Jeeniya Dewan

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Brand Research Paper

Exploring Scotch and Soda

It’s the early 80’s and a young entrepreneur, Laurent Hompes, is at a bar in Amsterdam with his buddy, deliberating on a brand name for his men’s fashion brand. Pondering whilst sipping on a scotch and soda, it didn’t take long for the lightbulb to light. In 1985, Scotch and Soda was launched as a mens wholesale brand based out of Amsterdam. The first location was parked in an alleyway and the brand soon became known for its secret locations only known by word of mouth. Hompes wanted Scotch and Soda to stand out more than any other fashion brand. The brands’ purpose is to create a space of ultimate freedom of expression, at the same time, fully embracing the free spiritedness of Amsterdam. “Effortlessly connecting the unexpected with expected,” meant pushing the boundaries of fashion and bringing about new craftsmanship. The brand is heavily focused on sustainability, using a blend of sustainable organic fabric and synthetic fibers.

With the first launch in 1985, Hompes wanted to create a logo that was distinct and true to the brand. He wanted a logo that would define the origin. The sewing machine symbolizes craftsmanship and individuality which amplifies the brands focus. The logo plays a major part in the apparel, often integrated in the overall design of the clothing and on the hangers. The distinctive detail on the hangers makes them exclusive to Scotch and Soda. The brand believes in originality and its emphasis on subtle details is an important factor to the brands identity through inspiration from Amsterdam’s culture and arts. In March 2021, 36 years later, the brand took the initiative to change the logo. The founders wanted to create a new logo displays an “S” initial and is designed where the tip of the letter resembles a needle point and the diaphanous movement of a thread attached to the “needle”. While completely different in design, the original logo is still apparent and celebrated in the new logo by having the elements of sewing in a traditional way.

Scotch and Soda went through its first rebranding in 2001 and then relaunched in 2002. The branding was completed by three new owners who came together to create a brand like no other by applying their broad skills and love for fashion. Scotch and Soda was predominantly a men’s wholesale brand. In 2008, they launched a new concept called “Scotch and Soda Shrunk!”. This new concept was inspired by their men’s collection and was the official boy’s line. There is an apparent emphasis on shrunk because essentially the collection is of shrinking the men’s line, literally.

The brand started to see an influx of women shoppers in store throughout the years. One would think the women shopping in a Men’s only clothing brand would be purchasing a gift for their father, brother, partner, nephew, etc. Instead, the women were shopping for themselves. Scotch and soda was known for its quality and preppy styles. A fashion stylist or someone who loves to experiment with clothes would be drawn to shop like this one. The brand acknowledged the universal attraction it held and so in 2010, Maison Scotch the official women’s line launched. Now with a women’s department, the future collections displayed complementary looks with both genders. The following year, ‘R’Belle” the little sister brand line of Maison scotch launched. Following an identical concept with Scotch and Soda shrunk for boys, the brand was now complete with a men’s, women’s, and kid’s line.

In 2012, the brand released its signature scent and universal perfume, Barfly. The amber fragrance has notes of vanilla, musk, orange, sandalwood, jasmine, iris, cardamon, incense and cedar. All these notes infused together gives you their signature fragrance. Soon, the brand introduced 2 more scents that are more gender specific. The fragrance line “With Love” for women and men brought a new element to its stores and attracted new clientele. In 2019, the stores held displays of the new line. With Love for women has its own character and is full of details. It has fresh notes of bergamot and lemon as well as base notes of guaiac, sandalwood, lotus and rose. The perfume is described as an intense but elegant fragrance. “With Love for Men”, was a spicy fragrance with tops of cardamon, pitahaya and bergamot and base notes of vanilla, tonka bean and musk. As of today, these scents are slowly becoming discontinued with the brand focusing more on its signature fragrance Barfly. Barfly is a unique scent, and it works with body chemistry which becomes a personalized scent.

In 2021, Scotch and Soda went through another rebranding again in addition to its global expansions, opening 15 brick – mortar stores. The rebranding includes a change in logo, interior design in stores transitioning from its usual industrial metal and black furniture to a white creamy color and soft interior. The hangers also changed from wood and bronze hangers to a universal light oak color. The hangers after the rebranding show a less obvious gender difference between the lines. With the launch of a new brand identity, Scotch and Soda aims to push sustainability by using certified fibers that are organic such as organic cotton as well as recycled and renewable sources. From what started as a men’s wholesale brand that was hole in the wall, is now a successful global company with 232 Scotch and Soda stores worldwide.