

GUCCI VS. CHANEL RETAIL BRAND IMAGE

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Author Note

First paragraph: Bell Approach

Second paragraph: Retail Selling Methods

Third paragraph: Which fashion house has the best selling strategy (opinion-based)

Abstract

Gucci is acknowledged as one of the top tier fashion houses in the world. Being around for almost 10 decades, the luxury brand has been able to adapt and thrive in the fashion realm because of the many selling methods and tactics successfully executed. From their bold and diverse ad campaigns to opening a fashion line with Harlem native Dapper Dan in 2017, Gucci has proven to be very attentive to the world around them being one of many reasons why they are so relevant today. As competitive as fashion retailing is today, it would be untruthful to say luxury brands do not pay attention to competitors. Chanel for instance is recognized as one of Gucci's few competitors. The two brands are able to deliver their brands messaging in a way which projects exclusivity, self-love, and confidence simultaneously. Analyzing these brands through the bell approach and their retail selling methods, the conclusion of which fashion house is most dominant regarding selling strategy.

Bell Method

The Bell Method, otherwise known as the Bell Approach, is to look, compare and Innovate. The concept was made by Author Judy Bell. Top brands like Gucci and Chanel are often looking at each other's stores, comparing it to their own, and are always trying to figure out new innovative ways to make their brand/stores better. For example, According to brandstruck.co "prior to 2015, Gucci's communication was characterized by the bold, sexually provocative style, which was initiated by Tom Ford, the the brand's artistic director, and continued by Frida Giannini." After seeing that this approach/method wasn't bringing in the success that the brand wanted compared to their competitors, they made changes in the artistic department. "In 2015, with Gucci under new management, a subtler approach was initiated. The image of the brand was changed almost overnight from sleek, glossy and sexual to raw, quirky, progressive, sensual, romantic and geeky." This change in strategy and approach helped the brand to be recognized as the top 4 most luxury fashion brands in 2019.

Chanel on the other hand focuses on timeless elegance and liberated femininity. The brand is widely believed to have reinvented fashion and focuses on feminine elegance. Karl Lagerfeld was a big reason for that. He was hired in 1983 as chief designer to modernize the fashion house a dozen years after the death of its founder, Coco Chanel. When he took over, the house was floundering and barely surviving off its perfume sales. According to sltrib.com (The Salt Lake Tribune), "as head designer, Lagerfeld reinvigorated the luxury brand and grew it into a multibillion-dollar fashion enterprise while maintaining Chanel's tradition of craftsmanship and quality." Chanel accentuates its timeless modernity and promotes the concept of "uncomplicated luxury" valuing simplicity over opulence. Heritage and brand equity are built around the

company's founder, Coco Chanel and her long-lasting legacy. "Coco Chanel never followed any established fashion rules, which allowed her to revolutionize the fashion world and free women from certain fashion constraints." Through using the Bell Approach, top brands like Chanel and Gucci are able to come up with innovative ideas that help them make big changes for their brand which help them get more sales.

Retail Selling Methods

In fashion retail, the services provided are very significant because it can either make or break a customer despite how often they come into the store. Customer interaction for instance is a huge advantage in retail reason being it communicates a unique understanding to the retailer on what consumers like and dislike. Gucci tackles this head on by providing their customers with interactive fashion shows which showcase their most sought out items.

"Given Gucci's history, therefore, it is not surprising that the company has launched an immersive retail experience for its customers. Thanks to the latest technological innovations, Gucci's customers experience an interactive, immersive type of engagement that had only been previously seen in theme parks and other entertainment venues.

Life-sized screens display a fashion show with which customers can interact (Rios pg.1)." This gives Gucci an opportunity to promote their new pieces as well as learning which items consumers interact with the most. User interfaces have given retail stores the opportunity to expand their services in this e-commerce and technology dominated era. Chanel has also dabbled into this channel of service by having a gaming pop-up shop in Hong-Kong. Within the arcade games which consoles were engraved and designed with the well known Chanel logo, the brand featured its new items within these arcade games.

“Its retro arcade stations, which were aptly named after Chanel products, turned traditionally one-way experiences into interactive and responsive activities. The games were skillfully outfitted with an element of learning to – its version of “Pong” featured pixelated versions of Rouge Coco in place of the traditional paddles, giving consumers the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the brand’s new products (Daswani pg.1).”

Tech is helping bridge the gap between retailers and consumers by emphasizing interaction. Another form of interaction that appeals to the consumer is store interior. When a customer first walks into the store, the interior sets a mood and idea of what the retailer is selling. Gucci’s store in Soho is a prime example of a store interior that embodies their brand messaging, something the luxury brand aims to share with the consumer. Within the store, there are many patterns and colors that interfere with each other that makes the store stand out. Applying this to their brand messaging, Gucci aims to encourage their consumers to be themselves and stand out in a luxurious manner.

“The Gucci brand, which has undergone an ‘image makeover’ of sorts over the years under the tutelage of Creative Director Alessandro Michele, is a bold mix of clashing prints and patterns; a “Gucci Effect” that has spilled over into the fashion industry at large. Gucci Wooster is the latest destination created by the brand, offering a new way to experience the eclectic, creative and Bohemian spirit of Gucci (AD pg.1).”

The “Gucci Effect ” is able to communicate this to the consumer despite being intangible. Chanel on the other hand communicates to their consumer a sleekness and perfection when it comes to their store interiors. The Chanel store located in Istanbul,Turkey’s theme for their store interior is “Little Black Dress and Pearls”. The store interior consists of marble, black granite, and

fragmented glass, all in which project sleekness and perfection. Their perfumes are displayed below a large painting surrounded by mirrors.

“The fragrance display practically counts as a work of art, with a wall treatment in fragmented glass and mirror surrounding the product niche. Speaking of mirror, nothing says “Chanel” more than the mirrored stairwell, Marino’s homage to that of the original headquarters. Reflected in the accordion panels, the white marble steps are topped by a caramel-colored silk-wool runner with a black “necklace” pattern knotted into the field off-center(Cohen pg.1).”

To be effective pertaining to selling methods, there should be a certain consistency when it comes to the brand image. The interior of the store can serve as a channel of just that.

When it boils down to which fashion house has the most effective selling method, Gucci gets their message across much more aggressively than Chanel, making it easier for them to sell better. Even though both brands provide e-commerce, user interfaces, and interesting store displays, Gucci’s brand messaging captures a larger picture of the consumer as opposed to Chanel. In conclusion because Gucci reaches a larger demographic, it allows their selling services to be much broader and creative than Chanel, which hits the ceiling with brand messaging the majority of the time aiming at women only.

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