

INTERNET

Oscar de la Renta, Marc Jacobs, Tiffany & Co. have spot-on social media strategies

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Upscale brands such as Oscar de la Renta, Marc Jacobs and Tiffany & Co. serve as role models for other luxury marketers for their outstanding use of social media as a marketing medium, according to industry experts.

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Brands that employ Facebook, Twitter, interactive Web sites and mobile devices to connect with their consumers are more likely to drive sales and reach an expanded customer base. A study from Vocus proves that social media is imperative to any luxury brand's marketing strategy.

"Overall, luxury brands should use social media to build and maintain their brand image and provide a more personal view behind the scenes," said Clay McDaniel, principal of social media marketing firm Spring Creek Group, Seattle.

"Many fans of luxury brands want to feel part of an exclusive club, so brands can use social media to bring together their biggest fans and offer them special deals, information or access to VIP events," he said.

"That will enhance fan loyalty, and also encourage fans to share your brand's social

pages with friends—growing your network of brand advocates virally.”

Impressive social media strategies

Mr. McDaniel said that Oscar de la Renta employed smart strategies with its Twitter account.

The personalized tweets from the elusive OscarPRgirl have attracted a large following and provide an in-depth sneak peek into the world of Oscar de la Renta.

OscarPRgirl also has a high level of direct interaction with consumers.

Recently, the @OscarPRgirl brand persona launched a Tumblr account to share more detailed information on with consumers.



Oscar de la Renta Twitter page

Another brand with an exemplary PR strategy is Marc Jacobs.

During fashion week 2010, the brand connected with Foursquare to create a “Fashion Victim” badge.

Consumers could check into Marc Jacobs stores to unlock the badge, and four badge-holders received tickets to the Marc Jacobs show.

The brand also has an interactive Web site that lets users share favorite products on social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter.

“The Marc Jacobs Facebook page also provided consumers with a sneak peak into the people behind the brand by showcasing behind-the-scenes photos of designers and fashion week,” Mr. McDaniel said. “Marc Jacobs is also on Twitter, a channel that has lately helped the brand greatly improve its image and build a very large following.”



Marc Jacobs' Facebook page

A third example of excellent social media marketing is Tiffany & Co.

Frank Strong, director of public relations at Vocus, Lanham, MD, believes that the brand's YouTube and Facebook strategy is one of the best he has seen this holiday season.

Mr. Strong said that the brand's Facebook page does a great job of answering questions in the discussion section with the same expertise and level of customer service that consumers have come to expect in Tiffany & Co. stores.

"[The brand] recently posted a video on its Facebook wall and received nearly 2,400 likes and more than 150 comments," Mr. Strong said. "Separately, the video has earned nearly 20,000 views on Facebook.

"The brand has struck the right tone that reinforces popular perception," he said.

Tiffany & Co.'s holiday campaign on YouTube

Social luxury brands

Consumers are no longer receiving information from just advertisements, direct mail or earned media such as news articles.

Now, consumers are increasingly turning to a network of friends and trusted contacts as a source of information for advice and recommendations on buying luxury items.

“For luxury brands, this is especially important, since they build reputations on trust,” Mr. Strong said.

Spring Creek Group's Mr. McDaniel also said that brands are built on quality. Loyal consumers that trust the brand's reputation.

Social media marketing can help a luxury brand solidify and personalize its exclusive image, as well as provide a way for enthusiasts to communicate and interact with each other and the company.

“Social media also provides accessibility to luxury brands for those who cannot afford to purchase luxury products, but are still fans who would like to share in the overall brand experience,” Mr. McDaniel said.

This also holds true for younger consumers, who may not be able to buy luxury products right now, but will eventually down the road. This way, the brand already has begun a relationship with a future consumer.

Increasing presence in 2011

The best practices for luxury brands to expand their digital marketing strategy in 2011 is to join – and actively use – social networking sites such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube.

Both Mr. Strong and Mr. McDaniel said that luxury brands can use these social media destinations to grow their following by providing greater accessibility to their products and company.

“Luxury brands should view social media as a medium to strengthen loyalty with existing customers, and engage and earn the trust of new prospects,” Mr. Strong said. “It is for lack of a better term, intimate ... it's an enormous responsibility [but] also presents a fantastic opportunity.”

Final Take

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