

Research Paper

Intro to Fashion Industry

FASH-120-005-FA2023

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Dec 3, 2023

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As a Chief Marketing and Merchandising Officer for a brand, identify a phenomenon and create a product campaign.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction of Social Issue Address
2. Evolution of Bags and Marc Jacobs
3. Address of Sustainability Issue in Marc Jacobs and Introduction to BAGGU
4. BAGGU on Sustainability
5. Coachtopia on Sustainability
6. “UNIQUE” Campaign
7. UNIQUE Campaign Execution and Beginning of Conclusion
8. Works Cited
9. Works Cited Continued

UNIQUE By Marc Jacobs

Marc Jacobs is a company known for their stylish 2000s inspired handbags and floral perfume and satisfying younger audiences fashion desires. Since 1984 after graduating Parsons School of Design wearing a hand knitted sweater by his grandmother from his collection, designer Marc Jacobs has developed a recognizable brand known for their rebellious, unpredictable, original, unique and authentic aesthetic according to LVMH and (Sowray, 2012). The goal of the brand is to be “part of a generation that’s conscious of the world around it, sensitive to humanitarianism and social entrepreneurship,” (LVMH, n.d.). With a goal of being conscious of their presence in regards to humanitarianism and entrepreneurship with successful sub-brands such as Heaven, the brand itself has done poorly on becoming a sustainable brand. With the popularity of their trending canvas tote bags and limited edition Heaven drops, Marc Jacobs is in the perfect position to launch a sustainable campaign to kick off their arrival into the sustainable fashion space.

“The COVID-19 pandemic turned the spotlight on the inequalities and the vulnerabilities of the global supply chains,” (Dobos, 2022). Covid-19 opened the doors for sustainability to become prominent for brands within the fashion industry. The most discussed and best-known sustainability issues of fashion are carbon emissions, water consumption and pollution, environmental and micro-plastic pollution, and waste generation (Dobos, 2022). “The three pillars of sustainability were first developed by Kahn (1995): besides the environmental and economic, there is a third dimension, social sustainability, which is characterized by equity, empowerment, accessibility, participation or sharing, cultural identity, and institutional stability,”

(Dobos, 2022). Societal sustainability is the element Marc Jacobs is lacking to become one of the most popular luxury brands in the sustainable fashion market place.

As a staple accessory with a world of its own within the fashion industry, handbags can be a signature item within a company. Before luxury brand flagship stores, brick and mortar stores and e-commerce businesses sold bags to consumers, the first evidence of the handbag goes back to BC. According to an article by Dolores Monet discussing the history of handbags, Egyptians in (2686–160 BC) “used double-handled bags made of linen and papyrus,” (Monet, 2022). “Archaeologists discovered an ornamental leather purse in an Anglo-Saxon burial mound in Britain. Dated to 625 CE (AD), the bag had deteriorated but showed evidence of gilt, silver, and garnet ornamentation and probably hung from straps on a belt,” (Monet, 2022). From the evolution of the papyrus bag in Egypt to a high quality cotton canvas tote bag labeled with the words “Marc Jacobs” across it, bags have evolved tremendously. The signature “Snapshot” handbags from Marc Jacobs are made out of Saffiano leather, a type of leather that “was first patented by luxury Italian brand Prada in 1913,” ([Snapshot](#) & Gentcreate Team, 2023). Saffiano leather is a durable, water-resistant material due treating process and finishing of animal hides made out of “the highest quality calf or cowhide,” (Gentcreate Team, 2023). Information on the production process of handbags from Marc Jacobs is scarce online, only noting four small paragraphs on their website under the [Social Responsibility](#) tab. Under the tab, the brand acknowledges that they *can* do better regarding their current practices. Information from Bob Cut Magazine states the Saffiano leather after it is created by Italian craftsmen is brought to manufacturing units in China for bag production (Editors, 2022). Marc Jacobs needs a societal concept campaign because they lack sustainability throughout their brand as a whole from production of its products to its authenticity to audiences. According to an article from *Good On*

You, the brand has zero evidence that can prove it uses lower-impact materials for their products and limited only a few hazardous chemicals for manufacture production. Marc Jacobs, a popular brand among Gen Z, has a chance to connect with them on a deeper level by creating authentic sustainable products. With Heaven by Marc Jacobs, it has become an obsession for Gen Z according to *Vogue* (Subair, 2022). The sub-brand, Heaven, began in 2020 and is “linked to ’90s grunge and rave, with a modern twist – has managed to carve itself a unique space in a way few retailers have managed in the era of TikTok,” (Subair, 2022). The Gen Z catered brand has another advantage that has led to its success: limited restocks. Subair noted some of the clothes from the drops even end up on Depop, a online thrift-store where consumers can both buy and sell their preloved garments and Ebay, a popular ecommerce store (Subair, 2022). The *Vogue* article slides in a piece stating, “but the idea (Heaven) is not to place these pieces out of reach. With less of an emphasis of ‘buy now’ culture in fashion, today’s youth are more than happy to own a slice of archive Heaven scored via a resale site, or wait for the next installment if they miss out,” (Subair, 2022). Supporting slower-pace fashion within a luxury brand opens new opportunities for brand development, acquiring larger target audiences and creation of creative marketing campaigns. Popular sustainable brands BAGGU and Coachtopia, are currently doing all of the above.

Generation Z becoming companies’ priority target audience of today, sustainable brands BAGGU and subbrand Coachtopia have successfully captured their attention *and* their wallets. Growing popularity over social media platform Tik Tok, BAGGU is a company founded by women who have created reusable bags and more out of recycled fabrics that are produced ethically, (Pilat, 2023). Founder Emily Sugihara started the brand over 15 years ago, another alumni of Parsons School of Design (Pilat, 2023). According to “Bagging a New Generation,” an

article from *The New York Times*, “together with her mother, Joan Hall Sugihara, and her friend Ellen Vanderlaan, the trio released the signature Baggu bag in 2007 after noticing a market need for quality reusable bags that were affordable and attractive,” (Pilat, 2023). Sugihara confesses that originally planning manufacturing for the bags caused them to be \$40 “which made it inaccessible for most people,” so they were advised to produce bags in China to keep prices down (Pilat, 2023). Sugihara continues within the article, stating, “Baggu worked with a manufacturing agent with a code of conduct and auditors to ensure their products were being made ethically,” and soon shifted to produce their products with a “family-owned factory group,” (Pilat, 2023). Unlike Marc Jacobs on their website, [Sustainability at Baggu](#) is a whole page dedicated to how their brand is maintained to be as sustainable as they can possibly be. BAGGU has a whole sustainability team that is made of members from all of their departments: production, operations, designs, marketing and brand. The team meets once a month to “identify and prioritize new opportunities for improvement across the company.” Even with the brand’s success of expanding, they are still committed to operating sustainably. On their website, one can learn how they work on their sustainable practices within each department, including working on minimal waste designs, the specific recycled materials that go into creating their bags and disclosing manufacturing ethics. The sustainability section even specifically states at the end an “No Incineration Policy,” stating, “BAGGU was created to eliminate unnecessary waste, and that means responsibly managing deadstock products and fabric. We never incinerate or landfill our deadstock products.” The eco-friendly brand also sells home goods, outdoor gear and technology cases. A BAGGU product can be bought through their website, boutiques and franchises such as Urban Outfitters.

Jumping onto the wave of sustainable fashion to help reduce humanity's carbon footprint, Coach has jumped on. As a sub-brand of luxury brand Coach, Coachtopia upcycles preloved accessories and materials to produce new bags, small leather goods and shoes. Stuart Vevers, creator director for Coach, explains in a *Vogue* article that sustainability has always been on his radar, but it was not until recently that he "saw it as the responsibility of the production teams to make better choices in the background," and that after becoming a father he began to ponder about the ways he could "actually make an impact," (Furtado, 2023). Coachtopia's products are "constructed to be circular—meaning produced with little-to-no new materials and leaving no trace behind," (Furtado, 2023). For example, The Coachtopia Wavy Dinky bag includes a detachable handle made out of 70% recycled resin (Furtado, 2023). Vevers specifically states he is inspired by today's younger generations and that Coachtopia has a distinctly Gen Z aura (Furtado, 2023). To allow younger generations to be heard, Coachtopia has created a "Coachtopia Beta Community" that gives feedback on the design, creative and marketing processes (Furtado, 2023). The brand also obtained beloved Gen Z actress, Lola Tung, to showcase their products for their campaigns. On Coachtopia's [website](#), one can easily learn about their whole process on creating their stylish upcycled bags. Coachtopia stated that, "the production of virgin raw materials accounts for at least 38% of the global fashion industry's emissions. In Coachtopia, we're working to reduce this impact by prioritizing alternative material sources, from high quality luxury leather production scraps to post-consumer waste to innovative, bio-based inputs." The Coachtopia leather is made with at least 50% recycled leather scraps from tanneries, according to their website. Their T-shirts "are made from at least 95% recycled pre-consumer cotton textile scraps." Their website dives into how they use other recycled textiles and materials such as resin, polyester, pack and how their products are made

from repurposed deadstock. Coachtopia's products are sold on their website for purchase but not available in Coach Outlet stores.

To blossom into "The Green Scene," Marc Jacobs will launch the eco-friendly campaign collection known as "UNIQUE," a collection of multipurpose bags and fragrances produced sustainably and ethically (Farnan & Stone, 2021). The bags would be designed to assist younger generations in their daily activities such as: attending classes on campus, grocery shopping and traveling to new places. The bags can be created from deadstock from past Marc Jacob bags sourced from factory outlet stores, discontinued lines, and recycled Marc Jacobs Daisy perfume bottles. Consumers are able to send in their preloved Marc Jacobs bags to get them upcycled into a new bag to extend the life of the bag. UNIQUE will also release a sustainable Marc Jacobs Daisy line with bottles made out of 100% recycled glass to differ from competitors including Coachtopia. The tagline for the perfumes would be, "A UNIQUE scent for a UNIQUE soul." UNIQUE will target age groups ranging from 15 to 35. The groups would involve the "The Cosmopolitans," who are a part of the Urban Social Group (The Nielsen Company, 2022). The Cosmopolitans would be one of the target groups for the UNIQUE campaign due to the fact they "live in an eco-friendly lifestyle," (The Nielsen Company, 2022). UNIQUE will target people who are a part of the Innovators consumer group according to Strategic Business Insights. Innovators are confident enough to experiment with their style, including where they purchase their garments (Strategic Business Insights, 2023). Innovators are perfect for the UNIQUE campaign because this group is typically future oriented, believes in science and are receptive to new ideas (Strategic Business Insights, 2023). Innovators are the backbones of Generation Z. The bags in the campaign will be created from recycled textiles and produced in ethical factories that will help lower carbon emissions and will be meant for daily wear such as tote bags,

backpacks, suitcases, work bags, laptop cases. With BAGGU and Coachtopia being a hit with Gen Z and Heaven being a staple for Gen Z's style inspiration, there is a perfect opportunity for Marc Jacobs to join in.

Marc Jacobs would sell its products in luxury department stores such as Nordstrom, Saks Fifth Avenue, Bloomingdales and its flagship store located in SoHo New York City. The marketing team will market the products by using influencers and public figures on social media apps such as Tik Tok, Instagram, Youtube and Facebook to reach larger audiences. The bags will be sported by public figures favorited by Gen Z and millennials such as Olivia Rodrigo, Frank Ocean, Kendall Jenner, Timothée Chalamet, and Jenna Ortega. Billboard ads will be displayed in fashion cities around the world such as New York, Los Angeles, Miami, London, Paris, Milan and Tokyo. A few pop-up shops would also occur in prior cities mentioned for the launch debut of UNIQUE. The launch would be in New York City in December near New Years Eve to help promote starting the new year as one's "UNIQUE" self.

Sustainability is the new wave and Marc Jacobs has the opportunity to join in on the wave. To successfully create famous handbags for society since the early 2000s, Marc Jacobs has a permanent seat in the luxury world. With their bright colors and Gen Z inspired sub-brand Heaven, Marc Jacobs has the opportunity to acquire new audiences while preserving their current ones. The UNIQUE campaign would help Marc Jacobs become a sustainable brand by ethically and sustainably producing dailywear bags for the generations that are always on the go while eliminating their carbon footprint. The brand plans to collaborate with well established brands such as BAGGU and Coachtopia for limited edition collections to help raise money to spread awareness of climate change. Sustainability in the fashion industry is growing each year and Marc Jacobs plans to blossom into the environmental space in style.

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