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Harrods cooks up Twitter interaction during branded Restaurant Week

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The Steakhouse at Harrods

By JEN KING

London department store Harrods is capitalizing on the popular consumer trend of sharing meals with friends on social media by generating a conversation on Twitter.

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Luxury Daily

The retailer selected seven of its favorite in-house restaurants to feature on its Twitter account during the seven-day, unofficial "Restaurant Week." Harrods often showcases its culinary offerings to highlight that the retailer is much more than a shopping mecca and can be visited as an outing.

"There is already a great deal of conversation taking place around the Harrods brand, especially where food is concerned," said Lisa Maynard-Atem, social media manager at [Harrods](#), London.

"Campaigns such as #RestaurantWeek are great because it means that we can be a part of those conversations and at the same time, remind and educate people that we have a wealth of choice when it comes to food," she said.

"Activity such as this also increases direct conversations with our audience. When we ask a question such as guessing a particular restaurant, our audience takes the time to

respond, which enhances the engagement and means that we are using Twitter in the way that it is meant to be used... To create a dialogue."

Dining at Harrods

The retailer announced its in-store version of Restaurant Week on June via social media. Although the majority of Restaurant Week content will be found on Twitter, Harrods used a Facebook post to spread awareness due to the platform's reach and ability to include more copy.

On Facebook, Harrods explained that from June 1 the retailer will be highlighting seven of its favorite restaurants. The retailer often considers its 28 restaurants a culinary destination that covers a broad range of international fare.

Here the retailer invited its followers to join in on the conversation if the consumer plans to visit one of Harrods' restaurants during the week. Harrods asks that consumers join the conversation by sharing "food photos and restaurant selfies" using the hashtag #RestaurantWeek or #HarrodsFood.



Restaurant Week announcement on Harrods' Facebook

Although #HarrodsFood is branded, #RestaurantWeek is a common hashtag used by food lovers who attend a city's week-long series of culinary events. Harrods would have likely benefited more if the hashtag incorporated a brand identifier because unrelated content is also filed under #RestaurantWeek.

Harrods retweeted a follower's tweet to highlight that consumers often share images of the retailer's restaurants. The original tweet did not include #HarrodsFood, but the retweet likely increased awareness, and use, of the hashtag.

As of press time, Harrods has generated conversation among followers with prompts such as asking the chef of Harrods Pizzeria a question. The tweet also includes a collage of images showing the restaurant and a freshly-made pizza.

Harrods @Harrods · Jun 2
If you could **#AskTheChef** behind the **#HarrodsPizzeria** a question, what would you ask them? **#RestaurantWeek**



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#AskTheChef prompt during Harrods' Restaurant Week

Another example of using Twitter to generate conversation occurred on June 3. Harrods shared a photo of a rack of ribs and asked followers to guess which restaurant serves the dish.

In addition to conversation, Harrods is using Twitter to create user-generated content. On a tweet from June 4, the retailer set a theme for the day, **#RestaurantSelfies**, and posted an image of its Oyster Bar.

Harrods @Harrods · 4h
Today's food theme is **#restaurantselfies** so we are sharing this picture of our wonderful Oyster Bar. **#RestaurantWeek**

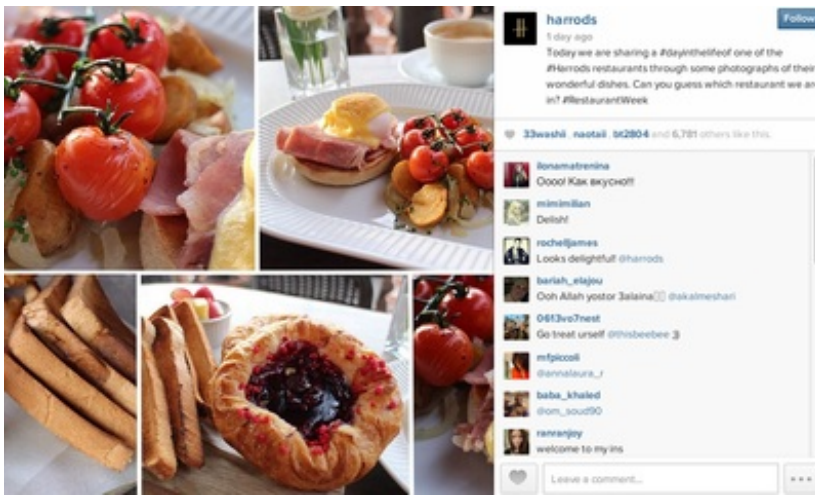


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Harrods' #RestaurantSelfie of its Oyster Bar

It is likely that Harrods is expecting its fans to follow its example and take their own **#RestaurantSelfies**, either while enjoying a meal or of an eatery inside the department store.

Harrods has also included content on its Instagram to ensure that all consumers are included in the conversation and can interact with the retailer where they feel most comfortable. On Instagram, similar to the rack of rib tweet, Harrods posted images of breakfast foods and asked followers to guess the restaurants.



Harrods' #RestaurantWeek post on Instagram

By having a week-long initiative, Harrods is likely to see consumers returning to its social pages to see which restaurants have been selected and to participate.

Foodie fulfillment

During its last food-focused social initiative, Harrods included all of its restaurants to introduce the culinary-sharing concept with its followers to boost foot traffic in-stores.

The retailer worked to establish itself as a one-stop destination for consumers by increasing foot traffic to its 28 in-store eateries. Harrods used its social media accounts to show top dishes to its foodie followers and general community so that consumers grasped the diversity of the department store's restaurants ([see story](#)).

Formats that entice the consumer to return to a site for additional information, such as daily snippets of specific categories or products, can maintain retention levels more so than sharing everything at once.

For instance, U.S. retailer Saks Fifth Avenue focused on the products offered by its beauty department with Vine videos that recreated an in-store tutorial in six-seconds.

Saks' #SaksIn6 was accessible across all of the retailer's social channel to ensure maximum exposure for the featured products. Although six seconds is a short time frame, consumers likely appreciated that the videos did not disrupt their day but still provided ample time to learn about a beauty product ([see story](#)).

By using Twitter, Harrods created a conversational promotion for its in-house restaurants.

"Twitter has a long history of being used to promote the restaurant industry dating back to it's roots of being used to promote the food truck craze sweeping the west coast," said Andrew Higgins, digital strategist at [Pixlee](#), San Francisco.

"It lends itself so well to the food industry with its ability to connect with consumers in real time," he said.

"Twitter as much as any social media platform allows for two way dialogues that help brands create conversations with customers instead of purely push marketing."

By intermittently posting about other products sold by Harrods, consumers tuning in for #RestaurantWeek will be exposed to much more of the retailer.

"It is always good practice for brands and businesses to create a diverse set of content and conversations on social to avoid their messages and voice from getting stale for consumers," Mr. Higgins said.

Final Take

Jen King, editorial assistant on Luxury Daily, New York

Embedded Video: [//www.youtube.com/embed/f2VAtfFccWI](https://www.youtube.com/embed/f2VAtfFccWI)

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