

Web 2.0. The New Showroom for Fashion Brands: How important is Social Media for the Fashion Industry?

Steffen Achenbach

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Master's Thesis from the year 2012 in the subject Business economics - Marketing, Corporate Communication, CRM, Market Research, Social Media, grade: 1.0, South Bank University London, course: International Business Social & Digital Media Strategy, language: English, abstract: Internet technology has greatly changed in form over the past few years. What was once mainly used as a source of information is now an important communication tool in people's lives. Enterprises are increasingly using the internet and social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube for their business communication to promote, to as many consumers as possible, their services and products. There are a variety of different ways enterprises can include social media in their business strategy. However, not every business is managing its social media presence effectively enough to maximise its benefits. Marketers often do not know how to deal with issues such as social media monitoring or creating brand awareness and shy away. In particular, the fashion industry shows a low level of social media engagement. Thus, the overall aim of this study is to investigate the importance of social media for the fashion industry. 12 international fashion brands were observed on a daily basis within one month to measure their social media activity. Furthermore, a user questionnaire and interviews with marketers were used to test the findings of the observations as well as from secondary literature. Thereby, the use and hence the engagement of brands with social media differ widely within the fashion industry. Some brands are aware of the impact social media can have on their business, whereas other brands prefer to use traditional (offline) marketing tools to engage with consumers. To survive on the future market, marketers need to change their thinking and integrate offline as well as online tools in their marketing strategy. The fashion industry has a high potential to use social media effectively to communicate new styles and trends. Due to its accessibility to photos and videos, social media enables fashion brands a fast and easy way of creating brand awareness and sharing advertising campaigns. Based on the findings, the researcher is able to formulate an overall strategic social media plan for businesses to improve their social media use and implementation. Additionally, the researcher developed within this study an innovative new social media measurement method which helps to determine a brand's performance on social media platforms.

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