

COLUMNS

## 5 emerging trends in fragrance marketing strategy

August 17, 2016



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By **Jo White**

When almost half (49 percent) of all yearly perfume sales are over the festive period, having the right launch strategy in place is vital to success.

More than six in 10 women buy or receive perfume at Christmas, according to GMI data, making reaching this diverse audience and standing out from the crowd a significant challenge.

However, the vibrant scent market is meeting these challenges with gusto, not only through investing in new launches, but by embracing a broad range of digital platforms to better engage with consumers.

Perfume gifts may be ubiquitous at Christmas but their marketing strategies are anything but. Five key trends emerging this year include:

### 1. Digital discoveries: consumer as celebrity

At the heart of the shift in how perfume brands cut through the clutter is the rising role of social media on consumers' buying habits.

Celebrities have long partnered with beauty brands to drive product purchasing. But consumers now have a greater affinity for an army of relatable beauty bloggers who test and share the latest scents, looks and fashions.

### 2. Embrace the theatre of scent

For an industry that has been built upon emotion and sensory experiences, launching new and immersive pop-up experiences is key to better connecting with consumers.

Fragrance retailer The Perfume Shop recently opened up The Perfume Bar, a sensorial cocktail bar in London's Mahiki nightclub. The pop-up included a bespoke cocktail menu inspired by best-selling scents.

For its part, Victor&Rolf brought the theatre to its pre-Christmas sampling campaign with an Instagram photo booth.

### 3. Marketing to Generation Me

In the post-recession era, promotions have become wallpaper to consumers bombarded by deals on a daily basis.

Meanwhile, the traditional festive box set has run out of steam and sales are on the wane, which means brands need to dig deeper to entice consumers to try something new.

In line with this shift, a growing number of brands are turning to personalization to reassure consumers that perfume is not simply a bland gift.

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The perfume market is ahead of the competition when it comes to embracing the "individualism" Pinterest/individualism demanded by millennial consumers.

Other examples include Burberry offering consumers the chance to carve their initials on a bottle as well as the growth of scent wardrobes where brands such as Jo Malone and Bottega Veneta sell a wardrobe of scents to enable consumers to make their own distinctive fragrance.

#### 4. Secret scents: return of exclusivity

The premium perfume market continues to thrive.

According to data from Euromonitor, the premium perfume sector continues to outperform the mass-market segment, with current value growth of 4 percent, compared with 2 percent for the former.

While historically perfume has been the mass-market entry-point for consumers seeking a slice of a brand beyond their budget, brands are increasingly seeking to bolster their premium credentials through limited distribution.

Louis Vuitton's much-anticipated fragrance will launch this September and its launch has been shrouded in huge secrecy. Its perfume will not be available in duty-free, but only from Louis Vuitton boutiques.

#### 5. Rise and rise of the sequel

Just as Hollywood has successfully minimized the risk of box-office disaster through a steady stream of re-works and sequels, smart perfume brands continue to grow their market share through new lines.

Established brands such as Hugo Boss have a successfully grown existing product lines, while Marc Jacobs continues to inspire consumers, with further sequels and sub-brands of its best-selling Daisy line consistently ranking in the top new launches of the year.

JUST AS MUCH as consumers seek the surprise and excitement of the new in a world of flux, the reassurance of a signature scent remains a key pillar for consumers and brands alike.

It is predicted that in the next four years the perfume industry will increase by an annual growth rate of 3 percent.

The brands that will drive this group are the ones moving quickly, taking advantage of the latest trends, innovating and adapting the way that they sell to their customers.

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