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Bluefly going viral for more luxury buzz



Alexandria Sage

SAN FRANCISCO

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(Reuters) - Bluefly Inc (BFLY.O) is adding live interviews with celebrities to its fashion shopping website and allowing consumers to upload their own videos, part of a larger effort to attract buzz, new customers and sales.

Bluefly.com, which offers designer clothes and accessories at partial discount, was the first online fashion site to include a style blog and is still focused on innovative marketing to appeal to fashionistas, said Chief Executive Melissa Payner, speaking at the [Reuters Consumer and Retail Summit](#).

"We're known as the place to go for entertainment and shopping at the same time," said Payner, adding that partnerships and tie-ins with popular fashion films and television shows are key.

The company, which got a boost from being featured on popular television show "Project Runway," views such partnerships as "critically important" in an increasingly crowded luxury retail environment amid competitors such as Gilt Group, Net-A-Porter and others.

The company's television ads, first aired in 2006, have featured a woman with no clothes on lamenting the lack of anything appropriate in her closet to wear.

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Payner said the company ultimately differentiates itself, however, through the merchandise it chooses to sell.

"We can do all sorts of marketing and types of promotions to get the consumer to come to Bluefly but if they don't connect with the merchandise you can never be successful," she said.

That assortment is "on-trend, in season and at a value," Payner said.

"When you look at businesses today there is no one who is positioned that way because there are off-price retailers who get merchandise but they don't present it in a way that's very upscale," she said.

The company's average customer order is \$295, the highest it has ever been.

One hit with customers has been "Closet Confessions," where "Project Runway's" Christian Siriano to socialite Nicky Hilton peruse their closets in front of the camera.

Next up is a live interview so shoppers can interact in real-time with celebrities. Users will also be able to upload their own "Closet Confession" videos.

"We think that will be something viral that will catch on because people love to share," said Payner.

Looking forward, Bluefly -- which does not provide financial guidance and posted a narrower operating loss in its most recent first quarter on a 2 percent rise in sales -- could potentially add extra categories, such as children's clothing, to the mix, said Payner.

"There could definitely be other categories and we've talked about them," she said.

"From a shareholder perspective the shareholders would like us to be profitable and continue to grow and there is a lot of room to grow within the structure we have today. And then there are a lot of other opportunities that we are constantly talking about."

Bluefly shares rose 5 cents to close at \$2.15 on Wednesday on Nasdaq.

(Editing by [Bernard Orr](#))

(Reporting by [Alexandria Sage](#))

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