

COM 641
Final Written Presentation
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Final Report

Written Presentation
Semester Client: Telfar

Semester Research Topic:

Telfar, a brand synonymous with their shopper bag, affectionately known as the “Bushwick Birken” due to the previous high degree of difficulty for consumers to obtain, toes the line of centering its target audience while aiming to expand its consumer base similar to many 21st century brands. Telfar solely offers a digital relationship with its consumers, as the brand’s products are exclusively sold online, and to its possible detriment eliminates in-person connectivity to its consumers. In my research, I will explore the effectiveness of consumer brand experiences on digital brands and how it influences brand loyalty.

Semester Client Need:

Curated Consumer Brand Experience: Telfar exclusively markets and sells its products online; therefore, all consumer touchpoints are digital and lack in-person human-to-human connection. Human connection is an important component of a consumer satisfaction, positive consumer purchasing cycles, and overall helps to build and maintain a mutual relationship between a brand and its consumers. Application of human connection in the digital market can be displayed through innovative consumer brand experience events. This research reinforces brands (specifically digital brands or non-brick-and-mortar brands, like Telfar) need to implement curated consumer brand experiences (specifically, in-person pop-up shopping experiences) to influence brand loyalty.

Hypothesis/ Research Question:

How do online brands that effectively use strategic curation of in-person brand experiences, specifically through pop-up shopping experiences, impact consumers' brand loyalty?

Research Findings from Four Methodologies:

To best assess the hypothesis/ research question, 4 research methodologies were utilized: a literature review of two scholarly articles that examined the connection between curated consumer brand experience and consumer brand loyalty, an in-depth interview with a public relations executive specializing in digital and consumer experience branding, a content analysis on 4 media channels (Magazine, Newspaper, Instagram, and TikTok), and a self-developed online survey that aimed to answer the hypothesis/ research question through consumers .

Overview of Literature Review Findings:

Literature Reviews were completed for “Impact of brand experience on loyalty” by Chuan Huat Ong, Heng Wei Lee, & T. Ramayah and “Curating as a Brand Design Tool in Creative Organizations” by N. W. Nixon, I. Pitsaki, A. Rieple. Both articles emphasized the impact on brand loyalty in the utilization of curated consumer brand experiences.

Specifically, “impact of brand experience on loyalty” underscored the reality of brands’ consumers progressing beyond offered goods and services and instead consumers’ attitudes towards the brand having a significant influence on brand performance and overall consumer brand loyalty. To leverage brand loyalty, brands implement consumer brand experiences to create unique and memorable interactions with customers. Chuan Huat Ong, Heng Wei Lee, and T. Ramayah examined the three dimensions of brand loyalty (word of mouth [WOM], willingness to pay more [WPM], and repurchase intentions [RI]) alongside the four categories of brand experience (sensation [sensory], affection, behavior, and intellect [intellectual]). Within their research, it was determined that the three dimensions of brand loyalty are successfully driven by intellectual experiences – brand experiences that include elements of analytical and imaginative thinking.

In addition, “Curating as a Brand Design Tool in Creative Organizations” examined the modern use of curation as a tool for brand development and consumer brand experience. Using the

qualitative research methods of both surveying and participant observation of three established brands, N. W. Nixon, I. Pitsaki, and A. Rieple identified three utilizations of curation that strategically develops brands: co-creation (using consumers input), technology (development of meaningful connections and building bridges between complementary brands), and story (storytelling).

In total, the research found in both articles progressed from the Value Creation Theory. Proposed by Frederick Reichheld, Value Creation Theory underlines the importance of businesses or brands understanding customers' needs and the ability to innovate to efficiently meet those needs. The theory is an essential component for businesses to be sustainable and competitive in the marketplace through consumer brand loyalty

Overview of In-depth Interview Findings:

To capture a subjective viewpoint from a marketing and branding professional, an in-depth interview was conducted with Katie Krawczyk. Krawczyk is the CEO and founder of 19 Ideas Strategic Marketing Agency, a communications company specializing in bringing brand concepts to life.

The interview emphasized the importance of relating to the "human side" of a brand. Particularly, highlighting that successful communication campaigns and consumer brand experiences center human-to-human connection. "The brand voice should feel cohesive at all touch points of the brand," stressed Krawczyk. Meaning that a brand's social media, external communication efforts, and marketing goals should align to best engage consumers and effectively build brand loyalty.

Moreover, Krawczyk identified curation as a tool of consumer brand experience in that it provides a component of tailoring for a segment of the target audience, usually the most loyal segment of the audience. Effective curation highlights a loyal consumer's reason of brand loyalty while offering the consumer the tools to make a purchase. "At its core, curation aims to

answer two questions: What is the takeaway that a brand wants the consumer to have? What does the brand want the target audience/consumer to do?," said Krawczyk.

Overall, Katie Krawczyk's insight underlines the transformative potential in both curation and consumer brand experiences to create meaningful brand narratives and foster deep connections with a brand's audience which leads to consumer brand loyalty.

Overview of Content Analysis Findings:

To analyze relevant media content, a content analysis was conducted to measure media variables for 4 brands, including Telfar. The media channels consisted of a "Variety" Magazine article, a Tik Tok video, an Instagram Reel, and a "The New York Times" newspaper article.

Variety Magazine, an entertainment news magazine, published an article on Netflix's "Netflix at the Grove" pop-up shopping consumer brand experience. The article reinforced Netflix's aim to engage consumers beyond the screen. Specifically, this pop-up shopping experience utilized *strategic curation of intellectual brand experience* – through the feature of life-size replicas of recognizable Netflix characters and the offering of photo opportunities. It also utilized *limited-edition merchandise* – including themed apparel and products to extend Netflix's footprint into clothing and to appeal to consumers who may have been Netflix product collectors. All in all, both components of consumer brand experience were implemented to engage the most loyal segment of Netflix's audience.

Sol de Janeiro, a skincare and fragrance brand, published a video of their pop-up shopping experience to its Tik Tok, a social media platform, to celebrate the launch of a new product. The Tik Tok video highlighted key aspects of pop-up shopping experience to display to consumers how to best use the brand's new product. Specifically, this pop-up shopping experience utilized *implementation of product* – So de Janeiro's video showcased hand massages being offered at the pop-up shopping experience utilizing the newly launched moisturizing product. Sol de

Janeiro also utilized *themed setting* – the overall consumer experience was themed round relaxation to boost mood, with massage chairs, guided meditation, and hand massages. The music used in the TikTok added further to the theme of relaxation. All in all, both components of consumer brand experience were implemented to help Sol de Janeiro's core consumers make meaning of the brand's products.

Fenty Beauty, a critically acclaimed cosmetic brand that centers inclusivity and diversity, published an Instagram Reel (video) highlighting their college campus #ShadeMatchU pop-up shopping experiences to its Instagram account to spotlight two products and the accessibility of shades offered through the brand. The Instagram Reel staged how the brand utilized key aspects of pop-up shopping experience to engage consumers of a specific demographic to understand the Fenty Beauty products and their applications. Specifically, this pop-up shopping experience utilized *audience engagement* – by way of the Instagram caption that was directed at a specific subsection of students [HBCU students] and a special hashtag #ShadeMatchU to engage a subset of the brand's target audience. *Event Location & Activities* – the location of the pop-up shopping experience was situated in a convenient on-campus location accessible to students along with the inclusion of activities that resonated with college-aged consumers. Lastly, there was utilization of *one-to-one engagement* - makeup shade match services and makeup application consultations were offered to event attendees providing consumers the ability to be intimate with and understand the best use of the products prior to purchase. All in all, these components of curated consumer brand experience are examples of curation where the needs of consumers were met by way of tailoring.

The New York Times, a newspaper covering news and investigative reports, published an article on Telfar's "Rainbow Bag Drop" pop-up shopping experience. The article reinforced Telfar's aim to encourage inclusivity in a consumer's purchasing habits. Specifically, Telfar's pop-up shopping experience utilized the key aspect of *impact and legacy*. The writer of the article utilized consumers' thoughts on the brand by conducting interviews at the pop-up shopping experience. Many of the consumers quoted in the article celebrated the accessibility and

representation Telfar stands for. Overall, this component of consumer brand experience impacts Telfar's target audience to make a meaningful connection with the brand that extends beyond fashion trends.

In the end, each brand examined in this content analysis leveraged a media channel to highlight their consumer interaction and help to make meaning of their products in an oversaturated market. Particularly, each brand strategically implemented the theoretical approach of the Experience Economy Theory to strengthen its economic value by meeting the needs of its consumers in an innovative manner that in turn leads to creating a lasting positive impact that cultivates brand loyalty. *Experience Economy Theory*, a theory conceived by B. Joseph Pine's and James Gilmore, suggests that "An experience occurs when a company intentionally uses services to stage, and goods as props, to engage individual customers in a way that creates a memorable event (Pine II & Gilmore, 1998).

Overview of Survey Findings:

To further understand brand loyalty in the scope of curated consumer brand experiences, a descriptive survey was dispersed to 50 people, between the ages of 20-40 and who identified as Black or Latinx.

The target survey audience was determined to be Black and Latinx consumers, ages 20-40. As a black-owned millennial brand, Telfar strategically markets its products to Black and Latinx consumers within millennial and Gen Z generations.

With a response rate of 85% and a margin of error of 20%, the survey found that on average consumers who have a good experience with a brand is more likely to share their positive experience with friends and family (sharing experience with others/ word of mouth [WOM] is one of the three dimensions of brand loyalty identified by Chuan Huat Ong, Heng Wei Lee, and T. Ramayah). Moreover, target consumers are likely to engage with a brand that utilizes a

strong sense of curation in its products or services and that tailored their product recommendations. Additionally, these consumers believed that a brand's utilization of curation in a consumer experience enhanced their perceived value of a brand (perceived brand value or willingness to pay more [WPM] is one of the three dimensions of brand loyalty identified by Chuan Huat Ong, Heng Wei Lee, and T. Ramayah) and positively influenced their decision-making process for repurchasing (repurchase intentions [RI] is one of the three dimensions of brand loyalty identified by Chuan Huat Ong, Heng Wei Lee, and T. Ramayah.) Lastly, this consumer population identified unique and immersive in-store experiences, interactive online platforms or apps, and social media engagement and storytelling as factors that would enhance their brand loyalty (aligning with two of the three utilizations of curation identified by N. W. Nixon, I. Pitsaki, and A. Rieple, that strategically develops a brand: technology and story.)

Client Recommendations:

Based off my semester research conducted through literature review, in-depth interview, content analysis, and descriptive survey, these are my recommendations for Telfar:

Recommendation based on the literature review:

Application of Sensory and Intellectual Experiences – developing brand experiences that engage Telfar's target audience through sensory elements (touch, taste, smell, sight) and intellectual interactions (analytical and imaginative thinking). Research shows that these types of experiences positively influence willingness to pay more and repurchase intentions which ultimately influence brand loyalty.

Recommendation based on the in-depth interview:

Leveraging the use of a creative agency to create a brand experience – Similar to Katie Krawczyk and 19 Ideas, communication professionals and creative agencies possess extensive knowledge

on engaging consumers through brand experiences and creating pop-up shopping experiences that establish a meaningful human-to-human connection between the brand and the consumer.

Recommendation based on the content analysis:

Implement pop-up shopping experiences for new product introductions – Utilizing in-person pop-up shopping experiences to introduce new Telfar product allowing for consumers to make meaning of the new product offering and learn first-hand how a Telfar product can impact their daily life.

Recommendation based on survey:

Implement Tailored Product Recommendations – Telfar can develop personalized product recommendations through pop-up shopping experiences and its e-commerce site, to create a cohesive brand voice. Tailored product recommendations or curation enhances the shopping experience and fosters stronger connections with consumers. For example: before the point of purchase Telfar could recommend other brand items that complement the item in a consumer's online cart, items from a previous purchase, or in-person during product selection or try-on.

Work Cited

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