

COLUMNS

## Will Tiffany's "Concierge of Love" fix its disappointing holiday gifting season?

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By **Pam Danziger**

Tiffany & Co. has pulled out the stops with its slick new "Concierge of Love" Web site and social media program aimed to generate big results for Valentine's Day gift sales. Heaven knows, Tiffany needs a good Valentine's Day performance after reporting on Jan. 12 that sales for the two-month holiday season were "disappointing," running 1 percent below previous year.

Hit or a miss for Tiffany?

Will Tiffany's "Concierge of Love" be the ticket to a strong performance in early 2015? I am skeptical. Not because the program is not done well. It is quite spectacular, as an advertising piece.

While I think the program is well executed technically, the key question is whether it will sell more Tiffany jewelry for Valentine's Day? It clearly aims for a millennial-aged audience in tone and texture, like the "[Love on Speed Dial](#)" post to Twitter, but the prices for the pieces featured in each of the videos start at \$2,000, a hefty price for most millennials.

The idea of buying a gift to express love by "dialing it in" is impersonal, bordering on tasteless. Is it just the romantic in me that thinks a gift of love should be personally selected and chosen with care, since it is intended to carry a very personal and emotional message?

As technically well executed as the Tiffany "Concierge of Love" is, it just does not hit the right emotional notes that convey "love." It tokenizes the Valentine's Day gifting experience, rather than celebrates it.

Tiffany could have done better with more emotionally evocative and touching messages.

Tiffany should know about the emotion behind gifting. After all, it has been in the gifting business since 1837.

The company put slick digital marketing strategies ahead of what made the Tiffany brand great delivering meaningful gifting experiences for both the gift giver and the gift recipient. The tone of the "Concierge of Love" is just wrong.

Shopping for gift important motivator for customers

While the "Concierge of Love" program is a miss, Tiffany understands how vital gifting is when it comes to generating sales.

Overall, we estimate 10 percent of shopping occasions are driven by the need to select a gift, and among the high-spending affluents that rises to 15 percent. And that percentage is even higher for jewelry stores such as Tiffany's

and luxury boutiques.

By our calculation U.S. consumers last year spent \$1.1 billion buying gifts.



*Reasons for affluents to shop: gifting CLICK TO EXPAND*

RETAILERS AND marketers need to better understand the important marketing opportunity that gifting represents. They need data to reveal the motivations and attitudes that drive consumers in their gift purchases and how their shopping behavior is changing.

Every year brings new trends in the popular gift choices that only research can reveal.

Retailers and marketers need insight into the role of Internet and social media on gifting and how price impacts purchase. Finally, they need new understanding of the shopping experiences which gift customers value most.

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