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**THE SHIFT IN THE FASHION MARKETING: FROM THE TRADITIONAL MEDIA TOWARDS THE  
SOCIAL MEDIA STATUS QUO**

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Writing this thesis was a big challenge for me. I did not know where to start and I was very afraid about the choice of the topic that does not match my course perfectly. Moreover, I was really not sure about the language choice because I have still some insecurities and gaps with my English. However, I chose one more time to follow my instinct and to write about something that truly interests me enormously and something within which I would like to build my career. I would first like to thank my supervisor Professor Giuseppe Landolfi Petrone for his invaluable insight, encouragement and good advice. Furthermore, I need to thank all my family and my small yet precious circle of friends who have been supporting me throughout this journey: I need to say to you it has been a hell of a roller-coaster and without your help I would never arrive here today. Thank you for bearing me even during the hardest times when I wanted to rock the boat, when I did not believe in my potential, when I did not see the future. Yet you have been there as a constant and I am really honoured and blessed to have you in my life. You are THE BEST!

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## INTRODUCTION

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In this thesis I would like to overview the main existing media channels and to see their evolution over the years. In particular, I will focus my attention on the marketing aspect of their nature and on omnichannel experience that they are now intended to create and provide to the modern customers. The main issue that I would like to raise is, in fact, the ubiquity of the marketing techniques and branding strategies in today's ever-changing, challenging digitalized landscape. The reason I chose this topic is quite simple: I wanted to deep dive into the theory of a phenomenon that pervades our lives on the daily bases and of which evolution we can witness consequences every second. I will try to delimit the main reasons behind the existence of such accelerated and never-ending dynamics and will try to look with anticipation to the next possible steps in the industry. This paperwork also intends to focus on other aspects of the fashion ecosystem that contribute to empower these phenomena and to create, indeed, a so called 'seamless experience' across all the touchpoints of the marketing funnel. Unfortunately, this capitalism driven actions all come with a price: We can see their disastrous impact on our planet and on the lives of millions of people involved in producing the desire infused items produced by this sector. Indeed, the questions should be risen: How far can we run in this marathon and what are the main goals that industry is putting ahead? What could possibly be changed and, above all, are we ready to change our point of view? All these questions are fortunately now raised by the main players of the industry, and it seems like the Corporate Social Responsibility is becoming more than just another trendy 'greenwashing' term used by the latter to entrap even more the presumably naive customers. As the matter of fact, nowadays, people become more and more informed about the behind the scenes of this enormously polluting industry and, therefore, are more conscious in their brand and product choices. Finally, this research will try not only to analyse the fashion marketing and promotion scene, but it will also attempt to provide the reader with the right viewpoints and instruments in order to make them capable of navigating this whole system by themselves and to instruct them on making the 'right' fashion choices in their future.

# 1 FASHION MARKETING

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This chapter will outline the main models of marketing strategies and their evolution through the years. It will analyse its implications compared to the other relative fashion disciplines and how they work hand in hand with each other.

## 1.1 THE ORIGINAL MARKETING MIX

The marketing mix model, also called the marketing mix, is the core element of any business strategy. The model is simple and universal in use and is a kind of checklist for the effective development of the company's product on the market. Initially, the marketing mix consisted of four elements (4P), later it became more complicated and as a result moved into the 5P and 7P marketing mix.

For the first time, the 'marketing mix' saw the light of day thanks to the publication entitled Basic Marketing: A Managerial Approach by Neil H. Borden<sup>1</sup>. As a basis, the scientist took the concept of one of his colleagues at Harvard, James Culliton. The latter represents marketers as a kind of alchemists, 'ingredient mixers'. Borden liked this idea so much, which by the way became quite popular in narrow circles of fellow scientists, that he even borrowed the concept of a marketing mix, which eventually included a fairly large number of interrelated 'ingredients', such as: Advertising, pricing, distribution channels, branding, personal selling, packaging, service, storage, logistics, pricing, collection and analysis of information. However, the main work was eventually carried out by another scientist Jerome McCarthy, who subsequently consolidated all the characteristics available at that time into 4 primary blocks:

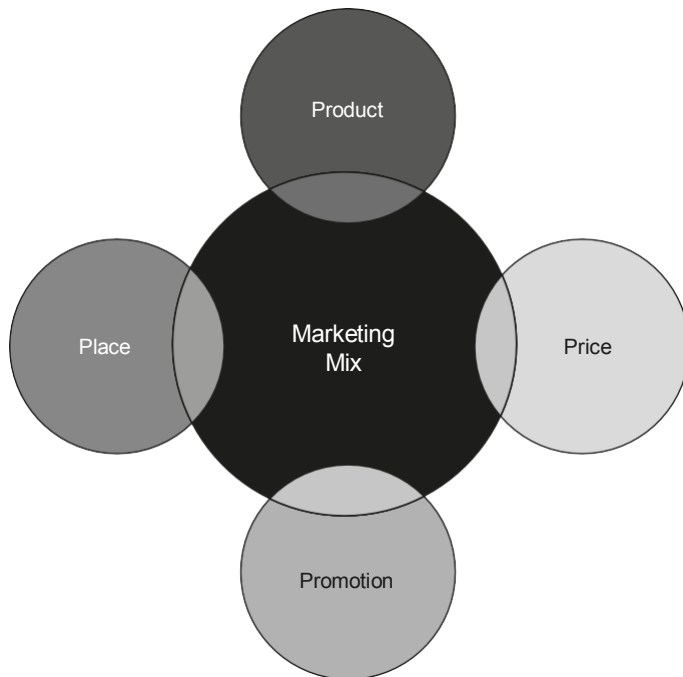
- Product
- Price
- Place
- Promotion

which were based on a functional connection with a specific object of marketing activity. The purpose of the marketing mix is to develop a strategy that will increase the perceived value of the product, as well as help maximize the company's long-term profit in the market. Currently, there is

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<sup>1</sup> Neil Hopper Borden (1895–1980) was an American academic who served as advertising professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Business Administration

an opinion that the marketing mix includes all the necessary components that a marketer can control and further develop to obtain a specific result, namely high-quality promotion. Each of the points can be easily divided into component questions, which we will do in the course of a detailed analysis of each of them.



**Figure 1.1** *The Marketing Mix.* (Mitterfellner, 2019)

## **Product**

The product is what the company offers to the market and the consumer. A product can be either a physical good or a service. The product is the first thing that starts work on the marketing mix.

Questions to be raised within this block:

- What do customers want from this service / product?
- What needs does it satisfy?
- What features does this product have to meet those needs?
- Are there any expensive items that the consumer does not need?
- How and where will customers use it?
- What does it look like?
- What kind of experience will customers get from using this product?

- What should it be called?
- What logo or brand name should be given to this product?
- How does it differentiate it from the competition?

Decisions that should be reflected in the product-level marketing strategy:

- 1) Branding brand: Name, logo, corporate identity.
- 2) Product functionality – the necessary and unique properties of the product or service.
- 3) The required level of product quality – from the point of view of the target market. The quality of the product should be built on the perception of consumers. (For example, for some consumers, the quality of a product is determined through the composition, for others, through the presence of positive reviews about it.)
- 4) The appearance of the product – style, design, packaging.
- 5) Variability or assortment of the product.
- 6) Support and level of service.

## **Price**

Undoubtedly, the price is a systemic link in the marketing mix since the profit of the organization itself ultimately depends on it. It is determined on the basis of the value of the product by the consumer, the desired profit, the cost of the product, as well as the pricing policy of competitors.

Questions to raise in this block:

What is the value of this product to your customer?

Is there a price set for these products in this region?

Are customers price sensitive?

Will a slight price cut help you gain more market share?

What kind of discount should you offer your sales agents?

What is your price compared to competitors' products?

Decisions that can be reflected in the marketing strategy at the 'price' level:

- 1) Pricing strategy for market entry (penetration).

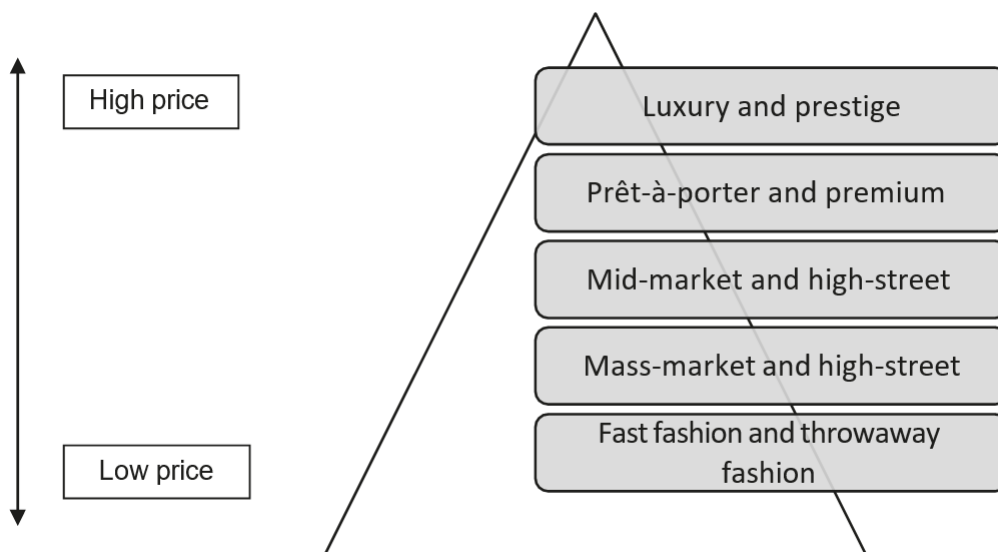


2) Retail price – it is imperative to correlate the selling price of the product with the desired retail price if the company is not the last link in the sales chain. (The selling price goes through a series of markups and surcharges before it reaches the target consumer – VAT, wholesale markup, retail markup, etc.)

3) Pricing for various sales channels. It provides for different price levels for different links in the distribution chain, for different suppliers (for example, volume discounts, bonuses for large wholesalers, etc.) Policy regarding promotions (conditions for discounts, maximum and minimum levels of discounts, frequency of promotions, etc.)

7) Possibility of price discrimination.

The pricing strategy of a fashion company is often linked to the market level, the quality of the product and the overall reputation of the brand and the range in question, placing haute couture at the top of the price pyramid and the fast fashion being most affordable (see the Figure 1.2 herebelow).



**Figure 1.2** Hierarchy of price and quality pyramid. (Mitterfellner, 2019)

## Place

The point of sale ensures that the product is available to the target market and means that the company's product must be present on the market in the right place (where the target consumer can see and buy it) at the right time (when the target consumer needs to buy it). In other words, the

place of sale refers to the distribution model of the company's product. Questions to be raised in this block:

- Where are customers looking for this product?
- If they are looking for it in a store, which one: A specialty boutique or a supermarket?  
Online store? Catalog? How to evaluate the right distribution channel?
- Do you need to use a sales team or a marketplace?
- Do you need to connect online sales?
- Should you send samples to catalog sellers?
- What are your competitors doing and what differences do you notice?

Decisions that should be reflected in the marketing strategy at the 'place' level:

- 1) Markets in which the product is planned to be sold.
- 2) Distribution channels through which the goods are planned to be sold.
- 3) Type of distribution (exclusive, limited list of retailers or unlimited distribution).
- 4) Conditions of distribution of goods (discounts and bonuses for retailers, requirements for displaying goods for retailers and penalties, etc.)
- 5) Product display conditions and display rules (shelf level, target shelf share, number of facings on the shelf, overlapping of facings, mandatory assortment, etc.)

## **Promotion**

In the context of the marketing mix, promotion is understood as all marketing communications that allow you to draw consumer attention to the product, form knowledge about the product and its key characteristics, form the need to purchase the product and repeat purchases. Promotion includes such marketing communications as: Sales promotion and direct marketing and can be conducted on-line or off-line through direct marketing, guerrilla marketing, search engine optimization visual merchandizing, celebrity endorsement, sponsorship, advertising, PR and others. Questions to be raised within this block:

- Where and when do you intend to convey your marketing message to the target audience?
- How do you intend to reach your target audience: Advertising in the media, outdoor advertising, mailing list, PR promotions, Internet?
- When is the best time for promotions?
- Is there seasonality for your product?

- Are there other environmental conditions that determine the time frame for your market segment?
- What promotional activities are your competitors running?
- How does this affect your choice of advertising actions?

Decisions that should be reflected in the marketing strategy at the 'promotion' level:

- 1) Promotion strategy: pull or push
- 2) Required marketing budget and SOV in the segment
- 3) Target values for knowledge, consumption and brand loyalty among target audience
- 4) Participation in specialized events and shows
- 5) Communication channels through which it is planned to contact the consumer
- 6) Geography of communication
- 7) PR strategy and event marketing
- 8) Brand media strategy
- 9) Promotional events throughout the year and sales promotions

## 1.2 THE SUPPLEMENTAL 3PS

In the 1980s, the four Marketing Mix Ps were expanded further to 7Ps and had more of a focus on services which included process (service process), physical evidence and people (participants) (Kotler *et al.* 2009, p.17).

### **People**

The term appeared in connection with the development of relationship marketing and service marketing. The term 'people' means people who can influence the perception of your product in the eyes of the target market:

- Employees representing your company and your product
- Sales staff who are in contact with the target consumer
- Consumers who act as 'opinion leaders' in the category
- Manufacturers that can influence the cost and quality of goods

This term also includes important consumer groups:

- Loyal consumers and VIP customers, generating an important sales volume for the company

The importance of these people is due to the fact that they can have a significant impact on the perception of your product in the eyes of the target consumer. Therefore, it is very important to reflect in the marketing strategy:

- Programs aimed at creating motivation, developing the necessary skills and competencies among the company's personnel
- Methods of working with 'opinion leaders' and other persons who can influence the opinions of consumers
- Programs for loyal customers and VIP clients
- Loyalty programs and educational programs for sales staff
- Feedback collection methods

### **Process**

The term refers to the B2B market and the service market. The term describes the process of interaction between a consumer and a company. This interaction is given special attention, since it is it that serves as the basis for making a purchase in the market and building customer loyalty.

It is recommended that the marketing strategy separately reflect programs aimed at improving the process of providing services to the target consumer. The goal is to make the purchase and use of the service as comfortable as possible for the consumer.

### **Physical evidence**

The term refers to the B2C market and the service market. The term describes what surrounds the consumer at the time of purchasing a product or a service. The physical environment allows you to form the right image of the company, highlight the distinctive characteristics of the product.

In the marketing strategy, it is recommended to separately prescribe the physical environment and its key goals.

### **Mass marketing**

Mass marketing is intended to reach a wide audience, without targeting any specific group.

This strategy is used with basic products such as underwear, T-shirts etc. because these items are used by everyone not depending on their social status.

The collaborations between brands are really efficient in this case, in order to stand out from the competitors and for improving one's reputation as was done in the case of H&M who collaborated with David Beckham for their underwear.

### **Target marketing**

Target marketing is more time consuming and expensive. But often it is the winning strategy because once you have defined the final customers, you can be quite sure that they will respond positively to your strategy. The brand communications plan will be tailored to address these specific customers.

## **1.3 THE NEW MARKETING MIX: 4Ds REPLACE THE 4Ps**

Fashion business has evolved enormously during the last years due to the development of the digital technologies. In fact, businesses cannot rely nowadays only on the tools provided by the original Marketing Mix, therefore a new, modernized set of tools has been invented to fill the void of knowledge in this area, the so-called New Marketing Mix that consists now of 4Ds. Let's have a look on them.

**Diversity replacing place:** There is now a true need to think in a global perspective, as there are new emergent economies that have the potential to supersede countries as US and Europe. The markets are in expansion, both physically and virtually, therefore the companies require to hire a culturally diverse and flexible staff with a set of international skills to satisfy the ever-changing profile of customers.

Customers from all the countries are now more aware of inequalities from the representation point of view and are more selective in terms of these criteria when choosing a brand. An increasing number of companies are willing to create a more ethnically diverse work environment, for instance, the Vogue UK editorial team was completely reconstructed in order to include people of different social backgrounds and ethnicities.

**Digitalization replacing promotion:** Digital has become a crucial part of the brand selling and promotional strategies. Many brands are now creating new, fluid ways to engage with their customers, for example, Karl Lagerfeld included tablets in the fitting rooms to let its customers share on social media their looks, thus creating an omnichannel experience of digital word-of-mouth. Another example is Burberry that installed promotional screens near the POS in their brick-and-mortar stores. It is important that the companies continue to tailor their promotional strategies

to reach the potential customers using both traditional and new media channels targeting the specific groups respectively.

**Design replacing product:** The upcoming 4.0 Revolution is paving the way of how the products are ideated and designed. Nanotechnology, smart textiles and 3D or 4D printing are just a few examples of these new technologies that are shaking up the whole creative process. Brands like Chanel have incorporated 3D printed textiles into their collections, whilst fast-fashion brand Uniqlo is well known for their Heat Tech and Airism fabrics with smart properties.

Moreover, through artificial intelligence, luxury brands can better predict the buying behavior of people. Brands are now producing more than just two collections per year because customers are looking for novelty more frequently than before. At the same time the high-end segment needs to find new ways to maintain the elusivity and the exclusivity of their products through the new design conceptions. For instance, the creative director of Balmain, Olivier Rousteing has released an NFT design, that had that could never exist in reality, because the entire garment is engulfed in flames using the augmented reality. Nevertheless, such innovations are not yet always welcomed with success by the audience of a luxury brands, because there are still groups of a more conservative clientele that want high-end to remain where it originally was: On the catwalks and the brick-and-mortar boutiques in its physical presence. On the contrary, businesses cannot ignore the presence of the new generations and their sharp taste for innovation.

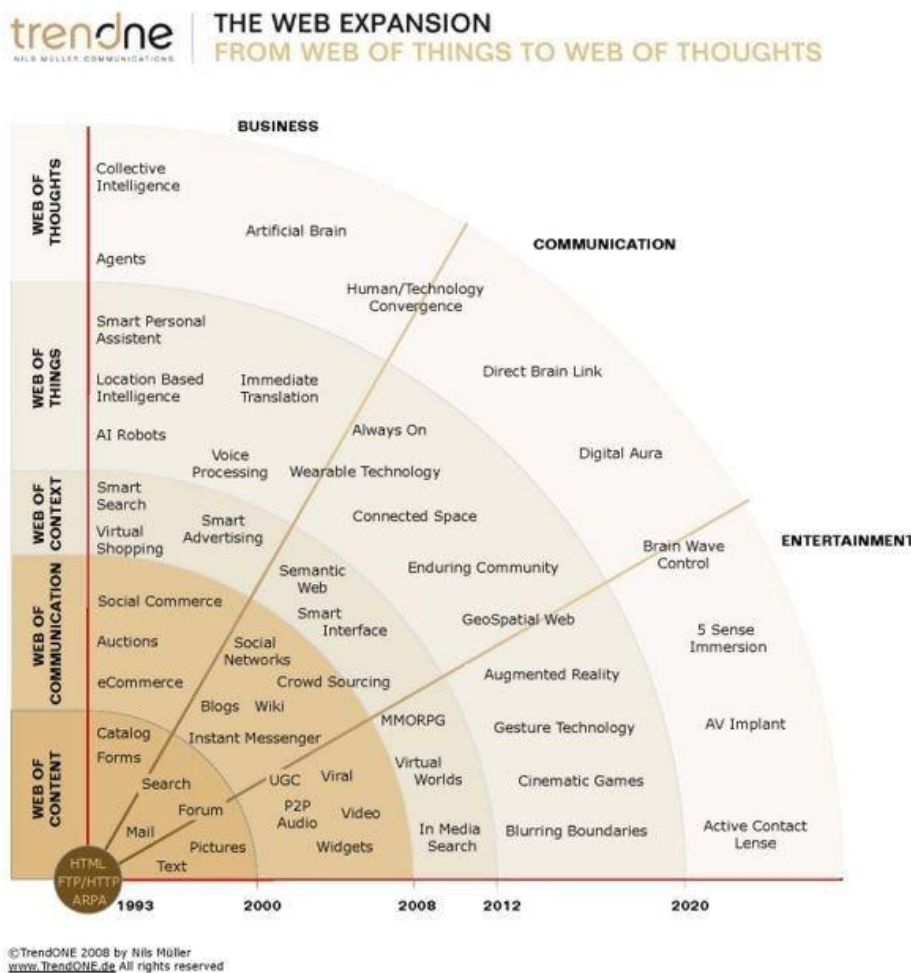
**Desire replacing price:** The new generations of customers have a completely different evaluation set whilst they choose a brand. Even if the price and the quality of the product are still important, it seems not being sufficient anymore to satisfy the customer needs. Indeed, they are now more attracted to the overall image qualities of it. Therefore, the brand managers' and marketers' tasks is now more important than ever before. They need to be up to date of the latest customer and market trends to create the right aura around the brands' reputation.

#### 1.4 THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC DRIVEN ACCELERATION OF THE DIGITAL MARKETING USE

Over the last years there has been a significant increase in the use of the digital channels in the marketing strategy of fashion brands. In fact, more and more companies are aware of the influence that these new means of communication have in today's marketplace and about their impact on customers' decision making. The growth of and investment in digital marketing has been exponential. Fashion has been reported to be the largest B2C Ecommerce market segment with its global size estimated at US\$528.1 billion in 2019 and expected to grow further in the future

(Statista.com, 2020). This change has especially been accelerated by the rise of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. The pandemic represents one of the most significant environmental changes in the modern marketing history, which could potentially have a profound impact on corporate social responsibility (CSR), consumer ethics, and the basic marketing philosophy (He & Harris, 2020). It has affected every sector of the economy, however due to its discretionary nature, fashion is particularly vulnerable. The average market capitalization of apparel, fashion and luxury players dropped almost by 40% between the start of January and the end of March 2020, which is a much steeper decline than that of the overall stock market (BOF and McKinsey & Company, 2020). Hence, the companies were obliged to change and adapt their core strategies to remain relevant and competitive in such a challenging period. Even if the main priorities were completely switched, with the traditional environments of shopping being closed, people still wanted to find ways to go back to the 'normality', and the more immediate platform to achieve a similar experience was offered by already known 'internet of things'. Whilst luxury fashion companies were always avoiding the implementation of the new technologies in their agenda, the aforementioned pandemic has made it clear that they would sink if they will not begin to think about the possibilities of remodelling their core values and embrace the digital era logic. In particular, previously, the luxury heritage brands, were following the logic that heritage is interchangeable with history and company's prestige image rather than representative of the emotional response originally developed in customers. This approach revealed itself to be completely outdated to the extent that the modern customer is not any more interested strictly in exclusivity and the 'status marker' aura of a brand, on the contrary, they become progressively interested more in other factors such as experience and self-identification with the brand. Additionally, during the pandemic we have also seen an unprecedented societal situational and contextual changes, which have had a significant impact on consumer ethical decision. Pre pandemic we saw the growth of environmental concerns, elevated by 'Extinction Rebellion'. Some organizations and individuals within the fashion industry was impacted by #MeToo. Particularly Black Lives Matter gained significant momentum during the pandemic. All these changes will supposedly continue to evolve in the post-pandemic reality with the key ethical basis's focus shifting from the product towards the society. It is argued that 'Pre pandemic consumer centric brand strategy is now society centric strategy. Further, against this new backdrop there are the 4C's of the modern planet community, content, curation and collaboration' (Andjelic, 2020). Thus, there was a kind of a natural selection among the brands and only ones that were able to show their resilience abilities have emerged as winners from this challenging situation. Indeed, the brands had a double task to achieve and navigate the short-term changes and at the same time, overlook the further evolution of situation in the long term. Accordingly, the internet is a

perfect medium to deal with such disruptive circumstances because its virtual nature allows businesses to reshape seamlessly their ‘modus operandi’ and at the same time offers to customers a care-free, safe environment where they can have an infinite array of possibilities to engage with the brands through different marketing touchpoints (social media, direct marketing etc.) and to create their own communities of like-minded consumers. Additionally, it provides companies with the possibility of going viral and global in a matter of some clicks and through the so-called eWOM (Electronic World of Mouth). Equally, it can be particularly beneficial for some rich VICs (Very Important Customers) who constantly sought for novelty and exclusivity, and who are at the same time always busy and are short on time. The new generations (Gen Y, Gen Z) are as well more technologically sensible and thus require a completely different treatment from the companies in comparison to the other generations as the new customers.



**Fig. 1.4** The web of expansion—From Web of things to the Web of Thought (Source [www.Trendone.com](http://www.Trendone.com))



In the face of today's rapidly changing environment, with the advent of a technology revolution and the customers' decision-making processes changing, organizations need to take digital integration seriously (Retail Weeks Report, 2014). Companies which master the process of digital integration are 2.5 times more likely to convert their customers (Bughin, 2013). There are five key customer touch points that luxury brands must strive to excel in digital marketing. These are the physical store (located in a city or an area frequented by the tourists); the person-to-person interaction option; an established online search; knowledgeable salespeople and a well-developed brand website (Remy et al., 2015). Further, to achieve success online luxury brands must try to innovate the digital experience; prove to be different from the competitors and reinvent the methodology of engagement with the customers. The above report also indicated the growing importance of social media. Ko and Megehee's (2012) work in a special issue on fashion of luxury brand highlighted four key issues significant in the sector: Luxury consumer behavior; luxury status or values; luxury brand management; and luxury brand counterfeiting. In this issue the authors reviewed 15 articles, the section on brand management clearly shows the importance of innovation, particularly the social media platforms that are trending among the other channels. The focus group conducted for this study reveals that it is a transitional period. The crisis management in this study is based on the pandemic dynamics: Change in consumers' behavior and their conversion to the digital spaces for shopping, leisure and communication. The excerpt below, explores deeper the ideas exposed above.

...We're in a period of transformation and nobody really knows the full impact of that and everyone is looking for what the new business model looks like. We've seen transformation in the way buyers usually buy new seasons, the traditional fashion weeks were taken online, even with some opening up, buyers are more scheduling one to one appointment.

(Board Director)

To conclude, the brands cannot ignore anymore, as already said before, the enormous impact that the digital marketing has had in the last years. It is vital, that some areas in particular will be considered with more attention than others, notably: The development of Ecommerce, the rise of the social media and the shift to the society centric approach. These core areas will evolve eventually and must be treated as a whole by the companies in order to create a consistent and modern strategy that will be updated along the way.

## 2 FASHION PROMOTION

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Once the marketing strategy has been determined and set in place, the brand needs to understand which media tools would be more suitable for its promotion. Indeed, the promotion can as well be considered as an integral part of marketing plan because among its main objectives there is the drive in sales and the increase in brand loyalty. In particular, the communication strategy aims to touch the customer's emotional sphere by creating an entire imaginative universe behind a brand with its belief-system, core values and products that are the incarnation of it. In this chapter, I will overview the possible communication channels and their usage mode. Actually, it is important to underline that every media tool is really important on its own, therefore, there will be some more information about each of them in the next chapters.

### 2.1 THE PROMOTIONAL MIX

The promotional mix consists of a mixture of promotional media channels employed by a firm to promote their brand products and services and communicate their message to consumers. The main promotional tools are:

- Advertising
- Public relations
- Direct marketing
- The retail environment
- Personal selling

Each promotional medium – advertising, personal selling, sales promotion and public relations – has its own unique characteristics, its own types of costs. A marketer who chooses means of promotion must be able to understand these characteristics and features. (Philip Kotler *Principles of Marketing. Short course*, p. 417)

Considering that they work hand in hand, there should be a holistic consideration of them and indeed, a cross-departmental collaboration should be implemented.

However, the above media are not the only ones to be considered. In the last years, there is a prominent use of other promotional activities, notably, the ones developed with the digitalization.

- Web communication and social media

In a number of marketing publications, as a list of activities included in the promotion mix, the same complex set of promotion methods is used, but presented using the terms:

ATL (above table line) - traditional advertising through the media

BTL (below table line) - sales promotion in the marketing channel

In the promotional mix, the media tools are meant to work in synergy and there is not a singular marketing or communication media channel that could work on its own. Here are some examples of some tools that cannot be categorized strictly under the first or the second concept: Online advertising, social media marketing, content management, events, etc. The fact is that all of the above are either tools or communication channels that are already included in the promotional mix.

So, for example, content generation (content management) is the management of one of the following areas in the marketing mix:

- Advertising management: preparation of articles in the media, advertising slogans, promotional materials.
- Trade marketing management: preparation of commercial offers, product catalogs, descriptions of trade promotions, etc.
- PR-management: preparation of press releases, brand stories, announcements, etc.
- Direct marketing management: preparation of information sheets, letter texts, product catalogs, etc.

The organization of marketing conferences, exhibitions, BTL-promotions is also carried out only for the purpose of advertising the subject of marketing, PR or trade marketing. That is why there is no event marketing that cancels the promotion mix. Moreover, it is impossible to consider content generation, SMM, Internet advertising as something separate, super important, 'new marketing', something that goes beyond the promotion mix, cancelling or modifying the promotion mix itself.

The appearance in marketing of such a concept as a promotional mix (promotional complex) is due to the fact that the listed means of communication and impact on the target audience are able to achieve marketing goals only in a holistic way. Each of the components of the marketing mix is able to solve different problems and has different potential, so they are complementary in the marketing strategy. All these tools work in a complex manner, complementing and enhancing the impact on the target audience.

The question for a marketer is not which of the listed means to choose, but:

- How guide the buyer as quickly and efficiently as possible through all stages of the sale, using the tools of the promotional mix?
- What means of advertising and marketing impact to use at each stage of communication, in order to complement the impact on the target audience applied at the previous stage of communication?
- How to distribute the marketing budget between them to maximize returns?

Like the concept of the marketing mix, the promotional mix synthesizes a large number of potential promotional activities into five dominant milestones viewed above. Therefore, this non exhaustive list should be viewed with discretion as deducted above as it does not encompass the full range of the communication tools, especially the wide variety of interactive social media campaigns, contests and promotions that invite consumer participation online. These highly interactive techniques engage the audience in the ways that make them feel as an integral part of the brand universe. In addition, there are specific promotional channels within the fashion industry such as the fashion PR, seasonal fashion weeks and visual merchandising techniques.

## 2.2 **DIRECT MARKETING**

Direct marketing is a tool by which companies target and communicate on a one-to-one basis with a customer (B2C) or another business (B2B) may operate.

In the fashion industry, a company might use the following ways of communicating with a consumer:

- Postal mailing
- E-mail or text (SMS) communication
- Applications, such as for mobiles
- Telephone

In the fashion industry, a company might use the following ways of communicating with another company:

- Postal mailing
- E-mail
- Telephone
- Trade journals
- Trade shows and exhibitions

Direct marketing can be useful if it is clearly targeted, but mass communications can be seen as intrusive and irrelevant to the consumer. They are often termed ‘junk mail’ as they come in the post and go straight into the recycle bin without being opened or come direct to the e-mail inbox and are deleted. Every time that this happens, the brand is diminished in the consumer’s eyes. Companies that do mass mailings know that a considerable amount of their effort is wasted but the offer of a reward can be an incentive.

### **2.3 PERSONAL SELLING**

Personal selling is a one-to-one style of communication that may include:

- Sales personnel training in product knowledge and selling skills
- Personal shoppers employed mostly by department stores
- Individual customer relations, which may include calling customers personally when new stock arrives that would suit them

In-store sales personnel tend to reflect the target customer. Research has found that many decisions to purchase are made by consumers in the retail environment, so the effect of sales staff (as well as visual merchandising) may contribute in either a negative or positive way. The industry in general does not always recognize the importance of training and product knowledge in the mass market and tends to reserve this for the upper end of the market. It is interesting to note that retail is not seen as a particularly attractive career choice in Italy. At the busiest times, many staff are part time and have not had any training in basic customer interface skills. Every member of staff should reflect the identity and ethos of the brand. Staff can be an important and enthusiastic communication tool. Independent retailers are considered to be the most service-orientated environments as they are often run by the owners. To personal selling, we might add ‘word of mouth’. Although it is not directly controlled by the company, word of mouth is influenced by the company’s image and consumer perception. With the rise in blogs and social media, it is hard to decipher what is user opinion and what is company-generated hype. You can assume that customer-generated publicity, whether negative or positive, will have an influence on other consumers’ perceptions. Sadly, consumers tell twice as many people about a bad experience as they do a good experience.

### **2.4 FASHION ADVERTISING AND DIGITAL CAMPAIGNS**

By ‘advertising’, we mean any form of exterior, non-personal, one-way form of communication and promotion that is clearly seen to come from a company. However, with the rise of the digital and

social media the promotional activities of this kind become always more interactive. The publicity aims to raise awareness, inform, raise desire, persuade and to retain the target customers. Moreover, it attempts to:

- Reinforce a brand's image
- Showcase its core values and vision
- Showcase brand's positioning in the market
- Understand and address customer's needs and desires
- Create a universe behind the brand
- Generate conversion and engagement

Once the message and purpose of the advert is established, the next step to consider is the medium. The medium, or channel, is the tool by which an advert is presented and reaches the public. Traditional mass media advertising channels are television (terrestrial and satellite), cinema, print (newspapers and magazines), radio, transport and outdoor advertising. Then there is emerging digital media: Websites, video, blogs and social media. Most fashion brands will use a combination of channels. For example, Michael Kors runs print ads and billboard advertising as well as [destinationkors.com](http://destinationkors.com) featuring campaign videos, Kors TV and Michael's Notes where the designer posts comments and photographs. In addition, the brand has accounts on all major social media and was the first to launch an advert on Instagram at the end of 2013.

Advertising can be an expensive tool of promotion, but for big global brands with substantial budgets, it is important because it rises the visibility of a promotional campaign through which brand identity and vision are communicated.

The choice of a particular media and the cost of an advertisement (known as an 'advert') in that medium is determined by the number of people who will see, read, watch or listen to the advert.

Costs associated with each of these types of advertising can be accessed via the official website of a specific media channel or publication. These costs are for the media space and do not reflect the costs associated with shooting a campaign. When exotic destinations, celebrity photographers, models and stylists are considered, the costs can be extremely high. Somewhere between advertisements and public relations come 'advertorials'. An advertorial is where a company takes a whole page and asks a journalist to discuss the company and product in a style which is more like editorial commentary than a explicit advertisement. The company clearly sponsors the space but a celebrity, stylist, or expert may confirm the attributes of the brand. Advertorials are neither 'above'

<sup>2</sup> nor 'below' <sup>3</sup>the line, they are sometimes referred to as 'across' or 'on' the line. Arguably, the notion of a 'line' is becoming increasingly blurred and should really be not considered at this point.

The fashion advertising has a peculiarity in comparison to other sectors to touch people's hidden aspirations and desires. The brands aim to make the customers believe that their products (clothes, jewellery, cosmetics) will make them. For men the most used messages relate to being successful, attractive, powerful, sexy, cool and so on. Therefore, the key to communicate these qualities is by creating powerful and impressive visual imagery that can tap into consumer's psyche.

It should already be clear that the message is a crucial element of any advertising campaign.

Therefore, the message should be stated carefully as it can endanger the company's image. Who is the advert aiming to attract and what is it trying to communicate? What type of message will be relevant to the audience but also be coherent with the purpose of the campaign and the values of the brand? Seth Godin, author of Purple Cow, believes that marketing ideas must be 'remarkable' in order to stand out and get a footprint in consumer consciousness. Malcolm Gladwell in his book The Tipping Point takes this further, stating that the message itself or the product it is promoting must be 'memorable'. Gladwell introduces what he calls the 'stickiness factor': For an idea or marketing message to spread it must 'stick'. Something about the message and how it is delivered must remain present in the recipient's mind – it must be remarkable, memorable and worth talking about.

When deciding upon the message the following points should be considered:

- What is the purpose of the advert? Is it to raise awareness, inform, reinforce brand values or provoke action?
- What if the most important message the advert needs to convey?
- Will the message be communicated directly or indirectly?
- What media would be best for communicating the message?

The brands need to consider if the message should be direct and to the point – 30 per cent off all products in a coming sale, for example or will it be more subtle and provocative? Another point to consider is how the message will be conveyed visually, will it be via photographic image, fashion

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<sup>2</sup> "ATL" stands for "Above The Line", meaning that the advertising is going to be deployed around a wider target audience, e.g. television (TVC), radio, or billboards.

<sup>3</sup> Below-the-line advertising is an advertising strategy where products are promoted in media other than mainstream radio or television. Below-the-line advertising campaigns include direct mail campaigns, trade shows, catalogs, and targeted search engine marketing.

illustration, video or other graphic image? Will the advert need additional written information in order to convey better the message? Should there be a slogan, strapline or written text to accompany the image?

#### 2.4.1 **Television advertising**

TV advertising has a wide reach, which means that it can be seen by a lot of people from a wide variety of demographics (a 'demographic' describes the characteristics of an audience in terms of age, gender or life stage). TV advertising tends to be expensive in terms of professional production costs and the most sought-after media slots (the ones in the commercial breaks of the most popular TV shows) are also expensive to occupy. TV adverts need to appeal to a large majority of viewers. They are, therefore, more suited to retailers and brands that have a wide geographic and demographic spread, such as Marks and Spencer (M&S), Gap, Nike and Levi's.

TV advertising use music and movement to good effect: it is three dimensional and can attract attention but normally it only lasts between 30 and 60 seconds. It cannot show a whole range of products but needs to focus on a narrow presentation and on image building. Levi's iconic advert, set in a launderette with the background music *Heard It Through the Grapevine*, only showed the 501 style of jeans. It created such demand that stores ran out of 501s. TV can stimulate demand so strongly that it is important that buyers and merchandisers are involved in the process at an early stage to ensure availability of the product and avoid disappointing the consumer. On the other hand, consumers may perceive that the product is too popular – they don't want to look like everyone else. Consumers can use 'selective perception', which means that they do not pay attention to an advertisement which does not appear relevant to them. They may 'tune out' or channel hop during adverts or they may edit their viewing (by using replay features that allow a program to be watched without the advertisements), but a strong 'musical worm' can capture their attention. A musical worm is an audible logo or symbol, for example, jingles that you immediately identify with an advert or brand when you hear them. Intel has a musical worm. TV adverts can be cost effective in an integrated campaign where 'stills' are replicated on billboards, in magazines and in store.

However, that can saturate the media environment and the consumer can become bored or tired with seeing the same pictures. TV advertising can be targeted to the composition of the audience. One-off TV specials, such as interviews with royalty or celebrities, can also be really expensive and there is much competition for them. It is important for the TV ratings that the viewer does not switch to a different channel during the ad break and stay there, so adverts have to be relevant to the audience. With the decline in the numbers of people watching terrestrial TV, the cost of advertising has steadily been decreasing. This has allowed, for example, H&M to enter the arena, where in the



past the advertising costs may have been too high and the audience might not have been as easy to define. Specialized TV programs, shown on either terrestrial or satellite channels, about fashion, modelling and what to wear or reality competitions can be competitively priced and target a specific demographic. These programs can be very attractive to advertisers as the majority of the audience will be in the target market. TV advertising of one-off special sales for department stores is most commonly aired the night before the sale. It appears to drive consumer action.

#### **2.4.2 Cinema Advertising**

Cinema advertising can use an extended version of a TV advert (or a more explicit version, if the audience is over 18). A longer version can communicate more on image and product range. Cinema's target market can be more precisely defined because certain films (action, comedy or romance) appeal to separate segments of the total population. Product placement in a film can be reflected in the advertising. Cinema advertising can be a reflection of the local geography, advertising local fashion malls, but some local advertising can be very unprofessional or amateurial. The release of the film *The Devil Wears Prada* offered an opportunity for luxury brands to show their location. Chanel No 5 re-used the Nicole Kidman advert one year after its original launch. Chanel was name-checked continually throughout the film and there was prominent product placement as it was Chanel clothing and accessories that the geeky assistant chose to transform herself into a fashionista. A cinema audience is particularly captivated as people have paid to watch the film. To a certain extent, they are more attentive than a TV audience; however, this may increase their resistance as they are impatient for the film to start and they may spend the advertising time getting popcorn, settling down and talking. Some people may only arrive when the film starts. Cinema advertising can impress more on a big screen rather than a TV screen. It can be longer and more effective in communicating, using film-like techniques. Indeed, one sometimes thinks a film or a trailer is starting but it is a cinematic treatment of advertising. It comes with no surprise that many famous film directors gained their first experience of the medium through directing iconic ads. Indeed, *Fight Club* director David Fincher has directed iconic ads for brands such as Nike, Levi's and Adidas. Cinema may prove useful to test advertising before it rolls out nationally. Audiences are often the subject of marketing research after a film.

#### **2.4.3 Magazine advertising**

For fashion retailers and brands, magazine advertising is the most effective form of advertising relative to cost as it can be highly targeted to the magazine's readership. The position of an advert is extremely important because of the way in which consumers 'browse' magazines and use them for a combination of news features and trends. Magazines use good color reproduction, which is vital

for fashion advertising, and are printed on glossy paper (indeed, they are often called the ‘glossies’). Magazine adverts can reinforce advertising which has been in another media as it can replicate a still from a TV advert, which reminds the reader very quickly of the original. The major fashion publications are expensive for advertisers, compared to newspapers, but are deemed to be worth the cost because of their reach (they are read, re-read and passed on). In the context of magazines, ‘reading’ might mean ‘perusing’ or ‘flicking through’ a number of times, which increases the consumer’s exposure to advertising. This type of advertising will be reviewed more in depth in Chapter 6.

#### **2.4.4 Newspaper advertising**

Newspapers can be daily, weekly, national or local and therefore can be useful for reaching different audiences and achieving different objectives. Unlike magazines, newspapers are discarded as soon as they have been read, so immediate action is an objective of this advertising channel. Fashion companies can advertise one-day sales within the immediacy of today or tomorrow and show product examples. Coupons can also be cut out and redeemed. Readers can be directed to company websites. Newspapers are mostly black and white so color, when used, does stand out. With digital printing, it is now cheaper and sharper. Newspapers may be read selectively by different members of a household: men may turn to the sports pages, women to features and fashion, so the positioning of the advertising is an important consideration. The choice and price of a particular position is dictated by the number of people who will see and read the advert. Newspaper advertising can be targeted towards the readership. For example, *The Financial Times* and *The Wall Street Journal* will attract certain layers of professional society and the advertising will be highly targeted towards their needs and interests, such as business attire. Newspaper readership is in decline due to the availability of news 24/7 on the Internet. However, weekend color supplements such as the Financial Times’s ‘How to Spend it’ and The Sunday Times ‘Style’ section has given newspaper advertising a new channel to consumers. These supplements are not kept as long as magazines but are perused in the same way as magazines to read in trend and celebrity information.

#### **2.4.5 Radio advertising**

Radio as a communication channel provides a number of opportunities but, on the whole, it has more disadvantages for most advertisers, in particular in the fashion industry. Radio cannot provide a visual stimulus but a mnemonic (for example, a catchy tune or ‘worm’) may work just as well if associated with a store or brand. One-off special events, such as sales, can be promoted but the radio does tend to be what people call ‘shouty’ to try and grab attention – the Advertising Standards

Authority has observed that the volume often increases during advertisements and this is within what is already a noisy environment. Local radio can provide opportunities for local stores to advertise but the quality of it and professionalism may not correspond to their standards. However, radio is relatively cheap compared to other media.

#### **2.4.6 Outdoor advertising**

Billboards on the roads and at busy traffic intersections are often used by companies as an advertising tool. However, they should not distract pedestrians or drivers (distractions might cause accidents), therefore they tend not to have much text. They may only be given a glance but can remind customers embarking on a shopping trip that the brand exists, especially if the same image has been used in magazines or if a still from a TV advert is replicated, as this reinforces previous exposure. Billboard advertising is relatively cheap depending on the location. Billboards may need refreshing frequently as drivers tend to use the same route to work. They can also be subject to wear and tear of the weather or from graffiti artists. Modern technology has developed digital billboard advertising in which paper poster sheets are replaced by electronic screens. These are growing in popularity and they can be changed on a daily basis or even at different times of the day. They have movement, which attracts attention of the commuters.

#### **2.4.7 Transport ambient advertising**

Whilst waiting for public transport (in metro, train stations or at bus shelters), the commuter is a 'captive' audience and may be looking for a distraction. On the other hand, they are bombarded by promotions within these environments and may actively screen them out (selective perception) or read a book. Many commuters board and alight at the same place on a daily basis, so advertisers may need to change their promotions more frequently – familiarity will make the viewer screen out. Taxis, buses and other forms of public transport are used widely as advertising channels as they cover a lot of ground (see Figure 2.1). Popular routes, such as through the main shopping districts, will cost more than those in rural or out-of-town locations. However, it must be noted that the route that a bus takes should be appropriate for the content. Some have been criticized by the advertising standards authority as being too indecorous.



*Figure 2.1 Advertising on a digital bus shelter in New York (Source [www.jcdecauxna.com](http://www.jcdecauxna.com))*



*Figure 2.2 Bus Advertising in London (Source [www.londonbusadvertising.com](http://www.londonbusadvertising.com))*

#### 2.4.8 Internet advertising

A company website is a form of advertising which consumers may actively seek out. Most media channels now give a web address as a contact point. Pop-up adverts and banners can be intrusive and annoying. The consumer can now sign up for e-mail alerts and applications from a brand; this is a form of active rather than passive engagement with the brand. However, companies need to ensure that they collect and use consumer data details in a responsible and targeted manner. Consumers will unsubscribe and have a negative attitude towards a company that passes their

details on without permission or gets their name, interests or family composition wrong. Amazon, whilst not an example from the fashion industry, can be seen as particularly effective. When a customer returns to their website, Amazon suggests other products purchased by customers who bought the same item. More often than not Amazon is accurate in its buying behaviour observations, as can be evidenced if you have purchased from Amazon. Net-a-Porter also does this effectively and other fashion companies could learn from these examples with their selections and tailor their alerts to the consumer. SMS (text message) communications are another example of technology being a central tool in marketing communications. When these communications are targeted and welcome, it is a useful reminder; when they are not then it becomes intrusive.

#### **2.4.9 Promotional campaigns**

Promotional strategy is an integral part of the communication mix and as every marketing activity it requires a thorough research, planning and a clear settled goal. The first step is to determine the objectives of the planning strategy. When the objective is fixed it should then be possible to take the next steps and determine suitable media, the exact message of the advert and invent its style and content. It will also be fundamental to calculate a budget and understand if the campaign can be carried out in-house or if an agency will need to be appointed. A simple advert might be executed in-house on a lean budget. A more complex advert integrated digital promotion or global campaign will usually demand the expertise of an advertising or digital communications agency. In summary, the steps of the planning process are:

1. Set advertising objectives
2. Find suitable media platforms
3. Decide who will conceive and direct the campaign
4. Set budget and timeframe
5. Confirm content, style and advertising message

## **2.5 FASHION PR**

Public relations (PR) is another vital tool of promotional mix by which companies attempt to influence consumer opinion about their image, ethos and kudos and by which they try to gain media coverage. PR is a subtle and less obvious form of promotion than advertising. To the untrained eye or ear, it may sound like an influential style leader is recommending the brand. Well-handled PR has a great advantage for fashion companies – not only it has potential to enhance the image or reputation of the company or brand but it can be, as well, lower in cost compared to advertising. Advertising and PR have the similar objectives and often achieve similar end results, however,

companies have to pay consistent sums to place an advert in a major magazine or in the cinema or on TV. The costs incurred with PR on the other hand are generally much lower and relate either to the operational costs of running an internal PR department or paying a PR agency – they normally charge a monthly retainer and/or a fee for their work. Smaller companies with more limited budgets may find they can manage most of the day-to-day aspects of publicity themselves via their website and social media. They may consider hiring a freelance PR person to help them get coverage in the national press or to handle special projects or events. Larger companies may employ a professional PR agency or they may be able to afford to run their own dedicated PR or press department. Other companies may generally use outside PR agencies and employ a communications manager to oversee projects and liaise with the agency. Accordingly, the information originates within the company but its end use is in the hands of the journalists using the press packs, releases and sample garments. PR is particularly relevant for the fashion industry as consumers use trend opinion leaders, stylists and more recently influencers and bloggers as a source of information and inspiration about trends and product features, especially when looking at magazines, blogs and social media.

Public relations activities can include:

- Press relationships, which are vital as the press come to rely on the PR function for samples and stories
- Press releases, which PR use to alert the media about stories, new collections and events
- Celebrity product placement
- Product placement
- Events management for the public or journalists
- Crisis management, which on occasion involves responding to negative publicity guerrilla campaigns, which can be relatively inexpensive as consumers pass on coupons or viral ads
- Pop-up stores
- Social media, such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, fan sites and blogs

Hereafter, the most important of them will be analysed more in-depth.

### 2.5.1 Press days

PR agencies and in-house press offices organize press days to showcase next season's collections to the fashion press. Magazines work on long lead-times so press days are held well in advance of the

season so that editors can request samples from designers and start developing ideas for fashion shoots and editorial. Press days can be held as well to promote trade fairs or a group of designers.

### **2.5.2 Celebrity product placement**

Celebrities were always an important attribute of the fashion PR as they are regarded by the target consumers as idols to aspire to both physically and from the moral values viewpoint. Many agencies have had to add a dedicated celebrity division to handle ‘buzz press’, which refers to the new speed at which agencies have to create stories regarding brand’s relations with celebrities and how they become a part of a PR campaign. One consequence of all this interest in celebrities is the PR activity known as celebrity seeding or celebrity endorsement. As viewed earlier, celebrity product placement happens when a celebrity signs a contract to become the face of a brand. Seeding, on the other hand, is when a brand loans or gives product to a celebrity so that they will be seen wearing them. This is usually managed via a PR agency. The aim of celebrity endorsement is, of course, to choose a suitable personality with a good reputation that enhances the brand’s image. Usually this is someone who is regularly under the spotlights, has a large social media following, posts photos wearing the brand’s products or is constantly photographed by the paparazzi: the result should be large social media and press coverage. This activity will be further analysed in Chapter 5.

### **2.5.3 Product placement**

A company can raise awareness of its brand and products by having them feature in a film, television show, music video or digital game. Known as product placement, this form of promotion can generate considerable interest and desire for a particular product. One of the most remarkable examples of fashion product placement was in the *Sex and the City* (SATC) television show and films. The first film, which came out in May 2008, featured clothing by Vivienne Westwood, Prada, Jimmy Choo, Louis Vuitton, Christian Lacroix and Chanel to name just a few. Shoe designers Manolo Blahnik and Jimmy Choo became household integral names after their product first featured in the show. The association between the Blahnik and SATC brands became so strong that a link to the Blahnik website was included on the SATC film website. Product placement can have a considerable effect on sales, as was evidenced when the movie *The Queen* was released in the United States in 2006. Immediately after the film premiere in New York, visitor numbers at the Barbour by Peter Elliot store on Madison Avenue increased dramatically, as did demand for two classic Barbour jackets, the ‘Beaufort’ and ‘Liddesdale’, worn by the actress Helen Mirren when she portrayed the Queen in the film. Moreover, product placement also provides an important revenue source for film financing, though companies do not always have to pay to have their products publicized. Karl Lagerfeld provided two custom-made white bouclé wool Chanel jackets

with navy trim for Cate Blanchett to wear in the Woody Allen film *Blue Jasmine*. Costume designer Sandy Powell collaborated with Armani to create the power suit worn by Leonardo DiCaprio in Martin Scorsese's *Wolf of Wall Street*. In both cases, the outfits became talking points and were much spoken about by press and bloggers.

#### 2.5.4 **Special events**

Special events are designed to suit a variety of situations that might include:

- Product launches
- Charity events
- Sponsorship events
- Fashion and style seminars
- Fashion shows
- Private shopping evenings

Special events can be aimed either at the press, industry professionals or at the end-consumer. They are either organized by a PR agency or an in-house events office or press office. Product promotions can also take form of a trade initiative, for example, the Hermès Festival des Métiers. This travelling exhibition toured cities in China, Europe and the US, giving visitors a chance to meet and watch artisans as they crafted Hermès leather goods, jewellery and watches. Special events aimed at end-consumers can be used to attract new customers, to offer something special and exclusive, to retain loyal customers or to push sales or to promote specific designers and brands. These types of events often have a charitable nature and part of the proceeds goes to the non-profit organizations. Arranging a special event will require a press release, announcements via social media and, if required, invitations to be sent to guests.



### **3 FASHION BRANDING**

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Fashion branding was and remains a key tool to differentiate the products on the marketplace. Fashion companies are now more than ever engaged in creating compelling brand strategies than ever, In fact, with the advancement of these strategies it is vital to remain relevant and staying abreast in customer's eyes. As companies try to stay competitive with their ability to offer appropriately priced, good quality fashionable product something extra needs to come into play, something emotional and touching. This is where the brand comes in. There is no doubt that fashion branding has evolved. It is no longer just about the products themselves or ensuring that the right products are in the right place at the right time, now it is brand experience that differentiates. Branding is the mechanism by which a company creates and manages a brand image and conveys the messages and values that the brand foster to its customers. Branding is therefore a significant strategic activity for companies which aim to differentiate their products and services. This chapter introduces the key branding concepts, illustrating how these may be viewed within the context of fashion.

#### **3.1 THE PURPOSE OF BRANDING**

The purpose of branding is to determine a clear and distinguishing identity for a product, service and/or company. The scope is to ensure that the brand offers something different and special in comparison to the competitor brands. Branding should also add value or enhance the perceived value of a product, allowing a company to position itself as a premium brand on the market. On a more complex level, branding tries to create emotional connection between customers and the brand. It increases not only the consumer's potential financial spending, but it can also interfere with their emotional investment in the brand. A pair of Nike trainers, for example, is not just a pair of running shoes but 'my Nikes', permeated with additional associations and meaning. In a pair of Nikes 'I can do it'. Therefore, a brand can be so powerful and influential – the Nike wearer might feel more committed and better able to get up early and run, they might believe themselves to be more fit, active and alive when they wear this particular brand. Consumers are indeed more likely to engage constructively with a brand and purchase its products if the brand satisfies several criteria. The brand's products and services must have be relevant to their life and needs, the consumer should identify closely with the brand ideology and style, and their association with the brand should trigger positive feelings and emotions.

Branding should generate a sense of security, trust, belonging and reassurance for customers. If they have engaged emotionally with a brand and are interested in what it has to offer, then they are likely

to remain loyal. It is crucial therefore that the brand remains consistent and continues to deliver the values and promises that customers expect. The aspect of brand continuity is an extremely salient factor within the fashion industry. It has to do with two contrasting factors – newness and consistency – are meant to be integrated season after season. Customers will naturally expect to have a large choice and want to be seduced with brand new merchandise every season, but they also demand some sense of stability and consistency when engaging with a brand. This reveals to be a true challenge to designers who must invent and create collections featuring fresh products on a regular basis. They must make sure that the integrity of the brand is respected and make the sensation of stability for customers, even if the products themselves change on a frequent basis. Even though the concept, colors and fabrics might change in each seasonal collection, the overall branding, brand image and values need to remain intact. Branding is basically about building a relationship between consumer and brand. Consequently, a thorough research must be carried out about the target consumers and their demands. This is why companies invest so much time and money in marketing research. The more clearly a company understands its customers, the better suiting products, services, retail environments and marketing strategies it creates. These strategies, in their turn, boost consumer engagement, promote loyalty and foster trust in its brand.

So, to sum up, the scope and purpose of branding is to:

- Tap into customers's values and beliefs
- Build connection
- Induce emotional response
- Impart reassurance
- Ensure consistency
- Build loyalty
- Create value and charge a premium

An important aspect of branding is to develop and implement what is known as a brand identity. This is one of the principal tactics for achieving the emotional attachment with the target customers that is so essential to the concept of branding.

### **3.2 DEFINING A BRAND**

The main features of a brand include its logo, strapline, slogan, actual products and physical retail environment. Nonetheless, a brand is more than the previously quoted characteristics – most of what constitutes a brand is intangible. For instance, the brand can be regarded as a paradox, a mixed patchwork created internally by company through a strategy and externally by consumer perception

and experience. Forged from a unique composite of tangible and intangible elements, a brand is created out of a total package including not only the garments, retail environment, packaging, and advertising but also the values, visions and associations that consumers attribute to the brand. Walter Landor, a pioneer of branding, famously observed, 'Products are made in the factory, but brands are created in the mind'. Allen Adamson, another industry expert, defines a brand as, 'something that exists in your head. It's an image or a feeling. It's based on associations that get stirred up when a brand's name is mentioned' (2007). Influential and successful brands manage to intricate positive or constructive associations in the minds of consumers, provoking emotions and feelings that can be extremely powerful and affirmative. However, each consumer creates their own perceptions and opinions therefore, it is possible that they may develop negative beliefs. It is indeed important for those who manage brands to carefully regard the associations and perceptions that a brand conveys, making sure wherever possible that messages are transmitted consciously rather than default. A brand must have clear points of differentiation, not only in the products and services but also at the level of experience. Consumers need to be aware of the brand's existence, connect with its ethos, value, what it has to offer – and of course the brand offer should be relevant to the needs, aspirations, and desires of customers. The values, messages, and ideas that a brand conveys will be expressed through:

- The brand name and logo
- The product
- Packaging and display
- The retail environment and its visual merchandising
- Social media and online content
- Advertising and promotion
- Company's reputation and behavior

The brand name and logo are tangible features that can be controlled inside the company. The logo provides the most important visible element of the brand: The style of this unique identifier should reflect and represent the essence or core meaning behind the brand. Intelligent or creative use of color, font and symbol can contribute to achieve a distinguishing logo that eventually will stand out as an iconic and trusted visual characteristic of the brand. Luxury fashion brands such as Gucci, Prada, Fendi or Chanel use typefaces in upper case to create an aura of authority and tradition. Some brands add a crest or cartouche to intensify the logo and confer on an air of grandeur or heritage. Sports brands design their logos with the scope of creating a sensation of movement, speed or direction. Brands that wish to transmit elegance or femininity tend to use lower-case script with

flourishes and tails. A well-designed and well-recognizable logo is a great asset to a brand. The logo can be formed using the brand name, i.e. Gucci or Prada; Paul Smith uses his signature as the brand logo. Initials and letters can be exploited to construct a brand name such as DKNY (Donna Karan New York) or used to form a secondary logo, examples being the interlocking letters of Fendi, Chanel or Gucci. There are, of course, legendary brands such as Nike with its iconic Swoosh symbol, so powerful that it instantly identifies the brand without the need for any accompanying name or words. Similarly, the Fred Perry laurel wreath and the Lacoste crocodile also act as iconic emblems for their respective brands.

Brand logos, symbols, slogans and straplines can be registered. It is also possible to register elements of a design that are specific attributes of a brand. Levi's, for example, has registered the marketing slogan 'Quality never goes out of style'® and the Burberry iconic camel, black and red check became a registered trademark in 1924 when it was used as a lining for the Burberry trench coat. A registered trademark gives the brand company exclusive rights over usage of the registered article. This helps to protect the brand from plagiarism or unauthorized use of the trademark. Once a mark is registered it can be identified by the ® or ™ symbol. A small business intending to trade in their home market can register their mark for exclusive use in their national market. But to ensure more full-scale protection, it is recommended to be internationally registered. Fashion product provides a fantastic canvas for branding. Logos can be embroidered boldly on T-shirts or used more subtly in placement embroideries. Denim brands use trademark stitching on back pockets to identify their jeans or use labels, like the iconic Levi's red tab. Clasps, clips, buckles and zips can all be developed in order to include recognizable and identifying symbols or emblems, and fabrics can be woven or printed with trademark stripes, checks and patterns.

Brands exist at every level of the fashion industry. There are branded fibres, branded textiles, sport brands, designer brands such as J.W. Anderson or Jacquemus, luxury brands like Louis Vuitton or Chanel, iconic couture brands like Hermès, fashion retail brands such as Zara or H&M, and even department stores like La Rinascente, Selfridges or Galleries Lafayette that have achieved brand status. Defining different types of brands is complicated, but they can be categorized as explained below.

### **Corporate brand**

This is where an organization has one name and one visual identity across its brands. The corporation is the brand. For instance, the Sri Lankan manufacturing corporation, MAS Holdings, has this kind of structure: MAS Intimates produces lingerie and intimate apparel for global customers such as Marks & Spencer, Gap and Victoria's Secret; MAS Active is a supplier of active

sports and casual wear to Nike, adidas, Reebok, Gap and Speedo; and MAS Fabric develops fabrics, elastics, lace and other garment components.

### **Manufacturer brands**

These are created and marketed by producer companies who choose a name for their branded product. Manufacturer brands are prevalent within the fibre and textile industry where chemical manufacturers brand their fibres. The science-based company DuPont™, for example, used to manage the well-known fibre brand, Lycra®. Another DuPont™ brand is Kevlar®, utilized in garments worn by workers exposed to a variety of hazards including abrasion and high levels of heat. NatureWorks LLC, a joint venture between Cargill and PTT Global Chemical, produce Ingeo™, a branded fibre made from renewable plant resources derived from corn. The avant-garde French fashion label Marithé + François Girbaud selected Ingeo™ to use in their first eco-inspired designs.

### **Private brands**

Private brands are also known as own brands, store brands, retailer brands or own labels. The US department store, Nordstrom, offers its own brand, Classiques Entier, and Macy's offers a wide portfolio of private label brands, including I.N.C. and Tasso Elba. Private brands raise the profile of a retailer, differentiate its offering and add value for customers. Retailers tend to favour them because they offer opportunity for higher margin than selling designer-branded merchandise.

### **Endorsed brand**

An endorsed brand is developed when a parent brand gives its name to or endorses one of its own sub-brands. The names of the parent and sub-brand are linked. Examples would be Armani Exchange by Armani or the perfume Obsession by Calvin Klein. The endorsement gives credibility to the sub-brand while also capitalizing on the status and reputation of the existing main brand.

### **Co-brands or partnership brands**

A co-brand is created when two brands join and collaborate to create a new brand. The Japanese designer Yohji Yamamoto made a collaborative brand project with adidas, adidas Y-3 (also known as Y-3). Y-3 takes its name from the 'Y' from Yamamoto and the three stripes of the adidas logo.

### **Brand portfolio**

When a company has a brand portfolio the aim is to take up a largest part of the market without the individual brands within the portfolio competing with each other. Each brand within the company

group will address specific needs across different key segments within the market. Kering's brand portfolio includes luxury and well-targeted prestigious brands, including Gucci, Saint-Laurent, Balenciaga, Bottega Veneta, Alexander McQueen and sports and lifestyle brands Puma and Volcom. The adidas Group has a brand portfolio that includes Reebok, Rockport, the shoe company and golf brand TaylorMade.

### **3.3 BRAND STRATEGY AND BRAND MANAGEMENT**

Determining a brand is a long-term and expensive process and companies do not take on this risky task lightly. Creating a brand with a clear identity takes time – it usually takes several years or decades to achieve brand status. Orla Kiely, for example, started her business in a small way working from home. It took approximately ten years for the company to expand and morph into the modern fashion and lifestyle brand so loved and appreciated today. Luxury brands like Fendi, Gucci and Prada started out as small family businesses. Fendi was a furrier, Gucci a handbag manufacturer and Prada designed and sold handbags, shoes and luggage. It was not until Mario Prada's granddaughter Miuccia took the reins of the company in 1978 that Prada started its journey into becoming a global fashion brand. Once a brand is recognized and valued by consumers then opportunity arises to capitalize on the power of the brand name and leverage the brand identity in order to push the brand forward. While it could be still argued that a brand is formed in the minds and hearts of consumers, it is a valuable business asset that must be managed effectively from within the brand organization. Three of the most widely used strategies involved in brand management are brand extension, brand stretching and brand licensing.

#### **3.3.1 Brand extension and stretching**

Brand extension and brand stretching relate to Ansoff's Matrix for growth discussed. Brand extension allows a brand company to capitalize on the power of an existing brand's equity and value to launch new products in a broadly similar market. This relates to product development in Ansoff's Matrix. Brand extension exploits a brand's identity, projecting the meanings and values behind it with new products. So an apparel supplier who manufactures a branded range of men's performance and outdoor apparel would be extending their brand into another area of the apparel market if they launched a similarly branded womenswear collection. The benefit of brand extension in this case is that distributors and buyers are likely to perceive less risk when taking on the women's version of the brand if they have had success selling the menswear, and end-consumers will have existing brand awareness and the consequent loyalty. If the company decided to utilize their established brand name in a completely different and unrelated market such as adventure travel then this would be termed brand stretching ('diversification' in Ansoff's Matrix). For example,

Missoni did this by creating the Missoni Home Collection as well as opening the former Hotel Missoni in Edinburgh, Scotland, and in Kuwait. When considering a brand stretching strategy it is important that there is a strong conceptual fit between the original brand and the new market. Missoni, for instance, is a brand built around luxurious mixes of colour, texture and pattern that translate well into the area of interior design.

### 3.3.2 **Brand licensing**

Brand licensing is a strategy that can be used by a business for brand extension. Licensing is a business arrangement where a brand company sells the right to use their name to another company who can then create, manufacture and sell specified branded merchandise under licence. Brand owners use licensing as a way of extending their brand into other product areas such as accessories, eyewear, intimate apparel, footwear, fragrances, make-up lines, watches, and homeware, or to expand into new geographic territories. For instance, Fila Luxembourg signed an agreement with US company Berkshire Fashions for the design, manufacture and sale of Fila branded accessories in the US market. This type of contract is known as licensing out and the manufacturing or distributing company (the licensee) will pay a royalty fee to the brand owner (the licensor). Royalty rates vary. The exact percentage is dependent on the timeframe of the arrangement, the type of product involved, the financial investment, the time it takes to develop the product and the volumes of merchandise predicted to sell. Licensing provides a means of diversification for a fashion brand, allowing it to expand into other markets and reach a broader audience. The general view is that less financial risk is attached to licensing compared to brand stretching because the brand company is not responsible for the capital investment or the costs involved in producing, distributing or marketing the licensed product. It is important therefore that licensing agreements are signed with companies with the suitable expertise in manufacturing and marketing specific products. Fashion licensing is meant to be invisible to the consumer, who should not know or notice that a licensee is making the products that carry a designer's name. However, a lack of control over the licensing can damage the kudos and value of a brand. Calvin Klein and Burberry have suffered from this in the past. Another expanding licensing model is two trademark owners collaborating to create a new product with shared brand values. Examples include the collaboration between Harris Tweed and Clarks shoes; French designer Christian Lacroix launching a furniture collection with Italian art mosaic manufacturer Sicis; and Spanish designer Agatha Ruiz de la Prada designing vacuums for Dyson. The most common form of licensing is the licensing out model, as explained above. There is another approach known as licensing in. A fashion brand pays for the rights to use the recognizable designs, images or intellectual property of another brand. An example is a clothing company buying the rights to use a Disney character on a T-shirt. This type of licensing is most common at the lower

end of the market, but a new trend of licensing in is gaining momentum at the higher end. Gossip Girl by Romeo & Juliet Couture, inspired by the Gossip Girl television series, is for example, one of such collaborations.

Licensing agreements are meant to be considerate accurately because brand sells the right to use its brand name and consequently its image and reputation. If the respective business produces jeans and T-shirts and sells the rights to use its brand name to a big manufacturer in this product area, it could potentially retain the rights for other products such as dresses or accessories, leaving its options open for other deals in the future.

### 3.3.3 **Brand repositioning**

Brand repositioning is the process of that redesignates the identity of an existing brand or product in order to change the position it holds in consumers' eyes relatively to that of competitors. A brand organization may decide to revise its strategic direction and reposition a brand if the current brand positioning is no longer relevant or effective. This decision might be a response to:

- A brand losing market share
- Changes in the macro or micro marketing environment
- New brands entering the market
- Repositioning of competitor brands
- Alterations in consumer demand

Repositioning does not usually presuppose a modification of brand name but might include streamlining and modernizing the existing logo.

### 3.3.4 **Rebranding**

Rebranding is a type of brand repositioning, but it goes further to include a complete change of name and logo, usually reinforced by a significant change in brand values and business strategy. This typically happens in response to a company acquisition and could comprise radical internal restructuring. Total rebranding generally occurs in industries such as banking and insurance, it is rather unusual within fashion, although it can occur within textile manufacturing or in the chemical fiber industry. One notable example, however, is the transformation of the French fashion conglomerate PPR into a new brand named Kering.

#### **A brand transformation: case study Kering**

In 2013 the Paris-based retail conglomerate PPR (Pinault-Printemps-Redoute) was relaunched as Kering. The strategic rebranding occurred to highlight the company's metamorphosis from a mass distribution company into a luxury fashion and lifestyle group. The new name, pronounced 'caring',



derives from the Breton dialect word *ker*, meaning hearth and home. It was chosen to reflect the group's protective and supportive role in relation to its family of brands, which include Gucci, Balenciaga, Saint Laurent, Stella McCartney, Alexander McQueen, Christopher Kane and sports brands Puma, Tretorn and Volcom. Kering allows its subsidiaries a high level of autonomy. The benefit to the brands is that they can learn from each other, share resources and adopt best operating and business practices identified within the group. The new logo is a stylized owl hovering over the Kering name. The owl with its sharp vision stands for Kering's ability to find potential and anticipate trends, a heart framing its face represents Kering's human values.

'We take something immaterial – imagination – which is absolutely fundamental to the luxury business and the sports business and turn it into something tangible.'

(Louise Beveridge, Senior Vice-President of Communications)

The sans serif typography is light and airy. The rebranding campaign was broadcasted via social media platforms. Kering saw the change of name as an opportunity to launch a series of short films, Kering Stories, created in collaboration with acclaimed fashion blogger Garance Doré.



**Figure 3.1** Kering rebranded logo and its CEO François Pinault (Source <https://www.mffashion.com>)

## 4 SENSORY BRANDING

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Sensory marketing and sensory branding try to involve all the senses with the aim to approximate customer to the brand. Thus, it uses the senses to connect and engage with customers on an emotional level and accordingly it aims to increment brand awareness. Sensory brand immersion also creates an emotional sense of place and promotes brand loyalty. ‘The term emotional sense of place describes the sum of human feelings, which can be evoked by a certain physical location [...] The feelings are based on personal experiences, memories and symbolic meanings which are all connected to the location’ (Bischoff, 2006).

Sensory system	Bits per second
Eyes	10,000,000
Skin	1,000,000
Ears	100,000
Smell	100,000
Taste	1000

**Table 4.1** Information transition rates of the senses (Bischoff, 2006).

Our five senses are made up of visual, auditory, olfactory, gustative and tactile senses and there are various studies which indicate which sense can capture and store the most information. One version states that the visual sense – so our eyes – is the most powerful, followed by the tactile sense of our skin, the ears, smell and finally taste. Each of the senses absorb around 11 million bites of information per second which directly go into our subconscious. This is because our conscious mind is only able to process 40 bits of information per second. It is assumed that due to this up to 95 per cent of our purchases are triggered by our subconsciousness. Furthermore, when activated alone, or together in combinations, the effect on our brain and lasting emotional memory can be quite strong. This is due to the fact that the sensory perceptions are processed in the limbic system of our brain. One of the oldest examples of sensory branding for commercial purposes is Singapore Airlines appealing to our olfactory sense: SQ started spraying its signature Stefan Floridian Waters – a mélange of rose, lavender and citrus, on its hot towels more than 30 years ago. The company recently tried applications of the same perfume in a Singapore ticket office. Passengers fondly spoke of a typical Singapore Airlines smell when entering the plane and had pleasant memories of the in-flight experience. Burberry on Regents Street in London appeals to our sense of taste (and smell) by offering a gustatory experience in its very own Thomas’s Café. The menu features everything from Eggs Benedict to Lobster and from Japanese tea from Kyoto to Champagne.

Armani has a more Italian approach, which certainly is aligned with the brand's ethos: The Armani Café and Restaurants in Milan, Paris, Cannes, Munich, London, Doha, Dubai, Hong Kong, New York and Tokyo. Indeed, on the official site of the Armani Paris restaurant, the values section straightforwardly quotes Giorgio Armani's vision: 'Besides quality of course, what I most value about food is the simplicity and the bond with history and traditions that it carries.'

#### 4.1 COMMUNICATION BUILDINGS

'A good building must do two things, firstly it must shelter us, secondly it must speak to us', said Peter Stutchbury (2016), an Australian architect. A directly operated store and a flagship store especially, can serve as a point of brand immersion and communication with the customer and for such projects, company budgets often invest millions. One such exemplary communication building is not from the fashion industry but from the automotive industry. The BMW Welt which literally means BMW World in German, is an impressive building and interactive space, which was commissioned by the car manufacturer and opened in 2007. It sits on the outskirts of Munich and attracts up to 25,000 visitors on some days. According to the BMW Welt official website, the space is 'Where the corporation goes into dialogue with its customers, friends and visitors from all over the world – a place of meeting and of change (...) This means: To see, feel, hear, smell, taste the brands – in brief: To experience the world of the brands of BMW Group with all senses'. In fact, the sensory experience is triggered by a modern, bright and large space, carefully designed to feature interactive exhibitions, tours, food and drinks as well as a dramatic sales platform where the new cars are handed over to the customers in an emotionally charged ritual (customers report of crying when seeing their car for the first time during the ritual). If you describe the space with adjectives and describe the BMW brand with adjectives, you would likely have interchangeable words. This is a successful example of a communication building from another industry, nonetheless, this concept tends to apply nearly equally to the fashion industry.



*Fig. 4.1 The BMW Welt, Munich (Source [www.press.bmwgroup.com](http://www.press.bmwgroup.com))*

For instance, the menswear flagship store of Hugo Boss in Tokyo is an architectural and sensory marvel, partly because award-winning architect Norihiko Dan had the task of fitting it onto a small plot of land and directly near the L-shaped the flagship store of Tod's. Also known as the Keyaki building, it opened in 2013 and features a structure composed of multiple leaf-shaped columns made from steel reinforced with concrete. The concrete columns have a surprising wood-like texture (visible when close), which was developed by pouring concrete into a wooden mould. The concrete construction stands in the upmarket shopping district of Omotesando where luxury shoppers seek to be entertained by brands. Within the Hugo Boss store, the use of materials such as concrete, wood, textiles, and light and smell (there is a Hugo Boss scented candle) takes the shopper on a sensory immersion and into the world of Boss. Within the space of a flagship store, the consumer can experience a brand with all his or her senses and the more positive the experience is, the more positive memories will be created, which can lead to loyalty and brand preference.



*Fig. 4.2 Hugo Boss Omotesando Flagship store, Tokyo (Source <https://www.alamy.it>)*

## 4.2 SONIC BRANDING

How do you make a brand forever recognizable by a jingle? How does a song become a bestseller (perhaps for a second time)? You need to write brand identifying sounds and put them into commercials and the science behind it is sonic branding. Sonic branding builds on the idea of our auditory sense. Many brands have incised themselves in our memory thanks to recognizable jingles or by using famous songs as their identity. Best examples are the sound bites electronics and computer operating systems make when you start the device, which uses sound bites that last no more than a few seconds but are instantly recognizable. McDonald's famously aligned itself with

Justin Timberlake's song and kept the jingle 'I'm loving it' as their brand sound. But for fashion it is more complex when it comes to creating consumer associations with sound and a jingle hardly suffices. Fashion brands use longer tracks of music in commercials, from short extracts of well-known songs to full length compositions accompanying an entire film. Music in fashion ads can even become famous, become a symbol of popular culture and become a hit single for a second time. Such was the case with Levi's when in the late 1990s the brand teamed up with a yellow furry puppet. The hit tune by the French electronic musician and film-maker Quentin Dupieux aka Mr Oizo was used in conjunction with his 'Flat Eric' puppet to create an unprecedented fashion ad. The genius behind the ad was advertising legend Sir John Hegarty. But not even Hegarty himself could predict the success of the commercial which seemed a bit bizarre to the brand's executives at first. But once it was released the popularity was of an explosive nature with fans building fan-sites dedicated to the puppet and requesting Flat Eric merchandise whilst the fictional character rose to cult status. Levi's continued to make several more commercials with the yellow puppet, establishing a clear link between commercial fashion and popular culture (Caird, 2016). Prior to that, Levi's had revived Dinah Washington's version of 'Mad about the boy', which she sang in 1952. In 2002, Levi's used classical music for the first time in their advertising, when with the help of Bartle Bogle Hegarty (again) the brand produced a highly expensive commercial using music by Handel. The arranger of the classical piece was John Altman who has created more than 4000 TV commercials. The Emmy Award-winning composer, arranger and conductor writes music for films and TV and has won every major creative award, including the inaugural MPA Music in Advertising Award. His compositions for Levi's and Renault won the Campaign Award for Best Soundtracks in 2003 and 2004. Amongst his commercials for famous fashion brands are Gucci, Wrangler and Prada to name just a few. He arranged the music Ridley Scott's fashion film for Prada, which was released in 2005 at the Berlin Film Festival. It was timed with the launch of Prada's new fragrance and Miuccia Prada asked film director Ridley Scott and his daughter Jordan Scott to create the film project.

A factor to consider are the side effects of sensory branding. Sensory overload is an over-stimulation of our senses which can have detrimental effects on physical and psychological well-being. It is problematic for people who might have conditions such as a predisposition to seizures, autism and Asperger's syndrome as well as a sensitive nature to stimuli. In a race to impress the consumer with immersive experiences and take more of the market share, brands become unconcerned to the consequences that produce their marketing practices. A high-stimulation place with lots of digital interfaces might also be confusing and unsuitable for children and elderly people. Gjoko Muratovski (2011) argues that architecture has been used since ancient times as a

means of political and religious propaganda, such as ancient Greece, Rome or Egypt where buildings were commissioned to convey the power of the ruler or an empire. In more modern times, the USA, Ex-Soviet Union, Berlin and other capitals constructed monumental structures that were ‘architectural propaganda’. However, when brands and not governments transform our landscape, what are they propagating? Our immediate environment is designed and curated by companies with strong commercial interest and in turn propagates consumerism. When cities no longer represent the fine arts, architecture and urban development but are a playground for the coolest, the noisiest, the tallest branded buildings, what meaning of life and which aesthetics do we acquire from our surroundings? A museum building, in comparison, is a cultural space, which is often accessible to all people, most ages and backgrounds (free or for a small fee). Are branded spaces equally inclusive and accessible without the pre-requisite of making a purchase and does it contribute in some way to the cultural value of a place? (Perhaps this is what cultural space the ‘Maison LVMH’ and the ‘Fondation LVMH’ are trying to achieve.) Brands thus become responsible for our cultural capital, the heritage of a city and the socio-cultural environment of present and future generations, however, this responsibility towards society is not necessarily compatible with business interests. Furthermore, big brands and corporations have been known to fuel gentrification. They can drive out small businesses which add to the vivacity and identity of a city and might have a long-standing heritage. As Naomi Klein already wrote in the beginning of the twenty-first century, Starbucks had a strategy for taking over urban spaces: The company took over entire neighbourhoods by simultaneously opening several cafés, forcing small and long-established competitors to close. Nearly two decades later, the strategy still very much applies with no large global city left untouched.

Since the retail environment of the store itself has such a large influence on consumer behaviour, it is not surprising that the main goal of fashion brands is to re-create the bricks-and-mortar environment in their online space. For stores which have never had a physical store environment, for example ASOS, this is not so much of an issue – customers do not have an in-store experience with which to make positive or negative comparisons. On the contrary, for customers who find the experience of shopping at Primark a torture, online shopping is ideal. Although it is a different platform, and naturally consumers will make comparisons. There is evidence in the view of recent economic downturn that customers are favouring E-Commerce experience and consequently they are not attracted to stores which presumably increase their spending. However, many online retailers now use a tagline of ‘customers who bought this, also bought that’, which demonstrates that they spend more in an in-store experience, where link selling and accessorizing add to the sales.

### 4.3 Digital technology at the point of sale

Because it is estimated that some 70% of buying decisions are made whilst within the fashion store, it is obvious that the elements of the retail environment, at the actual point of purchase, must be important. Although a warning must be done here that it is impossible to be 100% sure whether a store visit has been solicited by other forms of media and communication, advertising, PR, a friend or just a browsing habit. Consumer behavior reveals itself notably challenging to trace in terms of influences, motivation and lifestyle. It is in the retail environment that all of the elements of the marketing mix (product, price, place, promotion) unite in order to provide the customer with the immediate stimuli to purchase. This can be called a 'trigger mechanism'. Thus, the retail environment can be regarded maybe as the most important marketing communications tool a fashion brand has, particularly because consumers experience this environment with all their senses creating a very powerful impetus. Visual merchandising as part of communications within the retail fashion environment can be defined as what the potential consumer sees and experiences when approaching, entering and interacting in the store. Marketing communications in the retail environment can also be considered as infotainment: Part information (on trends) and part entertainment (in delighting the senses). Currently, customers live in a fusion world of the digital and physical, expecting brands to reach them on all possible channels. Thus, it is needless to say that it is absolutely natural to offer both worlds inside the store too. This creates a true journey for the customer from the first digital contact on a digital personal device to the physical purchase experience in the store. According to a study by McKinsey & Company (2015) on the digitalization of companies, customers have reported a significantly better brand experience and engagement. Some brands that have used the idea of integrating a digital interface in their store are:

Burberry – Interactive tables, video walls

Prada – Digital changing rooms

Tommy Hilfiger – Augmented reality fashion shows changing rooms

Karl Lagerfeld – Interactive digital tables and mirrors

Zara – RFID technology

Gucci – Digital entertainment for children

Nike – Multi-touch, multi-user wall, smartphone interaction

Karl Lagerfeld installed iPads inside the changing rooms in the flagship store in Munich, with the intention of inviting the customer to take selfies and post them on social media, turning the shopper

into a brand ambassador. This simple installation creates a buzz around the brand, reaches opinion leaders, helps interaction of customers and potential customers through social media and ensures harmony of off-line and online communication activities. The iPad features a photo of Karl behind a camera, seemingly ready to snap your photo. In the new clothes, the customer takes pictures and edits them with frames and decorations. After that, the interface asks to upload the picture onto the Karl Lagerfeld Facebook page.

In summary, the benefits of using sensory branding at the point of sale and in brand communication strategy is:

- Increase of in-store traffic
- Increase of time spent in the store
- Increase of brand awareness and preference
- Customer's engagement with the brand through social media
- Increase in sales and revenue
- Loyalty to the brand
- If the store uses technology for stock management, further benefits can be better merchandise and stock-management improving customer service and sales as well as personalized service: Customization and product adjustments directly in stores.



## 5 SOCIAL MEDIA, BLOGS AND OPINION LEADERS

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Nowadays, every self-respecting fashion brand has a Facebook, Instagram and/or Twitter page, although just a few years ago such a scenario seemed unlikely. How did it happen that for fashion houses the pursuit of likes and followers became a matter of honor, and social networks became one of the key marketing tools? The potential of using social networks as a promotional tool was recognized by luxury brand marketers about thirteen years ago. Burberry became one of the first and most successful then – to save its reputation, it began actively expanding online. By 2009, the house was in a difficult situation – due to the increasing number of fakes that were chosen by marginal British youth, and its image was under threat. To regain the trust of conservative customers and at the same time attract a new young audience, Burberry launched the Art of the Trench project – in substance, its own kind of social network within the site. By 2011, Burberry was spending 60% of its budget on the development of this direction – three times more than any other luxury brand. Among the merits of the brand in this field are many innovations: Photos from the backstage of the show for a Twitter account and an advertisement for the new Burberry Body fragrance, which appeared in the first place not just anywhere, but on Facebook. The brand also became the first luxury brand to launch a live streaming of its show in 2009. Today this practice is commonplace for any progressive brand, from Topshop to Fendi. ‘I can’t say that we are doing all this just for commercial reasons,’ admitted Christopher Bailey, creative director and CEO of Burberry, in an interview with *American Vogue*. ‘We just want to always stay in touch. I think our merit is that we have created a certain success algorithm: The more we entertain our followers, the more they are involved in the brand's community. And then one day they might go and actually buy something from Burberry.’ Burberry has certainly been a pioneer in the use of online platforms, and others have followed this scheme. Dolce & Gabbana has become the first brand to be listed on Weibo (Chinese equivalent of Facebook). Marc Jacobs in 2010 offered everyone who checks in on Foursquare in one of the Marc by Marc Jacobs boutiques an invitation to his show. Shoe brand Jimmy Choo's Catch-a-Choo campaign always for Foursquare offered access to limited-edition sneakers for check-in – thanks to this promotion, sales increased by 30%. Then aspiring designer Prabal Gurung received a hundred plus points to popularity after Demi Moore posted on her Twitter a photo in his dress. With the advent of the Vine app, marketers have begun to bet strongly on the ability to create video content without large financial and human resources. Some even managed to try out the main function of Vine in practice – creating videos in stop motion mode. Super progressive Burberry showcased prints and fabrics from the men's collection in detail, Marc Jacobs handbags became possible to see literally from all angles, British designer Matthew Williamson

gave a look behind the scenes of preparing for his London show and Oscar de la Renta brand gave the possibility to learn the process of creating a wedding collection of accessories. However, luxury brands did not dare to fully evaluate Vine's capabilities: Some were embarrassed by the not very high quality of the result, others saw more potential in the new Instagram video feature. 'I think fashion brands should take it easy on Vine and focus on its strengths: speed and ease of use,' says photographer Megan Signoli, who created an ad campaign for French Connection using the app. 'Then they can get a lot more value out of the final content, even if it doesn't come out amazing.'

The position of fashion as the lot of the elite at a certain moment turned into a complete anachronism. Over the course of the last years Instagram has become a key social media for the fashion industry. Photo and video reports from fashion weeks are the main content, of course, but the search for faces for an advertising campaign is a less obvious step. Nicola Formichetti used this several years ago when he decided to look for models for the McQueen campaign through MySpace. Advertising campaigns featuring professional models are also increasingly reminiscent of amateur camera footage posted on social. In 2011, Marc Jacobs invited his followers to share through pictures and videos how great they are spending the winter holidays in the brand's clothes, accompanying the photos with the #MarcFam hashtag. Michael Kors released the first-ever Instagram ad in 2013, and during the New York Fashion Week, he managed to collect 93,000 likes for photos and over 70,000 for video content. 'We follow our fans and believe that today more people are spending their time on Instagram looking for inspiration or specific products,' Lisa Pomerantz, senior vice president of global communications and marketing at Michael Kors, told WWD. 'Advertising like this helps us reach an audience beyond those already familiar with the brand.'

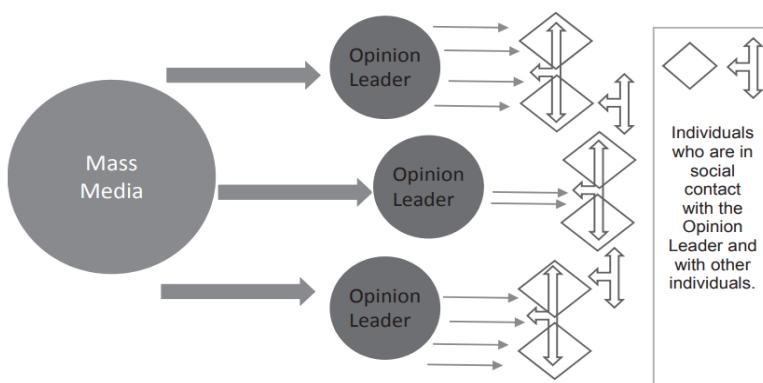
Designers themselves are increasingly admitting that when creating the next collection, they involuntarily think about how it will look on the pictures of Instagram users. 'Now, when creating a collection or show, I always keep in mind how the thing will turn out in the photo,' says Alexander Wang. He is not alone – the fashion director of the Milanese multi-brand La Rinascente Tiziana Cardini echoes the designer: 'Fashion seems to have become two-dimensional, flat. Designers, especially young ones, have a completely different attitude to form and volume, even to color. I think they put a lot more emphasis on the photogenic qualities of the clothes.'

The undisputed visionary Rei Kawakubo went ahead of everyone by releasing a fall-winter 2012 collection built on a flat cut under her own slogan 'The future is in 2D-dimension'. About fifteen years ago, the luxury industry existed as a closed ecosystem, built on the relationship of buying and selling, and focused exclusively on its extremely solvent audience. The halo of inaccessibility and luxury was guarded like a holy grail. But the position of fashion as the lot of the elite at a certain moment turned into a complete anachronism. The notorious new generation, whose undeniable influence on almost all

spheres of life was not spoken only by the lazy, became the starting point of a new marketing strategy. Yes, these 20-year-olds can't always afford to buy a luxury item worth a month's rent. But they give likes on the brand's page on Facebook or Instagram without any hesitation, creating the so-called mass demand effect. 'Social media is a great place for brands to hook millennials who are ready to spend huge sums on clothes literally saved on breakfast,' said Orli LeWinter, social media specialist at digital agency 360i. 'It's interesting to see how the democratic nature of social media and the elitist context of fashion brands try to find a compromise.' In the modern realities, fashion houses choose a new concept – not a specific thing becomes a product, but a dream about it. The honourable clients of a luxury brand, of course, continue to be the main target audience, but in addition to them, there is a tangible layer of potential buyers, those who, quite likely, will continue to be with the brand even when they move into the solvent category. It's a very handy tool to nurture a generation of loyal fans instead of looking for them among a sophisticated audience. It doesn't matter how many of those thousands or millions of followers will actually go to the store and buy a thing of this or that brand. It became important how many of them wanted to buy it. 'Creating a story around a brand is critical for marketing today, as it allows you to build a more personal relationship with your audience,' says Morgan Jones, head of digital at Say It Social advertising agency. At the same time, luxury brands have always remained inaccessible to most ordinary people interested in fashion. By allowing them to see the life of the industry from the inside, they give people the chance to live an experience that is not available even to every guest from the front row of the show. For example, the growing popularity of TikTok is a direct proof of this openness, since this social network content is produced and targeted at a younger audience than, for instance, its rival Instagram. In this way, social networks allowed young and talented people to talk about themselves to millions. Some of the budding designers have not yet made a single show or presentation, but at the same time they already have several tens of thousands of Instagram followers. Coco Rocha admits that social networks greatly simplify the life of a model: Now, if she is attacked by haters, she can fight back directly – block them. Many future industry stars were found through social networks – take one of the most sought-after London stylists Anna Trevelian, whom Nicola Formichetti found on MySpace. Or the face of Prada, model Lisa Ostanina, who was discovered by her own agency Star System through Russian Facebook VKontakte. While the luxury giants are reaping the rewards of a new marketing strategy in terms of real sales growth, a generation of young talents are celebrating the romantic idea of their own 15 minutes of fame. However, both of them are sure: Social networks have become an integral part of the fashion industry, and it seems that we can't no more get out of them.

## 5.1 THE MEANING OF AN OPINION LEADER

The precursor to the ‘Two-Step Flow of Communication’ hypothesis which emerged in 1944 was the invention of Paul Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson and Hazel Gaudet. The purpose of the study was to examine what influenced people to vote during political campaigns. The research showed unexpected results as the biggest influence for the people were personal and quite informal contacts rather than exposure to radio or newspaper. Based on these findings, it was Katz and Lazarsfeld who developed the two-step flow theory of mass communication that is still widely used today or has been revised and developed further for current times. As the name states, the theory is based solely on two steps of information flow: At first, information from the mass media will reach opinion leaders, who are people paying attention to and following the mass media. The opinion leaders will interpret this information and being quite influential, they will propagate their interpretation to their large audience with whom they are socially connected. (University of Twente, 2017) This model, which was first emerged in the 1940s (again the golden age of marketing innovation in the USA as mentioned in the previous chapters), is relevant yet again in the twenty-first century when blogging arose. It is possible to achieve a certain reaction of a mass of people by first influencing the opinion leader accordingly, pre-calculating how he or she will re-distribute the information. Blogging essentially works the same way: There is one blogger who has followers. This blogger will receive sponsored goods and information from brands which are then presented in a personal, authentic style on the blogger’s media channel. The information reaches the blogger’s followers and his or her opinion leads the opinion of a multitude of followers. For a brand it can be beneficial not to broadly spread a message to everyone possible, but to seek out an opinion leader who will disseminate the message to those who will certainly respond to it positively the only change today is an evolvement of cross communication between the followers, empowering the message which is spread.



**Fig 5.1** Two-step communication model (Lazarsfeld, 1940)

## 5.2 BLOGGING AND ITS IMPACTS ON FASHION BRANDS

In 2016/17 blogging was already more than 10 years old and had its own history. It began as a sort of personal diary, a not quite private nor secret diary, because its aim was for everyone to read it and comment on it. To the reader, it offered 24 hours a day access and was location independent at the same time. In the first years of the new millennium, people began creating personal style blogs and showcasing fashion on them. One of the very first people to do so was the now famous Scott Schuman with his 'The Sartorialist' blog. Schuman (2005) states in his biography that he 'began The Sartorialist with the idea of creating a two-way dialogue about the world of fashion and its relationship to daily life'. He posted street photos of stylish people sharing his creative life as well as outlook on fashion with the world. Schuman would be considered an 'Industry Blogger' which means that he is an expert with a background in the industry, either fashion journalism, design, styling or similar. For instance, he had a degree in apparel merchandizing and photography. The other type of blogger is often called the 'Citizen Blogger'. According to Gwyneth Moore (2012) this person is a 'passionate consumer of fashion', sharing their lifestyle and style recommendations and opinions with followers. In 2016, about 10 years after the first blogs emerged, there were hundreds of thousands of successful and high-earning bloggers and it has become a staple of our digital landscape. Mark Briggs writes that bloggers, unlike journalists, have the privilege of far more freedom in what they write, who they talk to and what other people they link their posts to. They might start out small but as more people read their blog they will reach a turning point after which the audience takes over. This is a benchmark that indicates when a blog has become really successful (and profitable). The power of blogs is so evident, that even the classic printed media have reformatted their websites into blogs, like Vogue Magazine who poached Suzy Menkes away from a career at The International Herald Tribune (spanning 25 years) to become the editor of Vogue's own blog in 2014. Equally, about 18 percent of private bloggers turn to the help of professional editors before posting and around 50 percent ask someone to look over the post before uploading it, as a 2016 survey of Orbitmedia revealed (Crestodina, 2018). Blogging has become a lucrative business sector, and often requires an office with staff who run the blog. It is rare that one witnesses the emergence of a completely new profession within their lifetime, particularly within the fashion industry. So how exactly is a blogger interesting to a fashion brand? Here is a best-case list of characteristics and business options a fashion brand might be looking for when it wants to do business with a blogger:

- The fashion blogger X is in tune with the current trends and his posts are highly relevant to his or her audience.
- X comes across as authentic and is considered an authority in fashion.

- The content of the posts is highly visual (photo/video), which is very important in fashion; it is original and creative.
- The content is informative so that the brand's message can get transferred. X has a good writing style and is an excellent communicator (including grammar and spelling) when it comes to storytelling.
- X is happy to be sent to report directly on fashion events, sometimes live.
- The blog posts by X can be timed with other important marketing activities of the brand such as store-opening, shows, product launches etc.
- X has several thousand or hundred thousand followers and they are a perfect fit for the brand. The followers are the correct target group for the fashion brand in terms of age, gender, income, fashion preference, shopping habits etc.
- The followers react to the blogger's content so a high rate of engagement can be expected.
- X does not promote competing brands or X does promote competing brands, but there is minimal risk of losing customers this way.
- The blogger is active on different platforms such as blog, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, Twitter etc. The brand can choose to do a campaign either on several platforms or just the strongest one.

What brands get in return for working with a blogger:

- Engagement
- Reach
- Numbers immediately measurable
- Targeting the right consumers who are likely to respond positively to the message
- Potential increase in product or service purchases. If a brand and a blogger are the right fit, the amount a blogger earns can be substantial.

In 2011, The Sartorialist stated in a controversial interview with The Talks that American Apparel bought advertising space on his site for one year and Net-a-Porter for the rest of 2010: 'So those two ads alone are a good fraction of a million dollars: More than a quarter million and less than a half a million. [...] My audience is so much larger than everybody else's that advertisers, well at least American Apparel told me that I am not in their internet budget. My order is so big and they have to pay so much that I am actually in their magazine budget. That comes from having a good size audience.' Interestingly, this statement caused quite a fuss in the fashion world, being quoted numerous times on other blogs and websites. However, the original publishers of the interview no longer have it on their website (Oystermag, 2011). Research is still emerging on how social media

really works or why indeed it does. But some say that searching, finding, liking, sharing, commenting and the self-presentation on social media is deeply embedded in our primal instincts and connects to feelings of reward. ‘Dopamine is stimulated by unpredictability, by small bits of information, and by reward cues – pretty much the exact conditions of social media. The pull of dopamine is so strong that studies have shown tweeting is harder for people to resist than cigarettes and alcohol’ (<https://blog.bufferapp.com/psychology-of-social-media>). It is highly likely that more psychological and behavioral research will be conducted in the next years on the phenomena of social media, including unhealthy and unethical effects.

### **5.3 THE CELEBRITY ENDORSEMENT STRATEGY AND MANAGEMENT**

A ‘celebrity’ could be defined as ‘someone who is known in the public domain’. This recognition may be related to their profession or expertise: Sportsmen and women (such as Roger Federer and the Williams sisters), musicians (Jennifer Lopez and Beyoncé are known simply by their first names), actors (Johnny Depp, Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie) or models (Linda Evangelista and Naomi Campbell). These people have become celebrities due to their talent in their field.

Nonetheless, there are also a number of celebrities who are known for their name, for a famous partner or simply by being exposed to the gaze of publicity. These celebrity stars can wax and wane depending on their activities and publicists. Some celebrities are generated by reality TV shows. Sometimes they have enduring celebrity status; more often than not, however, there can be alarming consequences for this type of celebrity. It can be said that: Some celebrities are famous for what they do, some celebrities are famous for not very much at all, some celebrities are famous for 15 minutes. An interesting point to note is that many celebrities are still famous long after they are dead. Dead celebrities cannot bring any adverse publicity to a brand by their behavior.

The idea of a celebrity opinion leader is in fact not new. Queen Elizabeth I, Napoleon and Queen Victoria – just to name a few – were political leaders who strategically shaped and influenced the opinion of their people (followers) and fashion. In fact, being affiliated with a royal ‘celebrity’ was a fantastic promotional tool for merchants and artisans of that era. Cope and Maloney (2016) believe that the Royal Warrant, which was first introduced in the UK in the twelfth century, was one way to help highly skilled artisans to grow their business. This included tailors, cobblers and dressmakers who might have the warrant until this day. In nineteenth-century France, Empress Eugenie was an avid fashion leader and endorsed her couturier Charles Frederick Worth who is said to have been the first designer to put a name (and a brand) on his lavish creations. Being associated with royals, even today, presents itself as a highly prestigious tool for designers and brands. For instance, Elizabeth Emanuel and her husband have gain the fame after they designed Princess

Diana's wedding dress. Some decades later, Kate, the Duchess of Cambridge, became an opinion-leader and fashion celebrity herself, promoting British designers by wearing their creations. By choosing to mostly wear UK high-street brands, those dresses were instantly sold out in stores and online, so much so that this was dubbed 'the Kate effect'. Other contemporary celebrities could be: Influencers, actors, models, athletes, singers, reality TV stars, iconic designers or even important activists or scientists. For the needs of today's fashion, it can be any of those and many more but there has to be a common denominator. In this context, celebrities have three main things in common discussed further more in detail which are attractive to brands: They are instantly recognizable, they have millions of fans and they love to collaborate with brands.

Psychological studies (Amos, Holmes and Strutton, 2008) have shown that celebrities have a significant and positive effect on consumers which benefits the brand.

- 1) Consumers want to imitate the celebrity.
- 2) Consumers believe the testimonial by the celebrity.
- 3) Consumers can memorize the advertisement much better when there is a celebrity.
- 4) Consumers associate the positive traits of the celebrity with the product (but when it turns to be negative, they will also associate these negative traits with the product).

How is a celebrity interesting to a fashion brand? Here is a list of characteristics a fashion brand might be looking for when it wants to do business with a celebrity:

- Celebrity career. Has the celebrity had a great career with great achievements?
- Celebrity scandals. Has the celebrity been involved in any scandal that generated negative press? If so, the consumers might associate the advertised product with the negativity of the celebrity.
- Celebrity validity. Would consumers trust this celebrity as an opinion leader on the particular product?
- Celebrity authority. Is the celebrity an opinion leader or considered an expert in this area?
- Celebrity looks. In a world where good looks can sell a product, it is important that the celebrity is considered to be attractive amongst the target customers.
- Celebrity recognition. Will consumers easily recognize the celebrity?
- Celebrity/product harmony. Is the celebrity the right fit to endorse a product? Will they be in harmony?



- Celebrity endorsement portfolio. Does the celebrity endorse other brands? If so, would they be a competitor? Is the celebrity endorsing too many brands so that the impact is spread?

Celebrities can be used both for advertising and PR communications strategies. This is why the PR department will try to send gifts to celebrities or offer to give them a dazzling outfit for a night out on the red carpet and ensures that their product gets seen and talked about. In the case of advertising, the celebrities are featured in campaigns and will actively endorse a brand. Celebrities are brands on their own as such, they should have a management team who will protect their name and their brand image and generally ensure that their publicity is positive. The role of management is to support, expose and protect the celebrity, which may seem idealistic in today's environment. Fees and contracts are negotiated by the agent or management and can vary greatly across brands and campaigns. Paid endorsement involves a brand signing a celebrity to represent the label in a traditional fashion advertising campaign. There will be a contract, which may preclude the celebrity from something as simple as cutting their hair or as complex as 'bringing the brand into disrepute'. A contract will also prohibit the celebrity endorsing a direct competitor. Kate Moss has a large number of brand endorsements and campaigns but none of them are direct competitors. The costs of this type of arrangement are obviously greater than for other types of endorsement, such as making favorable comments about a brand in the press for a one-off fee. Unpaid endorsement occurs when a celebrity wears the brand because they like it. The celebrity is normally given merchandise to wear at an event. This is called 'gifting'. Whilst it may appear to be unpaid, there are costs associated with this type of endorsement. One cost can be that the brand may be brought into infamy if the celebrity behaves badly. If it is an impromptu approach, with no contract in place, the brand has little or no protection. The public tend to prefer covert endorsement (where it seems that the celebrity has chosen to wear a brand) to overt endorsement (where the celebrity is paid). However, the public may not be aware that behind every brand and celebrity there is a complex machine of PR working to gain exposure for a brand in whatever way is suitable to the celebrity or the brand budget. Companies have developed social media PR strategies and advertising campaigns where the target audience can interact with the brand. Word-of-mouth recommendation remains as a very strong and credible tool and it is enhance through the use of social media. However, these digital strategies should be treated with caution; they do not always make it clear if the bloggers work directly with the brand or they are recommending the product without any interest involved. Nevertheless, it is a growing phenomenon and gives customers a sense of affiliation and belonging to a brand. The cult of celebrity is everywhere. Few brands, nowadays, do not have either an overt (paid) or covert (possibly unpaid) brand ambassador. Millions of

magazines are sold on the basis of cover-page gossip stories regarding the celebrity of the moment. It would appear that the public have an insatiable desire to know the very latest news about the celebrity orbit. Average consumers do not openly admit their desire to resemble to the celebrities they admire but they will admit taking some inspiration to a part of their wardrobe. They may take a leap of faith to wearing something which is inspired by a celebrity – they think that a little bit of that taste and maybe fame will have some effect on them.

Brands are said to have certain personality and descriptive characteristics such as: Classic, fun, dynamic or sophisticated. Many celebrities are also described by the public in these terms even though we do not really know them. It is no accident that the model often described as the girl next door, who comes from Croydon and was discovered in an airline queue (Kate Moss), is now the face of Rimmel (the first and cheapest make-up brand for young girls) and was a collaborator with Topshop (the most successful and accessible fashion-forward, high-street retailer and the first destination for millions of young girls with pocket money to spend on fashion). Research tends to show that the use of celebrities has the most positive effect in the key youth (18–24) demographic; this reduces with age, probably because the celebrities are unknown to older audiences and they are less influenced by them.

Sometimes a celebrity buys a particular brand and is snapped by paparazzi carrying an ‘it’ bag or wearing the brand. The brand has is not behind this kind of ‘accidental’ endorsement and has zero control over this. When it happens, the brand is most of the times is more pleased than not to be associated with the celebrity but unfortunately there may be certain celebrities with whom the brand does not want to be associated with at all. The brand PR machine takes a great deal of time and effort to ensure that the celebrities that they have approved are photographed as soon as possible to counterbalance any negative publicity. An example of this was Daniella Westbrook (a soap actor) who was snapped out with her baby, with both wearing head-to-toe Burberry check, including the pram. This picture was reused every time there was a press story regarding the ubiquitous Burberry check, which became synonymous with British ‘chav’ culture. It has taken Burberry many years to get rid of this association, which has a tendency to resurface every now and again to this day. Car crash couture is a feature of Grazia, where a celebrity is shown wearing a style or brand which is not as flattering as would be expected. However, the brand is either unnamed or does not pay for advertising space in the magazine, as this would jeopardize their relationship. Paul Weller, for example, has worn Ben Sherman out of choice for many years and has become an unofficial ‘brand ambassador’. Some brands are very careful about the magazines to which they will send clothes for product placement or a fashion

shoot. Some of the 'gossip' magazines does not have an up-market enough reputation to showcase their clothes. Publicists and stylists spend a lot of time and energy ensuring that the celebrity and the brand are pictured together in a favorable light. Pictures of a celebrity popping down to the supermarket wearing XYZ is not just taken by chance but carefully staged in most cases; when it is not, the problems begin. The paparazzi are well recompensed by the press for pictures of celebrities in a bad light and if they are associated closely with a brand then the brand reputation can be stained too. This can be disadvantageous for a very close 'co-branding'. With the advent of the Internet, particularly social networking apps and 'fans' with smartphones, a picture can go viral and become global in very little time and the speed of diffusion can be stupefying, unlike in the past when a newspaper had time to warn publicists and agents and they in turn could 'sell' them another story to protect their celebrity client.

There is not a large body of seminal research regarding how celebrity endorsement actually boost sales of fashion merchandise. The research that does exist tends to concentrate on other types of media. We can safely say, however, that endorsement is one of the most important communication channels or tools in fashion. Most academic commentators agree that using celebrities alongside products affects consumer behavior because of transference, attractiveness and congruence.

- Transference: When a celebrity endorses a brand associated with their profession (such as a sportsperson endorsing Adidas or Nike), then the theory of transference suggests that consumers will feel that some of the skills of the celebrity might 'rub off' on them if they purchase and use that brand.
- Attractiveness: It is difficult to think of a celebrity who is not attractive. In fashion it appears to be one of the key and most important aspect, where aspiring to look like a celebrity in terms of a hairstyle, clothing and so on allows the consumer to enter the world of the celebrity lifestyle. Young women everywhere adopt the style of the celebrities they admire. Through magazines, they are exposed to the celebrity 'look' and are given tips on how to 'get her look'. The main criticism of this has been that some young women aspire to 'be famous' when they grow up rather than having a career and they can also be influenced by celebrity diets.
- Congruence: A key concept in celebrity endorsement is ensuring that there is a 'fit' (congruence) between the brand and the celebrity. It must be reliable in the eyes of the consumer that the celebrity would wear the brand. It does not take much for the consumer to think that the celebrity is just being paid to wear the item. Even though

consumers are well aware that most endorsements are paid for, it would appear that they suspend their judgement on that unless there is a lack of congruence between the brand and the celebrity. There have been some famous cases of celebrities endorsing a particular brand but seeming to prefer another ‘off camera’. For example, a famous actress endorsed, for a rumored one million dollars, one brand of jeans and was then photographed in a competitor’s brand; she was instantly dropped out from the campaign. Not only does this cost money but it costs in terms of a damaged reputation for the brand – this photograph was travelling around the world. Whilst a contract between the celebrity and the brand can mitigate against this type of eventuality, the demand for celebrity stories is so insatiable that the paparazzi are always looking for an opportunity to expose celebrities. Matching a brand with a celebrity is by no means an exact science. Some companies undertake research on whether the present celebrity endorsement is ‘working’ and into who else could have the characteristics associated with the brand (such as urban, edgy or clean living). Sports personalities are ideal celebrities according to Stephen Urquhart of Omega as they mirror ‘watchmakers who are perfectionists’ (Pavri, 2010).

Our ambassadors are the epitome of mental strength and energetic passion just like Tag Heuer. We choose them for their uncompromising determination to work hard to fuel their natural talent and push further and higher the limits of their art and expertise. This mirrors very much our watchmakers creating new breakthrough timepieces and innovating each year. Working with ambassadors is a long-term collaboration that requires deep and mutual understanding and contracts tend to be for at least three years.

(Jean-Christophe Babin, CEO, Tag Heuer.)

If a celebrity stops portraying the image that fits the brand, the celebrity can be dropped out and a replacement can be found. Pringle had a long collaboration with Nick Faldo the golfer. However, when Pringle re-positioned as a younger, heritage-inspired modern brand, David Beckham was seen wearing Pringle on a book-signing tour. *The Sunday Times* celebrity power 50 list sorts its candidates using a combination of how many times the celebrity is mentioned in the media, magazine cover features, and Google entries and an extra dimension of what made them so popular. The Forbes Celebrity 100 list provides a list of top celebrities by earnings.

A relatively new phenomenon is the ‘celebrity collaboration’, in which a celebrity from one world, such as modelling or music, ‘develops’ a range for a retailer. The most advertised collaboration so far has been that between Kate Moss and Topshop, at an initial sign-on fee of £3 million. As a

globally recognized model collaborating with Topshop, which had ambitions and aspirations to develop the brand in a global market, Kate Moss became a promotional vehicle. Kate Moss and Topshop are now synonymous. To date, this has been extremely profitable for both parties.

Collaborations between designers and high-street retailers have also become ubiquitous as a Jimmy Choo range at H&M was announced and denounced equally. The collaboration between Karl Lagerfeld and H&M was not a great success for a number of reasons and one may wonder why the head of Chanel would need to make this type of collaboration.

Some celebrities bypass collaboration with a retailer and develop their own ranges. Victoria Beckham, Kendall & Kylie Jenner and Chiara Ferragni have all put their names to their own ranges as they are perceived to have sufficient expertise.

Some celebrities appear to endorse a large number of brands and the public can become suspicious, even critical of this as it appears that they will endorse anything for money. They become known as 'brand whores'. A celebrity can also become bigger than the brand. This has been called the 'vampire effect' – the celebrity is well recognized but the brand and its associations may be lost.

When celebrities 'slip up' or fall from grace and popularity in some way by their behavior, the brand with which they are associated is often also mentioned in press coverage. It is worse still if the celebrity is photographed behaving badly while wearing the brand. The public are obsessive in their following of celebrities, reading about both their good and bad times. When Naomi Campbell served a community service sentence for assault, her wardrobe was scrutinized on a daily basis by the press. Even in this circumstance, a publicity machine was vibrating in the background and no brand was damaged by this association. Perhaps this would prove the old saying that any publicity is good publicity. However, there are some transgressions that the public will not forgive and no amount of rehabilitation, good works and reality TV shows can resurrect the celebrity's tarnished image.

Celebrity can, as well, 'collaborate' with charity and non-profitable organizations. The celebrity is seen to be giving something back to society. The charity knows that it will get publicity if a celebrity name is associated with its efforts and good will causes for which it works. Baume and Mercier watches are endorsed by Andy Garcia in return for his fee being donated to charities of his choice. This is a good example of celebrity and brand association for altruistic purposes. It also assures a good PR coverage.

A fashion product has a lifecycle signed by the following phases:

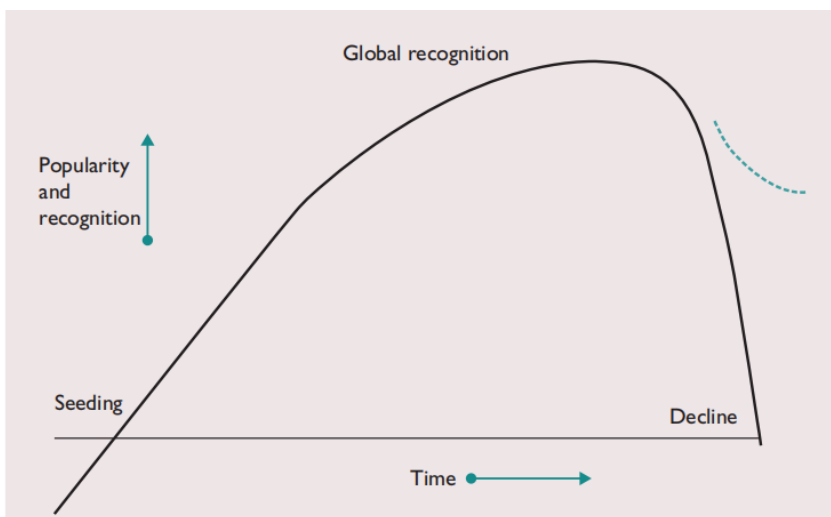
- Introduction

- Designer growth
- Available in up-market stores mass-market adoption
- Available in high street stores, height of demand decline
- The style goes out of fashion re-arise
- Return with subtle changes.

We can look at celebrity almost as a commodity, in a similar way:

- Introduction
- One to watch growth and some exposure
- Early recognition mass exposure
- Global recognition and height of demand decline or withdrawal
- Goes out of fashion or circulation resurrection or reinvention
- Return to the public arena

One of the major and most obvious differences in looking at celebrity as a product is the price. Before celebrities reach their highest demand and global exposure, they are relatively cheap at the ‘seeding’ stage of their lifecycle; fashion is not cheap at the couture and designer introductory stage of the lifecycle. Conversely, at the height of its demand in the mass market, fashion is cheap but celebrities are at their most expensive and lucrative for the brand (see Figure 5.3).



**Fig 5.3** Product lifecycle applied to a celebrity (Gaynor Lea, Greenwood, 2013)

### **One to watch**

Young celebrities at the start of their careers are relatively unknown and thus cheaper than more well-known people. They are people to watch for the future (also known as ‘seeding’) and can give an exclusive element to a brand. The only downside of this is that if they do not reach global

recognition and fame then all the investment in them will be wasted. Eva Herzigova is a good example of this strategy. When Wonderbra had a small budget, she (an unknown catwalk model) was chosen for a billboard campaign which garnered thousands of pounds of free publicity in media coverage because of its attention-grabbing content and ‘hello boys’ strap line. Seedlings grow with the brand.

### **Early recognition**

Celebrities, at their growth stage, are becoming more exposed and well-known. As they grow in popularity and stature, brand recognition grows with them. As ‘new faces’, they are featured in a variety of media as no-one has yet tired of them. Lily Allen was picked up by New Look at a very early stage in her career. Emma Watson (of Harry Potter film fame) was picked up by Burberry. Whenever she is photographed at a première or celebrity event, she is described as ‘the face of Burberry’, so Burberry gets a free name check every time she steps onto a red carpet. As her career will no doubt grow, so will her exposure and that of Burberry alongside. However, she may retire from public life, go to university and become anonymous. Lily Cole has gone to university and keeps up with some endorsements and modelling work. She is considered to be even more intriguing as being both bright and talented.

### **Global recognition**

When a celebrity has global recognition, an associated brand will also become global. If it is not already a global business, it can develop new and emerging markets. Madonna and Louis Vuitton have become synonymous. Global recognition comes at a price: Nicole Kidman was reputed to have been paid £5 million for her Chanel No. 5 advert. At that cost, it is not surprising that it has been used for three Christmas promotions. However, scandal is also reported on a global scale. Kate Moss suffered at the hands of the press, because of alleged drug taking, at the height of her global recognition when she was endorsing a number of high-profile brands. Some brands, most notably H&M, cancelled their contracts with her; although it may be considered that this situation allowed her to pursue a more lucrative offer from Topshop. Using a single celebrity who has global recognition in a campaign implies the use of economies of scale in terms of photography, styling and reproduction of images. A publication such as Vogue that has many editions in different countries across the globe can feature the same adverts and negotiate a media fee.

## **Decline**

The popularity of a celebrity may decline because of fading public interest, changes in taste or the celebrity choosing to withdraw from the public view and raise a family. Celebrities grow older and very few can carry the mantle for young brands as they age. They may downsize to lesser known brands but they are forever tarred with the phrase ‘the former face of’ and this may be something that the previous brand would want to distance itself from so they will be paid off. These celebrities in decline are sometimes called C-list celebrities – the last ones on the list of potential invitees to an event. Some celebrities in decline have taken up some brand endorsements which look almost desperate and lack congruence (for example, George Best and milk).

## **Resurrection and re-invention**

There are few examples of resurrection and re-invention of celebrities in an industry such as fashion, where youth and looks are of such importance. One of the most famous examples is that of Twiggy for Marks and Spencer (M&S). Celebrities who retire harmoniously at the height of their fame seem more likely to be able to re-enter the public arena later. Those who have desperately attempted to hold onto their celebrity status do not fare so well. Reality TV shows tend to be fertile ground for celebrities to attempt to come back into the public eye and resurrect their careers, but this tends to be very short term, mainly because they have been out of the public eye and lost their status.

To measure the effectiveness of the celebrity endorsement does not appear to be an exact science, but Mintel (Fashion and the Media, latest version) reports that a celebrity on the cover can triple the circulation figures of a magazine. The simple advertising value equivalent (AVE) calculation can be applied to a celebrity and a brand being photographed together. Depending upon the status of the celebrity, we can perhaps triple the AVE if the circulation of the magazine has tripled due to the celebrity feature. Hermes, for example, does not advertise its Birkin bag. It does not need to as, for example, Georgina Rodríguez is always pictured carrying one and her pictures (as a wife, a mother or an invitee to an event) guarantee already some cost-free coverage in the press.

The major benefits of celebrity endorsement are as follows:

- Press coverage: Signing a new celebrity is immediately newsworthy. Journalists are always looking for column inches and know that a celebrity name gets attention. A picture of the celebrity and, of course, a picture of the new campaign is equal to free publicity.
- Changing perceptions of the brand: When a brand is repositioning, the use of a celebrity who embodies the new characteristics is a human representation of the new values.



- Attracting new customers: A brand may want to attract a new target group of customers, older, younger or in a new market. Asian, US and Far Eastern market entrants may use celebrities who are more familiar in those markets. Nike tends to use celebrities and sports stars that are already familiar and popular in the domestic market.
- Freshening up an existing campaign: Sports brands, Burberry and L 'Oreal, among others, re-vitalise their campaigns by adding new 'members' to a stable of established celebrities.

Commentators have been saying for some time that the cult of celebrity is over and even supposed the 'death of the celebrity culture'. In times of global economic crisis, it is obvious that their excesses are not being reported that frequently but their ability to sell magazines and create debate in the media and online goes on unceasingly. Celebrities are being shown in a more positive light in some cases when linked with charitable causes. However, in times of economic crisis, they are also providing some respite from continual doom and gloom. Indeed, never before have there been so many different types of celebrity and the public 's interest in them continues. Reports of the demise of celebrity culture have been grossly exaggerated.

## 6 THE FASHION MAGAZINES

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### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

Magazines are an important and well-established media tool. They transmit the information about the latest and the newest trends in fashion, lifestyle, cuisine, tourism and more. They often center on the celebrity's luxurious life, their lifestyle habits, looks and routine. In fact, their main task, as for everything in the fashion world, is to create a 'mysterious' and 'desire permeated' universe where the readers can plunge themselves in order to escape from their daily boring and gray life and to imagine for a couple of minutes to be at the place of very important people. Indeed, they can experience an array of feelings and emotions while reading columns about what to wear in this season of the year or where to go on the next holiday. As other marketing tools, the magazine can be considered as a temple of fashionistas where they can 'profess' their 'religion' and unlimited love for fashion. The editors, stylists and other opinion leaders in the magazine space are considered to be trustworthy gurus that can advise the audience on how they can correct the flaws of their style and how to become more comfortable in their skin using different strategies that spans from their style to their sport routines, diet, psychology and so on.

The fashion magazines, in particular, tend to be highly image-focused and therefore contain a lot of fashion brand advertising and PR-driven features. They have a double task to entertain and to inform the audience. There is a difference between celebrity weekly and the fashion magazines in their tone, topics of the features and therefore the target audience. Thus, the promotional activities involved in each type of magazine will be different. Each of the magazine is a big business and an international brand on their own, that can be easily recognized by everyone, here are just some examples of the most famous ones: *Vogue*, *Elle*, *Harpers Bazaar*, *Vanity Fair*.

As already mentioned, each type of magazine is specifically targeted to satisfy taste of a specific audience. And there is even a classification of different consumer types:

- Innovators or early style adopters (e.g. *Vogue*, *Es Magazine* and *Elle*)
- Fashion enthusiasts (e.g. *Grazia*)
- Late style adopters (e.g. *Closer or More*)

There is, as well, a marketing and visual merchandising technique used to sell the magazines in the shops. In general, they are placed at the 'eye' level of the shopper that translates to the 'buy'

action. Nowadays, a lot of publications chose to install a specific point-of-sale fixture near the till, that pushes customers to make impulsive purchases.

## 6.2 THE REPERTOIRE OF MAGAZINES

As mentioned above, magazines, similarly to the fashion brands, can have different types of repertoires based on their target readers and therefore their content, advertising and publicity can change significantly. Consumers, based on the neuropsychological studies, like to have habits and as for everything that they choose to include in their routines, magazines make no exception and become as, as well, part of their daily ritual. They will choose, therefore, to spend their hard-earned money on a magazine that suits and coincides at most with their personality, style and taste. However, even if they can have their favorite one, they are likely to purchase other types of magazines based on their side interests in their lives i.e: Cookery, gardening, interiors, science etc. There are also some magazines that can encompass different areas at once for example *Grazia*.

The repertory can change in the course of life of a person. This life cycle, similarly, to a product one can be therefore schematized as follows:

- Children's magazine or comics with simple stories told through pictures
- Pre-teen magazine
- Teenage magazine
- Young adult magazine
- Bridal magazine
- Homes and gardens magazine
- Parent and child magazine
- Family lifestyle magazine
- Hobby magazines

The market of magazines has its climax in the 15–24 year age group (Mintel), in the same way as for the fashion products. It comes with no surprise as precisely in this age gap the lifestyle is the most active and interesting in the most cases. Therefore, it reveals to be the most profitable age segment for the publications. In fact, people of this age tend to be single or not married and tend to spend the larger part of their disposable income on their looks and on different leisure activities. Nonetheless, currently, there is a propension for the youngest generation to invest their time longer on the studies and professional career instead of creating right away a family, as it was used to be before, accordingly the media landscape including press tries to adopt their content for this brand new, but already well-established category of consumers.

### 6.3 THE MAGAZINE AND READER RELATIONSHIP

The relationship between consumers and fashion magazine can be compared to a friendship relationship, in which magazine plays a 'trusted' friend role thus providing the reader with possible recommendation for their fashion, lifestyle and much more. In fact, people develop a kind of long-term, solid relationship with this medium and become 'addicted' to the content that it provides them with. They like this type of press because they can find the key guidelines to navigate the fashion market enormous offer. Consequently, when they need to make a purchase, they are not anymore disoriented in their brand, style and trends choices and moreover, in some cases are able to become themselves 'independent' experts by training their eye. Naturally, as for any brand or label, magazines, as well build they reputation and kudos by becoming iconic, pop-culture glossies where a patchwork of ideas and images concurs to shape their cosmopolitan reader's taste.

The relationship between readers and magazines has been described by The Henley Centre (2001 and 2004) and discussed by Consterdine (2005) as falling into two distinct and basic categories: Information needs and cultural needs. I will report hereafter the informational and cultural needs that magazines satisfy in a fashion context.

#### **Information needs**

- Instrumental: It is very crucial for fashion magazines to deliver information about new retailers or brands and new trends so that readers are informed properly and on time.
- Analysis: Fashion magazines do not necessarily treat world pressing issues, ethical issues, the role of women in society and cultural issues with the same attention and extensivity as a broadsheet newspaper but it is enough to keep the fashion consumer aware of current affairs (nowadays these topics are more and more considered in the view of customer's changing values).
- Enlightenment: In a fashion magazine, articles on cinema, books and art exhibitions are classified under the features of 'rom-coms', 'chick lit' and art installations and fairs about fashion.
- Wellness and self-care: Fashion magazines are a big source of information about nutrition, beauty regimens and skills acquisition e.g. cookery and craft features. Aspirational information can include the latest type of sport or heathy lifestyle the stars are following. Consumers may feel that they are informed by magazines and that they can discuss, for example, the latest exhibition because magazines have given them the basics, although they may not have taken time to visit the exhibition.

## **Cultural needs**

- Ritual: Readers find pleasure and comfort when they purchase the latest issue of Grazia every week and Vogue every month or in buying some magazines before boarding a train or plane.
- Default: Readers glance at magazines when waiting in the doctor 's surgery or at a friend 's house. Grazia often publishes letters which say that a new 'convert' picked it up 'by mistake' but that it is now a weekly staple. Readers may not necessarily believe that this is an actual letter but it may be an amalgamation of a number of letters.
- Relaxation: Flicking through glossy magazines is a method of relaxing. Where and when readers do this is also a key feature of the relationship with a magazine. There is as well s physical component and relationship with a magazine.
- Entertainment: Amusement is provided in terms of funny stories, puzzles and quizzes, or pictures of celebrities in bizarre outfits.
- Escapism: Stories describe different lives, such as those of celebrities, or features of designer homes.

The Henley Centre also supposed that magazines engage with readers on a very personal level in four main ways: Trust, support, status and participation. Hereafter, as in the above examples, I will report them relatively to the fashion context.

### **Trust**

Readers have a close relationship with the magazine that they buy most often and the magazine can be seen as a trusted source of information. Most fashion magazines build on this concept of trust by delivering a combination of articles and fashion features which match the reader's needs: the magazine becomes a trusted friend.

### **Support**

Magazines reflect and support readers through the phases of their lives. Fashion and lifestyle magazines aimed at women who are of childbearing age have, for example, features on topics about the management of the balance between family and work life, clothes suitable for going back to a workplace, advice on returning to work, diet and exercise regimes, kids wear, décor for their bedrooms, storage ideas, child-friendly holiday destinations and holiday wardrobe staples. Readers might consult them, like a friend, in a time of change or crisis.

### **Status**

Lifestyle and fashion choices are strictly interrelated and are a fundamental part of the social status building for an individual. The magazine that provides the consumer with this kind of information also contribute to this idea of a status creation. The choice of magazine is a reflection of oneself. It is sufficient to compare two women on public transport: One reading Vogue and one reading one of the gossip weeklies: A significant difference between their social backgrounds can be observed.

## **Participation**

By choosing a certain magazine, readers are taking part in a community of readers who support charities, write e-mails and letters, join websites, social media accounts and read online blogs. Most magazines nowadays have an online version of the magazine; it is not a replacement for the glossy magazine (even if there are some debates about this point) but a valuable addition: For the consumer, it gives daily updates direct to the inbox, like a friend; for the magazine, the main benefit is that it enhance the brand status of the magazine for its loyal readers. In the light of the digital format use, It tend to become a two way conversation on a blog or social media such as Instagram or Facebook, not only by the possibility for the reader to like the posts, but also by interacting in the most various and unexpected ways that evolve very progressively i.e: Commenting, sending reactions on the stories of the official magazines accounts, participating in giveaways and other type of highly engaging contests.

## **6.4 THE MAIN TYPES OF MAGAZINES EXPLAINED**

### **6.4.1 Monthly and weekly magazines**

Monthly and weekly magazines do not compete with each other – they are used in different ways.

With the growth of the consumer 's response to and appetite for fast fashion, it is probably not surprising that circulation figures (even when aggregated) for weekly magazines are higher than circulation figures monthlies, with their longer lead times. Weeklies fill a niche by offering immediacy and monthlies are more suited to building brand awareness and long-term trends.

However, monthlies have had to play catch up in the age of social media. Weeklies inform the reader about the fashion trends of the moment, being more of a fashion shopping guide or prompt, and have fewer adverts which are image led. Their adverts are product led in contrast to monthlies, which have more space not only for adverts built on image but also for features about fashion leaders and insiders and catwalk collections for next season. Monthly magazines are aimed at the more fashion-forward consumer and tend to be kept for longer, almost as a reference.

In weekly magazines, women find advice on how to wear the look of now; monthlies, on the other hand, are for women who are more confident and can take an image, a theme, a mood or a style and

interpret it by themselves without a fashion dictat. Vogue is much more ‘fashion forward’ than a weekly like Grazia, which shows trends that are available to buy now. As mentioned already before, nowadays most monthly and weekly magazines, have a parallel online magazine, offering daily fragments of news and updates in the fashion world. They provide a virtual reminder of the magazine’s presence and sustain its brand awareness between issues. To date, these daily updates are free of charge.

#### **6.4.2 Weekend supplements**

Newspaper circulation is constating a drastic decline of readership in the last years and is therefore on a downward curve but weekend newspapers that feature style supplements are, on the contrary, showing some growth. This shows the tendency of the consumers to dedicate more time to read newspapers in their free of work time at the weekend (including fashion and lifestyle supplements) as daily news is diffused by radio, TV and, increasingly, the Internet. These supplements are the same as traditional magazines – they reflect the interests of the target market. There is a difference between the Financial Times ‘how to spend it’ supplement and the tabloids’ supplements. Although these are newspaper supplements, they share some of the characteristics of traditional magazines in that they tend to be glossy and are kept longer than the newspaper.

#### **6.4.3 Celebrity and gossip magazines**

Celebrity and gossip magazines have been the most successful types of magazines, in terms of circulation growth, in recent years. Reflecting a cultural obsession with celebrity and the subtleties of their lives, these magazines have an enormous market share. Fashion stories are mixed with celebrity stories. Advertising in celebrity magazines is aimed at the target market. Readers do not necessarily have the level of fashion education of typical Vogue readers, but they are still fashion conscious. Many up-market and luxury brands do not let celebrity and gossip magazines use their clothes for the PR purposes in fashion editorials. The top up-market brands tend to be shown on a red carpet with a celebrity wearing them, rather than in an overt advert or a product placement in this type of magazines.

#### **6.4.4 Teenage magazines**

Magazines aimed at teenager group are often considered to be independent from the main magazines but, nonetheless, are equally worth mentioning here as they can be part of a family of brands. Their main aim is to capture the brand awareness and loyalty of their consumers and then move them on through the other magazines in the stable as their lifestyle moves on. An example of this is Teen Vogue from the Condé Nast group. Teenagers’ needs and desires are somewhat different compared to the more mature audience of magazines. Teen magazines are perhaps even

more trusted than the main publications given the puberty timeframe during which their consumers are much vulnerable and influenceable. The subject of features, therefore, is specifically targeted to answer their needs in, for example, sexual matters (rather than asking adults or relying on friends, they trust a magazine for information). Beauty and body issues are an important part of such magazines. Editors of teen magazines take their responsibilities very seriously and have what can only be described as a 'carriageway' of the issues that all teenagers confront on an annual basis.

## **6.5 ADVERTISING COSTS, CIRCULATION AND CONTEXT**

Magazines, as stated before, reveal to be a trustworthy source of information for the consumers and as such it creates a strong bond with its readers. With this kind of a loyal relationship, readers tend to consider the advertising present in them less intrusive than in other types of media such as radio or television. The authority of a magazine can, therefore, seriously influence their fashion choices.

The advertising present in them is also subject to certain standards. Fashion magazines, are basically a form of leisure medium that needs to be calibrated in a way that corresponds to its primary function, that is to say entertain in a peculiar manner its target audience. The readers know which kind of content they want to see in their magazine of choice. They want, consequently, their needs to be respected and reflected. The advertising and other sorts of promotion such as PR non-paid features, are not an exception. The whole reputation and status of a magazine depends on the kind of advertising present in it. The fashion brands are at the heart of its main purpose: The one to introduce customers to the creative world of fashion products. Accordingly, the consumers of a magazine tend to build an emotional bond with these brands that can be translated in an immediate action in the present (purchase of a product) or simply to a mere awareness of the brand existence that however can be transformed into a purchase in the future.

The cost of the advertising depends fundamentally on two main factors: The position of it inside of the magazine (the context) and the circulation (the number of copies sold). The costs in the magazine are known under the term 'rate card'. The more people are exposed to the magazine (the higher circulation rate there is), the higher cost is charged to the brands. The more simplified way of seeing these costs can be that based on the analysis of the opportunities-to-see figures (sometimes known as OTS figures) that show essentially how many times the reader has been exposed to the advert. These figures can be easily found on the official websites of the magazines. Conversely, these numbers cannot be always entirely trusted due to the fact that magazines are quite often re-read or passed on to other people. In this light, it is estimated that it is read around 2.5 times.



The costs tend to be only approximate because there can be further arrangements with the advertiser if a longer contract is implemented. Magazines are also most of the times available to the advertising cost negotiation in the periods of reduced circulation, for instance, holidays represent a period with a significant fall in sales. An effective strategy to maintain stable numbers of circulation is that of a direct subscription that gives readers a good reduction in price and at the same time reward them with different discounts on products and gifts.

In general, the most expensive part to place an advert is the outside back cover (OBC). Strange as it can sound for the first time, this part is often exposed to the public when a reader carries the magazine rolling it in their hands to protect the inward part from any damage.

Generally, after the back page, the most expensive positions are (in descending order):

- The first double-page spread (FDPS) or inside the front cover (IFC) – the first thing to which a reader is exposed
- The first fifth (20%) where interest level is at its highest
- The first third (33%) commands the next highest price

A right-hand page (RHP) can add 5% to the cost, as our eye movement is left to right. The closer to an important feature or story, the more expensive the advertising. The final quarter or third of the magazine is less expensive to advertise in because it is where the reader begins to lose interest. However, magazine readers have been observed flicking through from the back when they return to peruse a magazine for a second time. This supports the theory of the cost of the back page being the highest but is not reflected in other adverts near the back. This may mean that advertising costs are not necessarily the reflection of the reader's behavior.

A PR feature can be considered as an equivalent type of a promotion activity to the advertising. Indeed, they tend to work in synergy in order to increase the value of the brands. Interestingly, this type of promotion can add 40% to the cost of any position in the magazine as it is seen by readers as a reliable and relevant information written by an expert in the field. In some cases, readers are not even aware of the feature nature. The word 'promotion' or 'advertorial' often appears in an unobtrusive position and font size.

As already mentioned, there is a clear relationship between the readers and the magazine in the context of product features and ads. It can be compared to a buyer of a company that must satisfy not his own tastes and wants but those of the target consumers. The same rule applies for the magazines that need to know and satisfy their readership desires.

The features that can range from fashion style advises, passing through fitness, lifestyle and beauty regimes to interior design ideas and quick cookery recipe, can make the readers truly believe that the magazine can be trusted as a very good friend and their relationship can even be considered interest-free to an untrained eye. This is a form of trust and loyalty that this kind of promotion technique tends to create in the consumers eye in order to acquire them on an emotional and psychological level. These kinds of features are a lot sought for by the brands because not only they are cost-free, but they can have an enormous impact on the consumers opinions. Their size and position are managed by internal PR professionals or external agencies.

Because the cost of advertising is calculated by circulation and context, the same figures can be used by companies to calculate how much the placement would have cost if it had been an actual advert. This is known as ‘advertising value equivalent’ (AVE) or ‘rate card value’ (RCV). The company can look at the position and context in which product placement has been inserted and calculate how much of the page has been taken up by the product placement. The page is divided into quarters and the cost of a whole page of advertising is divided by four. This gives companies a simple value for their coverage. However, there are a number of variables that companies could and should include into this calculation:

Front cover placement: no-one can advertise on the front cover of a magazine but because the front cover sells magazines this is a much more valuable variable – a Chiara Ferragni, Bella Hadid or Kendall Jenner cover can lift sales by a third.

- Position in the magazine: the first third is highly preferable for a brand.
- Position on the page: the center or top right of the page may be more valuable than the bottom left.
- The size of the image compared with others on the page (the larger the image, the more expensive).
- The reputation and prestige of the media channel. Being featured in the most renown and well-established magazines is the scope of every fashion brand.

The product placement should be as much reliable in the eyes of consumers as possible because it can enhance and increase the value of the product by 2.5%. times. Therefore, the companies are very keen to use this promotion activity because its value is 2.5 more worthwhile in terms efficiency and implies zero costs in production compared to an actual advertising campaign.

Usually, the sager step for the PR companies or the brand is to secure a whole page for the product placement in order to increase the chances of its visibility and impact.

In the film *The Devil wears Prada*, when viewing the clothes in preparation for a fashion shooting, the editor asks ‘Where are our sponsors?’ (The Americans call their advertisers ‘sponsors’.) This is a serious issue for magazines. Magazines do not make nearly enough money from the cover price to pay for the salaries, celebrity photographs, special reports, location shoot costs, photographers, hair and beauty stylists, and so on, that every issue requires. (The fees for celebrity photographers, such as Mario Testino and Patrick Demarchelier, are very high.) The cover price of a magazine is greatly sponsored by advertising revenues; magazines could not survive without advertisers. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that advertisers get some editorial coverage ‘in return’. This long-lasting and well-established relationship should be considered as an important clause of the existence of publishing fashion industry.

As already discussed, advertising and PR editorial promotional activities work in symbiosis to ensure a maximum influence on the target audience. In a single issue of a magazine, there is a careful balance between advertising and editorial in order to ensure a smooth and not invasive impact on the readership. Even so, these are long-term relationships and if a brand only advertises in alternate months, there are better chances that it will achieve some product placement in the following issues. Francesca Burns, a stylist at *Vogue* comments (Zarrella 2012): ‘At *i-D* you didn’t necessarily have to shoot all your advertisers but *Vogue* is big business and there are a lot of boxes to tick.’ (The Business of Fashion, 1 April 2012) This would seem to confirm the relationship between advertising revenue and editorial content.

Even if advertising as deduced previously plays a huge role within the fashion magazines, it is nonetheless worth mentioning that it can be partially or totally suppressed during certain periods of crisis. For example, during an economic recession, advertising is often one of the first budgets to be cut. There are a number of reasons for this, above all because it reveals extremely difficult for companies to evaluate the effectiveness of advertising. However, during previous recessions (in the late 1980s and early to mid-1990s), one area of the fashion communications business has always flourished and expanded: PR. This is due to its almost priceless nature and its hugely effective impact on the decision-making of the consumers even in the times of a recession when the advertising cannot be executed normally.

## 7 THE INTERNATIONAL FASHION MARKETING

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Living in a global and interconnected world gives the opportunity to the businesses to expand internationally with the aim to raise their development opportunities, growth and most importantly making more profits. Accordingly, brands willing to enter the global scene are faced with the challenges of adapting their offers to different types of customers with different ethnicities, cultural and social backgrounds. The domestic market is something that presents itself to be quite habitual for the companies; however, operating and defining a marketing strategy in a new and unfamiliar market can be relatively challenging especially regarding the communication area. Indeed, every foreign market should be thoroughly researched and analysed prior to any action and decision making. Another crucial aspect that needs to be particularly paid attention to is that of applying its own cultural specificities and tastes to other markets, also known under the name of ‘ethnocentricity’. This pattern can be very dangerous and can significantly affect the reputation of the business. The businesses can face, as well, problems such as language barriers, cultural differences, socio-economic and political context of the country. Therefore, the company’s main task is that of touching the base, and to determine the message and the brand’s image that they want to show of themselves. Indeed, it is very laborious and challenging to encode and to decode the brand’s message in another country. Intercultural studies have shown that there is significant difference in how people perceive individualism vs. collectivism, masculinity vs. femininity, tendency to avoid uncertainties, national or ethnic identity vs. global identity, religion and many other cultural factors (Müller and Gelbrich 2015).

### 7.1 OPERATING OUTSIDE THE DOMESTIC MARKET

As seen above, fashion companies are placing themselves on an international, global market arena, operating both in-store and online. Push factors are the reason why the companies start expanding over-seas and pull factors make them seek for new markets.

#### **Push factors**

Push factors are elements or conditions that make it difficult for companies to develop further in the domestic market. These factors can be linked to the increased domestic competition, falling profit margins, changes in consumer needs and desires, changing government regulations or pressure from institutional shareholders to look for higher returns through expansion to new markets. At a corporate level, overseas expansion may be sought for by the aspirations of a senior management team who intend to follow the competition or simply want to become an internationally recognized

brand. Market saturation happens when there is no further potential of growth in the market, or the possibility of boosting profits is limited. This may be a part of general market conditions or a declining format of a particular business. In this case, a brand has a store in every suitable domestic location and can see no further opportunities in the domestic market. This lack of opportunity may derive from a combination of factors over which the company has little control:

- Recession regulatory conditions such as, for example, planning consents
- Increasing corporation tax or the minimum wage
- Demographic influences, e.g. aging populations

### **Pull factors**

Pull factors, on the contrary, are linked to the attractiveness of overseas markets and not to the lack of possibilities in the domestic market. The foreign markets may seem more attractive for various reasons: e.g. to gain higher operating margins than in the domestic market as a result of lower levels of competition, less government regulation, a gap in the market or better supply chain conditions. Economic conditions may cause an overseas market to grow in wealth and consumer demand, as seen in Brazil, Russia, India and China (the BRIC nations) (Jiagui and Xiaojoing, 2010). In China, the widening of a rich middle class is boosting the demand for international fashion brands. Oftentimes, a new market may not present as much of regulatory barriers compared to a saturated one and in some cases will have a positive impact in terms of entry incentives. Moreover, some developing markets have a younger demographic, which can encourage the entry of modern fashion retailers. Indeed, there are several methods that can help to figure out how to match a brand to a suitable foreign market. However, the most relevant factors that will influence the choice are the companies' main corporate goals, the degree of fit between these objectives and the conditions which exist in the potential new markets and the company having the infrastructure (such as offices in the interested locations) needed to settle in the overseas markets. Ultimately, it must be noted that certain developed western markets may appear to be culturally similar and seem to be relatively easy to enter but may already be saturated.

## **7.2 INTERNATIONAL CONSUMER**

The purpose of targeting the consumers is to maximize both consumers and company's profit. Accordingly, in order to operate in today's challenging and globalized business environment, companies cannot ignore, as already discussed before, the differences that exist among different cultural groups. However, it must be noted that certain groups, the so-called 'homogenous' groups can in spite present some similarities and in this way companies may benefit and create global

advertising campaigns that satisfy at the same time more than one cultural group. This customer profiling can therefore be applied to different countries with the same 'type' of a customer. For instance, one of these profiles can be a middle-aged businessman who lives in one of a major city: New-York, London, Paris, Milan, Berlin, Tokyo, Shanghai or other Middle Eastern countries, wear a Brioni suit, Berluti shoes, a Rolex watch, Ralph Lauren underwear, Nike sportswear and Bulgari aftershave and carry a Paul Smith briefcase. Different aged groups of women can also build these homogenous groups in all the above-mentioned cities. The main difference among these groups is the culture of their nation. These cultural differences are directly related to the customer behavior and are thus fundamental for the companies to understand which promotional strategies to create for them. Global Blue ([www.global-blue.com](http://www.global-blue.com)), a tax-free shopping company that creates shopping guide experiences for all the main fashion cities of the world, launched a new publication called SHOP in spring 2011 in 26 countries simultaneously. Its content consists of one-third advertising and two-thirds editorial. It is both available in printed and digital formats and has a phone app to calculate tax refunds. Contributors are journalists and editors from all the main prestigious magazines. It has maps of shopping areas that show the location of every store and gives translations (for example, the London guide has Chinese, Russian and Arabic translations).

### 7.3 INTERNATIONAL SEGMENTATION CHALLENGES: CASE EXAMPLES

#### **Example geography:**

In Russia, the segmentation criteria of geography is a challenge: There are 11 time zones and the infrastructure for 'next-day-delivery' across 17,098,242 sq km of land can pose some issues. More than half of international product purchases derive from main cities such as Moscow and St Petersburg but only 25 per cent of all citizens use the internet for shopping.

#### **Example language:**

In terms of language, slogans like 'Because you're worth it', which was translated to 'Ты этого достоин' / 'Вы этого достойны' in Russia, have provoked all kinds of reactions from stupefaction to entertainment and more radical criticism by the Church's high patriarch, but in any case, did not have the intended effect. This can be partly linked to the fact that in Russian, the word itself means 'virtue', 'honour', 'nobleness' or 'dignity' and as such means the worth of a human. However, the virtue of a human being is such a deep philosophical, religious and ethical topic and this advertisement had the potential of degrading the worth of a human soul by comparing it to that of a bottle of cosmetics. So instead of reading 'you should have the best beauty cream' (intended message by the western brand) it is decoded as: 'You are a terrible person and worth no more than a

jar of cream'. Interestingly, when Russian consumers who understand some English realized that a brand has translated a slogan or catch-phrase literally without making the effort to find out about the Russian language or culture, they right away categorized the brand as ignorant and bad. The risk of losing reputation is therefore really high.

Second example language:

In China, the language is based on the system of logograms rather than sounds (phonetical language) and each Chinese character represents a monosyllabic Chinese word or morpheme and there are more than 20,000 characters in a Chinese dictionary. The CCPIT Patent and Trademark Law Office explains the challenges for brands expanding into China:

When entering the Chinese market, a foreign company, besides application for the registration of its Latin trademark in China, needs to design the corresponding Chinese trademark and apply for its registration [...] Due to the complexity of Chinese language, many foreign companies may have doubts in translating their Latin trademarks into corresponding Chinese trademarks and protecting the Chinese trademarks.

(Wang, 2016)

Western brands have the choice of either translating the brand name into Chinese (this keeps the meaning of the brand name), using transliteration (stays close to original phonetic pronunciation but does not necessarily keep the meaning) or using their western name and logo in the hope that it will gain recognition. The best version is when brands create a new brand name which sounds like the original and maintains the original meaning (Müller and Gelbrich, 2015). For example, in terms of favorable transliteration, 'Armani' has become '阿玛尼' ('A MA NI'), 'Chanel' was changed to '香奈儿' ('XIANG NAI ER'), and 'Lancome' to '兰蔻' ('LAN KOU'). 'All the selected Chinese characters are related to beauty, elegance, poetry, flowers, perfume, etc., similar to the Latin trademarks in pronunciation, and easy to read. At the same time, these characters, as a whole, are not ready words or phrases with specific meaning in the dictionary' (Wang, 2016).

Mercedes Benz is a positive example of a company which achieved the creation of a brand name with a satisfactory meaning, sound and phonetical length when it translated its name to 'ben-chi' (奔驰). This quite suitably means to gallop (or run faster) and thus offers a near-literal translation of the brand and the image it wants to convey. However, before the creation of 'Ben-chi' it allegedly had a translation glitch when it used 'ben-si', which has a negative and macabre connotation. Moreover, the Chinese culture dates back to nearly 4000 years and still pervades the modern-day

citizens. This is obvious from the mixed meaning ascribed in order to conform with tradition and at the same time to become more 'Western'. Companies which understand these language related specificities have significantly more possibilities to gain the sympathy and the trust of the Chinese customers.

### **Example cultural heritage:**

This case dates back to 1990s when the first McDonald's opened in St Petersburg: Locals interpreted the choice of location as disrespectful in regards to their cultural heritage. McDonald's chose to open the restaurant in a historical building on the famous Nevsky Prospekt, a street which has been featured in classic literature and can be compared to the Champs Elysées in Paris and is highly appreciated by the inhabitants of the city due to the pre-revolutionary architectural masterpieces (most are monuments). The fast-food restaurant was implemented at the place of the historical restaurant 'Café du Nord'. All the



**Fig 7.1** Russian Communists protest against the opening of the first 'McDonald's' in St. Petersburg, 1996 (Source [www.reddit.com](http://www.reddit.com))

residents very profoundly offended by the American brutal intervention who stripped out all the Art Deco interior decorations and behaved tactless and without doing any cultural research to build at any cost their venue (The café has reopened and works again under the same name: Café du Nord 1834.) Furthermore, the residents got quite serious about the matter: According to Pravda newspaper, in 1998, a small bomb exploded at an unfinished McDonald's restaurant in St Petersburg because the restaurant's construction was opposed by residents of buildings that were razed to make way for it (Pravda, 2007). 20 years later, a political friction is considered to have



been the cause for the shutdown of ten McDonald's restaurants in the summer of 2014 in Russia, backed by the public health watchdog Rospotrebnadzor who found problems with sanitary violations. Nowadays, following the unfolding of the full-scale war invasion by Russia, McDonald's has definitely closed its venues across all Russian territory.

#### **7.4 GLOBAL MARKETING STRATEGIES**

First of all, working within unfamiliar territories and unpredictable customer feedback implicates an extension of the communication model 'Coding and Decoding of Messages' to several steps and a response loop, thus turning a one-way communication model into a two-way communication model. There may be detected some differences when comparing this newly forged model to its predecessor one of 'coding and decoding': The codes are not only verbal and visual codes but also promotion activities implemented by the brand. This can be the already mentioned: PR, advertising, retail visual merchandising as well as different brand international expansion strategies that differentiate the ways in which products are presented in different countries and in different retail channels where it is sold. This is why the point-of-sale is added to the channels in step 3. After the consumer has decoded the message and the meaning of the intended message has appeared in his mind a vital step follows which is the response of the consumer to the said message. On international arena, this response is so crucial for a brand to 'make it or break it'. In the markets which are already known to the brand, the worst that can happen is that a consumer not fully understands the message and therefore will show a disinterest. In the contrary, as it was showed in the last examples, in unfamiliar markets the consumer might be totally repelled or even bewildered by a brand and therefore, can potentially refuse to accept it. Consequently, the consumer's opinion of the brand must be treated in a serious way and it must scrupulously study the expected and the given response of the target audience. This model based on the comparison of the expected response to the intended response was initially used in the aviation industry, where communication is vital in order to conduct a successful and safe flight operation. For instance, in the cockpit there are constant verbal exchanges between the pilot and co-pilot, as well as air traffic control. In order to ensure that the intended message is received and understood properly and in the correct way a system of repetition, verification and control is employed. Frequently, when aviation accidents occurred and the flight deck recording was later examined, there was miscommunication present and thus a human factor responsible for a less than desirable event. According to Airbus, a survey of NASA found 80 per cent of all accidents to have happened due to incorrect communication with 45 per cent attributed to listening (Airbus, 2004). For this reason, the so-called Cockpit and Crew Resource Management is a recurrent training factor for aviation professionals. All businesses on the

ground can learn from aviation by not only listening to responses from their consumers but also expecting that the response might not be the intended one. In terms of segmentation, a different approach is also needed for an international market: Wind and Douglas (2011) have suggested that international markets need to be segmented in two steps: First the country in terms of the macro environment has to be evaluated and then the customer characteristics. In detail, the recommended segmentation criteria of the macro environment include:

- General country characteristics
- Geographic location
- Demography
- Level of socioeconomic development
- Cultural characteristics
- Political factors
- Economic and legal constraints
- Market conditions
- Product bound culture and lifestyle characteristics

The customer characteristics are drawn on the same geo-commercial marketing criteria as the segmentation mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, including demographics, psychographics and lifestyle data.

## **7.5 THE PROSPECTS OF INTERNATIONAL MARKETS**

International markets can be seen by the companies as something both challenging and intriguing at the same time. However, the future forecasts are unanimous on one thing: The EU and USA are mostly saturated markets with little growth perspectives. But in spite of this, there is a constant growth in the so called 'BRIC' countries: Brazil, Russia, India, China. And according to Euromonitor (2013), by 2023, China will displace USA and Germany respectively making the world's largest economies China, USA, India and Japan (Russia excluded due to the current war with Ukraine).

### **1. China**

This country has been growing steadily ever since the Special Economic Zones were established from 1980. China's strengths are strong and cheap labor force, an increasing demand for high-quality goods and fashion as well as many self-made millionaires who love luxury. In fact,

nowadays China not only produces for export but also for its domestic consumption with its always higher demands by customers than before. China also has the world's largest population.

## 2. USA

The USA was and remains one of the world's leading economies, however due to the recession period in 2007 it has lost its positions on the international scene. With the presidency of Donald Trump from 2017 to 2021, the USA economy has inexorably continued to decline, including a decreasing middleclass, shrinking production and lower demand.

## 3. India

India has a large population and a growing and strong workforce. Consumers are interested in the traditional Indian brands but also, lately, in western goods, making it a profitable market. Indian consumers have a long-established relationship with the concept of luxury and western luxury brands are aware of this and therefore opening stand-alone boutiques as well as luxury shopping malls.

## 4. Japan

Japan faces a serious problem with its demographics due to the fact that the country sees the oldest population growing and the birth rate declining. Abenomics<sup>4</sup> policies (アベノミク Abenomikusu) have not succeeded to give Japan the intended economic boost, in spite Japan possesses and can be proud of one of the highly advanced technological innovation and cutting-edge engineering. Indeed, Japan was rated fourth most innovative country by Bloomberg in 2016. Japanese are known to be refined fashionistas and are particularly interested in high-quality and luxury designer clothes. However, this booming appetite for luxury has significantly decreased since the 1980s.

## 5. Russia

Russia's economic power is based on its own natural resources, such as oil, gas and precious metals (Alrosa is the world's largest diamond mining company), possessing more than 30 per cent of the world's natural resources. It was, as well ranked multiple times among the most innovative countries on different international business journals. Moreover, it has a large and increasing number of wealthy people, with the highest concentration in its capital: Moscow. On the other

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<sup>4</sup> The economic policies implemented by the Government of Japan led by the Liberal Democratic Party since the December 2012 general election.

hand, due to the war with Ukraine this situation is rapidly changing and the majority of the Western fashion and luxury brands have withdrawn their businesses for an indefinite period of time.

## 6. South Korea

South Korea is developing quickly in terms of economy, technology and cultural industry, putting itself into high global rankings in all three categories (i.e the emerging concepts becoming viral of K-Pop, KBeauty and K-Drama). In spite of the fact that, Korea exports its own beauty, fashion, music and popculture brands – also known under the term ‘Hallyu’, there is as well a growing demand for the western brands, especially, from the younger generations. Moreover, following the Covid-19 pandemic, the Korean consumers have reviewed their shopping habits by spending more on the fashion goods inside the country than abroad. South Korea accounts for 5 to 6 per cent of total personal luxury goods spending worldwide, according to Morgan Stanley analyst Edouard Aubin, which is slightly more than the French market, the fashion cradle. Therefore, in order to remain relevant and not to lose their influence, western fashion luxury houses are trying to blend in within the country by staging more events, fashion shows and by endorsing more with the local celebrities. For instance, French house Dior held its F/W 2022 collection runway show in Seoul this past April. Dior chairman and CEO Pietro Beccari said in an interview held ahead of the show for the Vogue Business: ‘We wanted to thank our Korean audience; Korea is one of the countries with the highest growth potential, and it’s also a trendsetting country — we have seen in cinema and the Oscar award they won, with Squid Game, Kpop. Blackpink and BTS are unbelievable.’

Furthermore, another type of marketplace is expanding rapidly: the Ecommerce. Indeed, with the rise of the Covid pandemic, there has been a shift in the way of how and where people shop. This change has persisted even after the pandemic climax and even with the reopening of brick-and-mortar stores. According to an equity analyst, Brian Nowak, covering the U.S, internet industry e-commerce will reach 27% of retail sales by 2026 and he also states that the E-commerce has not reached yet its ceiling. Accordingly, this growth is to be considered as permanent in the customers shopping habits. Indeed, Morgan Stanley’s industry model, along with other data, demonstrate that E-commerce will continue to gain popularity, even in countries where online shopping is already sought-after. China has now become the world’s largest internet market with 1,020 million users, followed by India with 658 million users and then the USA with its 658 million users. This shows a huge potential for future development of E-commerce as nearly 50 per cent of the global population can likely become internet users and consequently future consumers of digital global markets. A successful marketing strategy is vital for the companies to gain trust of the customers and the key to achieve it is to adapt quickly in different environments. As Euromonitor mentioned

in 2015: ‘As in all emerging markets, success is based on knowledge – an understanding of the market, but also the economy, consumers, competitors and suppliers. Companies which have been successful in China have managed’. The report stresses the different perspectives, tastes and desires of consumers in the east to that of consumers in the north, with coastal cities again being different to those inland (Booumphrey, 2015).

## 7.6 DEVELOPING AND DEVELOPED MARKETS

Companies have to make a decision whether to enter markets which are developing but which may not have an infrastructure that corresponds to the one in the domestic market. Eastern European markets can appear to be culturally similar regarding the consumer needs, desires and fashion tastes, which can facilitate the market entry, but every market has its unique characteristics and cultural differences must be paid attention to. It reveals to be vital while the company begins to plan its communication strategy which needs necessarily to include cultural peculiarities and nuances. In addition, nowadays companies need to create communication and marketing strategies that even transcend culture or are precisely developed to meet the needs of specific target groups in terms of ethical and societal norms. Middle and Far Eastern markets are completely culturally different to western markets and the company implementation will require adaptation of communication strategies in order to adhere to local practices and cultural specificities. One of the things that these potential markets have in common is their cultural difference and distance from the west. When it comes to entering, operating and communicating in these countries, adaptations have to be made to many parts of the marketing mix to remain relevant in the local market:

- Product aspects: Differences in sizing, colors and climate specificities.
- Price: Differences in import duties or taxes.
- Place: Retailers may operate in shopping malls and department stores.
- Promotion: For certain markets, a standardized campaign can be applied – if a global campaign is used, some small changes will still be made by the brand.

One of the main ways to overcome these cultural differences is by partnering with a local company. This can be absolutely crucial in some countries. More generally, fashion companies looking to internationalize should keep in mind the 5Cs:

- Customer: Lifestyle, typical fashion apparel.
- Culture: Adaptations of products and their communication strategy in the context of local media.

- Competition: Businesses already established in the market and the products they offer, especially related to their adaptation strategies.
- Constraints: the regulatory frameworks related to the ownership, implementation of the business activity, management and marketing strategies of the fashion brand.

Warmer or colder climates can often be used in order to test new collections that can be more or less fitted for those countries and can help with company's next management decisions. For instance, Fred Perry produced warmer jackets for the Russian market, which they then introduced to the UK, EU and US market and Mark & Spencer tested their summer ranges in the Middle Eastern countries before launching them in the Western markets. When Topshop first expanded into Australia, they did this by 'testing the market' using a concession in a Sydney boutique called INCU; however, it was soon discovered that they did not take into account the climate conditions and were sending the wrong season's items. Later, to avoid such flaws, Topshop created an international division in the UK head office to more precisely target the consumers in these culturally and geographically distant countries. Thus, franchise operations are a very used strategy for western brands entering Middle and Far Eastern markets. Indeed, the overseas partner takes all the risks and also benefits of establishing the brand in the new market by helping the retailer to adapt the products to the local consumers, culture, competition, climate and regulatory constraints.

## **7.7 STANDARDISATION AND ADAPTATION IN INTERNATIONAL FASHION MARKETING STRATEGY**

If every aspect of the marketing mix is applied for every market in which a company operates, the company is adopting a 'standardization' strategy. Complete standardization means producing the same products and selling them at the same prices in identical stores using the same marketing strategy. The main benefit of standardization is economies of scale – it is much cheaper per item to produce a large number of identical items, either in form of products for sale or marketing materials.

### **Standardisation: Levi's Iconic denim brand**

Levi's is renowned for its original communications campaigns. In the late 1980s and early 1990s at the time that it was internationalizing across Europe, Levi's used the international language of classic youth and US soul music tracks with visuals of the minutiae of US life to communicate its classic brand 501. The adverts were shown across Europe concomitantly and created such demand that 501s sold out. As already mentioned in Chapter 2, the first and most well-known of these adverts was 'Launderette' using the song 'Heard it through the grapevine' originally sung by

Marvin Gaye. Today these classic adverts are viewed regularly on YouTube. It is worthwhile to mention that Levi's considered it too indecorous (self-regulation) to show Nick Kamen (then an unknown model) undress to a pair of Y-front underpants on terrestrial TV screens across Europe so they were replaced with boxer shorts which were a revolution in men's underwear. Indeed, Calvin Klein built its brand on them. In August 2011, Levi's launched its first truly global campaign using the social media network Facebook, which was followed by cinema, print and outdoor media. Global chief marketing officer Rebecca Van Dyck said that across 19 countries 'people can share it, they can talk about it' and 'it's extremely exciting to have one voice, one message and it seems like the right thing to do because our consumer is global'.

### **Adaptation: H&M**

H&M can be viewed as a global brand as it operates from around 2200 stores in over 40 countries. H&M has collaborated with several high-profile designers and celebrities over the years. Each of the collaborations (with Lagerfeld, Madonna, Comme des Garçons, Versace and, more recently, David Beckham) were used as a marketing strategy to launch to the designer or celebrity home market. The pages of the official web site are adapted for each individual market. This is most noticeable for markets such as Saudi Arabia, where the clothes shown are very conservative and modest. Moreover, H&M TV features a number of short films with local designers, for example, Lulu Han who is a designer in Shanghai, taking the H&M crew around the local attractions. Brazilian model Gisele Bündchen's Spring–Summer 2011 campaign for H&M was a global standardized campaign and was launched simultaneously with H&M's entry into Brazil. However, because of external pressure, this campaign was then adapted for the Middle Eastern market by

using Photoshop. A vest was inserted to the image for the Middle East, to cover exposed female body (see the Figure 7.2)



**Fig 7.2** Gisele Bündchen is subjected to to the airbrush for the H&M campaign in Dubai (Source [www.dailymail.co.uk](http://www.dailymail.co.uk))

This adaptation technique, therefore, reveals to be a profitable strategy, using the same celebrity endorsement and the same picture for different countries at the same time.

## 7.8 INTERNATIONAL REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS

Governments in all countries control communications, to a greater or lesser extent: What is aloud and not to show and talk about in the advertising campaigns. These controls may be in form of laws or regulations. In the UK, for example, the Advertising Standards Authority states that all advertising must be legal, decent, honest and truthful. On the other hand, the Chinese government censors Internet content. Most countries have adopted some form of self-regulation except for those countries which are to a great controlled by religious laws or where dictatorships and communist regimes persist. These regulatory frameworks require some kind of adaptation to shape the communication campaigns for global and pan-European fashion brands. Each market needs to be analysed and studied singularly and presuppositions should be avoided. Most of the countries have in place a regulatory framework that outlaws fraudulent or misleading advertising, sometimes called the ‘hard’ issues (Copley, 2004). The major cultural differences which have an impact on fashion retailers entering culturally diverse markets are sometimes called ‘soft’ issues, however they are in most cases equally important.



## **Religion**

The use of religious symbols and their creative treatment are delicate in many markets. For example, Benetton's use of two nuns kissing caused fury in Catholic countries. Islamic law has very strict regulations on the use of the female body in any type of communication including advertising and in retail visual merchandising.

## **Representation of women and children**

The objectification of women is a seriously handled issue in several countries and therefore it can provoke the withdrawal of an advertisement from the market. Yet, in some countries, such as France, the use of the naked woman is still largely tolerated. On the other hand, advertising involving children or targeted at children audience is prohibited in some countries, for example, in Sweden.

## **Language**

In France, as an attempt to maintain the integrity of the French language, advertising has to be translated. The NEXT company strap line 'bringing fabric to life' was translated in a literal way into 'resuscitating dead material', which was not exactly the image the company wanted to showcase about itself. Another example would be the brand French Connection that used the fuck logo and strap line and thus was criticized in several foreign markets. The criticism was probably one of the causes that made this company relaunch in a lot of the international markets it was penetrating, thanks to the fact that it was selling thousands of T-shirts with the fuck slogan in the home market.

## **Taboos and customs**

As part of religious limitations, certain countries have taboos which would not be immediately evident to some fashion marketing teams. They can include the use of sacred symbols (cows and crucifixes) or unclean animals (pigs) in either the product or the communication strategy. For instance, Nike once unintentionally used the Arabic symbol for Allah on a running shoe, creating a scandal in more than one sense because it used, as well, its name on the feet that is seen as highly discrediting, offensive and defaming. In Thailand, showing the soles of the feet is considered highly offensive. This would affect the majority of the Western foot-wear companies clueless about this custom.

## **7.8 Domestic multi-ethnic marketing**

In today's globalized and multi-cultural society there is a need to review not only business practices for different cultural specificities across the globe but as well to consider its own country as a modern and ethnically diverse place. Accordingly, ethnic marketing is the model of marketing that tries to fulfil this void. Indeed, this marketing strategy aims to address the needs and to respect the values in a fair and responsible way by adopting the language and other cultural peculiarities of these ethnic groups. For instance, this technique is applied to meet the needs of African American groups in the US or to be more specific, brands such as Khushbu Fashions, a UK based fashion company which sells Indian and Pakistani fashion online. Ethnic marketing is well developed in the USA and the UK, but it is in its early stages in continental Europe. Indeed, this type of marketing reveals to be a highly profitable activity, especially, in the countries with highest rates of different ethnicity residents. In Germany about 20 per cent of population stems from another country and ethnic marketing is in expansion, on the other hand there are country with small percentages of inhabitants with different cultural background: for instance, Japan where only 2% of population are foreigners. According to the Justice Ministry, the largest groups of non-Japanese nationalities are Chinese, with 667, 000 people, accounting for almost 30% of foreign residents in Japan, followed by 375, 000 South Koreans and 321, 000 Vietnamese people.

## **8 THE FUTURE OF FASHION MARKETING: TRENDS AND OPPORTUNITIES**

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This thesis has for its main goal to outline the main dynamics behind the fashion marketing strategy and this conclusive chapter will try to indicate the current dominating trends and their possible developments in the future as well as their rotation nature. Although, there have been a lot of talk about the demise of traditional tools in favor of digital marketing this does not have to be considered as one and only truth. Whereas it cannot be denied that over the last past years there has been a huge disruption of digital technologies, the traditional media still occupies a predominant role in the communication landscape. In fact, companies still rely strongly on its authoritative dominance and cannot renounce it completely. What has truly changed is the internal development processes of these media channels. Indeed, they cannot deny the huge impact inflicted by the outbreak of the new technologies and consequently are obliged to adopt their formats to stay relevant and up to date to satisfy the current needs of the market. However, this modernization is not the only one point that needed to be adjusted to operate efficiently in the actual complex and intricate context. As a matter of fact, it is not anymore possible to succeed by working on a separate level. Businesses are now more than ever united to work in synergy. This applies with no exception for this industry. The concept of marketing itself wants to build a cohesive and collaborative

strategy build on different tools that can create a smooth and seamless experience to satisfy to the maximum the clientele of a particular business. Therefore, all the tools discussed before cannot function anymore on separately, but instead are diligently linked to each other and mixed together to forge an unrivalled multi and omni-channel experience that is meant to engage the target consumers during different steps and on multiple levels of the customer journey.

## **8.1 THE CHANGING MEDIA LANDSCAPE**

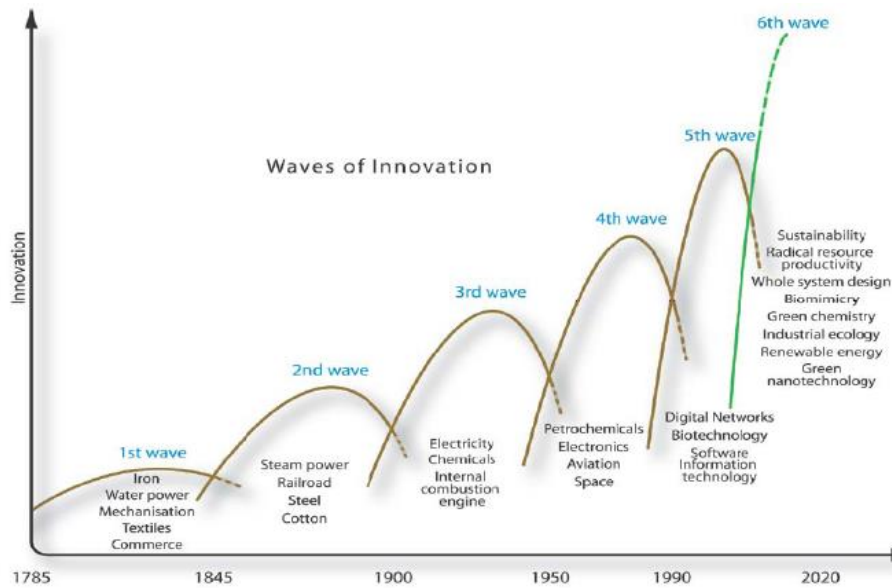
Traditional fashion media tools, as mentioned above, are under the threat to become obsolete and irrelevant in an ever-changing landscape of fashion communications. Consequently, they are constantly upgraded and supervised by the marketing experts in order to fit properly in the actual market. Thus, they are moving towards a digital continuum and assume new shapes. Accordingly, there has been a significant cut on investments in traditional media advertising such as radio and satellite TV. However, since the new ways of communicating have entered the scene there has been a progressive amalgamation with the existing tools. As a result, the social media platforms have become a perfect field for this transformation and have undertaken several forms encompassing different media tools. For instance, social networks such as Facebook or Instagram have become perfect platforms for fashion promotion and marketing activities. In fact, nowadays they are not anymore simple social networks as they used to be in the past, but instead, a complex media tool where different media formats co-exist and influence hugely public opinion. Instagram is considered as the most used social media in the fashion industry as it combines image-based content with the text one and recently has evolved even further by including video-content similarly to TikTok. This wide variety of possible formats is at the core of its success and allows both fashion brands and press to strive and flourish by delivering the most sophisticated content for their audiences and customers. The budgets for this type of content is often considered as a ‘grey area’ as it can largely vary and depend on numerous factors. Moreover, Instagram is not only a platform used for promotion and advertising, but is now allowing brands to link their products in order to directly sell their items from the app. This latter function makes this application a perfect marketing platform that includes all the funnel steps from the awareness to the action. In that light, such applications are seen as full of potential and therefore are considered by marketers as the future of this industry.

## **8.2 THE FASHION CAROUSEL**

The ‘fashion carousel’ is a symbolic representation of the fashion system that works in a circular way by reusing and reinterpreting ideas from the past. This ‘carousel’ consists of the utmost

different parts such as design, production, technological process, economics, marketing, communications and even politics which all contribute to the functioning of it. Every era had recognizable and distinguishable fashion trends that we can associate to it. Indeed, the trends tend to return in contemporary collections and become again relevant in the modern times. For example, fashion pieces such as shoulder pads and the materials of which they were made, were used differently in the last 2000 years: They were part of a Roman Centurion's dress, later appearing in medieval armor suits for men, European military coats at the end of the seventeenth century featured external shoulder pads called epaulettes. In the late 1800s American football players received shoulder padding as protection from injury. In the 1930s they were introduced into womenswear and later in the 1980s became the silhouette of the power suit for women. Yet again in 2009, Olivier Rousteing presented a collection for Balmain which emphasized the shoulders. Most likely, we will see the shoulder pads in fashion over and over again. Miniskirts are another interesting type of clothing, which, throughout history, transferred from men to women, making itself prominent in the twentieth century, so much so that a 'Hemline Index' was created, establishing a connection between the fluctuating length of a hemline and political, economic and social events. These two examples about the trends must not be seen as a deviation of the main topic, instead I made them to fully disclose the concept of fashion rotation. Indeed, the fashion trends are strongly correlated to social events, politics and even law and often coincide with the economic business cycles. There are different theories on the cyclical nature of business trends and the duration of a cycle, ranging from a few years to several decades. The following economists indicated waves and cycles of varying lengths: Kondratiev (54 years), Kuznets (18 years), Juglar (9 years), and Kitchin (about 4 years) and finally the Austrian economist Joseph Schumpeter, who later in his life became a professor at Harvard University, took all these theories and mixed them into one, bringing the theory by Kondratiev to the attention of the western world. The original 'Kondratiev Waves' (sometimes called K-waves or Supercycles, sometimes spelled Kondratieff) is a theory formulated by the Russian scientist Nikolai Kondratiev in the early twentieth century in Russia. A Kondratiev Wave is a long-term economic cycle in a capitalist economy, believed to result from technological innovation and produce a long period of prosperity during the expansion phase, but at a certain point it stops during a stagnation phase and definitely shuts down during a recession. This Cycle or Wave would last between four to six decades on average. Even though, modern economists have contradictive opinions on whether this theory is accurate and acceptable, the ones who recognize its validity consider the influence of such waves which are all directly connected to innovation and social change. Five distinct Kondratiev waves have been acknowledged since its invention with discussions pointing towards an imminent sixth one (Kenton,

2018). These waves are strictly connected to the developments and consequences of the industrial



**Figure 7.1** Waves of innovation: the Kondratiev Cycles (Source [www.researchgate.net](http://www.researchgate.net))

revolution. The industrial revolution has brought an intensive acceleration of the goods in mass production mode. Fashion goods were an enormous part of this disruptive process, and it unfolded in parallel with the first Kondratiev Wave. The technological advancements of railways and electricity helped to diffuse advertising and public relations, whilst petrochemicals and the automotive industries accelerated and promoted a global production and consumption of fashion en masse. Modern promotion and consumption practices are connected to the fifth Kondratiev Wave with the rise of digital technology and electronic devices. Ultimately, current innovations in medicine and health fields as well as biotech including studies of neuroscience, Artificial Intelligence and genes which are connected to the latest trends in the fashion industry are as well a consequence of the fifth Kondratiev wave.

### 8.3 TREND FORECASTING

The term trend forecasting designates every activity conducted by certain agencies or companies aimed at discovering arising fashion tendencies for the upcoming seasons. These companies operate to satisfy the needs of fashion businesses, particularly the designers and marketers who are constantly in search of new ideas and inspiration for the next collections. This practice is not something new, in fact, already back to the Industrial Revolution it was used to predict and fix colors and style trends. In the first years of twentieth century, France was looked at as the leader trend-setter by the rest of the world with its huge and very skilled production of colors and textiles. In the coming years, USA entered the market by founding their own Textile Color Card Association

of the USA (TCCA) that dictated the trending colors and fabrics to the US market fashion brands and shops. By 1930 the TCCA played a dominant role in defining the colors and their denominations for all kinds of fashion goods as well as government related items such as uniforms, ribbons, medals, and flags. By 1950, the international companies were showing their interest at subscribing to TCCA membership. This expansion led to the creation of industry specific trends and color books sponsored by those industries and direct consulting to individual companies (Holland and Jones, 2017). In Europe, from the 1960s onwards, agencies such as Promostyl, Nelly Rodi and Li Edelkoort (Trend Union) emerged, offering color, trend and visual forecast in colorful and often eccentric books. Further agencies developed in the following years, such as WGSN (Worth Global Style Network) in the late 1990s and Trendstop and Stylus after 2000. All these agencies operate internationally and have their offices around the world. Textile fairs and exhibitions such as Premiere Vision, Pitti Filati and Techtexil also became authorities on trends and now help the fashion industry to prepare for the upcoming seasons by giving insights into the raw material trends which are then transformed into clothes. Nonetheless, critics have indicated that giant WGSN and its trend predictions are so influential, that they forecast and predict textile trends several years in advance, influencing textile manufacturers. This in theory means that any fashion brand is selecting materials which were dictated by WGSN (Seto, 2017). WGSN is indeed a very powerful and strong authority in trend spotting and trend forecast. It was established by brothers Julian and Marc Worth in London in 1998, growing exponentially and changing owners to parent company Ascential in 2005. The agency (like most of the modern trend forecasting agencies) looks at a broad range of influences on the fashion industry, such as fabrics, colors, fashion, catwalks, lifestyle, interiors, beauty industry, marketing, consumer behavior, retail visual merchandising and innovation. Trend forecasting nowadays has for its task to be updated about the socio-economic context, science and technology advancements, politics and consumer behavior at the same time because finally, fashion is a catalyst for all of these phenomena. Therefore, these predictions are useful not only to pre-view the fashion related developments but more broadly to take a grasp of what can be the more all-encompassing events in the future.

#### **8.4 EXISTING TRENDS**

Advancements in spheres including neuroscience and machine learning, emotions and curation, Gen Z & Gen Alpha, emerging markets and globalization, inclusivity and sustainability are notably the most relevant and latest trends that fashion brands should consider and have knowledge of. Thus, it is crucial for fashion businesses to follow their fast developments in order to not being left behind and to include them properly in their practices following an ethical approach. In the following

paragraphs I will try to give the definitions to the most important of them and try to link them to the context of fashion industry.

### **Neuroscience and machine learning**

Neuroscience is a modern science that studies nervous system and brain and how it functions. This science might touch areas that can include marketing, emotional sphere of the brain, mood, memory and impulses of the human. Machine learning is a modern science which develops artificial intelligence (AI) and machines which can support, copy or even rival human intelligence by gathering and analysing data in order to make decisions. According to Amit Sharma (2016) retailers would be better off if they started thinking more like tech companies, using AI and machine learning not just to predict how to stock stores and manage staff shifts, but also to dynamically recommend products and set prices that appeal to individual consumers. Areas that this science might serve includes marketing, retail and online advertising. Both have been quickly entering the world of marketing and some brands such as Zara, Rigby & Peller, Prada, Burberry and Ralph Lauren have introduced AI into their retail environments and merchandising practices as well as advertising. It is foreseeable that more fashion companies will integrate AI, changing the traditional way consumers interact with brands.

### **Emotions and curation**

Neuroscience has demonstrated that humans are guided by emotions and most of the decisions that they make are based on them rather than the rational parts of our brain. Marketers are therefore at the same time inspired and driven by these neuromarketing studies and try to tap into consumers' emotional sphere. Emotionally imbued brand communications mean turning them into a powerful tool that can engage the viewer to such an extent that he or she feels pushed to share the advert on the the social media channels, thus turning the communications into a viral phenomenon. Emotions also play a big part in the need for curated spaces: Concept stores, pop-up stores or curated online selections with the good use of images, texts and graphics can significantly enhance the shopping experience both offline and online. There is a true need for spaces that let people distract from a fast-paced lifestyle and these are paradoxically shops. One of the main tools through which companies operate is that of visual merchandising that can be more broadly defined under the term of 'curation'. The definition of curation is 'the selection and care of objects to be shown in a museum or to form part of a collection of art, an exhibition', as stated by the Cambridge Dictionary (2019) and it has been a common practice in museums but over the last decades it has been applied to marketing and retail as well as online market spaces. Offline, consumers enter department stores and flagship stores like a museum, experiencing a carefully selected display of objects, often

interactive. Concept stores such as 10 Corso Como, the now closed Colette or Dover Street Market achieved a fusion of cultural space, commerce and exhibition space, setting trends in what is 'cool'. Online websites are attempting to deliver the same kind of experience. According to Elliot van Buskirk (2010), in online spaces consumers find themselves in curated environments such as Spotify which curates music, Facebook that curates the web or news websites which curate the news. This trend will most likely develop in other virtual realities in order to always enhance a brand experience.

### **Gen Z and Alpha**

Following the Millennials, Generation Z was born between 1995 and 2009 whilst the even younger Generation Alpha was born after 2010. Both are absolute digital natives (with modern children sitting in their buggies playing on smartphones), they are very useful targets to marketers who are already investigating those two demographic groups in order to understand how they can sell to them. These youngsters are a global and international as they were recently born in strong globalized markets. Indeed, they are highly conscious about the latest technological and science developments such as Artificial Intelligence, neuromarketing and sustainability issues and therefore represent both quite a challenging and at the same time interesting target segment for the brand. Brands are already trying to analyse and understand their future consumers who are transitioning from childhood to adulthood. Finally, these young consumers will be as well part of the emerging economies which offer great opportunities but also challenges for brands.

### **Inclusivity**

According to the Cambridge Dictionary (2019), Inclusivity is 'the quality of trying to include many different types of people and treat them all fairly and equally' and is a main trend in fashion. With brands embracing a wide variety of sizes and body shapes, ethnicities and genders the trend is steadily touching many industries including fashion which has a history of being highly excluding.

### **Emerging markets and globalization**

Emerging economies such as Brazil, India, Russia, China (in short BRIC) are economies that are on their way to becoming developed countries. They have financial infrastructure, GDP growth, established industries or increasing industrialization, social stability and an overall high growth rate. They are a profit-making investment for established brands because those countries have a rising middle class with numerous customers who have relatively recently obtained more disposable income and are wanting to buy designer brands. This trend shows consumer demand and consumer spending across several age groups and demographics in new markets.



## **Sustainability**

Sustainability is perhaps one of the most relevant topics of this decade and it means ‘meeting our own needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’. It includes environmental, economic, social aspects and overall ethical aspects and should ideally create a world where ecological integrity is maintained, communities can thrive and human rights are respected (McGill, 2019). This trend has been developing over the last couple of years and it has touched different types of consumers both in luxury and fast-fashion segments. Brands cannot ignore anymore the disastrous impact inflicted by this enormously polluting industry. Indeed, this growing awareness is hugely accelerated by the media efforts that has expanded its coverage of such sensibility-arising news. Whether it is fast fashion giant Inditex or a luxury group LVMH, they are all aiming to prove that their supply chain meets all possible ethical and green standards. As consequence, the sustainability trend wants the consumers to be more aware of the existing and possible environmental issues and guides them to achieve a sustainable approach towards their product’s choice and to make conscious purchases. Correspondingly, companies and manufacturers have the responsibility to showcase that their practices are truly sustainable and fair. Nonetheless, it is up to customers to make careful research before approaching or buying any brand’s products because this trend is often used in ubiquitous ways and can in some cases hide the so-called ‘green-washing’.

### **8.5 THE RISE OF ETHICAL AWARENESS**

Fashion has multiple meanings, most of the times it is associated with desire, pleasure, and fun, but it can also be linked to frivolity and spending money on unnecessary and useless products. Ethics have been for long time ignored within the fashion industry, but nowadays it is an issue that cannot be no longer ignored. In fact, customers are always more concerned about the environmental and societal factors that this business has been producing for years. For example, when fashion industries seek to speed up the processes of designing, manufacturing, shipping, and delivering fashion items and accessories to satisfy their highly demanding customers and to defeat their hostile competitors, they might make use of different means that are not, however, always ethical. As companies adopt vertical integration strategy and outsource manufacturing to external suppliers, the fashion industry has become more geographically spread, with manufacturing operations dispersed across multiple different regions and countries. The key scope of such outsourcing strategy is to gain competitive advantages through decreased costs, but unfortunately this practice lead most of the times to unethical production conditions. Fashion companies want to be the first to receive deliveries and, to be the first to offer the latest fashionable trend at a reasonable price on the market,

but that scope might lead them to use questionable practices such as sweatshop labor. In sweatshops, factory employees work unfairly long hours in dangerous and unhealthy conditions for extremely low pay. The following list enumerates several unethical practices that remain too common in many factories that are at the core of the fashion industry:

- Long hours: 120 hours of work per week is not uncommon. In China, some people work seven days a week, 12–14 hours a day. In Thailand, during peak season (i.e., to produce the main fashion collections for Spring-Summer and Fall-Winter), workers continue on with night shifts after working a day shift to satisfy the fashion brands' requests on time.
- Unsafe work conditions: Old equipment, dirt, dust, heat, nonhygienic environments, and a lack of proper ventilation represent some hazardous work conditions. The main goal of a sweatshop is to produce more at a minimum cost and in less than no time. To do so, manufacturers ignore workshop safety, use poor-quality, cheap constructions and ignore equipment safety issues; they also are resistant to invest to improve working conditions. Reducing costs is their priority, as ways to attract new orders, and therefore, nonhygienic or precarious settings are not really taken into consideration, as long as they can have the collections ready for on-time delivery.
- Low pay: Workers need a minimum living wage, defined as an amount sufficient to provide for their families 'basic needs' (food, housing, education). However, in most developing countries, workers in the fashion industry earn far less per month than the price of a Ralph Lauren casual shirt. In Vietnam, the minimum wage is between \$80 and \$112 a month, depending on the region; in Cambodia, it is \$75 per month and in Bangladesh, it is only \$68.13
- Child labor: The minimum age for employees often is not respected. This minimum is often very young (e.g. 12 years), yet many factories use children of just 6 years of age as workers. India holds the sad record for the highest rates of child labor in the world. More than 55 million children go to work in factories daily.
- Use of chemicals and contaminants: Manufacturing often requires various chemicals and pollutants to inject color or soften fabric, but these practices are done without authorization, without proper control procedures, without treatment after exposure, without recycling practices and therefore without any protection for workers. In China, the textile industry discharges more than 300,000 tons of chemical oxygen. In 2012, the China Pollution Map Database recorded 6,000 textile factories in violation of environment pollution regulations (e.g., discharge of untreated pollutants, wastewater contamination). The pollutants and pesticides spread to the air, soil, and water resulting in environmental contamination. Their

repercussions for workers that manipulate them are even more serious. Mostly, such unethical practices are common in sweatshops in developing countries. according to the fibre2fashion website, ‘nearly 2 billion USD worth of pesticides are used annually, of which pesticides worth about 819 million USD have been declared toxic as per the guidelines of the WHO. The health of the workers spraying pesticides in cotton fields and the people living around these fields are adversely affected.’

- Use of endangered species: Fur from almost any animal is banned by many countries but still used by several fashion companies. The uses of leather, fur, and even wool have been condemned by associations committed to prevent cruelty towards the animals. One of them, is the well-recognized People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), which argues, ‘Animals are not ours to eat, wear, experiment on, use for entertainment, or abuse in any way.’ Fashion consumers increasingly condemn the use of animals for fashion purposes and assert that people can easily be fashionable without harming animals. Public figures, such as the singer Pink, the U.S. swimmer Amanda Beard, and the actress Pamela Anderson, have joined and testified in this organization to fight against cruelty to animals used in the apparel industry.

These insights showcase the state of unethical practices in the fashion industry and the urgent need for change, especially as multinational fashion firms continue to be accused of damaging the environment and violating human rights, merely to increase their profitability. A recent dramatic event in a fashion factory awakened many occidental consumers to these issues, when a building collapse in Bangladesh killed thousands of workers producing clothes for popular international brands. Many shoppers declared they had been unaware, and some just preferred not to recognize that their desires for more and more diverse fashion apparel and accessories nurtured an unethical industry. However, luckily such awareness is growing among fashion companies, factories and consumers. Therefore, ethics is emerging as a new crucial expectation for the fashion industry and customers are looking more thoroughly for information and are more aware of the harmful and disastrous impacts that this industry causes to the environment and the society. Many partakers are responsible for the laissez-faire attitude of the fashion industry. Governments in both developed and developing countries make the laws related to the labor force, working conditions and environment. Therefore, it is their responsibility to identify violators that overturn human rights and pollute the environment in various regions and countries. With the rise of awareness of ethical issues and the emergence of change of behavior from customers, fashion companies also have been obliged to adopt more ethical practices and to influence, as well, their subcontractors’ behavior. For decades, these companies tended to deny their responsibility, alleging a lack of knowledge about the

practices of different contractors hired by overseas agents. These arguments reflected the view of the Nobel Laureate Milton Friedman, who famously declared in the 1970s that the only moral obligation of a company is to produce profit for shareholders. However, luckily times have changed: Modern fashion companies have no choice and must take more responsibility for their manufacturing procedures and create well-structured corporate social responsibility programs. Companies from developed countries need to find alternative methods to upgrade their supply chains and profitability without putting at risk others' lives and health or the environment. Corporate social responsibility refers to self-regulation processes implemented by companies to ensure the application of ethical practices and international norms. Although no universal standard exists for these programs, some guidance is available to fashion companies through the International Register of Certificated Auditors to improve their practices. Other organizations offer support to companies that want to prevent the use of unethical resources and improve social and environmental conditions. The Fair-Trade Certified movement promotes high standards for international labor and, social and environmental production. The Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) defines codes of conduct to enhance working conditions. Fashion companies that adopt ETI commit to improve the working conditions all along their supply chain, and an annual report summarizes their performance. But nonetheless, from a business perspective, sweatshops persist because they are highly profitable, for the company and, in some sense, for their workers. For instance, in developing countries, workers often struggle to satisfy their basic needs and hence accept poor treatment having no choice to survive. Jobs in the fashion industry imply long hours, unsafe and unhealthy working conditions, and low wage, but for some people, they are still a job. The fashion industry provides work, orders to achieve and a possible means of survival for people in developing countries. However, unethical working conditions cannot be the solution, and maximizing profit for brands in developed countries cannot be the only goal. Nevertheless, customers also hold a responsibility: They cannot ignore these circumstances and need to be more aware concerning their purchase choices. Logically, fashion brands are not charity organizations and must generate profit to be able to survive and offer nice, fashionable apparel and accessories at decent prices. Eventually, fashion shoppers have the power to stand for ethical fashion. Although some consumers are concerned about ethical practices, others are not really motivated to change their habits. Ethical production practices can potentially lead to higher retail price, and some shoppers remain reluctant to pay a premium price for ethically produced fashion products. As Rob Boggy, CEO and founder of IRII, Industrial Revolution II, an ethical apparel factory in Haiti, acknowledges, 'tougher regulations and more stringent factory audits are not enough. Consumers have the ability to demand that the brands they buy make more responsible sourcing decisions, using their collective wallet as

both the carrot and the stick. There is a lot of power at the top of the chain and as brands increasingly realize that consumers care deeply about this issue, real change will begin to happen.’ To achieve this change and convert fashion shoppers into ethical shopping decisions, customer education is crucial to make people more aware of the different practices in developing countries. Giving them some reasons and the background of the situation to pay more may lead to more ethical working conditions. In particular, fashion shoppers require more awareness raising information to be able to make better ethical judgments. Typically, the only information available to a customer at the point of sale is a Made In tag that reveals the country of production, the wash care instructions and the fabrics used. Fashion companies should communicate their ethical practices more extensively and effectively to help shoppers make conscious decisions. Consequently, three main actors can influence the development of ethical practices:

- Governments from developed and developing countries: by arranging with factories and suppliers for minimum wage and labor directives.
- Fashion companies: by having more control over their supply chain, their suppliers’ suppliers and negotiating fair price with them.
- Fashion consumers: by requiring more ethically made products and being ready to pay more in order to improve social and environmental conditions.

These consumers should not be limited to already existing green, environment conscious customers. They must encompass more shoppers, in order to have a significant impact on globally operating firms and influence their choices. Therefore, these international, powerful companies should commit to improve working conditions and minimize their environmental impacts, with the goal to retain shoppers by providing them with fair sourced and environmentally friendly products that enhance the life not only of the final customers but of all of the stakeholders. Accordingly, ethics should be a part of the brand’s vision and value system to demonstrate their long-term commitment. On the other hand, unethical practices can conduct the shoppers to change to more ethically concerned players. By offering ethically sourced and produced fashion products, companies thus add attractive value for customers. Ethics as a topic is more and more considered and appraised by fashion consumers, who want that their favorite brands adopt green strategies that are as admirable as their designs. Fashion companies will face this ever-increasing pressure by changing their supply chains and by demonstrating to their customers that they appreciate their concerns about social and environmental issues. Following this ethical pathway, fashion companies can avoid the potential damage to their image caused by unethical revealed practices, as well as the loss of their customers’ confidence. As a result, ethics is becoming an important added quality for fashion firms that

completes their brands core commitments. Indeed, this new added value preserves customers' trust whereas unethical practices in this way draw more attention and can change these shoppers' purchase decisions. Several examples are instructive. Some fashion companies use the guidance of other organizations and others create their own sustainable standards. For example, The Gap Inc. has adopted several corporate social responsibility programs. Aware of the impacts of its outsourcing production in terms of ethical practices, this company tries to reduce the possible negative outcomes. Firstly, it conducted evaluations to determine its environmental footprint precisely. In fact, thanks to this information, company could focus on specific elements in its supply chain that offered the potential for sustainable improvement and solutions to reduce environmental impacts. Secondly, the company began conducting unannounced interviews with employees to check working conditions and ensure its sustainable standards were being respected. Even though The Gap Inc. manufactures almost all its clothing and accessories outside the United States, it can control and evaluate suppliers' actions and remain closely engaged in the different production steps through its corporate social responsibility programs. As a result of these efforts, The Gap Inc. is emerging as one of the most responsible firms in the fashion sector, named as one of the '100 Top MBA Employers' in 2010. Moreover, this company enjoys a growing environmental and social sustainability reputation among its stakeholders and customers. Marks and Spencer is also devoted to green programs, that are leading it to launch its 'General Merchandise Living Wage' agreement. Mike Barry, Head of Sustainable Business, explained that the goal of this program was to implement 'a process to ensure our clothing suppliers are able to pay workers a fair living wage in the least developed countries we source from, starting with Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka by 2015. We will achieve this by ensuring that the cost prices we pay to our suppliers are adequate to pay a fair living wage and by rolling out our ethical model factory program to ensure the cost price benefits are paid to workers.' Some designers also create fashion differently, to improve their ethical practices. The designer Stella McCartney, for instance, refuses to use any fur or leather in her collections. She is a member of PETA, dedicated to the causes of animal protection and rights. As she has said, 'we address ethical or ecological questions in every other part of our lives except fashion. Mind-sets are changing, though, which is encouraging. As a designer, I like to work with fabrics that don't bleed; that's why I avoid all animal skins. You can buy cruelty-free fashion all over the place now, since demand is always increasing as people learn the dark truth about the fur and leather and exotic-skins trade.' In additions, recycling is another practice that can be considered as ethical in fashion. Galleries Lafayette, for example, promotes the idea of so-called 'empty dressing' to boost the recycling of fashion pieces. They have special spaces in their stores to collect fashionable and sometimes even luxurious clothing and accessories for recycling and exchange

purposes. Nevertheless, even ethical shoppers want to be stylish and the department store makes a special selection of pieces that are trending that season in order to attract even more the highly-demanding fashionistas. Their store's slogan for the operation is 'Fashionable Recycling: Renew Your Dressing Responsibly.' The concept is not to offer outdated fashion items but rather to exchange clothing during their current fashion season when consumers no longer enjoy wearing them. In return, the ethical consumers may choose from others' discarded fashion items or receive a gift card from the department store. As these examples show, various ideas are proliferating to produce and offer ethical products to informed consumers and to improve sustainable means for them to become more ethical in their daily purchasing behaviors. These different sustainable programs or initiatives implemented by the fashion companies, designers, and retailers reflect the rising awareness of ethical issues. As environmental and societal factors are more relevant in the decision-making processes of both fashion firms and consumers, these ethical trends should continue to grow, particularly if consumers start to avoid socially neglecting fashion businesses and support responsible ones. To boost the added value of ethical products, companies must make sure those values are clearly stated and shown to the customers, for example, through special advertisements and communication campaigns about fair-trade programs, uses of organically sourced materials or recycling for example. Another very important factor of the development of fashion ethics strategy is the price of the products. The price of ethical fashion items cannot be so high that it impedes customers to purchase them. They want fashionable, ethical designs that are not too much expensive. Customers cannot be expected to support all the costs associated with enhancing the sustainability of their favorite brand. On the contrary, the costs and the benefits should be shared. Fashion companies can reduce their margin to grant higher living wage or better working conditions in developing countries and thus attract more conscious shoppers. Fashion consumers can enjoy more the shopping when they know the practices behind the products that they buy. Concomitantly, by producing ethical products fashion companies can improve their reputation. Finally, given that the ethical and sustainable items are more attractive to more conscious shoppers, they boost the development of ethical fashion affinity on the market and loyalty to the company, in particular, which implies greater profits for fashion companies that become ethical.

## 8.6 AN ETHICAL FUTURE

The word morning is very similar and sometimes identical in different languages (In German 'Morgen' means tomorrow but it also means morning.) Every morning is a new start and the beginning of a new tomorrow. Every historical era is marked by some kind of changes both good and bad. Sometimes these changes were positive and shaped a way to the setting up of regulations

or advancements that significantly upgraded people's lives. At the same time, future establish itself as full of uncertainties and variabilities, therefore, it is vital that everyone make the right decisions and follows a set of ethical values that can led to better consequences. Accordingly, the business work scene is full of challenges and pressing issues about ethicality and other moral arguments that cannot be ignored anymore. The latest trends that I have reviewed previously, thus need to be analysed and questioned by our generation before it will be too late. In fact, they can hide numerous ethical dangers which if not properly scrutinized can lead to disastrous consequences for the future generations. In fact, the scientists should pay attention on how far they want to go to explore human brain functions to make advances in the Artificial Intelligence studies, at what extent marketers want to exploit people's emotions and damage nature for the sake of selling products. However, companies can choose the nature of their practices and regulations and can thus contribute to a fair and ethical developments of their businesses. Porter and Kramer (2011) defined a business model based on Creating Shared Value (CSV) that reshapes the concept of capitalism which is merely based on profitability and instead focuses on ethical values at its very core. This model wants to prove the concept of a 'beneficial' business that wants to establish a value system based on a common good. Accordingly, it wants to put a community at the center of its actions and create a mutual respectful and ethical driven relationship. The authors investigate the profit driven values of companies: 'How else could companies overlook the well-being of their customers, the depletion of natural resources vital to their businesses, the viability of key suppliers, or the economic distress of the communities in which they produce and sell?' (Porter and Kramer, 2011). The Corporate Social Responsibility model is something that we hear about in a lot of contexts. However, it is yet only partially applied by the companies, due to its cutting profit implications. Fashion conglomerates and companies such as LVMH, Kering, Prada, Chanel and Stella McCartney are good examples and trend-setters for implementing of ethical and fair values in their businesses. And finally, fashion business is one of the most questionable ones in this matter, thus making it the most difficult and challenging to work in. However, it is always up to us to determine our set of values and towards which direction to move. It is therefore necessary, if one wants to contribute to its fair development to study, analyse and understand its history, its present condition and think about the improvements that can be made in the immediate and for the long-term socially responsible future.



## CONCLUSIONS

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Fashion is a huge and powerful industry, that encompasses and interacts with very different fields such as culture, economics, communication, politics etc. This continuous and uninterrupted flow of different torrents make it often difficult to determine the right strategies that would suit at best both consumers and companies at the same time. Fashion takes part in the search of inspiration from and reshapes in the accordance to the evolution of societies as it manages the relationships between eager fashion shoppers and competitive fashion firms. Accordingly, in order to build a solid customer fidelity and further retention, companies make use of various exclusive benefits that 'only' their brand can offer. As a quintessential industry, fashion generate an added value – the beauty one. In fact, fashion is meant to be a physical reflection of our inner state and therefore, it provides people with all the necessary tools to forge, develop and perfectionate their exterior self-image. However, as already reviewed in the last chapter, nowadays fashion consumers are more thoroughly informed and conscious about companies' practices and therefore, more demanding too. With this change within the value system, the creative and beauty-driven value is not enough anymore, people now want more conscious and ethical apparel that would respect both environment where and communities within which it is created. In view of these new, unprecedented and challenging requests, companies cannot act anymore in the same way they used to before and must therefore show their resilience and flexibility in terms of adapting their actions to fit in this brand-new context. Moreover, this 'green' change must be as well communicated in an appropriate way and in this case it is up to marketing and communication teams of the companies to create a compelling and insightful story-telling about the actions that their business undertakes to change its intrinsic philosophy towards a sustainable and fair approach. Furthermore, the fashion industry has never been static one, but the changes happening today, comprising a completely different supply chain management, new distribution channels, new communication tools and above all a new outlook on the ethics and environment protection system urge a better demand and reactiveness from shoppers on the one hand and a greater elasticity and willingness to change from the companies on the other hand. Finally, it can be affirmed that this change can be driven simultaneously by companies and customers that must collaborate on synchrony in order to achieve great results both creatively and ethically.

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