

# Fashion – a design centred approach v market centred approach assignment



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To begin with the difference between a market centred approach and design centred approach must briefly be discussed. A ' design-centred' approach is where the design is produced away from the user and then presented to them. This is the traditional view of fashion design and one in which the designer is given free reign and no constraints on cost or creativity. The choice of fabric for a line and the amount of detail in the design features included will directly influence the cost.

Designers in a market led company need to be wary of how many features they can include in order to keep cost within the consumer range whereas a design led company have more focus on the artistic values of a product. A ' market centred approach' is rapidly becoming the most popular and the traditional approach to international marketing is a country/market segment centred approach. Statistics and marketing resources are used to split and target the most lucrative groups, and uses these segments with similar needs and wants as the basis for developing highly targeted sales and marketing strategies.

This method is said to stifle creativity because the core aspect of it is to make profit- this means designers have work within a certain framework and have to keep to certain costs. Being market lead is too important to be left to the marketing people and requires the total commitment of all levels in the organisation, designers roles have evolved and they are gradually becoming more market centred. Creating, communicating and delivering value to customers requires an integrated organisational approach and customer led culture.

Marketing can provide the lead in this respect, but all activities of the organisation need to be re-engineered around customers. The focus on customers allows the concentration of limited marketing resources on the 20 per cent of customers who generate 80 per cent of a firm's earnings.

However, there can be no doubt that the market centred approach to fashion applied by most high street stores has directly stifled the creativity of designers and UK design.

The UK retail market has become extremely saturated and the increase in off shore production and technological advances has allowed firms to compete more fiercely than ever before. In addition the larger firms control the most prevalent parts of the market and they have gradually gained advantages in regard to their control over the manufacturers and the supply chain. The sector is now clearly retail driven and within this designers are forced to work to certain constraints regarding cost, target market, colour forecasts etc.

Most importantly they are working to the needs of the final consumer and the information provided from marketing departments and buyers about said consumer. In other words, it is not the garment or the artistic values that is important anymore but the final buyer- they are the ones that the retail strategy is aimed at and although traditionally a buyer will shop for quality and service, price is now the determining factor in the majority of cases.

This validates the importance of off shore sourcing and constraining costs in relation to design and is the main factor that has contributed to “blandness” of design on the UK high street because designers aren't given full control.

Changing roles within the retail sector have also been a factor in the relative blandness of design. Previously a designer would have been given free reign and full creative control over his or her collection but with the emergence of the retail buyer, designers are often dictated to and any creativity is kerbed by purchase managers.

Designers may be asked to recreate old favourites with a slight twist or to come up with an original idea to update the line. Most high street retailers such as Zara, Arcadia, New Look etc. are streamlining in-house design teams, preferring to leave design and product development to buyers who liaise with suppliers and manufacturers creative teams; Designers are asked nowadays to take a more market centred approach and are asked to use market research and collaboration with the buying team to identify trends or colours to use for the season.

Today's designer also works under a deal of pressure. As mentioned previously designers are forced to be competitive because it reflects the rest of the industry at the moment- in addition the modern designer has to produce designs quicker- the fashion lifecycle can be as little as six weeks at the moment so the ability to respond to trends and work under pressure is needed but this must surely come at an expense to creativeness. The design team will have to work within a certain time limit and it is critical that all deadlines are met if the garment is to be launched due to plan. Designers have developed the ability to work more closely to deadlines and have realised that failing to meet them results in their products not reaching the customer on time which leads to reduced profits for the company and the possibility of being replaced by a designer who will work to constraints.

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The downside to quick and flexible production is the quality issues. Usually when garments are produced quickly there is a reduction in quality- speed and low price become more important, as mentioned quality will also fall in regards to the design of the silhouette, cut etc because the designer has been forced to work at a certain pace and within a certain framework that may vary from garment to garment or line to line. Designers have also found their creativity stifled by large workloads; most high st. esigners will be commissioned to work around 2 seasons ahead and on various different lines. These factors have all contributed to the changing role of the designer who is becoming more and more customer focused with a greater understanding of the fashion market- designers are beginning to take on board tasks that they did not say even 15 years ago. The process of globalisation has played a part in the lack of original designs on the high st. and the whole concept encapsulates the fall of design and originality.

A globalised company as Douglas (1987) points out “ develops global products and brands, a focus on the marketing of standard products and brands worldwide” Companies will begin to operate in a number of countries at as low a cost as possible and will usually use similar marketing strategies in each one viewing the markets as homogenised. Globalisation has seen faceless corporations held together by common technology, global branding and a global philosophy evolve.

This is due to a variety of factors such as the emergence of worldwide demand for certain products, be it Gap, Coca-cola, Nike etc and falling trade barriers and trade quotas in the apparel industry. The emergence of developing countries as manufacturing bases has helped to lower costs and <https://assignbuster.com/fashion-a-design-centred-approach-v-market-centred-approach-assignment/>

allowed firms to market their products to these markets as well. There can be no doubt that these companies serve their markets well but marketing to such a large audience means a heavy reliance on standardisation.

Regional and even national tastes are ignored by many truly globalised firms however Levitt argues that consumers want the same products which in turn is leading us to a converged commonality. The driving aspect of this convergence is due to the advances in technology (consumers in Tokyo can see a product from London as soon as soon as it is out via T. V, Internet etc) and the simultaneous diffusion of goods and tastes due to how fast information now flows.

People in remote places want the products they are seeing and hearing about via these new technologies and many global companies have almost cynically exploited markets for standardised products Gap for example has used these markets to expand by cross subsidising their risk but having a Gap on every high st has contributed to the blandness of UK shopping with every city having almost identical high streets. Global companies have exploited unprecedented economies of scale by producing goods on a mass scale and turning them out to similar target markets in various countries worldwide.

The epitome of the blandness of worldwide products is encapsulated by global branding. This is the key to globalisation as familiarity carries from one country to another. Evidence of global branding can be seen everywhere now in the fashion industry with the likes of Gap, Nike, Levi's, CK, DKNY being the main players. However in these outlets worldwide there will be

very much the same products, prices, packaging and promotions. This standardisation creates familiarity and allows costs to be cut in production.

The outlets will look the same worldwide and so will the staff, this generic face however is the key to globalisation but is leaving towns without character. In conclusion there can be no doubt that a market centred approach is more prominent and that it has led to a degree of bland design. Constraints placed on cost, fabric and design details do not allow designers to produce the designs that they would like and the designs that would differentiate their brand.

As a result designers have had to evolve, even within design centred companies; Tom Ford at Gucci for example will not be as constrained as buyers from Primark but will have to work to some sort of framework. Designers have become more market orientated, realising that value for money is what the customers want and profitability is what their employers want. Additionally the pressures that designers work under contribute to poorer designs; the fashion lifecycle moves so fast that the designer is making one design after another as fast as they can with no real art or passion going into designs which are very often just rehashes of previous styles. Finally Globalisation has played a huge role in the blandness not only fashion product but in firms like McDonalds, Coca-Cola, Starbucks etc. and epitomises the monotony of UK high streets and fashion. The evolution of global branding and technology has seen a convergence of tastes and standardisation of products and has been the impetus for repetition in design.

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