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How to Brand and Market a Fashion Label

New lifestyle brand 48

Metropolia Ammattikorkeakoulu

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<p>The purpose of this thesis is to understand the first steps when creating a fashion label. It concentrates on tools and theoretical frameworks that are used in branding and marketing when creating a successful and recognisable brand.</p> <p>With the combination of theory and practise, the first part of the thesis will go through the main branding components, giving examples of how and why to brand and make your label stand out from the crowd.</p> <p>The core of the thesis will concentrate on fashion marketing. This includes: choosing the right target group for your brand, identifying the competitors, understanding the external impacts on fashion labels by analysing the modern world and applying the 7p marketing mix into your marketing plan.</p> <p>The last part will introduce the fashion label this thesis has been conducted for, briefly explaining and discussing how the branding and marketing tools and frameworks have been applied.</p> <p>Topics used in this thesis are important to any new or old fashion label, as it guides through the main aspects which turn a label into a brand.</p>	
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<p>Tämän opinnäytetyön tarkoituksena on ymmärtää vaatemerkin luomisen ensimmäiset vaiheet. Ne keskittyvät erilaisiin työkaluihin ja teoreettisiin kehyksiin, joita käytetään brändäyksessä ja markkinoinnissa onnistuneen ja tunnistettavan brändin luomisessa.</p> <p>Yhdistämällä teorian ja käytännön opinnäytetyön ensimmäinen osa käy läpi brändäyksen tärkeimmät komponentit esittämällä, miten ja miksi brändätään, ja kuinka luodaan merkki, joka erottuu joukosta.</p> <p>Opinnäytetyön toinen osa keskittyy markkinointiin. Tähän sisältyvät: oikean kohderyhmän valinta omalle brändille, kilpailijoiden tunnistaminen, ulkoisten vaikutusten ymmärtäminen analysoimalla nykyaikaista maailmaa sekä 7P markkinointi-mixin soveltamista markkinointisuunnitelmaan.</p> <p>Viimeisessä osassa esitetään lyhyesti vaatemerkki, jolle tämä opinnäytetyö oli tehty. Siinä esitetään, miten yllä mainittuja brändäys- ja markkinointityökaluja sekä kehyksiä on sovellettu ja mitä markkinointikeinoja vaatemerkki aikoo tulevaisuudessa hyödyntää.</p> <p>Tämän opinnäytetyön aiheet ovat tärkeitä niin uusille kuin vanhoille vaatemerkeille, sillä se kertoo tärkeimmistä lähtökohdista, jotka auttavat muuttamaan vaatemerkin brändiksi.</p>	
Avainsanat	Markkinointi, Brändäys, Markkinointisuunnitelma, Verkkokauppa, Muoti, Vaatemerkki, Markkinointi Mix, Startup

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1 Introduction

“Running a successful fashion label requires around 90 percent business acumen and only about 10 percent artistic ability” (Meadows 2009, 7). To work in the industry you need to be ambitious, self-motivated, creative, energetic and passionate about fashion and possess working knowledge about marketing and business. (Posner 2015, 207.)

Fashion is fundamentally a commercial business producing and selling products, even though for designers, fashion enthusiasts and fashion students it might feel very glamorous and exciting way to make a living (Posner 2015, 207). When we use the word fashion, it is the behaviour and actions that have been approved by majority of people. Use of fashion may refer to the dances we dance, the words we use and the clothing we wear, as well as how we make our hair and spend our free time. It can start from a small group of friends or from as big as an entire country, but the point is, that the group of people adopt the style, and more than one person uses it. (Yurchisin & Johnson 2010, 1.)

In this context, a successful fashion brand does not mean the amount of sales or amount of people who recognise the brand, instead the success comes from being found, worn and talked about by only those, who matter the most to the business - the real, loyal customers.

To build a successful brand, it is important to understand that branding and marketing are two concepts that are linked and need each other's support. Brand for a fashion label brings out its certain types of characters and marketing is its voice. Businesses fail, when they don't tie these two together, as you can create an amazing brand, but what is the point, if you cannot reach the audience?

While reading this final project, it will guide you through the reasons and components on how brands are created, using the most common theories and frameworks. As soon as the brand is created, we move to the second part of the thesis, which helps us understand the meaning of marketing research and strategies, which are applied to the brand and marketing plan.

Finally, the used tools and theoretical frameworks will be put into practise to the label this project was conducted for, for further understanding on how branding and marketing are tied and used in real life. This will clarify which components are important for a fashion label and help anyone from a start-up or established brand to write a marketing plan using all the the information gathered from topics mentioned above.

2 Decent Hardware



www.decenthardware.com

Decent Hardware approached with a case that was too interesting to miss. They are launching a new label under DH with the name 48, which stands for numeric spelling of the original name.

Decent Hardware is a lifestyle brand offering skateboard gear and clothes that are ethically made, and designed to last.

Currently the label is facing a challenge. New labels are popping up like mushrooms, and the world-wide-web is getting cluttered. The company needs a new strategy and a plan when, where and how to launch the new label, find their niche and build their online appearance for the new product range and target group.

3 Branding

In general, brand represents promises that consumers expect from a product or a company by the people behind the brand and the way they deliver the promise (Pringe & Gordon 2001, 3).

People use brands and fashion to make statements about themselves and how they want to be viewed by others. When finding a label that speaks the same language and dresses in style preferred by the customer, it will more likely make sales and build its own customer base. (Posner2015, 146).

RALPH  LAUREN



Image 1. Ralph Lauren Spring 2017 catwalk look.

As an example, image 1, Ralph Lauren attracts certain type of people, with more or less similar interests, hobbies, (American) lifestyle and social status. It is not only the clothes that create the style, because fashion and trends change constantly, but the brand message remains the same. Most of the people associate Polo brand with horse riding and bourgeois lifestyle.

But branding is not only the name and logo, or the clothes designed for the label in particular style - it holds much more deeper meaning and content behind it.

“Great brands don’t let you down; they are part of your life and are more than just functional products” (Hall 2012, 49).

3.1 Why to brand?

Fashion is fast-paced concept, when one day you're in and another day out. With our globalised world and many new opportunities, young entrepreneurs and fashion graduates rush to establish new labels without market research and development of a brand identity. Therefore, only one out of ten new fashion start-ups survive, leaving them on shaky grounds, and eventually, they get crushed by much stronger and bigger brands. Clothing labels need to deliver more than just the products, and this is where branding steps in. (Heyden 2014; Meadows 2009).

Branding will help the label to differentiate itself from other labels alike and make it easier for a customer to recognise what is the brand message, values and to whom it should appeal. Branded products and services have added value, which have been deliberately designed for customers for recognition, association, opportunities and meaningfulness (Baines, Fill & Page. 2013, 219). When shopping and wearing branded products, they not only fit differently, but they make the entire experience unique from the very moment you think about the brand and deciding what type of garment you might considering of buying and why. Even if you don't particularly search for a new piece of clothing, you might feel your self-image needs updating, when the easiest way to update, is by buying something new to wear.



Image 2. Lee ad



Image 3. Pepe Jeans ad

We can learn some key branding elements from images 2 and 3, on how two competitor brands, selling similar clothing, to same target group, have branded themselves. Displayed ads and editorial pictures can help the label send the brand message. For example, in image 2, Lee is seen as relaxed, very casual and outgoing brand, whereas in image 2, Pepe Jeans London, is casual and rebellious. Depending on the state of

mood of the consumer, their buying decision might depend on the message the brand stands for.

Consumers like brands, because they help people to identify their preferred products, reduce the amount of time spent making decisions, reduce levels of perceived risk and improve the quality of shopping experience (Baines et al. 2013, 220).

3.2 How to brand?

Start-ups and small fashion labels have an advantage to offer more experience through the label than big corporate businesses, since they can have more contact with the clients and suppliers. With this in mind, it is more likely, that people involved with the brand live and breathe the life of the label, rather than have anonymous employees running the business without knowing their customers and co-workers within the organisation by name. (Craven 2005, 98).

Brand experience can be brought up with branding process, by creating a personality to the product, service or organisation, using consistency in design and in product/service information, giving certain type of feeling, appearance and competitive advantage. Branding, is where customer feels connected in emotional state, and brand - is something that people remember by name. (Hall 2012, 47).

There are several key elements that need to be considered and carefully gone through while creating a brand identity. Hall (2012) presents them as brand ingredients, but Pringle and Gordon (2001) have stated, that there is more to a brand through feelings and behaviour.

List of brand ingredients by Richard Hall (2012, 48):

- ✓ A unique name
- ✓ A personality
- ✓ A logo
- ✓ A designed identity
- ✓ A potential reputation
- ✓ A provenance
- ✓ Emotional meaning to the owner and customer

- ✓ Consistency
- ✓ Producer pride
- ✓ Availability
- ✓ Value greater than an unbranded product.

With a strong brand, marketing and identity walk hand-in-hand. One needs another not only for a survival, but for attracting customers and keeping them (turning them into loyal customers).

3.3 Brand ingredients

3.3.1 Name

Before you even start, you might need to come up with several names, and end up using two names for your label: 1. Brand label/mark/identifier and 2. Trade name. Brand names provide information about content, taste, durability, quality, price and performance (Baines et al. 2013, 219).

A good name is memorable, easy to pronounce, simple yet clever and unique, and should be available for registration and protection. It is most visible attribute to any fashion label (Meadows 2009, 39). Particularly in fashion industry, it is almost obvious to use your own name as the brand name, because you are the creator and you make the style, for example Michael Kors or Minna Parikka, but the problem is, that YOU LOSE your name to the brand and your name starts to belong to the brand. Another problem might occur, when creating a trademark. Do you want your name trademarked? Is it even possible to trademark? There are clever ways to create a trademark from your name, for example DKNY that stands for Donna Karan New York, but even Donna has faced challenges regarding her name, since the name is used to refer to the label and people working for the label, and not actually her (Bobila 2015).

Also, since people love stories, giving an interesting story about the name or how it was created is essential in nowadays branding. The story behind the name Marimekko is eventually quite boring in comparison, that Google was created by a miss-spell by it's creators.

Decent Hardware 48 has a logic behind it. It tells us something about the name. 48 is the numeric spelling of DH (d=4th letter, h=8th letter). So the name is not only easy, minimalistic/modern, but clever and technically, exactly the same as the original name!

3.3.2 Personality

Giving your brand a personality will give more information on how your brand is seen and how it communicates. Personality also helps people to engage with the brand and attract people who share same characteristics.

In mid 90's, Jennifer Aaker conducted a marketing research regarding brands, that made her realise, that most of the brands share set of human characteristics, that consumers associate with the brand. She developed the brand personality scale, which consists of five main dimensions of psychosocial meaning, subsuming forty-two personality traits. (Baines et al. 2013, 222).

The five main types, that can also be associated with a real person are:

- ✓ Excitement
- ✓ Sincerity
- ✓ Ruggedness
- ✓ Competence
- ✓ Sophistication

When choosing the personality, it helps the brand to differentiate itself from others, and clarifies the brand image and identity.



Image 4. How J. Aaker's brand personality framework looks

As an example, we can compare personalities of two brands that technically sell similar products: Billabong (see image 5) and O'Neill (see image 6). These two brands sell sporty, surfing lifestyle and products, but their personalities are very different. Billabong is young, hip and trendy, where O'Neill is mature, confident and intelligent. Because of their different personalities, they attract certain type of people, and these brands can differentiate themselves in the market.



Image 5. Billabong surf girls



Image 6. O'Neill ad by Mike Sullivan

Brand personality not only includes the personality features or characteristics, but also the demographic features like age, gender or class and psychographic features. Personality traits are what the brand exists for. (MSG 2017).

Many branding books and marketers suggests to describe your brand as it would be a person. The more details you give, the better picture you'll get about your brand and into which category it falls.

3.3.3 Logo

Fashion and logos have a very fascinating concept, because the brand name or “signature”/logo is displayed on garments one way or another, as seen in picture 7, how Louis Vuitton uses its LV logo. It is either hidden or shown on a label (example back of your neck), stitched or printed somewhere on the garment or made into a pattern. It can also be added on buttons or zipper pulls and other accessories on the garment. The way to display the logo or the name is almost endless and new ways are constantly being developed.



Image 7. How Louis Vuitton uses the LV logo.

For any fashion label, there are some considerations regarding the logo and where and how it should be displayed, as an example DC Shoes in image 8.



Image 8. How DC Shoes displays its logo.

First of all, before you make your final decision on a logo, you need to know your target group and how they behave. Do they want to show people the labels they wear? For example, people cover themselves from head to toe with clothes that scream the brand name, such as Louis Vuitton, Adidas, Ralph Lauren (have you noticed the Polo-logo has grown in the past years?) and so on. You can recognise these brands from miles away and their customers love to show off the labels for various reasons.

Or are your customers keeping a lower profile on the brands they wear? Even so, you can design your logo to serve with many purposes. It can be the name in particular font, a symbol, a stamp, a sign or a picture. In the end, it doesn't even need to be associated with the name, but it should make sense to the consumers why it's used and the story behind it.

It is highly recommended, that your logo is designed with help of a graphic designer for making it unique and right the first time. A graphic designer can help to pick the right colors, shape and size of the logo and overall feel of the design.

3.3.4 Designed identity

Fashion labels have different identities, even though they might sell their garments to the same target groups. This identity is something that makes these labels different from one another, and recognisable by the customers.

Brand identity includes company values and attributes, emotions, personality and passions, as well as purpose of existence.



Image 9. Eco-Certifications to support brand identity

Some labels get certified, and most commonly eco-certified (image 9) to support designed identity and build trust with the consumers.

Strong brands have strong identities and are recognized even by those who don't purchase the product.

Jean-Nöel Kapferer has developed a brand identity prism, a tool to recognize the most common identity aspects of the brand. It aims to capture the complexity of brand identity and the concepts behind it. (Posner 2015, 160).

Brand identity prism includes six aspects that are divided into two dimensions. Picture of sender vs. picture of receiver and externalisation vs. internalisation. And six aspects are:

1. Physique: Physical features, symbols and attributes
2. Personality: character, attitude or personality
3. Culture: Distinctive culture and brand values. Culture creates deeper meaning than a slogan. It's more real, long-lasting, believable and interesting way to brand (Sounio 2010, 35).
4. Relationship: Beliefs and associations connected with a brand. Is the brand more of a friend-figure or a mother-figure?
5. Reflection: The idealized image of the consumer. E.g. Nike reflects athletic, brave and competitive person.

6. Self-image: What consumers think about themselves when wearing the brand. E.g. someone wearing Nike might feel sporty, trendy and empowered. (Posner 2015, 161).

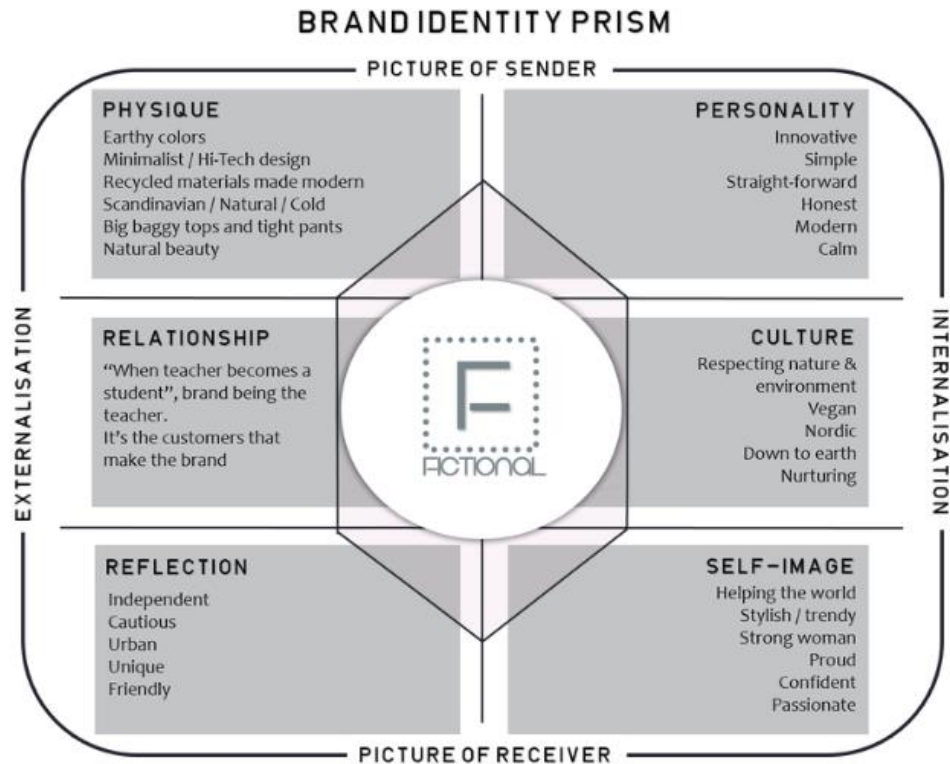


Image 10a. Brand identity prism example of a fictitious brand

Using brand identity prism as a tool, can help the label to build its identity in very broad and precise way. Having clear view about the brand will help it to communicate with the customers in a more effective way.

Another identity element is the visual material, such as colours, labels, tags, font style and size, packaging, interior of the shop and so on, as for instance, colour is part of our physical and emotional world, as they can be used to increase the desirability and relevance of the products. (Moose & Nyholm 2009, 44).

Well-designed visual material and content is an asset and can be strongly used within a brand and in creation of a marketing plan. As for an example, person can usually carry some luxury shopping bag over and over again, days after purchasing the item, just because he or she wants to be seen carrying the brand as an extension of him/herself.

Another asset is to make them visually appealing, that the person purchasing the item wants to keep all the extras that came with the garment, or purchases the garment, because they feel attracted to the visual material (image 10b tags for the fictitious brand).

Third and most common is by creating a recognisable pattern and using it as often as possible. For example, Marimekko “Unikko” (image 11) or Orla Kiely “Stem” pattern (image 12).



Image 10b. Tags to match the fictitious brand



Image 11. Marimekko Unikko pattern



Image 12. Orla Kiely Stem pattern

3.3.5 Potential reputation

Good reputation attracts and protects the brand from possible bumps. A favorable brand reputation means consumers trust your company, and feel good about purchasing your goods or services (DiAntonio, William, 2012).

In 2017, within the first 10 companies from the top 100 list conducted by Reputation institute had listed two fashion labels. The ranking consists of taken rates in fifteen countries, and is based on seven factors: products and services, innovation, workplace,

governance, citizenship, leadership, and performance. The two companies were Rolex, that was ranked 1st and Adidas, that was ranked 10th. (Reputation Institute, 2017).

Following brands with great reputation, can help determine where they are good at, and what it is that they do, to become number one. Labels should be able to learn from others, and apply the practises, but also remember to make them better or completely unique.



Image 13. Benetton faced reputation disaster when Rana Plaza collapsed.

But not all reputation is great (image 13). Large companies such as Benetton, had lost its reputation as a great and “green” brand, when consumers found out about Rana Plaza.

Rana Plaza was sewing factory in Bangladesh that collapsed in 2013, killing 1138 people and was the worst industrial disaster in the country and the worst garment factory disaster in the world. Benetton paid 1.1 million to victim’s fund, and H&M was the first and the largest brand to sign on to the 2013 Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh. (Kasperkevic 2016).

3.3.6 Provenance

The story of who you are and where you come is one of the most important aspects when meeting new people. The same applies to brands and their own stories. Currently brand origin, locality, authenticity and originality are strong assets, that should not be ignored (Sounio 2010, 48).

Country of origin effect (COO or COOE) may affect the consumer's purchasing choice. It used to be considered, that products made in China are lower quality than the ones made in Europe, but nowadays most of the fashion labels, even luxury ones, make their products in China, as the production technology has increased rapidly within several years.

There are still some perceptions about particular goods and their production from certain countries, such as Italian leather, French lace, Scottish cashmere and so on.

Other associations might be through the most popular type of design in the country, Scandinavian design is associated with Nordic countries, high fashion, luxury and couture with France and Italy.

Whatever it will say on your "made in" tag, it will be up to you, as long as it adds up to your brand identity and story. (Posner 2015, 124).

But in addition to your "made in" tag, your brand can be associated with country, city or origin; Pepe Jeans London, Donna Karan New York (DKNY), American Apparel, Tiger of Sweden. Associating your brand with provenance has been a successful role for many fashion labels, because it signals something about the country/place and its positivity and values, what could otherwise lack from your brand (Nijher 2016). Even though the brand doesn't necessarily have to be from that location, the name can help us identify style, culture and attitude.

"Customers are willing to pay a premium when brand provenance is done right. 'Made in', 'made by', and 'made since' are all shorthand for things that people genuinely care about such as quality, components, environment, health, personality and identity"
(Nijher 2016).

Such information can be easily added to labels or tags (see image 14).



Image 14. Additional brand information can be easily applied to tags.

3.3.7 Emotional meaning to the owner and customer

Fashion, is all about being included - to be part of the world or lifestyle that feels good, looks good and moreover is available. Anyone and everyone should have a chance to get it - regardless of the financial situation. (Agins 1999, 85).

Emotions can be used to extend the customer's emotional state (mood), or give a reason to purchase your products. For example, the same dress sold by two different stores/eCommerce's.

First brand reflects happiness and joy, and the other one serenity and pride. Depending on the state of mind of the customer, applied emotion can help to determine which store will make the sale.

In much deeper context, creating an emotional bond with consumers is one of the strongest ways for a brand to inspire loyalty. People tend to remember better, when something is associated with the feelings (Psychologist World, 2017). They connect emotionally with the brands they identify with, whether they realise it or not. (Chasser & Wolfe 2010).



Image 15. Having emotional bond with the brand will make the customers come back and possibly loyal

Think about the emotions that are associated with your designs. Do they make you feel good about yourself? Do they make you feel young? Or perhaps, knowing that they are made sustainable way, does it make you feel that you've done something good to the world?

How do you feel about your customers and how you want them to feel about your brand? Remembering your customers by name, their birthdays, and giving small gifts (or a simple unexpected discount) can evoke positive feelings about you and your brand.

Your brand can carry many emotions, try to pick the best ones and work them through, so that the customers can feel them too.

3.3.8 Consistency

You cannot entirely control your image, but you can influence it with consistency and communication (Juholin 2009, 193).

Consistency does not mean, that you choose to use a single visual identification element consistently, like for instance: “our brands advertising will always contain blue color” or “our models are never wearing shoes”. This type of consistency tend to be very corny and unfavourable. (Uusitalo 2014, 24).

Consistency needs to be applied to your brand promise, such as; “we only use recycled materials”. Your customers will know, that no matter what you do in your organisation, your products will always be as promised.

Another important aspect is communication. If your brand is constantly updating website, or is seen in particular magazine, people react, as that being the norm, and notice it very quickly, if consistency is broken.

3.3.9 Producer pride

If you love what you do and you care about your products, it will show in how they are made, delivered and developed.

But sometimes, it can be the consumers that demand the change or something new, making the producer do completely the opposite of what he or she is used to. In these situations, carry the demand with pride, stepping over your own views and comfort zone can help you become even better at what you though you do best. Leave room for learning and growing, and make every step of your journey count and make yourself, your team and your customers proud.

3.3.10 Availability

Brand should be available both mentally and physically. Mental availability gives customers reason to think about your brand, before they are even considering of making a purchase. For achieving mental availability, brand message has to be clear and easily remembered.

For example, when you think about purchasing new quality sexy women's underwear, first thing that might pop into your head is Victoria's secret. Of course you can also think of many other stores and brands such as Change lingerie or any store selling

lingerie, but that is exactly the type of mental availability brand has to gain - to be there, in people's mind, when they think about a product, and be memorable for the future reference.

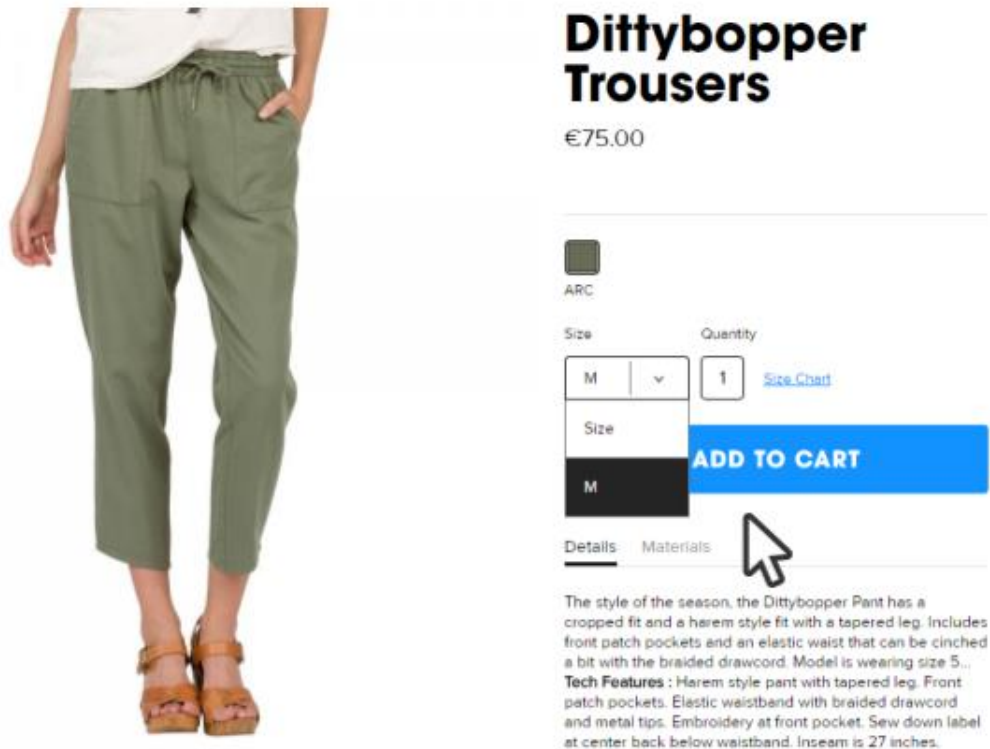


Image 16. Volcom website tells you availability when you pick the size. In this image, the only available size is M.

Physical availability on the other hand, are the products themselves on shop shelves and in stock (image 16), that customers can get where and when they want the product. It is the breadth and depth of distribution in time and space. (Gebert 2015).

With the brand strategy, you need to decide how broadly you want to distribute your label and brand items. Do you want to be always available, in store and online? How quickly is your brand going to respond, if the most popular items are sold out and what is the next step?

For example, many luxury handbags brands will distribute one of their latest models with only one piece per store. It makes the handbags more desirable, unique and increases the value of the bag. It makes the bag available everywhere, but not for everyone.

Another relatively recent example is H&M x Balmain collection. There was only a limited amount of sizes, per shops, per country worldwide. So even though H&M has many shops in one country, the collection wasn't available everywhere. Even H&M website had limitations, that you were able to purchase only one item per product from this collection. With these limitations and narrowed availability, Balmain collections we're sold out very quickly. (Mondalek 2015).

3.3.11 Value greater than unbranded product

Great brands appeal to the brain (common sense) as well as to the heart (feelings), and offers functional and emotional benefits. Branding helps to build relationships with the customers and strong brands are normally well trusted (Baines et al. 2013, 221). Value created with branding provides additional reasons for the customer to engage. Well designed brand has better control of itself and its promises. (Uusitalo 2014, 31 & 77).

It is easier to copy the functional characteristics of a product or service (image 17), than the brands way to deliver them emotionally (Baines et al. 2013, 222).



Image 17. The was between Gucci and copycat Mango

4 Marketing

4.1 What is marketing?

Marketing is an exchange process. It is the communication between the company and the customer, and its purpose is to generate a diversity of assets for both parties (Posner 2015, s. 34). Communication increases brand value and creates impressions, and half of the brand value consists of the way it communicates (Sounio 2010, 84).

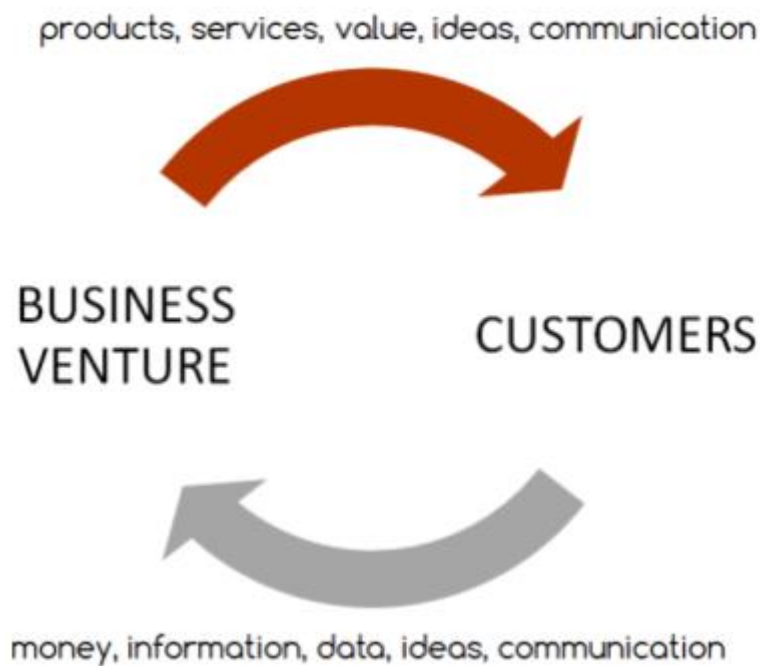


Image 18. Exchange process between customer and business.

Marketing is about seeing the business through customers' eyes (Craven 2005, 15). It is the most visible function in any organisation, and because of the marketing, people make their decisions and make their opinion on products and brands/labels. It is often considered, that marketing is only advertising and sellers work, but in reality, it is much more than that. (Bergström & Leppänen 2002, 7).

Marketing is about finding exactly whom to sell to, and why and how they want to buy. It includes product development, examining and identifying customers needs and demands, managing customer relationships and satisfying customer needs. (Craven 2005, 86).

There are several tools and frameworks that explain consumer behaviour and marketing influence. We will discuss the AIDA model and most common marketing strategies used in the fashion industry.

4.1.1 The AIDA model

The AIDA model as seen in the image 19, is the foundation for modern marketing and advertising practice. It contains four basic steps to persuade potential customers to make a purchase:

1. Attention, making customer aware of the product
2. Interest, providing information about the advantages and benefits
3. Desire, generate desire by convincing that product will meet customer's need
4. Action, making it as easy as possible for customer to make the purchase (DK 2014).

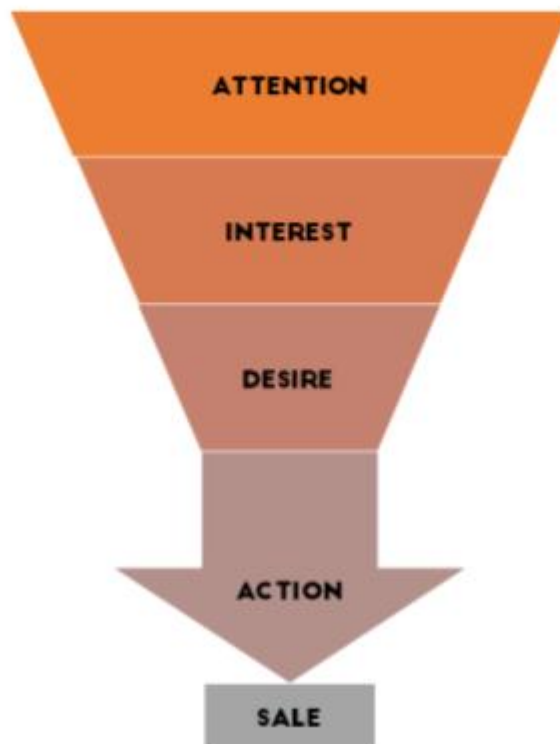


Image 19. The AIDA model

There are several ways how the label can achieve attention. It can be as simple as a good catchphrase or a discount, but it has to be interesting enough for the customer to proceed to genuine interest of what is on offer.

When browsing through the products, to keep potential customers interested, you can use product features and benefits to create the reason and desire for the customer to proceed to the next step.

Making the buying purchase experience as simple, easy and fast is important. In stores this can be achieved by placing enough staff and cash machines, as well as providing different payment methods, perhaps online, with direct links and availability to purchase without registering.

4.1.2 Marketing strategies

A marketing strategy outlines how a business intends to market its brand, products and services to existing and potential customers. The initial step in devising a strategy is to define the marketing objectives the business wishes to achieve (Posner 2015, s. 40).

It is up to you, what are you going to do first - the product and then find the market/niche or first determine the niche and then come up with the product. Either way works, but it doesn't hurt to do a little bit of research, because in the end, you need paying customers to make a living.

Customer centric approach

Instead of one-way advertising, customers want interaction with the brand, meaning that the brand should not only promote products and push the sales, but also listen what customers have to say about the products and give them information they want to hear or see. In other words, they want to be known as brand fans. They are hungry for the lifestyle information and hottest news about the brand. These fans might even feel like they own the brand, and react quickly to changes done within the organisation. (Sounio 2010, 29).

Posner (2015) outlines, that consumers expect visual and written content as part of their engagement and relationship with fashion brands, that needs to be a constant stream of up-to-date material. An underlying concept of marketing is to produce what

people want. It is therefore important to carry out research in order to identify who the consumers are and determine what they might require (29).

Visually appealing and well-written text on advertisement or a blog catches the eye. It's what makes consumers act and buy. With effective fashion communication, customers can feel that the people behind the brand really care, after assembling an appealing and interesting content using words and images. (Wolbers 2009, 241).

Inbound marketing is one of the customer centric marketing strategies, when the brands do not approach the audience with their products, but more of their everyday challenges and solutions to their problems by creating relevant content to their website, blogs or social media channels. This way, the business creates awareness and attracts customers to visit their different sites online and even subscribe to their newsletter. Inbound marketing, is all about creating good and helpful content to its target group.

If you are a fashion label that produces garments from recycled materials, with inbound marketing, you'd be more likely writing about recycling, fabrics made from recycled materials, the power of recycling, fashion and recycling and other content that might be interesting to read, without making the customer think about making any a purchase on your site, as the inbound ideology is, that customer goes through different stages, before actually purchasing a product or using a service. (See appendix 1) (Hubspot 2017).

Product centric approach

Sometimes people don't really know what they want. With product centric approach, you concentrate on the functions, most powerful benefits or advantages that the product offers, so that it would be irrational for a potential customer to buy from someone else. (Craven 2002).

Conclusion

No matter if you choose to concentrate on the customer or the product centric approach, they both share same characteristic, such as finding and knowing the features and attributes, but thinking about the benefits and emotional meaning as well.

Levitt's has created a model, showing, that customers don't buy just 'a product', but everything involved with the product, such as style, quality, brand and everything that

comes after the purchase. As seen on the figure above (image 20), even a simple jumper has layers, that can be used to market a product via different expectations, communications and services. (Posner 2015, 43; Bergström & Leppänen 2002, 87).

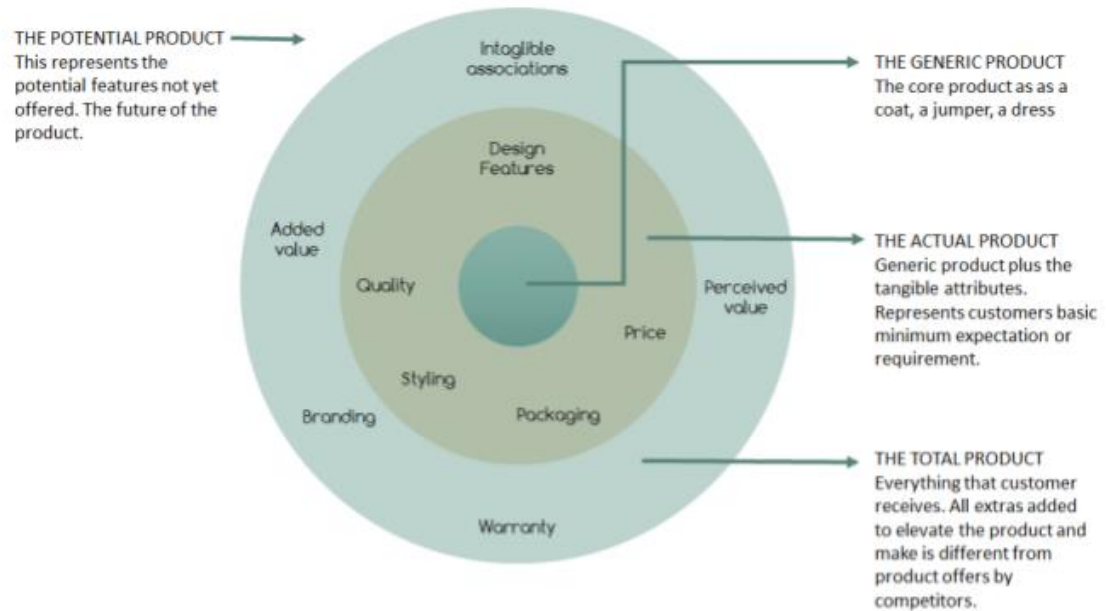


Image 20. Every product layer defines something new to the customer.

4.2 Marketing for a fashion label

The fact is, that some women are into clothes, but the average consumer is not interested in the fashion world. Women want good looking clothes, that have functional purpose in real life and can be worn to most of the occasions and that fit no matter what (see example in image 21 how simple dress can be worn in order to create multiple outfits). Keeping this in mind, even the most creative fashion designers show off their creativity through marketing rather than their designs. (Agins 1999, 14).



Image 21. How one dress can be transport into multiple outfits

4.2.1 Market research

Market research is highly recommended, as it helps you to understand your customers, competitors, industry you are in, and how to deliver the goods meeting your customer's expectations. (Baines et al. 2013, 96; Pyle 2010).

You can use primary or secondary research, but there are common mistakes when relying only on one or another. Primary research means interviewing or surveying potential clients or the target group. The common mistake made in primary research is when focusing on collecting data from people you already know. (Pyle 2010). Try to find people outside your friendzone and as many results as possible.

Secondary research means collecting and analysing data that has been already published. This is relatively easy and fast way to get information about your target group, but there are also numerous amounts of data online that are not very accurate or can be outdated. Secondary research is effective when trying to understand your competitors and target group demographics.

The main data that needs to be collected through research, is the information on the size of the market and its current state, for instance, is it a growing market? What is the future of the market? (Posner 2015, 64). This information will provide you insights about your customers, and the future of your business.



Image 22: By understanding how your customers like to buy will determine the best way to sell.

Market research is important, because not all consumers are the same, and by conducting the research, you can learn their motivations and shopping behaviour, such as: is shopping a social event or something they do online (image 22)? By identifying customers with similar characteristics, needs or fashion traits, you will know your market size, their location and habits. (Posner 2015, 108). Using this data, you can calculate approximately profitability and potential amount of production.

4.2.2 Marketing research and trends

Marketing research is much broader than market research, and includes research into new products, modes of distribution, product development, promotion research, pricing, advertising and public relations (Qualtrics 2010).

Popular methods used within marketing research in fashion industry is like-for-like (LFL) product comparison, that is detailed investigation into specific product. For example, if your collection contains basic product such as t-shirt, after identifying your competitors, you compare your product, in this case the t-shirt, with theirs. Research will include comparison of the price, fabrics, make quality, design details, fit, wash care, performance, colour options and amount of sizes and products in total. (Posner 2015, 81).

The next chapter, 4.3 Making a marketing plan, will explain what above topics include, making it easier to understand what type of marketing plan fashion business might require.

4.3 Making a marketing plan

Marketing can help you find out what makes your business unique, but a marketing plan helps you find out what, where and who are your customers, think about the future of your business and any other factors that might affect your company, such as determining marketing objectives and strategies, and establishing the actions your organisation intends to take in order to achieve its marketing and business goals. Marketing plans consist of market research, identifying the target group and their behaviour, analysing current and future trends and finding out who your competitors are and what they are doing to be successful. (Department of industry, innovation and science 2016; Posner 2015, 101)(See appendix 2 of a marketing plan table of content sample).

A marketing plan should provide a strategic insight and nature into the markets, competitors and resources, and cover at least two year and up-to five-year marketing period and include one year detailed operational or functional plan, that should be continuously analysed, updated and measured. (Baines et al. 2013, 157-158).

4.3.1 Who and where is your customer?

Drawing a plan on who is your customer is essential to any business. Depending on your designs and brand identity, you need to find out, are there any customers to buy your clothing, and how to get them interested in your offerings, since we all know, the fashion market is very cluttered.

With market segmentation, you can divide market into more smaller, more focused sectors, or so called niche. The fashion market can be segmented in several ways, for example by product type or market level (luxury, premium, budget...). (Posner 2015, 55).

Define the size of the target group in an amount of people, as well as in euros and be realistic. Narrow down the target group to your niche (using statistics), for getting more accurate numbers. Get specific and add any details, such as age, income, hobbies, job status, where they spend their holidays, where they shop and how they use their money.

Analyse the lifestyle and trends of your target group, that have the most impact on your designs. (Gehlhar 2005, 11)

4.3.2 Identifying the competitors

Try to identify from five to seven new competitors, that have similar products and same target group (image 23), and name at least three big competitors, that are well-known in the current market. Find out for how long they have existed, and what were their sales. Where they sell, who represents them and how they market themselves. Compare the products, designs, prices and quality, and what are their strengths and weaknesses. (Gehlar 2005, 12).

ZARA LIND&XVILA
Bershka VERO MODA®
MANGO KappAhl

Image 23. Brand that more or less compete with each other for the same target audience: "Young business-oriented woman".

Searching for your competitors can be challenging. One suggestion is, not to rely only on search engines such as Google, because your competitors websites might not be up and running, or can be hard to find. Best way is by asking your potential customers where they shop and what brands they wear. Going to forums and e.g. Facebook groups you can learn about small and new labels that are up and running and share similar characteristics and/or designs like your brand.

4.3.3 Situation analysis

This part of marketing plan examines internal and external factors of the brand and creates an overview of an organisation for understanding the factors that may influence the future. Most common measuring tool is SWOT analysis, that covers vast amount of information about the business, customers, competitors and projected growth in present and future. (Lorette 2017).

For systematic collection and evaluation of past and present is also used PEST analysis that examines economical, political, social, and technological data, that help organisation to determine performance and choice of strategies. (Business Dictionary 2017).

SWOT-Framework

SWOT framework comes in handy when figuring out where you and your brand are good at and where you need improvement, but it can also be used in comparing your label with the competitors, for creating a strategy to make yourself different from the others.

SWOT stands for; strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (image 24).



Image 24. SWOT analysis and common questions that need to be answered.

SWOT analysis can also help you to see how your competitors are doing on the market. Choose at least one competitor (not a super brand like Gucci or Ralph Lauren), this should be your number one competitor, and analyse it by using SWOT. When you have identified its strengths and weaknesses, try to propose better offerings. Check the amount of the products in a collection as well as the prices. Compare how many items they have in price pyramid (what and how much can you get in low price, mid-price and in high price). (Agins 1999, 73). Try to do what your competitor does, but better - or take a risk, and do something completely different, as long as you believe your strategy will work.

Getting information about a competitor's range of products, and their sales volumes and value, their profitability, prices and discount structures, the nature of their relationships with suppliers and distributors, their communications campaigns and special offers as seen in image 25, are all important (Baines et al. 2013, 136).



Image 25. You should know when your competitors drop prices, what is the biggest discount and how they promote the sales.

PEST-analysis

Pest analysis is often linked to SWOT analysis, but in reality, they concentrate on two different factors. Where SWOT analysis tells you everything about the business (internal audit), PEST analysis tells everything about the world outside the business that may affect the business one way or another (external audit).

- PEST stands for political, economical, socio-cultural and technological factors. There are also different variations of PEST analyses, that are:
- PESTLE/PESTEL: Political, Economic, Socio-Cultural, Technological, Legal, Environmental.
- PESTLIED: Political, Economic, Socio-Cultural, Technological, Legal, International, Environmental, Demographic.
- STEEPLE: Social/Demographic, Technological, Economic, Environmental, Political, Legal, Ethical.
- SLEPT: Socio-Cultural, Legal, Economic, Political, Technological.
- LONGPESTLE: Local, National, and Global versions of PESTLE. (Mindtools 2017b).

You should use real figures and brainstorm any upcoming factors on the market, if they are relevant to your label. Image 26 carries most common factors that need to be researched for a fashion label:



Image 26. PEST analysis with common questions for a fashion label.

4.3.4 Objectives

S.M.A.R.T. goals or objectives are something your label should try to reach within certain time and should be more or less realistic, with a description how to get there. They need to be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timed (S.M.A.R.T.).

For example:

1. Sell minimum 120 t-shirts every month.
 - a. Specific: You need to sell 120 t-shirts.
 - b. Measurable: You can follow the sales of t-shirts every month
 - c. Achievable: With help of promotion, possible discounts and new designs, you should be able to reach your target
 - d. Relevant: If your best sales come from t-shirts, you should concentrate how to get the sales up and follow them. Do not just pick any garment type, as it has to be meaningful to your business.

- e. Timed: You know you have one month to make the sales, for as long as your business is up and running.

You can add social media awareness to your S.M.A.R.T. objectives, but is it really necessary and relevant to your brand? As discussed before in chapter 4.1.2 Marketing strategies, people want to be known as brand fans, and by clicking 'like' button on facebook page on the spur of the moment does not show any commitment or special preference for the brand. (Uusitalo 2014, 83). Try to be more specific who you want to engage and through which channels.

Good objectives should include (annual) profit, new (retail) opportunities (physical stores or e-commerce), sales and improvement of processes (e.g. delivery times).

4.3.5 Differentiation and USP

Brands that offer products and services in a different way and apply completely different values, characteristics, benefits and strategies than for example market leader or closest competitor, is called differentiation. (Baines et al. 2013, 390) This means, that the same type of products are being promoted to different markets, with a different angle (image 27)(Aseem 2014).

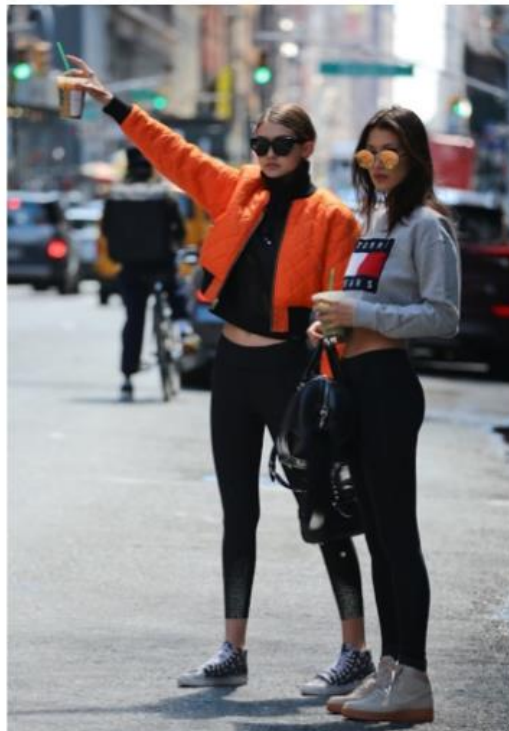


Image 27. Athleisure – when workout clothes became fashion.

Unique Selling Proposition or USP on the other hand is the reason the customer's pick your products instead of any other brand out there. For fashion designers or brands, it is mostly their signature style that helps define their USP and can be easily recognisable because of it. But if there are similar brands with similar features (such as price and target group), differentiation will be more valuable option to determine the brand strategy. (Posner 2015, 61).

There are several tools that can be used to determine how various brands are perceived according to the key attributes that customers value. When trying to apply differentiation strategy, such tools can be very useful, for positioning the brand as far as possible from competitors. Most common tool is called perceptual map (image 28), that visually represents each market and helps to understand the complexity associated with different attributes and brands. (Baines et al. 2013, 191).

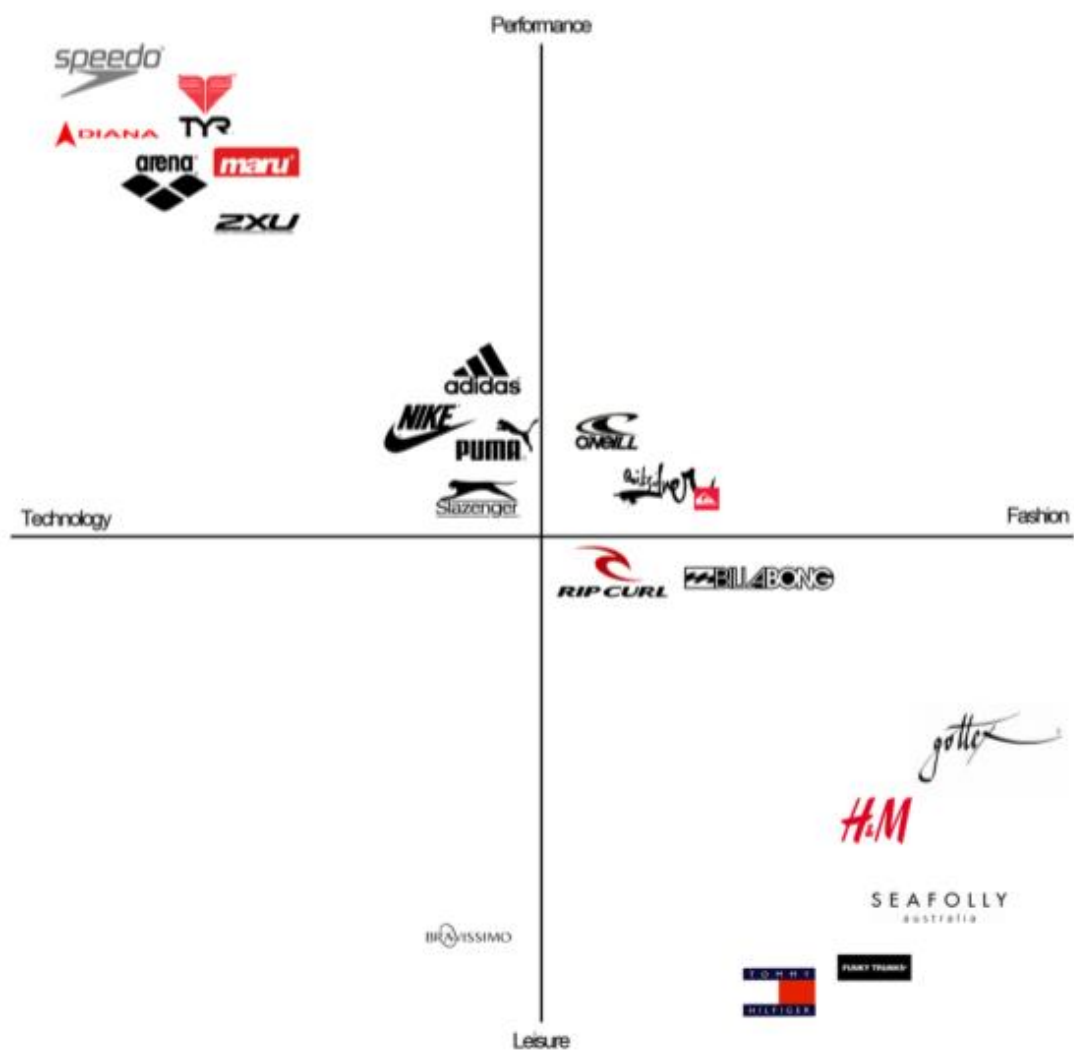


Image 28. Example of a sports brands perceptual/positioning mapping

4.3.6 Marketing Mix

In reality, fashion is not a product-based industry, but rather a service or people based. Fashion, trends and shopping experience cannot be put as a product, so therefore it is recommended to use the expanded marketing mix or the 7P's, since it puts the customer into the center (Posner 2015, 41). The original 4P stands for product, place, price and promotion, and the 7P marketing mix has in addition people, process and physical environment.

Best practise is to choose two most strongest or most important attributes of the 7P's and work them into perfection (Mortimer, Brooks, Smith & Hiam 2009, 16).

Product

Products are used to meet and satisfy customer needs.

Consider which are the most important factors and characteristics of the product from your customers point of view, what makes them commit to the purchase? How do they serve current and future customers, what is the feel and look of the product, how it is presented and what is its packaging, and which rational and emotional features it includes. (Mortimer et al. 2009, 16).

10-20% of the garments should be experimental eyecatchers and show stoppers, getting you the wanted attention from media and public. Otherwise most of the collection should concentrate on the most wanted items, such as jeans, t-shirts, jackets or other basic models that are easy to purchase. Swedish model is to sell one product properly to gain competitive advantage, before moving to the next step. (Sounio 2010, 169).

For apparel, product relates to product design, style, fit, sizing, quality, fashion level as well as performance and function (Posner 2015, s. 41) and packaging is one of the most important aspects of a brand (image 29), since it is the first moment when consumer interacts with the product (Chasser & Wolfe 2010, 56).



Image 29. You can be very creative with your packaging and it can really delight the consumer.

Place

What is the actual place of the stores (and products within the department stores) and warehouses, as well as how and where they are distributed in order for customers to be able to access them at a time and place that is most convenient to them (Baines et al. 2013, 372). If you are an ecommerce shop, it is most obvious that your products are on your website, but you should also consider partnering with other ecommerce stores, opening a showroom or using product and editorial images on different platforms, such as Pinterest or Etsy, forums and so on.

Think about where your customers are, where they go, which websites they visit and which apps or games they play in order to place your products correctly and being available when needed (image 30).

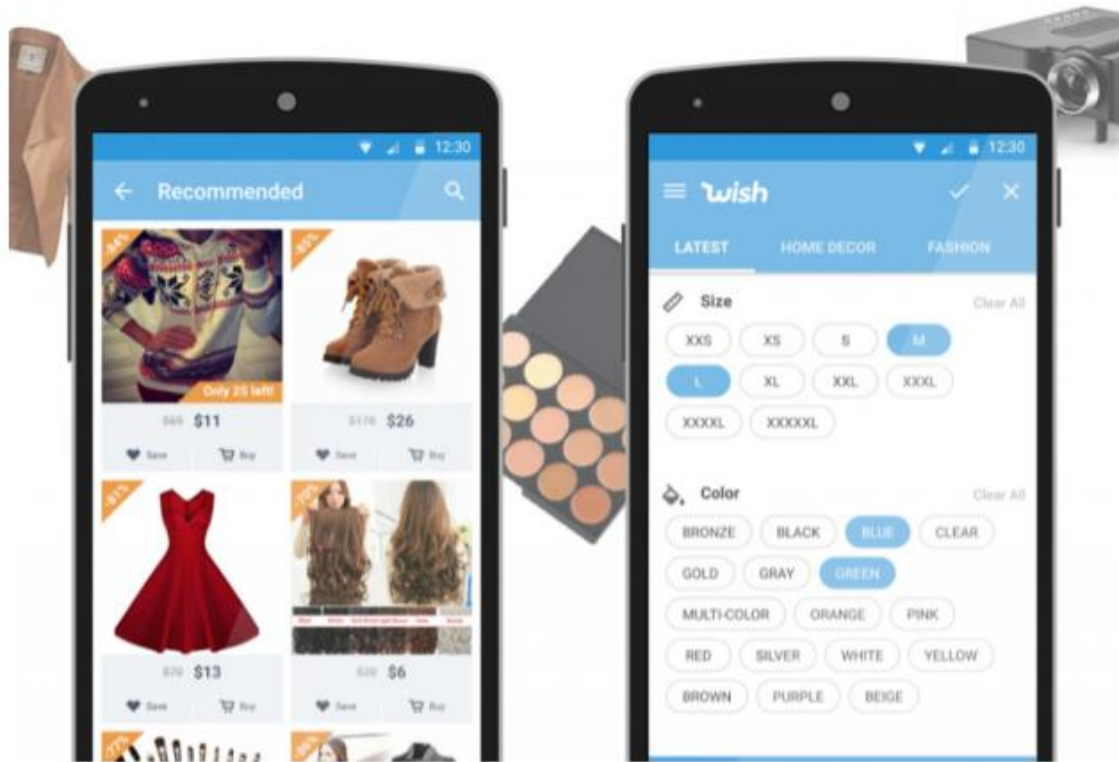


Image 30. Make it easier for customers to buy. You can even create your own app for your eCommerce.

Price

A typical customer is no longer entirely loyal to one fashion store and will search for the best price from their favourite fashion labels (Aginis 1999, 166).

Dividing products into price pyramid can make your label affordable to much broader target group, increase sales and divide your collection into a smarter and more cost effective structure.

At the bottom of the price pyramid are the basics, casual and accessory items that cost less than other products and is the biggest part of the collection. This includes socks, underwear and sunglasses, as well as t-shirts, shirts, basic jeans and so on. Most of the items stay the same after season and may change in colour.

Next level of the pyramid is the trend/mainstream clothing that has a higher price and less products available than the bottom part of the pyramid. This part can include jackets, trend items and seasonal clothing. Apparel in this section changes every season and should follow the current trends.

The top of the pyramid should be used for eye catching items, that are most expensive. It should contain only couple of items from the entire collection. As an example, look at

the brand Canada Goose that is specialised in outdoor wear (jackets). They have many products available for under 500€ (basic jackets, vests, accessories, pants), still broad but narrower product range between 500-1000 €, and only few items over 1000 € for which they are most known for (parkas).

This type of price structure was developed by luxury brands, when introducing affordable brand items for the consumers, that wanted to own something made by them. This is also the reason why luxury brands have their own fragrances (Agins 1999).

Prices should also include a sales plan (e.g. -20% off) and a price strategy for each season.

Promotion

Promotion is the way you communicate and present your products and services to the target audience (Baines et al. 2013, 372). Is it going to be advertised? Are you going to send newsletters or distribute leaflets?

When choosing promotion platforms, it's recommended to create a one year marketing calendar, on every seasonal hot-point - what is the most interesting thing happening at that time?

Most of the marketing campaigns kick-start just before the big event when competition is toughest (Sounio 2010, 39). Choose the best time when to start the promotion and follow the trends and habits of your customers. If you use fashion editors and bloggers in your promotion, remember to invite them in good advance (Sounio 2010, 39). Also decide for how long ad campaign or a promotion will last, so there won't be any overlaps with the existing ones.

PR is nowadays in the centre of marketing. Reputation wasn't as important before, compared to today. Public relations communicates positivity and facts about the brand story, products and people, and hides and harbours any negative news and press releases. (Hall 2012, 98).

Image 31 shows what is the main difference between marketing and PR, and when these two meet in order to create working campaign and content for the audience.



Image 31. What is Marketing and PR, and where do they meet.

People

If you use content created by the community, think about how to reward them (Sounio 2010, 105). People are everyone who deals with your label, inside and outside of the organisation.

Treat the customer as a person you like, that you would like to know better and with whom you want to chat with. Tell new stories, and don't bore them with same old things (Hall 2012, 172). Don't forget, that customers using social media prefer operators with faces and not robots, so make sure you have enough staff to operate in every angle of the organisation.

Also new staff always have to be trained and led by someone who knows how to communicate with the customers. The right people will believe in the product and deliver best service they can.

But employees are not the only people who represent the brand. Designers should also carry at least half of the brands representation. What they wear, where they eat, where they go is the brand's extension. If possible, the designer should wear own designs, or at least represent the aesthetics of the brand (image 32). (Gehlar 2005, 87).



Image 32. 21st century kilts: The kilt designer hasn't worn trousers for years.

Process

What happens before and after the purchase? How tracking, reclamation, etc. is proceeded? What does it take for the customer to get the garment into their wardrobe? How do they get rid of the garment when it's no longer needed?

Fashion has a peculiar process, because products created as fashions are designed to have a short lifespan, especially in modern westernised world. Trends change and process has to be fast to serve the required demand. (Reilly 2014, 13). Having detailed process and operations chain can be an asset, when trying to compete for best service and fast distribution.

There are also several ways to deliver the product.

The most cost effective way, is to show the products (prototypes) in advance, and let them order them with a better price. This can give the designer and manufacturer valuable information, which models are most wanted and what opinions and emotions the customers had when going through the collection. This can help the organisation to cut off any products, that are not wanted or alter them for better appeal. (Sounio 2010, 135).

Process can consist of various separate plans/systems, such as sales funnel, pay systems, customer relationships (loyalty card owners, regulars, online shoppers) that all require own process maps on the entire chain of shopping experience. Thinking

through every step of the process can help to determine what is needed or has to be updated to make it as smooth, fast and easy as possible.

Physical environment

Physical environment is nowadays much broader concept, and includes the actual physical environment such as store or showroom, physical presence, that includes company cars, staff clothing, business cards etc. and online environment, as internet is no longer just a communication platform, it is where people meet and manage their everyday affairs (Juholin 2009, 20). Just being found online is no longer enough, and you need to give a reason for the customer to get interested (Uusitalo 2014, 89).

Making physical environment interesting and memorable is one marketing tool and common factor in differentiation in the fashion industry. Turning stores into interesting scenic places, taking advantages in lighting, furniture, location and architecture is even almost a norm for branded labels (image 33).



Image 33. Piccio children fashion store in Valencia has very creative interior that is hard to forget.

4.3.7 Finances

Improved living standards in developing countries forces a rise in production prices which in turn affects the prices of the final products. With this development, we won't be able to afford new shoes or clothes the same way as we are used to, thus meaning that people will start repairing and making their products themselves. (Merisalo 2010, 22)

Keeping that in mind, following the production finances and predicting future costs should be measured. People are prepared to pay for the premium, but what the premium means to the consumer, might be totally different what you have in mind (e.g. produced locally vs. hand-made in Europe).

For startups, you can easily get access to production estimates and using realistic numbers of customers to calculate possible sales. For every other item added into calculation, such as office supplies or shop furniture you can find through online research.

If you are looking for a fund or a grant, the label should do a test run of garments, e.g. jeans and see how they sell or attract people. When you have managed to sell 1000 pairs, it is much easier to get the grant when you have actual profit margins, sales and market research to show. (Sounio 2010, 169).

Before setting up online crowdfunding, don't just pick up any platform there is, as you should find the one that is best for your label and purpose, and which type of funding you are looking for.

Try to tell a story and keep awareness up at all time. Do not just open up a fundraising, and hope that people will help you with your brand, you need to be active and find the people that might invest in your label. Write a good pitch, make a video and build up online awareness, and most important, make them look professional, so people will know that you take your business seriously.

5 Putting it into practise

5.1 48 as a brand

48 will be launched when every aspect of the branding and marketing has been strategically planned and tested. The idea is to have 48 as an ecommerce (online) store.

5.1.1 Target group

From what we have learned, a brand should appeal to certain type of people, encouraging them to engage. For a brand such as 48, finding its niche would not be hard, because it has already chosen what type of clothing it will produce, and who they will target, but from marketing point of view, the label is missing a plan on how the brand is going to communicate with the target group, and how many people there are, or how they fit into that particular segment.

For English speaking brand, communication is not a problem, as a result of globalisation, many new brands adopt English language as their business language, making them appealing and international no matter where their clients are. Same ideology is adopted to 48, even though the homebase of the brand will be Finland, which will be promoted in the brands strategy.

Other key points to consider regarding the communication, knowing exactly what the target group is looking for, and how they behave on social media and during their everyday lives. The brand should follow the influencers and spend the day with few of the ideal customers to understand their vocabulary, tone, catchphrases, where they go and what they do, as well as what are their problems/challenges and is there a way to solve them. (Voughan 2015).

5.1.2 Differentiation

Label 48 will have competitors in Finnish and in rest European market. In Finland, most direct and obvious competitors are Makia, Clothing and BilleBeino, indirect on the other hand are Formal Friday, Running Coala, Lean Garments and Ponkes. These brands represent either similar products, target group or label/production ideology. When look-

ing into European countries, there are many more smaller brands available for the same target audience, but 48 will, for the first few years, concentrate on finding its niche and USP within Finland.

The brand will decide on its offering, separating itself from others and making a strategy why the consumers should buy from them. This will lead us to creating better offerings and sending a clear message of the benefits to the customers. (Craven 2005, 79).

5.2 Brand strategy

Brand at its core should include clear name/word identity that's unique and distinctive, clear visual/design identity, strong, focused and clear messaging for creating engagement and loyalty, and finally continuous reinforcement through messaging (Chasser & Wolfe 2010, 46).

To support above aspects and to get started, brand should create a human version of the brand, that will help the label to make unified image of the brand. By creating a persona, brand will have a certain type of approach, tone and type of communication.

But creating a persona is not the only brand strategy to consider. Another factor and competitive platform is to include sustainability into the brand strategy. Even though sustainable production can be expensive, demand is growing for ethically sourced fashion and production methods (Posner 2015, 61). Label 48 will continue in the same footsteps as Decent Hardware in sense of sustainability, but is going to apply few changes into the brand strategy, with making everything as locally as possible, and encourage on new types of delivery/pick-up options to the market.

Sustainability for the label is more of a social norm, and has more to it, than being "fashionably ethical" or "green". Since the growth of sustainability has created the ideology of making sustainability part of everyday life, environmental aspect of the movement might not be the consumers priority anymore (Reilly 2014, 83).

5.3 Marketing strategy

Modern marketing has moved towards individualised and tailored content so every customer gets and sees exactly what they want, when they want (Craven 2005, 77). When targeting specific niche in one location, customised marketing is more or less applicable, but will require much more resources, when trying to target similar niche on the other side of the border, as it might require a total game changer.

Marketing requires relatively deep research and specific strategy. It should also include if the brand will try to influence on logical thinking or on emotions. It won't be considered as very effective strategy, if the brand decides to pick both. (Mortimer et al. 2009, 104).

Using recognisable design in marketing can trigger a connection between the product and the user. Design can also be borrowed from another product, that doesn't even have a connection to your brand or industry (e.g. Valio milk - Aalto vase). (Sounio 2010, 30).

The communication part and that which channels the label is seen through, it is very important for the brands overall image and into which category people see it is related to. Many small parts of any marketing campaign may affect the reputation, image and its awareness. (Uusitalo 2014, 82).

5.3.1 Marketing channels for eCommerce label

Newspapers and (e-)magazines

Fashion brands should have their own folder of marketing materials for newspapers and magazines. The folder should be clear and simple with couple of pockets that should include a look book or high quality photos, information of the products for the buyer, label biography, collection summary and copies of previous magazine publications. (Gehlar 2005, 88). Biography should be at most maximum one A4 page long and have the highlights of the company. Do not copy paste the same information about the brand from the website, give always new and fresh information to the journalists.

Pick the right newspapers and magazines when sending out the folder. Is your brand or collection something that might interest the readers?

For a brand like 48, men's lifestyle and fashion magazines as well as some of the hobby (sports, sailing, car/bike magazines) might be the right place to offer an article space, since brand concentrates on durable, high quality clothing for men.

Email marketing

Email marketing is probably the cheapest way to tell about your brand and products, but also one of the hardest, if you don't know what you are doing. It requires people to subscribe to your mailing list.

The truth about emails is, that people hate and ignore "spammy" emails, even if the email contains valuable information, on something that people might actually need at the best possible price. Email campaigns require loads of time and testing, especially when setting things up at the first time. Don't use all of the contacts you have, and try to learn from analytics on how well the campaign is performing.

Blog

Since marketing tactics have changed from 'trying-to-sell' to 'giving useful information' (inbound marketing), blogs have become a part of marketing practises. There are many reasons why any organisation and especially fashion brand should write their own blog, and main reasons are:

1. People constantly search for information and answers online. If your blog writes about something target group is searching for online, it is more likely that your blog post will appear on the first page of google.
2. Having a blog helps you to create followers and engage with your customers. It makes the discussion between the brand and the consumer more realistic.
3. Blog can give a personality to your website and tell more about the products on how to wear them, how to care them and how to match them. Good blogs have thousands of followers and big names hire influencers to write about their styles, likes and dislikes. The importance of a blog, is not to sell, but tell about everything that might be related with the brand.
4. Having one writer and one blog is good, but allowing influencers to write a post on your blog, and have the brand write on popular blogs (guest blogging) is even better. This is a great way to get people interested in your content and gain visibility across world wide web.

Online marketing

Not having a company website is almost like not having a product. The main information people seek for is address, phone number, opening hours and products. Consumers like to compare the findings and then make their purchasing decision based on the facts found online. Therefore it is crucial to have a website up and running.

48 is going to be an e-commerce store, and therefore it should provide unique shopping experience to the customer. Online shopping is becoming even more related to the brand identification and what the brand does to connect to the consumer. It's as important as the in-store experience. (Chasser & Wolfe, 68).

Online marketing also includes posting ads and banners throughout different websites and search engines. This type of online advertising is much cheaper than traditional advertising, because you can choose who sees the ad (by age, demographics, cookies, ect.) and pay when they actually click on the ad.

Mobile marketing

Brands are competing with hottest trends. Currently, most innovative labels offer apps and game-like experiences. Other stick to the basics and send simple text messages with offers. Whichever works for your brand and to the target group, should be the way the label utilizes mobile marketing.

For an e-commerce store, having an app would be a smart choice. Also considering placing products into games can help gain visibility, if that is an objective.

Word-of-mouth

Making people talk about your brand and share experience is very important for the brand image, engagement and most of all, trust. Word-of-mouth is considered as the most valuable marketing method.

Word-of-mouth can also be digital. People chat and share experience online with total strangers on platforms such as Facebook or target specific forum.

Social media marketing

Building online identity and gaining popularity takes years, but can be easily achieved with the help of social media. Don't expect to get hundreds of followers quickly, as only

a celebrity can gather thousands of followers when entering a new social media channel (Aalto 2012, 114).

Pick the social media platforms depending on your target group. Which ones they use, how often, and what they do there. Concentrate on one of them the most, and don't waste time to make them all equally perfect.

For a brand, such as 48, Facebook and Instagram are the most relevant.

Data mining

There is a lot of data available through conducted surveys as well as by following what people are talking about online and what their everyday habits are; such as what they buy, for how much and what type of payment they use. By using this data, organisation can bring exactly what the consumers want and how they want it.

Sponsoring

Sponsorship can be expensive, but will put the brand into better light. Sponsoring small happenings by just purchasing something a team or event might need is a great way to raise brand awareness, especially, if it's talking directly to the target audience. By making smart choices at the right places in the correct way, can help the brand to build positive brand reputation and visibility.

Video (YouTube and Live stream)

Making videos is not something new, but nowadays, it can be done almost by anyone and with a very little budget. There are many (even free) apps and softwares available that can be used to create a video, and some of the softwares have pre-made templates/layouts for making the video look a bit more interesting and professional.

Events and expeditions

Having leaflets or business cards is always handy, especially on big events, where there are many people with shared interests, such as sports events or relevant expos since you can hand them out.

What needs to be considered, is that many of these leaflets end up into the bins, so it is very important to hand them out to right segments during any events and making them valuable to the customer. Having 20% off with a leaflet is good, but giving something

for free is even better, if the aim is to get people making at least one purchase and getting them lured in into the website.

6 Summary

Brand building and getting noticed by your potential customers takes a lot of time and a well-planned strategy. For a start-up, ability to learn and shape the brand is something a label might do for even several years, before becoming a recognisable brand.

Regarding fashion and large amount of brands and options, people have brand new clothes in their wardrobes that remain unworn - that after some time end up into the landfill. Fashion brands are doing little to end this cycle, because they need to compete for best design and price. So most of them don't think about taking the responsibility of the sustainability within the industry. (Posner 2015, 119).

Every step taken should be planned and tested before applying them into the actual brand strategy. For brand to succeed, it should come out right the first time, to gain positive brand image, reputation and reach overall goals. Constantly changing strategies and brand identity, will message of unorganised and poor brand, who can easily lose the connection with the consumers. Applying the 11 brand ingredients, can help to shape the label into a brand, and gain the differentiation in the cluttered fashion world.

48 is not going to launch until every step of the brand strategy has been tested. Even though it is tempting to launch the brand, open the store and hope for the sales, it is more likely, that with such hassle, the label will fail and brand will die before making it to the second year.

Every business, not only fashion, needs to have clear business and marketing plan, to work as a guideline towards business success. After every applied strategy, it is important to analyse if the brand is meeting planned goals and if the strategy is working in favour of the brand.

Knowing the target audience is crucial, in the sense of knowing how to present the products to the potential customers, at the right time. Understanding the concept of marketing plan and parts of the marketing mix can help any business to understand how to be different, powerful and/or better than the competitors. It is up to the owner to

decide what will make the label unique, and this is where the marketing plan comes in handy.

This final work has taught me that there are many small elements that have a big impact on a fashion label. Many of these elements stay ignored by many entrepreneurs and start-ups, or they don't invest their time and resources on branding or marketing, as they hope, that their designs will speak for themselves.

With high interest of understanding how to brand and market a fashion label, this thesis has definitely opened new opportunities to continue learning, understanding and gaining new expertise within fashion industry, because trends and market habits are constantly changing and evolve as the world progresses with new technologies and consumer demands.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Inbound Marketing

Inbound marketing is a way to connect and engage with customers through content creation. The easiest way this is done, is by answering to most relevant questions customer might have. They might write to a search engine phrases such as: “Best dress colors for brunettes” or “How to look smart and trendy at work”.

There are four stages in inbound marketing, they are Attract, Convert, Close and Delight. By providing relevant content to potential customers, you enable the first stage “attract”, as the customers will visit your website or blog and read the text.

By having call-to-actions on that site, such as: “sign up for fashion tips” or “book your personal stylist for free” you enable them to convert to possible leads.

When they have signed up and continue receiving emails and offers from you, there next stage is to convert them from leads to actual customers, continuously remind them about your business, still providing them useful information.

When they have finally done they purchase, you need to continue delighting your customers, as they will grow to be your business promoters. With smart calls to actions and relevant to them content, you can continue making them happy and return.

Read more on HubSpot:

<https://www.hubspot.com/inbound-marketing>

Appendix 2

Sample of marketing plan table of content

1. Brand introduction
 - a. Brand history
 - b. Brand values
 - c. Brand overview
 - d. Brand structure
 - e. Products and offering
2. Situation analysis
 - a. SWOT
 - b. PEST
 - c. Competitors
3. Market analysis
 - a. Needs
 - b. Products
 - c. Trends
4. Consumer profile analysis
 - a. Segmentation
 - b. Demographics
 - c. Behaviour
 - d. Future and growth
5. Marketing strategy
 - a. SMART objectives
 - b. Marketing mix
 - c. Strategies
 - d. Marketing schedule
6. Finances
7. Control methods
 - a. Marketing audit
 - b. Efficiency control