

# The enfant terrible of the french fashion world essay sample



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For the basis of this report the fashion brand Paco Rabanne; will be under evaluation using the appropriate strategic management tools. Paco Rabanne, today, is seen as a brand that, although holds stature within the fashion world it is in need of revitalising, in other words it is believed to be a 'sleeping' brand.

To accurately assess the current fashion marketing environment, both a PEST and SWOT analyses will be carried out. This is to pinpoint the areas within the fashion marketing world that could either help or hold- back the redevelopment of the chosen brand.

Recommendations for the future of the brand will be clearly illustrated as to aid the development in the right direction, i. e. keeping in check with consumer trends. Consumer trends have never been more important as " the customer of the new millennium is more individual than ever before." (Hines et al 2001)

#### Brief History of Paco Rabanne

Paco Rabanne was born in Spain in 1934, however, during the Spanish Civil War, with his mother, he fled to France.

Fashion Design was not his first note of interest as; originally, he trained to be an architect. Which is ironic as in 2004, a Selfridges store in Birmingham's Bullring shopping complex, " which is covered in 15, 000 aluminium discs and is said to have been inspired by a Paco Rabanne chain-mail dress;" (bbc. co. uk) was honoured by the Royal Institute of British Architects for being "

the most provocative of all the year's submissions because of its uncompromising and unprecedented outward appearance." (bbc. co. uk)

With Paco Rabanne fashion was something of an experiment as " he used such unconventional materials as metal, paper and plastic for his outlandish and flamboyant designs." (wikipedia. org) This was never clearer than with the creation of " his ' throwaway' paper dresses and aluminium garments [which] took the world by storm." (thameshudson. co. uk)

With his innovative use of materials, his clothes were seen as ' unwearable', with items such as the, chain linked gold disc, dress that Gina G wore in the 1996 Eurovision song contest.

Still to this day Rabanne is a vital role model for many young designers, " but is known today for his successful range of perfumes as well as for his radical, innovative designs." (thameshudson. co. uk)

### Current Position

It is vital to find out the brands current position before a decision can be made as to where the brand is going and how it is going to get there. Two methods that can be carried out are; PEST and SWOT analysis, these help to determine the current position of the brand within the fashion market.

### PEST Analysis

The stages of the PEST analysis are Political, Economical, Social and Technological factors.

## Political

“ Politics and law might seem a world away from fashion but both can have extensive consequences for manufacturers.” (Easey et al 2002)

A main political issue within today's society is the ' green' factor, for example the implications that are following the overuse of natural resources, the lack of recycling etc. This could have a negative impact on some fashion lines, with the prospect of people going ' green'.

However, with Paco Rabanne, his use of unconventional materials could make the brand, yet again, stand out from the crowd, and clearly benefit the revitalisation of the brand. The reasoning behind this would be the fact that with Paco Rabanne using materials such as aluminium, paper, etc this could help in the ' go green' mission, as all materials that are used could and would be recyclable also the materials could already be recycled, therefore making the clothes environmentally friendly in an environmentally conscious world.

“ Never has green been so red hot.” (Ifpress. com)

## Economic

There has been a clear increase in the nations' disposable income, throughout the years; one way in which this is shown is with the increase in the minimum wage. This is confirmed with the insight into the increase in consumers spending power within the “ luxury goods market [which] was worth an estimated £70. 0 billion (US\$87. 5 billion) in 2005, up 9. 2% on 2004.” (mintel. com)

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This showing that the economy, within, Europe and the US is stable, creating a perfect opportunity for a revitalised brand to enter the market.

## Social

One of the main social implications that a brand faces is demographics; “ this is the study of changes in the size and make-up of the population.” (Easey et al 2002)

It is said that for the success of a brand it would be foolish to ignore the demographic factor. Changes can be forecasted well in advance as the changes occur slowly. It has been found that the consumers of fashion products are getting younger, due to pop idols, etc being leading fashion icons; creating a possible swell in the demand for fashion products as a result of lifestyle trends changing. However, in today’s society there is a higher percentage of 60+, which could be seen as a downfall for Rabanne.

The change in lifestyle trends is not only shown with the increase in income/disposable income and the increase in purchases of luxury goods, such as, fashion products, but also with the current environmental awareness. This then leads to the consumer’s attitude, which could be said to be the key ingredient to the whole success of the brands success.

In today’s society the consumer’s attitude to products has changed. “ Increasingly it seems that fashion consumers are purchasing with a conscience: they don’t want their retail choices to result in fewer environmental choices farther down the eco line.” (ft. com) The attitudes of the consumer is, quite clearly, inter-linked with the views of the media.

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## Technology

Technology is forever changing. In terms of the fashion world, there are many factors contributing to how successful a brand is.

“ The clothing industry is extremely labour intensive, but installation of modern machinery fitted with the latest electronic controls is helping to improve productivity.” (Easey et al. 2002)

With the extensive use of computers this allows for huge development within the fashion world. This allows for the previewing of designs without wasting materials, many colours, shapes and styles can be tested and so on.

Computers also benefit the consumer with the introduction of internet shopping, it is said that “ this type of shopping is becoming increasingly popular and many more highstreet stores and supermarkets are now offering this facility.” (rnib. org)

## SWOT Analysis

The SWOT analysis looks at both internal and external factors which can or can not be beneficial to the brand. Each of these factors must be looked at to have a clear idea of exactly where the brand stands within the fashion market.

The Analysis begins by looking at the internal factors, which lies in the Strengths and Weaknesses of the brand.

## Strengths

Paco Rabanne holds many strengths which could benefit the revitalisation of the brand, things such as a competitive advantage on today's designers. With over 30 years experience within the fashion world Rabanne already holds a respected position in the world of fashion. Also, Rabanne will have a better knowledge of how things are done and who can get them done, as the old saying goes; "its not what you know, its who you know."

Rabanne's designs are innovative and are still as fresh today as they were 30 years ago. With the ever increasing following of the 'go green' manifesto it is clear that with Rabanne's innovative use of materials it creates a clear strength for the brand.

### Weaknesses

Weaknesses that a brand can face is the lack of knowledge, although Rabanne has over 30 years experience in the fashion environment the weakness lies in the lack of technology knowledge.

As technology is a method that is used for almost everything in today's society it is believed that without computer skills, etc, you have no hope within any business environment. This could slow down production, etc.

The second stage of the analysis is to assess the external factors by looking at the brands; opportunities and threats.

### Opportunities

There is a clear demand for the sort of clothes that Rabanne offers, not only down to the 'go green' method but it is shown in the following by many

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designers; Stella McCartney being one of them. In an interview Paco Rabanne pointed out that she “ makes metal-covered dresses and claims it’s something that hasn’t been done before.” (bbc. co. uk)

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The increase in the sales of luxury goods is also a clear opportunity, as Paco Rabanne is a luxury brand. As Paco Rabanne is more commonly known for its luxurious fragrances these days consumers will be willing to spend more money on a revitalised brand due to the reputation of Rabanne.

### Threats

The introduction of Stella McCartney making metal dresses etc, could also be declared as a threat as that is clear competition from a young and vibrant brand who is aimed at the same market segment as rabanne.

The other downfall again lies with technology, as it will take time to be able to set up internet shopping etc which again gives a competitive advantage to other brands.

### The Future for Paco Rabanne

For the future the Paco Rabanne brand should first keep up the innovative use of materials as this will help it both fit in to the ‘ green’ movement in society and stand out from the rest of the fashion world. Paco Rabanne should aim to create a new trend.

“ A trend is characterised by a building awareness of a new look and an accelerating demand among consumers (Perna, 1987).” (blackboard. gcal)

As there has been a huge change in social opinion on the environment with many celebrities trying to combat the green issues with people such as; Cameron Diaz who firstly drives an electric car and secondly had her own tv show called “ Trippin'” which took a bunch of celebrities to different places all over the world to create awareness of global warming, the way we are over using our natural resources and so on.

“ Fashion change, shows, that new looks rarely come out of the blue. Instead, fashion is a logical evolution from one originator, the next step in building on a successful trial balloon, a response to social change, or an expression of cultural drift.” (blackboard. gcal)

In response to the social change the clothes which use innovative materials should be redeveloped in a way which consumers will relate to. Therefore it is believed that to create hype about the revitalised brand that Cameron Diaz and celebrities who share the same ‘ green’ opinions as her should be seen in Rabanne’s clothes. This is believed to help create a successful outcome for the innovative and revitalised brand.