

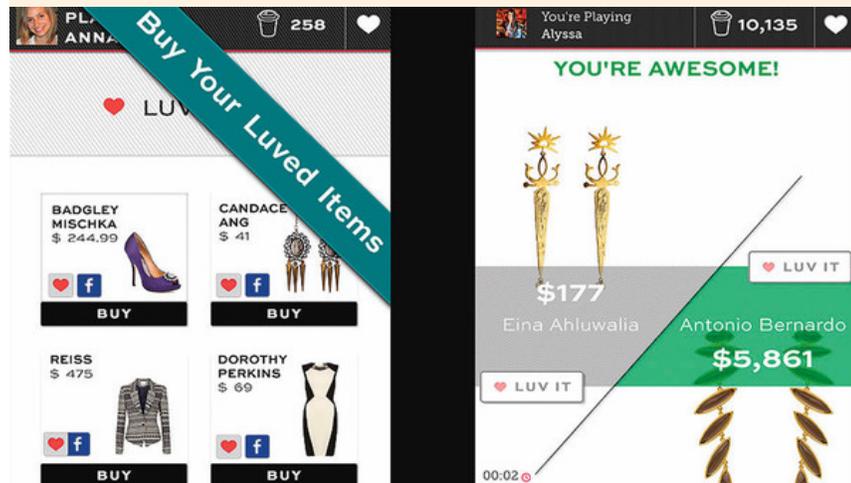
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Jewellers turn to mobile gaming

By Claire Adler



On trend: Fashion Eye allows players to guess prices

For advertisers, customers and potential customers were once unreachable when they were waiting for a companion in a restaurant, or in bed.

But mobile gaming apps have changed all that. The games are more popular among affluent internet users than news, fitness or personal investing apps, according to a study by the Shullman Research Center, a luxury consultancy. While 59 per cent of 35- to 54-year-olds have gaming apps installed on their electronic devices, only 40 per cent have news apps.

“Gaming is by far the number-one activity on mobile in terms of time spent, dwarfing Facebook,” claims John McCrea, chief marketing officer of MediaSpike, a Silicon Valley company that places luxury products in games and whose founder, Blake Commagere, built social games for Facebook that attracted 50m players.

“Current mobile games are richly emotional. Positive interactions with a brand produce significant lifts in ad likeability, recall and intent to buy,” he says. “For luxury brands, virtual interaction taps into the power of aspiration. What we do in virtual worlds reflects and influences our intentions in the real world.”

Mobile games allow brands to track and analyse consumer behaviour and then use that data to drive future business strategy. Over five months, 40,000 players took part in more than 2m matches of *Fashion Eye*, a mobile fashion game created by developer Fashioholic.

Incorporating jewellery by Bottega Veneta, David Yurman, Lanvin, Tom Binns, Kara Ross and vintage Chanel, *Fashion Eye* relies on its addictive quality. Sixty per cent of players returned to play more matches after their first game.

Launched last August after two years in development, *Fashion Eye* has yielded more than twice the retention rates – which measure the length of time spent playing – of most fashion-related apps.

The average time spent on a fashion app is 40 seconds, while the average time spent on *Fashion Eye* is two minutes, according to Flurry Analytics, a mobile analytics and advertising service. More than 40 per cent of consumer time on mobile apps is spent playing games.

“We’re in discussion with various global retailers who have asked Fashioholic to create their own branded games. Other brands will

soon start advertising in our existing games,” says Ohad Greenspan, Fashioholic’s chief executive and co-founder.

“Fashioholic’s games drive users to retailers’ websites and stores based on the user’s location,” he says. “We provide our clients with tools to measure how consumers perceive their items, how many times items are viewed and shared with friends, and how the game converts into sales.”

In branded games, such as TAG Heuer’s Mystery on Board, a brand has control over the game’s duration, content and number of brand references.

But because branded games are usually saturated with brand content, it is often a challenge to persuade anyone other than brand enthusiasts to play them.

Christopher Ward, a British watchmaker, is releasing a game this summer with the brand’s master watchmaker Johannes Jahnke guiding fans through challenges.

In the quiz app created by the Association of Art and Antique Dealers, players can test their knowledge of jewellery, clocks, fine art, silver, ceramics and glass.

Another option is for brands to be featured in existing mobile games. For example, the Lexus IS 350 F Sport appears in a mobile video game by EA aimed at car enthusiasts.

“By partnering with nimble start-ups, luxury and fashion brands can gain exposure to the gaming world without requiring big budgets or huge resources,” says Miriam Lahage, a Fashioholic board member and investor.

However, not everyone is convinced. Tamar Koifman, international client development director at the Digital Luxury Group, a marketing and communications agency, says she believes wealthy individuals do not play games sponsored by luxury brands.

But Ms Lahage disagrees. “The companies that figure out that games are important now will have an unfair advantage over their competitors,” she says.

Digital: Top luxury games

Fashion Eye by Fashioholic

Players guess which of two fashion items is the more expensive or guess the price of two similar-looking accessories. They predict future trends and play against each other to win coffee or points, which they can convert into retailer discounts or credits.

Covet Fashion by Crowdstar

Players put together outfits from brands such as BCBG Max Azria, Rebecca Minkoff, Kara Ross, Rachel Zoe and French Connection. Winning outfits lead to prizes ranging from store giftcards and accessories to virtual gifts.

According to Crowdstar, whose investors include Time Warner and Intel Capital, users spend 30 minutes daily shopping, styling and sharing looks on the app.

TAG Heuer’s Mystery on Board

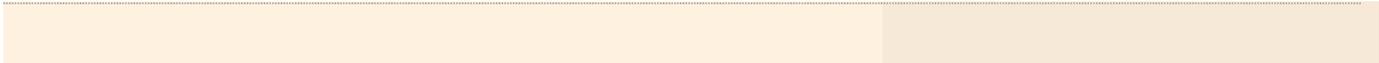
A virtual reality game set on a train where players find the TAG Heuer Aquaracer Glacier Express watch by searching for hidden clues – all against a backdrop of spectacular Swiss landscapes.

The game is available on mobile, desktop and tablets via Facebook. It was created for TAG Heuer by KRDS.

Montblanc’s WeChat campaign

The company has created a game on WeChat, China’s mobile social network with 396m users, to mark 90 years of its Meisterstück collection of pens. Users submit pictures and receive ratings by the community to determine whether they possess characteristics such as elegance, sophistication and leadership.

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