

COLUMNS

Embrace the craftsmanship behind digital

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By [Alex Levin](#)

If ever there was a time to bolster the importance of technology in the luxury world, it is now.

The luxury sector has only scratched the surface of integrating digital technology as a medium for excellence and growth.

As the global coronavirus pandemic continues to halt the majority of our daily activities, luxury brands have a window of opportunity to increase their attention to detail, strengthen their craftsmanship, and create premium experiences that exceed customer expectations now and into the future.

Always at the forefront

The luxury business is and always will represent those taking experiences beyond the status quo. They are the ones guiding the rest of the market on how to stay relevant and resonate with our core human desires.

To live up to this expectation, luxury firms must overcome their most critical oversight: neglecting digital experiences for their most important stakeholders, their staff.

Luxury essentially created what it means to manage client relationships. Luxury sales professionals are unbelievably educated on their product, their company's heritage and values. They naturally create deep relationships with their most loyal customers, and treat any new prospect just the same, with excitement of sharing the depth of knowledge about the origins of the company.

Luxury brands who have been "successful" online, have a considerable amount of sentiment credit from consumers due to their decades of investments in creating physical experiences that exceed expectations.

Now with tools such as Instagram and connections with influencers, luxury staff can have the ability to digitize their endorsements, advertising and messaging as an adjunct to these personal relationships.

By their nature, luxury firms are playing the long game, and the longer they play, the better they are at staying relevant and authentic. Help them embrace the digital craftsmanship needed to create a seamless path from inspiration to purchase.

Digital: Medium for personalization

As luxury organizations begin to understand that digital is a medium with its own craftsmanship sensibilities, they will be able to successfully strategize, design, and implement it to create unforgettable, relevant customer

experiences at each and every encounter.

When ideal customers walk into your flagship store, these should not be standalone, in-store customer journeys. On the contrary, they most likely first experienced your brand while looking up directions on Google Maps, checking shop hours on their phones, or asking Siri a question. Perhaps customers found you in a favorite magazine article, on a new product Instagram post, or from a friend who shared.

Although we know the luxury business can be seen as indulgent, the reality is that luxury is relative and, thus, intimately part of our human nature. It operates on all levels and digital technology is the perfect medium to provide the right thing, for the right person, at the right time, without having to show everyone everything all at once.

Digital technology makes communication more personal, more accurate and, ultimately, more scalable.

Melding digital and physical

Putting an LCD screen touch screen on something has never made it innovative, connected or smart. Instead, it marginalizes both the magic and specialness of both physical and digital worlds.

It is time to treat technology as another medium with which to paint a masterpiece.

The goal of senior leadership, then, is to use digital to carefully craft experiences that follow the brand's specific and unique internal learning development processes. These must be seamlessly paired with the front line employees who interact directly with customers.

It is about taking thoughtful action to support your team and to provide the best possible experiences for your customers, no matter where they are or what else is going on in their lives.

The time is now to invest in digital and rethink what technology-enablement means for your brand. Remember that brand trust, retail atmosphere and relevant information are the key components of customer experiences and ultimately drive shopper behavior.

It is in these times of productive disruption where luxury brands can step up to meet the challenge and exceed beyond the norm.

WITHOUT OUR FAITH in digital technology today, we would be in a much more difficult place.

Indeed, technology becomes less of a luxury and more of a necessity. Accordingly, it is critical to understand there is no line between digital and physical experiences.

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