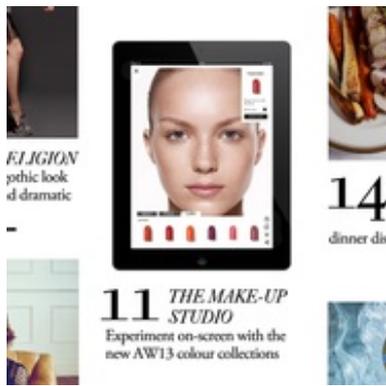


MULTICHANNEL

## Digital enhances beauty product experience remotely and in-store

January 3, 2014



By JEN KING

Luxury marketers who focus on beauty product lines have taken notice of how affluent consumers prefer to shop via mobile by continuing to incorporate digital touch points into campaigns and through in-store interactions.

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Beauty brands can benefit immensely from introducing interactive digital features to campaigns as a way to engage consumers both remotely and within boutiques. Digital touch points allow beauty brands to enhance engagement through exploration, often accompanied by a knowledgeable sales associate.

"Benefits with beauty brands relying on digital, in-stores and on mobile to communicate with consumers is that their consumers are already engaging in all three ways," said Brittany Mills, vice president of client solutions at [Nervewire Inc.](#), New York.

"The number one piece of content that converts to sales are video tutorials," she said. "Those can be viewed on-the-go via mobile and will help impact a consumer in their buying decisions. Your brand needs to have a voice within that space.

"With beauty brands, consumers want a custom experience because not all products will be used the same. Digital touch points can help create that custom experience before a

store visit. Mobile apps that allow someone to upload their photo and try on different lipsticks, etc. help to create that custom experience."

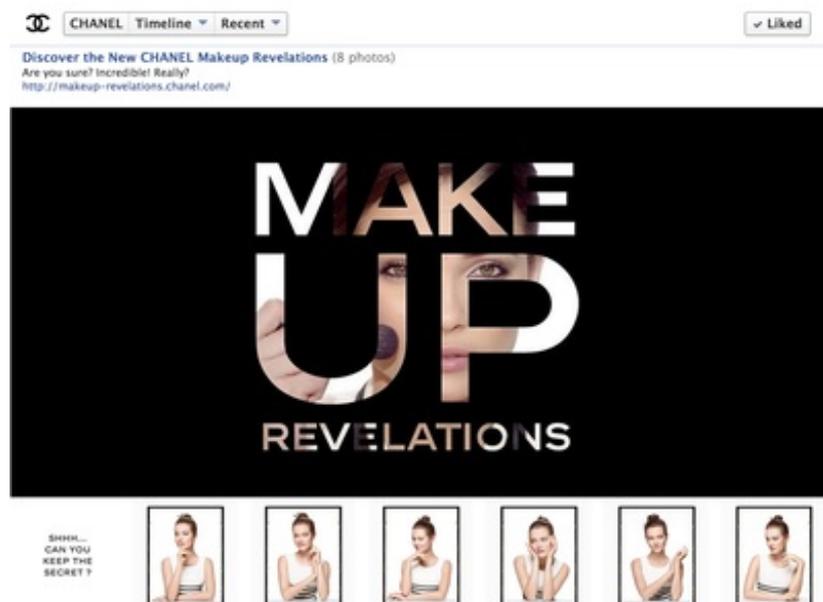
## Bounty of beauty

The types of interaction achieved through digital touch points varies from informative brand videos displaying professional tips to interactive efforts that allow the consumer to virtually experience a product before purchasing.

For instance, French fashion label Chanel advertised its cosmetics collection through a video series titled "Makeup Revelations" that showcases insider tips by professional Chanel makeup artist Lisa Eldridge for enthusiasts who want to create a branded look at home.

Chanel presents the video's content as a secret but is able to maintain a fun sensibility by pairing the tips with a lighthearted video featuring models gossiping about an unknown subject. By pairing educational content with a relaxed social video, a brand is able to hold the interest of the consumer while building awareness.

The series includes six videos that explain how to use Chanel cosmetics, most notably the brand's Vitalumière Compact Douceur, to "capture the sun," "reinvent radiance," "reveal your natural glow," "to blend," "to shine" and "to play with light." By scrolling past the video content, consumers can view which products are used in the videos above to seamlessly make a purchase ([see story](#)).



### *Chanel's Makeup Revelations post on Facebook*

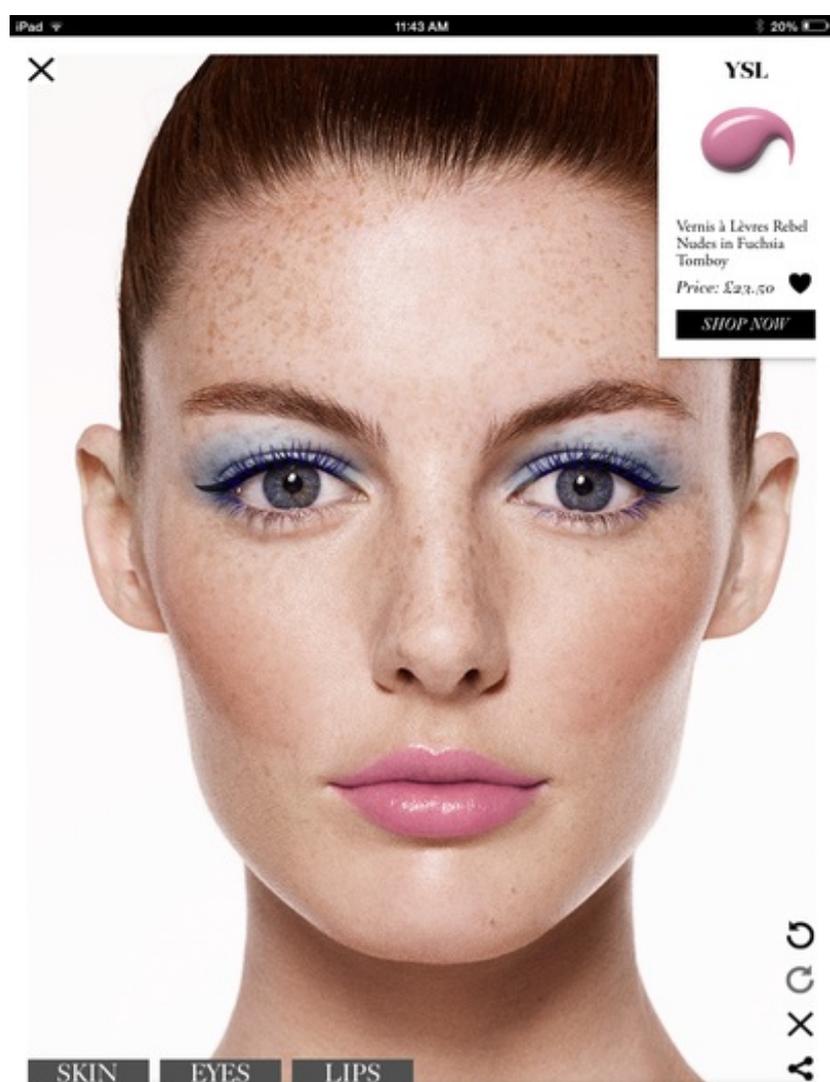
Brands can benefit from incorporating insightful videos into their digital efforts, but an approach that allows consumers to personally explore products is more likely to increase product awareness.

London department store Harrods, for example, developed an interactive makeup studio that readers of its magazine iPad application could access. The makeup studio recreates an in-store product trial that is likely to increase mobile beauty sales for the retailer.

Found in the December/January 2014 issue of Harrods' magazine app, the interactive "Makeup Studio" features four high-end beauty lines carried by the retailer. Interactive digital content that allows consumers to "try on" a product or see how an item works mirrors the in-store experience and empowers consumers with a better understanding of products.

Consumers first select the appropriate skin tone and one of the four featured brands carried by Harrods before a new page automatically loads. The new page displays the model's face without makeup, with three tabs that read skin, eyes and lips.

To test out a blush or bronzer the consumer selects a color from the season's collection and drags a finger across the cheekbone of the model to make the product appear. The same is done for eyeshadows, eyeliners, mascaras and lip color for each featured brand ([see story](#)).



### *Harrods' Makeup Studio app*

The retailer's Makeup Studio is similar to Stylewhile, an app used by Saks Fifth Avenue to assist consumers interested in trying on clothes and envisioning outfits by mixing and matching pieces via mobile ([see story](#)).

### *An interactive counter*

While the benefits of digital touch points via mobile are apparent, there are other modes of

increasing engagement.

Interweaving digital touch points into physical stores can help beauty brands enhance and maintain strong relationships with consumers who visit the cosmetics counter at a bricks-and-mortar location.

Most recently, British fashion label Burberry opened a new digitally-enhanced retail location to showcase its newly launched beauty line.

The Burberry Beauty Box, located in London's Covent Garden, carries Burberry's beauty, fragrance and accessory lines, and offers consumers the ability to discover the brand's cosmetics through both sales associate consultations and digital touchpoints, including mobile checkout. By creating a space specifically for its beauty line, Burberry is able to encourage consumer interaction with its beauty products, drive sales of the new line and test out new retail tactics.

For example, instead of a stationary point of sale, associates will ring up consumers' purchases on iPhones and iPads, giving consumers the option of a digital receipt. This is the first retail location for Burberry that has an exclusively mobile checkout.

In addition, users can virtually try on a nail polish by placing a bottle onto an radio-frequency identification or RFID-enabled platform. They then choose their skin tone, and the color appears on a hand onscreen ([see story](#)).



*Inside Burberry's beauty store*

As digital becomes more fluid and in some ways inescapable, brands must devise plans to incorporate these technologies. French fashion house Christian Dior, looked to students from Columbia Business School and Parsons The New School for Design to help envision the future of digital, in-store technologies.

Since the consumer fuels in-store experiences, the team created a mobile application that elevates engagement through a rewards program based on spend levels. The app, staying true to brand codes by including the canache and pink and light grey, would give Dior a new way to interact with its core enthusiasts.

Although the consumer's experience was the top priority for the Dior team, they recognized that the sales associates had to be well-versed in the brand story. To ensure employee knowledge, the Dior team reassessed the brand's beauty training programs ([see story](#)).

The addition of digital to a brand's overarching strategy can help fortify the relationship with consumers by providing options.

"When it comes to the digital channel, brands are one step removed from their customers," said Melody Adhami, president and chief operating officer of [Plastic Mobile](#), Toronto. "That's why it's important to not only have the same level of service but provide additional benefits on digital channels.

"With more than half of consumers buying directly from brands online in the past year, more and more people are shopping without the help of in-store sales representatives," she said.

"By providing interactive tutorials or simple visual cues for navigation online or on mobile, brands can bridge the customer experience gap between shopping offline and online."

The times are changing

For the foreseeable future, digital will dictate how consumers shop and will alter expectations. However, the new landscape leaves room for innovation that permits brand differentiation, especially in the beauty sector which has been late to adopt innovative technologies.

Senior executives from Chanel and Procter & Gamble projected at the Luxury Interactive 2013 conference that trends in the beauty retail market forecast a move toward infinite commerce. The jointly conducted Fashion Institute of Technology Graduate Program research study moderated by Stephan Kanlian, professor and chairperson at the Graduate School of FIT, highlighted what the future has in store for the fragrance and personal care market sector.

The Beauty in a Digital World study showed that the beauty sector is behind other market sectors such as electronics in ecommerce with only 5 percent of cosmetics purchased online. The study also found that beauty marketers are making consumers work too hard to get the products they want. The future of beauty commerce is not just based online and in-store, but everywhere a consumer is.

Online and offline models have become more similar as high-touch and high-technology blur the line between the two. To exist in an infinite commerce market, retailers must take available technology a step further because adding an iPad at the beauty counter will no longer be enough to engage consumers properly ([see story](#)).

Furthermore, the accessibility of digital touch points via online or on mobile is vital to understanding what consumers desire and need from their preferred brand.

"If you think about the times during the day that a woman might be looking for assistance or advice with beauty products, she is often indisposed, such as getting ready for work or an evening out, and unable to stop by her local boutique to discuss her questions with an associate," said Lauren Owen, project manager at [Blue Moon Works](#), Denver, CO. "So, having an online presence that helps inform and reassure a woman on the proper beauty techniques is key.

"Sites like L'Oreal Paris have spent considerable time and development hours to build consultation tools that allow a woman to provide her eye color and style preferences and, in turn, be provided with makeup advice, and of course recommended products," she said. "These online tools offer the same kind of conversation and input a woman would be looking for in-person, though obviously in a limited manner.

"The advantage is that a Web site or blog is open 24-hours a day and helps maintain the beauty brand as a go-to destination for advice and how-to knowledge, even without the physical act of going to the store. It's also very easy to share positive experiences in the digital space, so the reach of a brand is increased by providing valuable online tools."

Final Take

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

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/Gt3dtNp\\_o6E](https://www.youtube.com/embed/Gt3dtNp_o6E)

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