

# Packaging the Experience of Luxury

November 2007

**F**or some luxury buyers, a high-end BMW would be sufficient unto itself. Custom-built for the buyer, German-engineered for excellence, the Beemer is a sweet little sports car. But BMW understands that for a certain group of discriminating buyers, an automobile remains just an automobile. It's a way to get from point A to point B. So BMW offers those buyers something more than an automobile: its European Delivery program puts Point A right in the heart of Munich and Point B — well, that's up to you.

What's fascinating here is that BMW understands that an *experience* can extend the attractiveness of an item into whole new realms. They've created an opportunity that makes buying a BMW not just a trip to the local dealer but an extraordinary trip to Europe. And they don't just hand you the keys and a map: BMW has teamed with Conde Nast to create some of the most luxurious road trips ever imagined. You can stay in five-star hotels along the way, dine at some of the finest restaurants in Europe. Yet you can move at your own pace (whether that's zipping along the autobahn to touring slowly through the back roads), turn spontaneously on to those enchanting side streets, or pull over to enjoy that perfect sunset on a lonely alpine road.

And when it's all over? You fly home and BMW ships your car home by boat.

## **What's *Your* European Delivery Option?**

So what can you do to create experiences that will be appealing to your discriminating customers? Sure, they'll come in and purchase the goods or services you have to offer — but they may drift elsewhere for similar goods and services over time. What can you offer experientially that will make them yours forever?

We're fond of travel, so we like the idea of trips tied into merchandise. If you're selling wine, offer your discriminating clients a week in Napa or Burgundy or Tuscany. First class hotels, private tours and tastings, top-notch restaurants serving regional fare that they'd never find locally. Host a small group of people. Offer your expertise as the gateway to their experience of the place. Make it an intimate party and you'll make it an experience they'll never forget.

Of course, there are options other than travel, too. If you're selling high end kitchens, offer a set of exclusive cooking lessons. The experience isn't really about learning how to cook or to use all the high end equipment that you'll be installing in someone's home; it's all about sharing an experience and an appreciation of fine food with like-minded people. >>

### **Putting the Resources in Place**

And you don't have to do it all alone. Engage other experts to help you deliver the experiences that your customers will enjoy. There are high end travel agents that can customize a trip for your clients, creative chefs whose services you can engage for an evening with your clients. Don't discount an experience you think your customers might enjoy because you don't think you can pull it all together yourself; find the people who can help you pull it all together. It's as advantageous for them as it is for you. Firms that specialize in the luxury market, such as Verve Marketing & Design, can help you find the resources you need to create the luxury packages that will appeal to your particular clientele.

There are challenges to overcome, to be sure. You need to identify the experience—or experiences—that will be attractive to your customers. You need to identify the resources that can help you deliver those experiences. And you need to identify the discriminating customers who will want to participate in (and finance) those experiences. Again, a firm such as Verve can help you focus for optimal results. It definitely involves an investment of time on your part, but when your clients are still talking about the experience years after the wine has been consumed and the kitchen is old and familiar, the long term dividends will continue to show up in continued business and referrals.