

INTERNET

Neiman Marcus hosts photo contest to mark InCircle loyalty program milestone

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By SARAH JONES

Department store chain Neiman Marcus is hosting a photo contest to celebrate the 30th anniversary of its InCircle loyalty program to reach consumers who are truly devoted to the retailer.

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Luxury Daily

To enter the contest, consumers must post a photo showing what they love about Neiman Marcus, with one of the prizes being an upgraded loyalty status. This photo contest is a fitting way to celebrate the retailer's loyalty program, since a lot of the same customers who are enrolled in the program will be the ones interested in showing their affection for the brand.

"Photo contests are a great way to celebrate the customers that you're trying to reward and retain with a loyalty program," said Kyle Wong, CEO of [Pixlee](#), San Francisco.

"Neiman Marcus' customers are already taking photos of their experience without being prompted, but a photo contest is a great way to aggregate and display this behavior," he said.

Mr. Wong is not affiliated with Neiman Marcus, but agreed to comment as an industry

expert.

Neiman Marcus did not respond by press deadline.

Photos for perks

Neiman Marcus introduced the contest on its blog, which explains the contest rules. To enter, a user has to post a photo to Instagram showing what they love about the retailer and include @NeimanMarcus and #NMInCircle.

The retailer's loyalty program rewards consumers based on how much they spend. Members earn points per each dollar spent, and once they reach 10,000 points, they are sent a \$100 card to use at Neiman Marcus.

Thirty winners will receive an upgrade to the President's Circle, the second-highest tier typically reserved to shoppers who spend \$75,000 to \$599,999 annually. In the President's Circle, members receive 5 points for each dollar spent, rather than the 2 points earned on other tiers.

Some services are reserved specially for President's Circle members, such as wardrobe consultation and a fitting room experience for two people that includes light food and individualized attention.

One grand prize winner will receive a trip to New York planned by the InCircle concierge, who use their insider access to grant their clients special experiences.

The blog post links to the brand's Facebook app for the contest. Within the app, users can view rules, upload an entry and browse other contest entries.

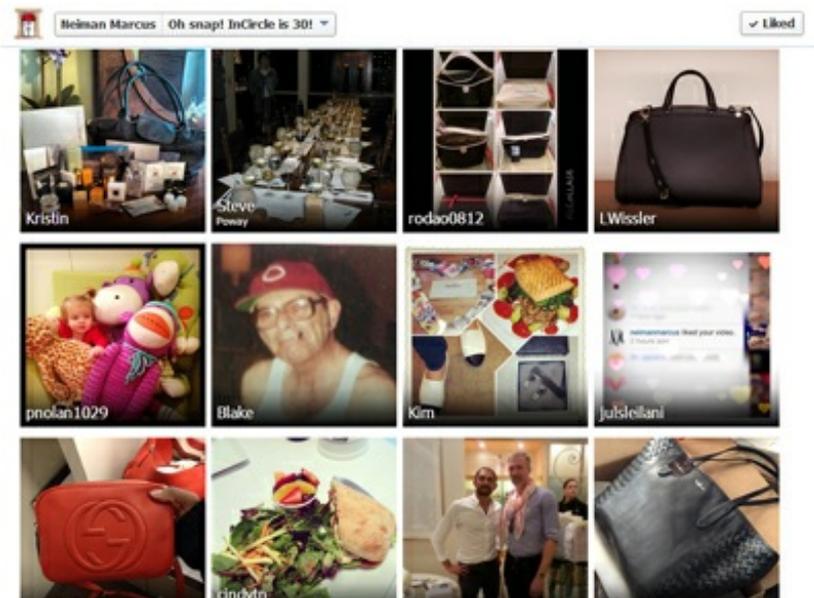


Neiman Marcus Facebook app

Neiman Marcus also posted a set of photos it hand-picked on its Facebook page, giving some of the entrants a moment of fame. This allows consumers to feel they are being noticed and listened to by the brand.

The contest entries range from personal to product-focused, with one person posting a photo of her father, the first person who took him to a Neiman Marcus, and another

posting about that special feeling when a Neiman Marcus box shows up with a purchase.



Entries on the contest app

The contest began Jan. 15, and will run until Jan. 26.

Snap to win

These types of photo contests are popular right now, because they are beneficial to both the consumer and the brand. The consumer gets a shot at fame, and the retailer gets brand ambassadors through the social media posts.

For instance, Italian fashion brand Dolce & Gabbana allowed users to submit their own family photos to its Web site to further fan interaction with the brand online.

The #DGFfamily project has created an online photo album of family photos that visitors can view ([see story](#)).

Also, department store chain Bloomingdale's lets fans determine the best selfie shot from its #BloomieSelfie Instagram contest to increase participation and spread awareness of the campaign.

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 ([see story](#)).

There are some things for a brand to keep in mind as it plans its own photo contest.

"Two of the most important best practices in having a successful photo contest is adequate marketing across multiple platforms and having a good prize," Mr. Wong said.

"When running a photo contest, they should be leveraging the visual content across multiple platforms," he said. "As smartphone camera technology has improved, the quality of the photos submitted has increased, and this kind of authentic content should be leveraged across as many platforms as possible."

Final Take

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