

Marketing principles summative brand analysis flashcard



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To do this it uses three main strategy practices; a well-selected product range specific to the targeted consumer; an arousing retail environment; and an engaging integrated marketing communications approach. As heir mission statement affirms, the intrinsic approach to this entire strategy is the constant endeavourer to “ understand our customers and connect with them on an emotional level” in order to determine customer behavior (URBAN. Com; Bubbler and Oliver, 2004; Kismet, 2010).

A number of facets in Urban Outfitter’s customer- inspired product range position the brand ahead of competitors in the eyes of the target consumer (Hackled, 2009). Firstly, the brand operates as much more than Just a retailer of apparel – it markets lifestyle merchandise; clothes, accessories, art, music, mom dcore, and culture. Thus it offers a fresh, alternative lifestyle image to its distinct target consumers, who actively strive towards social psychology concepts of social differentiation and personalization (Cove, 1997; Roar and Stoner, 2009).

Secondly, the product range itself has been tailored specifically to the lifestyle of the target consumer and the brand name by means of market segmentation analysis (Gardner & Levy, 1955; Dib, 1998). The progressive, yet accessible range selected is well informed, picked by young in-house buyers who “ understand [the] market cause they are living that life” (CEO Richard Haynes cited in Independent, 1998). They combine a style-diverse selection of established heritage brands; such as Nikkei, Levies, Fred Perry and Aids; and the regular recruitment of smaller, up-and-coming brands such as Where’d and Eleven Paris.

Thus, the brand generates a dependable product image building upon existing brand personalities of cult-brands such as Nike, whilst instilling a strong feel of exclusivity (Asker, 1997). Furthermore, this mix of different brands, styles and categories delivers a product range of high quality, and revived a convenient retail destination where items from numerous brands can be purchased, setting Urban Outfitters apart from competitor brands, such as H&M, River Island, Topshop (Baht & Reedy, 1998; Hackled, 2009).

However, higher quality and convenience comes at a price. Whilst Urban Outfitters does sell good value for money, their products are mid-priced, above that of some cheaper competitors; a potential risk in a time of economic recession and imposed university fees. Furthermore, providing an on-trend brand in such the highly volatile world of fashion runs high risk of inaccurate fashion-forecasting, something that URBAN Inc. CEO Richard Haynes believes caused a 9% fall in retail sales in 2013 (Quartz Magazine, 2014).

However, in future, losses will be minimized through smaller but frequent inventory flows in a broad range of products, where only successful items are promoted. Furthermore, Stuart Reed, retail design manager for Urban Outfitters I-J, explains that in order to fulfill the changing lifestyle concepts of their target market and remain established as a 'cool brand', Urban Outfitters now rebind every six months as a minimum, in order to reflect these changes (ID Magazine, 2011; Rosenberg-Elliott et al, 2011).

In the retail environment, Urban Outfitters' marketing strategy continues to establish an emotional bond with the customer, fulfilling their wants and

desires. In store, “ every element of the environment is tailored to the aesthetic preferences of [the] target customers” (URBAN ASK, 2009; Levy & White, 2012). These retail stores are typically located in large student cities, in high profile areas such as high streets and specialist retail centre to maximize visual publicity (Davies, 1991).

Rube’s website explains that “ stores are often located in unconventional retail spaces”, for example, a former theatre, bank, stock exchange and the Marble Arch in London (URBAN ASK, 2009). Indeed, Steve Briars, Creative Director at Urban Outfitters says that their stores are purposely different to other brands’ stores to position themselves above rival competition, but that also in their interior design, “ roughly 50%” of Urban Outfitters stores are different from each other, where the “ existing retail space is modified” to provide a unique, bespoke experience (Hackled, 2009; URBAN ASK, 2009; retailer. M, 2013). For example, upon opening, Loon’s Marble Arch flagship store used visual sight dimension tactics by creating a 1, softest square hole in its ground floor, “ providing sightlines to what is in the basement” (Bitter, 1992; retailer. Com, 2013). This can be attributed to their strategy for a smaller number of exceptional high quality stores, which in light of their low advertising budget, serve as a visual and experiential promotion. Despite differences in their retail spaces, the interior environments all follow a stripped back, warehouse feel template that contributes too unified brand identity.

A visit to a Urban Outfitters store (Leeds, 201 5) reveals that retail design strategies correlate closely to descriptions Rube’s website, establishing emotional relationships with their target consumers through sensory

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marketing (Krishna, 2010). All stores adopt a strategy of response taxonomy, providing consumer targeted sensory overload through haphazard store layouts, saturated with contemporary art, fast-paced alternative music, ‘ unique signage’ and lighting, in an attempt to entice the target consumer and enhance their customer experience (Donovan & Roister, 1982; Housel, 2007; URBAN. M). Merchandise is presented in a “ variety of creative vignettes and displays”, grouped together as potential mix-and-match items to assist the customer (URBAN ASK, 2009). Through sales marketing techniques, the salespeople embody the brand personality, wearing its products, displaying tattoos and engaging with customers, enhancing their experience (Retailer. Com, 2013). What makes the retail environment of Urban Outfitters different to its competitors is that it is not just a retail space. It is “ part art-installation, part urban cool coffee bar and part DC booth” (Independent, 1998).

Indeed, the Marble Arch Store features a creative art workshop where employees continue to create artwork that is used in the retail environment (Holbrook and Hiroshima, 1982; retailer. Com, 2013). This creates a unique environment that markets the urban lifestyle as well as products, providing target consumers with a space to experience pop-culture, meet friends and be inspired. This marketing strategy of creating an emotional relationship between target consumers and the Urban Outfitters lifestyle is most evident in their integrated marketing communications.

The brand hosts an online and social-media log, through which they provide the ultimate consumer experience which complies with the retail

environment, a valuable information resource on what inspires the Urban
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Outfitter lifestyle from style, fashion, news, art and culture (Shrimp, 2009 cited in Hackled, 2009). In this style of marketing, promotional intent is not always evident; the actual products are not strongly endorsed (Tattoos & Charter, 2000).

Instead Dimmit Siegel, Executive Director of Marketing for Urban Outfitters explains that the emphasis lies “ around building relationships and making friends with your customers”, ultimately a form of content marketing whereby Urban Outfitters publish content specific to their target consumer segment, seeking to encourage experiential consumerism and brand enrichment (observance. Com, 2010; Guardian, 2014). Firstly, the online blog seeks to enrich the brand and add value to its products through its association with third-party street floggers and trendsetters, who use their products and promote them to their own loyal networks.

Some street floggers actually share some influence and blog participation, such as Joshua Kraals and Travis Gumbos. Secondly, their social media strategy differs from other brands in that it focuses on “ engaging the actual customer rather than running up the numbers’ through entertainment marketing” - creating brand advocates as seen in its Ministrant campaign, ‘ I-JOY Around You’ and the Flicker campaign, ‘ The Way You Wore It’ in which consumers actively participate by posting their own photos (observance. Com, 2010; Hackled, 2010; enforceability’s. Com, 2013).

Such campaigns also encourage word of mouth advertising and the establishment of a brand community (Hackled & Taxiways, 2006). Through these key marketing strategies; a targeted, consumer- centric product

range; an arousing retail environment and an engaging integrated marketing communications platform, Urban Outfitters meets and in many cases exceeds the wants and desires of its target consumers. These coherent strategies are successful in creating a strong, unified brand image because they are all designed specifically for the target consumer and consequently, they interlink to create one single strategy approach.