

Isme, Littlewoods and Very invest more than £12 million in new ad campaigns

Shop Direct brands Littlewoods, Isme and Very have released their autumn/winter advertising campaigns, revealing an investment of more than £12 million.

Littlewoods invested £2.3 million in its multimedia advertising push featuring brand ambassador Myleene Klass. The first ads, based around the concept of “the Littlewoods touch”, first aired on Tuesday, 25th September, and ran for six weeks across TV, print and digital channels.

Littlewoods said that following the premier of its autumn ad on Facebook, unprecedented traffic to a fuchsia pencil dress designed and worn by Myleene Klass meant initial stock of the dress had already sold out before the first TV ad was shown. “This is the first time ever that a Littlewoods garment has sold out as a direct result of social media buzz,” says Littlewoods brand director Gary Kibble. “There’s no doubt that Myleene designed a show-stopping dress but the level of demand has completely blown us away, surpassing out initial projections by more than 400 percent.”

Littlewoods now expects sales of the dress to hit 2,000 before Christmas, and Kibble says the company has “pulled out all the stops” to bring in more stock. “[We] are expecting delivery of a further few hundred pieces in the coming weeks. Many of those have been preallocated so

shoppers need to move quickly.”

Sister title Isme invested £3.7 million in its autumn/winter campaign, a year-on-year increase of more than 56 percent. The push, which features brand ambassador Lynda Bellingham, ran throughout October across TV, print and digital, switching to a more festive treatment from 1st November to the end of the year.

Very.co.uk invested more than its sister catalogues’ combined spend on advertising, with £6.5 million ploughed into its promotional programme. The investment represents a 41 percent year-on-year increase and sees the campaign run across TV, print and digital for four weeks starting Monday, 8th October. Like Isme, the campaign then takes a more festive approach, focusing on the dilemma of buying gifts for friends and family in the run-up to Christmas.



direct
operations

Morrant's winning tech team

By Ernie Schell

Equipping sports teams for clubs, schools and leagues has been the mission of family-run Morrant Group since 1973. Father, daughter, son and staff are dedicated to providing the latest products from the leading manufacturers at the best prices for cricket, rugby, football, hockey, and netball teams all over the UK and worldwide, and to providing customers with the optimum online and call centre shopping experience.

In addition, Morrant's subsidiary company Dukes has the contract to provide all balls for Test Match and 1st Class County cricket in the UK as well as supply contracts with the vast majority of premier cricket leagues across the country.

Until 2005, Morrant managed sales for its more than 10,000 SKUs on multiple systems that had been custom-designed many years earlier and ported to the Linux open-source platform. But these systems were becoming increasingly difficult to support, and didn't offer the kind of marketing tools Morrant needed to meet corporate goals for sales and service levels.

Supporting industry standards

Notes managing director Sunil Jajodia, “We needed to move on to the next level in direct commerce systems, and start using solutions that would support industry standards”. To replace their legacy order management systems the Morrants team



turned to Cyrane, for search-engine optimisation (SEO) they chose Netcallidus (now part of the Dot Digital Group), and for site search and pay per click they use dotSEO, which lets them put SKUs into multiple categories and simplifies finding items once a customer has come to the Morrant website.

The website is “constantly being updated and developed behind the scenes to ensure that the shopping experience with us is easy and enjoyable,” says Jajodia. “Our average order is about £50, but

sales to leagues can be as high £20,000. To handle that kind of order we implemented a b-to-b version of the order management system to run alongside the b-to-c version and use the Cyrane integrated website. These systems will also support our expansion into Australia, South Africa, and India.”

Professional grade

Having accurate real-time stock data has proven to be one of the biggest advantages of the new system, and is used with demand history to support purchasing, which can be rather complex in a size-and-colour product environment.

“But we're also able to do a much better job of marketing,” Jajodia points out, “both on the site and in follow-up emails to shoppers who don't place an order. In the marketing area, we can segment customers by sport or other interest, and do a better job of targeting our marketing efforts through RFM analysis.

Morrant recently added PayPal as an optional method of payment and has the creation of a mobile-optimised version of its site on the to-do list, along with making a PDF version of Morrant's 80-page catalogue available online. ☺

Ernie Schell of Marketing Systems Analysis will be speaking on the topic of technology in the multichannel world at ECMOD.