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BUF 1101

Term Project

Background of Y-3

Yohji Yamamoto is an influential Japanese fashion designer based in Tokyo and Paris. He was born in Tokyo, Japan in 1943. Yamamoto attended and graduated Keio University with a degree in law in 1966. Afterwards Yamamoto further studied fashion design at Bunka Fashion College, getting a degree in 1969. He gave up a promising legal career to assist his mother in her dressmaking business, from where he learned his tailoring skills. "My Dear Bomb" (2010) He is known for his avant-garde tailoring featuring Japanese design aesthetics.



This image is from YOHJI YAMAMOTO FW 2013 Ready to wear collection Furniss (2013).

Yamamoto has won notable awards for his contributions to fashion, including the Chevalier of Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, Medal of Honor with Purple Ribbon, the Ordre national du Mérite, the Royal Designer for Industry and the Master of Design award by Fashion Group International.

One of quotes that Yamamoto is most famous for is, "Black is modest and arrogant at the same time, Black is lazy and easy — but mysterious. It means that many things go together, yet it takes different aspects in many fabrics. You need black to have a silhouette. Black can swallow light, or make things look sharp. But above all black says this: 'I don't bother you — don't bother me!'" Yamamoto (2000) which he said in an interview with the New York Times in the year 2000 when asked the question, "Why Black?" by one of the reporters. Yamamoto was more notoriously known for his first brand "Y's" in which the clothes were designed in his words in order "for women to wear men's clothes. I jumped on the idea of designing coats for women. It meant something to me – the idea of a coat guarding and hiding a woman's body. For me, a woman who is absorbed in her work, who does not care about gaining one's favor, strong yet subtle at the same time, is essentially more seductive." , Yamamoto (2011). This avant garde reason to design clothes was fueled by his feeling of traditional oppression. Yamamoto feels that in order to find something of your own you need to rebel against tradition which is what his "Y's" line did. The designer continued his career with the creation of his signature line, Yohji Yamamoto, a ready-to-wear collection for men was unveiled in 1984. This collection although targeted to men, still maintained the elements of the ambiguity of gender the importance of black, and the aesthetics of deconstruction. After the creation of Yohji Yamamoto's menswear brand he began to show a decline in designs as the years went by. Reemerging in the mid 1990s. Yamamoto experienced a "resurgence of creativity rare in contemporary fashion." Mears (2001)

the designs that he created were vastly different from his work of a decade earlier, it is said that his designs became a blend of street-style realism and the basics of athleticwear, reshaped and reconfigured for a contemporary audience. In October 2002 the birth of the most influential cooperation in sports and fashion to date was created, with the launch of the 2003 Spring/Summer Y-3 Men's and Women's collection. The "Y" stands for Yohji Yamamoto, the "3" represents adidas' three signature stripes and the "-" signifies the link between the two. Yohji's Y-3 created a bridge between avant garde fashion and sportswear . This opened up a brand new market in today's world of fashion. Y-3 also utilizes artistic projects season after season, including floating runways and laser light shows in order to visualize Yohji's vision and captivate the masses. 10 years later to mark the celebration of Yohji's and Adidas's collaboration ,Yohji continued to surprise the fashion industry with new developments, in 2013 Y-3 released their first men's fragrance "Black label" in order to "Seduce the senses" Yamamoto, (2013). He then expressed that "Ten years ago, together with Adidas, we created something that did not exist before, and we completely projected the future. My desire was and is to make sportswear elegant and chic. Adidas has always been a very personal inspiration to me, and it continues to enrich my creative life." Yamamoto (2013). Today's Y-3 has evolved even further with the drop of his newest collection, Y-3 SPORT. Y-3 SPORT utilizes futuristic concepts that appeal to the contemporary city dwellers that separate themselves from normal everyday sportswear and would rather a more cyberpunk-ish utopian feel to their garments. Yohji Yamamoto said, "Sport is Y-3. It is the brand's central essence and inspiration, and the reason I approached adidas in 2001 to collaborate together. We want to be bold. This will define a new chapter in our 15-year history together." Yamamoto, (2016). The legacy of Y-3 continues the release of his Spring 2017

runway show displaying a sci-fi, technically sportswear collection of various future archetypes of man.

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Target Market of Y-3

Demographics

The brand Y-3 has two separate collections one of which being Y-3's original ready to wear brand and the other being Y-3 SPORT. The types of individuals that may purchase each collection may vary, Starting with Y-3 Ready to wear, the demographics of the majority of consumers are what "Claritas" an interactive tool that lets you examine segment groups based on demographics and behaviors would classify these individuals as an "Aspiring A Lister" the site describes these kinds of people as "urban", also that they are out and about often and spend heavily on status brands while having above average technology usage . Another categorization that would fit this demographic would be "Connected Bohemians" described as " A collection of mobile urbanites, Connected Bohemians represent the nation's most liberal lifestyles. Its residents are a progressive mix of tech savvy" by "Claritas", Lastly the final group that would be most likely to purchase Y-3 Ready to wear collection would be classified by "Claritas" as "Young Digerati" who are "tech-savvy and live in fashionable neighborhoods on the urban fringe. Affluent and highly educated, Young Digerati communities are typically filled with trendy apartments and condos, fitness clubs and clothing boutiques". This demographic also applies to the Y-3 Sports category as well, perhaps being the theoretical bridge that connects the

gap between Y-3 ready to wear consumers and Y-3 Sport consumers. Separately the Y-3 Sports consumers are diversified with more social circles of their own. This segment is referred to as “Young & Influential” a segment of younger, lower middle class households that may or may not have high incomes but are nonetheless influential in their communities and social networks and are very tech savvy. The segment is for individuals who are more preoccupied with balancing work and leisure pursuits and who live in apartment complexes surrounded by ball fields and health clubs where their sports gear would be more effective to wear. The last group that would be inclined to purchase the Y-3 Sport collection is the “American Dreams” segment. These residents are found in “upper-middle-class multilingual neighborhoods in urban areas. They are heavy grocery and convenience store shoppers, opting to prepare meals at home more than their urban counterparts in other segments.” which implies they live a more health conscious lifestyle which is more suited for a more athletic lifestyle.

Psychographics

Moving along to the psychographic portion of the Y-3 market, through my research I found that there are three psychological groups that identify best with the characteristics of a Y-3 Consumer. The first of which being the “Innovators” described by strategicbusinessinsights.com, “as a consumer group [that] exhibits all three primary motivations in varying degrees.”. The three primary motivations are ideals, achievement and self expression making the innovator the most compatible group to be consumers of the Y-3 brand in ready to wear and sports. It is said by VALS that this group “are confident enough to experiment, make the highest number of

financial transactions, have international exposure, are future oriented, are self-directed consumers, believe science and R&D are credible are most receptive to new ideas and technologies and have the widest variety of interests and activities. Next, the “Experiencer” this group has a lot of money and are very expressive they are said to be “ first in and first out of trend adoption, go against the current mainstream, are up on the latest fashions, love physical activity and have a heightened sense of visual stimulation.” by VALS these individuals would definitely shop at Y-3 as these values are the same as Yohji Yamamoto's values when he talks about his brand and the reason why he decides to do certain things within his collections over the years. Finally the group that would be inclined to buy the Y-3 collection but not as much as the others would be the “Thinkers’ who are said to have high resources. They often use technology in functional ways and are financially established. Y-3 caters to functional technology with their pieces so that could prove useful to the thinker if they are athletic and enjoy performing optimally while wanting to be comfortable. These categories of individual whether or not they are demographically aligned or psychologically aligned all of these groups would be interested from purchasing apparel from Y-3 ready to wear or Sport as they enjoy technological things and like to express themselves in one way or another, these people also enjoy a healthier lifestyle which the technological and sports aspect of the brand caters to.

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Marketing Mix Analysis of Y-3

Product Line Analysis

Yohji Yamamoto's Y-3 is a very avant garde style of clothing featuring very futuristic silhouettes with modern twists to the garments at times. There is one product line that I will be touching on, Y-3 the ready to wear collection. Y-3's ready to wear collection garments are made up of cotton, nylon, elastane and polyamide to create a plethora of pieces ranging from military jumpsuits to sweatpants to track shorts and hoodies. All of these pieces contain futuristic details

that are “Inspired by the experimental costuming of sci-fi films” Y-3 (2017). Competitor of this product line is Nike ACG collection although they are fairly new to the fashion industry as they resurrected in 2014 after being more or less defunct for years. With the hiring of esteemed designer and “undisputed king of utilitarian wear” Yeung, H (2015). Errolson Hugh reinvented the Nike ACG and brought a sense of competition to Y-3 with their ergonomic, and 3D dimensional patterns designed to grant a feel of futurism combined with urban life comparable to Y-3’s own collection. The positives to Y-3’s ready to wear compared to its competitors is that the silhouettes used provide a completely unique look as opposed to just being strictly utility focused, the collection draws a line between the futuristic concept and the utilitarian concept that allows for the birth of the avant garde look only provided by Y-3. On the contrary to the positives that come with uniqueness are the pricing that comes along with it. Compared to the Nike ACG collection Y-3 is significantly more expensive in terms of pricing.

Pricing Strategy Analysis

The price range from Y-3 ready to wear collection items range from anywhere from 75\$ for hats and other small accessories such as belts upwards to 990\$ for larger items of apparel like outerwear specifically bookbags, jumpsuits and ponchos. Y-3’s products are inherently unique due to the fact that the asymmetrical cuts mixed with high tech futurism influences utilized by Yohji Yamamoto combined aspects of well renowned brands such as Rick Owens who is known for his dark avant garde pieces and asymmetrical cuts and ACRONYM who is designed by the same Errolson Hugh that designs Nike ACG heralded for his utilitarian and technical design

prowess in order to make a new androgynous line that can only be classified as its own style. Because of this distinctive style that Yohji Yamamoto crafted the price strategy position is regarded as “Top of the line” by the fashion industry and consumers alike. This price strategy position is appropriate for the intended target market since Y-3 targets young affluent tech savvy customers. This unique and small group of individuals would love nothing more to dress how they feel/view themselves and Y-3 fits that image perfectly.

Promotion Strategy Analysis

The image of the product line can be described as an athletic futuristic style with unique patches of utilitarian aspect catered to the performance actions of everyday city life with a sci fi influence. The images below are from Y-3’s current 2017 ready to wear collection on the website

The product is advertised through shows, campaigns and sometimes short commercials funded by the company. I believe that this method of advertising is effective because as it is a high price point collection only individuals that are inside of elite social circles would be able to catch the subtle or in other words discreet advertising that Y-3 takes place in fashion shows and campaigns alike.

Place Strategy

Y-3 Products are sold through E-Commerce sites such as Barneys, Zappos and END clothing. They are also distributed in Y-3 retail stores and select retail stores across the country. This strategy is effective because affluent people like to receive their items as fast and with as minimal effort as possible as most consumers do and since Y-3 has a E-Commerce site that delivers almost anywhere customers are sure to get their product with no problem with the least amount of hassle and wait time. Customers also have the alternative of having their items shipped to a select store for pick-up if they do not mind traveling to the store. Y-3 seeks to please their customers with excellent service and quality goods ensuring consumers are always satisfied with their experience.

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