

MOBILE

Beauty marketers turn to Instagram to stoke product awareness

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By JEN KING

As social media matures, marketers increasingly turn to each of the major platforms with distinct purposes in mind.

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For luxury beauty marketers, photo-sharing social application Instagram is regarded as a quick and effective tool to attract busy, affluent consumers on-the-go. From brand announcements to product awareness and beauty tutorials, Instagram's cross-cultural format allows marketers to engage consumers on a level unmatched by other social platforms.

"Beauty marketing isn't just about product, it's about lifestyle," said Apu Gupta, CEO of **Curalate**, New York. "Print media and 30-second TV spots are expensive to produce, and yet a brand's lifestyle moments shouldn't be restricted to those infrequent ads.

"Instagram allows beauty brands to celebrate the confidence of feeling beautiful through candid lifestyle imagery - jaunts around town, hanging with friends, killing it at work - through images that can be quickly produced and distributed," he said.

"These still images are limited only by a brand's creativity and help audiences further envision what their lives could be like by embracing the brand."

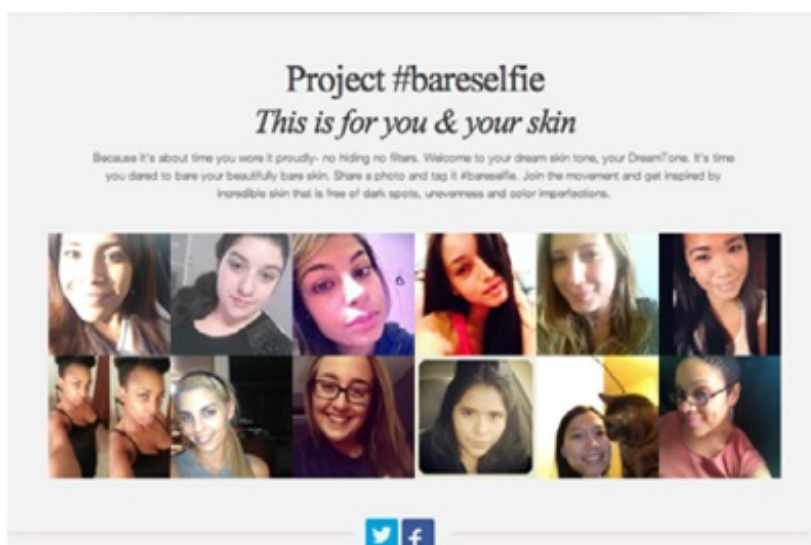
Rise of Instagram

According to a social media study conducted by L2, Instagram is beginning to outstrip veteran platforms because of its proliferating and attractive user base, high engagement levels and ecommerce-conducive format.

Of the 249 brands surveyed, 93 percent have an Instagram account and 43 percent post more than once a day. In the personal care sector, the study found that beauty brands have the fastest-growing communities.

The study also notes that Instagram easily incorporates user-generated content through branded hashtags.

As user-generated content becomes more prevalent among luxury marketers, beauty brands have the opportunity to capitalize on this trend through initiatives such as Lancôme's #BareSelfie effort.



Lancôme's #BareSelfie project

Lancôme's campaign garnered 500 user image and the ensuing UGC gallery generated 50 percent of sales for the newly launched DreamTone serum ([see story](#)).

Although Lancôme's Instagram use was product-specific, other beauty marketers such as Yves Saint Laurent Beauty rely on the platform to build awareness for a range of products.

"Lancôme's #BareSelfie campaign proved that consumers trust their peers and are more inclined to purchase a product when they see how it works for the every day woman," said Nicole Tiberia, senior brand strategist on the Lancôme account for [Olapic](#), New York.

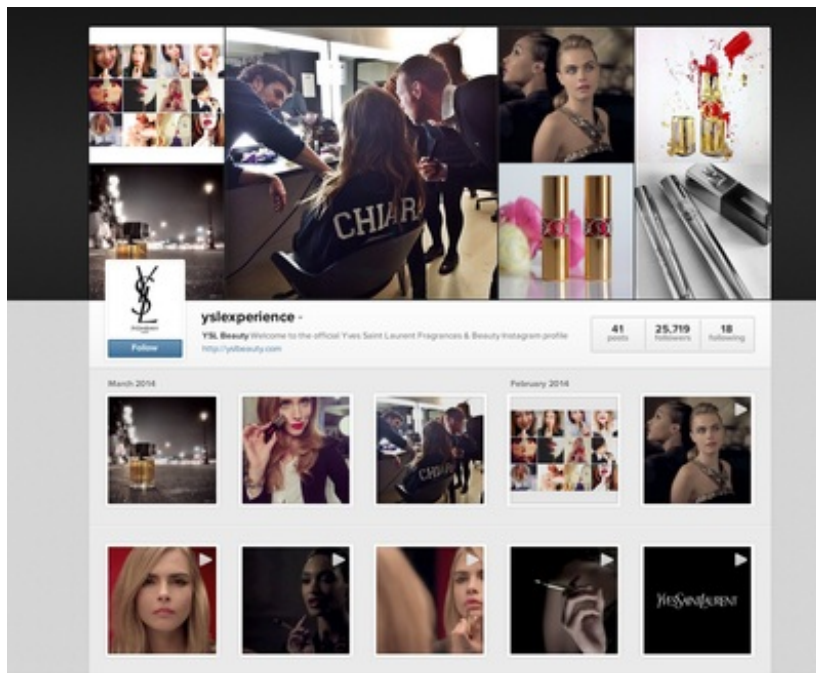
"When discovering a new product, having a variety of compelling content to make an educated purchase is key. Fans will create beautiful photos and videos based solely on their affinity for the brand – and Lancôme proved that with the campaign for DreamTone," she said.

While the French brand's beauty presence is lacking on other platforms, YSL Beauty's YSL Experience Instagram account is well-rounded.

At only a little more than a year in existence, YSL has increased its Instagram output as the

platform has gained in popularity. When launched in February 2013, the brand only uploaded an image about once or twice monthly with long time lapses in between posts.

A year later and YSL has increased its number of posts, ranging from skin care products, nail polishes, lipsticks and mascaras to include behind-the-scenes imagery and campaign video clips.



YSL Beauty's YSL Experience Instagram, desktop version

Retail role

Retailers are also using Instagram to increase awareness for beauty department offerings by retooling the digital tutorial.

For example, Saks Fifth Avenue recreated the in-store beauty trail with its #SaksIn6 6-second tutorials which were available across its social channels.

Although six seconds is a short time frame, consumers likely appreciated that the videos do not disrupt their day but still provide ample time to learn about a beauty product.

As mobile consumers frequently look for quick solutions to shopping, such as click and collect and two-click purchases, this mini beauty tutorial was likely appealing to individuals short on time.

To generate consumer conversation, the retailer accompanied its posts with the branded hashtag #SaksIn6. Although technically made with video-sharing app Vine, Sak's #SaksIn6 was posted on the retailer's Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to increase the amount of consumer views ([see story](#)).

Embedded Video: <https://vine.co/v/MZJtJqYHbUQ/embed/simple>

Saks' introductory #SaksIn6, made on Vine, shared on Instagram

As Mr. Gupta mentions, longer-formatted videos, are expensive to produce but an Instagram video is limited in time, thus cutting the cost but not the effectiveness.

"Video tutorials help people move from brand awareness to brand loyalty," Mr. Gupta said.

"Tutorials are about education, about achieving the look that will help you feel your best," he said. "If those tutorials are successful, they won't just educate, they'll build trust.

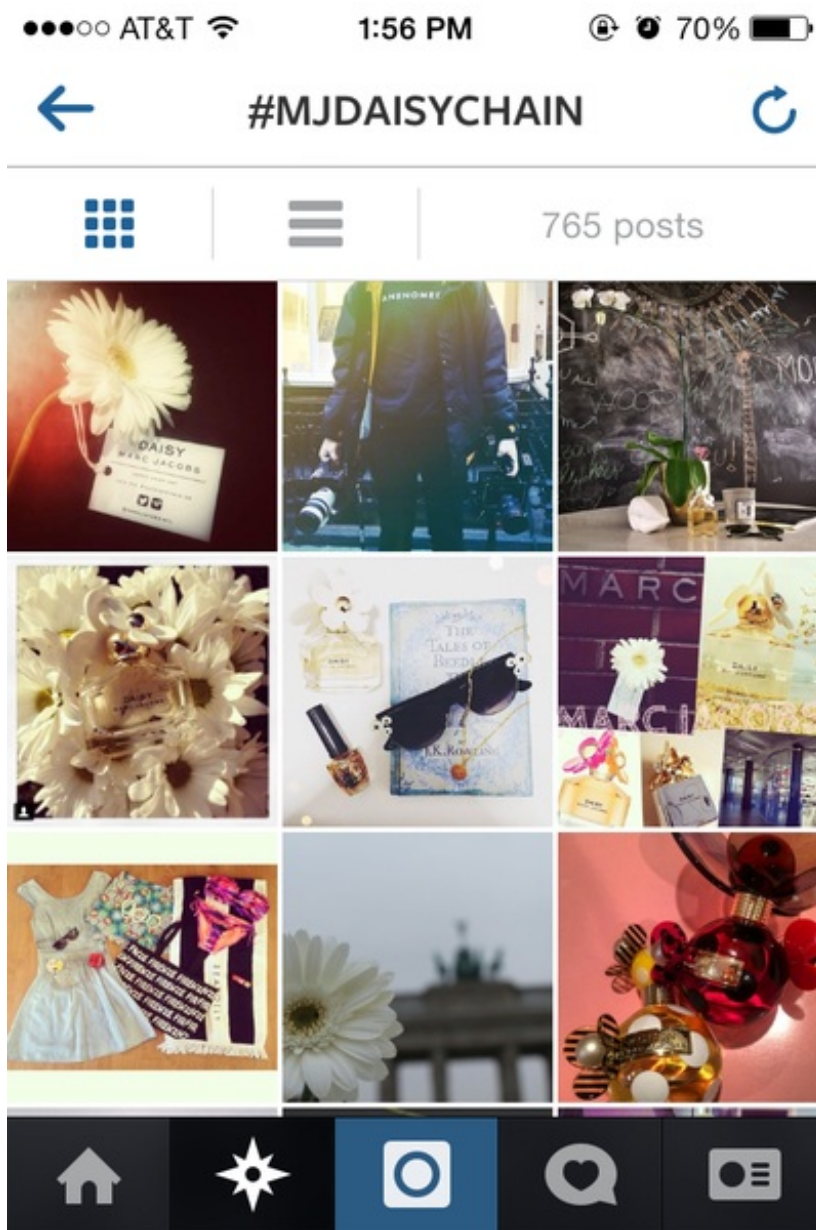
"Once a consumer trusts a brand they become much more receptive to listening to the brand and purchasing from the brand. Brands should consider leveraging Instagram and Vine to drive consumers to longer form videos that live on YouTube or their blog and this can be done by creating sneak-peeks/condensed versions of the longer videos."

Fragrant focus

Across all social channels fragrance is hard to market digitally because the scent can not be experienced in the same way it would be if at a bricks-and-mortar boutique. The use of user-generated content via Instagram helps convey a message or scent profile that may be lost if not done so in person and can amplify a campaign.

For example, Marc Jacobs incorporated fan-submitted Instagram content into its #MJDaisyChain promotion for its fragrance, Daisy.

Marc Jacobs increased consumer interaction with the social initiative by asking followers to create a digital daisy chain in images pertaining to the fragrance by using the branded hashtag, #MJDaisyChain.



#MJDaisyChain on the Marc Jacobs' Instagram account, mobile version

The U.S. label took the social campaign one step further than other brands have to date by creating a physical pop-up shop that only accepted “social currency” in the form of the branded hashtag on either Instagram, Facebook or Twitter ([see story](#)).

Furthermore Instagram has the power to promote and generate conversation based solely off one image. A prime example of this is Burberry’s March 12 post that announced its upcoming fragrance campaign will feature models Kate Moss and Cara Delevingne.

The post in question revealed no details of the fragrance itself besides it being an addition to Burberry’s established women’s perfume line.

Ms. Moss’ and Ms. Delevingne’s celebrity status will propel and maintain interest in the campaign. Within the first four hours of Burberry’s announcement on Instagram, the image of Ms. Moss and Ms. Delevingne was liked approximately 35,200 times.



Burberry post on Instagram, Cara Delevingne (left) and Kate Moss (right)

For Burberry, the announcement acts as the first time the fashion house has used Instagram to unveil a forthcoming advertising campaign ([see story](#)).

At the end of the day, Instagram can boost sales to a degree that other platforms have not reached.

"Instagram today is less about measuring clicks and more about building awareness," Mr. Gupta said. "For brands to really drive awareness on Instagram, brands need to look beyond their own photos and instead encourage their fans to celebrate the brand in pictures.

"In this way, brands can get thousands of people to showcase how their lives have been enhanced by the brand," he said. "The authenticity of these photos is ultimately what drives not just awareness but affinity as well.

"Smart brands are bringing these user-generated images back to the brand's Web site and linking these images to products to create opportunities to purchase. In this way, brands are making Instagram shoppable."

Final Take

Jen King, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/masGCg7ywHY](https://www.youtube.com/embed/masGCg7ywHY)