

MOBILE

## Harrods boosts Chinese consumer awareness via WeChat

September 27, 2013



By JEN KING

London department store Harrods is increasing its exposure in China by being the first British retailer to launch a WeChat social media account that conveys its latest content and special offers to Chinese consumers.



Harrods is building off the success of its Weibo blog to reach more consumers as China continues to be a power player in the luxury market. Through the use of local social media platforms, brands and retailers are able to appeal to local sensibilities.

"Social media has proven a powerful tool for brands to open up a dialogue with their customers," said Melody Adhami, president and chief operating officer of **Plastic Mobile**, Toronto.

"WeChat's plethora of features, including a group chat via QR code, is an excellent example of how brands can leverage the evolving technology to create a stronger connection with their customers," she said.

Ms. Adhami is not affiliated with Harrods, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

**Harrods** was unable to comment directly.

## Chatting with Harrods

The WeChat app will give Harrods access to more than 235 million Chinese users around the world, many of whom are unfamiliar with the retailer.

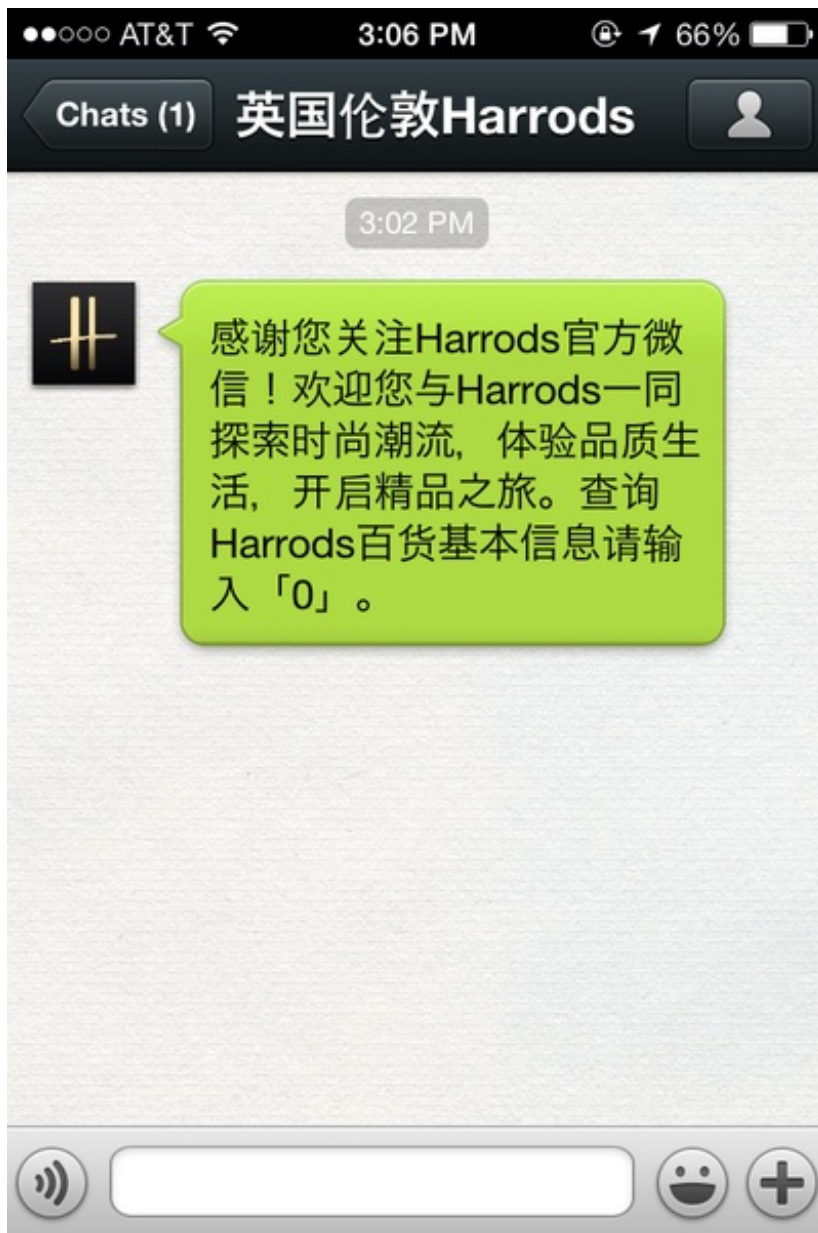
For consumers who have already experienced Harrods through travel and ecommerce, they will be better connected to the retailer which may drive purchases.



*Harrods' WeChat account profile*

Harrods is giving away prizes to the first consumers who sign up to chat with the retailer to celebrate the launch of its WeChat account. The prizes will be selected from Harrods' special-edition Archive Collection that adds a modern twist to its vintage charm.

Each of the items in the Archive Collection will have a scannable QR code. Consumers who scan the icon will be brought to the download page of Harrods' smartphone application where they can view an augmented reality video.



### *WeChat chat feature with Harrods*

WeChat has a group chat feature prompted by QR codes that brings together multiple consumers who have scanned the same code for a conversation, allowing Harrods to tap into local discussion.

The retailer recently launched its Harrods magazine and its luxury timepiece magazine iPad application in Mandarin. The apps include interviews with designers, behind-the-scenes content, photo shoots and beauty tips from leading luxury brands.

### *Local touch points*

Brands continue to create more personalized services for consumers in China

For example, hotel chain Ritz-Carlton is bolstering its digital presence by launching a Chinese Web site and a page on social network Sina Weibo to keep up with its growing presence in China.

The luxury hotel brand conducted two six-month studies over the past year to ensure that its entrance into China's digital sphere matched the expectations of its guests. By adapting its digital presence to Chinese sensibilities, The Ritz-Carlton will likely stand out among

competitors with less resolved enterprises ([see story](#)).

Additionally, online retailer Net-A-Porter is boosting its exposure in China by partnering with the Upper House hotel in Hong Kong to offer guests a number of exclusive services.

Through this partnership guests can receive gift cards, complimentary express delivery from Net-A-Porter and Mr Porter, access to the style concierge service and more. The retailer is likely aiming to show off its services to Chinese consumers through this partnership ([see story](#)).

Harrods is likely to gain new fans through its WeChat account because it appeals to local sensibilities.

“As the fastest-growing social media site in China, WeChat offers the maven of department stores the opportunity to connect with their largest international customer group on multiple levels,” Ms. Adhami said.

Final Take

*Jen King, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York*

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/XdR89JLdXK4](https://www.youtube.com/embed/XdR89JLdXK4)

---

© Napean LLC. All rights reserved.

Luxury Daily is published each business day. Thank you for reading us. Your [feedback](#) is welcome.