

Oxendales marketing strategy analysis



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Anthony Nolan

Marketing Campaign

Oxendales started off as a purely clothing supplier when they first appeared online but nowadays they sell a lot of different things from home wear to electricals and entertainment items. Through broadening their stock range, they have become a more desirable option for many more segments of the demographic.

This report will show how Oxendales go about their business and how they are viewed by the public that use their service.

Oxendales marketing campaigns are ongoing. They are around a long time and their name is a household one. Nonetheless they do still need to get their product out there. With this company, selling items is just part of the offer. They also give credit and charge interest on that credit. They make a lot of money doing business in this manner.

Once a new season collection of clothing is announced their marketers set in motion a plan that gets the new arrivals from the storehouse to the public.

They appear to have a good idea of who they are targeting with their campaigns. The demographic being targeted is the medium to low income earner or people on social welfare; people who can afford to pay instalments but cannot necessarily afford to buy a product outright. For this segment of the market, Oxendales are often an invaluable ally in helping them to clothe themselves, their families and their homes. Oxendales have a huge selection of items on offer for people and for the household.

They tend to bring out two new “ lines” of clothing every year. The different styles and items are reflective of the different seasons. The first line of the year is the Spring/Summer collection, which typically comes to the fore around March or April. Then around September they announce their Autumn/Winter collection.

Oxendales introduce their new lines typically through a number of channels that they feel will get their product specifically to the target segment. They show their stock on television, using TV3 as their main channel for showing people the wares on offer. They utilise the show Ireland AM to get their new offers into the vision and minds of the public.

At the same time as being seen on television they will also be launching advertising collateral campaigns on many different levels, from more television advertising to social media and physical paper advertising.

They will follow this up by interacting with the public one-to-one in trade shows such as the “ Woman’s World Show” which is a yearly event held at the RDS in Dublin. This public relations meet and greet is meant to align Oxendales with many of the other company brand competitors attending the show as well as get their own brand into the minds of the public or to cement their brand in the minds of people who already know of them.

No matter where and through what channel they are showing their items, one will find a consistent “ feel” to their advertisements. The colours used are often very alike across all of their advertising campaigns. If one is reading a flyer that falls out of a magazine they will feel that the “ look” of

that flyer is consistent with an advertisement they may have seen on-line for example – The visual connection is apparent.

The consistent look leads on to the famous “ Three C’s” of marketing. Do Oxendales fulfil this criteria?

- Well their communications are first class. Their advertisements and language used is clear and concise and is not in the least confusing. They sometimes communicate how simple it is to get credit from them as much as their actual items for sale.
- Their items are often not as Compelling as their credit offers. Oxendales can often reel in a buyer through the promise of “ buy now-pay later”. This is a compelling way to attract custom from the target segment.
- Their look remains Consistent throughout. Their colours and designs used for advertising is instantly recognisable and they do utilise consistency across channels.

Oxendales use integrated communications too. Every time a piece of Oxendales literature is examined or online source seen, one can immediately identify that the company “ link” to the other places they are available to view as well as to their website. They often also link to their credit facilities which experience has told them is a unique selling point.

The Marketing Mix

The Product Being Sold

The most important part of Oxendales overall product is convenience. Online Shopping is on the rise according to Roy Morgan Research (2015). So, from that we can conclude that people are using the convenience of online shopping for a myriad of reasons. What are these reasons?

Upstream Commerce (2012) quoted the eight most important reasons that people shop online as Convenience, Better Prices, Variety, Fewer Expenses, Comparison of Prices, No Crowds, Compulsive Shopping and Discreet Purchases. We will see many of these reasons pop up again and again.

Barbara Thauof Forbes. com (2013) quotes a study by strategy and marketing consultants Simon, Kucher and Partners when she propounds that 24% of online shoppers like to buy books, consumer electronics and entertainment online while 18% of online consumers prefer to buy health and beauty products, toys, sports equipment, hobby interests, clothing, merchandise and furniture online. This is an interesting finding in relation to Oxendales online activity.

24% of online shopping is spent on books, consumer electronics and entertainment. How many of these do Oxendales supply? The answer is two of the three. Oxendales will sell a person everything from an iPod to an Xbox and from a television to a heater (and many, many items in between). Books are the odd ones out. We move on - 18% of people shop online to buy health and beauty products, toys, sports equipment, hobby interests, clothing, merchandise and furniture. That is seven categories of items that could possibly be sold online. Again, how many of them do Oxendales sell? The answer is Five. This online behemoth sells all of that list barring hobby

interests and merchandise (though all things sold could be classed as merchandise surely?)

So going by the experts' views on why people shop online, one would have to conclude that Oxendales understand the reasons and offer an excellent product to people in their online store in order to fulfil the needs of their customers.

Specifically however a product is more than just an item. How does this company fulfil the other range of criterion that goes to tick the “ product” box in relation to Marketing?

- **Quality:** Like many shops, both online and physical, the quality of item bought is directly linked to the price of the product. Having sampled many of Oxendales products they have been found to be durable and fashion sensitive. Certainly as an online shop, Oxendales is seen as a high quality outlet.
- **Image:** The image of Oxendales is linked to a few things. Firstly, it is seen as somewhere that people can buy things now and pay later, thanks to their simple and effective paying plans. They are also seen as ultra-convenient. Oxendales have a wonderful selection of items too in a vast array of sizes and models. So the overall image is one of ease of access to what people want and ease of payment.
- **Branding:** Oxendales is a household name. They have been around since 1875 (Oxendales: About, 2016) so it is understandable that in that time they have become so well known.

- Features, Variants and Mix: As alluded to earlier, this online super store offers many items in many different configurations, sizes, colours and categories.
- Customer Service: Excellent customer service is available, through online, telephone and written media. When an order is received, the packaging staff also include a return label in case an item does not suit the customer for whatever reason.
- Availability: Always available to use, every moment of every day of the year.
- Warranties: Oxendales offer a refund, repair or replacement service on all items purchased that do not reach the consumer in perfect condition (Oxendales: About, 2016).

Promotion

Oxendales promote sales by giving special offers on their website. They have seasonal promotions in which they offer certain items at a discount price. When Spring arrives, they will often sell outdoor furniture and garden implements at a special discount.

In addition to their discounted stock, they also promote through email by giving existing customers money off codes that they can apply to their basket the next time they are online for a discount. For non-members, the company will email introductory offers always highlighting their easy payment option. Almost everybody who applies to Oxendales will be accepted for payment through credit. This company is a market leader in direct marketing.

Price

It appears that Oxendales do not believe in low price equalling higher sales. Their prices are never as low as one might find on the bargain rail of a local department store. Even when discounts are given, one might find that the item on discount would still exceed the price of a similar discount in a high street shop.

As far as positioning goes, the idea that Oxendales wants to hold in the mind of consumers is one of ultimate convenience and ease of purchase. Due to their massive stock one can find almost anything within their range to suit them. Due to their credit facility, one can spend money that they do not actually have and then pay off the cost of the purchases over a set period of time. Due to the company accepting almost anyone that applies for credit, that will place a multitude of people in a catchment net for business, particularly approaching festive periods and leading up to birthdays, weddings, interviews etcetera. The position of Oxendales as a brand is very much one of convenience. However, when people are finding it difficult to keep up to date with payments then the company could be seen as a nuisance and increasingly in a bad light due to their continued letters and phone calls, even though the reason for the continued negative correspondence lies with the consumer.

Finally, Oxendales do not only sell through a credit account payment option. They also allow people to pay directly like any other online shop, through use of Credit/Debit card. They do not allow payment through an online bank such as PayPal however.

Place

Oxendales use a number of different suppliers as part of their distribution channel. Many of their suppliers are little known brands like “ Premier Man” for example. These brands are created and sold exclusively in online shops like Oxendales. The items are produced at low price in many Asian countries, shipped to Oxendales warehouse and then sold on to the consumer or end-user.

The company also sell high street brands such as Levis, Wrangler, Toshiba, Black and Decker and Timberland to name a very few. It is the same type of distribution channel. Oxendales buy in the stock at the stock price and then sell on with a mark up to the customer. Of course Oxendales also gain revenue through the interest they charge on their credit facility.

The sales support for this company is quite good. They can be contacted by telephone, through a form online on their page and by email. The best way is by far by telephone as one knows they are being heard and they will get an immediate response.

The company use a first level channel for selling goods. The goods are produced and then sent directly to Oxendales without the need for a wholesaler.

The company also has a presence on social media such as Pinterest, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and Blogger.

People

As far as customer contact goes, Oxendales rarely need to interact with anyone. They do have a phone contact number and there is an automated response which, if navigated correctly will eventually lead to an operator who is usually very friendly and interested in the query being made.

However because their system is so well set up online, there is little need for assistance from another person in order to order goods or return them.

Having said that they do have top quality IT staff who keep the website current and glitch-less so that the business of making money can continue apace. The webpages of the Oxendales website have all of the facilities that even the most limited computer user might need and understand.

The people who work on the image of the company have done a good job keeping the “convenience” image to the forefront. They also superbly make the consumer feel that they are getting a bargain when in fact they may not be, not compared to a high street store. However the consumer often values convenience over price.

Process

The process used is very definitely a customer focussed approach.

Oxendales want to radiate a friendly and relaxed approach to consumers in everything they offer, from getting the customer to choose the products to be bought to getting the customer to part with their money. Everything on the website is streamlined and very easy to navigate. Most modern internet speeds will allow for easy navigation and very quick page loading.

The design of the website is excellent. The pages scroll and it is up to the user of the site to choose how many items to view per page. There is also a facility where one can sort the item content on a number of criteria from Best Sellers, New in, On Sale to Ratings, Price lowest to Highest and vice versa. Moving from one area to the next is very easy too with the use of a docked banner at the head of the page displaying the different department names, each one hyperlinked to the appropriate section.

The actual process of finding, adding to the basket and checking out one's selections is very easy on this website. It gives the impression of years of experience on the company's part.

Physical Evidence

The whole online experience of shopping at Oxendales is really a very good, easy and addictive one. Given a large enough spend limit it could be imagined that many people would get themselves into a lot of debt in a single visit. Once one uses this site, and provided one has some credit left on their account, it is almost a certainty that one will return and purchase again and again. The whole feel is one of ease and once a purchase is made, one of fulfilment. Oxendales offer a positive feeling to people visiting their site.

When the products ordered do eventually arrive at one's front door, they are always packaged superbly in a heavy weight plastic outer layer covering a bubble wrap and a thinner plastic inner layer. They come with a printed receipt and a printed returns label should it be required. Really the whole process from ordering to actually receiving the goods is very simple and incredibly stress-free.

Visible Metrics

Not having access to information about Oxendales Social Media internal metrics one can only comment upon the visible on-page information that is available to all viewers.

- On Facebook, Oxendales have 20585 followers.
- The Facebook page receives between one and four new posts from the page manager each day.
- New posts receive on average four likes each
- Judging by the amount of “ likes” for their posts, their followers either do not regularly visit the page or they do not like the posts. Due to their continued success in the online shopping market, one could conclude the former reason for the lack of post “ likes”.
- There have been seventeen visitor posts going back to December 17th 2015, from a membership of over twenty thousand.
- Oxendales post both images and video files to their Facebook page but neither are very popular
- Oxendales have 1344 followers on Twitter
- The Twitter Page receives between one and five new posts per day from the page manager.
- New posts receive an average of one like each
- New posts are rarely retweeted
- Like Facebook, it can be construed that their presence on Twitter does not greatly contribute to their actual sales on their website.

- Very rarely does any one of the 1344 followers ever reply to a tweet on the Oxendales Twitter page
- Oxendales has 23 followers on Instagram
- They have posted 184 images on Instagram
- Out of 184 posts, they have received just 5 comments
- Out of 184 posts, they have received 114 “ Likes” concentrated on 26 of the total posts

Without access to their page metrics and only going on the visible data one could conclude that Oxendales success is certainly not based upon their online presence.

From the information gained one can see that very few people interact with the company through social media. For this reason, it must be concluded that their success is based upon other strategies.

Targeted Demographic

“ Oxendales has an emphasis on contemporary women’s styling ranging from sizes 12-32 and we’re constantly developing our collections to bring you the latest looks that will keep you on-trend throughout the season. With our brand ambassador Lorraine Kelly choosing her favourite pieces, we’re making shopping for plus size clothes, lingerie and wide fit shoes and boots fun, easy and enjoyable regardless of age, size and shape.” (Oxendales Website, 2016)

The above direct quote is taken from the home page of the Irish Oxendales website. They do offer clothing for children too and for men and they offer

homeware and electrical goods. However, this is the headline from the home page of their website. This above all would intimate the following:

- That the company are targeting the female demographic above all else.
- That they are attempting to target all age groups of adult women.
- That they are attempting to target all shapes and sizes of adult women.
- That they are targeting women who are fashion sensitive and want to be dressed in up to the minute styles

Once one clicks on the “ Menswear” hyperlink, the following is displayed:

“ At JD Williams we know that finding stylish menswear that fits perfectly can be tricky. Our collection of big and tall menswear comes in a range of sizes to give you perfectly proportioned design. We have t-shirts, polos, coats and jackets in chest sizes 36-66, plus our trousers and jeans are available in 5 leg lengths, including extra-short and extra-long leg and waist sizes 32-64. Discover how easy it is to find the perfect fit for every occasion.” (Oxendales Website, 2016)

Oxendales is still the page header however Williams and Brown is the Menswear Department name. They are using this ploy of renaming the department to make it distinct and separate from the other departments.

Their catch-line on this page would suggest the following:

- That they stock many different types of clothing from T-shirts to jackets to trousers

- That they cater for all sizes of man, tall, small, fat, thin and everything in between

“ You name it, kids need it. Cots, highchairs, clothes, shoes, coats. But with all this in one place, shopping for your family has never been simpler. Look out for our new range of girls and boys clothing in our collection of baby, nursery and children’s essentials.” (Oxendales Website, 2016)

This demographic is aimed at the younger generation and is found on the “ kids” page of the website. So what can one glean from this statement?

- They stock items for many ages of child
- They stock items for both girls and boys

So what can be concluded from the information gained? The conclusion has to be that Oxendales, while catering for many different types of person and interest, primarily wants women to visit their site. This is suggested by the first page loaded on entering the website being aimed primarily at women. They want ladies of all ages and who are fashion sensitive. They probably know that even in the year 2016, women still do a lot of the buying for the household and therefore by targeting women on their home page, they are indirectly offering them the other areas of the site for their perusal also. The tag-lines on the Menswear and kids-wear pages are also aimed at women as well as men. They continue to talk about interests of women, the perfect fit and fashion.

Advertising Campaign

Oxendales advertise their online business in a number of ways. They use different online sources and some physical ways to advertise (as opposed to intangible online advertising).

Their latest advertising technique is to sponsor television shows. They are the current sponsor of the popular television drama “ Downton Abbey”. This means that every time the show is on television, the Oxendales brand is shown on-screen prior to the start of the episode and at the start and end of every advertisement break. This is more than just advertising of course as they are also positioning their Brand next to the aristocratic gentry of a period now long since passed. The nobility and wealth of the families portrayed in the show places Oxendales into a high class light by association.

They also advertise on television on daytime television. Ireland AM is a popular morning show mostly for stay at home mothers and unemployed people. The latest fashions available from Oxendales can be seen quite often being modelled on this show. Ireland AM also tend to use real people as models rather than incredibly beautiful sculpted catwalk ladies and gentlemen. This is good for Oxendales as they are trying to sell their brand to the people in the street. On the negative side, using normal people their clothes may not look as glamorous as they would on a professional model.

Oxendales advertise online on such sites as hotfrog. ie and rollercoaster. ie. The former is a business directory and this type of advertising is quite astute as people use business directories all the time to locate phone numbers and addresses. Having an ad in such a place should serve the company well. The latter, rollercoaster. ie is a parent and pregnancy site. One can immediately

see what Oxendales intentions are here. They are appealing to the mother on behalf of the child; they sell for both.

Their online presence also stretches to social media. Not only do they have their various social media pages but they also have paid advertisements in the side bars on the various pages on various sites.

Finally, they use the old fashioned paper and card as advertising media. Quite often in glossy women's magazines, postcard sized spam cards will fall out when opened. This "junk" often consists of various offers and advertisements for different shops, both physical and online. Oxendales do advertise in this manner. They also buy advertisement pages within the magazines pages.

Their other paper advertising is through their own full and mini-catalogues. The full Oxendales catalogue is only available through request from their site. However, the mini-catalogues showing their latest offers are sometimes distributed through people's letterboxes and as a third party supplement in Sunday Newspapers.

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