

MULTICHANNEL

Smythson highlights craftsmanship, art in multichannel handbag launch

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By SARAH JONES

British leather goods maker Smythson is promoting its new 1887 handbag through a multichannel campaign that focuses on the inspiration and craftsmanship behind the design.

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In addition to a store window display, the brand has created online content to present the newest model to its line of handbags, including an artsy video. By delving into the creative process of its designers and highlighting how the bag is made, Smythson is likely to make consumers covetous of its latest fare.

"This handbag launch highlights the brand's creative vision behind their creation," said Dalia Strum, professor at the **Fashion Institute of Technology** and founder of **Dalia Inc.**, New York.

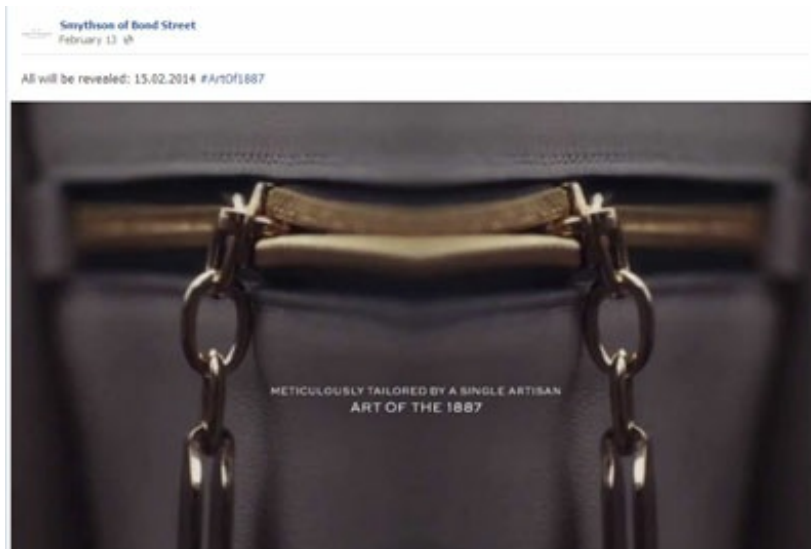
"By merging the history, along with the architectural inspiration and the strong attention to detail, Smythson is able to establish a stronger visual story and bridge it to the customer connection," she said.

Ms. Strum is not affiliated with Smythson, but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Smythson was unable to comment directly before press deadline.

In-depth introduction

Smythson introduced the 1887 on social media, with a series of posts acting as a countdown to the release date Feb. 15. In these posts, Smythson gave its consumers snippets of information about the bag, including close-ups on its gold hardware or the fact that one artisan tailors the bag.



Facebook post from Smythson

On Feb. 15, the brand posted a link to the collection, as well as a one-minute video showcasing the bag in a kaleidoscope style, called “Art of the 1887.”

The bag is shown rippling up in alternating colors, showing both a pale pink and a navy. The middle of the screen becomes a mirror, showing the zipper detail creating a V shape.

Through the video, consumers get detailed looks at the bag from all angles.

On its Web site, Smythson created an in-depth blog post about the 1887, which leads with the craftsmanship behind the bag, mentioning the 365-day process for the single artisan to put together 97 pieces.

Later in the post the brand discusses the architectural inspiration behind the bag, musing on Frank Gehry’s “Peix d’Or” sculpture. Smythson then connects that to the fact that its 1887 is sculpted on a mold.

In addition to the digital content, Smythson’s Bond Street flagship features a window display of 1887 bags, rounding out the brand’s multichannel marketing. In the window, disembodied white mannequin arms hanging from the ceiling grip 1887 bags of varying shades of blue.



Smythson Bond Street window

Handbag mania

Smythson is proud of its craftsmanship, and uses it as a selling point.

The brand is targeted affluent brides with an online wedding invitation service and showed off the craftsmanship behind its stationery products through video.

Smythson introduced consumers to the new online Wedding Stationery service on its digital channels by letting them see how different invitations are made. In the spring, luxury marketers that do not customarily appeal to brides tap the wedding season to boost sales ([see story](#)).

Other brands are focusing on handbags for the spring season, trying to attract consumers rebuilding their wardrobes.

For instance, French fashion house Balenciaga offered a handbag model exclusively on its ecommerce site to drive traffic from its loyal consumers.

The brand told its subscribers about the handbag in a promotional email that featured a minimalist design, with minimal copy. By keeping the wording of the email simple, Balenciaga is enabling its followers to scan the email quickly to determine their interest ([see story](#)).

Smythson's digital efforts will allow the brand to merge its past with its present.

"The short video is an artistic approach to showcasing and displaying the collection, along with their diverse color assortment through a highly visual lens paired with a whimsical focal," Ms. Strum said. "Smythson is able to establish their elegant heritage

redefined within modern culture.

"By visually storytelling their collection along with storytelling the experience through their blog, Smythson is focusing on some best practices which should be supporters within their marketing strategy," she said. "These are stepping stones in regards to their reach and connection with their target market."

Final Take

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