

BUSINESS STRATEGY AND MARKETING INTEGRATION IN THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY: AN ANALYTICAL APPROACH

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Abstract

The fashion and textile industry contributes to changes in national and global economies through the purchasing of clothing. Business strategy is necessary for every successful fashion brand. Allowing an entrepreneur to think through all aspects of their fashion business with the help of business plan and business strategy, they understand how to deal with any additional obstacles and ensure it has the potential to be a viable business. To interpret the decisions within the company must be used marketing research for analyzing the values, wants, needs and behaviors of customers. With a range of techniques and a business philosophy using fashion marketing upon the customer or potential buyer of clothing and related products/ services in order to meet the long-term goals of the organization. It is a major argument that fashion marketing is different from many other areas of the marketing sector. The change is intrinsic and that is the very nature in fashion, giving different emphasis to marketing activities. Also, the role of design in both leading and reflecting consumer demand results in a variety of approaches to fashion marketing. Branding, marketing mix, process and skills are important in getting to the target market to see that one fashion brand is the only brand that can provide the right solution to their needs to build loyalty and repeat sales. The main channels in marketing intermediaries that help to get the goods from the manufacturer to the consumer are: retailers, agents, distributors, wholesalers, advertising agencies and market research agencies.

Keywords: economy, fashion, marketing concept, business process, companies,

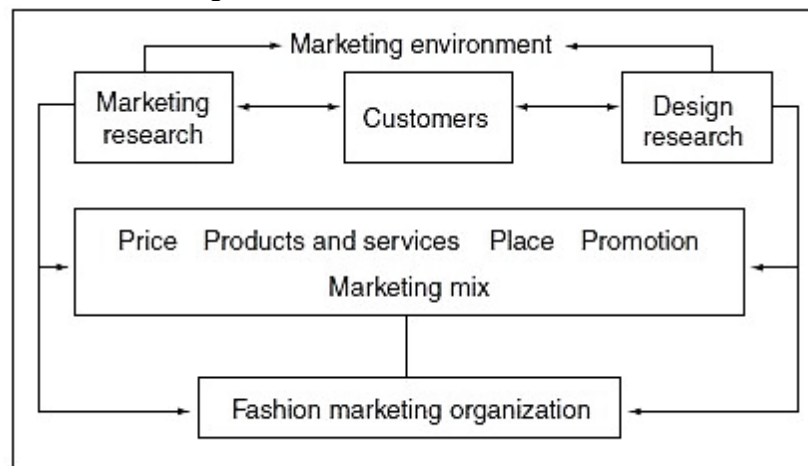
JEL Classification: L67, M10, M31. Industrial organization (Textiles, Clothing, Shoes and Leather Goods); General Business Administration; Marketing.

INTRODUCTION

Today's global textile industry is characterized by highly automated factories often handling all stages of textile production from processing fiber to finishing the fabrics. Moreover, technological developments continue to advance and expand the applications of textiles. Using the term *textile* is to describe any fabric (woven or knitted materials), manufactured fibers (nylon, polyester, rayon) or natural made fibers (cotton, wool, silk). An understanding of the context and organization of the global textile industry is important as textiles and other materials are the foundation of the fashion industries. The textile industry is organized around four basic components of textile production: fiber processing, yarn spinning, fabric production and fabric finishing. After the textile industry and its fabric/ material production is fashion industry. Textile industry is primary concerned with the production and distribution of yarn, cloth and clothing, and less concerned with the fashion aspect in comparison with fashion industry. Textile and Fashion industry are related and correspondence to all other stages of business and marketing in fashion brands. The business stages are: market research, data processing, technological and technical innovation, design, cost analysis, production opportunities, marketing, advertising and promotion.⁶³

⁶³ Nicola, W. & Ian, G. The Fashion Business, Theory, Practice and Image. USA

Figure 1. The Fashion Marketing Process



Source: Fashion Marketing, third edition. Wiley-Blackwell. USA

Business strategy

The business strategy is a roadmap to convince owners/ investors to start the business/ investment describing business, vision and goals for the brand and outlining the strategy to build the business and handle the competition.⁶⁴

Researching -Researching the size of the market, customers, shopping ways and competitors. Researching the audience to understand the interest and product offering.

Developing a clear pricing strategy -Most important is that price points are in line with how much customers would be prepared to pay and in the line of competitors.

Testing the market -To avoid expensive mistakes and minimum risk it can be done a Minimal Viable Product (MVP) test first. Running a pilot with the minimum amount of stock to start building brand awareness and gauge demand is ideally to get customer feedback before investing too much. The business plan should then be updated taking on board the response to the test phase.

Presenting a strong brand identity -The brand needs a distinct personality to set itself apart from competitors. Identity elements should be aligned to present a coherent message, such as visual identity, imagery, price points, quality and market positioning.

Financial forecasts -Business plans should also provide a clear structure for the financial side. The 2 main forecasts are the Cash Flow and Profit & Loss. The cash flow should capture the money that flows in and out of the business. The *flow in* would include sales revenue and any finance/ investment and the *flow out* is all expenses including start-up costs, direct costs and ongoing overheads. Based on the figures in cash flow as should show the profitability of the business, the Profit & Loss statement differs.

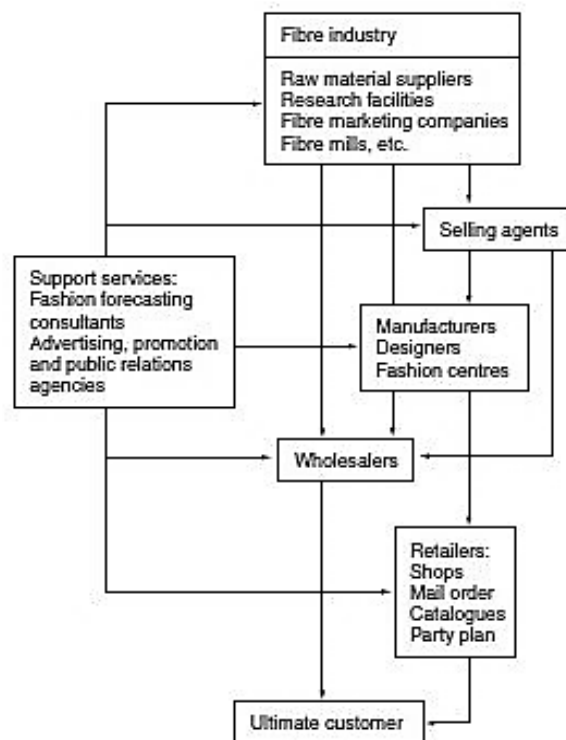
SWOT analysis -Analyzing the overall strategy by conducting a full SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats). Evaluating the plan and mitigate any potential issues.

Marketing definition

⁶⁴ Sandra, M. (2023) Fashion Angels. 6 Top tips how to build successful business strategy. Retrieved from: <https://fashion-angel.co.uk/6-top-tips-to-build-a-successful-fashion-business-strategy/>

The term *marketing* is used to describe the management process that connects product offerings with the values, wants, needs and behaviors of customers. Also, the marketing of fashion merchandise connects marketing research with management decisions around merchandising strategies for getting the product to the right consumers at the right price and in the right place.⁶⁵ The marketing functions of a fashion brand company are most often associated with product promotions and sales. Marketing strategies for fashion brands create optimal promotional mix (advertising, publicity, social media, sales promotions, direct marketing, visual merchandising and personal selling).

Figure 2. Fashion flow chart



Source: Fashion Marketing, third edition. Wiley-Blackwell. USA

Marketing operates with the wholesale but also with the retail levels. If companies do not sell their own products at retail, they must place those products at wholesale such as boutiques, department stores and online sales companies. Marketers for companies that do sell their own products at retail are primarily concerned with matching products to their own customer base. To find a close fit between the products and the retailer's customers they use fashion shows, catalogs and sales with sample products. Marketing with both the wholesale and the retail level also involves promotional activities, print and media advertising aimed at establishing brand recognition/ reputation for diverse characteristics (quality, low price or trendiness.)⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Leslie D., Kathy K.; The Business of Fashion: Designing, Manufacturing and Marketing 6th Edition; USA (pp. 3-10)

⁶⁶ John, S. & Valerie, S. (2024) Britannica. Fashion retailing, marketing and merchandising. Retrieved from: <https://www.britannica.com/art/fashion-industry/Fashion-retailing-marketing-and-merchandising>

Fashion designers and brands promote their clothes to retailers (such as fashion buyers), media (fashion journalists) and directly to customers. Back in history in the late 19th century, Paris couture houses began to offer their clients private views of the latest fashions. Couture houses but also department stores in the early 20th century, regularly put on fashion shows with professional models. Also in other countries ready-to-wear designers, with imitation of Parisian couturiers, began mounting fashion shows for an audience that combined private clients, journalists, and buyers. In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, fashion shows became more elaborate and theatrical, were held in larger venues with specially constructed elevated runways (catwalks) for the models, and played an increasingly prominent role in the presentation of new fashions. Marketing comprises a range of techniques and activities, some of which are highly familiar to the public. Most people have encountered market researchers, and all have seen advertisements. Other less public aspects include product development and branding, pricing, publicity, sales promotion, selling, forecasting and distribution.

Fashion retailing and costumer behavior

The businesses that make a profit by selling goods and services to the ultimate consumer are called retailers. Also serving as gatekeepers by narrowing the choices for consumers and providing them with access (through retail outlets) to the merchandise, thus performing an important service to consumers. Marketing research strategies are employed that focus on a fashion retailers specific target customer. Fashion retailers to be successful they must have a keen understanding of consumer behavior, knowing how and why individuals select, purchase, use, maintain and dispose of fashion products. The history of retailing parallels the growth of the RTW (ready to wear) industry. Fashion retailing was focused on selling fabrics and materials to individuals who handmade clothing, until the advent of RTW clothing. Fashion marketing is a business philosophy or way of thinking about the brands from the perspective of the customer/potential customer.⁶⁷ Fashion firms depend upon customers making repeat purchases and the key to such loyalty is the satisfaction of customer needs for garments (style, durable, easy to care for, comfortable, perceived value for money). And that's because fashion designers/ brands should readily appreciate the need to understand the customer's perspective. Fashion marketers want to know does the customer belongs to a group of buyers that forms a profitable prospect for the company and most designers want to have a mental picture of a typical customer. Seeing the business from the perspective of the customer does not preclude concern for profit, but if profit is not actively sought then the brand ability to meet customers' needs in the long term will be greatly diminished.

The fashion marketing concept

The fashion marketing concept is another way to view the relationship between marketing and design. The alternative view of fashion design as a function of marketing research fails to recognize that many people do not know what they will like until they are presented with choices or that their preferences change over time. Good fashion design can challenge conventional views.

⁶⁷ Mike, E. (2009) Fashion Marketing, third edition. Wiley-Blackwell. USA

Figure 3. The Fashion marketing concept

Concern for fashion design	High	Design centred	Fashion marketing concept
	Low	Failure	Marketing centred
		Low	High
		Concern for customers and profit	

Source: Fashion Marketing, third edition. Wiley-Blackwell. USA

Consumers vary in the conservatism, recognized that they have towards fashion styles and also the speed and readiness with which they change their opinions. Many who profess to hate a design seen on the catwalk for example, may later come to like it when they try the garment themselves or realize that others have signaled acceptance. Low concern for customers, profit and design leads to failure. While disregarding customers' preferences and the need for profit it can occur a consequence of overestimating design ability. By recognizing the interdependence of marketing and design, the fashion marketing concept attempts to embrace the positive aspects of high concern for design, customers and profit. If designers understand how marketing can enhance creative processes, then designers within the fashion industry can lead as well as respond to customer requirements and progress can be made. Central to the concept of fashion marketing is the role of the customer and dealing with understanding and researching the fashion purchaser, behavior of consumers and the reasons why people buy particular garments: what influences them and what criteria they use.

Function of Fashion marketers

An overview of the sort of activities that fashion marketing engages in:

- Fashion marketing research (Investigating the market shares of competitors and trends)
- Product management
- Fashion promotion
- Distribution

An overview of the fashion marketing process

All brands operate within a wider commercial environment that influences their activities. Fashion marketing can be viewed as a process that gives an indication of the structure of fashion brands. Changes in value added tax may inhibit demand for certain garments whereas a fall in unemployment may stimulate demand for work wear. These two simple examples illustrate how changes in the marketing environment can have significant effects on the operation of fashion brands.

Branding

Branding allows the consumer to differentiate between different products. Without branding it is difficult to know how you might market a product or service. Differentiation comes from values that can be built into the brand, these are usually related to human personality traits, such as warmth and reliability, so that consumers can understand exactly what kind of experience they can expect from using a particular product or service. The brand targets particular consumers. Usually these are recognized in a logo or icon forming a trademark or brand identity and allow the consumer to recognize one brand's differentiation from another.

The Fashion Marketing Mix

The major unique characteristics are the 4 P's in the fashion marketing mix: *Product, Promotion, Place and Price*.⁶⁸ Despite the limitations and debates around the marketing mix paradigm, it remains a mainstay of marketing theory and defines the scope and structure of categories of academic research and the way the subject is taught.

The marketing mix of 4 C's are: *Consumer, Cost, Convenience and Communication*. A mixture of traditional and new technology marketing methods is included in a context that relates to two particular fashion concepts.⁶⁹ There are two case studies exploring the process of the marketing of fashion. First is a womenswear orientated project, the other is menswear; both show strongly how the concept and consumer is key to creative solutions in the marketing mix, but they have different approaches to communication. Both projects follow a process of market research, specifically about the consumer and the target market, competitive analysis, customer profiles, conceptual development, the critical path for achieving the objectives from concept to realization and promotion, cost, convenience, communication, traditional marketing approach and technological marketing approach. With this process, works in tandem design development.

Fashion Marketing skills

Professionals must master a diverse set of skills that blend creativity, strategy and business acumen, to succeed in fashion marketing.⁷⁰ Fashion marketing key skills that every fashion marketer should possess:

Trend Awareness Understanding what styles are gaining popularity and how consumer preferences are evolving allows marketers to craft campaigns that resonate with their audience. Staying ahead of fashion trends is critical for marketers in this industry. Trend awareness through runway shows, social media or street style, being aware of trends helps marketers position their brands at the forefront of the industry.

Creativity The creativity is essential in a highly visual and dynamic field like fashion. With developing innovative campaigns, fashion marketers can not only capture the essence of their brand but also stand out in a crowded market. Including everything from creating compelling digital content to designing impactful events that showcase the brand's uniqueness.

Research and Analytical Skill Market research helps identify consumer preferences, demographics and buying behavior, while data analysis informs strategies and improves campaign performance. In fashion marketing, understanding the market and consumers through research is foundational. Successful marketers rely on data to track trends and adjust their efforts for maximum impact.

Digital Marketing Expertise Having expertise in digital marketing and shifting toward online shopping and social platforms, is crucial. A deep understanding of how to reach and engage

⁶⁸ Liz, B. (2023) Fashion Marketing. Manchester Metropolitan University, USA

⁶⁹ K, McKelvey. The Marketing of Fashion. Northumbria University. UK

⁷⁰ Lea, G. (2024) Heuritech. How fashion Marketing can transform your brand's success. Retrieved from: <https://heuritech.com/articles/fashion-marketing/>

audiences online is essential, from managing social media accounts to running campaigns. Familiarity with tools like Google Analytics, email marketing platforms and paid social advertising is key to executing successful digital strategies.

Interpersonal and Communication Skills To develop cohesive strategies, fashion marketers often work with various teams - creative departments, product managers and sales teams. The ability to collaborate effectively and strong communication skills, ensure that marketing efforts align with business objectives and brand identity. This skill is also crucial for building relationships with influencers, media and retail partners.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Fashion Marketing ways to develop Fashion Brand

Effective fashion marketing is essential for building and expanding a successful brand. There are several ways in which fashion marketing strategies can help brands grow and reach their full potential:

Building Brand Identity and Loyalty

The heart of any successful fashion company is a strong brand identity. Defining fashion marketers and communicating with the brand's values, story and aesthetic to connect with consumers. Marketers can cultivate a loyal customer base that identifies with the brand's personality and values by consistently delivering messaging that aligns with the brand's image. Brand loyalty is built over time through engaging content, consistent interaction and delivering on promises, which in turn drives long-term business success.

Reaching and Engaging Target Audiences

In fashion marketing the target audience is understood to be critical. Brands can develop personalized campaigns that appeal to specific consumer segments, just by conducting thorough market research. Targeted strategies ensure that the right message reaches the right people at the right time, whether it's through social media campaigns, influencer partnerships or email marketing. These focused drives sales are more effective and approach maximizes engagement.

Differentiating Brand in a Competitive Market

Standing out is a constant challenge because the fashion industry is highly competitive, so fashion marketing helps brands highlight what makes them unique through innovative designs, sustainable practices or exclusive collections. Brands can capture the attention of consumers by showcasing these differentiators in a compelling way and establish themselves as leaders in their niche.

Driving Sales and Revenue Growth

Driving Sales and Revenue Growth is the goal of any marketing strategy. Whether through online marketing, retail partnerships or events, marketers ensure that every touchpoint with consumers is optimized for sales conversion, helping the brand reach its financial goals. To boost brand visibility and effectiveness, fashion marketing combines creativity with data driven strategies, attracting new customers and increasing revenue.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

To meet the long-term goals of the organization/ brand, marketing is a management process concerned with anticipating, identifying and satisfying customer needs. Whilst concerned with the brand's relationship with customers it is also concerned with internal organizational factors that affect the achievement of marketing goals. There are many views of what marketing is and what it does. Marketing is the main solution for all business problems and can provide solutions for product failures or falling profits. Recognizing the interdependence of the many business and creative functions within organizations/ brands. This view fully appreciates the wider

marketing environment that confronts all brands when they embark upon marketing activities. The best marketing plans and activities can be easily and quickly undermined by changes in the economy or in competitors' actions. The fashion industry is highly competitive and is characterized by change. Such are in part a reflection of the enormous risk in the fashion industry, but some are also due to the appropriate application of the business strategy and marketing.

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