

MULTICHANNEL

Adopting technology early provides a strategic advantage

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Technology is changing the consumer experience

By SARAH JONES

LOST PINES, TX - Brands should be early adopters of new technology to become influencers rather than procrastinators waiting in the wings, according to panelists April 24 at the iProspect Client Summit.

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Luxury Daily

While many luxury brands take a back seat to technology, looking to others to figure out the kinks first before they jump in, they may want to think of adopting earlier. This will give them a differentiator and allow them to be looked to as innovators.

"We're big believers in test-and-learn," said Tim Reis, head of performance solutions at [Google](#), New York. "Those who moved early learned faster."

"Even if the learnings are imperfect, I would always encourage companies to start early, get familiar, understand as fast as you can," he said. "Because that's the big and ongoing challenge these days, is things are moving very quickly, so your ability to learn fast is your strategic advantage."

Information age

One type of technology brands may want to get on board with is in-store data collection.

With more consumers shopping online, a lot of information became available to retailers, allowing them to better know their consumers. This was not achievable in bricks-and-mortar stores, where the only information gleaned was at point of sale.

Nomi has looked to beacons in-store to be able to track how consumers move about a retailer's displays, identifying their entry and where they gravitated toward. This data is then collected and shared with other stores, allowing others to benefit from the insights.

Fabergé's used Nomi's beacon technology for its Big Egg Hunt in New York.

The fundraising event claimed to be the largest public deployment of Bluetooth-enabled beacons, giving participants in a citywide egg hunt a way to access clues, rewards and other information.

The Big Egg Hunt was sponsored by Fabergé and benefited two nonprofits: Studio in a School and Elephant Family. For the event, more than 200 egg sculptures, each created by a leading artist, designer or creative, have been placed around New York, with consumers encouraged to find and check-in at the eggs as well as bid on them via a mobile application ([see story](#)).



Ralph Lauren joins the Faberge Big Egg Hunt with a whimsical cowboy out of the American West now here in NYC to make new friends — with Jorge E. Lopesàenz and 38 others.



Facebook post from Ralph Lauren

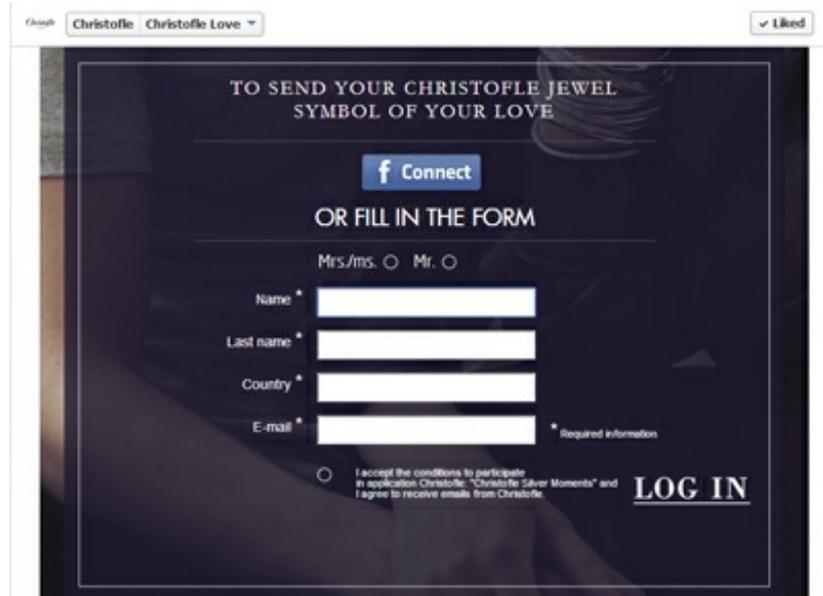
Some consumers were wary of this use of technology, said **Nomi** cofounder Wesley Barrow, but compared to 18 months ago, consumers are much more understanding and they do not receive as many questions.

Even as consumer sentiment about data changes, showing the value that can be derived from data will help to make consumers more comfortable with brands collecting information about them.

Google's Mr. Reis gave the example of being signed into Chrome across devices. If you look directions up on a laptop the night before a trip and then get into a car the next day, it can remember and suggest that trip when you go to Google maps, rather than having to enter the address again.

Donnie Keller, director of product management and custom solutions at Xbox Live Advertising, said that gamification also loosens consumers up to sharing information about themselves.

A form on a Web site with no incentive is not likely to glean consumer details, but if the request is delivered in a fun, entertaining way, its users are more likely to oblige.

A screenshot of a Facebook Connect form for Christofle jewelry. The form is dark-themed with white text. At the top, it says "TO SEND YOUR CHRISTOFLE JEWEL SYMBOL OF YOUR LOVE". Below that is a blue "f Connect" button. Underneath is the text "OR FILL IN THE FORM". There are two radio buttons for "Mrs./ms." and "Mr.". Below that are four input fields labeled "Name", "Last name", "Country", and "E-mail", each with an asterisk indicating required information. At the bottom, there is a checkbox for "I accept the conditions to participate in application Christofle: 'Christofle Silver Moments' and I agree to receive emails from Christofle." and a "LOG IN" button.

Gamification gives consumers a reason to share their information

Looking ahead

While technology has eased a lot of what consumers do in their day-to-day lives, there are still frictions. Having to unlock a phone or open an app presents barriers in the process of getting information.

Technology is headed toward removing these frictions, and lowering the number of devices necessary to access information.

Brands can keep this in mind when creating new apps.

For instance, luxury lifestyle management and concierge service provider Quintessentially Lifestyle is ensuring that members have access to its exclusive benefits with a new mobile application.

Available for iPhone and Android smartphones, the eponymous app connects Quintessentially Lifestyle members to the service's Lifestyle Assistants to access a wealth of knowledge ranging from nightclub and restaurant recommendations to obtaining last-minute concert tickets. Affluent consumers generally gravitate toward experiences that have an air of exclusivity, and an app gets rid of the searching by providing a better sense of opportunities ([see story](#)).

Along with this reduction of barriers to receiving information, publishing information will become easier.

"I feel like social media will stop existing as it is," Nomi's Mr. Barrow said. "Social media will stop being a noun, there will be a social element to everything we do.

"So that's probably the biggest change that's starting to happen with some of these next-generation platforms that are becoming more content creation platforms," he said.

"Ultimately, if you're doing a campaign and it doesn't have a social element to it, then you're doing it wrong."

Final Take

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