

INTERNET

Smythson taps bridal season for brand extension

April 8, 2013



By TRICIA CARR

British leather goods maker Smythson is targeting affluent brides with a new online wedding invitation service and is showing off the craftsmanship behind its stationery products through video.

[Sign up now](#)

Luxury Daily

Smythson introduced consumers to the new online Wedding Stationery service on its digital channels by letting them see how different invitations are made. Around this time of year luxury marketers that do not customarily appeal to brides are tapping the wedding season to boost sales.

"High-end consumers who are already familiar with the brand will be pleased to see this promotion, but that's about all it will accomplish," said Al Ries, founder and chairman of **Ries & Ries**, a Roswell, GA-based marketing strategy consultancy. "The problem is, it lacks a motivating message.

"Not in all categories, of course, but some categories including fine stationery are perfect for wedding season promotions," he said.

Mr. Ries is not affiliated with Smythson, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

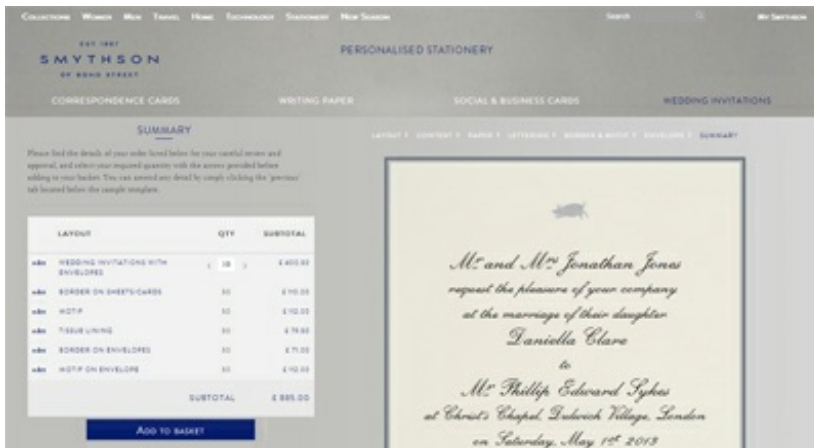
Smythson did not respond before press deadline.

Wedding bells

The new online wedding invitation service offers consumers six personalization options: layout, content, paper, letting, border and motif and envelope.

Smythson offers the wedding-specific tool on its Web site where consumers can complete the six steps and place their order for delivery.

Consumers can design the invitation, preview the design and price and place their order.



The screenshot shows the Smythson website's personalized stationery design tool. The page is titled "PERSONALISED STATIONERY" and features a navigation menu with options for "CORRESPONDENCE CARDS", "WRITING PAPER", "SOCIAL & BUSINESS CARDS", and "WEDDING INVITATIONS". The "WEDDING INVITATIONS" section is active, showing a "SUMMARY" table and a preview of a wedding invitation card.

LAYOUT	QTY	SUBTOTAL
WEDDING INVITATIONS WITH ENVELOPES	1 18 3	£ 400.00
BORDER ON SHEETS/CARDS	30	£ 10.00
MOTIF	30	£ 10.00
TISSUE LINING	30	£ 7.50
BORDER ON ENVELOPES	30	£ 11.00
MOTIF ON ENVELOPE	30	£ 10.00
SUBTOTAL		£ 888.00

The preview shows a wedding invitation card with the following text:

*Mr and Mrs Jonathan Jones
request the pleasure of your company
at the marriage of their daughter
Daniella Clare
to
Mr Phillip Edward Lykes
at Christ's Chapel, Barbours Village, London
on Saturday, May 1st 2013*

Invitation tool

Smythson's wedding invitations start at approximately \$610 for a set with add-ons such as borders, motifs and tissue envelope lining costing extra.

The brand is directing consumers to the new service through digital efforts that span email, its Web site and social media.

One component of the marketing efforts is a video that shows the making of the invitations and raises awareness of the brand's 125-year-old design process.

The 50-second "Art of Personalised Stationery" video shows craftspeople designing custom sets of wedding invitations by hand and using machinery. It was directed by Carter Peabody.



Video still

Smythson's email campaign to push the online wedding invitation service showed recipients the video as well.

Embedded Video: <http://www.youtube.com/embed/jwPPFBK9mKQ>

Art of Personalised Stationery Video

Showing the craft

Despite it being a new service, Smythson is marketing its personalized wedding invitation tool in the same manner that it would market any of its products.

The theme of craftsmanship is relevant across all categories of luxury since it is a factor in the status of a brand.

Craftsmanship has been the subject of other recent digital marketing efforts among these marketers.

For example, leather goods maker Tod's is flaunting its new D.D.Bag in a video that brings awareness to its design process as well as the brand's Italian roots.

The animated film by Italian artist Mauro Seresini shows butterflies that are born from pattern paper and brings viewers along as the insects gather tools to make handbags ([see story](#)).

In addition, British fashion house Burberry showed a glimpse at the craftsmanship involved in constructing items in its autumn/winter 2013 menswear collection through a teaser video and digital promotions for the show ([see story](#)).

Consumers could justify spending a higher amount on luxury goods if they are aware of the expansive design and manufacturing process behind each piece that ensures its quality.

"One of the major trends in marketing is from print promotion - Tweets, blogs - to video promotion, so you can expect many brands, including Smythson, to launch videos," Mr. Ries said.

"But the product itself, fine stationery, doesn't lend itself to good video," he said. "Unlike automobiles and many other products, there's no motion in a piece of paper."

Final Take

Tricia Carr, associate reporter on Luxury Daily, New York

© Napean LLC. All rights reserved.

Luxury Daily is published each business day. Thank you for reading us. Your **feedback** is welcome.