

Top shop marketing mix



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Topshop Market According to Mintel (August 2003), UK consumers keep on spending on clothes, even when they are cutting back in other areas, with total consumer expenditure on clothing in the UK reaching ? 34, 825 million in 2002 - a 25. 3% increase compared to 1998. This exceeds the growth of total consumer expenditure in the UK over the same period. Although the rate of year-on-year sales growth slowed slightly in 2003 as the consumer boom of 2000 and 2001 cooled, the slowdown in fashion retailing has not been as abrupt as some observers predicted.

Specialist clothing retailers, such as Topshop, Next and GAP, account for the biggest share of spend, attracting between 68%-71% of all consumer expenditure on clothing during 2002. Department stores, sports goods retailers and mail order houses also vie for a share of shoppers' wallets but these are not so well positioned as some of the specialists to respond quickly to emerging fashion trends. This is where retailers like Topshop, H, New Look and Zara have carved a reputation, with their ability to pre-empt latest catwalk styles at affordable prices and with the shortest possible lead times.

Achievements Topshop has undergone a remarkable transformation since the mid 1990s, changing from a down market outfitter for the nation's teenagers to a seriously cool, trend-setting brand. Its success has made Topshop a retail phenomenon on the high street, enjoying a huge growth in sales profits and carving out a distinctive personality with an individual brand mix. It continues to headline in nearly every fashion title and broadsheet, establishing a reputation for bringing innovation and style to the high street.

While many other retailers belatedly copy the latest look, Topshop frequently sets the agenda. Topshop has received numerous accolades in recent years - style bible 'The Face' called Topshop " a dream factory that initiates and innovates, and creates its own fashion", while i-D said: " Can Topshop do no wrong? " The Telegraph declared: " Blink and you'll miss it... with 300 new designs every week, Topshop, once famously naff, is now just as famously cool. " Topshop has become a multi-award winning brand, attracting numerous industry gongs.

They include being nominated as a 'Cool BrandLeader' in 2002 and 2001 to 'The most glamorous place to shop on the High Street' from Glamour and a 'Best Stores in the World 2003' Award from The Face. Timeout shopping awards 2002 awarded Topshop with the 'Best Womenswear Award' and In-Style 2003 awarded the 'Best Vintage award'. The driving force behind the transformation of Topshop is Brand Director Jane Shepherdson and her team, who has been rated as one of the fashion industry's most influential figures. Along with her team of buyers and designers, gut instincts are followed to introduce elements that they feel are right for the brand.

This is a concept that is obviously paying dividends - with 295 stores in the UK and a further 62 international stores. History Although Topshop itself was launched in 1964, its parent company, The Arcadia Group, dates back to 1900 when Montague Burton launched it with an investment of ? 100. Initially the menswear chain Burton was the company's principal brand, but the launch of Topshop in the 1960s took the Group into the women's fashion market. It was a small start, with Topshop initially only having space in a Sheffield department store called Peter Robinson.

A year later, the same store allocated Topshop space in the basement of its Oxford Circus store in London. In 1974, Topshop was taken out of Peter Robinson and set up as a standalone retailer, catering for 13-25 year-olds. In 1978, a boys' and young men's version, Topman, was introduced and in 1982, Top Girl, for 9-14 year-olds. In 1992 Topman and Topshop combined forces at 214 Oxford Circus to create the world's largest fashion store. In 1996, the shift in external opinion of the brand began when Vogue voted the Topshop Colour Cosmetics range the best new high street range.

Two years later, the 214 Oxford Street flagship store was reopened as a stunningly refurbished flagship store, welcoming 100, 000 shoppers every week. The brand's style credentials were further underlined with the launch of a special 'Design Collection' in the store. Product A key ingredient in the brand's success has been its vision of shopping as entertainment. The brand's stores around the UK all accentuate this concept, with the prime example being Topshop's 90, 000 ft² flagship Oxford Circus store. It has its own video wall, Topshop Kitchen, Boutique, Vintage and Nail Bar.

There are also frequent in-store events, such as seasonal catwalk shows, celebrity shoppers and makeovers, all of which offer the Topshop customer a complete and exciting shopping experience. The formula evidently works, with visitors to the store spending on average 44 minutes inside. There are currently three vintage clothing brands stocked in Oxford Circus, all providing a different category of product from a high fashion brand with a 1960s and 1980s influence; Vintage dresses and a traditional casual product range. There are also three vintage accessory concessions featuring 1960s printed scarves and belts.

Topshop's design label UNIQUE was created in 2001 by a strong in-house design team. The aim of UNIQUE was to create capsule collections to set trends and to dispel the myth that Topshop's sole aim was to copy the catwalk. It was a success and UNIQUE soon began to build Topshop's reputation in design. Alongside this, the TS Design label that targets the more savvy designer-led consumer has worked alongside different designers including Sophia Kokosalaki and Jens Laugesen. Past designers have included Clements Ribeiro, Hussein Chalayan and Russell Sage.

Topshop has also created Boutique - a specific area in a selection of its stores to appeal to its more designer-aware customers, celebrities and industry insiders. Boutique houses UNIQUE and also the latest 'capsule' collections from designers, such as House of Jazz and Jens Laugesen under the TS design label. There are now Boutique spaces at Oxford Street, Manchester, Birmingham and in Topshop in Selfridges London and Manchester stores. Topshop does not only sell its products via its stores. It also trades via one of the most successful fashion websites that was produced to recreate the Topshop attitude online. The site, [www. topshop. o. uk](http://www.topshop.co.uk), now has a database of 120, 000 people with on average 180, 000 unique users per week, doubling sales year-on-year. Recent developments Topshop recently underlined its position as the title sponsor of supporting young fashion talent at a grassroots level, by sponsoring Graduate Fashion Week for the fifth year running. The annual summer exhibition is the single biggest student fashion event, showcasing the work of the UK's leading fashion colleges. It aims to launch the careers of young fashion students and, as a

registered charity, is entirely dependent on the sponsorship revenue it generates via its relationship with Topshop.

Topshop is constantly moving on with new product developments to make the brand the best on the high street; latest additions have included Topshop Sweets, Moto Sno-performance board and ski wear, a new lingerie offering and an ever increasing shoe range. In 2001 Topshop upped the tempo for customer service on the high street by launching its 'Style Advisor' service the ultimate personal shopping service on the High Street. The Style Advisors offer free fashion advice to help find the perfect purchase in a hassle free environment. In response to customer demand for this service, Topshop has increased the number of Style Advisors, introducing them into stores across the country. The service has been moved on with 'Topshop To Go' where the style advisor service can now be brought directly to the customer whether this is at work or at home. Promotion Topshop believes that creative input is the key to staying fresh. It sets high goals for itself and is constantly innovating and driving editorial, gaining genuine endorsements within the press. Topshop also works with credible, creative teams and focuses its marketing strategy on bold advertising campaigns, an example being the Vogue Catwalk Guide.

Its marketing mix broadly consists of authoritative advertising, gaining a word of mouth reputation for cutting edge design, constantly innovating its flagship store in Oxford Circus and sponsoring young talent. Topshop is the single biggest supporter of young fashion talent in the UK, and its carefully selected sponsorship arrangements are an important aspect of its promotional strategy, not only helping create the next generation of style

gurus, but also adding credibility and authenticity to its brand in the eyes of consumers.

As well as its title sponsorship of Graduate Fashion Week, Topshop is also the biggest supporter of London Fashion Week and the sponsorship of the prestigious New Generation Award. Known for launching the careers of 'fashion royalty', the New Generation Award has previously been won by established names including Alexander McQueen, Matthew Williamson, Clements Riberio, Antonio Berardi and Hussein Chalayan. Topshop has forged genuine partnerships with a number of New Generation designers by working with them on special projects, including House of Jazz, Sophia Kokosalaki and Markus Lupfer.

TS Design is another promotional strategy carrying real value for designers. This is Topshop's own initiative, providing financial support to young designers by sponsoring their shows. In return, the designers design a 'capsule' design collection for the in-house TS design label. Topshop has gained a reputation for working with the most up and coming young talent. Other previous sponsorship activities have included Topshop at Fashion Rocks.

The huge fashion and music event, hosted at The Royal Albert Hall in aid of The Prince's Trust, was an essential destination for models and celebrities alike and, as such, was a natural fit for the Topshop brand. Brand values Topshop is a fashion emporium that blends cutting-edge style with affordability. The brand has been described by the model Liberty Ross as "Just the best thing ever" and The Sunday Times Style stated; 'If Audrey

Hepburn were alive today she'd be buying diamonds from Boucheron and vest-tops in Topshop'.

Topshop is loved by fashionistas, models and celebrities alike, and has evolved into a fashion label that exemplifies up-to-the-minute affordable style. Topshop as a brand has earned celebrity endorsement, reflecting its reputation for becoming a high street retail phenomenon. Celebrity customers, such as Gwyneth Paltrow, Kate Moss, Liv Tyler, Erin O'Conner and Lizzie Jagger, underline its reputation as a fashion mecca, which is also exemplified by some of the reputable and cutting edge designers who work with the brand.

Things you didn't know about Topshop sells on average 30 pairs of knickers a minute, 6, 000 pairs of jeans a day and 9, 000 pairs of fishnet tights a week. Topshop sells 40, 000 classic vests in an average week. The Oxford Circus flagship store can sell 1, 000 of one style of item in a week, has 200 changing rooms (as well as VIP private changing area) and 1, 000 staff work there at any one time. Topshop is the single biggest sponsor of young fashion designers in the industry.