

Bethan Rees 1104558 - Research Methods Assignment 3

by BETHAN ALICE REES

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Proposal Project

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Working title

Marketing strategies used within the fashion industry today.

Introduction

Throughout my written dissertation project proposal the subject of my choice that I will be conveying within a field related to my programme of study, is marketing strategies used within the fashion industry today. A marketing strategy is an “organization's strategy that combines all of its marketing goals into one comprehensive plan” (BusinessDictionary.com, 2015). The main aim of my study is to find out the main marketing strategies used within the fashion industry today and to establish the most popular and effective marketing strategies used by all competitors within the fashion industry. I am also aiming to gain answers to research questions and objectives, such as, how marketing strategies are carried out within the fashion industry, what companies in the fashion industry actually achieve from specific marketing strategies, why companies in the fashion industry choose to use certain marketing strategies, which are the most beneficial marketing strategies used by companies within the fashion industry and within a company who is in control of deciding the best marketing strategies to use. In addition, I am also aiming to gain answers to research questions and objectives, such as, what are the main marketing strategies that encourage customers of the fashion industry to buy products and which marketing strategies gain their attention the most, how customers of the fashion industry view companies marketing strategies from their own perspective, who influences customers to buy a product and why customers eventually decided to buy a certain product. The answers from these research questions and objectives will be used to make an appropriate conclusion, as to which is the best marketing strategy/s used within the fashion industry today.

Review of relevant literature

“With its beginnings in the late 17th century, the fashion industry is a globalized sector that works to meet the demand for apparel and dictates the trends for what should be worn” (wiseGEEK, 2015). The competitive fashion industry today has been divided into five levels, haute couture, luxury wear, affordable luxury wear, mainstream clothing and discount clothing. As a result companies have had to utilise effective marketing strategies, in order to strive within this industry.

One of the most popular and inexpensive marketing strategies in the fashion industry today is through word-of-mouth. “If you're not personally speaking to your customers, be sure that you have brand ambassadors who can communicate effectively with your customers about your products” (Brookins, 2015). It is essential that these brand ambassadors are people who wear your items and who will promote their favourable participation with your brand. Furthermore, a look book is also considered a beneficial marketing strategy within the fashion industry today. A look book is “a book filled with glossy photographs provides editors, potential buyers and even potential customers with an idea of what you can create. Work with a photographer who understands fashion photography and consider hiring a stylist for the shoot” (Brookins, 2015). Within the competitive fashion industry today it is vital that your look book marketing strategy includes information about your company, how your brand began and which direction you aim to head in. Another good marketing strategy within the fashion industry today is through the use of fashion blogs. “People are frequently introduced to brands by friends and family, but they often venture online to do their research and look for reviews from other customers. A big part of the online community includes blogs and social networks” (Brookins, 2015). It is favourable to gain

powerful, mutually beneficial relationships with the nearby and national fashion bloggers and websites, as an aspect of your innovative marketing strategy. Within the fashion industry today it is important to convey gripping angles throughout marketing strategies, as they are overpowered daily with ideas from up-and-coming designers. One of the main marketing strategies within the fashion industry today is of course the internet. The internet allows companies to reach a massive number of people. Therefore, it is beneficial for companies in this industry to create a website containing images and videos of their fashion. It is evident that within the fashion industry the repetition of a company's marketing strategy and message is crucial in order to remain in the public's consciousness. "Email and social media are easy and inexpensive ways to achieve this. Enrol in bulk email services through which you can send to all your contacts regular fashion newsletter updates relating to your business. Include discount coupons and other special offers" (Small Business - Chron.com, 2015).

There are many marketing strategy theories within the fashion industry today, such as segmentation. This is when products are made to resolve customer's issues and fulfil their needs. "Market segmentation is the craft of presenting a company's product to segments that want it, can afford it, and know how to access it. Business owners and marketers who identify these segments based on demographics, behaviours and desires can concentrate their marketing efforts on the customers who are most likely to buy" (Small Business - Chron.com, 2015). Another marketing strategy theory that is prominent in the fashion industry today is marketing mix, which arranges all sectors of the marketing plan around the habits, wants and psychology of the target market. This examines marketing through the theory of the "4 Ps". "The first P is product, and takes into account its design, features and competitors. The second P, price, is a factor that can be adjusted to manage demand. Promotion is the third P. It seeks to find which media to engage in order to make the right people aware of the product's benefits. Placement, the fourth P, determines where and how potential customers can access the product" (Small Business - Chron.com, 2015).

A cultural influence upon marketing strategies within the fashion industry today is values. "Values of a society dictate what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Some countries, such as the United States, are more individualistic, with citizens making purchasing decisions based on personal preferences" (Small Business - Chron.com, 2015). However, in countries such as Japan, individuals make purchasing decisions on fashion items depending on the well-being of a family. Another cultural influence on marketing strategies within the fashion industry today is symbols, which refers to language that is spoken and unspoken. Throughout marketing strategies in this industry language is known as a symbol of cultural pride. "While some foreign influence may be acceptable, a culture may want to preserve its specific cultural heritage. A marketer would need to conform marketing strategies in such a country into language symbols acceptable to the population of that particular country" (Small Business - Chron.com, 2015).

Research strategy and methodology

Primary research is "information that comes directly from the source--that is, potential customers" (Entrepreneur, 2015). Throughout my subject of marketing strategies used within the fashion industry today, I intend to carry out a mixed method approach of primary research. This method of primary research entails quantitative methodology, which "generally involves collecting numerical data that can be subjected to statistical analysis" (Mixed Methods, 2015) and qualitative methodology, which "generally involves listening to the participants' voice and subjecting the data to analytic induction (e.g.,

finding common themes)" (Mixed Methods, 2015). I believe that a mixed method approach of research is appropriate in order to obtain information and data about marketing strategies used within the fashion industry today, as "researchers are enabled to use all of the tools of data collection available rather than being restricted to the types of data collection typically associated with quantitative research or qualitative research" (Sagepub.com, 2015). There has been a historical argument for 30 years that mixed methods research expresses strengths that counterbalance the weaknesses of both quantitative and qualitative research. This conveys that it is appropriate for me to carry out a mixed method approach of primary research.

Furthermore, I intend to utilise various research methods throughout my mixed method approach of research, when researching my chosen topic of marketing strategies used within the fashion industry today. One of the research methods that I intend to carry out is interviews, a qualitative form of research methodology. I plan to interview company managers/owners on the high street that are in the fashion industry in order to gain answers to my research objectives, as stated in the introduction. Face to face interviews normally take place between an interviewer and the interviewee at a decided venue. "The interviewer will ask the respondent/interviewee questions and record their responses. Interviews can also be carried out on the telephone; for telephone interviews the researcher will ring the person they would like to interview" (Learnmarketing.net, 2015). Therefore, if the owners/managers of company's within the fashion industry do not have the time to have a face to face interview with me I will suggest the option of a telephone interview. Furthermore, another research method that I intend to utilise is a survey/questionnaire, a quantitative form of research methodology. "This method of market research involves getting feedback from potential customers through a structured, multi-question survey" (Canadianentrepreneurtraining.com, 2015). I aim to create a survey/questionnaire to hand and to fashion industry customers on the high street for them to complete in order for me to gain answers to my research objectives, as stated in the introduction. In addition, another research method that I intend to utilise is focus groups. I intend to carry out two focus groups in order to aid my research. The first focus group will be members of staff from different companies that are in charge of the marketing strategies within the fashion industry, and the second group will be members of the general public who purchase items from the fashion industry. I plan to carry out these focus groups in order to gather information and opinions in relation to my research objectives. "These groups are led by an objective discussion moderator. Focus groups are a great way to get feedback on a product or service idea" (Canadianentrepreneurtraining.com, 2015).

Logistical and ethical considerations

Throughout my research I have to be aware of the possible ethical considerations. I must ensure that I have full permission from the people who I will be studying throughout my research, such as, individuals within the fashion industry and customers. Also, I do not want to cause any harm towards the participants within my research, therefore another ethical consideration is to be careful with the simplest things, such as, the way I would delicate questions whilst carrying out the interviews. Another ethical consideration during my research is objectivity vs. subjectivity. When carrying out research it is crucial that you are "sure your own personal biases and opinions do not get in the way of your research and that you give both sides fair consideration" (Owl.english.purdue.edu, 2015). When conducting research, through ways such as questionnaires it is important that it is done so under the firm understanding that all your findings will be kept anonymous, which is another ethical consideration within my research. In addition, an ethical consideration to

take into account when reporting the results from my research is to be certain that I precisely present what I was told or what I observed. It is crucial that I “do not take interview responses out of context and do not discuss small parts of observations without putting them into the appropriate context” (Owl.english.purdue.edu, 2015).

Moreover, throughout my research it is vital that I establish the logistical considerations. Logistical considerations can be defined as, “relating to the process of planning and organizing to make sure that resources are in the places where they are needed, so that an activity or process happens effectively” (Dictionary.cambridge.org, 2015). A logistical consideration that I have to take into account is the size of my focus groups involved within my research, the number of surveys to be handed out and completed, and the number of interviews to carry out with individuals within the fashion industry. Another logistical consideration to establish throughout my research is the time and costs available for me to carry out my research and the number of members within the fashion industry that will have time to participate in my interviews and focus groups, and the number of general public individuals that will be willing to complete my questionnaire and take part in my focus group. In addition, within my research I require respondents to individually complete my questionnaire. I will gain access to respondents by politely approaching members of the general public on the high street, close by businesses within the fashion industry, and ask them if they would mind completing my short questionnaire, or if they would be willing to participate in my focus group for research purposes. Also, to gain access to respondents of my interviews, I will go into companies within the fashion industry and ask to talk to the manager/owner and ask them if they would mind taking part in a short interview regarding marketing strategies used within the fashion industry today.

Outcomes

Overall, the sorts of results that I expect to gain from my research are the exact ways companies within the fashion industry carry out their most beneficial marketing strategies, such as, fashion blogs and the internet, and what exactly these companies actually achieve from these marketing strategies, for example increased amount of customers. I also aim to gain results as to why companies in the fashion industry choose certain marketing strategies, such as, to increase incomes and profits, and who is in control of deciding the best marketing strategies to use within the fashion companies, for example the manager, deputy manager, or do the companies have their own marketing team to decide on the strategies. Furthermore, the sorts of results that I expect to gain from my research are the main marketing strategies that encourage customers of the fashion industry to buy products, such as, internet web sites or fashion showcases, and the strategies that encourage customers to buy products by gaining their attention the most, for example advertisements. I also aim to gain results as to how customers of the fashion industry view companies marketing strategies from their own perspective, such as, striking and inviting or bland and boring, and within the fashion industry who influences customers to buy a product and why customers eventually decided to buy a certain product, for example seeing celebrities wearing the clothing, the effective marketing or maybe knowing that a percentage of the clothing cost goes to support a local charity.

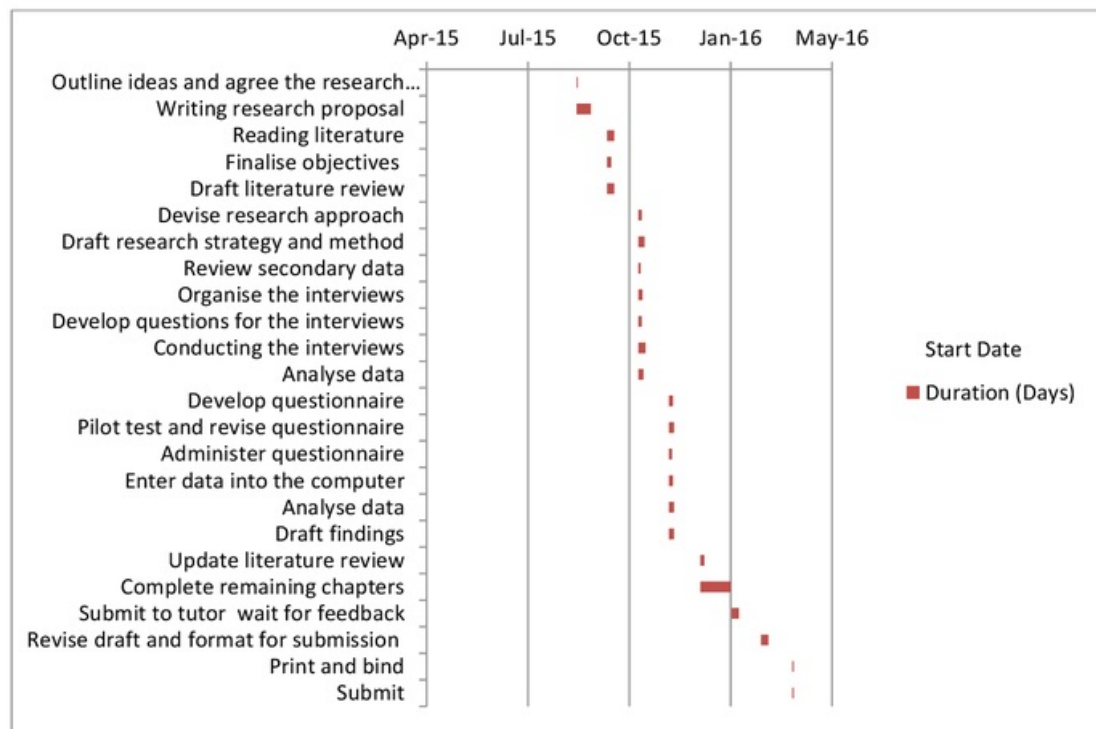
Timetable

Below is a planned timetable for the various elements of work involved in the bringing together of my dissertation. I have then used the data within the table to create a GANTT chart, as this type of chart “is one of the most popular and useful ways of showing activities (tasks or events) displayed against time” (Gantt.com, 2015).

Table

Task	Start Date	Duration (Days)	End Date
Outline ideas and agree the research questions and scope with supervisor	Sep-15	1	Sep-15
Writing research proposal	Sep-15	14	Sep-15
Reading literature	Oct-15	7	Oct-15
Finalise objectives	Oct-15	4	Oct-15
Draft literature review	Oct-15	7	Oct-15
Devise research approach	Nov-15	3	Nov-15
Draft research strategy and method	Nov-15	6	Nov-15
Review secondary data	Nov-15	2	Nov-15
Organise the interviews	Nov-15	4	Nov-15
Develop questions for the interviews	Nov-15	3	Nov-15
Conducting the interviews	Nov-15	7	Nov-15
Analyse data	Nov-15	5	Nov-15
Develop questionnaire	Dec-15	4	Dec-15
Pilot test and revise questionnaire	Dec-15	5	Dec-15
Administer questionnaire	Dec-15	3	Dec-15
Enter data into the computer	Dec-15	4	Dec-15
Analyse data	Dec-15	5	Dec-15
Draft findings	Dec-15	5	Dec-15
Update literature review	Jan-16	4	Jan-16
Complete remaining chapters	Jan-16	30	Feb-16
Submit to tutor wait for feedback	Feb-16	7	Mar-16
Revise draft and format for submission	Mar-16	7	Apr-16
Print and bind	Apr-16	1	Apr-16
Submit	Apr-16	1	Apr-16

GANTT Chart



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GRADEMARK REPORT

FINAL GRADE

71 /100

GENERAL COMMENTS

Instructor

Thanks for this submission of assignment 3. Below is the feedback that is concerned directly with the criteria that was presented to you in the assignment brief.

Research Question:

You have provided a clear research area and have given some quite considerable attention to the research questions and the objectives that ensue from this.

14/20 %

Background Literature:

There is quite considerable evidence of background reading through your review of key literature ideas and you demonstrate this quite well in your selection and of ideas from sources that underpin quite well your own thoughts. You need to add page numbers to references for citations where possible.

12/15 %

Methodological approach:

You have explained and justified a quite clear selection of the methodological approach and techniques for data collection and analysis. You defend your mixed methodology approach quite well and you identify particular methods and represent these effectively.

21/30 %

Ethical Issues:

You have provided a quite clear consideration for ethical issues and to some extent how you will handle them and why they are important.

Logistical issues are also attended to.

11/15 %

Project Planning:

A quite clear idea and representation of the planning that you envisage for the project is provided in a suitable table.

6/10 %

Presentation:

Your clear presentation and good quality structure, style, grammar and referencing is evidenced in this work. You will need to provide page numbers for quotes if available.

7/10%

Final mark 71/100%
Alex

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