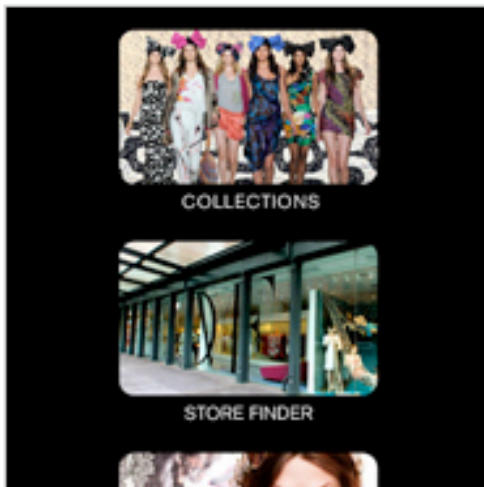


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iPad may woo luxury brands to finally enter mobile full-throttle

By [Courtney Muir](#)

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Diane von Furstenburg's mobile application

potential, has already won over luxury brands such as Diane von Furstenberg and Mercedes-Benz.

Luxury brands have not been too quick to adopt mobile marketing practices. But that may change with the iPad, which has the potential to woo luxury marketers into the mobile space.

The exclusivity that Apple is known for makes it very much like a luxury brand, and let's face it, its pricing is up there as well. The iPad's large screen, which adds to its advertising and marketing

"The iPad and Apple in general command strong hi-tech and high-quality brand recognition," said Rob Longo, vice president of sales, marketing and support at Dilithium, Petaluma, CA. "This is not a professional opinion, but it appears Apple users can be characterized as higher-income, higher-educated users with discriminating taste.

“This also the target demographic of luxury brands.”

A whopping 300,000 iPads were sold on the first day of release and sales reached between 600,000 and 700,000 in the first weekend. This is evidence of the fact that consumers want rich access to the Internet anywhere and anytime.

The iPad is a multitouch tablet that features access to the Internet, email, photos and video viewing. With more than a thousand applications, the iPad offers brands the ability to reach their target demographic in a new, rich-media-enabled, and therefore, appealing way.

Hesitation

Luxury brands are hesitant to experiment with new marketing strategies because they need to maintain the appropriate aesthetics.

“The iPad offers a larger screen with a higher resolution, plus an extremely easy interactive experience,” Mr. Longo said. “This enables the delivery and viewing of high-quality video advertisements.

“The only downside is the iPad doesn’t support Flash, and since so much advertising is done with Flash, this may limit the reach of some of the ad campaigns,” he said.

There is also the issue of exclusivity. Luxury implies that is it not for everyone and the Internet makes it difficult to selectively choose who to interact with.

Apple leads the charge

Apple is changing the way that luxury marketers think of mobile. The iPhone has already proved that.

Chanel, Breitling, Christian Dior, Gucci and David Yurman all made their debut into the mobile space via the iPhone platform.

However, brands like Louis Vuitton and Hermes are still iffy about the mobile space. That may change with the iPad platform.

"The luxury market, by definition, implies higher-value items and lower-volume sales, appealing to a smaller cross-section of people," said Alex Hall, chief operating officer at TigerSpike, New York.

"Luxury brands have no choice but to test the [mobile] waters if they haven't already," he said. "Using the mobile Web or apps to promote these services as part of an integrated communication plan will really start to drive measurable conversion if linked effectively to other awareness-driving media."

The iPad is a mobile device that offers luxury brands the opportunity to significantly expand their reach to an exclusive audience of online consumers.

In terms of creative execution, the iPad allows luxury marketers engage consumers with their brand and products through interactive ad campaigns, applications and videos.

"The experience is way different thanks to a larger screen, the new capabilities of the iPad and its mobility," said Steve Edo, founder of [Pure Entertainment Group](#), Montreal. "Luxury marketers can now fully create a digital experience with entertaining content that better reflects their brand."

Luxury brands are extremely hesitant to experiment with new marketing strategies as well.

"But I actually believe, in the long run, most of these luxury brands will jump on the iPad bandwagon," Mr. Edo said. "In 2010, luxury brands have got to be present in all social media and on mobile devices."

Best practices

1. First off, locate the target audience. Make sure they fit the iPad user demographic.
2. Create ads and applications specifically designed for the iPad platform, keeping in mind the screen size, various views and the touch screen, for example.
3. Remember, the iPad does not support Flash. Create non-Flash rich-media ads.
4. To play on the exclusivity of the brand, create ads that are firsts. Wow the audience and engage them in ways they never thought possible.
5. Always keep in mind that the iPad has a larger screen, which requires special adaptation and bitrate configurations to meet customer's viewing expectations in varying wireless network conditions.
6. Color-rich ads and applications are a must.

IPad audience

An iPad user survey by AdColony found that 58 percent of respondents have bachelor's degrees and/or graduate/professional degrees and 44.3 percent earn a household income level of \$100,000 or greater.

The results also show that of iPad users, more than 48.7 percent own iPod touches, 43 percent own iPhones and more than 27.2 percent own BlackBerry devices.

"The iPad audience is people who are looking to interact with products," Mr. Edo said. "The luxury brands are looking to target online consumers in a whole new different way.

"I think we have a match here," he said.

The iPad allows for deep and rich experiences with applications and rich-media, in-application and in-browser advertising.

Luxury brands have premium products to showcase and the iPad is like a canvas that can bring out the luxury feel.

"Advertising and branding for luxury products and services is about presenting high quality and controlled brand messaging," said Greg Philpott, president and founder of mDialog, Toronto, ON. "When the advertising is experienced on a platform as coveted and desired as the luxury brands themselves, the message is fully embraced and realized.

"The iPad itself is intrinsically luxurious and provides the perfect platform to reach a high-end audience," he said.