University of Huddersfield Repository

Wigley, Stephen M.

Fashioning the Brand: a creative & commercial interpretation of the role of the brand in fashion

Original Citation


This version is available at http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/26634/

The University Repository is a digital collection of the research output of the University, available on Open Access. Copyright and Moral Rights for the items on this site are retained by the individual author and/or other copyright owners. Users may access full items free of charge; copies of full text items generally can be reproduced, displayed or performed and given to third parties in any format or medium for personal research or study, educational or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge, provided:

- The authors, title and full bibliographic details is credited in any copy;
- A hyperlink and/or URL is included for the original metadata page; and
- The content is not changed in any way.

For more information, including our policy and submission procedure, please contact the Repository Team at: E.mailbox@hud.ac.uk.

http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/
Fashioning the Brand:

a creative & commercial interpretation of the role of the brand in fashion

Futurescan 3 – November 2015

Stephen M. Wigley
University of Huddersfield
Introduction

• Context & Background:
  – The Brand in Fashion.

• Aim & Objectives:
  – Practitioners’ understanding of ‘the brand’.
  – The functions of the brand in fashion.

• Methodology.

• Findings.

• Conclusions.
The brand:

- Definitions.
- Constituents.
- Practical roles.

A complex organism composed of tangible and intangible constituents and performing a variety of roles for consumers and companies.
Fashion Market/Products:

• Competitive.  Critical
• Commoditised.  Defining
• Creative.  Universal

A market in which branding is especially significant in determining the success of participants.
Conflict

Fashion researchers underestimating the scope and role of branding practice

Marketing researchers underestimating the significance of branding in fashion practice.

The brand in fashion:

• Commercial functions.
• Creative functions.

Research dissonance:

Creative vs. Commercial
Aim & Objectives

**Aim:**

- Provide a conceptual model representing the commercial & creative functions of a brand within a fashion business.

**Objectives:**

- Account for the fashion brand as understood by creative & commercial professionals.
- Explore the role & functions of the brand in the fashion industry.
Methodology

- Interpretivist approach.
- Qualitative data collection.
- Interviews with 13 industry professionals:
  - Fashion designers.
  - Marketing/management professionals.
  - Variety of companies and market sectors.
- Results analysed, compiled and validated.
Findings

Understanding of the brand:

• Varied from simple to sophisticated.
The brand for commercial professionals:

- Accored with academic definitions.
- Tangible & Intangible dimensions.
- “The look of a business”:
  - Stores, websites, marketing materials.
- Applied marketing terminology:
  - Positioning, image, values, personality.
The brand for commercial professionals:

- Primarily a tool for influencing customer response – promotion & perception.
- No spontaneously mention of design.
- Felt they had an active and powerful role in manipulating the brand.
- Refer to the brand using personal, possessive pronouns: “my/our brand”.
The brand for creative professionals:

- Had a less specific understanding.
- Applied brand to personal practice:
  - Design, archives, collections.
- Dichotomous view of brand influence:
  - They are influenced by the brand, but...
  - They do not in turn influence the brand.
The brand for commercial professionals:

• Primarily a tool for informing design development and range planning.
• Spontaneously mentioned marketing.
• Felt they had a passive role where they were influenced by brand, not vice-versa.
• Refer to the brand using impersonal terms: “the brand”.
Proposed definition of the fashion brand:

The fashion brand is composed of tangible components (including logos, slogans, marketing communications) and intangible components (including positioning, image, personality and values) which are both appealing to the target consumer and inform the development of products.
Role & functions of the brand:

• Brand perceived as a tool for influencing consumer opinion & driving sales.
• Commercial interviewees regarded the brand purely as a promotional device.
• Creative interviewees regarded the brand as informing their work in a more sophisticated way.
Commercial role & functions of the brand:

- Attract customer attention.
- Build cohesive identity & values.
- Create positive image, status & personality in consumers’ minds.
- Compel customer purchase.
- Reassure & reward customers to ensure longer-term loyalty.
Commercial role & functions of the brand:

• Attract customer attention.
• Build cohesive identity & values.
• Create positive image, status & personality in consumers’ minds.
• Compel customer purchase.
• Reassure & reward customers to ensure longer-term loyalty.
Creative role & functions of the brand:

- Inspiring the overall look of new products & collections: concept, colours, features.
- Informing the evolution of design concepts: fit, drape, detailing.
- Connecting product design to promotional activities in the market.
Findings

Creative role & functions of the brand:

CONCEPTUALISATION

Design concept inspiration, accrued from archival research and brand heritage and history

SAMPLING

Design development accrued from understanding of brand’s established qualities.

PRESENTATION

Final development of products and collections to connect with marketing initiatives.
Findings

Commercial:
• Brand is a tool for promotion.
• We influence the brand via our professional practice.

Creative:
• Brand is a tool for product design & promotion.
• Our professional practice is influenced by the brand.
Definition of the fashion brand:

The fashion brand is a concept composed of tangible (including logos, slogans, marketing communications) and intangible components (including positioning, image, personality and values) which serves a function in both influencing the attitude and behaviour of customers, and inspiring and informing the form and function of products.
Role & function of the fashion brand:

Brand has ‘upstream’ influence in informing creative decisions of designers employed by the business.

Brand has ‘downstream’ influence in promoting products to consumers, and influencing their attitude and behaviour.