

MOBILE

## Bloomingdale's balances selfies with beauty tips in Instagram contest

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By JOE MCCARTHY

Department store chain Bloomingdale's is letting fans determine the best selfie shot from its #BloomieSelfie Instagram contest to increase participation and spread awareness of the campaign.

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**Luxury Daily**

The #BloomieSelfie contest asked fans to submit a selfie that details a favorite beauty or styling tip that enhances their snapshot. By aggregating a diverse range of interpretations, the retailer not only boosts the reputation of its social media pages but also gets a clean insight into what consumers want.

"Selfies' have become a cultural phenomenon online, with everyone from celebrities, to business executives, and everyone in between taking photos of themselves and posting them online," said Christine Kirk, CEO of [Social Muse Communications](#), Los Angeles.

"Bloomingdale's definitely jumped on the 'selfie bandwagon' with this campaign, capitalizing on the popularity of selfies," he said. "The campaign shows that the brand doesn't take themselves too seriously, and is also in touch with what's popular online.

"The Bloomingdale's campaign also differentiated itself from the cringe-worthy selfies, by requiring fans to provide a beauty tip that corresponds with their #bloomiesselfie, thus

making it more informational and useful than just a typical selfie."

Ms. Kirk is not affiliated with Bloomingdale's, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

**Bloomingdale's** did not respond by press deadline.

Self-made beauty

The #BloomieSelf contest first asked fans to submit selfie shots with an accompanying beauty tip that could be captured in the frame.

Sample tips for good selfies include choosing a cream or matte lipstick one shade darker than a person's bare lips to "define your pout," and avoiding foundations and creams with SPF to stop looking washed out.

As submissions came in, they were arranged on a voting board for fans to vote, which increased the exposure of the campaign. Since entrants had to accrue votes, they presumably shared the contest on their social media pages.

Consequently, as friends of entrants learned about the contest, they may have submitted their own selfie or simply voted.



*#BloomieSelfie poster*

In the process, the brand likely gained insights into consumer preferences. For example if a particular product was emphasized in the contest, the brand could tailor appropriate promotions.

The retailer promoted the contest on its various social media pages.



At first, the poster requested that fans submit a selfie. Next, the poster asked for fans to vote for their favorite selfie and beauty tip.

## Vision

Instagram contests hosted by luxury brands take function in a variety of ways. Some contests look to harmonize fans around a central theme.

For instance, Leading Hotels of the World is celebrating its 85th anniversary with an Instagram competition through Nov. 22 that invites fans to share photographs of memorable birthday cakes.

The length of the #ShareYourCake contest ensures that an ample amount of submissions will arrive, from which three winners will be awarded \$500 gift certificates redeemable at LHW hotels. Although it may seem odd to celebrate an 85th anniversary, promotions throughout the year have increased the brand's Facebook likes by around 80 percent since 2012 and Twitter followers have increased by around 40 percent ([see story](#)).

Other contests place a premium on original departures from the norm.

For example, Four Seasons Hotel Hong Kong interacted with a diverse group of young consumers by inviting Instagram users to capture views of the cosmopolitan city.

The summer contest sought to bring new visitors to the hotel and invigorate current visitors with a creative mission. Instagram competitions of this kind breed memorable ties by spurring entrants to make new experiences ([see story](#)).

The selfie (like most things pop culture) is certainly reaching the end of its 15 minutes of fame. Many people are starting to get annoyed with the selfie, in particular with women and/or girls who post photos of themselves making the unflattering "duck lips" (or a pouty face) at the camera.

Regardless of the content, Instagram campaigns allow brands to tap into a thriving network.

"I think, or personally, at least hope, that the selfie is on it's way out, and Bloomingdale's

likely caught this trend on its last legs, but it was a fun and silly way to engage with fans," Ms. Kirk said.

Final take

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

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