

IN-STORE

## Harrods boosts foot traffic with new exclusive handbag exhibit

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By JOE MCCARTHY

London department store Harrods is increasing foot traffic through the expansion of its luxury accessories department with The Handbag Narratives that rewards consumers with exclusive views and offers.

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**Luxury Daily**

The Handbag Narratives showcases more than 20 luxury designers in the exhibition and several of the handbags have been exclusively crafted for the department store's customers. The event uses the power of narrative to further entice consumers to visit the store.

"This is definitely a way that a retailer can use the physical location of the store to create a deeper and more compelling relationship with the customer," said Dave Rodgerson, senior management consultant of retail strategy and change at [IBM Canada](#), Toronto.

"It's not unlike their recent promotion with the 'Green Man' known as Richard," he said. "It's always fun and exciting when stores create retail theatre, whether it's Richard or the Handbag Narrative.

"If, for example, Stella McCartney or Victoria Beckham were to participate in person to share their stories about what inspired their designs, the concept of the narrative becomes

even more dynamic and interactive."

Mr. Rodgeron is not affiliated with Harrods, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

**Harrods** was unable to comment by press deadline.

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The Handbag Narratives exhibition will feature luxury brands such as Gucci, Prada, Burberry, Fendi and Mulberry.

The displays are arranged in museum-like niches. Each window shows products in a vivid and peculiar context.



*Burberry display*

Some brands lean toward whimsy, while others are more austere in their presentation.



*Fendi display*

Each display will be supplemented with the tale of how the bag was designed and what the brand stands for. Consumers may appreciate the chance to get a glimpse into the brand's architecture.



*Alexander McQueen display*

Consumers will get a sense of the creative process by having the exhibit start with an explanation of a particular product and then expanding into the brand's mission. This layered understanding may fortify a consumer's loyalty to a brand.



*Prada display*

The event aims to drive foot-traffic to the new luxury accessories department. In addition to fans flocking to see the displays, consumers will have a chance to purchase exclusive handbags.

The event runs July 6 to Aug. 24.

Harrod's is broadcasting the event on its social media pages using the hashtag #handbagnarrative.

## Tactile style

Getting consumers to visit a store becomes more challenging and important in an age of online shopping.

Although it is necessary to build easy-to-use Web and mobile sites, driving foot-traffic takes precedence as the bricks-and-mortar location is where a department store exudes its identity.

Luxury department stores have used different tactics to bring consumers in.

For example, retailer Saks Fifth Avenue lured consumers to its New York department store's 10022-Shoe salon to visit the Christian Louboutin boutique, which is the brand's first shop-in-shop in the United States.

The young, female characters in the video seemed to portray the target digital audience of both Saks and Louboutin. Though the video has a light-hearted message, it likely served as a soft reminder for consumers to visit the boutique after its unveiling June 13 and, therefore, drive store traffic ([see story](#)).

Since handbags are generally better suited for sale in stores rather than online, consumers are likely to come into the Harrods store if they are interested in a bag.

"For one, high-end accessories, especially handbags are a tough sell over the Web," said Paula Rosenblum, managing partner at [RSR Research](#), Miami, FL. "If you're going to spend \$6,800 on a bag, you'd like to be able to touch it, feel it and examine all its compartments.

"For another, the opportunity for cross-sells is much higher if the shopper is in the store," she said.

"With the assistance of a knowledgeable sales associate, it's far easier to add a new wallet and other accessories to go with the bag."

## Final Take

*Joe McCarthy, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York*

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