A proposal of blending physical and digital experiences through an interactive SS16 pre-sale event for the store SPRMRKT.nl

A complementary product to the research paper with the question “What are the possibilities of omni-channel implementations for small luxury fashion retailers and how can they benefit from such an approach?”

by Terrell Tate
SPRMRKT is a small-scale retailer situated in the Jordaan district of Amsterdam offering contemporary fashion with a considerable focus towards luxury. It exists for 12 years and has witnessed many developments and changes within the fashion retail culture.

With its over 450 m² and the aim to push the unconventional, the store has always been a hub for inspiring ideas in fashion, arts and design by regularly hosting events to bring people together through shared interests.

Some years ago it dared the step to open an online store with several subsequent attempts, but never really with a notable sell-through.

Since three months now a new webshop has been launched with an updated navigation, stronger visual language and the connection between digital and physical stock. The results are increased sales, conversion rates and customer service, but still, the webshop and social media engagement remains far underneath its full potential. Specifically Instagram, as the strongest social media platform in the fashion industry, needs a bigger following and more user engagement.

The following event concept has the aim to help SPRMRKT in digitally engaging with its increasingly international customer base.

VETEMENTS

VETEMENTS is a Düsseldorf based design collective and is known for its womenswear staples that elegantly combine roughness and deconstruction. It is SPRMRKT’s most popular brand when looking at sales in-store and online and therefore serves as the main collaborator for this event.
A proposal of blending physical and digital experiences through an interactive SS16 pre-sale event for the store SPRMRKT:

As stated in the research paper, the physical aspect of experiencing a product or brand in-store remains extremely important, especially in the luxury sector. Still, the steady advancing digital possibilities, specifically fueled by mobile technology, have the potential to enhance the engagement of passionate fashion followers. Through an in-store event, which embraces the developments of channel-converging methods, the aim is to digitally connect with the customers within a physical space. Simultaneously, the online visitor should, to some extent, be engaged as well.

The idea is to reveal VETEMENTS’, the store’s most popular brand, SS16 collection two weeks before it is available to the public. Next to the collection presentation, the aim is to enable pre-ordering items via smart phone.

The event will be further supported by an interactive virtual reality tool, which will allow a unique first-person view into the brand’s SS16 show, to give the visitor a personal and distinct experience of the brand. With help of the interactive 3D stereoscopic view it will be possible to effectively trick the person’s mind into believing that he/she is actually present inside the video.

Further objectives of the event:

International social media coverage:

Four bloggers will be invited and have the possibility to participate in an affiliate programme, which will make their blog and Instagram posts shoppable. The contributors will receive a share for each sale and additionally have the benefit of creating high quality, exclusive and relevant content.

Retention of international customer base:

Drawing attraction to an international crowd will receive specific attentiveness. The presence of the VETEMENTS’ head designer and free worldwide shipping on all pre-order items should add to the brand’s already existing global appeal and aims to encourage an appropriate crowd to join the event.

Physicalisation of online shopping:

Specifically for the event the communication will shift towards digital. All logos and store name citations will be altered from SPRMRKT to SPRMRKT.nl, to support the physicalisation of the store’s eCommerce platform.
Main elements of event

1. VETEMENTS SS16 pre-order collection presentation

During the two-hour event the visitors are able to have a closer look at the SS16 collection two weeks prior to the official launch. All items that are part of the presentation will be available to pre-order via smart phone. Through QR codes each item has a direct digital link to the webshop and can be reserved with a prepayment and by entering shipping information (or by choosing store pick-up).

The most popular items will be part of a subsequent two-week window installation. The QR codes in this case are applied on the windows and can therefore be used at anytime, also when the store is closed.

To mobilize an as international as possible crowd, the store offers free-shipping on all pre-order orders and an A1 print of an editorial image by choice. Also Demna Gvasalia, the head designer of VETEMENTS will be present.

Some of the pieces have a strong limitation and are bought only once per size. Hence, the act of pre-ordering should have some demand and assures the customers to receive the desired item at their home address or via “click and collect”.
Pre-order installation of the three most popular items in front of the store (will be set up after the event, for two weeks)
Instagram, as the most powerful social media platform, will play an important role throughout the event. Compared to other social media platforms, the per-follower engagement rate is exceptional and even exceeds Facebook’s by far.

Four personalities (photographer, creative director and two stylists), which are closely connected to VETEMENTS’ brand-realm, will be invited to create styled imagery with SS16 pieces. These pieces will be made shoppable, directly from Instagram with help of the have2have.it platform. The four contributors have the chance to participate in an affiliate programme and will receive a 15% commission share for each sale generated through their post.

Additionally, SPRMRKT will host a live broadcasting of the event through the app Periscope in order to engage people digitally in real-time (more about Periscope later).

Benefits for contributors:

- SPRMRKT will provide professional equipment for image production including make-up and hair stylist
- Contributors will get access to presentation prior to main event to ensure adequate environment for styling preparations and photo shoots
- Contributors are able to participate in affiliate programme, with each sale through Instagram or their blog, they will receive a share

Benefits for SPRMRKT:

- International social media exposure through contributor’s Instagram following, high value engagement as followers are likely to know and be fond of the the brand
- More traffic on eCommerce platform through have2have.it link
- Increment of social media following
Example of contributor’s Instagram post

The link in the bio takes the IG follower to the have2have.it page, which has a similar look and feel to the IG account.

By clicking on the image the user will be directed to the appropriate product on SPRMRKT’s eCommerce platform.
To furthermore extend the blending of physical and digital experiences, SPRMRKT will initiate the collaboration between the technology company Purple Pill and VETEMENTS. Purple Pill has developed a 3D stereoscopic camera, which makes it possible to create panoramic videos. It is comparable to Google Maps, but with moving pictures. These videos are then displayed by a headset (such as the Oculus) and give the user the feeling of being in a different environment instead of the one they are actually in. In this case, the user will find him-/herself in Paris, at the runway show of VETEMENTS SS16 collection. The headset is able to react to the movement of the wearer’s head and eyes, and change the perspective accordingly.

Purple Pill will record the show from three different angles. This will happen during Paris Fashion Week in September 2015.

During the pre-order event at SPRMRKT the visitor will have the opportunity to interactively relive the show.

The view of the Oculus-wearing person will be projected in real-time in the store to trigger the rest of the crowd.
In combination with the digital activities happening in the store, rearranging the store’s logo will furthermore reinforce the physicalisation of online shopping.

By adding the .nl URL ending, there will be more attention towards the eCommerce platform. As the aim is to engage an international audience, the visitor will remember the digital representation of the store.
FLOORPLAN FOR THE EVENT

ENTRANCE

CHANGING ROOMS

Make-up and hair section

Photos studio for social media content

PROJECTION SCREEN

PURPLE PILL VR
Virtual Reality video installation

BAR

VETEMENTS
SS16 collection presentation

CO
UNT
Live broadcasting for online audience

To complete the convergence of digital and physical worlds, online users can’t be ignored in participating in the event. Therefore a live broadcast through the Periscope app will be established. Periscope enables the user to watch and broadcast live videos from all across the globe.

There were previous live streaming apps, but they all failed because the Wi-Fi infrastructure was not advanced enough. But with more open rapid Wi-Fi networks and faster 4G mobile networks than ever before, live streaming might become as omni-present as Google or Facebook.

Concrete benefits for SPRMRKT.nl through event

1. More traffic and resulting conversions on webshop
2. More international brand awareness
3. Email retention of international audience
4. More social media engagement
5. Increase of social media following

Future thoughts

- how can the newly acquired followers be engaged on a long-term basis
- the in-store “SPRMRKT.nl” rebranding could be retained
- could QR code usage become integral part of retail and SPRMRKT?