

MOBILE

## Barneys releases iPad-only app to create immersive digital experience

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*Barneys iPad app*

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By SARAH JONES

Department store chain Barneys New York created an iPad-specific application to further bring its in-store experience into the digital space.

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**Luxury Daily**

Barneys' app combines its content site The Window with online shopping to give consumers a rounded impression of the retailer. More retailers are choosing to have their apps connect consumers with the store through more than just ecommerce by providing easy links to content and customer service.

"Form factor is incredibly important on mobile," said Matthew Woolsey, executive vice president digital, **Barneys**, New York.

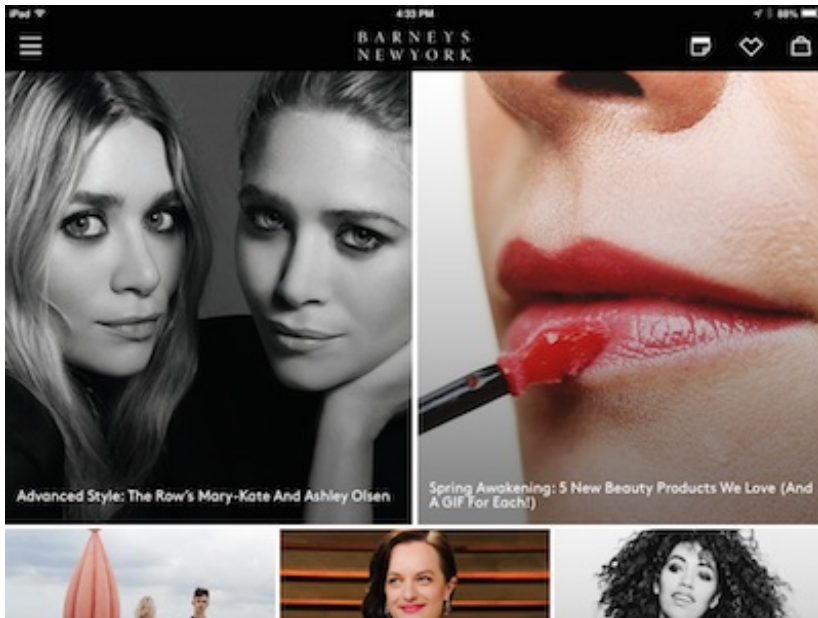
"We built this app on iPad first because it is an immersive, content driven experience that perfectly matches the 'found-time' nature of the iPad," he said.

"A phone version is in the works, but when it comes to content, our customer is more engaged on the iPad than on any other platform."

Digital drive

Barneys publicized its app across all of its social media accounts to drive downloads. To give consumers a sneak peek at the app, the retailer posted a video of a person using the app to its Instagram and Facebook pages.

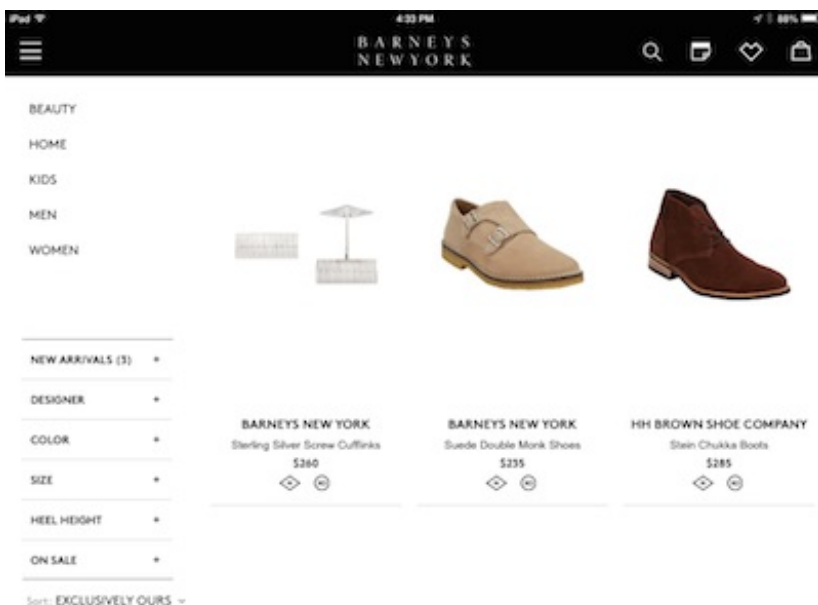
The homepage of the app loads all of the content from the retailer's blog The Window. Consumers can scroll to continuously load more stories. In addition to the entire feed, the user can select categories such as fashion, Barneys Man, beauty or influencers to view content on a single topic.



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Featured stories for the app launch are an exclusive interview with Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen about their line The Row, Mad Men's Elizabeth Moss' thoughts on what her character will do after the show ends and an article detailing five new beauty products exclusive to Barneys with animated GIFs to show how to apply them.

In the shopping section of the app, Barneys highlights the merchandise that is unique to the retailer with an XO icon, which stands for "exclusively ours." To easily find these exclusives, consumers can sort the products in any chosen category.



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New for the app is a feature where consumers can book an appointment with a personal shopper, which can be accessed from an icon on the home page. Consumers first choose what they are looking for help finding, whether special occasion attire or a seasonal wardrobe.

Consumers can then select a shopper's name from a list, or decide to look for available appointments with any associate. A calendar then appears showing the number of available times on a particular day.

Making these appointments easy to book will likely draw more consumers to use the service, and will draw consumers in-store.

Barneys worked with mobile development and design firm Fueled on its app, which can be downloaded for free [here](#).

The retailer's iPad-first approach makes sense with how consumers use mobile devices.

"I have noticed that scaling an app to the screen real estate available for video is becoming more common," said Paula Rosenblum, managing partner at [RSR Research](#), Miami. "As the market matures and as the number of people with tablets rises, this is becoming a very good idea.

"Computers aren't really for couch use any more and neither are phones," she said. "The tablet is most common. It makes for a way better experience."

## Ecommerce enabled

As retailers produce more content, their mobile apps have begun to reflect a blend of shopping and entertainment.

Department store chain Neiman Marcus released an iOS mobile application that blends content and commerce to promote interaction with consumers on-the-go.

In addition to shopping features, Neiman Marcus' NM app houses the retailer's blog and Instagram feed. This separates the retailer from many of its competitors whose mobile apps serve only as commerce platforms ([see story](#)).

Barneys has also been working to make it more appealing for its consumers to shop online.

The retailer introduced free returns to its ecommerce services to make online shopping less stressful for its consumers.

Prior to this the retailer had free standard shipping but charged an \$8 shipping fee for online returns sent through the mail. Taking away this possible fee will allow consumers to shop more freely online, knowing that they can easily return anything they are not satisfied with ([see story](#)).

This move by Barneys takes into account consumers shopping habits.

"It doesn't so much as change the digital user experience as it taps into consumers' already changing habits," said Philippe Poutonnet, vice president of marketing at [HipCricket](#), Bellevue, WA.

"It makes perfect sense for Barneys to optimize their mobile experience for tablets," he said. "Data shows that tablet users out-shop and out-spend other mobile users. Therefore, this lucrative segment should be a high priority for Barneys and its high-end clientele.

"With this app, Barneys is giving customers what they are demanding: the ability to research and shop on their own terms. The app gives them portability and an "on-demand" digital shopping experience.

"The inclusion of the personal shopping appointment feature further shows how important mobile customers are for Barneys and how brands are doing all they can to court these highly influential consumers."

### **Final Take**

*Sarah Jones, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York*

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

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