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The Chronological Development of a Fashion Retailer Own-Brand

Stephen M. Wigley
University of Huddersfield

Eilidh O’Connor
Marks and Spencer Plc.
Introduction

• Background and context.
• Aim and objectives.
• Methodology.
• Literature.
• Primary research.
• Findings.
Background & Context

• UK fashion market characteristics.
• Branding & brand management critical.
• Retailer private-label brands dominate.

• Private label literature has focused on grocery sector – little on fashion.
• Seeks to understand how a fashion retailer’s brand is created, constructed and managed.
**Aim and Objectives**

**Aim:**
- Develop a model encapsulating the components contributing to the image of a fashion retail brand.

**Objectives:**
- Identify the potential components of a fashion retailer’s own-brand via an analysis of the related literature;
- Test the relative importance of each component to both fashion consumers and industry professionals;
- Propose a model illustrating the fashion retailer’s own brand and its effective deployment in the market.
Methodology

Two Phases:

• Review of literature to develop draft model.
• Test and refine the model using expert interviews and consumer focus groups.
  – Representatives from 7 brands participated.
  – Senior marketing, brand and retail managers.
  – Three focus groups using voluntary participants invited from a pool of fashion consumers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</table>
Literature

Synthesised with specifics from:

• Retail branding.
• Fashion branding.
• Industry insight - Mintel.

• Used to inform a draft model identifying the major components / attributes.
Draft Model

- high quality
- innovative
- trust
- good value
- socially responsible
- cares for environment
- great customer service
- name
- market position
- user image
- design/VM
- good reputation
- distinctive image
- pride
## Primary Research - Consumers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Group C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1    | Good value                     | Quality merchandise  
| 2    | Great customer service         | Reputation  
| 3    | High quality merchandise       | Name  
| 4    | Customer self image            | Value  
| 5    | Good reputation                | Customer service  
| 6    | Design/VM                      | VM  
| 7    | Trust                          | Innovative  
| 8    | Innovative                     | Distinctive image  
| 9    | Distinctive image              | Brand name  
| 10   | Brand name                     | Pride  
| 11   | Pride                          | Market positioning  
| 12   | Market positioning             | Good to the environment  
| 13   | Good to the environment        | Socially responsible  
| 14   | Socially responsible           | Positioning |
# Primary Research - Professionals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trust</th>
<th>Good Value</th>
<th>Great customer service</th>
<th>Customer self image</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good reputation</td>
<td>Market positioning</td>
<td>Good value</td>
<td>Good reputation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer service</td>
<td>High quality</td>
<td>Design/VM</td>
<td>Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High quality</td>
<td></td>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>Pride</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socially responsible</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Design/VM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good to environment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good reputation</th>
<th>Distinctive image</th>
<th>Pride</th>
<th>Market positioning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Customer service</td>
<td>Design/VM</td>
<td>Market positioning</td>
<td>Brand name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good value</td>
<td>Innovation</td>
<td>Customer self image</td>
<td>Distinctive image</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer self image</td>
<td>Brand name</td>
<td></td>
<td>Design/VM</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>Market positioning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pride</td>
<td>Customer self image</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distinctive image</td>
<td>Customer self image</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Primary Research - Professionals

Brand name
Market positioning
Distinctive image
Innovative
Socially responsible
Good to environment
Good value
Design/VM
Customer service
High Quality
Customer self image
Good reputation
Trust
Pride

These elements can then become associated with the brand once the others are established.

tangible qualities which consumers experience and shape their opinion of brand

established when brand is created; this is the brand essence
## Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub group</th>
<th>Reasoning</th>
<th>Brand components</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Store level</td>
<td>• These components were rated most important by consumers and identified by practitioners as being store facing and important at store management level.</td>
<td>Good value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• These are perceived through direct contact and experience with the retail brand.</td>
<td>Great customer service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High quality merchandise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Customer self image</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Good reputation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Windows/in store display/design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company level</td>
<td>• These components, although rated low by consumers were seen by practitioners as vital elements in creating and maintaining a strong brand.</td>
<td>Market positioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• These are perceived through indirect contact with the retail brand and form the strategy of the retail brand.</td>
<td>Distinctive image</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Brand name/name of store</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Innovative</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Good to the environment</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Socially responsible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intangible</td>
<td>• These intangible components of the brand are also important and are closely linked to other components as identified by both consumers and practitioners.</td>
<td>Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>results</td>
<td>• According to practitioners, these are created when the other components are in place</td>
<td>Pride</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings

- Company level
  - Name
  - Innovative
  - Market positioning
  - Distinctive image
  - Good to the environment
  - Socially responsible

- Trust
  - Pride

- Intangible
  - Good value
  - Great customer service
  - High quality
  - Customer self image
  - Good reputation
  - Design/VM

- Store level
Findings

Market positioning
Distinctive image
Brand name

Innovative
Good to the environment
Socially responsible

Good value
Great customer service
High quality merchandise
Design/ VM

Customer self image
Good reputation

Trust Pride

Company level
These components were recognised by industry professionals as being important in establishing a brand. These represent the 'attributes' which form the backbone and essence of the brand.

Store level
These components were recognised by industry professionals as being important at store level and were recognised by consumers as being extremely important in brand perception. These represent the 'benefits' of the brand and are established after the company level attributes in order to fulfil the brand agenda and philosophy.

Intangible
These components were recognised by practitioners and consumers as elements which are created after the other elements are in place. These feelings or 'attitudes' are closely associated with other elements and represent the final stage in developing a brand.