

Brianna Perriello

Dr. Mace

ENG 201

28 April 2015

The Aspects of Fashion Marketing

“A brand for a company is like a reputation for a person. You earn reputation by trying to do hard things well.” These wise words of Jeff Bezos, the CEO of Amazon, outline what the marketing industry is made up of. Marketing is such an important and general field that people may not realize the practicality and theories behind it. For one thing, fashion marketing is one industry that could seem somewhat complex. Fashion marketing is simply where the practical mechanisms and theories take action under all aspects of marketing itself (Jackson, Shaw). With this simple explanation, many people do not realize that there are many misconceptions about the marketing industry. The question that people should ask is: What are the aspects of fashion marketing?

To start off, fashion marketing follows practical and theoretical tools. According to Tim Jackson and David Shaw, the term marketing is very specific when it comes to the fashion industry. In reality, fashion marketing is used to describe the communication links of the promotion of products along with the creation and conservation of brand identity. Fashion marketing is very functional. For example, some major functions include: buying, merchandising, design, retail, pricing, and many more (Jackson and Shaw xvi). Based upon the many functions, marketing becomes tactical and strategic no matter what industry it is. Fashion, in fact, is probably one of the most difficult industries in society today. Society has become very competitive and advanced so rapidly that the

fashion industry needs to ensure stability. Now, every single day, brands and industries change.

The customer is always right. This is one motto that many businesses live by in today's society. Presently, to think about the fashion industry, marketers need to know what their consumers want and adore. This is where they implement their skills into the industry and manufacturing. Consider this as a practice rather than a theory. Along with other industries, every business has a target market and positioning of their product (Jackson, Shaw xvii). This becomes very important because catching attention is key for success. Fashion trends are like the seasons of the year (289). Trends change, but the brand stays the same. Unlike other industries, fashion has more of a strategic and tactical approach. People may not realize that marketing is not just about the communication aspect, but also the hands on, practical aspect as well. They need to target and position themselves to capture attention of consumers.

Although it may seem that the fashion industry is completely different from others; this is not true. In fact, "Each generation of consumers is exposed to commercial influences, advances in technologies, social attitudes and lifestyles that are often fundamentally different from those experienced by the previous generation" (Jackson, Shaw 272). In other words, as a function of marketing itself, buying becomes important because a "customer should be the first consideration for any marketer and is the embodiment of demand for all fashion products and services" (1). Now, what is vital for any business is to buy or manufacture what it can sell. Therefore, as each generation changes, the fashion trends change. Primarily, for businesses, this could be prodigious;

however, they also have think about the customer who tries to keep up with different trends that can be overwhelming.

Arguably, Tim Jackson has claimed that in today's society, the power has shifted to the consumers in the fashion world. This may seem foolish, but in actuality, this is very true. Consumers in general, are well informed about brands, products and prices, and have enough knowledge of what needs and wants can be satisfied from different alternatives (1). Subsequently, consumers feel more dominant within a fashion brand because of the strong connection they feel (1). Others may look at this and see no problem because the company or brand did a great job of targeting to their consumers and maintaining customer loyalty; however, this could be hurtful to other luxury brands. For example, "In 2005, Marks and Spencer rebranded around the slogan 'Your M&S' (1). The fact that the word "you" is in a slogan automatically captures attention. Except, marketers feel that brands are belonging to customers and not conserving their own identity through themselves (2). They are relying on the customer to keep the brand consistent. Now, a consumer is technically supposed to help preserve the brand identity; however, the company should also be proud of themselves for participating in unique and successful functions of marketing.

To recall, a brand is supposed to work towards a target and position in order to sell their products. Along with this there is branding. "Branding remains the vital marketing tool to differentiate and attract consumers at all levels in global markets" (Jackson, Shaw 245). Society is so complex, and never fails to continue, that no business or industry will ever know what the world's greatest brands will be of the future (Clifton). Along with many other misconceptions of fashion marketing, the identification

of “branding” has two different applications. First and foremost, the obvious meaning is the identity, or symbol of the company. Secondly, branding refers to the “particular business model, in which a company creates desirable products and utilizes third-party channels to distribute them” (Jackson, Shaw 245). So, the term brand has to do with the actual company, while branding is the process done to help promote the brand.

Fashion marketing could be seen as a packaged deal. With a clear target and position comes consumer loyalty. So, in order to continue a legacy of an elite brand such as Louis Vuitton, clarity, consistency and leadership are important characteristics (Clifton ix). Clarity, more or less, deals with the mission, vision and values of what is understood (ix). Nonetheless, clarity focuses on what is actually important to the brand. For example, Louis Vuitton has been around for so many years, so they would most likely agree that their logo, or signature collection of handbags portrays significant value and clarity to their company. Next, consistency in general, conveys to accuracy and basic logic. While, in the fashion industry, consistency relates to long-term value in relationships: who are they and what are they doing (x). Lastly, with leadership, the brand must aim to exceed expectations (x). So, for example, Louis Vuitton needs to ensure that they take initiative into allowing new people to work in new areas of product, service and promotion, along with handling self- restoration (Clifton). With this, it allows brand positioning to occur. A company should implement different personalities to broaden their target market (Jackson, Shaw 251). For example, “H&M, Mango and Zara entered the UK market as fast-fashion brands and repositioned many UK retailers who were slow to respond to fashion change” (251). Subsequently, these stores have made their way into the United

States, and are doing exceptionally well. Essentially, the consumer relates to the brand, which then relates to the target and position.

Technology is taking over society today. New innovations are being introduced every single day. “As technologies evolve and societies becomes more socially and culturally diverse, so people’s values, attitudes, lifestyles and media viewing and consumption habits are changing and becoming increasingly fragmented” (Jackson, Shaw 272). Interestingly enough, technology is definitely a positive for the fashion industry; however, at the same time, it has narrowed the communication levels between fashion designers and consumers (Millennials). According to Imran Amed, the editor of *The Business of Fashion*, social media has disrupted the way that fashion companies communicate, and in the future, this will affect luxury brands (Millennials). Technology will always play an important role in society and marketing, no matter what. But, with the new advances rising rapidly, these companies cannot keep up. The fashion industry, indeed, needs technology; yet, the lack of physical communication is what scares these businesses. For example, advertising is probably one of the most important functions of fashion marketing. Marketers are worried about the future in advertising because of the lack of awareness of slogans and advertisements with new generations of consumers (Jackson, Shaw 276). New generations are becoming more lenient with advertisements and not showing too much interest in them because it acts as a waste of time. Therefore, many companies are becoming concerned with this ideal.

Technology playing such a huge role in society and marketing today is becoming a challenge for major luxury brands. According to an article discussing the upcoming generations, fashion brands are concluding that “The big gap between handwork and

technology will become smaller and smaller” (Millennials). In other words, in the near future, hard work and labor will be considered “out of style” if technology stays as consistent as it has been. For today’s society it is all about technology and social media all day, every single day. Society is not going to slow down with advances; it will stay consistent with anything it can. Therefore, these fashion brands will be changing more and more and consumers will have to adapt and stay tuned for the changes that have yet to come. Along with technology, comes innovation. Originality is key to success, but at the same time so is staying modern and up-to-date. Luxury brands such as Ralph Lauren, Louis Vuitton, Michael Kors and many more need to be mindful of this otherwise, their products and, or brand will be considered obsolete.

The fashion industry has become more and more competitive. Although this may seem like a huge obstacle for luxury brands, competition, in fact, could be seen as a motivator. Competition itself is vital for the success of not only fashion brands, but also business out there in the world. It may seem outlandish to look at competition as an asset, but there are two underlying questions that help brands make choices about competitive strategy. The first question is based upon the “attractiveness of the industries for long-term profitability” (Porter). Essentially, fashion brands should be appealing to consumers and even themselves, otherwise opportunities will not arise. Next, relates to how competitive strategy is the “determinant of relative competitive position within an industry” (Porter). So, other businesses might just be more profitable in the end despite any competition, even though competition is considered a key element to success.

All questions have answers. With Porter’s questions about competitive strategy come results. Fortunately, his explanations are easy to understand. He identifies three

strategies that help answer his questions relating to the competitive strategy: overall cost leadership, differentiation, and focus (Porter). These generic strategies will help brands gain competitive advantage over all others. The cost leadership strategy deals with being a leader in terms of the industry. What a fashion brand should do is ensure to lower the cost to the “organization of delivering the products and services” (Mindtools). Differentiation, on the other hand, deals with the appeal to the customers in a way. In order to ensure that customers want to buy a specific fashion brand or product, it needs to be attractive. “Effective sales and marketing, so that the market understands the benefits offered by the differentiated products” (Mindtools). Instead of having the same products each year or season, there needs to be diversity. Finally, the focus strategy is probably one of the first steps a brand should take. They need to have a set focus on what type of customer or advertising they want to do. Then, they can go ahead into the merchandising and retail functions of fashion marketing. A brand needs to focus on a “niche market,” and this will then lead to brand loyalty by the customer and long-term satisfaction. (Mindtools). In order for this so called, satisfaction, companies need to ensure that they have some sort of identity, or vocation for their brand.

There are so many functions of marketing that many do not know about or understand. In the end, they all coincide with each other. Everything falls into the hands of the consumer and brand itself. All marketing is about ensuring the right sales and promotion of the company. So, with a luxury brand there needs to be a target and focus to set a tone and then there will be a consumer ready to take action. The fashion industry allows society and marketing itself to be diverse (Jackson, Shaw xiv). Fashion marketing is not just about theory, but also about hands on practices to ensure the appeal of the

brand. The unique nature of fashion marketing will always be a challenge; however, who knows what will happen in the future.

Works Cited

- Bezos, Jeff. *For the Love of Marketing: An Original Poster Series - Pardot*. Pardot. N.p., 12 Sept. 2012. Web. 07 Apr. 2015. <<http://www.pardot.com/ideas/marketing-posters-inspiration/>>.
- Clifton, R. *The Future of Brands*. New York: New York University Press, 2003. Web. <http://books.google.com/books?id=URPHZiA46UC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_atb#v=onepage&q&f=false>.
- Jackson, Tim, and David Shaw. *Mastering Fashion Marketing*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. Print.
- "Marques for Millennials; Demographic Trends." *The Economist* Dec 13 2014: 10-1. *ProQuest*. Web. 9 Apr. 2015. Web. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1636202842?accountid=13044> Macmillan, 2009. Print.
- "Porter's Generic Strategies: Choosing Your Route to Success." *Porter's Generic Strategies*. N.p., n.d. Web. 07 May 2015. <http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newSTR_82.htm>.
- Porter, M.E. *Competitive Strategy*, New York: The Free Press. Review by: William B. Gartner *The Academy of Management Review* Vol. 10, No. 4 (Oct., 1985), pp. 873-875.

