

Multichannel approach necessary for Mother's Day marketing

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Lagos Spring 2012 collection

Luxury marketers are seeming to favor social media and mailers to inspire gift ideas for Mother's Day next month, but brands should consider a multichannel strategy for the greatest reach.

Jewelers, apparel and accessory designers, hotel brands and retailers are tapping these channels for a gift-giving holiday that sometimes goes overlooked. To stay ahead of the game, experts suggest starting to market as soon as possible.

"Celebrating family and friends has been a buoyant market segment at all price points throughout the Great Recession," said Karen Weiner Escalera, president of [KWE Partners](#) ^[2], Miami. "It's an area that consumers cut last.

"Mother's Day is about pampering and indulging moms with everything from small to large luxury items that she wouldn't buy for herself, precisely because they are indulgences," she said.

Social butterfly

Mother's Day is less than a month away and luxury brands are using mostly digital means to get their products out.

For example, Barneys New York and Mandarin Oriental are tapping Facebook to market a new contest that gives a mother-daughter pair the chance to win a brand-oriented getaway package that will hopefully draw awareness to the retailer's products and the hotel's spa services.

The high-end retailer and the hotel chain's New York property are partnering to create an exclusive experience that comprises a stay at the hotel, a spa package, lunch at a Barneys eatery and two \$500 gift cards from the retailer.

Barneys and the Mandarin Oriental are using their location-specific Facebook and Twitter pages to create awareness for the contest among their followers ([see story](#) ^[3]).

In addition, British brand Burberry plans to use social media to push a variety of Mother's Day-themed apparel and accessories.

"Social media continues to be driving force in the luxury segment," said Chris Ramey, president of [Affluent Insights](#) ^[4], Miami. "Leveraging it around holidays allows merchants to benchmark strategies and fine tune as necessary.

"Being involved with social media is an imperative today," he said. "Managing the strengths of the medium separates the artists from the associates."

However, other brands are going for a more traditional route.

Philadelphia-based jeweler Lagos developed a special mailer for Mother's Day.

The brand is highlighting its newest collections including the Ombre, Caviar, Love Me Love Me Not and Rare Wonders.

Lagos' mailer uses multimedia touch points including calls-to-action to its Facebook page and Web site.

"Each distribution channel deserves its fair share of attention," said Isabelle Scarchilli, marketing director at Lagos, Philadelphia. "Our plan includes a traditional mailer that will invite our customers to come to the stores to take a walk-through spring. For the Web, we want to experiment with a different format.

"The focus is very much on featuring beautiful product shots but avoids the catalog feel," she said. "We believe that the gift guide section is a great place to refresh our Web and experiment with new interactive concepts."

Mum's the word

Not many luxury brands have begun to market for Mother's Day, but it is better to get started sooner rather than later, per experts.

"The best time to start marketing would be right after Valentine's Day in order to provide enough lead time and build up for the most efficient social media effect," said Dalia Strum, president of Dalia Inc., New York.

Marketers also need to start earlier because, unlike Christmas, brands cannot assume that consumers know the date of the holiday.

However, there are other factors to take into consideration, including business of consumers and shipping time.

Just like all marketing strategies, luxury brands should consider a multichannel strategy.

This way, consumers can have extra time to get ready and, the more channels brands are on, the greater chance more shoppers will see the messages.

"Successful marketing includes many media," Affluent Insights' Mr. Ramey said. "Leave no stone unturned, you never know where Mother may be watching.

"Besides, moms are special every day," she said. "Reinforcing the love by starting early is an excellent strategy."