

Running Head: OFF-WHITE “PROPOSAL”

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Off- White is a luxury fashion brand which was founded in 2013 by its American creative designer Virgil Abloh. Off-White’s success is rooted in its well designed sneakers, t-shirts, pants, and jackets. Off- White was first founded under the name “Pyrex Vision” by Abloh in 2012, however after facing an abundance of criticism for printing his logo on Ralph Lauren flannels and reselling them for over five hundred dollars, he decided to desert the name entirely (Deleon, 2013). He rebranded the next year as Off-White where he combines the ideas of streetwear, luxury, art, music, and travel and defines the brand as “the gray area between black and white as the color Off-White” (Yotka, 2018). The company was established in Milan, Italy and until this day bases its manufacturing there. The brand states this is because its “core value is to be made from the best available and particular regarding fabric, fit and fabrication” (Off-White, 2019).

Although the brand does not necessarily have a straightforward mission or vision statement readily provided to the public, through the company’s online “About” page and several interviews conducted by the founder, it is not hard to determine what they are. For one, Abloh prides himself in top quality merchandise and the brand has developed a reputation for quality by itself. Clothing and accessories do not compromise on quality. In an interview, Abloh used the “Made in Italy” quality of his clothes to legitimize the expensive price tags on Off-White’s t-shirts and sweatshirts, and as a way to make a case for the importance and timelessness of Off-White’s product line (Deleon, 2018).

The store chosen is located in Soho, New York at 51 Mercer Street. The Soho area is best known for its variety of stores that range from trendy upscale boutiques to national and international chain store outlets. Residents in the area make a median income of \$124,396. The store has two units and is two stories. It has twenty five hundred square feet. There is a total

OFF- WHITE “PROPOSAL”

population of about 19,573 in the Soho area. According to a census done in 2010, the racial makeup of the neighborhood was 66.1% White, 2.2% African American, 0.1% Native American, 22.2% Asian, 0.4% from other races, and 2.6% from two or more races. Most inhabitants are adults, with almost half 42% being between the ages of 25-44, 24% between 45-64, and 15% being 65 or older.

This actually coincides with the brand's target. Off-White's main target market are millennials, those born between the years of 1981- 1996. The targeted consumer has already graduated with their undergraduate or masters and makes around \$70,000 to \$150,000 annually. Both sexes are key customers. They are most likely not married yet and do not have any children. Key psychographics for Off- White include individuals who like to shop more online than in store and who like to wear clothing that express youth, individuality and personality. People of its target also are interested in clothes that are comfortable yet stylish, while also unique and minimalist. Their lifestyle can consist of anything from attending concerts and music festivals regularly and also shopping at Supreme and Kith to those who like to shop at Balenciaga and try new brunch places during their lunch break. Social influences include Instagram influencers and blogs.

As most brands, Off-White has a combination of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that makes the brand what it is. One of the brand's key strengths is the high quality materials the merchandise is made from and the innovative designs, hovering quotation marks being its most signature and unique one. This specific design and their logo, a four way arrow, has become highly detectable in the fashion industry. Another strength is the brand has stores in eight different countries in the world which include, The United States of America, Japan, China,

OFF- WHITE “PROPOSAL”

Thailand, Canada, Korea, Singapore and Dubai. It has also been the fastest growing luxury brand since its creation in 2013. This could be because of their several collaborations with other major brands such as Nike, Moncler and Jimmy Choo. Also, being produced by its parent organization, New Guards Group (NGG) gives the brand reliability. The brand also sells through other retail stores such as Saks, Neiman Marcus and Farfetch. Fifty-nine percent of millennials in the United States actively use Instagram and the brand is also very active on Instagram which creates another segway for new customers from its target market. Abloh takes advantage of the fact that fashion is the third most followed type of account on Instagram and posts artistic content which inspiration comes from the youth he wants to target (Donovan, 2018). “His posts speak the millennial language, knows what visuals inspire, and showcases a consistently relatable – if aspirational – presence. He focuses not only on his clothing, but also on the lifestyle that goes with it (2018).” The brand has a strong social media presence, depending largely on for promotion as well as a strong brand image.

As for weaknesses, the brand recently changed its popular and recognizable logo in September of 2019 to a face in the middle of two hands, with the words “Off” and “White™” above the hands. This might confuse customers or potential customers who were used to its old logo. The company also lacks many retail stores in The United States, which forces most of their customers to buy online or through other retailers. The cost for shipping to the United States is also expensive because products are manufactured in Milan, Italy. There are a limited production of products and a small product selection which leads to many “Out of Stock” items when viewing the online website. The brand also targets millennials which limits clientele from other demographics, and to top it off, the high prices of the merchandise make it hard for their target

OFF- WHITE “PROPOSAL”

market to afford products. A final weakness is although Off-White is a luxury brand, it is somewhat hard to determine this through their streetwear designs.

Off-White’s opportunities include the expansion of its brand products and the communication to its consumers of the expansion. Also growing the streetwear market worldwide and future collaborations with other brands. E-commerce and M-commerce are fast growing retailing channels with sixty-seven percent of millennials preferring to shop online. The brand has both a e-commerce and m-commerce platforms, however they can improve it and make it more appealing and easy to navigate for shoppers. Off-White’s vast growth was launched by engaging heavily with customers on social media. Threats for the brand include high prices limiting the target market range and economical factors such as employment affecting the brand’s sales. A threat that is no longer an issue would have been their generic logo which would make merchandise easy to be duplicated and frauded.

Two of Off-White’s main competitors are the brands Supreme and Vlon. Supreme has seniority being founded in 1994. VLONE while also a very new brand was founded two years prior to Off-White in 2011. All three brands are known for their streetwear styles and strive to target millenials, however, Supreme and VLONE are targeted more towards the male demographic. More specifically, Supreme looks to target skateboarding and hip hop cultures. VLONE mostly hip hop culture. With Supreme only having twelve locations in total and VLONE with none, both of these brands also look to target individuals who mostly shop online. They also rely on social media for promotion. While looking at both competitors, it was found that Supreme has the most Instagram followers with 13.6 million while Off-White trails closely behind with 9 million. Vlon comes in last with only 897,000. However, VLONE is not as active

OFF- WHITE “PROPOSAL”

on social media as both Off-White and Supreme. To deviate from these brands off-White must continue to remain active on social media and open more locations.

Currently the store location is set up with a Minimal layout which is very simplistic and gallery like. Upon entering the store all mannequins and racks are placed on the left and right sides of the wall allowing the customer to walk directly in the center of the store. Merchandise being on both sides of them makes it easier to find what they are looking for. To innovate this layout method I would change it into a Soft Aisle Layout. Fixtures will be arranged into groups so that customers can shop walls, move around the store easily and still find things quickly. This will be a non-permanent layout because the store location is small and will consistently be changed based on season and trends.

The concept for Off-White’s Spring 2020 collection is titled Meteor Strike. There are three trends that will be highlighted for Off-White’s Spring 2020 collection, front splits, cutouts and bucket hats. These trends are not meant to become a staple in customers wardrobe but to provide an innovation to seasonal merchandise. To showcase the trend of bucket hats I will use the emphasizing interiors Trend Towards strategy to excite customers. To go along with the space theme, upon walking into the store customers will become face to face with an assemblage of bucket hats on a fixture in the form of a spaceship about ten feet wide and 5 feet tall. Customers will be able to easily slide the bucket hats off the feature if they are interested in looking at or purchasing one. Since all bucket hats will be of the same shape, this utilizes the repetition merchandising strategy. The surprise merchandising strategy is also utilized with this feature. To showcase the cutout trend six mannequins, three on each side of the door, will be featured in a closed window display. This way, the rest of the store is blocked by customers

OFF- WHITE “PROPOSAL”

viewing from outside the store and the spaceship feature does not take away focus from the products. Customers will also be surprised when they enter the store and see the feature fixture. Rhythm as a merchandising strategy will be represented through this trend. The front split dresses will be featured of display racks in the middle of the store and grouped by together function and color. Ther merchandising strategy used to present this trend would be balance. Dresses will be displayed equally to show a unified presentation. I would also continue the use of non-store selling and utilize of celebrities, influencers, the internet and social media applications to sell products through data-mining.

By utilizing all of these methods of “Silent Selling” Off-White is sure to continue to rise as one of fashion’s most innovative brands. The strategies implemented in this proposal are sure to make Off-White the lead of its competitors, including its biggest one Supreme. The Soft Aisle Layout, merchandising strategies such as Rhythm, Balance and Surprise and the advance use of all opportunities given to the company are all key components to making this brand rise to the top and make an impression on fashion that will last a lifetime.

OFF- WHITE “PROPOSAL”

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