INTERNET

Nowness adds shoppable video feature to sell with subtlety

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By SARAH JONES

The LVMH-owned and editorially independent Web site Nowness has unveiled a new shoppable video feature to blend content and commerce.

Nowness unveiled this new experience through a dance film that shows a range of fashion including Louis Vuitton, Kenzo and Bottega Veneta. The Web site will allow all of the brands it partners with on video stories to add the shoppable element, giving luxury brands the opportunity to have consumers discover their merchandise while viewing.

"This option provides additional value to their advertisers who promote video content on Nowness," said Natalie Ney, Chicago-based account supervisor at iProspect. "It allows them to add a direct response element, helping to drive purchase of selected products but still within a non-embracive, native environment.

Ms. Ney is not affiliated with Nowness but agreed to comment as an industry expert.

Nowness declined to comment directly.

Performance piece

Nowness' first shoppable video, titled "Mine All Mine," shows five dancers from London's

Sadler's Wells Theater, who at the beginning of the video wear white undergarments. The film was directed by Tell No One.

One dancer comes running out of a door wearing a Haider Ackermann dress with a sheer top, her own undergarments visible underneath the navy blue dress.

Video still from "Mine All Mine" by Nowness

As the first woman dances, another dancer begins to move and the dress magically jumps to the second woman. During a lift, the dress transfers to a male dancer, who does his own solo.

After the dress has been passed around the group, more garments appear. A woman rolls on the floor, somersaulting into a blouse and rolling into a jacket.

Video still from "Mine All Mine" by Nowness

The rest of the video shows more sequences of dressing and undressing, with the dancers stealing apparel from each other.

Nowness' shoppable feature works with Cinematique. On a desktop, it is embedded, but on a mobile device users need to download the free app.

When a user sees an item that catches their fancy, they can click directly on it while the video is playing. Instead of popping up with the item details and disrupting the video, the item just gets added to the consumer's boutique in the background.

A counter at the bottom right hand corner of the video keeps track of how many items have

been added. When the consumer wants to see where they can purchase the item, they can click on the icon to pull up their choices.

Once the item has been clicked on, product details appear, along with an image of the garment in the video. Consumers can then click to be taken to a retailer of the brand.
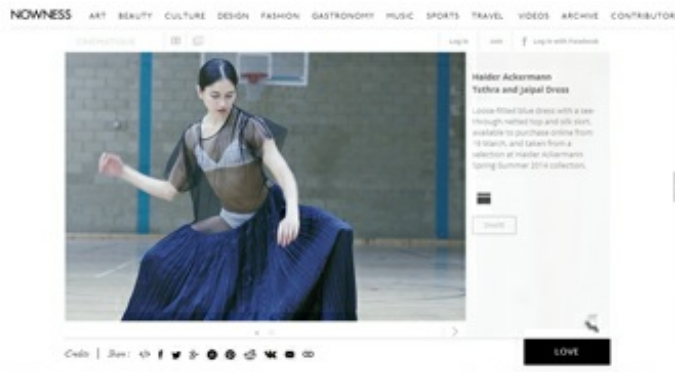
Nowness Web site

Nowness said in a branded statement that this feature will allow consumers to "identify featured fashion products and save them for later purchase through third-party sites without disrupting or distracting from the viewing experience."

The editorial site also said that this will not disturb its currently ad-free layout.

"The new video feature is truly native and minimizes the disruption users often found in current shoppable video technologies," Ms. Ney said. "Several current technologies have the product images within the video, either featured to the side or popping up throughout.

"Modifications could be made to the boutique page as it's not easy to navigate and the external link to the product page is not clearly labeled," she said. "Also, the product page links should be as specific as possible and in some cases, they drive to a multi-product page without the actual product shown on the video."

Click to buy

Shoppable videos are becoming more prevalent in fashion marketing, because they allow consumers to easily identify items they like.

For example, French leather goods house Louis Vuitton attached personas to select models from its men's bag collection to showcase the products' utility.

Louis Vuitton's "A Man, a Voyage, an Iconic Bag" shoppable video series captures vignettes of the rooms belonging to three bags' fictional owners. Through these short films Louis Vuitton is able to showcase the broad appeal of its bags (see story).

Also, British menswear label Alfred Dunhill nimbly weaved shoppable components into its "Portraits of Achievement" video installment that honors British biathlete Lee Jackson.

The "Fire and Ice" video followed Mr. Jackson as he trained for a biathlon and discusses the challenges that arise when combining two sports at such a competitive level. The rugged and independent nature of cross-country skiing and shooting will likely appeal to

the brand's core audience (see story).

This is one way for brands to reach affluent consumers without overtly selling or advertising.

"My favorite thing about this technology is that it doesn't disrupt the user viewing the video," Ms. Ney said. "When a user is watching the video, they can simply click on the garment to add to their boutique, and then once the video is finished, they can review their selection in the boutique.

"The benefits of this technology for brands is two-fold," she said. "First, it allows them to ensure their users experience the full concept and meaning of the video by not having external annotations, distracting banners, or other elements that could interrupt the video viewing.

"The video environment is truly native, which aligns well with the editorially based site and meets the expectations of how affluent consumers prefer to view their content. Secondly, it allows consumers to further engage by seamlessly driving to a product page for more details to purchase."

Final Take
Sarah Jones, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York