

Impact of giorgio armani on fashion



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Introduction

Giorgio Armani, the sole share holder, Chief Executive Officer, President and chief designer of Giorgio Armani SpA which is one of the most profitable fashion houses, is quite qualified for the interlocking work of design, management and marketing. Since the early eighties, he had been recognized as one of the most successful and well-selling designers in global fashion industry. Teri Agins (2000) stated that Giorgio Armani is one of the world's best-selling designer, a creator who was equal parts steak and sizzle —fashion and marketing. In addition, once, it was published in Forbes (Richard Heller 2001) that ' Armani is unique. He's the only designer in the world who has been able to combine real creative genius with a tremendously astute business sense.'

As an icon to fashion newcomers, stars and fans, Giorgio Armani has created a super fashion empire which owns 10 lines (Armani Prive, Giorgio Armani, Armani Collezioni, Emporio Armani, AJ Armani Jeans, A/X Armani Exchange, Armani Junior, Armani Casa, Armani Cosmetic and Armani Hotel), more than three hundred stores in thirty-six countries, thirteen factories all over the world and approximately five thousand employees. He keeps perfect balance between the role of designer and director. Mr. Armani was chosen as the world's most successful designer by Forbes in 2000 and honored with a lifetime achievement in a 2004's gala event organized by the Fashion Group International which is a global non-profit association with a membership of over 6000 professionals of achievement and influence representing all areas of the fashion, apparel, accessories, beauty, and home industries to commend his inapproachability talents and high status in fashion area.

This article will be separated into three parts to wholly demonstrate Giorgio Armani's major contribution and evaluate his status and impact in the field of fashion.

- The Design Revolution Giorgio Armani brought
- Giorgio Armani's Unique Marketing Strategy
- Conclusion
- Design Revolutionary

Giorgio Armani, one of the most famous fashion designers known by people of all ranks and classes in the world, is the undisputed genius of fashion. This Italian designer first made a name for himself by his menswear. Followed 1975's successful menswear fashion show, he started designing chicly women's wear in 1976. However, Armani lead the fashion trend at that time and indeed revolutionized the men's and women's dressing way, thus he was usually cited as the world's best-recognized, most commercially successful, and personally wealthy designer. (Mary Lisa Gavenas, 2008)

'Elegant', 'Masculine' and 'minimal' are the commonest words to describe Armani's style. All Armani's cuts are simple, clean and as straight as possible. It nullifies the conflict between dignity and sex, between dress and power. It also produces an aesthetic beauty on the level of the liberation of social minorities and sexualities; acquires public importance through diffusion and mass culture, while remaining open to the imaginary and the sensual; creates narcissistic commodities no longer determined only by functionality, but also by such models of symbolic identification as gender and status. (Germane Celant , 2000)

Iconic Design

As a fashion master, Giorgio Armani has created a significant number of design classics, such as 'Pantsuits for women', 'Unconstructed Suit', 'Ethnic Style' and 'Casual Luxury'. But if we have to select one as his representative work, jacket, is the inevitable choice. It is generally known that Armani is dubbed as the king of jackets by mass media, not merely because he is the first person who designed the jacket in 1975, but also since he devoted to update it and make it iconic. For Giorgio Armani, one jacket was all it took to initiate his triumphant career and to change both the streetscape and the history of fashion. Certainly it was a special jacket, something new, which miraculously illustrated the needs and not merely the aesthetic of the moment. It was created to fit the restlessness and new authority of women, and to offer men the impetus to liberate themselves from the uncomfortable armor they had been using to protect their dignity and insecurities. (Natalia Aspesi, 2000)

As mentioned in the Emporio Armani magazine, published in 1996, 'when I began to design, men all dressed in the same way. American industry called the shots, with its technicians scattered all over the world..... all impeccably equal, equally impeccable. The Mao Syndrome. Everyone wore the same uniform, a bit wider here, a bit more tapered there, but the substance was always the same. You couldn't tell them apart. They had no defects. But I liked defect. I wanted to personalize the jacket, to make it more closely attuned to its wearer. How? By removing the structure. Making it into a sort of second skin.' Armani is bold in making innovations and he has never stopped his step. He exerted himself to develop his design around the jacket

which was the starting point for his career. Armani renewed and redesigned the jacket almost each season. He illustrated that his small but crucial discovery lies in having imagined garment which falls over the body in a surprisingly natural manner. (Giorgio Armani, 1996)

The appearance of jacket offered a new way of dressing for both men and women. Germane Celant (2000) pointed that his jacket was a tool of unstable identity that could adapt itself to any bodily context whatsoever, thus satisfying the emotional and psychological requirements of a femininity tending to the masculine as well as a masculinity that aspired; it situated itself in the area of androgyny.

However, jacket has been created for more than twenty years, but so far it has been widely updating in fashion industry. There is no exaggeration to say that, from mass market to luxury market, the iconic design - jacket existed everywhere of fashion area.

Men's Wear

It is widely known that Giorgio Armani began his career by freeing men from the monotonous uniform and offering them varied ways to dress. From years to years, collection to collection, he increasingly designed casual luxury, comfortable but cool menswear on the basis of clear knowing men's desire. It is commented by Farid Chenoune (1993) that Armani initially designed clothes for sexy, thickest and broad-bottomed men, thereby shifting the center of masculine anatomical interest from the back (in contrast to the earlier fashion for tight, flat pants with their 'exposed—beam' look).

As mentioned before, in 1975, Giorgio Armani caused a splash in fashion industry. His shocked-world jacket was endorsed by male fans who clustered round Armani's fashion concept. Through several years' exploration and innovation, Armani became one of the best-selling menswear designers in the end of 1970s, but he didn't become dizzy with the successes already won, he continued to expand his impact in fashion trend, especially in menswear.

In the beginning of 1980s, with the popularization of cinema and television, the whole society has liberate its male sartorial possibilities so they may often coexist and interpenetrate (Anne Hollander, 1994). Armani successfully caught the chance and established cooperated relations with Hollywood's movie industry. Paul Schrader's 1980 film American Gigolo put Armani on the public's radar again. In the movie, actor Richard Gere dressed exclusively in Armani. Teri Agins (2000) suggested that the movie was a walking Armani fashion show. Indeed, from then on, men's dressing perception was absolutely different. Maetha J. Nelson (2000) also supported that the imagination that shaped a wardrobe so supple and seductive for Richard in American Gigolo that menswear in this country was never the same again.

Giorgio Armani, whose design style was looked upon as sexy, elegance and good quality, was recognized as a progenitor of the Wall Street 'Yuppie'.

Women's Wear

' Giorgio Armani changed the face of women's fashion beginning in the ' 70s. Thousands of confused women placed their confidence in him, and were overnight transformed to best dressed.' said by Anjelica Huston, an actress.

The famous architect Gae Aulenti also declared for this view. She explained that Armani is expressing with continuity a sense elegance that derives from both the intellect and the sense. According to female celebrities' appreciation to Armani, it is easy to understand and conclude the status and influence of Giorgio Armani in women's wear design. Armani had cast the same spell over a new generation of executive women who were unimpressed with the fussy, figure-molding haute couture that was coming out of Paris. Armani's soft, comfortable tailoring went over big in feminist age (Teri Agins, 2000).

As Anne Hollander (1994) mentioned in *Sex and Suit: the evolution of modern dress*, the modernizing clothes for women had meant copying men's clothes, directly or indirectly, one way or another. Giorgio Armani may not be the first or the sole one who borrowed menswear's tailor to women's wear, but he may be the one who made the greatest impact. It is also supported by Farid Chenoune (1993) that Armani dressed women in fashions directly inspired by menswear and gave professional women the same kind of subtly powerful uniform that men had.

In the 1970s, since women were allowed to share the job with men and assert themselves in office, the need of suitable and graceful working-clothes was pressing. Coward (1984) indicated that women's bodies and the messages which clothes can add are the repositories of the social definitions of sexuality, and women are always the defined sex and the display of those definitions. Giorgio Armani was aware of it and went in for designing what business women want. From 1970s to current, Giorgio Armani, whose

pantsuits were the pinnacle of ' power-dressing', has demonstrated a major contribution in working women's fashion.

Fashion begins and ends with the consumer (Maria Costantino, 1998). Since Armani knew clearly his customer's needs and satisfied them, his label has become synonymous with the power suit. Maetha J. Nelson (2000), the managing editor of In Style Magazine, criticized Giorgio Armani's contribution in women's wear that ' The designer who showed women they could dress for the office without looking like men.'

UNIQUE MARKETING STRATEGY

Giorgio Armani, who built the empire by himself, is not only a great designer, but also a marketing genius with astute business sense. Armani's marketing strategies always combine with his design. Armani's huge success is attributed to his fantastic design, creative marketing strategy and distinct business form. None of them could be ignored. From 1980 onward, Armani proved his business mettle by successfully sign license, expanding into allied fields, open his own stores, maintaining tight control of his distribution, and acquiring established manufacturing facilities (Mary Lisa Gavenas, 2008). He had the initiative of his empire by the 21st century, while his peers had sold their business.

Celebrity Strategy

The symbiotic and tight relationship between fashion designers and celebrities, especially the Hollywood's stars, could tract back to the 1950s. As Martha Nelson, the editor of in Style, concluded that celebrities work on another level because people think of them as real people more than models. There is no doubt that celebrities are symbols of fashion trend.

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Personal purchase bias of mass, paying close attention to what they wear, which brand they adore, may be influenced by celebrities, such as singer, actor, sport star, artist and socialite.

Celebrity strategy, which was supported to carry out by Giorgio Armani, is of prime importance in Armani's promotion plan and plays a significant part in brand growing. Teri Agins (2000) proved that Armani was the first designer to milk his celebrity connections by developing a publicity machine to get his clothes on the backs of Hollywood's most influential and most visible A-list of actors, directors, producers and agents. Such headliners became an integral component of his master marketing plan to keep his trademark in lights

Since 1980s, Armani has designed for celebrities to attend Oscars or other red-carpet events. For this Italian designer, Oscar night was regarded as a key marketing chance to publicize his brand. With the huge success of his celebrity strategy, Armani is widely favored by celebrities and regarded as the sure choice. Hamish Bowles (2000) pointed that Armani's intimate involvement with present-day Hollywood seems therefore an inevitable one.

Diffusion Line

It is difficult to confirm that Giorgio Armani is the first designer who put forward the concept of diffusion lines, but he must be the most successful designer who created his own sub-brands and diversified new product categories, created a coherent 'branded environment'(Mark Tungate, 2005).

From haute couture to ready-to-wear, from menswear to women's wear, from evening dress to home wear, from cosmetic to hotel, Armani offers varied products and Armani's featured lifestyle to different ranks and

classes. After Armani's first attempt and success in brand extension, a significant number of fashion companies followed his step, develop their own sub-brand, which extremely changes the structure of fashion industry.

Giorgio Armani's empire has developed 10 lines whose objects oriented are various. Followed section will simply introduce them.

Armani Prive: Haute couture line. It is only available for the top part of customer pyramid. It is regarded as the sure dressing for celebrities to attend red-carpet events

Giorgio Armani: The most expensive label for ready-to-wear. It is the most favorite brand for the elites who work in the Wall Street, and the executive women who are wealthy, confident and stylish.

Armani Collezioni: The high end line for ready-to-wear, but cheaper than Giorgio Armani. The line is typically aimed at an older customer who does not desire 'trendy' design, but places emphasis on high quality more classic items (YourNewFragrance. com, 2008).

Emporio Armani: The medium line designed for ambitious youth. This line is unique because it features products that more affordable than the products featured on high end lines, but also supplies items that cost more than the ones in cheaper lines (Paulagerie, 2009).

AJ Armani Jeans: The special line for denim-related garments.

A/X Armani Exchange: The lower-end line. It is geared toward older teens and young adults with a contemporary fashion style (YourNewFragrance.com, 2008).

Armani Junior: A line designed for children.

Armani Casa: Special high-end home lines, whose products include furniture, linens, home wear and so on.

Armani Cosmetic: A special collection of Armani featured cosmetics, such as skin care, perfume, and cologne.

Armani Hotel: Under this label, there are luxury hotels and resorts which smoothly give publicity to Armani's lifestyle.

Conclusion

If we considered the couture designer as an artist (Linda Welters, 2007), Giorgio Armani has done for fashion which Picasso has done for painting (Franco Maria Ricci, 1982).

Colin McDowell (1997) commented that Armani look can be worn by all age group with confidence because like Chanel's fashion for women, it eschews gimmicks, ignores fashion fads and springs from a philosophy based on an understanding of men's needs and a faultless technique which brings its own logic to everything the designer creates.

It is indisputable to research and analyze in two directions created a niche for himself with his elegant designs, mostly done in a neutral palette. Although his fashion house, , was much smaller than many other fashion houses, it

was one of the most profitable. Another distinctive feature of the house was that Armani headed both the creative as well as the business sides, which was not the norm in the industry.