

The Influence of Mass Media on Luxury Fashion Brand Marketing Strategies: A Case Study of Hermès

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Abstract: In this era of information and technology, mass media plays a crucial role in various aspects of commerce. The fashion industry is closely related to audience feedback and the social environment. The fashion trend is changing rapidly and constantly. It is imperative for the industry to rapidly disseminate its unique ideas and gather information from customers and competitors. This situation enables fashion brands to adjust their marketing strategies, pursue commercial benefits, and create innovative styles. Therefore, utilization of media tools has become a prerequisite for triumphing in the competitive commerce landscape. This essay adopts a case study research method to analyze the impact of mass media on the marketing strategies of luxury fashion brands. Moreover, it aims to compare traditional marketing strategies with contemporary ones. Then, it delves into the forthcoming issues that luxury fashion brands may encounter due to advancements in media development. Finally, give solutions to luxury fashion brands in the era of mass media. The conclusion is that luxury fashion brands need to fully integrate their classical and digital marketing strategies. While maintaining their stylish and opulent attributes, the brands need to take advantage of mass media platforms. The goal is to capture the customer's psychology and enhance the customer's buying experience.

Keywords: mass media, luxury, fashion, marketing, Hermès

1. Introduction

Mass media serves as an essential conduit for daily communication and the dissemination of information across various spheres of human life, encompassing politics, economics, science, technology, and culture. In parallel, fashion has held an enduring role within human civilization since its inception. Initially, fashion primarily served as a rudimentary form of camouflage and protection from the elements, but it gradually evolved into a symbol of societal class distinctions and eventually a means of expressing one's inner self [1]. The media industry, with its distinct characteristics and positioning, plays a pivotal role in shaping public perceptions and trends. In the realm of fashion, establishing a symbiotic relationship with the media is crucial, leading to mutually beneficial outcomes. It's imperative to effectively navigate the intricate interplay between the multifaceted aspects of the fashion industry and the media [2]. Fashion enterprises must gain comprehensive insights into the media's profound influence on the industry [2].

With this context in mind, the primary aim of this paper is to meticulously examine the impact of the media on the marketing strategies adopted by luxury fashion brands. To achieve this, we will employ Hermès as a case study, shedding light on the media's pivotal role in shaping branding and communication practices within the industry. Through this analysis, we intend to underscore the profound influence wielded by the media in the realm of luxury fashion marketing.

At present, researchers have begun to pay attention to the study of media influence and fashion management. The articles cited in this essay were highly original and realistic. They have played an important role as sources of information for this study. However, in general, there is a lack of research on the impact of media on fashion, and there are few usable scientific findings.

This dissertation adopts a case study methodology to examine the influence of media on fashion branding, with a specific emphasis on the renowned luxury brand Hermès. Additionally, Hermès is highly regarded for its iconic Birkin and Kelly handbags, which have become symbols of luxury and exclusivity worldwide. The case study will encompass an exploration of industry and company culture, and subsequent analysis will address identified issues. Data for the study will be sourced from official materials and branded sources to ensure accuracy and credibility. The theoretical framework will draw upon relevant literature to provide a comprehensive understanding of the case.

In this paper, the author will first analyze the types and characteristics of mass media. Exploring the relationship between media and fashion, summarizing the marketing strategies used by luxury fashion brands in the past. Then, using Hermès as a case study, the author will discuss Hermès' specific initiatives to use media in marketing. Summarizing the impact of media on Hermès' development path and the challenges the brand has faced. Finally, gives several solutions for luxury fashion brands and discusses their possible actions in the media era.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Types and Characteristics of Mass Media

Mass communication refers to the use of various media platforms, such as newspapers, magazines, radio, and television, to convey information to a wide audience. These media acts facilitate communication and serve as public conduits for information [3].

1) Print media involves conveying information through symbols printed on paper, including words, images, colors, and layout. Newspapers, magazines, and books are examples of print media. Newspapers are distributed widely to the public on a regular basis, while magazines play a significant role in disseminating culture.

2) Electronic media, such as radio, television, and cinema, utilize electricity and telecommunication technology to manage audio-visual content. The primary difference between electronic and print media is that electronic media can directly impact the human brain through visual [3].

3) Digital media contains information expression and dissemination through the Internet. It offers advantages in terms of low cost, unlimited time, interactivity, multimedia capabilities, targeted audience reach, enhanced visibility, flexibility, and real-time [3]. The Internet has transformed information transmission and integration, surpassing traditional media forms in terms of efficiency.

Modern mass media, driven by scientific and technological progress, have a remarkable ability to transmit vast and complex information globally. They play a crucial role in cultural transmission, communication, and sharing. They are now indispensable tools in contemporary society.

2.2. Relationship Between the Media Industry and the Fashion Industry

The connection between fashion and mass media is intricately woven into the fabric of contemporary society. The fashion industry plays a pivotal role by supplying a constant stream of creative content to the media [4]. This creative input empowers media outlets to effectively convey fashion concepts to the public. An illustrative example of this can be found in television media, which serves as a platform for announcing emerging fashion trends and spotlighting influential figures within the fashion realm. Moreover, the media industry capitalizes on specific fashion brands or products as key components of their marketing campaigns. This includes the creation of related promotional materials and advertisements, further solidifying the symbiotic relationship between the fashion and media industries [4]. In essence, this collaborative partnership enhances the media industry's offerings to its diverse audience, ultimately enriching the overall cultural landscape.

The media industry also contributes to the growth of the fashion industry in multiple ways. Firstly, as an information carrier, it provides conceptual elements that inspire fashion designers and contribute to the innovation of new fashion concepts [4]. Secondly, the media serves as a platform for showcasing fashion samples to the general public. Additionally, the media industry actively promotes and markets fashion products, generating awareness, interest, and demand among consumers [4].

Overall, the relationship between fashion and mass media is symbiotic. The mass media influences and guides fashion, while the fashion industry provides creative marketing opportunities for the media industry. This interconnection plays a vital role in shaping the fashion system and engaging the public with fashion.

2.3. Traditional Marketing Strategies for Luxury Fashion Brands

The marketing strategy of luxury fashion brands revolves around differentiation and creating a perception of scarcity [5]. These brands differentiate their products based on quality and design, embodying refinement and extraordinary style.

Hermès maintains strict control over the origin of its products [5]. They ensure that all items are crafted exclusively in their handmade workshops located in France [5]. Hermès handbags bear the signature and unique number of the craftsman responsible for their creation. Establishing a personal connection between the artisan and the product.

While the value of a product lies in its quality, the value of a brand lies in its promotion. Luxury brand advertisements are meticulously crafted, featuring high production values aligning with the designers' visions [1].

For example, Hermès' 2016 spring/summer advertisement campaign "Hermès is born from Nature" explores the interconnection of elements in the universe [5]. Hermès has consistently cultivated a close relationship with art, which is quite uncommon in an era marked by growing commercialization and capitalization [5].

While print advertisements establish a brand's spirits, the real brand experience happens when customers visit the boutique. Luxury brands incorporate art exhibitions, receptions, and other experiential activities to forge a closer connection. Hermès utilizes intimate events for media and valued customers [5].

The "A Walk in Wonderland" exhibition in April 2017 was a event open to the general public. It comprised interconnected spaces representing different chapters in Hermès' history. This immersive exhibition showcased items from the founder's collection, the brand's archive, and contemporary pieces. Created a captivating story-like experience for visitors. It effectively communicated the brand's values to diverse audiences, fostering emotional affinity and strengthening customer loyalty [6].

3. Hermès' Brand Positioning and Media Strategy Analysis

3.1. Hermès' Brand Values, Positioning, and Cultural Expression

Hermès is a globally recognized luxury brand that stands out in the industry for its unique brand values, precise positioning, and creative cultural expressions. Hermès has a rich history and tradition of craftsmanship dating back to 1837. Each product is meticulously crafted with attention to detail and precision [7]. The brand's commitment to perfection and innovation has allowed it to maintain its esteemed reputation over the years.

Hermès' distinctively French luxury style blends tradition with modernity. The products showcase refined craftsmanship and the use of premium materials. From leather goods to silk scarves, and watches to perfumes, every Hermès product epitomizes superior quality and timeless [7]. With its focus on catering to high-income individuals and discerning fashion connoisseurs, Hermès has established a loyal clientele.

In addition, Hermès actively collaborates with artists, designers, and cultural figures to organize art exhibitions, cultural events, and charitable [7]. By promoting and celebrating artistry and creativity, Hermès aligns itself with the cultural sphere. The brand's commitment to sustainability is also evident in its cultural expressions, as it utilizes eco-friendly materials.

In conclusion, Hermès has successfully established a distinct brand image through its core values, exceptional products, and cultural expressions. Its emphasis is on craftsmanship, luxurious positioning, and dedication to art. Hermès not only shapes the business landscape but also strives to create a brighter future by fulfilling its social responsibilities.

3.2. Media Selection and Strategy

Luxury brands have recognized the impact of social media marketing and have begun to utilize social media platforms to engage with young consumers. Weibo has emerged as a crucial platform in this regard, allowing luxury brands to promote brand activities and offer customer service, with 376 million monthly active users and 165 million daily active users accessing Weibo through mobile devices [8].

By using Weibo, luxury brands can collect user feedback and communicate with their desired audience. Therefore, leading to more precise consumer positioning and effective product promotion. Disseminating brand messages and placing advertisements on Weibo enables luxury brands to capture wider attention and generate revenue more rapidly [8].

Luxury brands adopt different strategic positions on Weibo. For example, Hermès primarily uses Weibo as a news release platform, maintaining a weekly release frequency with text and visual content. However, the number of comments and likes is relatively low, resulting in a smaller number of followers(961k) compared to other luxury brands such as Burberry(1698k) and Gucci(3834k).

In addition, with the increasing recognition of digitization in the luxury industry, WeChat has become an integral part of communication strategies for luxury brands. Luxury brands are gradually experimenting with tactics to achieve effective outcomes on the WeChat platform. Eight specific forms of WeChat marketing, tailored for the luxury sector, can be identified:

Brand Development Storytelling: Luxury brands utilize WeChat as a platform to narrate the brand's history, evolution, and founder's philosophy. In order to create a captivating brand narrative.

Online and Offline Integration: Luxury brands use WeChat to facilitate interactive experiences that seamlessly integrate virtual and physical environments. This includes features such as 360-degree image displays and behind-the-scenes content sharing during shows [9].

Membership and After-sales Services: WeChat serves as a channel for luxury brands to provide exclusive membership services and personalized after-sales support.

WeChat Moments Advertisements: Luxury brands use WeChat's moments to showcase advertisements composed of engaging text, videos, and images.

Interactive Games: Brands create interactive games on WeChat, particularly during festive seasons, to engage users and foster a sense of brand connection.

Personalized Services: Utilizing geographic location data, luxury brands offer personalized services on WeChat, including product translations and relevant recommendations [9].

Expanded Purchasing Channels: Luxury brands utilize WeChat to broaden their sales channels by establishing limited-time experience shops [9]. So that enables seamless purchasing experiences within the platform.

WeChat Mini Programs: Luxury brands develop WeChat mini programs to provide users with boutique shop locators, navigation, and brand experience.

Hermès Wechat account primarily serves as a platform for boutique inquiries, brand updates, and customer service. The frequency of WeChat notifications aligns with Weibo, averaging one per week. The average reading volume is approximately 20,000 per release. Surprisingly, in October 2017, Hermès broke new ground by opening a WeChat limited-time experience shop in collaboration with Apple to sell their smartwatches [6]. This is a significant departure as it marked Hermès' first venture into online sales in China.

Upon clicking the push notification from Hermès WeChat, users are presented with a concise page containing only two or three sentences and a brief 12-second video. By clicking on the "read original text" button in the lower left corner, users are directed straight to the purchasing interface. The shop offers six different models of smartwatches priced at around 10,000 RMB. It is worth noting that Hermès opted to launch its online sales with the relatively lower-priced Apple Watch, indicative of the brand's cautious approach to this new endeavor [6].

By choosing to establish a limited-time experience shop on the WeChat platform, Hermès demonstrates its commitment to and optimism towards this influential platform.

3.3. Convergence of Traditional and Digital Marketing

The convergence of communication channels presents challenges for luxury brands when it comes to building integrated marketing communications. Marketing messages are no longer confined to a single channel but are spread across various different times and locations. However, it's important to view traditional and emerging channels as complementary rather than mutually exclusive [6].

For luxury brands, the goal of integrated marketing communications is to cultivate resonance and emotional attachment between the brand and consumers. The integration of communication channels depends on the foundation of traditional channels while utilizing digital channels to expand coverage in online [10]. Luxury brands should engage effectively with consumers on social media and understand consumer needs and preferences. Ultimately, build more personalized and meaningful connections with customers.

Hermès' WeChat Mini Program provides consumers with a shopping experience that contains online, mobile, and offline channels. Thus, immersing them in the products offered by this luxury brand. The integration of communication channels plays a crucial role in helping the brand effectively manage and understand consumers. Establishing online and offline sales channels is no longer a new concept. Through data sharing, the integration of online and offline products has been achieved. The dichotomy between physical retail and e-commerce gives way to harmonious integration [11]. The co-development of both has become the "new normal" in sales models [11].

In today's landscape of product and marketing homogeneity, relying solely on product quality or traditional promotional strategies is unrealistic [10]. Consumer experience becomes key to establishing brand awareness and image. The integration of traditional and digital experiences for

luxury brands primarily manifests in the refinement of online platforms [11]. Carefully crafted and technologically advanced websites can communicate aesthetics and designs with the public.

Taking Hermès' official website as an example, its homepage showcases a slightly tilted and asymmetric logo positioned in the top left corner. The logo itself is no longer the sole focus of the brand. The website incorporates elements of painting and calligraphy, utilizing a unique handcrafted font by an artist. This choice imbues the brand with uniqueness and vitality, showcasing Hermès as both an artist and a designer. The layout and design of pages and panels align with the classic Hermès color palette, consisting of orange, white, and gray. Enabling consistent communication between the brand's values and aesthetic standards.

In today's media landscape, traditional sales channels still dominate the luxury industry. However, there has been a noticeable rise in online luxury sales in recent years, indicating that luxury brands are adopting both traditional and digital marketing strategies [11].

4. Marketing Issues of Luxury Fashion Brands in the Era of Mass Media

The dynamic market environment poses challenges to this traditional system's effectiveness. The emergence of diverse communication modes presents both opportunities and obstacles for luxury brands.

4.1. Brand Aging

Brand aging occurs when consumers are aware of a brand but choose not to purchase it [12]. Several factors contribute to brand aging. Firstly, aging management refers to executives becoming less receptive to new ideas, hindering the development of contemporary marketing strategies. Secondly, low product design innovation fails to cater to the demand of younger consumers. Lastly, untimely advertising diminishes brand memory and relevance [12]. Brands must address these challenges to rejuvenate themselves in the market.

4.2. Lagging Adoption of Smart Media Platforms

While other brands embrace social media and generate online buzz, luxury brands have been slower in their adoption [12]. The positioning of luxury goods conflicts with the mass-appeal nature of smart media platforms. Many luxury brands continue to be managed in a family-based manner. Chinese teams of most luxury brands often lack autonomy in decision-making. While trendy brands have continuously created all kinds of omnichannel retail in line with the consumption habits of the Chinese market, luxury goods are usually still stuck to the use of offline sales. Various strategic decisions of luxury fashion brands in the Chinese market require approval from higher-ups. The hierarchical decision-making process at brand headquarters hinders timely responses from executing departments. To keep pace with the rapidly evolving smart media environment, luxury brands must grant teams decision-making autonomy and encourage timely responses [13].

In conclusion, luxury brands face challenges related to brand aging, adoption of smart media platforms, and balancing tradition with innovation. Addressing these challenges requires embracing digital platforms while preserving brand identity [13]. By overcoming these obstacles, luxury brands can establish strong connections with both existing and potential customers.

5. Marketing Strategy Optimization in Mass Media Era

In response to the escalating consumer demand for luxury brands, the landscape of the luxury goods industry has experienced significant shifts. By integrating new technology into their strategies, brands can revolutionize their existing marketing mindset [1].

5.1. Capturing the Customer Base and Expanding into the Youth Market

Today's young generation, raised in the era of the Internet, has a preference for convenient digital channels when it comes to completing their transactions. In order to tap into the vast online consumer traffic, luxury brands should collaborate with e-commerce companies to establish a strong online presence [6]. The post-90s demographic accounts for 50% of total luxury goods consumption and contributes to 46% of the market share (McKinsey & Company's China Luxury Report 2022). However, it is important not to overlook the consumption power of individuals within the \$100,000 to \$250,000 annual income range. Their loyalty and purchasing potential should not be underestimated.

5.2. Utilization of Big Data Technology for User Analyzing

The application of big data technology enables the depiction of user profiles, allowing for precision marketing strategies. When consumers browse or make purchases of specific products, their subsequent internet activities are tracked. Therefore, they receive targeted product recommendations and details on various online platforms. This exemplifies the utilization of big data for precision marketing.

Given the diversity among users in terms of factors such as gender, geographical location, age, and preferences, dynamic data analysis is conducted to understand individual consumer behavior [13]. User profiles help identify and target specific groups of potential consumers, providing the foundation for precise product placement and information dissemination [13].

Furthermore, big data facilitates the tracking of customers throughout the entire consumer journey, from initial interest in a product to the final purchase decision and post-consumption feedback. By analyzing consumers' consumption habits and pain points, big data helps uncover valuable insights and deeply understand the needs of potential consumers.

In the realm of luxury apparel, the group interested in a product may not necessarily be the same as the group that actually makes purchases [14]. High-end marketing differs significantly from mass promotion, as the interests of high-end consumers diverge from those of the general public. Therefore, studying the purchase data of actual consumers becomes pivotal in user profiling.

5.3. Profound Emotional Experience

The key distinction between luxury goods and ordinary products lies in their emotional value. Consumers willingly pay a significant premium for luxury goods as they seek to fulfill their spiritual consumption needs [12]. Luxury goods embody emotional value, often exemplified by French luxury brands renowned for their ability to evoke romantic sentiments. For instance, when consumers use French-made perfumes, they not only experience a refreshing and distinctive fragrance but also feel enveloped in a romantic atmosphere. This emotional experience is a significant aspect of luxury goods.

In the digital age, many luxury brands are embracing online marketing strategies to effectively cater to customers' emotional desires. These brands are continuously exploring ways to satisfy customers' emotional needs. Additionally, brands can tailor their marketing initiatives based on the geographical location of consumers [13,14]. Take Chinese New Year as an example. Luxury brands can introduce and promote special products infused with Chinese zodiac elements through social media platforms. By capturing the shared sentiments associated with the Chinese New Year, such as the longing for a reunion with loved ones, brands successfully resonate with their target audience and create meaningful connections.

6. Conclusion

This article provides a concise overview of marketing methods in the luxury fashion industry, focusing on mass media characteristics. By analyzing Hermès' brand identity and style, it extensively examines their marketing activities on Weibo and WeChat. Offering an in-depth analysis of their current social media marketing efforts. The findings emphasize the need to integrate traditional and digital marketing strategies. Highlighting the synergy between online and offline sales promotions while expanding emotional experiences.

The paper identifies challenges faced by luxury fashion brands, including brand aging, and inadequate attention to digital media. Practical solutions are proposed, such as expanding into the youth market, utilizing big data for precise targeting, and fostering stronger emotional connections with customers. These recommendations aim to equip luxury fashion brands with the necessary tools to thrive in the era of mass media. Catering to both loyal consumers and the younger generation influenced by digital media.

The study acknowledges its limitations. Covering topics such as marketing, communication, and information technology. Understanding certain concepts may be challenging due to the broad scope within a limited time. To address these limitations, relevant literature was extensively reviewed to enhance knowledge and bolster the study's credibility. However, since the luxury industry has been slow in embracing new media, fully demonstrating the impact of media on brand promotion is constrained. Thus, the conclusions drawn from the Hermès case study may not be entirely comprehensive or robust.

The research area holds opportunities for further exploration, given technological advancements and transformations driven by the digital economy. Luxury brands must adapt to the characteristics of the smart media era to maintain competitiveness. It is important to note that smart media platforms will evolve and become outdated, making current marketing strategies less effective in the future.

To address this, researchers should actively explore innovative marketing models aligned with future trends. For example, investigating VR technology for immersive clothing displays or integrating sensor technology for interactive experiences. Drawing inspiration from other fields and incorporating smarter technological algorithms is a possible direction for future research.

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