

An Analysis of Luxury Brands in the UK Market to Increase Brand Value Through Social Media Marketing

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Abstract: Given the rapid expansion and widespread impact of social media, luxury businesses have progressively acknowledged the imperative to use these platforms to augment their brand equity and engage younger, technologically proficient consumers. This study analyses the strategies utilized by luxury brands in social media marketing in the UK, assessing their efficacy in influencing consumer perceptions and purchase intentions. This study analyses the social media marketing tactics of prominent luxury companies by reviewing relevant literature and case studies, focusing on the use of unique content, celebrity endorsements, and interactive campaigns on platforms such as Instagram and TikTok. These platforms were chosen due to their substantial user base among the adolescent demographic, which is highly engaged and essential in the luxury sector. Furthermore, it assesses the effectiveness of these strategies in conjunction with consumer feedback, demonstrating that luxury brands can effectively engage a diverse audience and significantly increase brand value by implementing innovative and targeted social media strategies. The findings suggest that social media marketing is essential for the development of brand loyalty and the enhancement of brand equity, rendering it a critical component of contemporary luxury brand management in the digital era.

Keywords: UK Market, Luxury Brands, Social Media Marketing, Brand Value.

1. Introduction

In light of the accelerated growth of social media, luxury brands have increasingly oriented their marketing efforts towards these platforms, with the objective of attracting a younger demographic and enhancing brand value. In the UK market, well-known luxury brands such as Burberry and Gucci have successfully increased brand exposure, thus effectively increasing brand awareness and loyalty. This trend shows that social media has emerged as a significant component of luxury brand strategy. This paper aims to comprehensively examine the marketing strategies and outcomes of luxury brands on social media. To this end, the study employs a case study methodology, selects a number of representative luxury brands as research subjects, focuses on analyzing their marketing strategies on platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, and evaluates them in conjunction with consumer feedback. An in-depth analysis of brand postings and consumer surveys is conducted to investigate the impact of these strategies on consumer brand awareness and purchase intentions. The research emphasizes three primary components: the specific marketing strategies that luxury brands in the UK market have

implemented on social media; the impact of these strategies on consumer brand awareness and purchase intention; and the extent to which social media marketing contributes to the overall value of luxury brands. In summary, this investigation contributes to the clarification of the importance of social media marketing for luxury brands, thereby offering a thorough examination of social media marketing strategies and an in-depth examination of the impacts of implementation.

2. Luxury Brands and Social Media Marketing

2.1. The Definition and Characteristics of Luxury Brands

Luxury brands refer to branded products or services that are perceived by consumers as being of superior quality, provide real value through desirable benefits, whether functional or emotional, and possess a prestigious image within the market. The image in question is typically constructed on the basis of attributes such as exceptional service quality, craftsmanship, or artisanship. Consequently, luxury brands are perceived as deserving a premium price and capable of eliciting a profound emotional connection or empathy with consumers [1].

2.2. The Rise and Development of Social Media Platforms

In recent years, social media has become a major and influential marketing factor, significantly influencing the success of a business, service, or product [2]. In the early 1990s, individuals began to formulate the idea that the Internet would serve as the subsequent relationship marketing tool. The term "social media" frequently prompts the emergence of three concepts: Web 2.0, which encompasses websites that facilitate networking and marketing [3], and the immense quantity of information that is disseminated [4]. The majority of individuals regard social media as a platform for sharing their daily updates and images on social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter [5]. In a more informed light, social media has demonstrated its utility as a low-cost information exchange platform accessible to a diverse range of entities, including consumers, businesses, organizations, governments, and other entities. It offers a valuable avenue for learning, education, sharing, collaboration, marketing, advertising, and improvisation on the central idea being circulated. In recent times, social media marketing (SMM) has evolved beyond its origins in social media, becoming a highly favored platform for marketing purposes among tech strategists. This form of marketing is based on the electronic word of mouth [6]. defines SMM as an integrative process aimed at promoting goods and services on social media platforms. It has the potential to target a far wider consumer base than traditional forms of marketing. In synthesizing the insights from the extant literature [7]. social media marketing (SMM) can be defined as a dialogue frequently initiated by consumers or audiences, or a business, product, or service that traverses a circular network of the aforementioned parties to initiate reciprocal communications regarding promotional information, or to gain insights from one another's usage experiences, ultimately benefiting either or all of the involved parties [7].

2.3. The Importance of Social Media for Luxury Brand Marketing

The emergence of social media has presented marketers with a plethora of exceptional opportunities to establish connections with consumers within their social networks, thereby facilitating the development of more intimate and personalized relationships [8]. The introduction of social media has significantly altered the way in which brand content is created, distributed, and ingested. This transition has resulted in the transfer of the authority to influence brand images from marketers to consumers' online interactions and content [9]. Social media appears to be a significant factor in the efficacy of a brand in the luxury sector [10]. For example, Louis Vuitton (LV) provides all LV fans with the opportunity to experience the show by posting videos of its catwalk presentations on its

Facebook page [11]. Burberry has established an online purchasing platform for Chinese consumers that provides round-the-clock customer service via online chat systems. Furthermore, the organization operates accounts on Chinese social media platforms, including douban.com and kaixin001.com. Burberry's account on Weibo, a microblogging service, has been known to receive comments from several local personalities. Burberry had accumulated 180,000 followers on Weibo by January 2012, a substantial increase from the 90,000 followers it had in early 2011 [12].

3. Social Media Marketing Strategies

3.1. Burberry's Social Media Marketing Strategy

Burberry was the inaugural luxury fashion brand to demonstrate unreserved commitment to social media. Burberry's Facebook page has amassed over seven million fans, while its Twitter account has garnered over 400,000 followers, a significant lead over competitors such as Louis Vuitton and Gucci. In the Top Social Network ranking by Famecount in 2011, Burberry was the best-ranked luxury brand. In the overall brand category, it was in 22nd position, behind brands such as Coca-Cola, Starbucks, and H&M. However, it was the best among luxury brands, ahead of BMW and Chanel [10]. Burberry has implemented social media marketing strategies to enhance its brand value, particularly among younger demographics. A sequence of extensively detailed examples will be provided in the subsequent section.

3.1.1. Creative Content on Instagram

An early example of a social media campaign is the "Art of the Trench" Campaign, which was launched by Burberry in 2009. It was a digital platform that featured images of individuals donning Burberry trench jackets. Additionally, the campaign promoted the upload of users' personal photographs, which in turn fostered a sense of community and user-generated content [13]. By integrating social media engagement, the campaign effectively highlighted Burberry's heritage and resonated with a younger, tech-savvy audience. The strategy significantly enhanced the brand's visibility and affinity among millennials, resulting in a significant response on platforms such as Instagram.

3.1.2. Interactive Activities on TikTok

The act of sharing live video content through social media platforms, with a particular emphasis on TikTok and Instagram. Burberry was among the first prestige brands to integrate live broadcasting on social media platforms, such as TikTok and Instagram. The brand utilized an Instagram live broadcast to disseminate its Spring/Summer 2021 presentation, thereby generating an immersive experience for viewers worldwide [4]. Burberry was able to effectively engage younger consumers who prioritize inclusivity and accessibility by integrating cutting-edge digital experiences. The live performances allowed users to experience the brand's runway events in real time and foster a sense of connection, thereby increasing brand loyalty and perceived exclusivity. Influencer Collaboration Burberry produces high-quality content that resonates with younger audiences by collaborating with personalities and influencers. For example, in 2020, Burberry collaborated with TikTok influencers to launch a branded challenge that highlighted the brand's iconic trench coat [14]. These collaborations have been observed to generate substantial engagement, attract new followers, and solidify Burberry's reputation as a modern, innovative brand. The challenge significantly increased the brand's social media presence and encouraged user engagement.

3.2. Gucci's Social Media Marketing Strategy

Social media marketing is a crucial tool for engaging target audiences; nevertheless, it may present difficulties in maintaining a cohesive company brand identity. Nonetheless, the Italian luxury super brand Gucci exemplifies a brand that has effectively cultivated and sustained a coherent brand image throughout its social media platforms. Gucci has been a prominent company in the fashion business and has lately undertaken a rebranding campaign to align its corporate identity with the values and interests of a younger age that prioritizes sophisticated experiences. Gucci's social media platforms effectively replicate this image, thereby strengthening the brand. This has resulted in Gucci becoming a prominent and ubiquitous name among younger demographics with remarkable rapidity [15].

3.2.1. Celebrity Endorsement and Brand Storytelling

The organization collaborates with influencers and personalities. Gucci has a history of collaborating with high-profile personalities and influencers on TikTok. Billie Eilish, a performer and actress, has been featured in numerous campaigns. These partnerships involve the promotion of Gucci products in a manner that is relevant to younger audiences on TikTok [16]. The resulting collaborations generate substantial engagement, thereby guaranteeing that Gucci remains a relevant and aspirational brand among younger consumers. The brand has successfully bridged the divide between luxury and mainstream culture by utilizing influencers to disseminate content and challenges.

3.2.2. User Generated Content and Brand Engagement

The Gucci Model Challenge The #GucciModelChallenge achieved ubiquitous status on the social media platform TikTok in 2020. Users were encouraged to wear clothing that was inspired by Gucci's eclectic aesthetic. The brand's distinctive fashion style was emulated by millions of users, who created their own videos, thereby contributing to this trend [5]. This challenge not only increased the brand's visibility but also enabled Gucci to capitalize on the creativity of TikTok's user base, thereby fostering a strong sense of community and brand engagement. Gucci's allure to Generation Z was further enhanced by the involvement of influencers and personalities, which contributed to the campaign's success. Gucci's TikTok engagement strategy is distinguished by its consistent integration of high fashion with contemporary trends, which includes the use of popular memes and noises. This approach establishes a company image that is both germane and inclusive by integrating professional models alongside everyday consumers [17]. In the digital sphere, Gucci has effectively solidified its position as a preeminent luxury brand and strengthened brand loyalty by adapting to the informal and creative content style of TikTok. This has also engaged younger consumers.

4. Consumer Feedback Analysis

The results of consumer feedback suggest that social media marketing has a substantial influence on the modernity and brand affinity of luxury brands, including Burberry and Gucci. The effectiveness of these strategies can be assessed through three critical analytical lenses: changes in consumer brand awareness, changes in consumer purchase intentions, and consumer attitudes toward social media marketing.

4.1. Changes in Consumer Brand Recognition

Burberry's strategic use of Instagram, particularly through its live-streamed fashion shows and campaigns like "Art of the Trench," has been effective in increasing brand recognition. Burberry has become a leader in digital innovation within the luxury sector as a result of its consistent and creative content, which resonates with younger consumers. These strategies have not only maintained the

brand's traditional luxury appeal but have also broadened its target demographic to younger individuals, thereby ensuring its ongoing relevance in a rapidly evolving market. In contrast, the company's utilization of TikTok, which included the #GucciModelChallenge, significantly increased Generation Z's awareness of Gucci. The high level of participation in this challenge, in conjunction with influencer collaborations, led to viral content that reached millions. Gucci's global brand visibility has been substantially improved as a consequence of its strategy of utilizing user-generated content and celebrity endorsements, particularly among younger audiences who prioritize creativity and social engagement.

4.2. Changes in Consumer Purchasing Intentions

Burberry's collaborations with social media influencers and emphasis on visually compelling advertisements have led to heightened consumer engagement and enhanced purchasing intentions. Burberry's partnerships with prominent figures like Kendall Jenner have resulted in a substantial increase in product sales and consumer engagement. Burberry has successfully converted increased brand recognition into heightened purchase intent, particularly among younger consumers, by aligning its digital content with aspirational lifestyles. In contrast, Gucci's TikTok campaign has markedly impacted consumer behavior. The #GucciModelChallenge, aimed at motivating users to emulate the brand's aesthetic, resulted in a notable increase in interest in Gucci merchandise among participants. The brand's ability to convert social media engagement into tangible purchasing behavior illustrates its understanding of the digital consumer journey. The integration of creative content with shoppable links and product placements has greatly increased sales.

4.3. Consumer Attitudes Toward Social Media Marketing

Burberry's consistent delivery of premium content on social media platforms such as Instagram has garnered favorable reactions from consumers. The brand's digital innovation has been recognized for appealing to consumers who value both tradition and modernity in connection with its heritage. The feedback indicates that Burberry's social media marketing strategy elevates consumers' perception of the brand as inventive and distinguished, which is crucial for sustaining its luxury status. In contrast, shoppers perceived Gucci as progressive and inclusive owing to its inventive and creative use of TikTok. The company's commitment to engaging individuals directly through user-generated content and challenges solidifies its status as a contemporary luxury brand. Gucci's triumph on TikTok arises from a shift in consumer attitudes towards luxury brands, emphasizing brand accessibility and engagement. The positive consumer reactions illustrate the efficacy of Gucci's strategy in establishing a brand that is simultaneously opulent and attainable.

5. Conclusion

The findings indicate that the brand equity of premium brands is significantly influenced by social media marketing. Burberry effectively engaged a significant group of young people by distributing premium creative material on Instagram. Gucci successfully cultivated significant engagement on TikTok via celebrity endorsements and user-generated content, thereby strengthening its brand position. The majority of respondents endorse the social media marketing strategies of luxury brands, asserting that these tactics significantly augment the businesses' allure and modern image, as indicated by consumer feedback research. Nonetheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that this study possesses several limitations. A comprehensive analysis of the quantitative data would have yielded a more profound grasp of the research subject. Subsequent research could broaden the case studies to encompass a wider range of companies and incorporate quantitative research methodologies, resulting in more comprehensive and nuanced findings. The emphasis must be placed on the emerging

marketing patterns across these platforms and the disparities in the impact of different social media platforms on the future marketing of luxury goods. Moreover, it is crucial to assess the long-term effects of social media marketing on luxury companies, encompassing an examination of the sustained increase in brand loyalty and market share. Additional research will augment the provision of thorough and pragmatic recommendations regarding marketing strategies for luxury firms in the digital age.

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