

INTERNET

Editorial content and storytelling boost microsite engagement

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By JEN KING

NEW YORK - A senior director and professor at New York University's Leonard N. Stern School of Business at the Luxury Interactive 2013 conference highlighted the storytelling capacity of microsites through six key points meant to elevate engagement.

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The academic's "Achieving Your Long-Term Marketing Strategy Through the Use of Microsites" presentation showed the potential that microsites have for engaging consumers. A dedicated microsite has the ability to engage consumers on an emotional level through brand storytelling.

"Think of a microsite as an enhancement of brand DNA," said Thomai Serdari, director of research and adjunct associate professor at NYU's Leonard N. Stern School of Business.

"Being able to excite the consumer in the luxury market is one of the most important things," she said.

"When you talk about luxury, you can only talk about it if you address the emotional response."

Needed ingredients

Although a lot of work is involved in creating a microsite, Ms. Serdari believes that it has

the ability to enhance a business model.

A microsite is a straightforward way to promote a focused message or multiple messages with editorial content that engages and excites the consumer.

Brands should avoid microsites that are one-dimensional and act as an additional ecommerce platform.

Ms. Serdari looked at microsites from various industries and found that the best microsites include strong editorial content where a brand is able to convince consumers of a product's value.

Since the luxury sector is about excitement, loyalty and becoming one with a brand, DNA-centered content serves to create a conversation with consumers.

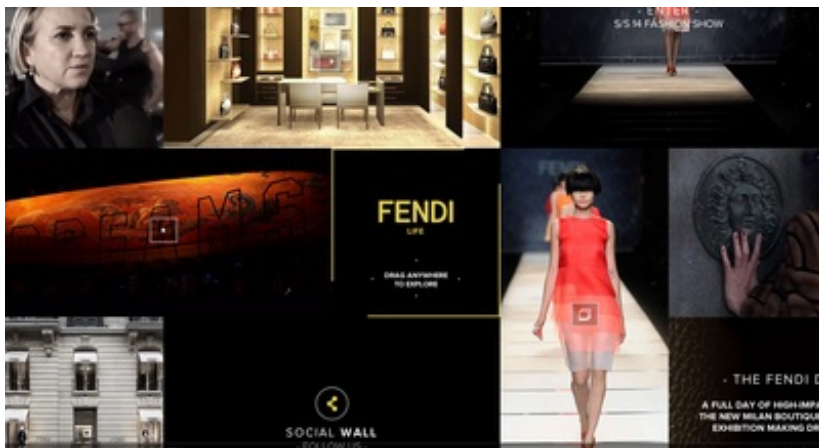


Balenciaga Le Dix handbag microsite

Successful microsites have a strong storyline that draws consumers in with an "absence of information." The luxury allure can be maintained by retaining distance when defining products, while not being condescending.

The brand creates a conversation with multiple narrative plots that speak to different levels of consumers and products.

Ms. Serdari explained that in addition to storytelling, microsites need six key ingredients for success: scarcity, suspense, surprise, humor, fear and a total feeling of the sublime.



Fendi's "Fendi Life" microsite

Brands should highlight one product or collection to display scarcity while using suspense to announce something new. This allows for the brand to build off the original microsite and continue consumer engagement.

Surprise, humor and fear should be used as a way to show inventiveness, a softer side of a serious brand and playful intimidation. The latter allows the brand to display its inclusiveness without appearing stuffy.

Micro focus

Brands that choose to create microsites are able to generate brand awareness. This is further enhanced by brands that repeatedly build upon a microsite platform.

For example, Italian fashion house Fendi is garnering interest in its spring/summer 2014 collection exhibited during Milan Fashion Week through a microsite that features interactive and behind-the-scenes content.

The Fendi Life microsite centers on “The Fendi Day” Sept. 19 at the fashion show in Milan, the opening of a Milanese boutique and a new exhibit exploring Fendi’s role in film. By displaying different aspects in one location, the brand is able to appeal to the different types of consumers who fall under the enthusiast umbrella ([see story](#)).

Microsites allow for a deep and content-driven consumer connection.

“A microsite allows the consumer to identify with the brand, to fall in love with a brand, to follow [the brand],” she said. “And not because someone else is wearing the products.

“Microsites create a deep emotional connection with an emphasis on story while showcasing merchandise,” she said.

Final Take

Jen King, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

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