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Master thesis:

FASHION EVENT MANAGEMENT

Fashion brand positioning and development through
fashion event management and marketing strategies

MANAGEMENT DES ÉVÉNEMENTS DE MODE

Positionnement et mise en valeur de la marque de
mode par le management des événements de mode et
par les stratégies de marketing

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Svetlana Jaćović
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ABSTRACT

In modern society an event is often described as something that “happens”, and therefore, in that sense, we could use the term Fashion Event management to describe the organisation of everything that happens within fashion industry. We could define a fashion event as an occurrence at a given place; a special set of circumstances; a noteworthy occurrence, and this definition embraces a wide range of possibilities.

Fashion event management from the point of Science/Art/Culture of management is a topic that is insufficiently researched; furthermore, fashion management is not researched and recognized at all, from the perspective of cultural management theory. Especially compared with other disciplines in the field of cultural management/creative industries, fashion event management is a topic neglected by cultural policies, and there is not yet a base of research to work with.

In recent years Cultural industries of certain countries have introduced the fashion, design, fashion events, etc. in their cultural policies as a new concept of cultural “industrialization”, linking cultural activities and industrial sector.

In addition, rather than academically rigorous research conducted by professional researchers, much of the knowledge in the field has been generated by practicing event and fashion managers who have written books about their own experiences, knowledge, and skills. These authors possess a great deal of experience, and their past involvement has generated a variety of different ideas about what constitutes event and fashion management. The ties between practitioners and academics are currently loose, and that the field of event management as well as fashion management could be significantly improved by both sectors working more closely together.

On the other side, the brand is today more important than previously and this is especially true for the global fashion industry where marketers market the brand rather than the traditional products. Brand strategist affirm that brands recall clear associations in consumer mind: they talk about brand personality, a long term relationship with the consumer centered on emotional feelings more than on economic transactions.¹

Branding is becoming more a function of the relationship and the experience the consumer has with the brand. Above all in industries producing symbol intensive goods there is a stronger connection of brands with people's personalities and beliefs.

¹ Schmitt B., Simonson A., (1997) *Marketing Aesthetics. The Strategic Management of Brands, Identity and Image*, Free Press

In fashion industry the point of sale is no longer a channel but product/brand in and of self; fashion management has sharper focus on emotional and personalized involvement of the consumer. Fashion shows and special events are certainly the major press coverage event in fashion.

Managers may use an event or a series of events as one of the marketing methods to promote brand, products or to improve positioning of the brand. Using events to market product and brands is increasing in recent years.

The purpose of this study is to explore the role of event marketing strategies in positioning and development fashion brands. Research revealed a number of important findings that add to previous literature made to enhance the effectiveness of fashion event marketing strategies in positioning and development of fashion brand and contribute to managerial practice as well.

ABRÉGÉ

Au cours de mes études de master en Management et Politiques culturelles à l'Université des Arts en tant que styliste-modeliste, je fus pour la première fois impliquée dans les aspects théoriques et pratiques du management culturel. Tout en ayant acquis de nouvelles expériences dans ce domaine professionnel, je me suis retrouvée à traiter de différentes questions sur l'industrie de la mode auxquelles je n'ai pu trouver de réponses dans le milieu universitaire.

La raison pour laquelle je me suis inscrite au master en Management et Politiques culturelles à l'Université des Arts est d'avoir ressenti le besoin de m'éloigner un peu du côté artistique de cette industrie dans laquelle j'étais de plus en plus absorbée, afin de me consacrer plus par la suite à l'approche commerciale du management, et de maintenir l'équilibre entre ces deux mondes.

Je me suis rendue compte que le management de la mode et le management des événements de mode en tant que science/art du management représente un sujet sur lequel très peu de recherches ont été faites, en outre, le management de la mode du point de vue de la théorie culturelle ou de l'éducation n'est ni étudié ni reconnu en Serbie.

Le management culturel fut l'objet de nombreuses études, ce qui a permis la création de liens entre les disciplines suivantes: l'art, la sociologie de la culture, la phénoménologie du spectacle et des politiques culturelles. Il s'est avéré dans l'approche éducative que l'aspect commercial du management culturel soit souvent négligé dans les études menées par les directeurs artistiques. Par contre dans le cas des managers d'affaires, eux dans leurs études arrivaient à peine à comprendre son côté artistique. C'est pour cette raison justement qu'il fut plutôt difficile d'établir un équilibre entre les différentes approches.

Dans le cadre du management culturel, les événements artistiques ont une grande importance, cependant les nouvelles formes contemporaines d'art tels que la mode, le design, l'art de la rue, les dessins animés, etc., sont souvent négligées. En outre, le management qui s'applique à la culture met l'accent sur la culture publique, et puisque la mode fait partie du domaine privé, souvent, et de façon injuste, elle manque d'attention de la part du management culturel. Toutefois, il est arrivé récemment, lors d'événements complexes tels que la semaine du design de Belgrade, la semaine de l'architecture et la semaine de la mode de Belgrade, que ces deux mondes, soit la culture "d'élite" et la culture "populaire", se rapprochent.

Toutefois, avec la naissance des industries² créatives on voit apparaître un nouveau défi pour les études de la culture, les politiques culturelles et le management dans le cadre de la culture³. Le concept libéral des politiques culturelles en Grande- Bretagne⁴ a contribué à une compréhension plus large du fait que le domaine de la culture doit être industrialisé, à savoir les principes de l'entrepreneuriat, du risque, de la productivité et de l'efficacité qui doivent y être introduits. Par conséquent, les nouvelles théories de la culture et les politiques culturelles englobées par le terme industries créatives prennent souvent en considération l'ensemble du secteur de la culture (toutes les divisions de l'art allant du théâtre aux beaux-arts), en y ajoutant tous les domaines de la production et les services qui, en grande partie, emploient du personnel créatif - dans la mode, le marketing, l'industrie du jeu, etc.⁵

Ceci sont les raisons pour lesquelles le sujet de mon mémoire porte sur le "MANAGEMENT DES ÉVÉNEMENTS DE MODE - Positionnement et mise en valeur de la marque de mode par le management des événements de mode et par les stratégies de marketing",

Le fait de s'occuper du concept de positionnement et de la mise en valeur des marques de mode par le management des événements et par les stratégies de marketing en tant qu'élément des industries créatives, semblerait peut-être trop audacieux vu les troubles continuels et l'instabilité politique en Serbie, surtout que ce concept n'est pas complètement formé même dans des pays plus stables et plus développés. Cependant, l'importance de la mode et de l'industrie de la mode, sous-estimée sans aucune justification, peut avoir un effet considérable sur le développement global de la société, ainsi que sur développement culturel et économique.

² Les industries créatives – les activités fondées sur la créativité individuelle, l'habileté et le talent, tout en possédant le potentiel de créer la richesse et les emplois de génération, et de mener une exploitation plus poussée de la propriété intellectuelle. Jeffcutt P., (2001), *Managing Creativity in the cultural Industries*

³ Dragičević Šešić M., (2009) Razvojna politika Srbije u vremenu ekonomije znanja i kreativnosti, *Kretivne industrije i ekonomija znanja*, Academica

⁴ „ Le concept britannique des industries créatives est largement représenté en Europe. Le concept est né dans les années 90 avec l'établissement de la Task Force des industries créatives qui fut conçue pour étudier le potentiel des industries créatives à produire le développement économique au Royaume-Uni. Le concept fut lancé officiellement par des études empiriques publiées en 1998 et en 2001. Le concept britannique est au fond orienté vers la production, parce que la valeur des produits et services est le plus petit dénominateur commun à identifier les activités qui appartiennent au secteur des industries créatives. Le fait de comprendre le concept britannique des industries créatives est réduit à l'analyse du potentiel économique dans les domaines suivants: la discographie, le logiciel multimédia de divertissement, le design, la publicité, l'édition de livres et de brochures, la production cinématographique et vidéo, les activités en scène de spectacle vivant, la radio, la télévision et les créations de mode.“ Source: Mikić H., (2008) *Kreativne industrije, dizajn i konkurentnost: proaktivan pristup*, Centar za evropske integracije Srbije CEI

⁵ Dragičević Šešić M., (2009) Razvojna politika Srbije u vremenu ekonomije znanja i kreativnosti, *Kretivne industrije i ekonomija znanja*, Academica

Mon plan est de continuer à travailler en tant qu'académicienne, à poursuivre la recherche en tant qu'assistante et manager de relations publiques à l'institut international privé de la Mode et des Arts "Mod'Art International" à Belgrade, tout en enseignant aux étudiants des cours sur le management de la mode. Par conséquent, le sujet me sera utile à accomplir les objectifs que je me suis fixés.

Dans la société moderne, un événement est souvent décrit comme quelque chose qui "arrive", et donc, dans ce sens là, on pourrait utiliser le terme de management des événements de mode pour décrire l'organisation de tout ce qui se passe dans l'industrie de la mode. On pourrait définir un événement de mode comme quelque chose qui se produit à un endroit donné ; un ensemble particulier de circonstances, un événement remarquable, et cette définition englobe un large éventail de possibilités.

Le management des événements de mode du point de vue du management des Science/Art/Culture est un sujet sur lequel il n'y a pas eu suffisamment de recherches; en outre, le management de la mode n'est ni étudié ni reconnu, du point de vue de la théorie du management culturel. Surtout quand on le compare avec d'autres disciplines dans le domaine du management culturel / des industries créatives, le management des événements de mode représente un sujet qui est négligé par les politiques culturelles, sans mentionner le manque d'une base comme point de départ pour toutes recherches.

Ces dernières années, les industries culturelles de certains pays ont introduit la mode, le design, les événements de mode, etc., dans leurs politiques culturelles comme un nouveau concept "d'industrialisation" culturelle reliant les activités culturelles et le secteur industriel.

En plus, plutôt que d'avoir des recherches académiques rigoureuses menées par des chercheurs professionnels, on insiste sur le fait que la plupart des connaissances acquises dans ce domaine proviennent des événements même et des managers de mode qui ont écrit des livres sur leurs propres expériences, leurs connaissances et compétences. Ces auteurs possèdent une énorme expérience, et leurs engagements dans le passé ont produit toute une gamme d'idées différentes sur ce qui constitue les événements et le management de la mode. Les liens entre les praticiens et les universitaires sont actuellement assez faibles et il s'agirait d'améliorer la situation dans le domaine du management des événements ainsi que du management de la mode de la façon à ce que les deux côtés s'engageaient dans une collaboration plus serrée.

D'un autre côté, la marque est aujourd'hui plus importante qu'auparavant, et ceci s'applique particulièrement à l'industrie mondiale de la mode où la marque est plus commercialisée que les produits traditionnels.

Les stratèges de marque affirment que les marques provoquent des associations claires dans l'esprit des consommateurs: ils parlent de personnalité de marque, d'une relation de longue durée avec le consommateur centrée sur les sentiments émotionnels plutôt que sur les transactions⁶ économiques.

La marque est de plus en plus une fonction de la relation et de l'expérience que le consommateur a de la marque. Surtout dans les industries produisant des biens devenus des symboles, il ya un lien plus fort entre les marques et les personnalités des gens ou leurs croyances.

Dans l'industrie de la mode le lieu de vente n'est plus un canal, c'est plutôt le produit / la marque ; le management de la mode met davantage l'accent sur l'implication émotionnelle et personnalisée du consommateur. Les défilés de mode et les événements spéciaux reçoivent sans aucun doute la plus grande attention des médias dans le domaine de la mode.

Les managers peuvent utiliser un ou plusieurs événements comme une des méthodes de marketing pour promouvoir la marque, les produits ou pour améliorer le placement de la marque. Le fait de se servir des événements pour placer les produits et les marques sur le marché devient de plus en plus commun ces derniers temps.

Le but de cette étude est d'examiner le rôle des stratégies de marketing centrées sur les événements dans le positionnement et la mise en valeur des marques de mode. La recherche a révélé un certain nombre de résultats importants qui s'ajoutent à tous les travaux de recherches effectués auparavant afin de rehausser l'efficacité des stratégies de marketing des événements de mode dans le cadre du positionnement et de la mise en valeur des marques de mode, et de contribuer ainsi à la pratique managériale.

Ainsi, de nouvelles recherches visant à examiner le positionnement et la mise en valeur de la marque de mode par le management des événements et par les stratégies de marketing contribueraient non seulement à la littérature et à la pratique disponibles en ce moment, mais pourraient fournir aussi des recommandations utiles aux praticiens du management de la mode, en particulier aux praticiens du management culturel en Serbie et dans la région.

⁶ Schmitt B., Simonson A., (1997) *Marketing Aesthetics. The Strategic Management of Brands, Identity and Image*, Free Press

Il est indispensable de définir précisément une question de recherche, afin de déterminer les étapes nécessaires à suivre pour traiter le problème de la recherche et atteindre les objectifs de la recherche.

Les objectifs d'ensemble de ce mémoire sont d'étudier les conséquences que le management et le marketing des événements de mode peuvent avoir sur les relations qui se sont développées entre la marque et les consommateurs; de définir et d'examiner les implications positives de management découlant de l'utilisation de stratégies de marketing qui s'appliquent à des événements spécifiques pour le management de marques ; d'analyser comment la théorie et la pratique comme sujets d'étude peuvent être utiles pour les petites entreprises de mode ou celles qui ne se sont pas encore positionnées ; de proposer la stratégie de marketing la plus efficace pour construire, lancer et mettre en valeur la marque de mode et pour créer une identité de marque à travers des événements de mode ; de fournir un cadre de réflexion et de mise en pratique concernant certaines des questions intéressantes découlant des meilleures pratiques dans un environnement stressant et dynamique de l'industrie du management de la mode ; d'acquérir une meilleure compréhension du management des événements de mode ainsi que du positionnement et de la mise en valeur de la marque par la recherche théorique et les exemples de meilleures pratiques.

Ces objectifs seront atteints en abordant la question de recherche suivante:

Comment créer une identité de marque d'une entreprise de mode et quel rôle le management d'un événement de mode et les stratégies de marketing de l'événement jouent-ils dans le positionnement et la mise en valeur de la marque de mode?

Afin d'étudier à fond cette idée, des sous-questions d'appui ont été développées pour être utilisées comme des lignes directrices lors de l'élaboration de la recherche. Cette recherche essaiera d'apporter des réponses à certaines des sous-questions suivantes:

Quelles leçons les managers de petites entreprises de mode peuvent-ils apprendre à partir de l'expérience des marques de mode qui sont bien positionnées, reconnues et célèbres à travers le monde ?

Est-ce que le management de la mode peut inclure le management culturel ainsi que le management d'affaires, du point de vue du concept théorique et de celui d'un outil pratique de mise en œuvre?

Cette thèse est structurée autour de cinq parties principales de texte. Puisque le premier chapitre d'introduction donne un bref aperçu de la thèse en définissant le sujet ainsi que les questions de recherche, et en déterminant les objectifs de cette recherche, le deuxième chapitre alors se concentre sur la méthodologie de la thèse même.

La méthodologie de recherche et le processus d'élaboration partent du principe généralement compréhensible, soit qu'il est extrêmement important dans l'approche que l'on développe pour mener la recherche de déterminer les résultats obtenus et de proposer des recommandations. Ainsi, l'approche paradigmatique utilisés dans cette recherche est expliquée et justifiée tout en tenant compte de ce que les principales implications entraînent, et le processus utilisé pour recueillir les données est décrit en détail.

Le fait de définir la marque, l'industrie de la mode (ainsi que la marque au sein de l'industrie de la mode), le management des événements de mode et le marketing des événements de mode représente en soit un compte rendu de la documentation ainsi que la pratique. Le compte rendu de la documentation et la pratique sont essentiels pour une compréhension claire du sujet. Il contient une variété de définitions qui proviennent d'innombrables documents, et étudie les thèmes considérés de part et d'autres comme des indicateurs importants qui ont contribué avec succès au positionnement et à la mise en valeur de la marque lors du management des événements. Finalement, le compte rendu se termine par le choix d'un modèle potentiellement utile qui permet d'évaluer l'efficacité du management des événements de mode dans le cadre du positionnement et de la mise en valeur des marques de mode.

Le chapitre sept présente l'analyse des meilleures pratiques dans le domaine des événements de mode ainsi que les résultats de la recherche qui sont le produit des analyses et interprétations de la chercheuse pour arriver aux conclusions et aux recommandations.

Le dernier chapitre permet de discuter les résultats, de tirer des conclusions et de proposer des recommandations.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and motivation

During my master studies in Cultural policy and Management at the University of Arts as a fashion designer, I was for the first time involved in academic and practical aspects of cultural management. I gained new experience in this professional field, and at the same time, I started dealing with various questions concerning the fashion industry, to which I found no answers in the academic environment.

The reason I enrolled the MA Management course at University of Arts is because I needed to move away a little from the artistic side of this industry by which I was being increasingly absorbed. What I required was more of the business approach to management and the balance between the two worlds.

Also, I realised that fashion management and fashion event management from the point of Science/Art of management is a topic that is insufficiently researched, furthermore, fashion management is not researched and recognized at all, from the perspective of cultural theory or education, in Serbia.

Cultural management was researched bridging following disciplines: art, sociology of culture, phenomenology of spectacle and cultural policy. In education process, when it was studied from art managers' point of view, the business side was often neglected, whereas when it was studied by the business managers, the art side was barely understood. Therefore, it was rather difficult to find balance in the approach.

Within cultural management, art events are having important significance, but new contemporary forms of arts such as: fashion, design, street art, cartoons, etc. are often neglected. Also, management in culture emphasis on Public Culture, and since fashion is part of the private sphere, it often and unfairly escapes the attention of cultural management.

However, lately within complex manifestation such as: Belgrade design week, Week of architecture and Fashion Week Belgrade, these two worlds of “elite” and “popular” culture are approached.

However, with the emergence of creative industries⁷ a new challenge for studies of culture, cultural policy and management in culture⁸ is set. The liberal concept of cultural policy in Great Britain⁹ has contributed to a broader understanding that the area of culture has to be industrialized, i.e. the principles of entrepreneurship, risk, productivity and efficiency needs to be introduced to this area. Therefore, the new theories of culture and cultural policy under the term creative industries often perceive whole culture sector (all branches of art from theatrical to fine arts), adding all areas of production and services that employ the creative staff to a greater extent – such as fashion, marketing, gaming industry etc.¹⁰

Those are the reasons why the topic of my undergraduate dissertation is “FASHION EVENT MANAGEMENT - Fashion brand positioning and development through event management and marketing strategies”,

Dealing with the concept of positioning and development of fashion brands through event management and marketing strategies as a segment of creative industries, can be perhaps considered as move too bold at the time of constant turmoil and political instability in Serbia, given that even in more stable and developed countries is not fully formed. However unjustifiably underestimated significance and importance of fashion and fashion industry can have a significant impact in the overall development of society, as well as cultural and economic development.

My plan is to continue working as an academic, continuing the research as a teaching assistant and public relations manager, at the International Private Institute of Fashion and Arts “Mod’ Art International” in Belgrade and at the same time continue to teach students on Fashion

⁷ Creative industries - activities based on individual creativity, skill and talent and which have the potential to create wealth and jobs generation and further exploitation of intellectual property. Jeffcutt P., (2001), *Managing Creativity in the cultural Industries*

⁸ Dragičević Šešić M., (2009) *Razvojna politika Srbije u vremenu ekonomije znanja i kreativnosti, Kreativne industrije i ekonomija znanja, Academica*

⁹ „ *The British concept of creative industries is widely represented in Europe. The concept originated in the 90's by establishing Creative Industries Task Force which was designed to investigate the potential of creative industries to generate economic development in the UK. The concept was formally implemented through empirical studies published in 1998 and 2001. The British concept is basically a production-oriented, because the creative value of products and services is the least common denominator to identify the activities that belong to the creative industries sector. Understanding of the British concept of creative industries is reduced to the analysis of economic potential in the following sectors: discography, multimedia entertainment software, design, advertising, publishing books and brochures, cinema and video production, stage-Performing activities, radio and TV activities and design and fashion design.*“ Source: Mikić H., (2008) *Kreativne industrije, dizajn i konkurentnost: proaktivan pristup*, Centar za evropske integracije Srbija CEI

¹⁰ Dragičević Šešić M., (2009) *Razvojna politika Srbije u vremenu ekonomije znanja i kreativnosti, Kreativne industrije i ekonomija znanja, Academica*

management course. Therefore, I have found the topic useful for accomplishing the goals I set for myself.

1.2 Problem definition

Contemporary concepts of cultural development are based on an integrated economy, which involves balanced connecting of cultural activities and industrial sector.¹¹

The fashion manufacturers work in an industry, differs from other activities in cultural field, is characterized by short product life cycles and a high level of competition. According to Frings¹² the inconsistency of fashion is criticized by many that advocate that fashion only change in order to encourage purchase. He presented three causes to why fashion changes; people need change, people get bored with what they have and changes in fashion is a sign of change in up-to-date events and change in a person's lifestyle. In order to succeed within the fashion industry it is important to understand the time it takes for a new style to get accepted, the audience must be ready for a change once a radical shift in style is introduced. Frings therefore quoted the famous Italian designer Valentino who said "Timing is the key to a successful idea". However in the fashion industry, timing is not enough, many fashion companies are today engaging in international activities due to the fact that their domestic market is small.

Event management within the fashion industry is focused on marketing a concept rather than the traditional products and because of that, the brand becomes an important tool in order to achieve success.

However, branding is not something new; it has been around for a long time as a way to gain advantage towards competitors and in order to differentiate one's products from others. To gain competitive advantage companies need to build their competitive strategies around their brands rather than their products.¹³ It is argued that the value of the brand in the end resides with the customers. Because, brand value is created when the attributes which the customer aspire is associated with the product, therefore the relationship between brand and customer is significant.

¹¹ Mikić H., (2008) *Kreativne industrije, dizajn i konkurentnost: proaktivan pristup*, Centar za evropske integracije Srbija CEI

¹² Frings G. F., (2008) *Fashion: from concept to consumer*, Pearson Education Inc

¹³ Fernie J., Moore C., Lawrie A., Hallsworth A., (1997) The internationalization of the high fashion brand: the case of central London, *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 6

One way to increase the brand value is through differentiation.¹⁴ In the fashion industry, differentiation based on the product alone does not go a long way. In recent years, it has become almost impossible to market fashion products based only on product differentiation in this highly competitive industry and this has led fashion marketers to focus their marketing and advertising strategies more around the brand than the product.

Developing strong brands has become an important key asset for companies whether they are small local ones or big international ones.

Therefore, the growing popularity of fashion brands in recent years represents an opportunity for fashion managers to keep existing customers and to attract new ones as well.

One such approach that has all attributes to play key role in positioning and developing fashion brand is events management and marketing.

Thus, further research that would examine the positioning and development of fashion brand through events management and marketing strategies would not only contribute to the existing literature and practice but could provide useful recommendations for fashion management practitioners as well, especially for Serbian and regional cultural management practitioners.

However, fashion management as a part of cultural management discipline is not researched and recognized enough and is more often a discussion topic among practitioners rather than academics.

1.3 Research questions and objectives

A clearly defined research question is essential as it will determine the necessary steps that need to be taken in order to address the research problem and meet research objectives.

The overall objectives of this paper is to explore how fashion event management and marketing can affect the relationships developed among brand and consumers; to identify and investigate the positive managerial implications that may accrue to the brand from using specific event marketing strategy for managing brand; to analyse how researched theory and practice can be useful for smaller or non-positioned fashion companies; to propose the most efficient marketing strategy to build, launch and develop fashion brand and create brand identity through fashion

¹⁴ Kotler P., Keller K. L., (2006) *Marketing management*, Prentice Hall

events; to provide a framework for thinking and application in practice concerning some of the attractive issues arising from the best practices in the stressful and dynamic environment of fashion management industry; to gain better understanding of fashion event management and brand positioning and development through theoretical research and best practice examples.

These objectives will be reached by addressing the following research question:

How to make a Fashion Company's brand identity and what is the role of Fashion Event Management and Event Marketing strategies in positioning and developing of fashion brand?

In order to thoroughly explore this idea, the following supporting sub-questions were developed to be used as a guideline for the research design. The research will try to provide answers to some of the following sub-questions:

What lessons can managers of small fashion companies learn from the experience of the well positioned, recognizable, worldwide famous fashion brands?

Whether fashion management can integrate cultural and business management in both theoretical conceptualization and practical tool of implementation?

1.4 Outline of the thesis

This thesis it is structured around five main content sections. Since the introductory first chapter provides a brief overview of the thesis, by defining the topic, research questions and setting the objectives of this research, the second chapter is focused on the methodology of the thesis.

The research methodology and design process is used, on the commonly understandable principle that is the approach to the conduct of research critically important in determining the results obtained and recommendations offered. Thus, the paradigmatic approach used in this research is explained and justified in the light of the main implications involved, and the process used to gather data is described.

Defining the Brand, Fashion industry (as well as brand within the fashion industry), Fashion Event Management and Fashion Event Marketing constitute the literature review and practice. The literature review as well as practice is essential for a clear understanding of the topic. It contains a variety of definitions taken from a range of differing literatures, and investigates those topics that have been variously held to be important indicators to the successful brand positioning and development within management of events. The review concludes by identifying a potentially useful model by which to assess fashion event management effectiveness in fashion brand positioning and development.

Chapter seven presents the analysis of best practices in Fashion events and outcomes of the research, reached through application of researcher analysis and interpretation to draw conclusions and make recommendations.

In the last chapters the findings are discussed and concluded, and recommendations proposed.

This structure has been chosen to make it easier to communicate content to the reader and to distinguish between the intent of each of the sections.

2. METHODOLOGY

This chapter will present the methodological framework used for collecting and analysing the data in order to solve research problem and answer research questions.

In the business field, the systematic way of accumulating knowledge through research processes may be implemented for making well-informed managerial decisions¹⁵. Therefore, business research aim to predict, describe and analyse the phenomena that constitute the ever changing business environment¹⁶. Hence, business research is “a systematic inquiry that provides information to guide business decision.”¹⁷

Business research can be divided in two categories, basic and applied. Basic business research is driven by desire to better understand a phenomenon in the business environment and by doing so to contribute to the general body of knowledge in a certain business related aria. O the other hand, applied research aims to solve a specific problem in a certain organisation.

This study, like most academic business research studies, falls into the first category, as it aims to explore a business related phenomenon, which is the role of event management in positioning and development of fashion brand.

Research study needs to satisfy followed criteria: the purpose has to be clearly defined, the research process must be detailed and documented, the research design has to be methodically planned, the limitations should be outlined, the managerial implication have to be adequately noted, the findings must be clearly presented, the conclusion need to be justified and the researcher’s experience should be reflected.¹⁸

¹⁵ Ghauri P., Gronhaug K., (2005) *Research Methods in Business Studies: A Practical Guide*, Financial Times, Prentice Hall

¹⁶ Hair J. F., Money A.H., Samouel P., Page M. (2007) *Research Methods for business*, John Wiley and Sons

¹⁷ Cooper D. R., Schindler P. S., (1997) *Business Research Methods*, Richard D Irwin

¹⁸ Ibid

2.1 Thesis methodology

This study, belonging to the field of fashion management and marketing of profit business environment, as well as event management and marketing, based on relevant literature (library books, magazines, journals, databases, institutions and Internet)

A review of available literature, as well as strategy processes applied on the particular topic has been conducted, in order to establish the theoretical context, which is then further built by the results of empirical research and analysis of the key event marketing issues evident in several best practices within fashion.

The main theoretical background for this thesis has been found in the theories on brand building, strategic brand marketing and management by Aaker D.A.¹⁹, Kotler P., Keller K. L.²⁰ and fashion history and fashion management theory by Breward C.²¹, Barthes R.²², Agins T.²³, Soboul – Polchi and Chaumette X.²⁴, Barnard M.²⁵, as well as on the books by Goldblatt J.²⁶, Bowdin G. A. J. et al.²⁷ and Hoyle H. L.²⁸, which treats the issues of event management and event marketing. These theoretical concepts provide the tools for context definition and for creation of appropriate strategies of fashion brand positioning and development within fashion event management. The recognized theoretical frame was integrated in practical management solutions for fashion companies and its consumer oriented tools in the field of fashion event marketing.

The part of the best practices research was carried out relying on the methods of participant observation and interviewing through interviews with designers, directors and employees of

¹⁹ Aaker D. A., (1996) *Building Strong Brands*, Free Press; Aaker D. A., (2008) *Strategic Market Management*, John Wiley & Sons Inc.

²⁰ Kotler P., (1988) *Marketing Management: Analysis, Planning and Control*, Englewood Cliffs/ Prentice-Hall; Kotler P., Keller K. L., (2006) *Marketing management*, Prentice Hall; Keller K. L., (2002) *Strategic Brand Management Building, measuring and managing brand equity*, Prentice Hall

²¹ Breward C., (2003) *Fashion*, Oxford University Press

²² Barthes R., (1990) *The Fashion System*, University of California Press

²³ Agins T., (2000) *The End of Fashion: How marketing changed the clothing business forever*, Harper Collins Publishers Inc

²⁴ Soboul-Polchi V., Chaumette X., (2007) *Fashion management*, Research papers, Mod' Art, Institut International Privé des Arts et de la Mode

²⁵ Barnard M., (2001) *Fashion as Communication*, Routledge

²⁶ Goldblatt, J., (2002) *Special Events: twenty-first century global event management*, John Wiley and Sons

²⁷ Bowdin G. A. J., Allen J., O'Toole W., (2006) *Event Management*, e - book. www.books.google.com

²⁸ Hoyle H. L., (2002) *Event marketing: how to successfully promote events, festivals, conventions and Expositions*, John Wiley and Sons

Fashion companies and with director and PR manager of Belgrade Fashion Week. This chapter giving the overview of current fashion event management practices and its place in cultural life and then goes on to giving solutions and recommendations for identified problems.

In the end, the paper gives conclusion encompassing research questions and final discussion of results and their significance.

3. DEFINING THE BRAND

3.1 What is the brand?

A brand can be defined as “a name, term, sign or symbol or a combination of all of these things, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller and to differentiate them from those of competitors”.²⁹ Branding is all about creating difference. A brand name creates a common identity for the product and highlights the way in which it’s different from other products.

Over the last two decades the concept and application of branding tools evolved from its origins in the Anglo-Saxon mass consumer industry to a wide range of industries, even very far from consumer products: from cars to coffee shops, from Universities and Museum to television stations. However, branding assumes different features according to the specific industry. In industrial products or in the service sector the brand usually plays a role of identification, differentiation and guarantee mainly related to the more tangible aspects of the supply system. Within the so called symbol intensive industries, offering prestige or luxury products, the brand expresses mainly intangible benefits and attributes.³⁰ If a great brand balances the delivery of functional benefits with emotional ones, a great symbol intensive brand needs to awake mainly desires and pleasure in the consumer.

Brand strategists affirm that brands recall clear associations in consumer mind: they talk about brand personality, a long term relationship with the consumer centered on emotional feelings more than on economic transactions.³¹

Branding is becoming more a function of the relationship and the experience the consumer has with the brand. Above all in industries producing symbol intensive goods there is a stronger connection of brands with people's personalities and beliefs.

In order to get a full understanding of the market potential associated to a brand it is necessary to use a broader definition of brand as an "*aggregation, around specific signs of a complex of*

²⁹ Kotler P., (1988) *Marketing Management: Analysis, Planning and Control*, Englewood Cliffs/ Prentice-Hall

³⁰ Aaker D. A., (2008) *Strategic Market Management*, John Wiley & Sons Inc.

³¹ Schmitt B., Simonson A., (1997) *Marketing Aesthetics. The Strategic Management of Brands, Identity and Image*, Free Press

values, association, expectations to which clients assign a value that goes over the technical and functional attributes of the products identified by the brand itself.”³²

3.1.1 Understanding brand

Brand management as one of the marketing functions has been around for as long as we have known professional marketing.

But, it has been a part of the traditional marketing approach in which many functions of today’s brand management were performed in a spread out fashion by the marketing manager and a combination of his team members like the sales manager, the advertising and communications manager, and the marketing administration manager to name a few. The terminology of brand management was not used.

Brand management, in its present integrated form, has come into limelight and focus over the last 20 years. The functional execution has undergone transformation in terms of its description as a substantive job under one head. This implies that the overall functions of brand management are full of substance and therefore are described specifically under the head - brand management and not as disparate parts of the overall marketing functions.³³

In other words, brand management has not lost its primary roots that are well-entrenched in marketing; it only has acquired explicitly defined dimensions within which the function operates. To further explain the point, there have been functional adjustments within the overall marketing functions only to bring into clear and sharp focus the specific functions and job of brand management.

Brand management now presents itself as a distinct part of an integrated marketing approach in which it connects with all the touch points within and outside of the marketing department.

Followed chapters will represent a clear understanding of what a brand is, why and how it is managed, and what are the dynamics involved in managing brands in the present day competitive market.

³² Zara C., (1997) *The brand and the creation of enterprise value*

³³ Aaker D. A., (1996) *Building Strong Brands*, Free Press

3.2 Functions of the Brand Management

While performing the core functions of brand management, brand managers:

Figure 3.2³⁴



- Develop long range competitive strategy for success of the brand. All tactical moves that form part of the strategy are formulated for execution by relevant personnel of the company.
- Prepare in coordination with sales personnel “sales forecasts” and “attach” the same into marketing plans and budgets. Sales forecasts serve as the basic denominator of all

³⁴ Source: Jean-Noel Kapferer: *Strategic Brand Management – Creating and Sustaining Brand Equity Long Term*, retrieved from Virtual University of Pakistan

budgetary figures, which are divided and sub-divided into small pieces to be achieved by different personnel in different departments.

- Work with advertising and other related agencies (promotional and research) to develop advertising “copy”, communication strategies, and plans for execution of advertising and promotional campaigns.
- Stimulate support of the brand among the sales force and trade members (distributors, wholesalers, and retailers) through communicating reasonably all the rationale for brand plan.
- Gather intelligence on the brand’s performance to see how the brand stacks up against competition, customer and trade attitudes develop and change, and new problems and opportunities arise. Identification of problems, their solutions and further improvements are part of the function that keeps brand managers busy for most of the time.
- Meet changing market needs through improving and initiating new products/brands. This function is an extension of the preceding one and, as mentioned, cannot be performed convincingly unless problems are identified and changing needs pinpointed.

3.3 Brand equity

Recently also the branding techniques evolved within firms. Branding has been fostered from being a support to the product commercial promotion to a strategic process that permeates the entire company and involves different functions and organizational roles.

The literature defines the value associated to a brand as *brand equity*:³⁵ brand equity is a set of brand assets and liability linked to a brand, its name and symbol that add or subtract from the value provided by a product or service to a firm and or to that firm’s customers.

³⁵ Aaker D. A., (1991) *Managing Brand Equity*, Free press

Brand identity and brand image are strategic objectives, above all in businesses where the role of intangibles is greater, such as in fashion, design and entertainment. A strong brand image helps the business add value for the customer and for shareholders: over time it creates an asset for the company called “brand equity”.³⁶ Determining the brand equity, meaning the value of a brand, is an extremely important aspect of strategy and marketing both for the producer and the customer. The purpose of this section is to provide an in-depth review of three dominant theories in the field of brand equity management.

Advertising practitioners began using term “brand equity” as common nomenclature for this concept in the early 1980s.³⁷ Since that time, interest in the brand equity concept has steadily risen. Each effort has produced a slightly different way of defining brand equity and to date, there is no one widely accepted, conclusive definition of brand equity. In addition this concept is probably more relevant in mature industries (such as fashion) and in large rather than small companies; it also varies geographically. Still the most common approach is to define the brand as asset. Currently there are three dominant theories³⁸ of what constitutes brand equity. The three categories of brand equity measures are: those that assign it strictly financial value, those that express it as the means for brand extensions, and those that attempt to measure it from the consumer’s perspective.

- Brand equity as financial value. Those who support the financial theory feel that without placing a monetary value on each brand, corporate executives have no way of knowing the total worth of their companies. The importance behind the need for this knowledge comes into play when a company is posturing itself for acquisition or attempting to ward off a takeover.

- Brand equity as potential for brand extensions. A second view of financial implications of brand equity with brand extensions. Here, brand equity is a measure of a mature brand’s ability to assist in the development of similar brand types (extensions). The thought is that the more equity a brand has, the better able is to lead to new avenues of expansion. The emphasis shifts from the near-time to

³⁶ Aaker D. A., (1991) *Managing Brand Equity*, Free press

³⁷ Ibid

³⁸ Ibid

measuring future growth potential. For the first time, we begin to see references to consumer perception, brand loyalty and the attitudinal dimensions of consumer behavior. Researchers in this field study the associative affects of brand equity and brand extensions and how they can be applied in meeting the long range planning goals of a company. It is a loyal customer who is willing to try and adopt brand extensions when they become available. By assessing current brand value and past performance, a prediction can be made about potential future growth. The same holds true for brand expansions. Attention is given to brand attributes such as: brand name, attitude towards the original brand, and the fit between the existing brand and new one.

- Brand equity as customer perspective. The third area of study deals with consumer-based perspective of equity. Researchers who study this stream feel that with knowledge of what goes into purchase decisions, they or corporate marketing managers can determine what value (equity) the consumers place on particular brand. The identity tells about the brand history and sources of uniqueness; it communicates the organization's core beliefs and values. Brand image is the sum of consumer perceptions about the brand which may not matched with the brand's identity unless the brand promise is clearly stated. The identity of any brand has to have strong rational and functional support that serves the deeper needs of the consumer. Having that as a framework, the brand can elevate its proposition to the subconscious mind of the consumer. The rational and functional base, with emotional content, connects with people beyond their expectation.

In order to create a strong brand image, a company should be able to build a strong and shared brand identity first, and then be able to communicate this identity in a correct and relevant way through all the contacts points for the customer.³⁹ Branding is about integrating; the brand is in different places at the same time but it needs to speak only one language. This is particularly relevant in the case of fashion where under one brand there are several products categories,

³⁹ Aaker D. A., (1996) *Building Strong Brands*, Free Press

several distribution channels and communication media. Furthermore, the product, being seasonal, cannot represent the identity of the company over the long term.

3.4 Brand models

For comprehension of a brand's dimensions, three models are fundamental:⁴⁰

- Brand identity
 - Brand image
 - Communication
-
- Brand identity is what a company transmits about the brand to the market place. Identity has many components – the name, the packaging, the colors, the typestyle, the logo, and a host of other factors that comprise its personality. The personality of a brand should be created for it to get expressed in terms of well-defined characteristics. What is most important here is that the company must be able to express the real essence of the product to the target market. Any product, however high on the quality and reliability grid, may not exploit its full potential if it is not expressed right by way of creation of the right compatible personality. If a brand is to be registered in the minds of consumers as “durable”, then the whole identity has to revolve around the aspects of durability.
-
- Brand image is a term used very loosely by people outside the sphere of marketing. Changing the image is an often topic while discussing brands under distress. Brand image follows identity. It is a reflection of what we projected to send to the public. Managers must be clear about what they want to send and how they want it received. Brand image is something that builds into the minds of the consumers. The managers can have the market imagine their brand's identity the way it is intended to be imagined, the more successful they are in their effort. If there is a gap between the identity and the image, then there is a need for corrective action.

⁴⁰ Aaker D. A., (1996) *Building Strong Brands*, Free Press

Brand image, therefore, is the totality of information, advertising, promotions, and other brand manifestations that the consumer has seen and received about the brand over a period of time. It is, in other words, his experience with the brand modified by certain perceptions, previous beliefs, biases, social norms, and a level of forgetfulness.

- The tool that transmits brand's identity to the target market for creation of the right image is communication. To ensure that image remains as close to identity as possible, companies get into communications of different kinds. This is where brand communication takes an important stage. Correct communication goes a long way in creating and building brand identity.

According to Kotler et al. "communication is an interactive dialogue between the company and its customers that takes place at the pre-selling, selling, consuming, and post consuming stages".⁴¹

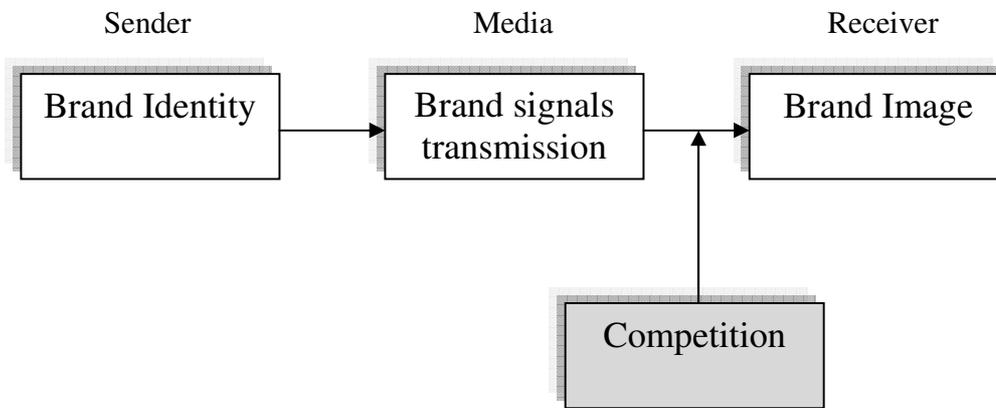
This implies that communication is a recurring process that starts before customer buy (advertising, promotions, events and other), remains in force while customer buy (the brand itself communicates), and does not end even after you customer consumed the brand (brand's ability to satisfy and keeps reminding customer of being loyal to it).

It further means that communication is not restricted to the traditional communication platform, which is advertising, promotions, public relations, personal selling, and also some technologically advanced ways of reaching the consumers through e-mail and internet based direct marketing.

The working of three models can be graphically illustrated as follows:

⁴¹ Kotler P., Keller K. L., (2006) *Marketing management*, Prentice Hall

Figure 3.4 BRAND MODELS⁴²



3.5 Positioning of the brand

Brand positioning is finding the proper location in the minds of a group of customers or market segment so that they think of product in the right or desired way.⁴³

Some other authors describe positioning as how a brand is positioned in the mind of the consumer with respect to the values with which it is either owns provides “associations” on.⁴⁴ All the elements of a marketing program can affect the position of a brand and therefore having clear position strategy can insure that the fundamentals of a marketing program are consistent.

The brand position corresponds to the communication objectives which are those parts of the identity that is to be actively communicated with customers. Marketers must choose if the position that is created should be credible or aspirational. If the company is incapable of delivering on the new promise or if the target audience is not ready, it will be sensible to wait before launching the aspirational position.

⁴² Source: Jean-Noel Kapferer: *Strategic Brand Management – Creating and Sustaining Brand Equity Long Term*, retrieved from Virtual University of Pakistan

⁴³ Keller K. L., (2002) *Strategic Brand Management Building, measuring and managing brand equity*, Prentice Hall

⁴⁴ Marsden P., (2002) *Brand positioning*. Journal Marketing Intelligence and planning

For the company to position the brand directly it can be beneficial to compare the brand identity with the brand image; often the comparison will reveal that the positioning has to be adjusted in order to occupy the desired place in the customer's mind.⁴⁵

Kotler et al.⁴⁶ stated that it is not until a company has defined its target market that it can make consistent decisions regarding advertising messages, media and prices. In order to set the target market, the company must estimate the total market demand. Total market demand is the volume that defined group of consumers in a specific geographical area would buy of product throughout a defined period of time under a distinct marketing strategy.⁴⁷

This is because Aaker⁴⁸ pointed out; a well defined marketing strategy might fail if it does not work with audience in the marketplace. At the same time that the company identifies its target market it also has to make decision regarding the nature of competition because other companies might have focused on the same target market in the past or will do it in the future.⁴⁹ That is because with the target market comes the competitors, which are those other companies that target the same market segment.

After the brand has identified target audience and the nature of competition, the marketers can define the appropriate *points of difference*, POD, and *points of parity*, POP, associations.

A company has to decide whether or not to accentuate a brands' POD's or POP's in order to know what it should emphasize on in order to affect the target market.⁵⁰ Keller defines POD as the brand associations which are strong, favourable and unique.

People can have strong brand preference even though they have never purchased a product, the preference can be founded on perception and not experience of use. Such tendency can be based on social, cultural and personality factors but also motivators such as advertising and public relations. POPs are the brand associations which the brand has in common with other brands, in other words they are not unique.

There are two kinds of POPs, category and competitive. The first one is the associations to a brand that the consumer considers compulsory in order for the brand to deliver a credible

⁴⁵ Aaker D. A., (2008) *Strategic Market Management*, John Wiley&Sons Inc.

⁴⁶ Kotler P., Keller K. L., (2006) *Marketing management*, Prentice Hall

⁴⁷ Ibid

⁴⁸ Aaker D. A., (2008) *Strategic Market Management*, John Wiley&Sons Inc

⁴⁹ Keller K. L., (2002) *Strategic Brand Management Building, measuring and managing brand equity*, Prentice Hall

⁵⁰ Aaker D. A., (2008) *Strategic Market Management*, John Wiley&Sons Inc.

offering, category POPs may change over time due to developments within the industry. The competitive POPs are the associations created to negate the PODs of the competitors.

If the brand exceeds in some areas and manage to break even in others where the competitors are trying to find advantage, the brand should be strong. The key to positioning is often more about achieving the necessary or competitive points of parity rather than a point of difference. When a customer thinks positively of a brand concerning one particular attribute, another attribute is often more poorly regarded.⁵¹

Contradiction in brand positioning is the example when a brand is positioned as “top quality” and at the same time as “inexpensive”. To overcome this, it is possible to either present the attributes in two separate campaigns that are run simultaneously or to borrow credibility from another way is to redefine the relationship between the benefits in order to convince the customer that link is positive.

Brand image could be described as the perceptions and beliefs held by consumers around the brand.

As consumers’ perception of the brand has shifted from its physical characteristics to its symbolic associations, developing brand image through advertising is becoming more apparent. Just as a person’s identity provide direction, purpose and meaning, the identity of the brand is central to the brand’s strategic vision since it embodies the basic characteristic that will sustain over time.⁵²

Brand identity are the unique association that the company want the consumer to have when confronted with the brand. When the customer experiences that the brand is delivering the benefits that it promised to undertake, brand bounding occurs.⁵³ Aaker⁵⁴ referred to this as brand loyalty meaning that the customer’s resistance to switching is increased.

This means that the motivation to change from familiar brand to unknown one is low.

⁵¹ Keller K. L., (2002) *Strategic Brand Management Building, measuring and managing brand equity*, Prentice Hall

⁵² Aaker D. A., (1996) *Building Strong Brands*, Free Press

⁵³ Kotler P., Keller K. L., (2006) *Marketing management*, Prentice Hall

⁵⁴ Aaker D. A., (1996) *Building Strong Brands*, Free Press

4. FASHION INDUSTRY

4.1 Defining the fashion

“... fashion is merely a product of social demands... This is clearly proved by the fact that very frequently not the slightest reason can be found for the creation of fashion from the standpoint of an objective, aesthetic or other expediency. While in general our wearing apparel is really adapted to our needs there is not a trace of expediency in the method by which fashion dictates ...”

Georg Simmel⁵⁵

By fashion one generally mean the process that identifies certain design, products or social behaviours as "in" for a limited period and which replaces them with regularity by new design, new products and new forms of social behavior.⁵⁶ If the consumption of a fashionable item is removed from its specific social context then changes in fashion do not entail any improvement in product quality.

To sociologists fashion represents an expression of social interaction and of status seeking.⁵⁷ A designer brand provides to consumers a feeling of shared well-being and common interest. For economists and business analysts, fashion can be defined as a cycle that allows to some mature industries, such as clothing, footwear or even cars, to be dynamic and maintain certain profitability over the time.⁵⁸ When we talk about the fashion system or the fashion business we usually refer to a wide and complex cluster of closely interconnected industries of different importance and weight, all influenced at various degree from the importance of fashionability.⁵⁹ Attention is usually focused only on the finished products (clothing, knitwear, hosiery, accessories) but these are the result of a long chain of stages, activities and technologies whose interaction is largely responsible for the product's success on the market.

⁵⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Simmel

⁵⁶ Barthes R., (1990) *The Fashion System*, University of California Press

⁵⁷ Breward C., (2003) *Fashion*, Oxford University Press

⁵⁸ Agins T., (2000) *The End of Fashion: How marketing changed the clothing business forever*, Harper Collins Publishers Inc.

⁵⁹ Barthes R., (1990) *The Fashion System*, University of California Press

It is difficult to provide an unambiguous definition of the word fashion, as there is no objective and unanimous interpretation of it, above all at an international level. According to Wikipedia (the free online encyclopedia) fashion “refers to styles of dress (but can also include cuisine, literature, art, architecture, etc.) that are popular in a culture at any given time. Such styles may change quickly and fashion in the more colloquial sense refers to the latest version of these styles”.⁶⁰

Going back to the etymological roots of the word, the Serbian word for fashion *moda* (adopted from Italian language), derives from the Latin word *mos*⁶¹ and has the different but related meanings of:

- a) usage, custom, habit, tradition,
- b) law, rule,
- c) regulation, good manners, morality.

However the fashion phenomenon existed long before the introduction of the word *moda* (fashion). Right from the start it was considered a strange and absurd phenomenon.

This list of meanings makes it clear that although taste is the expression of an individual orientation, it has to contend with a system of social rules that defines what can be considered “fashionable” at any time or place. A presumed etymological overlap between fashion and “modern” is not thus the result of pure chance, It emphasizes the developing and institutional aspects of taste. The French, English and German words *mode* confirms this matrix. This word derives from the Celtic words *mod* and *modd*, which have the same meaning as the Latin word *mos*: usage, custom or manner.⁶²

The commonest word in the international setting, *fashion*, seems less interesting and explanatory. It derives from French word *façon*, through the Latin *facere*: do, built, make.⁶³

Modern sociologists define fashion as a system of meaning where the notions of style and aesthetics predominate over functional benefits. The way we dress talks about us, shapes our

⁶⁰ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fashion>

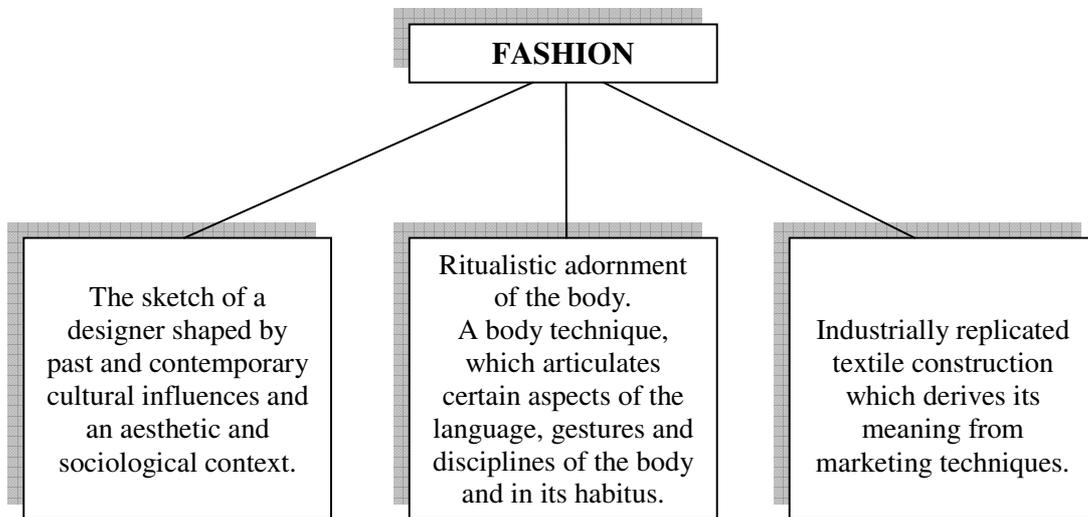
⁶¹ Soboul-Polchi V., Chaumette X., (2007) *Fashion management* Research papers, Mod’ Art Institut International Privé des Arts et de la Mode

⁶² Polhemus T., Procter L., (1978) *Fashion and Anti-Fashion: An Anthropology of Clothing and Adornment*, Thames & Hudson

⁶³ Soboul-Polchi V., Chaumette X., (2007) *Fashion management* Research papers, Mod’ Art Institut International Privé des Arts et de la Mode

social identities. For centuries, individual or societies have used clothes and other body adornment as a form of nonverbal communication to indicate occupation, rank, gender, sexual availability, locality, class, and wealth and group affiliation. According to Breward⁶⁴, fashion possesses many facets simultaneously, as indicated in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 **FASHION AS A SYSTEM OF MEANINGS**



According to the vision, fashion is the direct result of both a creative and an industrial process. It is a system of innovation engineered to meet and encourage seasonal consumer demand, fulfilling a cultural requirement to define ever-shifting social identities and relationships. The phenomenology of fashion is therefore made up not only of design but also production, distribution and consumption processes, within an ever-evolving context.

Fashion cannot be understood out of the context. What you wear, how you wear it and why you wear it depends on the time and place. A product, a service, or even a social behaviour, is considered “fashionable” if it is widely approved by specific public in a specific time and social

⁶⁴ Adapted from Breward C., (2003) *Fashion*, Oxford University Press

context.⁶⁵ If the consumption of a fashionable item is removed from its specific social context it loses any meaning, and changes in fashion do not entail any improvement in product quality. The specific public may be intended according to a geographical perspective or may be socio-demographic.

Modern fashion, as we know it today, is a recent phenomenon. After Second World War and up to the 1970s the concept of seasonal fashion was only associated with clothing, in particular with some specific womenswear segments: *haute couture* and *ready-to-wear*.⁶⁶ Since the 1980s, however, fashion has increasingly spread to additional segments – fur and hosiery, perfumes and cosmetics, eyewear, accessories, furniture and travel destinations.

We can talk about fashion in some contexts, such as computers and academic theories, which are long a long way from dimension of aesthetics and style.

Up to now there has been no other field of human activity where the systematic change of the product has been institutionalized as it has in clothing and the consumer goods closely related to apparel.

This is due to the fact that clothing is, or ought to be, the expression of a development in customs, social context, culture, in a phenomenological context that is much wider and complex than clothing itself.

Knowledge of the meaning of fashion, of the whys and hows of its creation, spread and consumption, is central to understanding the fashion business and its management.

4.2 The fashion cycle

The product life cycle concept suggests that goods go through four stages of evolution: introduction, growth, maturity and decline.⁶⁷ As a product evolves and passes through each stage, profit is affected, and different strategies have to be employed to ensure that the item is success within its market. The length of the product lifecycle in fashion-related industries is short compared to other industries; it can range from a few weeks to a few seasons. Frings⁶⁸ define the

⁶⁵ Polhemus T., (1994) *Streetstyle: From sidewalk to Catwalk*, Thames & Hudson

⁶⁶ Breward C., (2003) *Fashion*, Oxford University Press

⁶⁷ Barthes R., (1990) *The Fashion System*, University of California Press

⁶⁸ Frings G. F., (2008) *Fashion: from concept to consumer*, Pearson Education Inc

fashion cycle as the period of time between the introduction of a certain fashion (a new product) and its replacement by a new one.

The degree of innovation of the replacement may involve basic features (product concept, style, basic materials, accessories), or variants (colors). The process of change is partly driven by the cycle of the seasons (Spring/Summer and Autumn/Winter), and partly by the fashion cycle itself (introduction, top, and decline of a certain fashion). The fashion cycle can be explained from two perspectives:⁶⁹

- Seasonal change is brought about the industrial, retail and communication system of fashion. This is tied to the need to encourage and control a certain level of product turnover. “Planned obsolescence” encourages new demand season after season for the products that could last much longer considering their functional and technical features alone. The fashion cycle plays out within the structure of seasonal collections that are connected to seasonal trade fairs and fashion shows. These events were once the exclusive domain of women’s *haute couture* and ready-to-wear clothing, but have now been penetrated by the whole clothing system, including fibres, textiles, leather goods and hosiery.
- Change, indented as great product variety and variability over time, is designed to guarantee the consumer a wide range of choice and the greatest satisfaction in terms of how the product fits personal needs. The existence of trends and new products coming out in the market follows the increasing individualization of the consumer. This is particularly true in the case of so-called “fast fashion”.

A certain trends in terms of colors or shapes or materials must gain wide consumer acceptance to become a fashion. In other words, consumer must buy and wear a style to make it a fashion. Not all fashion products go through a short seasonal lifecycle. Companies also customarily sell basic products (such as polo-shirts and blue jeans) for years with few style changes. Such items never become completely obsolete, but remain accepted for an extended period of time. Companies selling basic products can count on a long product life cycle with the same customers buying

⁶⁹ Soboul-Polchi V., Chaumette X., (2007) *Fashion management* Research papers, Mod’ Art Institut International Privé des Arts et de la Mode

multiple units of the same product at the same time of over time. For these products, decline is often related to structural changes in people's habits and lifestyles (for instance, the use of a hat in menswear or the use of large shoulders in womenswear). In addition to the seasonal fashion cycle and the longer cycle of basic, there is third cycle in fashion, the so-called "fad". A fad is usually a short lived fashion, with lacks of character to hold consumer attention for very long.⁷⁰

Each fashion has its own lifecycle made up of three stages: introduction, highlight and decline. Various actors participate in the adoption and diffusion of fashion trends in the different stages. Fashion innovators create the trend and "opinion leaders" are the first to adopt the new fashion during the initial stage.⁷¹

Opinion leaders are the small groups of consumers and distributors who want to look different from the mainstream for several reasons (class differentiation, identification with particular system of values and so on). There is the process of diffusion and adoption by much wider segments of the market during the second stage through the masses first and then late adopters. There is often an aspirational element supporting the diffusion of fashion to mainstream consumers, the desire to be trendy among those who follow an imitative model of behaviour. The final stage is decline and adoption by laggards who are the last to take over a particular fashion.

If we talk about cycle of fashion through history and when did it start historically, the follow of change underwent an initial acceleration in the late 13th and 14th centuries, despite disagreements about the beginnings of fashion in history and despite certain variability in the duration of cycles. The institutional origin of the concept of fashion, in the sense of a systematic process of socially accepted variations in a particular custom and clothing style, took place early in the Renaissance in the Italian cities. It later spread to the whole of Europe as early sign of the crucial role of Paris as the place where new fashions were created in later centuries.⁷²

A second acceleration of the phenomenon seems to relate to the emergence of the merchant social class, alongside the established social groups such as the nobility, the army, the clergy etc.⁷³ The

⁷⁰ Frings G. F., (2008) *Fashion: from concept to consumer*, Pearson Education Inc

⁷¹ Barthes R., (1990) *The Fashion System*, University of California Press

⁷² Steel V., (1988) *Paris Fashion: A Cultural History*, Oxford University Press

⁷³ White N., Griffiths I., (2007) *The Fashion Business, Theory, Practice, Image*, Berg Oxford International Publishers Ltd.

diffusion of rich merchants through Europe encouraged the creation of new dress code, one no longer conditioned by ostentation (the nobility), poverty or usefulness (the army), but by the search for social legitimacy. Thus association between clothing and cyclical change was strengthened.

The rhythm of the fashion cycle underwent a considerable intensification in the 19th century. At first the role of designers was fundamental; later industry and distribution played a part in supporting or anticipating the development of the end consumer.

A further acceleration in the fashion cycle took place in the late 1970s with the relative democratization of fashion. This was the result of the emergence of ready-to-wear collections, with designers name on the label of the industrial product.⁷⁴ Ready-to-wear designers helped to create a much more complex relationship between the designer and an increasingly demanding market, less willing to accept a standardized industrial product but at the same time unable to buy *couture* dresses.

4.3 Fashion industry segments

According to group of clients we can segment the clothing industry into menswear, womenswear and kidswear; based on product category and end-used we have sportswear, formal wear, jeanswear.⁷⁵

Other industries support the fashion “network system” and are also part of the wider fashion system: these include the textile machinery industry and various parts of the service industry (specialized press, trade fairs, advertising and communication agencies, design studios).

Considering the final phase of fashion network that is the industry and the market for clothing and accessories, the most important segmentation criteria usually combines price levels, degree of creativity/innovation and exclusivity of the brand image.

⁷⁴ Tungate M., (2005) *Fashion brands: Branding Style from Armani to Zara*, Kogan Page

⁷⁵ White N., Griffiths I., (2007) *The Fashion Business, Theory, Practice, Image*, Berg Oxford International Publishers Ltd

Each segment originating from this approach identifies a business model with well defined key success factors: the ready-to-wear/designer segment, the diffusion segment, the bridge segment, the mass-market segment.⁷⁶

Ready-to-wear represents the top end of the market with very high prices (over three to five times the average price) and high quality manufacturing. *Ready to wear* is a niche segment defined by historical couturiers and tailors originating from couture and by the first lines of designers (stylist) who became successful in the 90's and do not originate from couture.

Diffusion is a segment defined by the second lines of designers in its highest part), from industrial brands perceived as designer brand and lines of new designer.

Bridge represents the medium-high level of the market between ready to wear and the mass market.

Mass market represents by far the biggest part of the clothing market world-wide, with a share of the total market value above 80%. Competition takes place among global companies and is very tough; low price and control over distribution are key success factors for competing. In this segment manufacturing phases are almost completely delocalized in low cost countries.

4.3.1 The fashion ready-to-wear

Ready-to-wear, intended as the result of the interplay between industrial processes and designer creativity, born in Italy by the end of the 1960s.⁷⁷ Up to then the clothing industry was used to be the large, vertically integrated clothing industry producing standard products with a reduced variety and fashionability. This model originated from the big American business and was diffused in Europe after the Second World War. At that time fashion and creativity were limited

⁷⁶ White N., Griffiths I., (2007) *The Fashion Business, Theory, Practice, Image*, Berg Oxford International Publishers Ltd

⁷⁷ Tungate M., (2005) *Fashion brands: Branding Style from Armani to Zara*, Kogan Page

to the French craftsman *couture* addressed to very few and very rich consumers.⁷⁸ By the end of the sixty's the sexual revolution and the search for a new identity by young people had a strong impact on clothing consumption. A demand emerged for differentiation and clothes able to express tastes and lifestyles of young people and, above all, of women. The French *couture* felt into a crisis due to the recession (1970s) and so did the traditional clothing industry due to the rising cost of labor on Western markets.⁷⁹ The crisis of the old fashion model coupled with the emergence of new demand needs gave birth to a new business emerged, the ready to wear, as a flexible and differentiated production targeted on the new needs of women demand. Some apparel boutiques started creating their own lines to be produced by small textile firms that became specialized in the manufacturing of clothes ready-to-wear (*prêt-à-porter*).⁸⁰

At this point in time appeared the designer: his role was distinct both from the tailor/couturier of the high *couture* and from the manager responsible for product development in the clothing industry. A new system took place where a designer used to propose his line of products to an industrial firm to which he was committed by a professional contract. The industrial firm, at its turn, used to organize a system of manufacturing firms that were engaged depending upon their manufacturing specialization (from yarns to accessories).⁸¹

The new business started in late 1970s thanks to some designers with the financial support of the industrial textile groups. The industrial model, based on family business, small enterprises, flexibility and industrial districts allowed designer to develop their collections relying on an unique and integrated fashion network going from yarns to fabrics up to clothing.⁸²

During the 1980s the industry underwent extraordinary growth. The main drivers of demand were the general economic prosperity and the attraction of the *nouveau riches* towards brand names. This resulted in several changes in the fashion industry. The first was the springing up of numerous new brands and products. At this time the ready to wear business became crowded with new emerging designers attracted by the business profitability.

⁷⁸ White N., Griffiths I., (2007) *The Fashion Business, Theory, Practice, Image*, Berg Oxford International Publishers Ltd

⁷⁹ Steel V., (1988) *Paris Fashion: A Cultural History*, Oxford University Press

⁸⁰ Barthes R., (1990) *The Fashion System*, University of California Press

⁸¹ Tungate M., (2005) *Fashion brands: Branding Style from Armani to Zara*, Kogan Page

⁸² Breward C., (2003) *Fashion*, Oxford University Press

In addition, well established designer brands started to diversify into “middle market” (the diffusion and bridge segments), often through the use of licensing agreements. Companies started to become increasingly international, often using franchising as a quick route to expansion. Many designers also capitalized on their reputation and improved their profitability by opening their own retail network in direct competition with their wholesale customers. Designers perceived many advantages to retailing their own products direct interaction with consumers that provided rapid feedback about style that sell.⁸³

- Reduction in dependence on store buyers;
- Integrity of the collection presentation;
- Hiring and training of the retail staff.

In the early 1990s the fashion industry suffered a drop in demand as a result of a slowdown in the European, Us and Japanese economies combined with the impact of the gulf war. There were changes also in the dynamics of the consumer. First, consumers rapidly abandoned the model of the 1980s. The display of too many brands became unfashionable.⁸⁴ Second, consumers became value driven searching for a good price/quality ratio in all fashion segments.

As a result the market began to favor well established brands, which had a good value proposition, together with an innovative product system. A period of consolidation ensued, while the companies themselves tried to reposition their brands and improve their supply chain management.

Weaker companies were swallowed up by the largest ones. There was also the growing need for financial resources. As a result several companies went to the public to raise funds while others searched for financial partners. Nowadays the characteristics of the ready-to-wear market are the dominance of large and international companies competing both in the fashion and in the luxury market and the dominance of brand names.

Collecting new brands has become the latest fad for modern ready-to-wear and luxury goods companies as they search for several identities to keep the earnings growth and continue to create

⁸³ White N., Griffiths I., (2007) *The Fashion Business, theory, practice, image*, Berg Oxford International Publishers Ltd.

⁸⁴ Agins T., (2000) *The End of Fashion: How marketing changed the clothing business forever*, Harper Collins Publishers Inc.

value for shareholder. The well known are Gucci Group, LVMH, Prada Group, and IT Holding.⁸⁵ Leading fashion houses also began restructuring their shops with ambitious architecture. The alliances between designers and architects have been on the highest level, such as Prada and the visionary Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas; Issey Miyake and Frank Gehry and Hermes and its multilevel "maison de verre" glass brick building designed by Renzo Piano in Tokyo.⁸⁶ The aim of the new stores is to combine shopping with public space for more cultural events.

4.4 Brand identity in fashion

While in the past the "critical success factors" for fashion companies were the product and manufacturing technologies, today these success factors have shifted to a series of "intangible elements", namely brand and retail management.⁸⁷

The brand is fast becoming the fulcrum of all market strategies. Consumers are increasingly aware of their own personality and behaviors, including purchasing behavior.

Today, companies producing life-style products have the highest potential for successful strategies, particularly in the more advanced societies (affluent and value-driven) and geographic locations. The relationship between customer and product must be built on deeper, more durable foundations than in the past.⁸⁸

Within this context, the brand more than the product (by its very nature subject to ongoing change in fashion) plays a fundamental role because it represents a "tool" capable of stabilizing the relationship between the company - or one of its product lines - and a given segment of consumers who identify with that company.

What are the peculiar aspects of brand management for fashion ready to wear firms?

Fashion houses competing in the ready to wear business have grown rapidly following the designer's vision and supported by the manufacturing skills of licensee companies.⁸⁹ But in a

⁸⁵ www.guccigroup.com, www.lvmh.com, www.prada.com, www.ittierre.it

⁸⁶ http://www.nytimes.com/2001/10/12/news/12iht-retail_ed3_.html

⁸⁷ Tungate M., (2005) *Fashion brands: Branding Style from Armani to Zara*, Kogan Page

⁸⁸ Ibid

⁸⁹ White N., Griffiths I., (2007) *The Fashion Business, Theory, Practice, Image*, Berg Oxford International Publishers Ltd

highly competitive and global context the designer's creative vision is not enough: a new managerial approach is required.

The new management approach from fashion companies is centered on brand management.⁹⁰ Branding is a way of organizing and extracting value from scarce resources that in the fashion business are:⁹¹

- The supply system (obtaining access to the best skills and suppliers worldwide)
- Creativity (designers, architects, advertising agencies, in general creative people and creative teams that are difficult to find and manage)
- Location (it is increasingly difficult to be present in the top location at global level)

Branding presupposes a greater awareness of medium-to-long term strategies, clear market positioning, more consistent product innovation and product range policies.

Therefore, branding acts as a mean to better organize and select the supplier network, the designers and all the creative people working for the brand vision.

As it described in Chapter 3 Brand management starts from the concept of brand identity. Brand identity has been defined as a word or a logo, related to a product, that at the beginning has no sense and then, year after year, it acquires a meaning determined by the products and the communications of the past.⁹² Firms can't manage directly the sense behind their brands but they have to manage it through brand identity as perceived by the market.

Managing successful brands is widely considered as much an art as a science. This certainly applies to fashion brands, as creating a demand for something very expensive which is not really needed is an art, while managing multiple products, markets and channels under one brand is a science. Managing these kinds of brands is even something more than that.

⁹⁰ Soboul-Polchi V., Chaumette X., (2007) *Fashion management* Research papers, Mod'Art Institut International Privé des Arts et de la Mode

⁹¹ Ibid

⁹² Kapferer J. N., (1992) *Strategic Brand Management*, Free Press

Brand management is a balancing act: keeping with traditions, breaking from them, balancing old and new, staid and stylish, nurturing the roots of tradition and know how, at the same time staying fresh, relevant and contemporary.⁹³

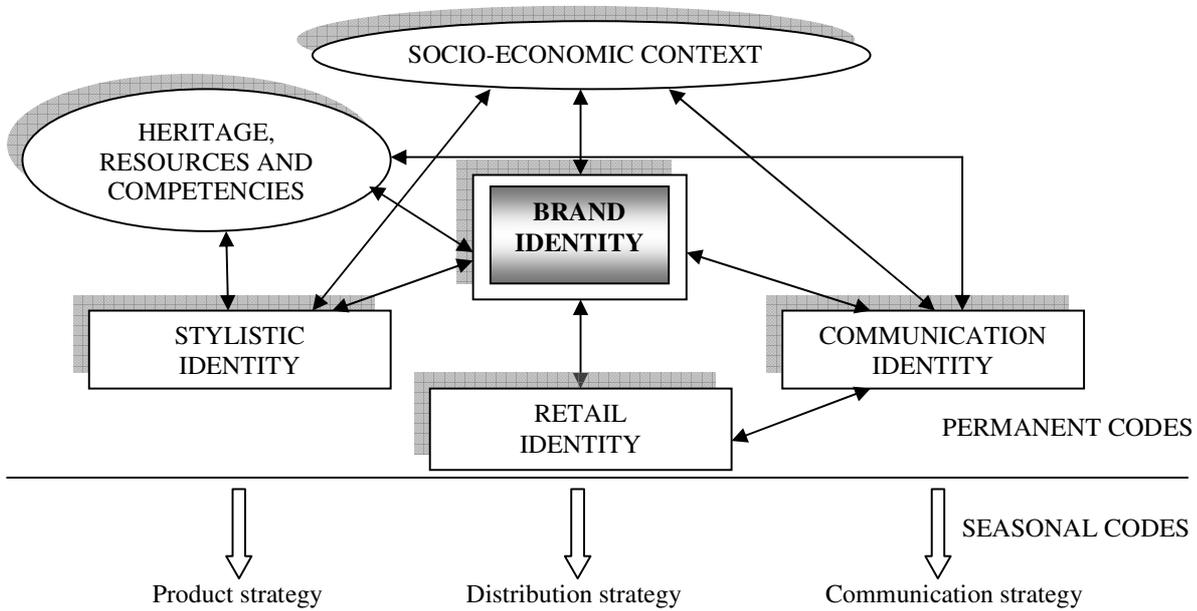
“Keeping the dream alive” is the key success factor. The difference between brands that are successful for decades and all the others lies in their approach to the future. Brands that won’t last are satisfied with the existing product, while great brands are never satisfied with here and now and constantly seek new improvements in order to satisfy a changing and increasingly sophisticated consumer base. These brands are creators of the future with a solid grounding in their past. Based on Aaker’s⁹⁴ Brand Identity Planning Model in order to analyze the complexity of fashion brand positioning, we can identify four main elements in building a fashion brand identity: heritage, style, retail and communication (figure 4.4.).

These four elements define the long-term positioning of the brand in terms of aesthetic and visual codes, and represent the framework and the point of reference for the seasonal strategies in terms of product, store and communication. An effective positioning allows brands to build strong, favorable and unique association in the consumer mind, which leads to a positive brand image. In fashion industry, the stylistic identity is the core of brand positioning as each company first makes an aesthetic statement through the product.

⁹³ Aaker D. A., (1996) *Building Strong Brands*, Free Press

⁹⁴ Ibid

Figure 4.4 THE FASHION BRAND IDENTITY MODEL



To succeed in an ever-changing environment, it is vital to have both internal consistency and external relevance, Internal consistency is important for positioning the brand: stylistic identity, communication identity and retail identity should all refer to the same brand basis so the customers know what to expect from the brand. External relevance means to be able to catch up with market evolution and the socio-economic context and update the brand identity in order to be fresh and contemporary for the customer always.

Some authors distinguish between the concepts of identity and image in brand management. While image is a reception concept, identity is on the sender's side.

Therefore brand image emerges as the overall perception of a brand identity on the marketplace as driven by brand personality and positioning. Brand personality and positioning are a result of

the interplay between different elements, all affecting the values and the symbolic meaning attached to a brand.⁹⁵

We could define the fashion brand identity as a “system of attributes”. For symbol intensive firms particular importance is assumed by three kinds of brand attributes:⁹⁶

- corporate and brand history and core competencies
- product and stylistic identity
- visual identity

History is one of the most valuable asset belonging to a brand: Guerlain’s (1829), Cartier’s (1847), Levi’s (1853) have a fundamental role in defining the brand authenticity and standing. History also discloses the original competencies on which the brand grew and built up a credible positioning. A brand obtains its legitimization and potential for growth from the competencies that the market recognizes to the firm. History and competencies are the starting point, and often also the bond to the building of a credible brand identity.

Recently some authors proposed the concept of corporate story to identify the comprehensive narrative about the whole organization, its origins, its vision and mission.⁹⁷ In this sense stories represents a powerful tool for differentiating an organization and prevent imitation from competitors.

Stylistic identity defines the long term stylistic codes belonging to a brand (forms, colors, materials, product categories). In industries based on fashion and style the stylistic identity is the point of the product and brand system. In these industries firms are born over an original product and a distinctive concept and leveraging on this they build a strong brand identity and a wider product offer that is always bound to the product and its aesthetic. A brand identity is written into the corporate story and it is made of daily practice, techniques, designing and constant innovation.

⁹⁵ White N., Griffiths I., (2007) *The Fashion Business, theory, practice, image*, Berg Oxford International Publishers Ltd.

⁹⁶ Soboul-Polchi V., Chaumette X., (2007) *Fashion management Research papers*, Mod’ Art Institut International Privé des Arts et de la Mode

⁹⁷ Ibid

The visual identity is defined by long term codes that characterize brand communication.⁹⁸ Message, tone, atmospheres, the media strategy, point of sale, merchandising, if employed according to recurring and recognizable scheme they are able to make the corporate image distinguishing.

A strong consistency among stylistic identity and visual identity must exist in order to build a strong brand.

The difference between the brands maintaining their leadership and the brands lasting for few seasons is the capability to make the identity evolve together with the market evolution. The key issue for fashion brands is always the issue of relevance for a new generation.⁹⁹

And it is not always true that going back to the roots - understanding the essence of the brand - will help revive them. Gucci and Dior were something entirely different 20 years ago. When Christian Dior started, their clothes were revolutionary. Then, 20 years later, Dior had become the most classical, conservative company losing touch with the brand's original spirit. Therefore new designers were brought in, trying to connect again to the emotional values (revolution) that were attached to the brand when it started.¹⁰⁰

Returning to the past isn't always the answer. Any successful brand has to reconnect with an image that's relevant to the identity of consumers at that moment in time. To maintain leadership, brands have to transfer it across generations, and in fashion clothing and accessories it's particularly hard to make this transfer, just because clothing is a symbol intensive product category.

4.5 Stylistic identity and the product development process

The offer system in the fashion industry and particularly within the clothing industry is very complex, partly due to the technical features of the products (fabric, models, finishing and accessories), partly to destination of use (functions, end-uses and occasions of use) and partly to

⁹⁸ Soboul-Polchi V., Chaumette X., (2007) *Fashion management* Research papers, Mod'Art Institut International Privé des Arts et de la Mode

⁹⁹ Ibid

¹⁰⁰ Ibid

style of dress (classic, modern, avant-garde).¹⁰¹ Complexity is also the result of the degree of innovation of the distribution service in the whole offer system. Therefore, rationalizing the process of collection development is must.

We should, however, be aware of the need to safeguard creativity and inspiration. These are two essential elements; without them fashion would not even exist.

Therefore the process of the product and brand development in fashion companies is the result of the integration of two sub-processes. The first is aimed to defining the seasonal offering in terms of aesthetic and stylistic elements, and is driven by the creative people, mainly designers. The second is focused on defining economic and competitive targets¹⁰² of the products and is driven by managers from different departments (sales, merchandising and marketing).

Designers should identified and interpret the latest aesthetic-technical trends (shapes, colors and materials) in order to renew the company's offering from season to season, without distorting the brand's permanent stylistic identity. Interpreting long-term socio-cultural trends, and analyzing the market (consumer and trade) and the previous season's sales, however, are all activities that have to be carried out by commercial or product management. The objective here is to define the entire brand offering in terms of variety and variability.

The fashion brand cannot be completely dependent upon the commercial vision because in fashion industries the consumer wants to be surprised by the brand's new proposals. On the other hand, "unbridled" creativity without any marketing constrains is hardly sustainable of profitable in markets where respect of price points and timely deliveries represent key success factors in order to compete. Managing the product development process in fashion means being able to create a system that is consistent at different levels: short-term vs. long-term and aesthetic vs. commercial variables.¹⁰³

¹⁰¹ White N., Griffiths I., (2007) *The Fashion Business, theory, practice, image*, Berg Oxford International Publishers Ltd.

¹⁰² Soboul-Polchi V., Chaumette X., (2007) *Fashion management* Research papers, Mod'Art Institut International Privé des Arts et de la Mode

¹⁰³ Bilton C., (2007) *Management and creativity: from creative industries to creative management*, Blackwell publishing e book, www.books.google.com

4.6 The concept of stylistic identity

Fashion brands propose new collections every season according to what these trends will be. However, at the same time, they also preserve their own individual stylistic codes in order to maintain their brand identity and positioning.

Without their own stylistic identity, all brands would be the same every season and as a result there would be no such thing as competition. Although fashion companies exist to offer their seasonal collection styles, these seasonal styles must be consistent with the company's overall identity. Because in fashion the very essence of each brand is rooted, for the most part, in a distinct brand style, it is absolutely crucial that the brand still exemplifies its permanent stylistic codes in its seasonal collections. Stylistic identity should not be a standard or "cage", but on the contrary direction along which to make the brand's style evolve.

Stylistic identity is made up of some aesthetic elements including the brand logo, colors, fabrics, patterns, details, linens and the shape of piece.

For a fashion brand it is critical to achieve a balance between the new seasonal trends and the brand's permanent stylistic codes.

4.7 Image identity and the communication process

If the product incorporates the tangible dimension of fashion goods, it is communication that provides sustenance for symbolic contents. In fact, how product is represented is what transforms it into a brand in the mind of consumers, what imposes lifestyle, a world of values on product attributes. In fashion, communication makes the brand as object of desire in the eyes of general public.¹⁰⁴

Visibility, consequently, becomes an essential ingredient in the success of the major brands. Visibility is the result of the huge investments in communication. The language of fashion, based on the aesthetic of "images without text", with the product as "protagonist", represents a means of communication that is:¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Barnard M., (2001) *Fashion as Communication*, Routledge

¹⁰⁵ Soboul-Polchi V., Chaumette X., (2007) *Fashion management* Research papers, Mod'Art Institut International Privé des Arts et de la Mode

- High impact, because it builds brands by using models and celebrities;
- Consistent, because centralized decision-making process between image and style;
- Universal, because the form of expression is the image, which can be understood with no need for translation.

Fashion has always used visual tools for communicating – photographs, shows, showrooms, exhibitions, models, videos and sample collection. This is because symbolic features are more easily delivered through communication based on images and aesthetic representation. Fashion is, in and of itself, a form of communication. The predominance of image and focus on the product often translate into the so-called “logo picture”¹⁰⁶ – in other words essentially similar images of different brands, which is also due to crowding on the same media channels.

To communicate in a different way, fashion companies have to match the world of communication with the world of the brand, representing a lifestyle which must be consistent in every single element.

Strict internal supervision of the communication process, the predominance of image over words, the importance of Public Relations for speaking to a competent audience; these are the key differentials for communication in the high-end brands of luxury and fashion with respect to mass markets goods (figure 4.7).¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Agins T., (2000) *The End of Fashion: How marketing changed the clothing business forever*, Harper Collins Publishers Inc.

¹⁰⁷ Adopted form : Soboul-Polchi V., Chaumette X., (2007) *Fashion management* Research papers, Mod’Art Institut International Privé des Arts et de la Mode

Figure 4.7 COMMUNICATING FASHION/LUXURY VERSUS CONSUMER GOODS

	HIGH-END BRANDS	MASS BRANDS
OBJECTIVE	Brand image	Brand Awareness
MAJOR TARGET	Trade and Opinion Leaders	Final consumer
PLANNING	Seasonal	Yearly
FOCUS	Product Intangibles Visual	Story Attributes + Benefits Copy
TOOL	PR	Promotions
ADVERTISING MEDIA	Printed magazines	Traditional & Interactive Media
EVENTS	Catwalk	Sponsorships
STORE	Prestigious location The “temple” of the brand	High traffic location Open Door and Accessibility
BUDGETS	High as a Relative Percentage on Sales	High as Share of Voice
INTERNAL PLAYERS	Designer; Art Director; Press Office	Marketing of Brand Manager
EXTERNAL PLAYERS	Free-lancers	Advertising Agencies. Media and Research Centers
MEASUREMENTS	Press Return	GPR and Sales

Mass market fashion brands tend to mimic language of high fashion in attempt to create a motivational effect. But they give priority to an array of high diffusion media (billboards, TV, Internet, unconventional tools) to reach younger, wider audience.

However, communication must be considered an integrated process with clear objectives.

4.8 Communicating the fashion brand

Integrated communication refers to a strategic design that provides for the synergic and scientific use of all the means available to achieve a particular objective¹⁰⁸. Integrated communication is above all necessary for a fashion brand that has to communicate the intangible values of a lifestyle.

If all the messages coming out of the firm (external communication) and all those circulating within it (internal communication) are consistent, the perception will be reinforced. For this

¹⁰⁸ Barnard M., (2001) *Fashion as Communication*, Routledge

reason, all the communication specialists (public relations, press offices, image and communication agencies) have to share the same vision: that of the firm. Vision includes internal communication as much as external communication. According to Soboul-Polchi et al.¹⁰⁹ fashion companies have three different objectives in their communication:

1. Brand awareness.

The brand should be known and well-recognized among competitors.

2. Brand image.

Image is more than simple awareness: it is about building relevance. It is not enough to be known; consumers have to associate the brand to specific values. Fashion companies do not speak to everyone. In fact, their target group is limited to those customers who can actually participate in the lifestyle they propose, or to the wider but nevertheless select a group of consumers.

3. Reputation.

Reputation is very important asset and an increasingly critical aspect of company's communication. Reputation has to do with the attempt to align key audiences (local authorities, shareholders etc.) with the strategy of the company. Nowadays internal communication, investor relations, issue management and social responsibility are as important as advertising and event creation.

Therefore, messages and tools should be designed and planned with the focus to specific objective, with increasing complexity for people who handle communication and coordination of different activities, different media and different countries.

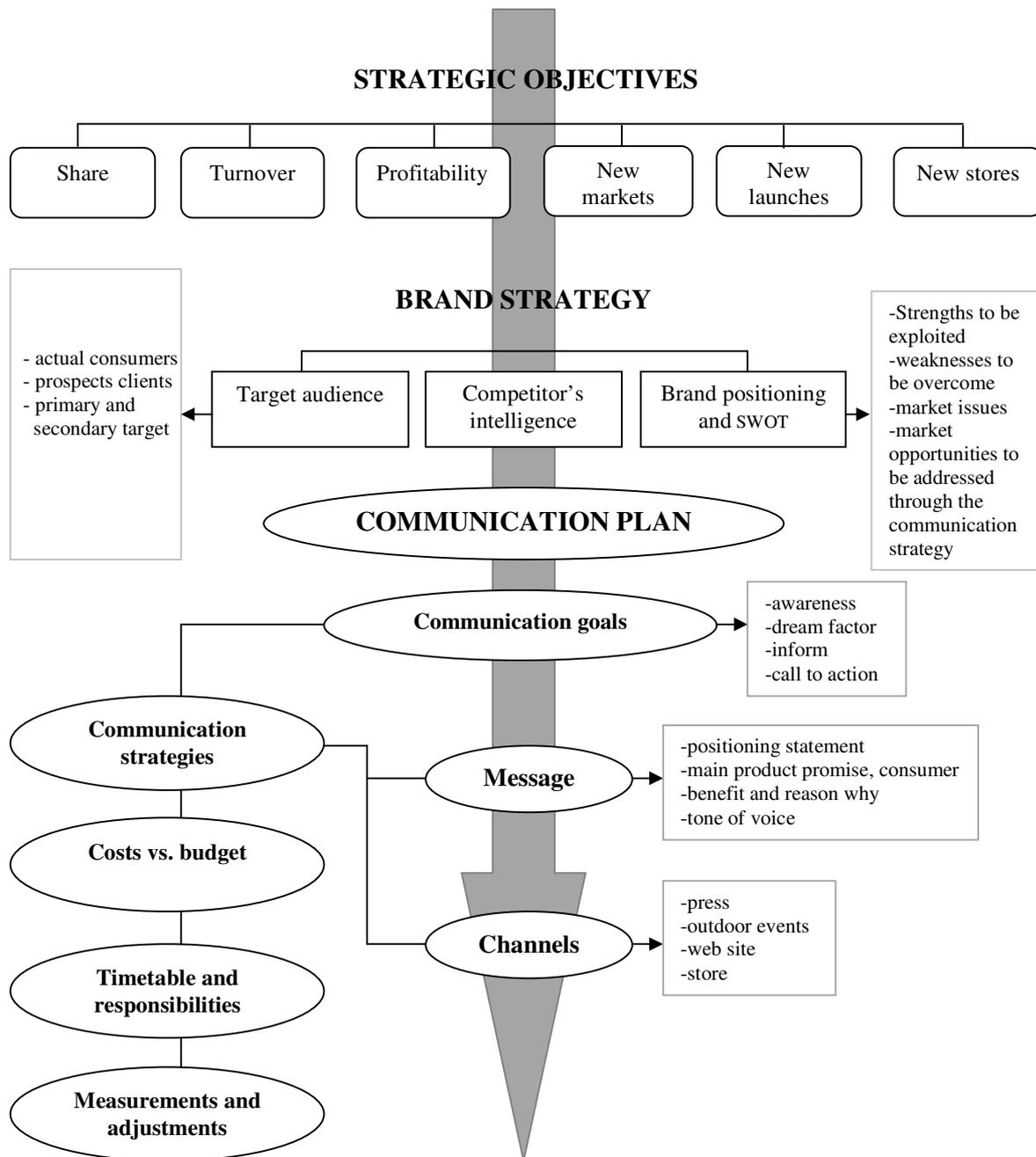
4.9 Communication planning

The starting point of any communication strategy is the communication plan which defines target audience, key messages, media planning, budget, calendar and responsibilities in accordance with

¹⁰⁹ Soboul-Polchi V., Chaumette X., (2007) *Fashion management* Research papers, Mod'Art Institut International Privé des Arts et de la Mode

more general company strategy for the year. Figure 4.9¹¹⁰ sums up the planning process from the definition of strategic objectives down to the implementation of communication plan.

Figure 4.9 COMMUNICATION PLANNING



¹¹⁰ Soboul-Polchi V., Chaumette X., (2007) *Fashion management* Research papers, Mod'Art Institut International Privé des Arts et de la Mode

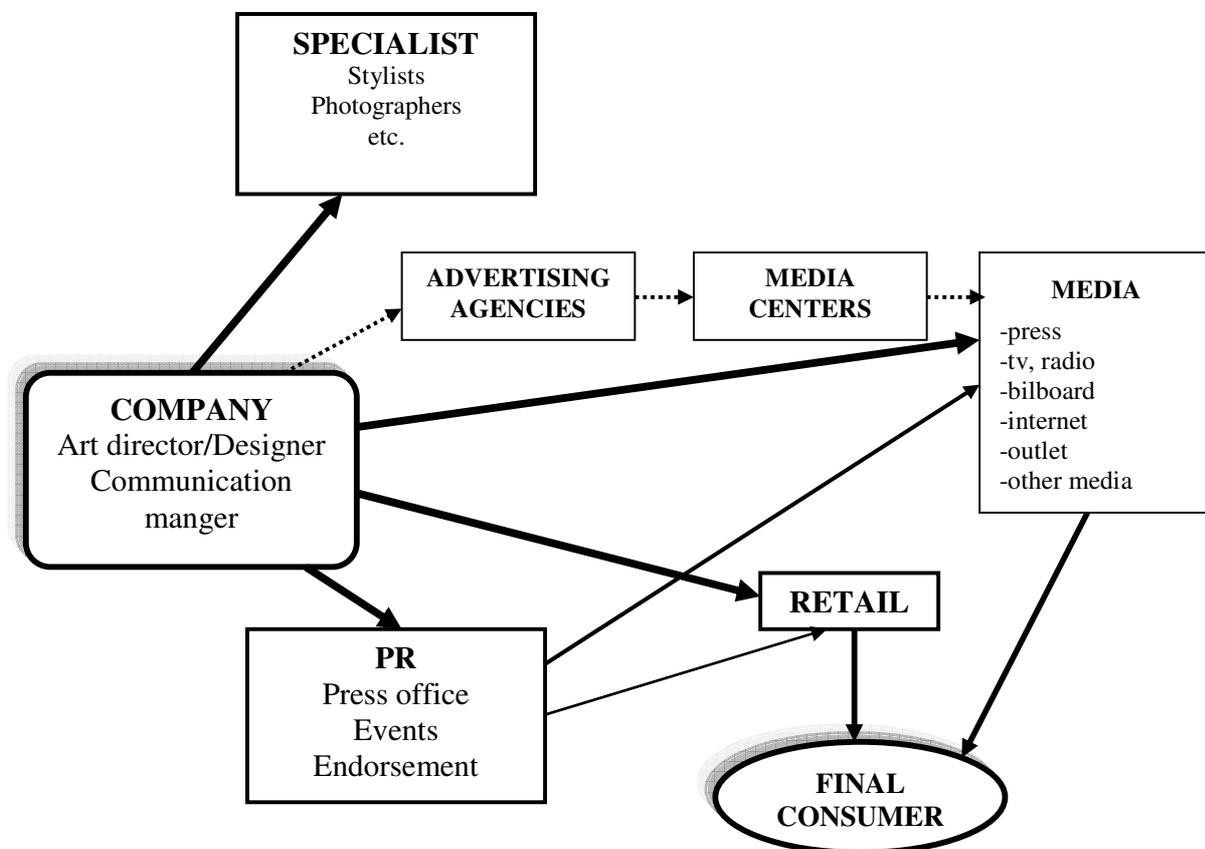
4.9.1 The fashion communication system

One peculiarity of fashion companies is their direct control over a number of activities, from developing the concept of the campaign to post-production, from planning media to the press office and organizing events. This is not the case with mass market companies, where such activities are usually delegated to external specialists. Through direct control and delegation of activities within the company's experts (designers, art directors) fashion companies could ensure total consistency of all the messages they convey, and guarantee that attention to detail that makes the difference.

A required role is that of the designer who takes the role of art director in charge of every aspects of image, from the campaigns, events, to stores design.

Figure 4.9.1 presents the fashion communication system and the strongest relationships among various players within the system.

Figure 4.9.1 THE FASHION COMMUNICATION SYSTEM



4.10 The role of Public Relation within communication system

Most common tool used to achieve the different communication objectives is advertising. It serves to create visibility by different promotions. However, qualification depends first and foremost on Public Relations (PR) activities.

PR refers to the series of activities undertaken to create strong relationships with stakeholders (clients, media, local community, employees, sponsors, opinion leaders) to make company known and built its reputation, diffusing a positive image and influencing the public opinion.

Managing PR means tracking all the public actions of a brand, shows, special events (usually society gatherings, or those related to fund-raising or art, music sponsorships), the presentation of the sample collection, the launch of the new of a new line, celebrity dressing (providing garments to people in the world of show business, art and culture), managing relationships with key clients. The objective is to promote the brand image to final consumers, even if the initiatives themselves generally target those who work in the fashion industry and opinion leaders. Opinion leaders talk about the events, and they get talked about, and this should bring the event to public notice.

4.11 A new communication scenario

Fashion is contending with need to evolve its language while preventing this means of expression from becoming trivial.

The so-called “photo logo” is no longer enough; investing in advertising is increasingly expensive and not always useful. Advertising is a sign of power of a brand which reinforces awareness, but that does not qualify the brand any way; this qualification, instead, is built via word of mouth.

The press, which has played such a crucial role in the rinse of fashion, is struggling to find a new language that goes beyond the trade-off between advertising and editorials.

New scenarios are emerging on the horizon: the point of sale is no longer a channel but product/brand in and of self; management today has sharper focus on emotional and personalized involvement of the consumer. This explains the need for strong integration between communication actions and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) analysis.

Fashion shows and fashion events are certainly the major press coverage event in fashion. The ten minute that typical fashion show lasts is when company/designer gets the chance to have their entire public (press, buyers and opinion leaders) fully focused on his vision of the fashion. The event is more and more a mere communication tool needed to make a statement in terms of creativity and to renew the reason to buy carry over products.

Competitive environment that is growing more crowded, with hundreds of brands in struggle for market place positioning, impose fashion events as unavoidable communication tool.

The other new communication scenario is the branched Internet advertising. The impact of the Web has only just begun. Fashion companies are in the midst of a major shift in the media landscape from traditional fashion publishing to user-generated content.

However, the proposed new Web scenario is not the subject of this research and it is mentioned as the result and possible objective of the fashion brand building and development, to which I came through research and analysis connected with this thesis.

5. FASHION EVENT MANAGEMENT

The Event Management can be found under its own name, but more often under Entertainment Industry, Art Management/Production or under Creative Industries. In this Chapter efforts are made to define the Fashion Event Management.

5.1 What are events?

Many authors have discussed the definition of events and the various terms used to describe, however, there is an agreement on standardized terms or categories to use. A useful starting point when looking at definitions and terminology is The Chambers Dictionary¹¹¹ which defines event as,

“anything which happens; result; any incidence or occurrence esp. a memorable one; contingency or possibility of occurrence; an item in programme; an organized activity at a particular venue, eg for sales promotion, fundraising.”

5.2 Event management

The word event¹¹² is derived from the Latin word *eventus* which means outcome, result, success and was originally used to describe big happenings out of the ordinary. Today, the concept of events includes a large variety of social gatherings, meetings, festivals, sports, shows, and performances. It has become a fashion to use the word ‘*event*’ for everything that is happening.

Management¹¹³ has its roots in the Latin word *manidiare*, which is derived from the Latin word *manus* (hand, fist, team). The word *management* is used to describe the activity of organizing a group of people to achieve a desired outcome. Combining the words *event* and *management* the growing profession of event management emerges.

¹¹¹ Bowdin G. A. J., Allen J., O’Toole W., (2006) *Event Management*, on line book. www.books.google.com

¹¹² *Event* (2010) In my etymology online dictionary. www.myetymology.com

¹¹³ *Management* (2010) In my etymology online dictionary. www.myetymology.com

Event management is the process by which an event is planned, prepared, and produced. As with any other form of management, it encompasses the assessment, definition, acquisition, allocation, direction, control, and analysis of time, finances, personnel, products, services, and other resources to achieve objectives.

Job of an event manager is to oversee and arrange every aspect of an event, including researching, planning, organizing, implementing, controlling, and evaluating an event's design, activities, and production.¹¹⁴

5.2.1 The History and Background of the Event Management

*“Festival and Event practitioners belong to a new and rapidly growing career field. As with other emerging quasi-professions, the managers, marketers and co-ordinators occupying full-time positions have organized professional associations and are seeking certification. Those wishing to enter the field look to the associations, and increasingly to formal educational institutions, to provide appropriate certificates which will hopefully ensure access to the better jobs. As well, numerous volunteers are seeking recognition for their efforts and skills. Consequently, the situation is somewhat unclear and constantly evolving”.*¹¹⁵

Event management is, compared to other fields of social sciences, a relatively new field. Academic research into the field of event management has not started until about 15 years ago. Regardless of the description of event management to be used, it is obvious that planned events have significantly changed in volume, size, scope, and quality.

Getz & Wicks¹¹⁶ concluded their research by saying that “there are clear technical skills for event management, but less convincingly can there be said to exist theories of event management”.

During the mid 1990s were identified ten knowledge areas and attributes¹¹⁷ required to be successful in the event industry: project management, budgeting, time management, relating to

¹¹⁴ Rutherford S. J., Goldblatt J. J., (2003) *Professional Event Coordination*, John Wiley & Sons Inc.

¹¹⁵ Getz, D., & Wicks, B. (1994). Professionalism and Certification for Festival and Event Practitioners: Trends and Issues. *Festival Management & Event Tourism*

¹¹⁶ Ibid

¹¹⁷ Loos, P., Hermes, B., & Thomas, O., (2008) Reference Model-Based Event Management. *International Journal of Event Management Research*

media, business planning, human resource management, marketing, contingency management, obtaining sponsorship and networking. Those skills were categorized in the five domains legal/finance, management, public relations/marketing, economic/analytical and ethical/contextual, to create a knowledge base for future event managers. These skills seem to be a contentious issue, as vision, leadership, adaptability and high organizational skills were named by the same managers as the essential attributes to be successful in the field.

Subsequent to the research above, the following knowledge should also be transferred in event management:

- History and meanings of festivals, exhibitions, celebrations, and other events
- Historical evolution, types of events
- Trends in demand and supply
- Motivations and benefits sought from events
- Roles and impacts of events in society, the economy, environment and culture
- Who is producing events and why?
- Program concepts and styles
- Event settings
- Operations unique to events
- Management unique to events
- Marketing unique to events

Comparing today's outlines for event managers, a common base of knowledge included in the subjects of event management cannot be determined. It becomes remarkable truth that obviously no generally accepted common base has evolved out of the suggestions of the various researches that has been conducted over the last 15 years.

Despite the variety of literature about event management, the core elements of event management in the past often only entail organizational and controlling measures as part of the event execution. Loos et al.¹¹⁸ objects this assessment and highlights that the definition would exclude the integrative tasks of management with decision making options. He describes event

¹¹⁸ Loos, P., Hermes, B., & Thomas, O., (2008) Reference Model-Based Event Management. *International Journal of Event Management Research*

management as “the coordination of all the tasks and activities necessary for the execution of an event regarding its strategy, planning, implementation, and control, based on the principles of event marketing and the methods of project management.”

Still, special events have evolved to the point where their number, scale and variety, combined with their associated economic, social and cultural impacts, demand attention from researchers.

5.3 Types of the events

There are many different ways of categorizing or grouping events, including by size, form and content, however events are often characterized according to their size and scale. Common categories are major events, mega-events, hallmark events and local/community events.¹¹⁹

Within these categories events can be divided into four types:¹²⁰

- Personal events (weddings, birthdays, anniversaries);
- Leisure events (leisure, sport, recreation);
- Cultural events (art, ceremonial, sacred, heritage, folklore);
- Organizational events (commercial, political, sales).

Considering this classification, it should be based in mind that there are frequent overlaps between the types of events.

To handle the confusion we could categorize events into three main groups¹²¹ which are:

- Business events
- Sporting events
- Cultural events

¹¹⁹ Bowdin G. A. J., Allen J., O’Toole W., (2006) Event Management, on line book. www.books.google.com

¹²⁰ Shone A., Parry B., (2004) *Successful Event Management*, Thompson

¹²¹ Van der Wagen L., (2007) *Human resource management for Events, Managing the event workforce*, Elsevier Ltd.

These groupings seem to be appropriate as they encompass all sorts of events and allow to give a more specific, categorized overview of events.

5.4 Fashion event management as a part of Cultural events

According to the given classification, one would rank fashion events among cultural events regardless of the fact that their ultimate aim is to present and to sell new collections to current and potential buyers, to secure a certain position on the market and to build the image and the brand for profit's sake.

As a social and cultural phenomenon, fashion is starting to be one among integral subsystems that are part of contemporary theories of culture. The laying-down of such theories represents an important step forward as regards classical study of costumes and fashion.

By means of fashion, one can „communicate“ with a wide audience, apart from building up and depicting a specific cultural identity.¹²²

Looking at fashion events and at the importance of the notion of wear in modern society from the point of view of cultural management, in fact these events can just be used as a communication tool that proved to be right with wide audience, as one segment within the context of building the cultural identity of a society/state/city, by using the existing practice of creative industries and the “industrialization” of culture.

The link between cultural activities and industrial sector is what many authors call creative economy where new ideas, artistic creation and their creative implementation are essential for establishing overall development performances.¹²³ This modern approach of the creative industries and the relevance of fashion as a cultural phenomenon allow fashion events to fall under cultural events.

¹²² „Identity is either a goal or a result of a psychological and social process that a subject is using to identify himself with other things or with an ideal subject, with precise aspects of another real or ideal subject, with a real or ideal social group, that is with certain criteria and presentations of criteria recognised individually or socially.“ Šuvaković, M., (2005) *Pojmovnik suvremene umjetnosti*, Ghent, Horetzky/Vlees and Beton

¹²³ Mikić H., (2008) *Kreativne industrije, dizajn i konkurentnost: proaktivan pristup*, Centar za evropske integracije Srbija CEI

As per already mentioned reasons, this research of fashion events management is also an attempt to surpass by means of interdisciplinary approach all the shortcomings and unfair disregard for specific segments that are the essence of cultural management.

5.5 Phases of Fashion event management process

According to Goldblat¹²⁴ all successful events have five critical stages in common to ensure their consistent effectiveness. These five phases are:

- Research
- Design
- Planning
- Coordination
- Evaluating

Reviewing and explaining these phases from the perspective of Fashion Event Management leads to the clearly defined theoretical systematization of stages which are a necessity to the successful organization of fashion events.

- Research

Most special events start with an idea. Research is the first step to make this idea come true, as it is the search for knowledge about the matter at hand and the starting point for all progress. With a deeper understanding of the past and the current possibilities we can influence and change the future. With a better understanding of the customers and clients needs and wants and the feasibility of these needs and wants, the fashion event manager has a higher chance of achieving the imagined outcome for the event. Research will reduce the risk of not achieving the goals of a fashion event.

The value of research into expectations, needs and desires has been highlighted by various sources, such as PR professionals and marketing experts. After a first broad research into

¹²⁴ Goldblatt J., (2002) *Special Events: twenty-first century global event management*, John Wiley and Sons

the idea and its feasibility a project plan is created to give the decision makers a broad idea about the feasibility of an event and a base for supplementary research. It identifies target groups, sets measurable goals (strategic, operative and economic), identifies marketing strategies and sets the structure of the fashion event planning team.

- Design

After researching the facts about a fashion event, design focuses on the creative aspects of an event. Design has to be approached differently than research, as it is not static or predictable. Design is the creative process that makes the event different from other events that have gone before; it gives the event its uniqueness and therefore requires a lot of inspiration and ideas coming from various sources. It is very important for the event manager to support and highlight the importance of ideas coming in from their team. At this stage brainstorming is a very important tool for bringing ideas together to create an outstanding event.

It is important to be clear about the core reason which is in this case fashion brand positioning and development, and make this the centre point around which the discussion revolves. It is also important to create a suitable environment for staff to work creatively, as different individuals often require different approaches to help stimulate ideas. A great deal of experience is required to facilitate successful design meetings with staff members. Once these creative meetings have been held it is important to give structure to the ideas and to compare them with the actual goals and requirements of the event.

An approach to needs assessment in Event management, according to Goldblatt¹²⁵ contains five questions: Why, Who, When, Where and What?

In the fashion event management, Why, as a question, with a sub-questions: What is the compelling reason for the event? and Why must this event be held?¹²⁶ becomes partially not applicable since the answer to it is by itself implied. Fashion events represent for fashion companies one of the essential ways of communication with their products' consumers as well as with the audience in general.

¹²⁵ Goldblatt J., (2002) *Special Events: twenty-first century global event management*, John Wiley and Sons

¹²⁶ Ibid

On the other hand, knowing that nowadays fashion events sublimate many aspects, actors and factors with their conception and content, one may always ask Why? within the context of choosing the space, cooperation, aiming at searching out mutual identity, philosophy, message and ultimate goal together with all other constituent factors of the fashion event. Based on these facts, one may formulate sub-questions to the Why question in the fashion events management, as follows:

- Why? What is the compelling reason for this type of fashion event?
 Why must this fashion event be held with chosen partners?

All other questions formulated by Goldblatt can fully apply as well in the Fashion Event management.

- Who? Who will benefit from this event?
 Who will the audience want to attend?
- When? When will the fashion event be held?
 Is the date and time flexible or subject to change?
- Where? What is the best destination, location and venue?
- What? What elements and resources are required to satisfy the needs identified above?

Next to the needs the feasibility of every item has to be checked with regards to finance, human resources and political influences. Depending on the event at hand this can be quite different to other events before as you might rely on volunteer work, expertise, or special people. How to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the people involved is quite an important task as well. They need to function together efficiently.

- Planning

The planning process is the stage where the quality of the work of the two previous stages becomes tangible and is typically the longest period of time.¹²⁷ In this stage the requirements from the previous stages will be concretized and customized. With good in depth research and an appropriate design the planning can focus on getting the pieces together.

Depending on the input from the previous stages and the requirements for the event the team will be put together. Team building lessons from project management can be integrated when it comes to big fashion events. Especially mega events will divide the event in smaller projects to be realized by teams. After installing the teams focus can be given to the conceptual options for the event. Two main phases involved in this stage are Time and Space.

- Coordination

This stage is the part where the actual fashion event happens. It is the ultimate test of the quality of work done in the previous stages combined with the nature of unpredictability that comes with every event. All the preparations and the planning of the staff will be tested and emphasis will be on short-term problem solving to keep a smooth running of the event.

The coordination stage starts with the dress rehearsal as the last test of the pre event set up and planning. Often the dress rehearsal gives the fashion event manager the opportunity to test his set up and it will identify several challenges that have not been thought of.

There is one main issue the fashion event manager has to consider before the event and stick to it throughout the event: the staffing.

- Evaluation

Evaluation is the task that can be of enormous value for future events. It is a dynamic process that changes with the event and the stakeholders involved. Some fashion events might just require a short debrief while others require an in-depth analysis with a sophisticated outlook of future influencing factors. A good evaluation always starts with

¹²⁷ Goldblatt J., (2002) *Special Events: twenty-first century global event management*, John Wiley and Sons

feedback of the attendees, since a survey is mostly used form of analysis. Another good way of getting an idea of the satisfaction of guests is the usage of an observer, a person who observes an event with regards to a checklist and offers additional comments.

A relatively new, but highly efficient way of evaluating an event is the pre-and post event survey. It shows the discrepancies between the expectations before the event with the actual delivering of the event. It helps to close gaps that might have gone unnoticed otherwise.

5.6 The Five Pillar Approach

After defining the management processes, this section defines the four pillars:¹²⁸ time, finance, technology and human resources, define one new pillar - creativity as an inseparable part of fashion event management and analyses the best practices within each of the pillars. To achieve the goal of a comprehensive summary a large spectrum of literature has been analysed and compared with regards to best practices.

5.6.1 Time

Time is the most pressing issues when organizing events.

The first pillar of fashion event management is “time” with the two categories value of time and critical path. Time is one of the most scare resources of humankind, once invested it is gone. The field of fashion event management is very time consuming and therefore time is a very important consideration. The fashion event manager needs to assess the value of his time and charge it to the event. Knowing about time is important because it helps analysing the actual costs of an fashion event and it gives staff a limit on the time needed for the planning of an fashion event.

¹²⁸ Goldblatt J., (2002) *Special Events: twenty-first century global event management*, John Wiley and Sons

Goldblatt¹²⁹ has identified several best practices for event time management. Next to the importance of knowing the worth of time an event manager needs to limit time wasting activities and get a database of contacts to refer to instantly.

The worth of time allows charging every event with the amount of hours put in and it enables the event manager to limit the time put into time wasting activities.

Critical path is a term taken over from project management. The critical path connects the tasks included in an event and shows how these tasks are related and how long the project will take if all dependent tasks could be undertaken after each other. It then depicts the earliest and latest possible starting time for each task with regards to the dependencies and shows when activities will have to start without influencing the earliest possible finish time.

Finance is the issue that has to be kept in mind. There is a lot reasons why fashion events are happening, but nearly none of them has an unlimited budget to spend without any income.

5.6.2 Finance

The second pillar is “finance” with the aspects overall costs of business, sponsorship and marketing and promotion.

There are several ways to organize an event but in the case of fashion event there has to be a fashion company behind who the event manager works for. In most cases the fashion event manager works for his own company and signs a contract with a client, company or institution to organize an event. In some cases the event manager works for the organization and realizes the events for the company. Research related to the fashion brand identity, positioning and development in this thesis comes to the point that “event manager” should be one of the employees (as art director/designer/PR/marketing manager) in the fashion company.

The following techniques for fashion event management financial success of the company will assist to establish framework for long-term profitability:

¹²⁹Goldblatt J., (2002) *Special Events: twenty-first century global event management*, John Wiley and Sons

- Set realistic short-term and long-term financial goals¹³⁰
- Seek professional counsel
- Identify and use efficient technology
- Systematically review financial health
- Control overhead costs

The above identified techniques are necessary to continuously create great events.

Sponsorship can be a very important for the success of an event. All major fashion events, like Fashion Weeks around the world, have sponsors, companies who support the event in exchange for public exposure. Sponsorship makes an event financially feasible and ensures the quality standards of events. In the research process it requires a lot of time to analyse the needs and requirements of the fashion event and find appropriate sponsors. Therefore it is most common to have sponsors for big events where the work involved justifies the estimated benefits of a sponsor. In the research part the following checklist¹³¹ has to be considered:

- Is the event feasible without a sponsor?
- Is there enough backup for a sponsor?
- Does sponsorship fit to the event?
- Does sponsorship fit to the organization (spirit, legal, ethical)?

If the outcome of the research indicates the necessity of a sponsor the second step would be to identify appropriate sponsors and work with them towards the realization of the event. Applied to the five processes of event management this means:

Research

- Examine the extend of required sponsorship
- Research sponsor activities at other events
- Analyse the local market to find prospectus sponsors
- Contact advertising and PR companies to identify possible interest

¹³⁰ Goldblatt J., (2002) *Special Events: twenty-first century global event management*, John Wiley and Sons

¹³¹ Ibid

Design

- Conduct a focus group to scout attitudes toward the event
- Customize the event to reflect sponsor's needs and objectives

Planning

- Qualify the sponsors through profound research
- Apply sponsor's action plan
- Reconsider sponsor's changes and additions
- Implement the changes and update sponsor

Coordination

- Ensure visibility of sponsor
- Evaluation

After the event it is essential to meet with sponsor to evaluate the success of the event and assess further projects.

The modern age has made the marketing and promotion for an event even harder, as people are exposed to an ever increasing number of publicity through an increasing mix of channels. A study conducted by Gitelson and Kerstetter¹³² emphasizes the potential complexity of promotions for events. Previous experience was the main source of information.

“Promotional channels such as radio, television, newspapers, magazines, posters and banners, were all significant in raising awareness of the event, but not highly rated as the most important source of information. Internet was not highly used despite all the events having a dedicated website and the three ticketed events having online booking available through their ticketing agent. Media sources tended to be supplementary information sources.”¹³³

This conclusion highlights the importance of understanding the information sources used by attendees and the way they make their decisions.

¹³² Gitelson R., Kerstetter, D. A (2000) New Perspective on the Decision-Making Process of Arts Festival Visitors

¹³³ Smith K. A., (2008) The Information Mix For Events: A Comparison Of Multiple Channels Used By Event Organisers And Visitors. *International Journal of Event Management Research*, 4

Ralston et al.¹³⁴ emphasize the importance of word of mouth as the most trusted and most efficient way of marketing any city, company or event. Most industries have the advantage that they can market their products in relation to other products, because people know similar products to compare them with. Fashion events are different. Most of the fashion events are unique because of their creative diversity and therefore it is hard to compare it with previous or other events. The tendency to create bigger or wider (World Fashion Week), varied and better fashion events every time increases the difficulty of comparison.

The information mix for fashion events have been heavily researched and the two main distinctions are free access fashion events and ticketed fashion events. For free events the distribution of information is highly important. Ticketed events require far more work than only providing information, they also have to deal with reservations, guests lists (if tickets are in the form of invitations) or payment issues (if fashion event has a charity nature) . These factors “influence the structure, operation, and effectiveness of event distribution channels.”¹³⁵

Goldblatt¹³⁶ has created a checklist for promotions to ensure a high quality event:

Research

- Identify all event elements that require promotion from the proposal through the final evaluation

Design

- Develop strategies for allocating scarce event promotion resources with efficient methods

Planning

- Identify promotion partners to share costs
- Carefully target your promotion to those market segments that will support the event

¹³⁴ Ralston L. S., Ellis G. D., Compton D. M., Lee J., (2007) Staging Memorable Events And Festivals: An Integrated Model Of Service and Experience Factors, *International Journal of Event Management Research*, 3

¹³⁵ Smith K. A., (2008) The Information Mix For Evens: A Comparison Of Multiple Channels Used By Event Organisers And Visitors. *International Journal of Event Management Research*, 4

¹³⁶ Goldblatt J., (2002) *Special Events: twenty-first century global event management*, John Wiley and Sons

Evaluation (throughout the event)

- Measure and analyze your promotion efforts throughout the campaign to make corrections as required

5.6.3 Technology

Modern technologies allow us to communicate with people around the world, get information and do the research necessary to evaluate the chances of an event, and this is one of the most important issues when creating a fashion event.

Entertainment is a part of every event. People come to events to divert themselves from their daily life and expect amusement and attractions to get out of their routine and experience something new. Entertainment is the most common purpose of events. Entertainment becomes a priority during design process, as the fashion event team has to determine how they want to achieve the goal of the client and what kind of entertainment they will provide.

The process of planning the entertainment is relatively outspoken once the design has been finished.

First, and most importantly, technology can be used within the company which organize fashion event to accelerate processes and efficiently enter data such as financial spreadsheets, customer information and latest requests.

There are several recipients of communication and an effective and efficient communication strategy is essential for the success of a fashion event.

During the research process the target audience has to be distinguished and the needs of that market segment have to be analyzed; in particular, the most common information channel used by the target audience must be determined. Uncertainty obstructs people from going to the fashion event and the basic event information needs to be available. A properly managed communication strategy is important for building customer loyalty and ensuring continuing success.

One way of managing and developing relationships with potential visitors is through membership databases. For smaller companies, friend groups or information from ticket agents, are vital sources means of disseminating information.

Currently each event company uses a different methodology and formula to describe the outcome of the event and therefore it is difficult to benchmark their event operations and outcomes against each other's.¹³⁷

The location of the fashion event is the single most important consideration at the beginning of the preparations of an event. During the research process possible locations are identified and discussed. It is not until the design process that the event manager knows most of the details and can conduct a site inspection with the event in mind.

5.6.4 Creativity

Creativity has always been an important business skill, but in the turbulent fashion market it is essential. Creativity is a core competency for leaders and managers and one of the best ways to set Fashion Company apart from the competition. Fourth pillar "Creativity" has the most important role when creating a fashion event.

In Fashion Event Management we can define creativity as the act of turning new and imaginative ideas into event reality. The basic condition for a creative act is to combine known elements into new combinations or perspectives that have never before been considered.¹³⁸ Creativity should be stimulated for two very important reasons: to prevent obsolescence and to increase productivity.

Perkins¹³⁹ writes of the utility of deliberately searching for many alternatives so that many combinations and perspectives can be considered. He stresses that superior creative effort involves deliberately searching for many alternatives. Creativity is much more likely to emerge when a person considers many options and invests the time and effort to keep searching rather than settling for mediocre solutions.

So, the mission of every fashion manager should be to search continually for ideas and programs that are superior to the ones the organization is currently committed to. In a word, it's called progress.

¹³⁷ Goldblatt J., (2002) *Special Events: twenty-first century global event management*, John Wiley and Sons

¹³⁸ Perkins, D. N., (1981) *The Mind's Best Work*, Harvard University Press

¹³⁹ Ibid

The planning stage requires what Goldblatt¹⁴⁰ calls a “sensory audit and plan” to powerfully satiate the needs of the visitors. It is crucial for the fashion event manager to be creatively and emotionally involved in the planning of the event.

5.6.5 Human resources

The fifth pillar of fashion event management is “human resources” and the sub-categories of human resources are management, staff, volunteers and customer relationship management.

The functions of human resource management – recruitment, selection, induction, training, and performance management – are important parts of every event organizer’s job.¹⁴¹

In the case of large event, the size of the event clearly warrants a specialist human resources team. For smaller events, these functions are undertaken by the organizer or area managers. In this environment, there is typically a diverse range of employment arrangements and very frequently there are volunteers involved.

Essentially, the main differences between the management of an event and the management of an ongoing business enterprise is that the event is generally intangible and untested, and there is only one chance to get it right.¹⁴²

The significant issue for fashion event strategic planners is the temporary nature of most event-related employment. Maximizing performance and achieving optimal levels of service is only possible through effective strategic human resource planning, which is undertaken by managers throughout the event organization and/or HR specialists considering mega fashion events. One of the most challenging tasks for the fashion event or human resources within event is managing the people designing and staging the event. It is thus vitally important that each person in a management or supervisory role understands the human resource function and their contribution to managing the people in their temporary workforce.

Many fashion events involve volunteers. The number of volunteers varies depending on the type and scale of the fashion event. For many of them, the volunteers are specialists in their areas but commercial fashion events seldom require volunteers.

¹⁴⁰ Goldblatt J., (2002) *Special Events: twenty-first century global event management*, John Wiley and Sons

¹⁴¹ Van der Wagen L., (2007) *Human resource management for Events, Managing the event workforce*, Elsevier Ltd.

¹⁴² Ibid

6. FASHION EVENT MARKETING

Promotion is vital in creating awareness of the event, a desire to participate, and a feeling by the potential participant. Effective marketing takes internal objectives and turn them into external result.¹⁴³

The marketing process must begin at the outset of the planning process, during the settings of the goals and objectives of the event itself. Marketing must both reflect and drive those objectives. It must also integrate the objectives into one goal and enlist people into action toward the fulfillment of the goal.¹⁴⁴

As it presented in chapter 5.5 *Phases of Fashion Event Management process*, Goldblatt¹⁴⁵ states that the five questions: Why, Who, When, Where and What, help determine if the event is feasible, viable, and sustainable. In fashion event marketing, we can use the same questions to determine the feasibility, viability, and sustainability of the marketing plan. These five questions of marketing are critical to developing all promotional strategies:

- Why? Why should someone take the time and spend the money to come to your event?¹⁴⁶ Instead of the inert call to attend fashion event with a simple “You’re Invited”, is primarily to tell target group why is important to attend certain fashion event.
- Who? To whom are we marketing the fashion event? Target audience may vary, depending on the nature of the product/brand being promoted and analysis of the audience to be attracted is essential to target marketing.
- When? The fashion event management team should make the marketing function an integral part of the planning process in order to maximize the value of timing of an event.

¹⁴³ Hoyle H. L., (2002) *Event marketing: how to successfully promote events, festivals, conventions and Expositions*, John Wiley and Sons

¹⁴⁴ Ibid

¹⁴⁵ Goldblatt, J., (2002) *Special Events: twenty-first century global event management*, John Wiley and Sons

¹⁴⁶ Hoyle H. L., (2002) *Event marketing: how to successfully promote events, festivals, conventions and Expositions*, John Wiley and Sons

Strategies in planning the timing of an event are integral to the challenges faced in the marketing process.¹⁴⁷

- Where? A key asset in promoting a fashion event can be location.
- What? In planning promotion of fashion event, it must be considered the purpose of the event. First of all, it is certainly promotion of new seasonal products to the market, but this purpose could not stand alone in strong competition environment and among demanding consumers.

Regardless of the fashion event, success will depend on the recognition by the event marketer that the five Ps of marketing will play essential role: Product, Price, Place, Public Relations and Positioning.¹⁴⁸

Also, fashion event managers may use an event or a series of events as one of the marketing methods to promote brand, products or to improve positioning of the brand. Using events to market product and brands is increasing. According to Goldbatt¹⁴⁹ events are now critical in the total marketing effort.

When looking at it broadly, the primary and most commonly stated objectives with fashion event marketing are to affect the image, to create awareness, to identify the brand/product with the target group and to achieve media coverage.

6.1 Differences between fashion event marketing and traditional marketing

The main difference between fashion event marketing and more traditional forms of marketing like advertising lies in the fact that with traditional marketing the consumer is a passive receiver of messages that are conveyed to them through a push strategy, whereas event marketing adopts a pull strategy which allows the consumer to become actively involved in the development of brand meanings.

¹⁴⁷ Hoyle H. L., (2002) *Event marketing: how to successfully promote events, festivals, conventions and Expositions*, John Wiley and Sons

¹⁴⁸ Goldblatt J., (2002) *Special Events: twenty-first century global event management*, John Wiley and Sons

¹⁴⁹ Ibid

Furthermore, as fashion event marketing is an outgrowth of experiential marketing, it also exhibits the four basic differences that Schmitt¹⁵⁰ identified between experiential marketing and traditional marketing:

- Traditional marketing focuses on functional features and benefits while fashion event marketing on consumer experiences.
- Traditional marketing views consumers as rational decision makers while fashion event marketing acknowledges that consumers are both rational and emotional beings.
- The methods and the tools that are used in traditional marketing are analytical, quantitative and verbal whereas fashion event marketing employs eclectic methods.
- In traditional marketing the product category and the competition are narrowly defined while in fashion event marketing the act of consumption is viewed as a holistic approach.

Fashion event marketing has its roots in experiential marketing, a marketing approach which has become a powerful tool in the hands of marketing practitioners in the last decade.

6.2 Experiential Marketing

*“Experiential marketing is a strategy that seeks to intentionally bring to life and animate the brand promise for consumers through staged experiences they have with the brand before they buy, during the buying process and at all touch points they may have with it thereafter”*¹⁵¹

As a unique approach to the task of marketing goods and services, experiential marketing is a concept that integrates elements of emotions, logic, and general thought processes to connect with the consumer. The goal of experiential marketing is to establish the connection in such a way that the consumer responds to a product offering based on both emotional and rational response levels.¹⁵² Schmitt¹⁵³ attributes the emergence of experiential marketing to three main causes.

¹⁵⁰ Schmitt, B., (1999) Experiential Marketing, *Journal of marketing Management* 15

¹⁵¹ Lenderman, M., (2006) *Experience the message. How experiential marketing is changing the brand world.*, Caroll and Graf Publishers

¹⁵² <http://www.wisegeek.com/what-is-experiential-marketing.htm>

¹⁵³ Schmitt, B., (1999) Experiential Marketing, *Journal of marketing Management* 15

First, the ubiquity of information technology that not only has facilitated the way we operate but it has brought a transformation on the media with which we communicate.

Second, the supremacy of the brand as everything nowadays is branded; products are not longer seen as carriers of characteristics but as a means to offer customer experiences.

And third, the ubiquity of communications and entertainment as everything now acts as a stimulus for communication and entertainment.

Lenderman¹⁵⁴ also adds that the clutter of advertising messages has reduced the effectiveness of mass marketing pushing marketers to try and find new creative ways of reaching consumers who prefer to be connected to brands that employ innovative and outstanding communication methods.

This is why branding is no longer just about providing an identifiable trademark, but it attempts to communicate clearly stated brand values that will create unique brand identities which will enable consumers to experience a subjective contribution to their life.

These experiences are extremely valuable for the customers and can play a momentous role in their future consumption behaviours, and for this reason their unmeasured potential value has to be acknowledged by the brands. The importance of experiential marketing will keep rising as marketing is becoming more and more demanding because of the fragmentation of the media, wise and fastidious customers, and the rise of the “free-thinking” and common sense consumer.¹⁵⁵

Actually we have entered an era that will be defined by an “experience economy” as companies will have to compete on staging and providing experiences to consumers, thus making the consumption experience the main element of brand differentiation.¹⁵⁶ However, experiential marketing, like any other approach, is not devoid of limitations and shortcomings. Some researchers argue that the concept of experience is not yet well defined and thus the experiential approach to marketing lacks a solid foundation.

¹⁵⁴ Lenderman, M., (2006) *Experience the message. How experiential marketing is changing the brand world*,. Carroll and Graf Publishers

¹⁵⁵ McCole P., (2004) Refocusing marketing to reflect practice. The changing role of marketing for business, *Marketing Intelligence and Practice* 22

¹⁵⁶ Pine II B. J., Gilmore, J. H., (1999) *The experience economy work is theatre & every business a stage*, Harvard Business School Press

In the experiential view, the focus is placed on the symbolic, hedonic and aesthetic nature of consumption, as it regards consumption as an act that aims at the pursuit of fantasies, feelings and fun. Essentially, what experiential marketing attempts to achieve is to hit a sensitive chord - emotional, intellectual or both - in each individual consumer and thus create a strong link between the consumer and the brand through shared, but yet unique for each consumer, memorable experiences.¹⁵⁷

After all, in order to build and develop a successful brand, marketers need to win consumers' cognitive and emotional support and dedication. Therefore the role of experiential marketers' is to facilitate the hedonic nature of consumption by providing the appropriate environment that will allow consumer experiences to materialize.¹⁵⁸ In order to achieve that they should employ experiential strategies that could stimulate sensory experiences (Sense), affective experiences (Feel), creative cognitive experiences (Think), physical experiences behaviours and lifestyles (Act), and social identity experiences that derive from connecting the individual consumer to a reference group (Relate), which according to Schmitt are the five strategic experiential modules. By putting these experiential modules into practise, marketers will be able to obtain an insight into the new, evolving consumer world, employ a successful experiential approach, form a brand experience that is unique and alive, provide a platform for consumer interactions and have the opportunity to innovate constantly to enhance consumer lives.

However in order to achieve all that, marketers need to treat experiential marketing not as another means of pushing their messages to consumers, but experiential strategies have to be implemented in a way that gives the consumers the opportunity to obtain their own individual brand experiences as it is up to each individual consumer to acquire his/her unique experiences.¹⁵⁹

A memorable experience can take place when the brand is communicated to the consumers in an inimitable and impressive way, allowing them to have an active role as participants and not as mere spectators. Therefore, to actually be effective, an experience has to be more than "a one day" offering, an impermanent moment, but it should have a "transformation" capability which could be achieved through the achievement of new skills and knowledge, and the development of self confidence and self image.

¹⁵⁷ Lenderman, M., (2006) *Experience the message. How experiential marketing is changing the brand world.*, Caroll and Graf Publishers

¹⁵⁸ Schmitt, B., (1999) Experiential Marketing, *Journal of marketing Management* 15

¹⁵⁹ Whelan S., Wohifeil M., (2006) Communicating brands through engagement with "lived" experiences. *Journal of Brand Management*, 13

In contrast with traditional marketing thinking that people only make consumption choices based on the utility of products and services, experiential marketing takes a more holistic approach by acknowledging that consumers, being rational as well as emotional beings, strive to accomplish pleasurable experiences.¹⁶⁰ Experiential needs can be defined as desires for products that provide sensory pleasure, and variety.

Moreover, consumers nowadays consider that product and service quality are mostly a given and search for intriguing brands that can excite their senses, and stimulate their brains. For example, brands like Dior or Chanel are so successful not only because of their products or their positioning but because of the experience that is associated with owning and consuming these brands.

Hence, one of the main points of experiential marketing is that marketers should not just be concerned with customer satisfaction but they should strive to make the consumer emotionally involved with the brand.¹⁶¹ Therefore, the traditional marketing thinking that emphasizes only on consumer satisfaction is no longer relevant in the experience economy. This attitude comes to reinforce that while loyal customers are usually satisfied customers, satisfaction by itself does not lead to customer loyalty. Loyalty creation is actually a process driven by experience, and it is through experience that the strong connections of brand that lead to improved brand loyalty and extension. This is why a growing number of companies are using experiential marketing strategies to create experiential links with their customers.

In practical terms, experiential marketing has to deliver clear and meaningful benefits to consumers; needs to have authenticity in order to mobilize the marketplace; should employ original and creative methods to connect with consumers; must engage consumers in memorable ways; has to facilitate personal interactions between marketers and consumers; and should convey brand messages to consumers when and if they are willing to receive them. Firms could facilitate consumer experience by providing special elements and resources that would add to the value of their brands, like setting up flagship stores “brand lands”, or organising special events. There are several successful brands that have embraced and successfully implemented the

¹⁶⁰ Schmitt, B., (1999) Experiential Marketing, *Journal of marketing Management* 15

¹⁶¹ McCole P., (2004) Refocusing marketing to reflect practice. The changing role of marketing for business, *Marketing Intelligence and Practice* 22

concept of experience marketing. Some notable examples are Nike's Niketowns¹⁶² in several cities of the world, in terms of brand lands, while Donatella's Versace Company¹⁶³ is the one of the most successful company in organizing events. These companies that are successful in employing experiential marketing manage to bring their brands into life through interaction, through experience and through events.

6.3 Fashion Event Experiential Marketing

Driven by the fundamental values of experiential marketing, event marketing tries to create emotional ties through shared consumer experience by offering brand experiences, entertainment and education that will allow consumers to enhance their subjective life satisfaction.¹⁶⁴

Following that notion, event marketing has been defined as "the interactive communication of brand values by staging marketing events as 3 dimensional brand-related hyperrealities, in which consumers are actively involved on a behavioural level and which would result in their emotional attachment to the brand".¹⁶⁵

A successful event marketing strategy has to be experience oriented¹⁶⁶, as it must focus on attracting consumers' interest by communicating the brand meanings through lived experience. Moreover, it should promote interactivity among consumers but also between consumers and marketers. These two elements, experience and interactivity, are vital as it liberates marketers from the limitations of one-way advertising communications because through interactive brand-

¹⁶²<http://www.thefreelibrary.com/NIKE+TOWN+to+open+in+Los+Angeles%3B+Wilshire+Blvd.+will+be+home+to...-a016803474>

¹⁶³ Winkler E. S., (2009) *Designing Dreams: Best Practices for the Art & Business of Avatar Apparel Design & Development*, Fashion Research Foundation

¹⁶⁴ Wohlfeil M., Whelan S., (2006) Consumer motivations to participate in event marketing strategies, *Journal of Marketing Management* 22

¹⁶⁵ Ibid

¹⁶⁶ "Trendwatch published a survey by TBA Global and Event Marketer in 2007. It found an "overwhelming majority of marketers (82%) surveyed stating they are getting more value out of their current events with more than a third (36.5%) citing experiential marketing as the most effect vehicle for developing a bond between company and customer, besting in order, advertising, direct marketing, sales promotion, online and public relations." Moving from a purely rational value proposition to "rational plus emotional" as part of a brand repositioning contributed directly to driving up sales volume 229% and profit up 201% in a single year for Cemex, stated D. Keith Pigues, VP Marketing, "B to B" 3/12/2007. " Source: www.carsonworldwide.com

related events the brand hyperreality can be transformed into a “real-lived” experience that appeals to consumers on a multi level.¹⁶⁷

The final two elements that characterize an effective fashion event marketing campaign are self-initiation, and dramaturgy.

Self-initiation reflects the marketers’ attempts to create an emotional impact on consumers by staging self-initiated marketing-events.¹⁶⁸ While experiences are unique for each consumer they need external stimulation from the marketers in order to take place.¹⁶⁹

Dramaturgy refers to the unique, distinctive and memorable elements that have to be incorporated in an event marketing strategy, similarly to a theatre production, in order to effectively turn the brand into a lived experience.¹⁷⁰

Actually, the experiential view has several times drawn parallels between the business environment and a theatrical production. Like a theatrical production, in the marketplace companies bring into play drama, script, actors and active audience participation from the side of the consumers.¹⁷¹

The change that has been made by the emergence of experiential marketing is that while in the past the business environment resembled that of a conventional theatrical play where every component had a clearly defined role, the companies were the actors and the consumers the passive spectators, nowadays the marketplace resembles more of the experimental theatre where the audience was an active and vital element of the performance.

¹⁶⁷ Wohlfeil M., Whelan S., (2006) Consumer motivations to participate in event marketing strategies, *Journal of Marketing Management* 22

¹⁶⁸ Ibid

¹⁶⁹ Schmitt, B., (1999) Experiential Marketing, *Journal of marketing Management* 15

¹⁷⁰ Lenderman, M., (2006) *Experience the message. How experiential marketing is changing the brand world.*, Caroll and Graf Publishers

¹⁷¹ Pine II B. J., Gilmore J. H., (1999) *The experience economy work is theatre & every business a stage*, Harvard Business School Press

6.4 Commonalities between event experiential marketing and fashion brand development

Various studies in the past have underlined that shared consumption experience is a decisive factor for the development of brand which will be able to provide a fullness of benefits to the fashion brand.

It is vital to analyse the reasons why fashion event experiential marketing is a suitable means of promoting and development of fashion brands and this can be achieved by presenting their similarities.

The use of a pull strategy in fashion event marketing gives an opportunity to consumers to actively experience, add and change fashion brand meanings and thus become a co-creator of brand value and this is the common feature between event marketing and fashion brands, as fashion brands also favour consumers' active involvement in shaping and defining the brand.

It is important to note that co-creation is not about outsourcing insignificant activities to customers as some marketers would suggest. It actually entails the co-creation of value which derives from consumer experiences and personalised interactions.

On a closer inspection, one can find many other correlations, elements and factors that make event experiential marketing a suitable and effective strategy to position, to develop and maintain fashion brand. Also, fashion brand can create brand "opinion leaders" the personal, one-to-one communication with consumers through event experiential marketing can lead to the creation of new opinion leaders that will relay the brand messages to other consumers and target groups.

7. EXAMPLES OF BEST PRACTICES IN FASHION EVENTS

Through the Chapter Fashion industry it was noted that Brand management is a balancing act: keeping with traditions/breaking from them, balancing old and new, staid and stylish, nurturing the roots of tradition and know how, at the same time staying fresh, relevant and contemporary. Brands that won't last are satisfied with the existing product, while great brands are never satisfied with here and now and constantly seek new improvements in order to satisfy a changing and increasingly sophisticated consumer base. These brands are creators of the future with a solid grounding in their past. In order to analyze the complexity of fashion brand positioning through Chapter 4, Figure 4.4¹⁷² The Fashion brand identity model identified four main elements in building a fashion brand identity: heritage, style, retail and communication.

History as one of the most valuable asset has a fundamental role in defining the brand authenticity and standing. Stylistic identity defines the long term stylistic codes belonging to a brand, and strong consistency among stylistic identity and visual identity must exist in order to build a strong brand.

7.1 Examples and problem discussion

According to these facts it is quite difficult to explore and extract the best practices in worldwide famous luxury brands¹⁷³ (such as Chanel, Gucci, Louis Vuitton, Dior, etc.) which will be a good examples for fashion brand positioning and development, because of their complexity, long existence and the decade-long position and their wide field of impact.

¹⁷² Page 47

¹⁷³ "Chanel is intertwined with the personality of its creator, Coco Chanel and her lifestyle. Thanks to the creator's image, the brand value is ensured. The logo of Chanel has not changed since its inception and this is commensurate with other luxury brands. Investment in premier locations and the development of flagship stores akin to museums is typical, for example Prada's takeover of the Guggenheim Museum in New York. Luxury retailers are clustered in certain streets in capital cities, like Rue du Faubourg St Honoré in Paris and Fifth Avenue in New York. Burberry tried to reposition itself as a 'credible high fashion brand' by opening a flagship on Bon Street in London. Heritage of the brand and the history associated with its founder and its craftsmanship are built into the luxury brand. The history of the brand is part of its distinctiveness, such as Vuitton's travel cases. The symbolism associated with these brands is instantly recognizable and memorable at an international level and is linked with cultural identity." Hines T., Bruce M., (2007) *Fashion marketing*, Elsevier Ltd.

On the other side, as it mentioned before, Dior for example was something entirely different 20 years ago. At the beginning Christian Dior clothes were revolutionary, then, 20 years later, Dior had become the most classical, conservative company losing touch with the brand's original spirit. New designers such were brought in, trying to connect again to the emotional values (revolution) that were attached to the brand when it started.

Returning to the past is not always the answer and significant heritage does not provide a strong brand position in the future. Any successful brand has to reconnect with an image that's relevant to the identity of consumers at that moment in time.

The good example is designer John Galliano, who has returned brand values of Dior, and at the same time imposed the new standards in fashion design and fashion event presentation. The luxurious, opulent and theatrical fashion shows of the fashion designer John Galliano are described as “I have nothing to say, only to show.”¹⁷⁴

*John Galliano: Modernity and Spectacle*¹⁷⁵
Caroline Evans

John Galliano: 1990s

Christian Dior Autumn-Winter 1998/9 couture collection designed by John Galliano.

“Entitled ‘A Voyage on the Diorient Express, or the Story of the Princess Pocahontas’, it was shown in the Gare d’Austerlitz in Paris, where the models arrived on a steam train while the audience were seated on sand-covered platforms decorated with huge bronze platters of spices to look like an oriental spice market or souk. As the visitors sat surrounded by canopies, potted palms, antique Louis Vuitton suitcases and Moroccan lanterns, consuming champagne and Turkish delight, the train chuffed into the station and a model dressed as the Princess Pocahontas burst through a wall of orange paper at the front of the train. Only then did the train come to a halt and disgorge its cargo of models, dressed in a jumble of native American and sixteenth-century European dress. The presentation and the majority of the garments were pure spectacle, such that the consequent press coverage was in fact rather critical of the designer for having substituted showmanship and pantomime for fashion design itself.”

¹⁷⁴ White N., Griffiths I., (2007) *The Fashion Business, Theory, Practice, Image*, Berg Oxford International Publishers Ltd.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid

“The audience was seated on sand-covered platforms decorated like an oriental souk; the models arrived on a steam train with a wall of orange paper at the front through which a model dressed as the Princess Pochahontas burst as the train pulled into the station.

The name ‘Diorient Express’ stencilled onto the side of the train aptly suggested both Galliano’s orientalism, which eclectically combined cultures, continents and centuries, and the disorienting effects of his showmanship. Although the ‘Diorient Express’ show was, perhaps, his most excessive in terms of spectacular presentation it was far from the only one. Other shows were staged in a suburban sports stadium transformed into a forest scene with forty-foot high spruce trees, the Paris Opéra converted into an English garden where the fashion photographers were given straw hats on entry, and the Carousel du Louvre, the official venue for the Paris collections, made over as a Manhattan rooftop scene, complete with battered chimney stacks, designed, like most of his shows, by the set designer Jean-Luc Ardouin. In every case, Galliano’s transformation of a space involved effacing its real characteristics in the interests of imposing his fantasy vision on the space.”

“In keeping with the spectacular *mis-en-scène* of his shows of this period, each collection was based on a fantastical narrative.”

“So wide ranging is Galliano’s eye for the visual detail of the past, and so inventive the way he juxtaposes histories, styles and cultures, that it is hard to imagine a Galliano design which is not a visual quotation from a pre-existent source. What is unique, however, is the way he kaleidoscopically fuses a range of references into a single figure.”

“In keeping with the spectacular quality of his designs, his fashion presentations were highly theatrical during the 1990s, both in his own name and as principal designer for Givenchy and then Dior.”

“Although the spectacle was conceived on a grander scale in the late 1990s, all Galliano’s shows had been characterized by highly developed sense of theatre.”

“In 1993 he showed a small but very influential collection in the eighteenth-century house of the Portuguese socialite São Schlumberger.

Capitalizing on the fact that the empty house was up for sale, he created an atmosphere of romantic decrepitude by scattering it with dead leaves and rose petals, unmade beds and upturned chairs, and filling the air with dry ice. In July 1995 he was appointed principal designer at the couture house of Givenchy for which he produced his first couture show

in January 1996 and two subsequent ready-to-wear collections before being appointed principal designer at Dior.

In his couture show for Givenchy Galliano created a Princess and the Pea scenario in which two models sat twenty feet in the air preening themselves on top of a pile of mattresses.”

“A year later, in January 1997, he produced his first couture show for Dior, audaciously staged in a fake *maison de couture*: in the Grand Hotel in Paris Galliano created a scaled up facsimile of the original Dior showroom, including the famous staircase on which Cocteau and Dietrich had sat in the 1950s to watch Dior’s shows.”

“With the substantial backing of a major couture house Galliano was able to create his shows on a far bigger scale than previously. Increasingly he began to use more theatrical techniques, for example replacing runway lighting with theatre lighting and minutely choreographing each section of the show three days before. Each model had only one outfit per show, thus avoiding the hectic series of rapid costume changes which characterized other fashion shows. The more conventional parade down a catwalk was replaced by a walk through a series of connecting rooms dressed like film sets through which the story was told, reminiscent of the 1993 show in São Schlumberger’s house when, in Galliano’s words, “the girls worked the whole house from the top floor down”. It was like an old salon presentation.

The audience, far smaller than the usual fashion show audience, was seated in small groups in these rooms, far closer to the clothes than usual. The models, each of whom had been rehearsed like an actress by Galliano before the show, were encouraged to feel their way into, and act, the part of their characters as they paraded through the rooms, striking attitudes and poses, staging *tableaux vivants* as they went.”

In order to create a strong brand image, a company should be able to build a strong and shared brand identity first, and then be able to communicate this identity in a correct and relevant way through all the contacts points for the customer. Researching and analyzing luxury brands and their positions on the market through history, no matter how brand equity is strong, contemporary market and competitive environment demand constantly market place positioning and always the new verification of brand values.

Fashion Event practices of the most significant world luxury brands prove that event management and marketing strategies figure as a crucial tool for general improvement of fashion brand

identity, for consumer development and building of enviable image and recognizable brand identity of fashion company. In fact, how product is represented is what transforms it into a brand in the mind of consumers, what imposes lifestyle, a world of values on product attributes. All the above impose fashion events as unavoidable communication tool with consumers.

Reviewing the aspects and the ways the global positioned brands maintain and develop its brand value, at first sight we can conclude that the basis of good and constant positioning in the market is financial power of the company and opportunities that are opening with a huge capital invested in advertising and organization of fashion events. However, going into a detailed analysis, first of all, of fashion events of these great brands we can simply conclude that behind every successful fashion event/spectacle there is an innovative and fresh idea, in basis, that attracts attention of the public saturated by typical fashion presentations.

Relocating of fashion events from “typical” spaces for fashion shows to a new, unexplored and unexpected environment is also one of the good aspects of innovative presentation and different communication with audience. This tendency is not something that occurred in the management of fashion events, but has been used for a long time in many segments of cultural and artistic activities. What is typical for fashion events is that this kind of presentation was started by luxury brands (it can be seen above in the examples of Dior and John Galliano fashion shows), locating their fashion events in unusual and less luxury spaces: Gare d’Austerlitz in Paris, house of the Portuguese socialite São Schlumberger, etc. Also, fashion event becomes a specific art event that integrates the various spheres of art, and fashion shows are increasingly assuming the form of spectacle. In the fashion industry this form of presentation imposes the need for the engagement of artists of different profiles such as directors, set designers, choreographers, composers, musicians etc. Fashion events as a form of spectacle, become closer to performing arts management as a segment of Cultural management.

If we analyze the best practices from our region and explore the fashion brands in this region and beyond, which build their identity and position in the market, the situation is certainly very different. Serbia and the region as a small and economically unstable market do not have the capacities yet to create conditions for the development of strong, recognized international brand. The bigger problem emerges due to inadequate development of fashion and textile industry and non-recognition of these industries by the cultural policies as a segment that can contribute to mutual prosperity and development.

As discussed at the beginning of this work, the British model of culture “industrialization” would help, particularly the countries with turbulent circumstances, faster integration of these two systems and contribute to the effective expansion of the public and consumers. Although fashion and fashion events are, as a part of the "popular" culture, unfairly neglected by cultural management theory, in practice there are indications of good examples of cooperation and successful organization within the two sectors.

*Excellent overture before the start of the Fashion Week*¹⁷⁶

“Fashion studio Click in collaboration with Ethnographic Museum in Belgrade, made an effort to remind us of rich cultural heritage of the nations from this region, by organizing the exhibition, which had, as its initial inspiration, one of the most important pieces of clothing in the history of clothing in this region – *zubun*.

In the traditional culture of clothing of Serbian people in 19th and first half of 20th century, the expression “zubun” was widely used in South Slavic Balkan region as a term for upper piece of clothing like vest, usually without sleeves, with the whole edge slit from the front, with different lengths, and it presents the most representative piece of clothing in Serbian national costume.”

“The aim of the exhibition is to present the collection that is exceptional by the number of preserved exhibits, and formal, functional and stylish features as well, to point out

¹⁷⁶ <http://www.seecult.org/vest/zubun-u-parizu>; <http://www.utripu.com/sta-se-dogadja/specijalni-dogadjaji/sd-reportaza/7268-izlozba-zubun.html>;
<http://www.rts.rs/page/stories/sr/story/16/Kultura/174121/Izlo%C5%BEba+%22Zubun%22+u+Etnografskom+muzeju.html>

dynamic connections between past and present and to offer new perspective on distinctive part of Serbian cultural identity.”

“Zubun was made of domestic wool fabric, cloth, mostly white, and even though it is linked to the men's clothing range as well, it is dominantly women's clothing.

Exhibition "Zubun 2010 - Serbian folklore in contemporary fashion design", will be placed in the Ethnographic Museum from 19th to 25th of April, with exhibits of the Ethnographic Museum exposed at the same time, as a time parallel.”

“The whole project, along with the catalogue of old crafts in Serbia that was made by experts of Ethnographic Museum, was supported by the Serbian Chamber of Commerce.

Group of renowned designers (JSP – Jelena and Svetlana Prokovic, Tamara Radivojevic, Sandra Jankovic, Evica Milovanov Penezic) gathered around the idea and ambition to promote Serbian fashion design in world fashion market and students of Paris school Mod'Art Belgrade, showed a series of stylish pieces of clothing and fashion accessories inspired by Serbian folklore. The realization of clothing also included elements of traditional crafts (hand-made embroidery, knitting ...) which contributes to the originality of these pieces, but also to the direct survival of these crafts.”

“The overall aim of the exhibition is to raise awareness of the Serbian cultural heritage on both national and international levels, and for the realization of this objection, consciously was used fashion as a good communication channel because it represents one of the most popular contemporary arts that attracts great public attention, in particular of young people with lack of knowledge of our cultural heritage. The same exhibition will be exhibited in Paris as well at the Serbian Cultural Centre in September 2010. during Haute Couture Fashion Week and will most definitely contribute to spreading of positive image of Serbia on international level.

International promotion of Serbian fashion design in the context of promoting and preserving of the rich Serbian heritage aims to contribute to a positive image and spread awareness about the culture and traditions of Serbia, and thus fits well into the theme of this year's Week of foreign cultures in Paris – “*Heritage*”.

“Organization of the exhibition during the Paris Fashion Week is also the opportunity for Serbia to be actively involved in the promotion through the elements of folklore and contemporary fashion design” announced Ministry of Culture of Serbia.”

The charity fashion show MILENA PAVLOVIĆ BARILLI¹⁷⁷

“Opening ceremony of the Fashion Week will be marked by fashion show that is dedicated to Milena Pavlović Barilli. The Belgrade City Assembly and the Fashion Studio Click will organize a fashion show inspired by the original illustrations by Milena Pavlović Barilli that were published by the American Vogue and other leading fashion magazines of that time (Harper's Bazaar, Glamour, Charm). Costumes, inspired by fashion illustrations of our great artist, were prepared by designer Vladanka Celić, the shoes were designed by Lidija Jovanović, and hats were done by Nataša Filipović.

The importance of the fashion show is greater because it will have a humanitarian character and the total income is intended for the Center for Integration of Youth - Shelter for Street Children.

In cooperation with the Foundation and the Gallery Milena Pavlović Barilli in her hometown of Požarevac, the organizers made sure that this show, and other fashion events during the week, reminds on Milena's magical personality and work.”

Cooperation between cultural sector and the Belgrade Fashion Week shows and proves the success of this type of event and introduces world trends in cultural management to the fashion scene in Serbia. These examples show that Governmental bodies and Cultural Public Sector recognize and support interdisciplinary projects, and achieve its partnership in the framework of these projects. However, all this is just a small segment of the attempt to permeate Cultural Management and Business Management, initiated primarily by a few individuals from the fashion business environment. It is important to note and recognize that there is still no initiative by the Cultural Public sector / Cultural Policy in Serbia to deal more with given topic and find a good model that could be applied, and that would contribute to a positive image and spread awareness about the culture at wide range.

Such model would have multiple benefits: better positioning and development of Serbian fashion brands, expansion of target groups within cultural activities and in the long-term strategies - economic prosperity that could be reflected at the national level.

¹⁷⁷ <http://www.urbanlook.info/vesti-mainmenu-42/16-modne-vesti/446-26-beogradski-fashion-week-2-911-2009>

By conducting research and interviews related to the issues dealt with by thesis, we came to the point that most Serbian fashion companies has no specific and developed marketing strategy. Also, most of the employees and managers of different fashion companies as well, during the interview, could not define target group their brand is addressing to and what strategies should be applied in the future, thereby to form a distinctive brand identity. This situation reflects in the fashion market in Serbia, where there is no initiative from fashion producers to position fashion brands, in a particular cultural milieu or present it to the wider audience, through identification with other sectors. Much more is invested in classical forms of advertizing, through printed and electronic media, billboards, or through identification of the Brand with public person etc.

Fashion event has become neglected, if we exclude the existence and organization of Fashion Week twice a year. Fewer and fewer companies act on their own in organizing their fashion events, and that part is reduced to the ten-minute show with eventual appearances of public persons, famous and non-famous personalities. More and more Serbian fashion companies are trying to identify Brand with public figures from different spheres, losing the “thread” with its primary function of the existence and activities – creativity.

Fashion industry should find new creative ways of reaching consumers who prefer to be connected to brands, innovative and outstanding communication methods. A good example is fashion events which are becoming more and more a mere communication tool needed to make a statement in terms of creativity.

The situation is significantly better when it comes to young Serbian designers and designers behind whose Brand is their name. Most of young designers have positioned their brands through fashion events most often within the Belgrade Fashion Week.

A good example of positioning and developing her own brand and creating brand equity is Serbian designer Dragana Ognjenović, who has continuously and most often placed her brand through independent fashion shows and events. She is the only designer here that has made her own brand that now includes an expanded range of products (DO software, DO home, etc.) and whose products have its value and credibility on the global fashion market.

8. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The main objective of this research is finding the answer to the question of the specific aspects of fashion brand positioning and development in the context of the fashion event management through theoretical research and best practice examples.

A clearly defined research question was essential to address the research problem and meet research objectives.

8.1 How to make a Fashion Company's brand identity and what is the role of Fashion Event Management and Event Marketing strategies in positioning and developing of fashion brand?

Based on Aaker's¹⁷⁸ Brand Identity Planning Model in order to analyze the complexity of fashion brand positioning, this research identified four main elements in building of fashion brand identity: heritage, style, retail and communication.

The result of the thesis findings confirmed that the brand identity and brand images are strategic objectives, above all in businesses where the role of intangibles is greater, such as in fashion. A strong fashion brand image helps the business add value for the customer and for shareholders: over time it creates an asset for the company - brand equity.

What a fashion company transmits about the brand to the market place and what is the most important here is that the company must be able to express the real essence of the product to the target market. Any product, may not exploit its full potential if it is not expressed right by way of creation of the right compatible personality.

Given the above elaborated facts, it can be concluded that brand image follows identity, and it is a reflection of what we projected to send to the public.

The tool that transmits brand's identity to the target market for creation of the right image is communication. To ensure that image remains as close to identity as possible, companies should

¹⁷⁸ Aaker D. A., (1996) *Building Strong Brands*, Free Press

get into communications of different kinds. This is where brand communication takes an important stage. Correct communication goes a long way in creating and building brand identity.

To communicate in a different way, fashion companies have to match the world of communication with the world of the brand, representing a lifestyle which must be consistent in every single element.

Through analysis of image identity and the communication process it was concluded that communication makes the brand as object of desire in the eyes of general public, which means that visibility is an essential ingredient in the success of the major brands. Visibility is the result of the huge investments in communication. Fashion companies have three different objectives in their communication: brand awareness, brand image and reputation, thus messages and tools should be designed and planned with the focus to specific objective.

However, most common tool used to achieve the different communication objectives is advertising and it serves to create visibility by different promotions. However, investing in advertising is increasingly expensive and is not always useful. Advertising is a sign of power of a brand, but that does not qualify the brand any way. The press, which has played such a crucial role in the rise of fashion, is struggling to find a new language that goes beyond the trade-off between advertising and editorials. Fashion Companies should focus on emotional and personalized involvement of the consumer. Fashion shows and fashion events are certainly the major press coverage event in fashion. The fashion events becoming main communication tool needed to make a statement in terms of creativity and to fully focus entire public: press, buyers, consumers, etc. on company's vision of the fashion.

This thesis claims that the positioning and development of fashion brand in a certain market is most effective and most productive if the fashion events are considered as the main communication tool with the entire audience. That does not mean that other segments of communication between Brand and consumers should be ignored. But it also means that with the quality of the planning process and the successful realization of the fashion event or the series of events, it can attract large media environment which would provide visibility, reputation and awareness in the eyes of general public to fashion brand.

However, not every fashion event can attract a large and equal attention of all the factors who participate in building of brand identity. Market is becoming more and more demanding because

of the fragmentation of the media, wise and fastidious customers and competitive environment. Analysis of theoretical framework and best practices leads to the conclusion that fashion event management should focus to creative event process and to specific marketing strategies.

The thesis presented main difference between fashion event marketing and more traditional forms of marketing like advertising. With traditional marketing the consumer is a passive receiver of messages that are conveyed to them through a push strategy, whereas event marketing adopts a pull strategy which allows the consumer to become actively involved in the development of brand meanings. Fashion event marketing has its roots in experiential marketing as a concept that integrates elements of emotions, logic, and general thought processes to connect with the consumer.

As it mentioned above the clutter of advertising messages has reduced the effectiveness of mass marketing. It is necessary to find a new creative ways of reaching consumers who prefer to be connected to brands employing innovative and outstanding communication methods.

This is why branding is no longer just about providing an identifiable trademark, but it attempts to communicate clearly stated brand values that will create unique brand identities which will enable consumers to experience a subjective contribution to their life.

Within fashion event marketing company should try to create emotional ties through shared consumer experience by offering brand experiences, entertainment and education that will allow consumers to enhance their subjective life satisfaction. The final element that characterizes an effective fashion event marketing campaign is dramaturgy. And, if we draw parallel between the fashion business environment and a theatrical production, in the marketplace fashion companies and fashion events bring into play drama, script, actors and active audience participation.

The use of a pull strategy in fashion event marketing gives an opportunity to consumers to actively experience, add and change fashion brand meanings and thus become a co-creator of brand value. Event experiential marketing is a suitable and effective strategy to position, to develop and maintain fashion brand.

All the above lead us to the conclusion that event management and marketing strategies can effectively reinforce the consumer's feelings and significantly aid in the positioning and development of a strong fashion brand.

8.2 What lessons managers of small fashion companies can learn from the experience of the well positioned, recognizable, worldwide famous fashion brands?

Research has shown that fashion brands tend to mimic language of high fashion in attempt to create a motivational effect. However, this approach could not give the long-term results, if the randomly and superficially selecting fashion brand experience. The analysis of the key differentials of communication between high-end brand and mass brands in this research will help to conclude what experiences and practices of well positioned and recognizable high-end and/or mass brands, small fashion companies can use to develop their brand identity:

- Objectives: Brand awareness and brand image
- Major target: Trade and Final consumer
- Planning: Seasonal
- Focus: Story and Visual
- Tools: PR (word of mouth) and Promotion
- Events: Partnerships and Sponsorships
- Celebrities: Product placement
- Store: High traffic location and accessibility
- Internal players: Designer, Art director, Marketing or Brand manager
- External players: Media and Research centers, free-lancers (e.g. photographers)

Reviewing of fashion communication systems led to the conclusion that luxury brands have direct control over a number of activities, from developing the concept of the campaign to post-production, from planning media to the press office and organizing events, which is not the case with mass market companies, where such activities are usually delegated to external specialists.

This research proposes that small fashion companies and non positioned should also apply direct control and delegation of activities within the company's experts (designers, art directors, managers) to ensure total consistency of all the messages they convey, and guarantee that attention to detail that makes the difference.

8.3 Whether fashion management can integrate cultural and business management in both theoretical conceptualization and practical tool of implementation?

As it stated at the begging of this research, within cultural management art events are having important significance, but new contemporary forms of arts such as: fashion and design are often neglected. Also, Cultural Management emphasis on Public Culture, and since fashion is part of the private business sphere, it often escapes the attention of cultural management.

On the other hand, fashion management is not sufficiently explored in the theoretical framework of business management as well. Although, many educational institutions deal with this kind of business today, a lack of adequate literature and theoretical point of view regarding this specific area is still a huge issue. The existing literature generalizes and integrates many fields of business management, and established theories do not distinguish specifics of fashion management whose business environment is directly related to the artistic aspects of its factors. This gap, both in cultural and business management, resulted in fact that literature that was made from cultural management point of view, neglects business side if fashion industry, and vice versa, literature that was made from business management point of view, shows weak understanding and interest for artistic side of fashion management.

Creative industries are currently attempting to rectify the shortcomings that follow aforementioned areas of management, and prove the importance that these specific areas have in the overall cultural and economic development of a society and state.

The importance of fashion management from the perspective of theoretical research lies in the fact that fashion management shows good integration of artistic and business sectors.

The existing practices show much greater mutual influence and cooperation, however, it is necessary that there is a clearly defined legislation behind everything, incorporation of this area in cultural policies and clearly defined recognition by state public sector.

8.4 Limitations of the research

Research that was conducted relies mostly on the literature about event management, general business environment, brand management, fashion and does not focus on fashion event management and fashion brand management. Event management literature which was used during the research process was mostly written from the point of view of the practitioners, and has a structure of practical guide. Combining the direct research approach, previous experience, best practices and background from the fashion industry, general business and brand management theories and literature, conclusions specific for the fashion event management and fashion brand positioning were drawn. In this research there was no space for dealing with deeper insight into the theory and interesting questions of fashion event management.

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10. APPENDICIES

Appendix 1

Interview Guide

- ❖ **How would you describe _____ as a brand?**
- ❖ **What is _____'s target market?**
- ❖ **What does _____ stand for? Which values should be associated with the company's brand?**
 - What does the company do to increase the credibility of _____ as a brand?
 - How did the values that _____ stand for change since the introduction of the brand?
- ❖ **If _____ was a person, how would you describe her?**
- ❖ **How does a customer recognize that a product comes from _____?**
 - For example the associations that they perceive when seeing the brand?
 - The similarities and differences between other actors within the same industry?
- ❖ **What position does _____ has on the market?**
 - What position does _____ strive for?
- ❖ **How was _____'s brand communicated to the customer when being first introduced?**
 - Through which channels (publicity, PR, celebrity endorsement, fashion shows, trade fairs etc.)?
 - How was symbols and other slogans used?
- ❖ **Which consistent theme exists in the company's marketing that shows that it is _____ that stands behind it?**
 - How does the theme change from collection to collection?
- ❖ **What is the main marketing objective of _____? To gain new customers or to create loyal ones?**
 - How important is customer brand loyalty?
 - What did _____ do to create brand loyal customers?
- ❖ **What role does the brand play in relation to the product within the fashion industry today?**
- ❖ **How does _____ measure the success it has with the customers?**
- ❖ **Which products did _____ first launch on the international market?**

Appendix 2

SDA BOCCONI Scuola di Direzione Aziendale dell'Università Bocconi
Stefania Saviolo, The Italian way to brand identity -Case study Giorgio Armani

3. Giorgio Armani: the Italian way to brand identity

3.1. History and competencies

Giorgio Armani was born in 1934 in Piacenza, Northern Italy; he received a bachelor and attended two years at the Faculty of medicine. From 1957 to 1964 he worked as buyer at the greatest Italian department store, La Rinascente. From 1964 to 1970 he was at Hitman (Nino Cerruti's menwear company), designing formal men collections. At that point Armani realised that within the menswear it was not possible to escape a certain staticity. The big chance was in the womanswear that it was booming in that years. Armani decided to leave Hitman to work on his own in that new segment as a consultant for other fashion companies. He was very successful, designing for such manufacturers as Boulevard, Montedoro, Sicons, and Gibo. In 1975 he was convinced by his friend Sergio Galeotti to establish the company GIORGIO ARMANI S.P.A. giving birth to his label of clothing, positioned within the ready-to-wear segment. After some years Galeotti, who was in charge of the managerial part of the company, died and many considered Armani unable to survive to him.

“I had to acquire the entrepreneur status not being embarrassed in front of a lawyer language and capable to manage the company personnel”⁷.

The turning point was 1978 when Armani signed his first important licensing agreement with Gruppo Finanziario Tessile, one of the largest apparel companies in Italy. Armani designed his collections and GFT took care of industrialization, production and distribution.

During this first phase of development Armani has been through a series of lucky coincidences. He began working in a time when women were beginning to understand, perhaps confusedly, that they would have to change in order to deal with society in a different way, to have the same opportunities as men. Fashion adapts to the world, and the world uses fashion to assert itself: its mentality, professions, ways of being. At the beginning of the 1980s these factors were completely different from those of the previous decade, and fashion has been able to express these differences. Armani has always been focused on women, living in Milan in particular, who in the 70's

⁷ All the Armani's statements in italics has been taken from various numbers of Giorgio Armani magazine.

approached the world of work wishing to realize something important. In Armani's view, fashion is not to dream but to live with: people have to be allowed to use fashion and change it; that's why Armani doesn't pursue the total look concept. The jacket, the Armani most representative item, can be dressed with everything else, in many different ways and for many years. And the Armani's jacket was a real revolution in womenswear and his biggest success.

"My women's jackets date back to 1975, one year after my first menswear collection. I was surprised by the fact that my sister, and some of our female friends, wanted to wear the jackets, in which to move freely, naturally, like a second skin. All my work has developed around the jackets. It was the starting point for all the rest. My small but crucial discovery lies in having imagined a garment which falls over the body in a surprisingly natural manner. I experimented with new techniques, removing the lining, or the interlining. I have modified the arrangement of the buttons, and radically altered the proportions. What was previously considered a defect has become the basis for a new form: a new jacket. This creative procedure has generated a light jacket, as comfortable as a shirt, sensual even in its construction. I have been called the first post-modern stylist, they say that I have done for the jacket what others have done in architecture and art. Others have said that the Armani jacket has become a sort of antidote for the aggressivity and flashy colors of that type of 1980s dress which today we view with disdain. Like a sort of undeclared status symbol, which confers status without displaying the symbol".

As far as his his approach to style and creativity is concerned, this was really distinctive. Unlike others designer that were pure tailors with great technical capabilities but no market orientation, Armani was able to balance the social changes in the world and the evolution of consumer tastes and needs with his technical competencies.

From the beginning Armani has always admired and was inspired by the French couturiere Coco Chanel. Her rigour, the culture of dressing well, with irony, coquetry, attention to the smallest details. Coco Chanel knew how to dress women in an elegant, refined, but also rational way. For the daytime, she dressed them in a practical, almost masculine way, while for the evening she wanted them to be super-sophisticated super-refined, super-feminine. An image of the woman which is still extremely up-to-date.

"I'm not a pure artist I want to channel my creativity toward that which can be of use to the men and women of today. I want to interpret fashion, to make it comprehensible, friendly, confidential, to bring men and women closer to the concept of elegance, in total respect for their personality and for the times in which they live".

The experiences in the men's apparel industry had taught him about the practice of the discipline, which he tried to translate into a style capable of expressing the radical nature of the changes in progress. Furthermore, in Cerruti, that was a leading wool-fabric producer, he learnt the importance of fabrics in designing clothes.

My energies are concentrated in my hands when I touch fabric. I think that my constant, almost maniacal research on fabrics is one of the reasons behind my success. To model a fabric around a body is one of the most sensual experiences on earth. You have to feel it, it has to become one with the body, it is like arranging a drapery with pins.

3.2 The creation of a successful brand

After the success of his first collection Armani decided to extend his name over a wider product range entering into new licensing agreements. Furthermore, thanks to the constant flux of royalties rising from the GFT licensing agreement, Armani could invest on his image and on his distribution network. Over the time his name became a successful umbrella-brand.

Between 1975 and 1982 the following product lines were developed:

- GIORGIO ARMANI - BORGONUOVO 21 (men's and women's wear collections, 1975)
- GIORGIO ARMANI – LE COLLEZIONI (men's –worldwide- and women's wear - North America- 1979)
- MANI (men's-North America- and women's wear -rest of the world)
- ARMANI JUNIOR
- GIORGIO ARMANI UNDERWEAR (men's and women's wear)
- GIORGIO ARMANI SWIMWEAR (men's and women's)
- GIORGIO ARMANI ACCESSORIES⁸ (for men and women)
- EMPORIO ARMANI (men's and women's wear collections, 1981). *"In my work I wanted to be more democratic, and to separate high fashion from the image of an applied art destined for only a few globetrotting jet-set millionaires. I thought about people. I thought about those women who cannot afford my dresses, but would like to own them, because they feel they are right for them, and I thought about a form of education of taste. And this conviction led me to create Emporio Armani, as a place where my style is within everyone's reach".*

⁸ Ties and Socks - Glasses - Scarves and Foulards - Shoes - Bags - Small leather goods - Suitcases - Belts - Umbrellas - Hats - Gloves - Costume Jewellery.

- ARMANI JEANS (men's and women's wear)
- GIORGIO ARMANI SPOSA (bridal collection)

In 1982 the prestigious "Time", dedicate its cover to Armani that was the first designer to appear on the cover after the French couturier Christian Dior.

Between 1982 and 1984 he launches EMPORIO ARMANI UNDERWEAR and SWIMWEAR, EMPORIO ARMANI ACCESSORIES⁹ and his FRAGRANCES ARMANI for men and for women. In 1987 Armani's brand is extended in EYEWEAR and SOCKS. In 1989 Armani launches EMPORIO ARMANI GIFT COLLECTION (items for the home and bath), in 1991 A/X: ARMANI EXCHANGE (men's and women's) and in 1992 GIO' women's fragrance. In 1995 he creates the lines GIORGIO ARMANI SKIWEAR and GOLF and he launches ACQUA DI GIO' (women's and men's fragrance), in 1997 EMPORIO ARMANI WATCHES, in 1998 EMPORIO ARMANI FRAGRANCE and in 1999 EMPORIO ARMANI BEAUTY COMPONENTS. The latest from Armani's work is the Armani Exchange. This brand is recognized by the sign A/X. As easy as the Gap, and nearly as cheap, Armani Exchange aims at offering jeans, sweaters, and T-shirts a little more stylish. A/X Armani Exchange is the company's least expensive line, competing in the US with retailers such as The Gap and Banana Republic.

3.3 The industrial growth

During the '90's the company goes through a process of vertical integration in order to better control the production activities and the distribution network investing the company cash flows. Here are the main operations performed:

- the acquisition of shares in Armani's licensees: SIMINT (licensee of Armani jeans) (53,02%), INTAI (licensee of Armani Ties and Armani Underwear e Swimwear) (51%), LUXOTTICA (licensee for eyewear) (0.5%), ANTINEA (licensee of womanswear for Emporio Armani) (100%);
- market consolidation with opening of company owned boutiques (80 in 1990);
- acquisition of G.A. Japan (the company that manages free standing stores and Emporio in Japan).

⁹ Ties - Socks - Glasses - Scarves and Head scarves - Shoes - Bags - Small leather goods - Suitcases - Belt - Umbrellas - Hats - Gloves - Bijoux - Gifts.

- acquisition of GFT production facilities.

Value chain control requires to build new competencies very far from the company's original know how. And this will implicate a more solid managerial structure that is also related with the problem of Armani's succession.

The company's present success is made evident from the following figures:

- total sales are 1.650 billions Italian lire with an estimated profitability of 250 bn.(1999);
- 2000 point of sales all over the world;
- 20 successful licenses

New York's Guggenheim Museum recognized Armani's considerable contributions in a retrospective that opened on October 20th 2000, featuring about 400 of his fashions. The show examines the cultural impact of his designs. It's the first time the museum has dedicated one show to an individual designer, and it's said to be the largest one-man fashion exhibition ever presented in New York.

"I see this exhibit as a beginning, not a retrospective, It shows what I can do, more than what I have done."

To emphasize the timelessness of Armani's fashions, the museum has grouped his clothes thematically rather than chronologically. One section of the exhibit examines the impact of his designs on the androgynous look, while others explore the influences of Eastern and North African cultures and his use of a "non-color" palette -- lots of gray, taupe and similar neutral tones.

3.4 Brand identity levers

3.4.1 Stylistic Identity

Armani has been, first of all, an interpreter of modernity thanks to his curiosity and his willingness to stay in touch with everyday life.

"Before each collection, I stop to reflect. I stop to examine the state of things: the problems and discomforts I see each time I watch the news on television, the impact of a

film, of people I have met, the realities which seeth across the pages of newspapers, scandals, manias. Everything that touches our lives, everything that is bubbling beneath the surface of the everyday world. I try to sum it all up, and I ask myself questions. How can a man dress, today, if he doesn't want to look like a yuppie or an ambitious businessman, but does want to be decorous, presentable with self-respect? What about young people? Does the shabby, grungy style express any sort of true rebellion? What about the young girls I have seen at demonstrations, or at the universities: might they not enjoy a romantic, floral dress? When I find the answers to the questions, I am ready to go to work".

His secret is to elaborate, through his creativity, what people in the street suggest: *"... nowadays to impose a fashion trend means to humiliate men and women. As far as I am concerned I do the opposite: if I see in the street a man or a woman wearing something that attract my attention or I notice a behavior that for them is not consciously elegant I work on it, with the support of my experience and I obtain the final result that is that people refine their style without becoming a fashion victim".*

This orientation led Armani to eliminate the superfluous, to emphasize comfort and enhance in his collections the *"refinement of essentiality"* that today represents the essence of his style.

"Each time I begin to think about a new collection, I start with the "nots". Not this, not that. The sum of all the nots turns into a positive direction, clear distinct forms for my clothes".

For Armani the dress is like an identity, the dress is like the place where to find oneself without constriction both physical and psychological. His woman is gentle and seducing, self confident and not requiring to act or dress like a man, nor shout her sex-appeal. She represents the essence of modernity and cosmopolitanism.

"I never think of a special woman, I think about a woman who is neither tall nor short, neither skinny nor fat. Well, maybe more on the slim side than the plump side, for problems of fit... Above all, I think about a woman who knows how to dress; unlike, for example, an American lady in her seventies who I once saw wearing one of my dresses which I would never have imagined seeing on anyone her age. Dressing well requires a head, not just a body".

The silhouette has the shoulders as a focus point. There is a strong research in materials that are precious, light, soft; he loves silk, linen, shantung, organza, georgette. The best items are the shirt-jacket, the jacket with an invisible tie, light, deconstructed in order to cancel the stereotype of *tailleur*. Particular attention is devoted to colors that are mild and clear, sometimes strong but without any gaudy identity.

"I have always thought that strong colors are facile, overwhelming, they distract attention from the form, the research, the variations in the lines of a garment. But at times I fear that my style is becoming too stereotypical, too homogeneous. So I add some painterly suggestions of color, unexpected natural shadings, to provide new definition for my clothes.

I am known as the stylist without color, the inventor of "greige", a cross between grey and beige. I love these neutral tones, they are calm, serene, they provide a background upon which anyone can express himself. It is a way to connect and combine the other colors. It is a base upon which to work, and it is never definitive, never dissonant, never a passing trend, it is always something that remains, a versatile basis over which, from time to time, to imagine other things".

In the men's wear, discarding fashion conventions, Armani stripped the padding from the traditional men's suit jacket and changed the way men wear clothes. Armani's looser-fitting jackets and slouchy pants softened the starched business suit; so long, striped ties and knife-edged creases. The natural perfection of his clothes comes from an obsessive attention to every detail. Armani style designs the character.

"I've always tried to realize a kind of fashion which doesn't turn your head: you can turn your head after 50 meters, not immediately. If you turn at once it means that you've been shocked. On the contrary, the fashion I suggest has to make people think about it. It's especially a matter of thinness, shadings, lengths, it's a tailor made work: a revers which marries the shoulder which hangs in a particular way, button that deliberately draws in a particular way instead of a perfect closing (...). Consequently I always look for soft moving tissues, that give the impression to be lived. All these things together represent my style (...) It's a clothe-philosophy".

He supervises all the process of product development starting from the first drawing to the industrialisation made by licensees. Season after season each new model differs a little from the previous one: it is a process of evolution and never a revolution.

3.4.2 Visual identity

Image and communication

The corporate communication is entirely managed by Giorgio Armani, supported by his sister, Silvana, for all the world markets. As result one can easily recognize the distinctive sign of Armani's style in his way of communication, contrary to most of fashion advertising campaigns: the product has to be clearly identified as Armani, not mixed with images too modern or too trendy. Boys have to be masculine, not

ambiguous; girls have to be modern, but not too seductive. All the images projected by the brand are consistent with the message delivered by the product, starting from the choice of colors.

“For my photo campaigns I have almost always favoured black and white. Some have said that in my images I use black and white like color. I find that it is more realistic, more natural, it might seem like a paradox, but that’s the way it is. In the images I like contrasts which bring out form. I think that black and white images are completely different from colour photos: the framing is different, and the way of doing close-ups. In the latest avant-garde films from America I have noticed a return to black and white, to accentuate the dramatic effects of lighting. Once, for a campaign, I decided to use photocopies instead of prints, precisely because I was fascinated by the visual impact of their accentuated contrast. Naturally if the in a collection require it, I use color. But in these cases I want the color to take on an abstract value: a perfect shade against the background, or the decorative force of the arabesque created by backlighting”.

The message from Armani’s communication is: be yourself in a fine manner; do not mask yourself following trends which do not belong you, find your own style. In the Armani’s advertising, the woman acts as protagonist, not the product; when she is dressed for success, as at the beginning of 80s, or when she reaches a calm and conscious autonomy (at the end of 80s), or she re-asserts her romantic and sensual vein (at the beginning of 90s) or she claims her achieved equilibrium and her freedom to live all these different moods (latest collections). The diffusion of his advertising campaigns is also strictly controlled. Armani decided to go without top models, with the specific goal to let his fashion talk.

“They say I dislike top models, and so I never use them in my shows. It’s an old story, I don’t dislike them, but I am not convinced by the model-star equation. On the runway, I want the clothes to do the talking, to capture the desires of the viewer. Top models are personalities. What I need are pretty girls I can shape to my wavelength, who can present my clothes. I always insist on a certain uniformity of make-up and hair, to make the message more incisive. If I send Cindy Crawford, who is gorgeous, out onto the runway, who’s going to notice the dress? I know that super-models and actresses get you press, television, chatter. But the commitment I put into my work must be respected, and demonstrated in every possible way. The press ought to tell the truth about this profession, which is still a very serious discipline. It’s not about seasonal gimmicks. A beautiful dress doesn’t need crutches! When I do the casting for my shows I always look for men and women with whom people can identify, even in their imperfections. Too much beauty takes the attention away from the clothes. I am offering clothes, not racial prototypes”.

Armani controls in a very careful way communication campaigns, leaving very little room to photograph and choosing himself models, locations, colors and merchandising.

"I have always tried to find, together with the photographers who have worked with me, a language capable of giving an appropriate form to all that I wanted to express in my clothes. Images, for me, are storytellers, oracles. They must communicate emotions. I have always thought that the image (the principal means of communication for fashion) should translate and embody my style".

Giorgio Armani thinks that people have to find in the shop the same that has been communicated, not others (as it usually happens in the fashion system). Armani has been the first one to use billposting (for Armani Jeans) and, since 1984, murales (for Emporio Armani): murales, together with advertising on the newspaper, are the ways of communication Armani loves more, because of the strong visual impact. The total communication investment (from the catwalks to the market analysis) is nearly the 5% of total turnover generated.

Cinema: a communication concept in Armani

Armani's communication started under the influence of a spontaneous passion: Giorgio Armani's love for the 40's US movies. The icon is the cinema of the beginning of that period. The shift from the empirical to the scientific application comes later on and evolved thanks to a series of coherent decisions: the choice of Martin Scorsese as director for an Emporio spot, the cinema as leit motif for Emporio Armani Magazine, the creation of costumes for many movies (i.e. "The untouchables": not by chance set in the 40's) and the Giorgio Armani's public presence at the most important cinema events as the Venice Festival one, where, in the 1999, he took part in as producer of the Scorsese's movie "Il dolce cinema", a tribute to the Italian neorealismo. Step by step, Armani created a very specific identity in the consumers mind that clearly identify Armani proposal with a certain world: such an outcome comes from an extreme coherence, a continuous effort to interpret a concept at every level.

The retail concept

During the last ten years Armani assumed a stricter control over the distribution system, left at the beginning into the licensees' hands. So long he decided to acquire Antinea and Simint (before acting as licensees) in order to ensure deliveries' time and quality and the control of the brand image around the world. Considering retail Armani is, as usual, a "maniac" of details: every detail is fundamental, even the lights into the shop. A wrong combination in a shop window between a cloth and an accessory makes him suffer, so

he personally checks that sellers don't distort the equilibrium between the different items. Such a busy man uses to spend a lot of time talking to the shop assistants in Milan to transfer them the entire brand concept. With regard to the new openings, both flagship and franchising, Armani is very cautious: he only looks for the best locations all over the world and he's always concerned with the risk of an excessive exposure which could impact of the company's image (the policy of his competitor, Versace, is the opposite: Versus and Emporio turnover is similar, around 200 billions lire, but Versus stores are six times more than Emporio ones).

11. Curriculum Vitae of the author

PERSONAL INFORMATION

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WORK EXPERIENCE

- Dates
- Name and address of employer
 - Type of business or sector
 - Occupation or position held

FROM 1/12/2003 TO 1/8/2005

Trikotaza Ivkovic, 8. marta 23, Bolec 11307, Belgrade

Knitting company

Fashion and textile designer

- Dates

2004 and 2005 Manager and participant of the summer international colony "Ljetna medjunarodna kolonija Peroj" in Croatia, Pula - under patronage of the Serbian Ministry of Culture

2005 The assistant of costume designer / film "Duhovi Sarajeva" in Bosnia and Herzegovina (cooperation with Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia)

2006 Costume designer in the several students projects: "Circus" , "Three sisters" , "Kings and rings" etc.

2007 One of the project managers of regional seminar and study trip "Transfer of good practice" in Romania – Under patronage of University of Arts in Belgrade and supported by CEI and ECF foundations

From 2005 – Free-lancer / Handmade manufacturing of wedding and cocktail dresses

- Dates
- Name and address of employer
 - Type of business or sector
 - Occupation or position held

FROM 20/09/2007 TO 20/11/2007

Les Célestins Théâtre de Lyon, 4, rue Charles Dullin 69002 Lyon France

Theatre

Internship - Public Relations (work with young audience)

- Dates
- Name and address of employer
 - Type of business or sector
 - Occupation or position held

FROM 15/12/2008

Institute of Fashion Mod'Art Beograd Panciceva bb, Belgrade

Private international institute for fashion and fashion management

PR manager and Teacher

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- Dates (from – to)
- Name and type of organization providing education and training
 - Title of qualification awarded

From 1998 to 2003

Faculty of Applied arts in Belgrade, University of Arts

Costume designer

