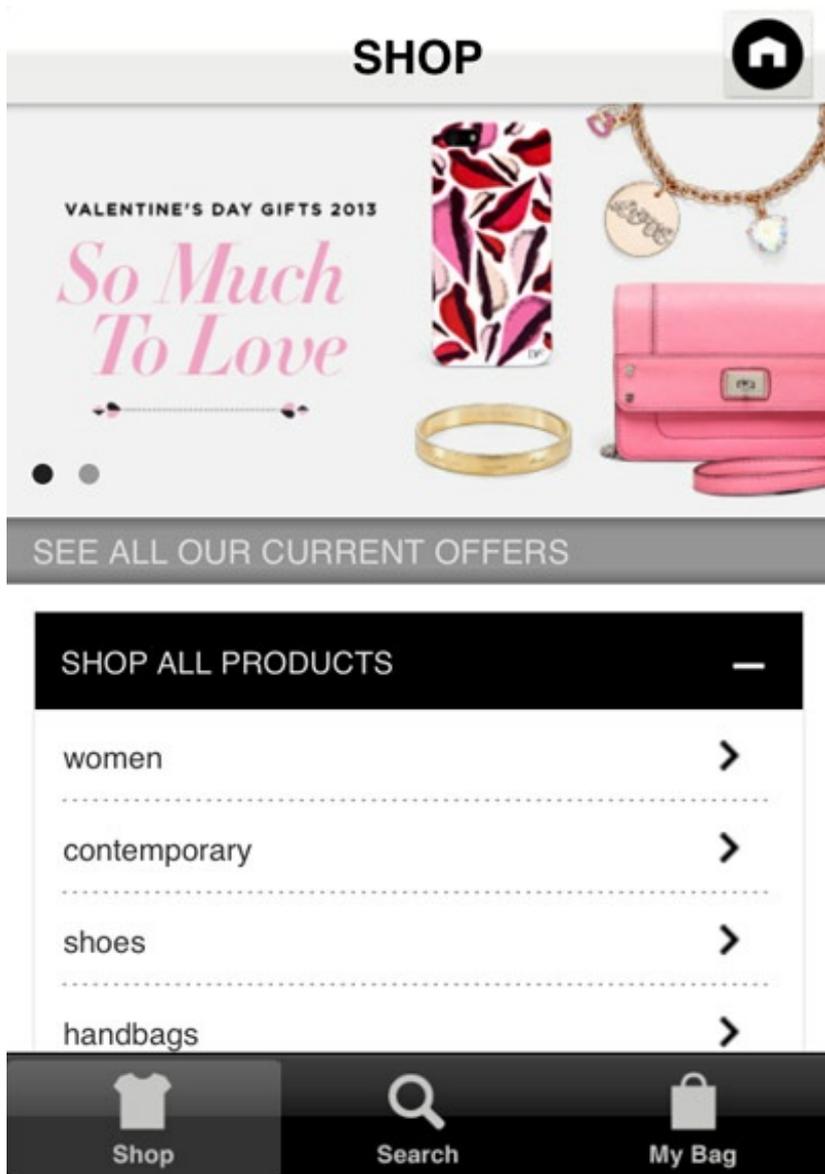


Valentine's Day items

Items in the gift guide include Diane von Furstenberg's Metallic Tweed Clutch for \$295, La Mer's The Collection set for \$285, Jimmy Choo's Anouk Suede Pumps for \$595, Prada's Daino Mini Hobo Bag for \$455 and Fendi's Pequin Busta Striped Canvas Tote for \$595.

App users can choose the color and size, if applicable, and add items to their in-app shopping guide.

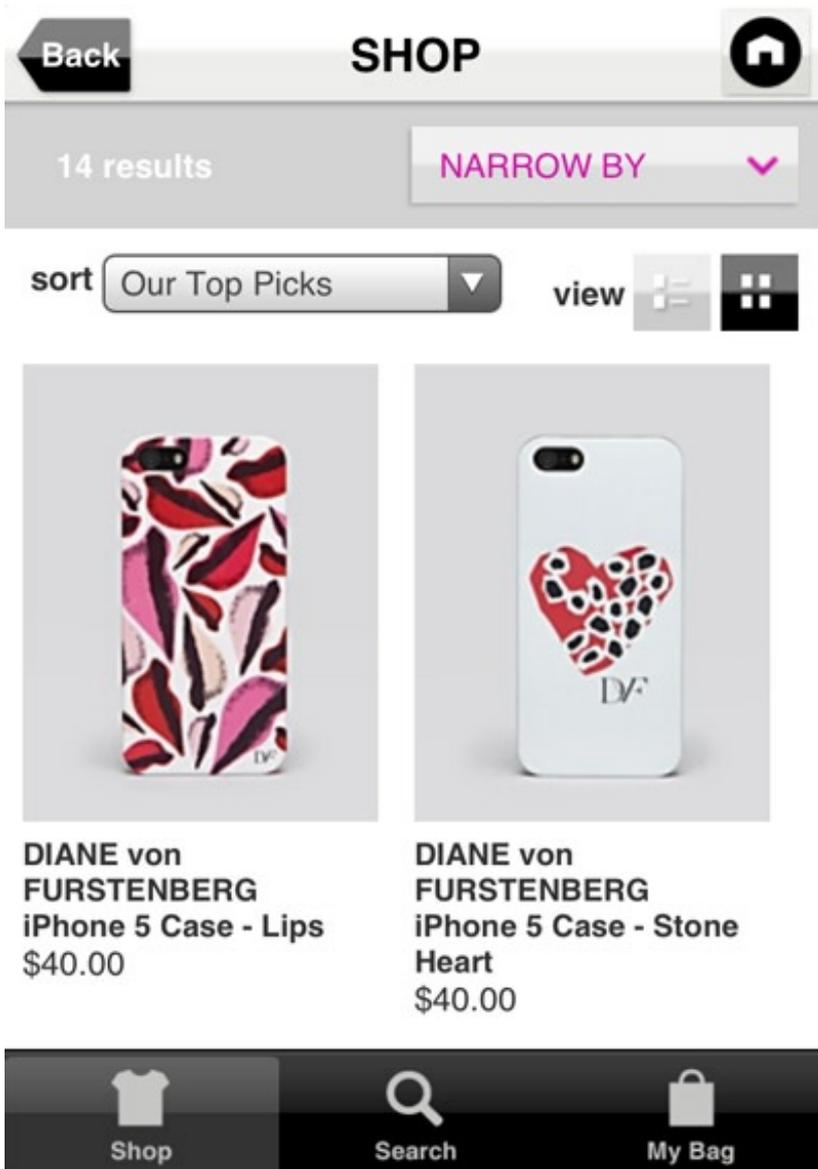
Also, Bloomingdale's is offering a "So Much to Love" gift guide in its Big Brown Bag mobile app for the iPhone and Android devices.



Bloomingdale's app

The guide is split into gifts for him, gifts for her and gifts under \$100. Users can narrow each category by brand and price range.

Brands included in the gift guide are Marc Jacobs, Salvatore Ferragamo, Milly and Diane von Furstenberg.



Diane von Furstenberg items

Additionally, Nordstrom's smartphone app contains the retailer's LoveWorks Valentine's Day gift guide that is split by gifts for him and her. Subcategories in each of these sections allow users to shop by recipient, price, item type and Nordstrom's favorite gifts.



Nordstrom app

For example, the Longtime Love recipient category under the women's section of the gift guide includes items such as Valentino's medium Lock Genuine Snakeskin Shoulder Bag for \$2,995 and Dolce & Gabbana's Light Blue gift set for \$68.

Other brands included in the gift guide are Marc Jacobs, Saint Laurent Paris, Valentino, Jimmy Choo, Alexander McQueen, Prada, Miu Miu, Fendi and Rebecca Minkoff.

All in the app

Gift guides are one way that luxury retailers can raise awareness for the commerce functions of their mobile and tablet applications.

Nowadays, the ability to make a purchase within an app is vital for all retailers, especially luxury retailers, per Melody Adhami, president and chief operating officer of **Plastic Mobile**, Toronto.

When users are browsing on a mobile device and they find a product, mobile commerce

platforms allow them to buy it right then and there.

“In fact, I think because luxury shopping has such an emotional element, allowing users to make that purchase immediately can provide a sense of reward,” Ms. Adhami said.

“A retailer that facilitates shopping on the spot can benefit from a lower drop-off rate – when customers change their mind, find something else or go elsewhere,” she said.

“Being able to make a purchase right away is part and parcel with the overall immediacy and convenience of the mobile channel. It just makes sense.”

Site for sore fingers

However, app purchases are not make-or-break for luxury retailers, per Martini Media’s Mr. Goldberg.

At times, an app is the right platform for certain mobile marketing efforts such as those to drive engagement and awareness.

But mobile sites may be more beneficial for luxury retailers since an app is less likely to be found, installed and consistently used.

Indeed, luxury retailers need to push repeat usage of their apps so that the effort is worthwhile in the long run.

Marketers that are looking to leverage the brand experience should use mobile applications to do so and encourage repeat usage through personalization, exclusive content and functions that enhance the journey to purchase, experts say ([see story](#)).

Mobile users are more likely use a search engine to find a product, which leads to a retailer’s mobile site.

“Even while in a brick-and-mortar store, consumers will search for product reviews and information, and the best place to grab that user’s attention is on a mobile-optimized Web site,” Mr. Goldberg said.

“The numbers prove that a mobile investment will be worthwhile, especially for luxury brands,” he said. “Seventy-seven percent of affluent users now own a smartphone and 47 percent own tablets, and almost half made a purchase on their mobile device.

“Mobile is surging and its growth is expected to continue.”

Final Take

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