Synopsis of the Club e-Luxe Breakfast Seminar 2011

Borderless Luxury at the 2011 Club e-Luxe Breakfast Seminar

The relationship between luxury and technology reminds me of a story I once read about two neighbours who famously disliked each other, only to find out several years later that they were half-sisters.

As everyone who is linked to both tech and luxury knows, the rapport between these two "neighbours" is peppered by friction to say the least. As mentioned in earlier posts and also in **Luxury Online**, luxury for a long time observed technology and digital media from a suspicious distance before eventually joining the digital gig. Despite this, luxury and technology still don't speak the same language and the dialogue remains challenging and almost non-existent. This is the "gap" that Luxe Corp strives to fill through Club e-Luxe; and the advancement of this dialogue between luxury brands (Chanel, Gucci, Boucheron, RémyMartin, Lanvin etc) and technology companies (Microsoft, Cisco Systems etc) was very much evident at the last **Club e-Luxe Breakfast Seminar** held on 13th January 2011 at the Ritz Hotel, Paris.
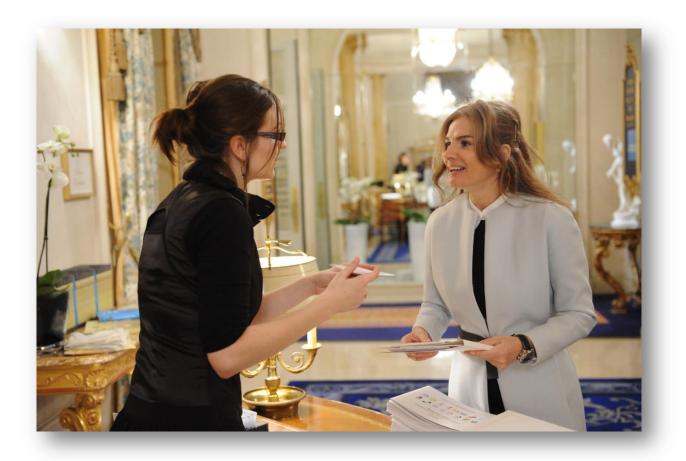

As mentioned in **the first part of this post**, the theme of the event was Borderless Luxury with an emphasis on integrating interactivity in the luxury retail experience (both online and offline). The event brought together key players of both the luxury and tech worlds to dissect how luxury brands could benefit from several groundbreaking tools, applications and techniques that defines today's digital landscape.

The Vice President of **Cisco Systems** who flew in from California for the event, took the audience on an immersive journey of how Cisco's Borderless Networks could work magic across the entire value chain of a luxury business, from retail to client services, communications, operations, logistics, production and cross channel multi-media marketing. **Microsoft's** Global Digital Director gave an eye-opening presentation and DEMO of the power of Cloud Computing and its value as a multi-media tool particularly the across the tri-channels of offline, online and mobile. Its extended benefits through 3D (think of the movie Avatar, which Microsoft helped to develop by the way) were also explained and

luxury brands were able to understand how these core technologies could be integrated within their operations.

Boucheron's International Marketing Director then made an engaging presentation of both the strategic vision and the operational approaches behind its Augmented Reality experience **My Boucheron**, the first bold foray into virtual reality by a high jewellery brand. A DEMO of the application was made and the audience were able to live the "dream" of wearing the delectable pieces from Boucheron's collections, at least virtually.

An interactive Roundtable Discussion / Debate session followed on the topic of Traditional vs Integrated (Online + Offline) Retail. With the participation of Boucheron and three luxury CEOs who had slightly opposing views on the importance of e-commerce, bricks & mortar retail, cross-channel retail (including mobile and tablets etc) and applying digital tools within the physical store. The debate was illuminating to say the least.

In addition to these insightful exchanges and DEMOs we were delighted to witness further evidence of the current transformation taking place in how luxury perceives technology, similar to what we saw at the **Club e-Luxe International Summit last June**. Hearing luxury executives refer to technology as "liberating" and as an "enabler" call for celebration, following a decade of viewing technology as a mix of trash and threat! This is evidence that this dialogue started by Club e-Luxe five years ago is contributing to the advancement of luxury in digital media. Who would have imagined then that techies and luxury executives could spend a day together?

Here are a few quotes, some of which further accentuate this evolution as act as a boost as we prepare for the **forthcoming Club e-Luxe International Summit** to take place on Tuesday 31st May at the Ritz Hotel, Paris.

"*Don't fight, don't run but feed cyber-residents with content or they will feed on your brand*"

"*Social networking is not new but was effective 2,000 years ago. Jesus Christ was the Master Social Networker. Luxury brands ought to emulate his technique of Find + Recruit + Convert = Evangelize*"

"*Technology is a enabler, a means to an end. Technology should serve luxury and not the other way round*"

"*Luxury brands finally understand the liberating powers of digital media*"

"*For branded content to be effective, luxury brands have to Create + Captivate + Converse + Convert + Commercialize*"

"*The objective of every branded content from a luxury brand should be to provide an exceptional experience*"

"*Video is emerging to become one of the web's most effective and most viral communications tools*"

"*In addition to web analytics, luxury brands now need to employ video analytics*"

"*Web research and analytics should be less static and luxury should need to seek out Digital Anthropologists and Behavioural Strategists to define their way forward online*"

"*Online games like Kinect are no longer just gaming platforms but social platforms. Kinect is currently the No.1 Social Media on TV!*"

"*When embarking on a digital project, luxury brands should keep in mind that every aspect of the final experience should start and end with the brand*"

"The internet aids luxury brands to overcome the intimidation factor in terms of pricing and store visits"

"Branded content should be about connecting with people's emotions"

"The five key aspects of traditional luxury retail that must never be compromised are: emotional connection, service, brand & store universe, experience and surprise

"The shopping experience is the single uniting factor of online and offline retail"

"Luxury should not be driven by existing technologies but by what they can achieve through technologies"