

MOBILE

Mobile social games a natural fit for upscale brands: Appssavvy exec

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Luxury brands should find ways to leverage mobile location-based services to create deep brand engagement and drive sales, according to an appssavvy executive.

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Location-based games such as Foursquare provide an intriguing opportunity for upscale goods and service providers because smartphone users who use the services tend to over-index for household income. Prestige brands should find ways to leverage activities consumers are already performing to generate interest and engagement.

Luxury Daily's Peter Finocchiaro interview Robert Victor, vice president of product and strategy, at [appssavvy](#), New York, about the potential of mobile games for luxury brands. Here is what he said:

What are some keys for luxury brands looking to utilize mobile games?

First I think luxury brands need to take a step back and make sure their Web experiences are optimized for mobile device.

The devices themselves, especial the iPhone and iPad lend themselves to high income users. They are the devices of rich – it's a very high-income-bracket device.

But many luxury brands Web sites are all built in flash. They are very beautiful sites that

lend to art more than typical advertising.

[Luxury brands] have put effort into aesthetics, and they now have large canvas to work with, but they are still using flash.

A study I read, a while back now, maybe a couple of months ago, haven't done said that most of the top ten luxury brands listed by Forbes – their websites did not render properly or have full functionality on iPad.

Step one for best practice is to make sure their Web experience works on devices before worrying about going into games.

Once you fix that and you can leverage that rich experience.



What types of mobile gaming are good for engaging luxury consumers?

I would say the main thing is to not just limit yourself to games as we think in traditional sense.

Yes, devices do segment people such that someone playing any game would probably have higher income, and probably be in the luxury goods bracket, especially those that have iPhone or iPad. They're already holding a luxury good.

While [consumers] are already using luxury goods, to them reach them with others is a safe bet.

When I think of these consumers, I think of certain game elements.

People that are in the luxury goods market have really taken to social activity through mobile devices.

When I look to luxury goods, I look to bring them into activities they're always performing.

For example, [appssavvy] works with an application called Ski Report. I wouldn't think of it as a game in and of self.

[The application] lets users post ski conditions and share the information with their friends. It is playing game of life through social mobile device.

This application has a higher-income-bracket user. It is a great place for luxury goods to reach consumers.

Similarly, luxury brands should be looking at how you can drive people to perform certain

interactions through location-based services as games – game-ification.

If you were to reach consumers through a mobile game, while also allowing them to then visit store, you can get value out of them playing the game.

One idea is a walk down Madison Avenue, checking into a little bistro here, a local wine shop here and ending at the Hermes gallery.

So there are tons of opportunities for luxury brands to create higher levels of engagement through social activities in game.

What are some pitfalls for luxury brands looking to develop mobile games?

One of the pitfalls I would avoid – I've heard of a trend where luxury goods companies go out trying to build their own apps and games. That's something I would probably avoid if I were them.

The best way to reach consumers is find activities they are always performing and find apps where they performing those activities.

We make sure we find the best activity to engage consumers with these brands.

I would not necessarily go into building my own application because first that means building my own game.

Then what you would have to build a mass audience to play the game. It is a two-step process.

Advertisers don't put an ad in magazine then its raise circulation.

A pitfall I would avoid is not realizing that by building app you are now in the software business.

Which luxury brands have done location-based games well?

This is not quite a luxury brand, but H&M did something particularly well when they were trying to do their My Blues sale. They reached people in places where they were near stores. It was a localized experience that drove you into their store.

In terms of real, true luxury brands, I have not seen it yet. I am waiting for it.

The opportunity is there for them. They should be looking for something like a Ski Report on the iPad or iPhone where you already have a high income audience.

I can think of no better opportunity for luxury brand to get involved and be part of conversation.

I'm waiting for a great one.

Volvo recently did a campaign similar to H&M, targeting people who checked in using an LBS application at competing car dealerships, promoting a car called the Ff60, which is one of bigger sedans.

That [initiative] had similar success as H&M, reaching people who were obviously

affluent, checking in at BMW or Mercedes dealerships with message for its newest car.

And, Marc Jacobs was involved with Foursquare – the brand had badge on Foursquare for Fashion Week. But, it could have been even better if they leveraged other activities along with it.

What's the main thing luxury brands should know about mobile games?

These devices create the perfect opportunity for you to leverage activities that people are already performing. I cannot stress that enough.

Consumers are out there sharing and talking to each other, posting on Twitter and posting on Facebook.

These are alpha consumers. When you are sitting on the Hampton Jitney, it is now an iPad on everyone's lap, not a laptop.

Getting luxury brands into that activity is so important.

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