

COLUMNS

5 tips to creating a coherent brand experience across channels

February 8, 2012



By **Emmanuel Probst**

Thanks to the recent growth in smartphone usage, marketers have become obsessed with creating and broadening their brand's mobile presence.

Applications are often presented as the solution to almost all marketers' problems, such as driving traffic and conversion or increasing satisfaction and loyalty.

The great news for luxury marketers is that mobile technologies enable access to hard-to-reach audiences, including people with household incomes of \$100,000-plus and those ages 18-35.

The challenge, however, is to link online and offline marketing efforts.

Tipping points

Marketers, beware. Consumers evaluate brands based on their overall experience, rather than differentiating online from offline. Yet, there often is a disconnect between the in-store experience that luxury brands deliver and their online presence.

Here are five tips to creating a coherent customer experience program.

Gain permission to communicate with your audience. People buy from people, hence your store associates are best positioned to promote your app, mailing list or Web site.

Any in-person interaction is a great opportunity to say, "We'd like to stay in touch." Church's Shoes, among other brands, promotes its mailing list this way.

Your online team and store associates can help each other out. Your Web site should drive traffic to your store by allowing for in-store pickup. Store associates should then cross-sell and up-sell items that match what the customer bought online.

Conversely, store associates can order from the Web site an item that is out of stock in-store and have it delivered to the customer's door. Men's Wearhouse has had great success implementing such a process.

Provide valuable content to your followers. It is hard to build a following and gain permission. Do not blast your fans with discounts and offers that will depreciate your brand and ruin the relationship in which you just engaged.

Last summer, a local retailer invited me to a boot trunk show. Sorry, but I did not feel like buying boots when it was 90 degrees Fahrenheit outside.

Conversely, custom tailor Nicholas Joseph created a campaign to "revive Gentleman Customs, the gentlemanly

manners and etiquette of days gone by." Its discerning clientele will be glad to learn that "The gentleman goes first in taxis, revolving doors at rest, and boats." This message is aligned with Nicholas Joseph's brand image.

Promote viral online recommendations. Use QR codes and Web-based customer advocacy management technologies to identify your most satisfied customers and ask them to spread the word on Facebook and Twitter.

Chances are that they will be delighted to let all their friends know about that fancy purse, day spa or romantic weekend gateway. Let us be honest about it: it gives your clients an opportunity to advertise their status.

It is all about love. Too many brands jump on the bandwagon and engage in online media for the sake of it.

Past the initial excitement of downloading your app, nobody cares about your platform.

Indeed, studies show that one-quarter of apps downloaded only get used once.

The luxury experience is about belonging to a tribe, engaging with the brand in a very personal way and, ultimately, feeling special.

For example, Tiffany & Co. allows customers to share love stories and romantic spots via their "What Makes Love True" application. It is also worth taking look at the new Ritz-Carlton Web site, which enables guests to share stories of luxury service.

SO MUCH NEW software and hardware is released every day that you cannot keep up, and you do not need to.

Instead, stay true to yourself by focusing on the story you want to tell.

Then, pick the media that are best suited to conveying your message and ensure that this story is delivered in a consistent fashion across the board.

Finally, engage your fans by asking them to write the story with you.

Emmanuel Probst is vice president of retail at [Empathica](#), Chicago. Reach him at eprobst@empathica.com.

© 2020 Napean LLC. All rights reserved.

American Marketer is published each business day. Thank you for reading us. Your [feedback](#) is welcome.