

INTERNET

Neiman Marcus integrates social commentary with ecommerce guide

February 19, 2013



By TRICIA CARR

Department store chain Neiman Marcus is incorporating style tips from its Facebook fans into content for its online magazine InSite and an email campaign.



Luxury marketers often encourage Facebook fan feedback on the social network itself. Neiman Marcus took this feedback a step further by incorporating comments from fans into content on InSite and an email.

"Inclusion of social tips or comments makes sense," said Paul Farkas, cofounder/CEO of [ULN Ultra Lifestyle Network](#), New York. "It instills opportunity for the consumer-base to engage and builds reputation that luxury brands are digitally modern and social."

Mr. Farkas is not affiliated with Neiman Marcus, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

[Neiman Marcus](#) did not respond before press deadline.

Fans know best

Neiman Marcus sent an email Feb. 15 with the subject line "How to dress for Date Night" that linked to a style guide on its ecommerce site.



Email

The content of the email and the shopping guide located on the retailer's InSite online magazine is partly driven by Neiman Marcus' Facebook fan feedback on each suggested trend.

The email linked to two parts of Neiman Marcus' ecommerce site. Recipients could click on the first call to action "Shop our favorite going-out looks" to **shop items** from brands such as Dolce & Gabbana, Diane von Furstenberg, Saint Laurent Paris and Christian Louboutin.

Women's and men's items are included such as the Carolina Herrera Drop-Waist Duchess Cocktail Dress in red for \$3,290, the Lanvin Overdyed Cotton Suit and Gingham Button-Down Shirt priced at \$375-\$1,495, the Saint Laurent Strappy Studed Leather Sandal for \$1,295 and the Christian Louboutin Marquise Metallic Python Clutch Bag in silver for \$1,995.

The second part of the email campaign brought consumers to the magazine-style shopping guide located on the retailer's Web site through the call to action, "Our most fashionable Facebook fans share how they'd style it on InSite."

The content is four pages within Neiman Marcus' InSite magazine. The cover page of the guide mimics the email campaign and tells consumers about the content.



First page

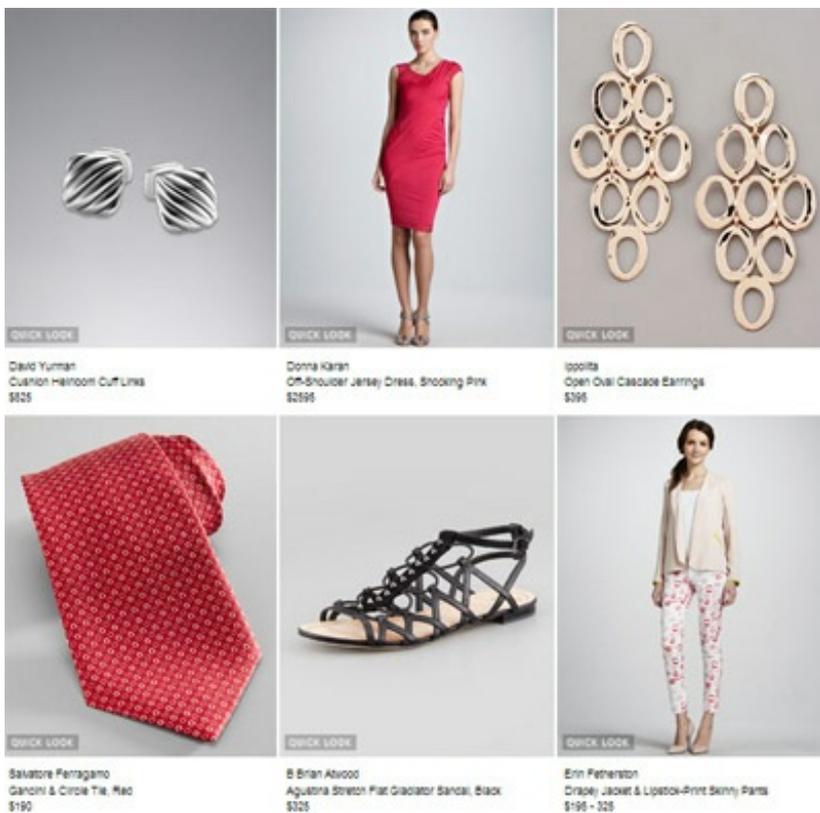
The next page tells consumers to dress in red for a dinner date. The featured item is the Diane von Furstenberg Messon Half-Sleeve Dress in red for \$135.

To the right of the page, Facebook fans weigh-in with by finishing the sentence, "Wear it..." Tips include "With Chanel No. 5" from Russ G. and "With nude shoes and lots of mixed gold and silver jewelry" from Joan L.



Second page

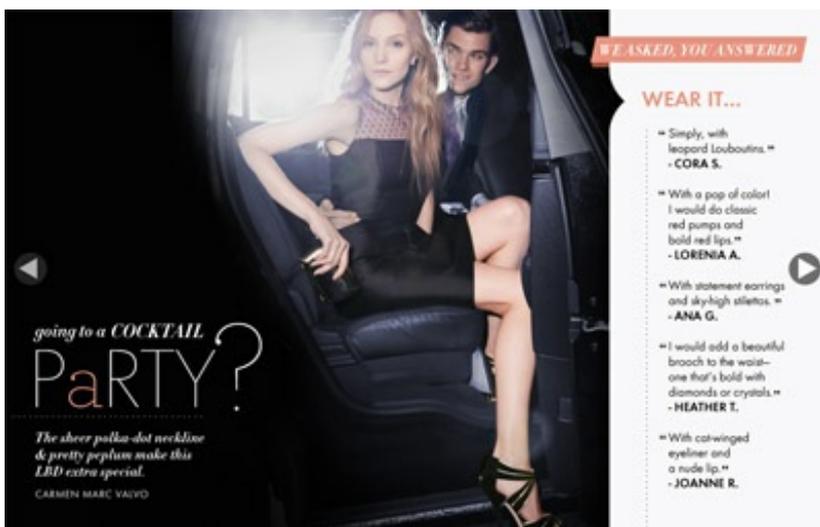
Consumers can click to shop the items in the guide including the red dress.



Shop the guide

The next page of the guide tells consumers to wear a black dress with a statement neckline to a cocktail party. The featured piece is the Carmen Marc Valvo Dot-Print Peplum Cocktail Dress for \$525.

To the right, Facebook fan style tips include “With statement earrings and sky-high stilettos” by Ana G. and “I would add a beautiful brooch to the waist – one that’s bold with diamonds or crystals” by Heather T.

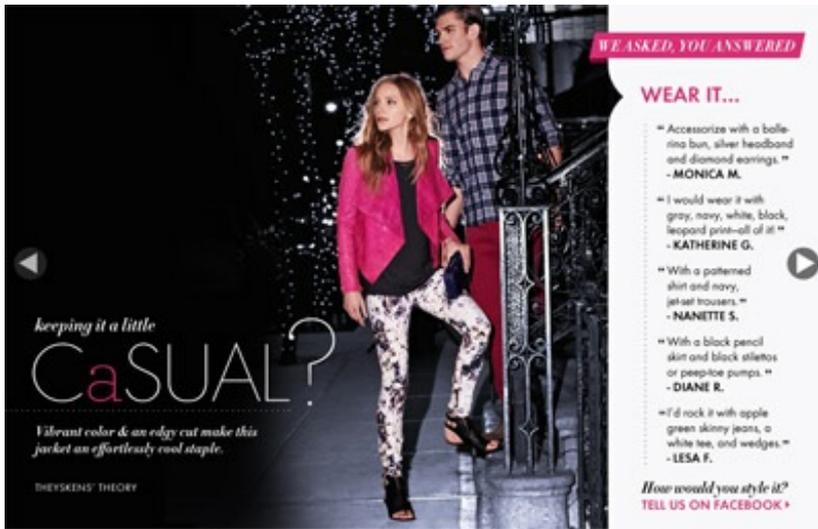


Third page

The last page of the shopping guide is dedicated to casual dressing with pieces such as the Neiman Marcus Perforated Draped Leather Jacket for \$425.

Facebook users finished “Wear it...” on this page with tips such as “Accessorize with a ballerina bun, silver headband and diamond earrings” by Monica M. and “With a

patterned shirt and navy jet-set trousers" by Nanette S.



Fourth page

"It's refreshing to see Neiman Marcus embrace and highlight its Facebook community's style through curation, rather than overtly run a contest," Mr. Farkas said. "However, it strips much of the essence of Facebook as a medium with fan advice wholly flush with the guide's layout, devoid of the icons, avatars and overall blue hue of the social network.

"While Facebook's aesthetics aren't very fashionable from an editorial standpoint, one or two minor design elements would serve to bridge such s-currency for readership, especially for a magalog," he said.

Speak out

Luxury marketers that share consumer-generated content in social campaigns likely do so to give an incentive for engagement with a reward of acknowledging their fandom.

Automakers are taking this approach as well.

For example, German automaker Porsche is honoring its 5 million Facebook fans by letting them collaborate to design a 911 Carrera 4S vehicle.

The automaker has launched an interactive campaign on a Facebook application where fans can vote on the characteristics of a 911 Carrera 4S which it seems that Porsche will produce ([see story](#)).

In addition, BMW of North America used fan-created videos as the content for a contest that took up a dedicated section of its YouTube page.

The automaker encouraged consumer participation in the contest that showcased the new 3 Series with the videos that were all 5.9 seconds in length, the same amount of time that it takes the car to go from 0-60 miles per hour.

Consumers could vote for their favorite video to decide which creator would win a new 3 Series sedan ([see story](#)).

Luxury marketers that embrace their social media community in this manner will

eventually reap the benefits.

"Most of all, they are further steps towards social shopping as authentic peer influence potentially will be as effective as ad spend or celebrity endorsement," Mr. Farkas said.

Final Take

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