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The Role of Visual Identity Design in the Evolution of Luxury Fashion Brand Strategy

Jia Cai

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The Role of Visual Identity Design in the Evolution of Luxury Fashion Brand Strategy

By Jia Cai

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Fine Arts in Visual Communication Design

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May 1st, 2019
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Abstract

Fashion luxury brands have taken longer than other retail segments to understand and adapt to consumer behavior changes created by the digital revolution over the past decade. Digital and social media has created a fundamental shift in consumers expectations of their shopping experiences.

The big debate in the luxury fashion industry has been whether the integration of ‘off-line’ and ‘on-line’ actually creates value or reduces the exclusivity associated with the brands. In the past, luxury brands have relied on traditional marketing channels such as print and direct mail to engage their high-value customers. Additionally, the industry has placed an enormous focus on the in-store experience as an opportunity to differentiate through enhanced service, ambiance, and customization.

Data, however, shows that there really is no debating the benefits of going on-line any longer. The impact on performance by digital is clear, for brands that have chosen to invest in enhancing their shopping experience using digital and/or social media channels and platforms. It is not one versus the other. Instead, the two mediums need to come together to create a relevant customer journey.

The challenge is that there is not a simple repeatable roadmap to succeeding in the digital landscape. Brands need to invest in testing, adapting, and finally innovating their on-line offering to win a share of consumers’ minds.

This thesis explored the role that visual identity design plays in social media – the most heavily leveraged platform by luxury fashion brands to create
their on-line experience. The thesis ideates and iterates on opportunities through design to create a seamless browse-to-purchase experience for luxury customers. The specific experiments conducted were through the lens of a fashion re-seller called 'TELLER BLANC'.

**Keywords**

Fashion | Luxury | Digital | Social Media | Design
Introduction

Situation Analysis

The Internet is no longer optional. A small number of businesses made it an essential part of people’s lives, but a very large number of businesses have needed to adapt to the new digital reality to survive. Whole industries have re-organized themselves around a new digital standard to reach audiences and sustain growth. The question of if a business needs to go digital has become irrelevant; it is rather a question of how it should deploy digital.

One of the very few exceptions to this rule for a long time has been the fashion industry. More specifically, the luxury segment of the fashion industry. Historically, the luxury fashion industry anchored itself on exclusivity. Selling hard to obtain products, along with highly personalized services, and unique one-of-a-kind shopping experiences. All of which added up to creating brand equity. Consumers were also happy to pay the premium in order to gain access to this exclusivity and associate themselves with the branding. This created a mutually beneficial system where luxury fashion brands and their elite clientele both benefited from each other’s company.

However, times are changing for the luxury fashion industry. With the emergence of the Internet and access to information, a number of controversies emerged over the last decades in the luxury fashion industry that breaks the facade created by the mutually beneficial system. Whether it be about fashion brands that have exploitative sourcing and manufacturing practices, leadership in luxury brands caught breaking laws, or luxury fashion consumers and brand ambassadors who have been embroiled in trust-breaking situations.
These changes have caused a fundamental shift in consumer demands and behavior. Consumers of luxury fashion brands are requiring that brands source their products more ethically, that brand marketing goes beyond exclusivity to being value-based, and that brands provide authentic and original products, services, and experiences. This is very hard to do with the traditional marketing methods that luxury fashion brands have utilized historically.

This is where digital has begun to play a key role and has huge potential to be a winning strategy for luxury fashion brands. Digital allows brands to create accessible, effective, and thoughtful experiences to a wide array of customers, at scale. While some luxury fashion brands now have an on-line presence, most brands are still scratching the surface with a website and a social media page. There is still a big opportunity for luxury fashion brands to engage with customers better and create a sustainable brand strategy for their organizations.

One of the key trends that indicate this is true is the ongoing transformation of the luxury fashion industry in China. The Chinese market has adopted digital in a big way and is seeing the results in numbers. WeChat, the most popular social media platform in China, known as the “window for luxury brands in the Chinese market”, has begun to focus on strengthening co-operation with luxury fashion brands. By using innovative digital features like on-line marketplaces, targeted content, aesthetically pleasing experiences, and the use of key opinion leaders (KOL’s) that are similar to influencers in North America, WeChat has created significantly increased sales revenues for brands in China compared to the rest of the globe.
The thesis explored this opportunity through the lens of design and visual identity. In order to execute on digital offerings, design plays a key role in attracting and retaining consumer attention. With the added complexity of the higher expectations from luxury fashion shoppers, design plays an even more important role in successfully transitioning to a digital-first strategy for brands. For this thesis, a North American luxury-fashion re-seller company named Teller Blanc was used as a case study. The brand sells high-end fashion products from around the globe primarily to the Chinese and Canadian markets. The thesis tested and created opportunities to elevate the brand’s identity and proposes new ways to engage more effectively with its digital-savvy customer base.
Summary

A big opportunity that the Internet offers brands is to expand their value-added marketing strategy. Brands can add significant value to customer experiences by providing meaningful information that supplements services. By enhancing the customer experience through value-added marketing, brands can start to build organic relationships and eventually loyalty.

In the past, luxury fashion brands resisted the Internet because e-commerce had the perception of being a lesser-than experience that could not convey the heritage of the brands. This has stifled innovation in their branding and marketing strategy. Luxury is really about the customer experience, not just about the product. With the evolution of consumer behaviors through the Internet and more specifically through social media engagement, the Internet is now a valuable tool that brands need to think about from an experience standpoint. Use of text, pictures, and videos to allow customers to engage with brands and share their stories is very important to consider in the design of a future digital roadmap for luxury fashion brands.

This thesis investigated practical design applications and choices that can maintain the core differentiators of luxury fashion brands while leveraging digital to create luxurious on-line experiences. It highlights the process of investigation through design iterations and a final proposed visual identity style guide for TELLER BLANC.
Research

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Literature Review</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E-commerce 2018: Business. Technology, Society provides a deep dive into the field of e-commerce. The focus is on the concepts, terms, and empirical data that comprehensively introduces this constantly changing field. The textbook uses thought provoking content and relevant references to highlight how e-commerce is shifting the global economy.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>This book presents e-marketing planning and marketing mix tactics from a strategic and tactical perspective. Part 1 begins with setting the context for marketing planning. Part 2 discusses legal and global environments. Part 3 begins the e-marketing strategy discussion in depth, and Part 4 continues with marketing mix and customer relationship management strategy and implementation issues. This edition reflects the disruption to the marketing field based on social media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A comprehensive guide to the strategy, implementation and practice of Internet Marketing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data and references are dated; but the book overall provides a thorough review of the emergence, role, and impact of Internet Marketing.


The book focuses on the analysis of on-line strategy and development of the luxury industry, tracing the evolution of the Internet from a means of communication to a trade and distribution channel. The author provides a comprehensive evaluation and a critical assessment of the tactics required for the management of luxury brands on-line. The limitations to the book are in relation to the existing technology at the time compared to the newer digital and social media platforms/channels available currently.

**Reports**


The report examines and lists the 100 largest luxury goods companies globally, based on the consolidated sales of luxury goods in the 2014-2015 fiscal year. It also provides an outlook on the global economy; an analysis of merger and acquisition activity in the luxury goods industries and discusses the key forces shaping the luxury market.

The report is a joint analysis by Altagamma and McKinsey on digital luxury experiences and omni-channel decision journeys of approximately 7,000 luxury shoppers across eight geographies, four product categories, and three price-points.


The survey and results report has two major objectives. (1) To gain insights about current spending patterns and future priorities, from marketing and other business leaders responsible for digital marketing, and (2) To examine trends as compared with the 2013 survey trends. The report focuses on the amount spent on digital marketing and on what, as well as what roles the marketing function plays and how it is changing.


The seminal report consists of fifteen articles, published as a special issue, on fashion marketing of luxury brands. The articles are grouped by the following topics: luxury status/values, luxury consumer behavior, luxury brand management, and luxury brand counterfeiting—even though many of the articles include information relevant to at least
one other topic. With authors representing thirteen different countries (and probably more if country of origin were to be considered), this issue on marketing of luxury brands is truly international in scope.

**Articles**


The article provides a thorough analysis of the current state of digital platform, Sina Weibo, in China and the impact of social media engagement on luxury fashion brands; with data on revenue performance for brands and influencers.

10 T Timms, M. 2015. *Digital: the one fashion luxury brands can’t keep up with.*
http://www.theneweconomy.com/

The article explores the resistance to digital in the luxury fashion industry, as well as need to take control and shift the perception of digital to an opportunity instead of a challenge.
When conducting the thesis research, the target audience emerged as three primary persona types.

1 Fashion Brands (e.g. Teller Blanc – the fashion reseller profiled in this thesis)
2 Visual Identity students and professionals
3 Fashion Industry students and professionals

**Persona 1 – Fashion brands**
The thesis project is intended to showcase the increasingly important role of visual identity design in branding strategies of fashion companies. A key question that is top of mind for these companies is how to effectively leverage social media to appeal to rapidly evolving tech-savvy consumers in a way that is scalable and efficient. While there are a number of considerations, this thesis reviews and illustrates examples of how design plays a role in answering this question. During the ideation and solutioning phases of the thesis project, Teller Blanc’s CEO, Olivia Wang, was interviewed and surveyed in order to understand the key concerns and priorities of this persona type.

**Persona 2 – Visual Identity students and professionals**
The thesis project demonstrates an application of visual identity design principles in a specific industry, luxury fashion. The supporting visual identity style guide that accompanies the research is meant to spark design ideas in terms of the potential for brands to connect with consumers through visual design. The style guide has been designed to generate curiosity in design students and professionals in terms of both the fashion industry applications and the interconnectivity between design and social media technology.
Persona 3 – Fashion students and professionals
Similar to persona type 2, the thesis project demonstrates the role of design in the luxury fashion industry. However, for this persona type, it showcases the potential strategic decisions that professionals can make by using design principles as a guideline to make and implement branding decisions.
Process: Methods

Overview

In order to test the thesis, an iterative design process was followed to ideate and design solutions that meet the future needs of TELLER BLANC - the luxury fashion reseller brand profiled in this thesis.

The process began by understanding the brand and its current environment. Discussions with the founder, Olivia Wang, provided insights into the history of the brand, customer and demographic insights, as well as the future desires of the founder for the brand and company.

After synthesizing the current-state understanding, a series of design applications were developed to test out and create options for future-state branding and design strategies for TELLER BLANC. These iterations were evaluated with Olivia and eventually finalized into a finished visual identity style guide.

About the brand

TELLER BLANC is a luxury fashion apparel reseller. The founder, Olivia Wang, is an urban planning designer educated in Paris. She was inspired by design and fashion in France and opened an on-line luxury fashion reseller business after moving to Toronto, Canada. She uses a Chinese social media platform called WeChat to share product information daily with her customers and manages transactions through e-payment services. By managing the end-to-end purchase process on-line, she has been able to grow to a decent volume of customers around the world – the majority of her current customers residing in China and Canada. Right now she has two warehouses in each of these countries and carries more than 25 authorized designer fashion brands, contributing to approximately $580,000 in annual revenue.
The founder of TELLER BLANC, Olivia Wang, provided key demographic data points. This data was utilized during ideation and design phases of the thesis.

**Key Data**

Sex: 90% female  
Age group: 19-40  
Education: University educated  
Ethnicity: Primarily Chinese, Canadian  
Employment: Student, Employees, Self-employed  
Household income: $80,000+ annually  
Additional Comments: Majority of customers purchase products for themselves or as gifts, not to re-sell
Original Logo

Teller blanc is a type of hydrangea flower. It originates from China and is very popular in France. It is also the founder’s favorite flower. She liked the way it represents her Chinese background, as well its relevance to the French aesthetic. A single hydrangea flower actually consists of many individual smaller flowers. All the smaller flowers group together to form what looks like a beautiful flower ball. The founder chose this flower to indicate that her reseller business contains many designer brands under one umbrella. All the brands put together make a beautiful flower—TELLER BLANC.

Currently TELLER BLANC only has this logo to represent the brand’s identity. During the early stages of her business, this logo was used on-line as a profile picture and as stickers on product packaging. This logo currently has too much detail and may not be best-suited to apply on other applications, such as promotional materials and signage. In addition, the visual identity of the brand needs to have more elements and be consistent as the business expands quickly.

Figure 1: Original logo of TELLER BLANC
Brainstorm

Figure 2: Brainstorm Maps
Logotype Experiment

Figure 3: Testing different font types
**Logo Design**

Through use of a simple and clean font, the logotype gives the target audience immediate recognition of the brand’s name. All letters are of equal width and in upper case. This presents a neat look to the audience and is easier to read. Letters have rounded corners to give the audience a feeling of softness. A square border can indicate similarities to a stamp or label. It represents the traditional methods where resellers added their own sticker onto the designer brands’ tags that they sold. So, a square border is used to illustrate TELLER BLANC as a reseller.

**Primary square logo**

![Figure 4: Testing different logo weights](image)

Figure 5: Logo design methodology

" = Height and width of the logo type
Secondary logotype

Figure 6: Testing different logotype weights

TELLER BLANC

TELLER BLANC

TELLER BLANC

TELLER BLANC

Figure 7: Final logotype
Symbol Elements Design

To fulfill the visual identity of the company and set it up to be able to design promotional material in the future, a few symbols have been created to reflect the brand’s story.

An individual small flower was selected from the hydrangea to create two fundamental symbols and it has three variations of the symbols that can be used in different situations. It is a responsive design concept. The symbol elements are ready to be used and the actual form can be changed based on the circumstances.

People usually appreciate the full ball of hydrangea flowers and don’t pay attention to its individual smaller flowers. However, the individual flower has been selected as a reference to showcase a different perspective and also to create a different way of putting the flowers together as a background wallpaper. By doing this, the design translates the old logo elements into contemporary symbols without loosing the founder’s initial wish for the brand.

Figure 8: Reference for individual flower of hydrangea
Symbol design experiment

Figure 9: Experimenting with symbol designs
Symbol design final and variations

Figure 10: Final Symbols and two variations
App Symbol Design

Current Page               Other Page

Home Button

List Button

Cart Button

Me Button

Figure 11: App buttons design
Along with classic black and white colors, gold has been selected as a primary color to represent the success story of TELLER BLANC as well as the sophistication and elegance that the brand brings to its customers.

**Gold**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RGB</th>
<th>205,163,73</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CMYK</td>
<td>16,32,82,5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEX</td>
<td>#CDA349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMS</td>
<td>117C</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As secondary colors, pink and blue have been chosen to represent the femininity and strength that fashion brands can empower customers with. Secondary colors can be used for events and promotions.

**Verdana** was chosen as the font, a humanist sans-serif font, to give the brand messaging a contemporary yet personal look-and-feel.
Process : Results

Through the observations gained in the methods phase of the process, a new visual identity style guide for TELLER BLANC has been designed. The consolidated guide can be viewed in the following pages. The guide has been developed with TELLER BLANC’s marketing and branding team as the audience.
Brand Guideline 2019
01  About us
02  Logo
03  Color & Typography
04  Icons
05  Business System
01

About us
Brand History & Our Vision
“I want to make fashion easy to access, no matter where in the world you are.”

– Olivia Wang (Founder of TELLER BLANC)

TELLER BLANC is a luxury fashion apparel reseller. The founder, Olivia Wang, is an urban planning designer educated in Paris.

In 2016, Olivia was inspired by design and fashion in France and opened an online luxury fashion reseller after moving to Toronto, Canada.

By managing the end-to-end purchase process online, TELLER BLANC has been able to reach and grow our global customer base. Currently, the majority of our customers reside in China and Canada.

We believe that fashion is a universal language spoken across cultures and it should be accessible around the world. Social media helps in spreading latest fashion designs and in developing a new way of shopping online.

By the end of 2019, we plan to launch a new built-in program within social media apps to increase brand exposure and make the overall online shopping experience easier.
02

Logo

Design & How to Use
Primary Logo

Through the use of a simple and clean font, the logotype gives the target audience immediate recognition of the brand’s name. All letters are of equal width and in upper-case. This presents a neat look to the audience and is easier to read. Letters have rounded corners, to give the audience a feeling of softness.

The primary logo uses a square border. It is meant to draw similarities to stamps or labels. It represents the traditional methods where resellers added their own sticker onto the designer brands’ tags that they sold. So, a square border is used to illustrate TELLER BLANC as a reseller.

Clear Space

One “T” height space from the square

Minimum Size

Digital = 64 pixels height
Print = 1.5cm height
Maximum size on top of backgrounds

The maximum size of the logo is related to the media it is placed on. The Primary logo can be placed on top of a picture or a patterned background.

The maximum size of the logo is one logo distance from the short side edges.
Secondary Logo

The Secondary logo is a wordmark. It is only used on small or narrow spaces when the square logo is not applicable.

**TELLER BLANC**

Clear Space

One “T” width space from each side

Minimum Size

Digital = 16 pixels height
Print = 0.4cm height

**TELLER BLANC**

Maximum Size

Digital = 64 pixels height
Print = 1.5cm height
Recommended Usage of the Logo
Unacceptable Usage of the Logo

Using shadows on logo

Stretching logo out of proportion

Too big on an image

Disturbing background

Use secondary logo when primary logo is not applicable
Primary Colors

Along with classic black and white colors, we use gold as a primary color to represent our success story as well as the sophistication and elegance that we bring to customers.

Primary colors are recommended for usage on logos, stationary, and other major applications.

Black
- RGB: 0, 0, 0
- CMYK: 0, 0, 0, 100
- HEX: #000000
- PMS: 419C

Gold
- RGB: 205,163,73
- CMYK: 16,32,82,5
- HEX: #CDA349
- PMS: 117C

White
- RGB: 255,255,255
- CMYK: 0, 0, 0, 0
- HEX: #FFFFFF
- PMS: 629C

Secondary Colors

As secondary colors, we use pink and blue to represent the femininity and strength that fashion brands can empower customers with.

Secondary colors are recommended for usage on special events, and promotion materials.

Magenta
- RGB: 168,30,77
- CMYK: 26,100,56,13
- HEX: #A81D4D
- PMS: 220C

Pink
- RGB: 241,142,181
- CMYK: 1,56, 3, 0
- HEX: #F18DB5
- PMS: 2037C

Aqua
- RGB: 152,216,222
- CMYK: 38, 0,13, 0
- HEX: #94DEE2
- PMS: 629C
Typography

Print and web font is Verdana (Regular and Bold). It is a humanist sans-serif font to give our brand messaging a modern yet personal look and feel.

Regular: Title and text

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

Bold: Headline

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0
04

Icons
Design & How to Use
Hydrangea Flower

Teller blanc is a type of hydrangea flower. It originates from China and is very popular in France. It represents our founder’s Chinese background and its relevance to the French aesthetic.

A single hydrangea flower consists of many individual smaller flowers. All the smaller flowers group together to form what looks like a beautiful flower ball. The founder chose this flower to indicate that her reseller business contains many designer brands under one umbrella. All the brands put together make a beautiful flower – TELLER BLANC.

Hydrangea Symbols

Hydrangea symbols have been created to reflect our brand’s story. They are part of the visual identity of our brand and can be used on marketing and promotional material.

Three variations of the symbols have been created as a responsive design package to be used based on the design requirements.
How to use hydrangea symbols

Patterned wallpaper
Symbols on applications
05

Business System
Stationery and App
Stationery

Thank you card, business card, envelope, and receipt template.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>QTY</th>
<th>AMOUNT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Portrait SS2019 Maxi Dress, Blue  Size UK 4 (US 6) SS2019050100666</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>CA$650.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Product total     CA$650.00  
Shipping costs     CA$15.00  
HST@13.0%          CA$84.50  
Order total     CA$749.50
Shopping App

Homepage

List Page
Shopping App

Shopping Cart

TELLER BLANC

Immi
Short dress in blue stripes
$288

Size: 6

Edit | Remove

You may also like

Immi
Homestyle shirt in White
$288

Immi
Top with pleat in White
$288

Immi

Select All

Check out
Process: Evaluation

To gather feedback on the thesis and visual identity style guide, interviews were conducted to gather feedback and future considerations to supplement the thesis insights and outcomes.

Participants

The following three individuals participated in the interviews. Each of these individuals were selected to represent one of the three persona types highlighted in the target audience section.

1. **Olivia Wang** – CEO, TELLER BLANC Inc.
   TELLER BLANC is the luxury fashion reseller company that has been utilized as a case in this thesis. As a direct contributor to the case details used to test this thesis, as well as a recipient of the final output, Olivia was a natural fit to be one of the evaluators. She provided direct perspectives on usability of the style guide, feedback on design, as well as future considerations.

2. **Raphael Rajan** – Manager, Strategy Consulting, Deloitte
   Deloitte is a global consulting organization with expertise in several industries, including Fashion and Retail. A key report, Global Powers of Luxury Goods 2016 – Disciplined innovation, that was used in the research phase, was published by Deloitte. Raphael is involved in advising companies on how to plan and execute brand strategy in the digital age as part of his job. So, as an evaluator, he was able to share overall feedback on the thesis, observations on the market trends, and implementation considerations.
3 **Shray Mehra** – Associate Director, Innovation, Creative Destruction Lab (CDL)

CDL is one of Canada’s most prominent seed-stage start-up incubation programs for technology-based companies. Given that TELLER BLANC is a technology-based luxury fashion reseller and the core application of this thesis is design in social media technology, Shray was ideally suited to provide feedback on the technology ecosystem trends, innovation, and long-term strategic considerations.

**Interview**

Format: 60 minute in-person interview

Key topic areas and questions were shared with participants prior to interview, along with the thesis and visual identity style guide, for the purpose of evaluation. Key topics included:

- Evaluation and feedback on the overall thesis
- Evaluation and feedback on the style guide
- Feedback and discussion on the state of the luxury fashion industry
- Feedback and discussion on the role of design in branding strategy
- Feedback and discussion on the impact of technology on user experience
- Discussion on future considerations

Notes were taken during the interviews on the participants comments and have been synthesized in the following section, Evaluation Results.
Key Takeaways
The feedback and discussion of each of the participants has been synthesized and summarized as key takeaways. This feedback is meant to be supplementary to the visual identity style guide, as additional information and considerations for the reader to utilize the thesis findings in a practical manner.

1 Olivia Wang – CEO, TELLER BLANC Inc.

What works well
• Loves the logo. Appreciates the simple and clean logo-type and said that it would be easy to remember and associate with her brand for her customers.
• Didn’t mind the removal of the flower from the current logo, since it is incorporated consistently in other elements of the style guide. She said the new logo is less distracting without the flowers.
• Excited about the contemporary look and feel of the refreshed design and style guide. The modern attributes of the design speak to her customer demographic better, who are generally young working professionals.
• She liked the use of primary and secondary colors and appreciates the messaging of sophistication, elegance, and women empowerment behind the choice of color schemes.

What could be better
• As her business grows over the next few years, Olivia is considering utilizing the web as another platform to grow her business. She wanted to know how the largely social media and mobile-based experience showcased in the style guide can be used for web applications in the future. She would’ve liked to see those considerations included.
She also talked about the latter end of her user’s experience; which is the payment process. She was curious to know if there are any additional considerations to ensure that the user has an enjoyable purchase experience.

Future Considerations

- Overall, Olivia is happy about the outcomes of the style guide and confirmed that it maintains the core business and brand values she hopes to represent for TELLER BLANC in the market. She is looking forward to utilizing the learnings from the thesis and plans to roll out the new branding and design in the near future.
- She expressed that she will be looking to leverage social media more in the future while on-boarding new brands and selling to customers, potentially in new geographies and across additional demographics. Some future considerations would be around how this visual identity and design might need to evolve if the target audience changes.

2 Raphael Rajan – Manager, Strategy Consulting, Deloitte

What works well

- Agrees with the overall assessment of changing consumer habits and desires. Shared that Generation-Z now play an increasingly vital role in impacting brand performance. Companies are needing to shift quickly from their Millennial strategy to a Gen-Z strategy.
- Confirmed the reluctance of the luxury fashion industry to change in the past, as well as the success stories of those who have. In his experience, working with retailers, those that adopted social media and digital strategies early have already setup themselves up exponentially for future success. Raphael agrees that technology and design are not optional parts of
business strategy anymore and that it must be a more central part of decision making.

- Raphael liked the overall design and applications of the visual identity style guide. Shared that the aesthetic was consistent with what Deloitte’s own Digital and Design studios aim to create – simple to use, functional, and delightful to the user.

What could be better

- More analysis on the financial value created by the implementation of technology strategy and design considerations could be helpful in convincing the readers and companies on the direct business impact of these investments.
- An implementation roadmap would have been useful to guide the user, in this case TELLER BLANC, on how to practically shift from its current branding to the new proposed branding and design strategy. A change management timeline and approach would have been helpful to introduce customers to the change in a positive way and roll-out the refreshed branding with high impact.

Future Considerations

- Raphael shared that business and strategy decisions on technology and digital considerations in the future are much more short-term (3-5 year time-frame) in nature, compared to the past where businesses made longer-term (5-10 years+) investments. He commented that it would be important to think about the roadmap closely and weigh the investment options carefully. Technology and design decisions should be scalable investments.
3 Shray Mehra – Associate Director, Innovation, Creative Destruction Lab (CDL)

What works well
• Shray provided highly positive feedback on the design aspects of the thesis. He expressed that many of the technology start-ups that he works with focus heavily on the functionality of their products and services, and don’t pay enough attention to the design and experience aspects of their business. So, by incorporating design as a driver of customer engagement and value for TELLER BLANC, he believes this will in-fact allow Olivia and the company to create a better customer experience and ultimately drive sales.
• He also likes the fact that TELLER BLANC is a fully-digital business and that the thesis explore the role of technology as a primary driver of value in future business strategy. Although he is not deeply aware of the dynamics within the luxury fashion business, he drew many parallels to other consumer businesses in retail and service-oriented businesses.
• He confirmed that the design aesthetic and principles used are in line with success stories of some of the digitally enabled start-ups that he works with. Shray expressed that clean and neat design choices are appealing to users in the “Instagram-filter-age” and is also versatile and adaptive as the companies grow.

What could be better / future considerations
• Coming from a cutting-edge technology world, Shray felt that social media is only just the beginning. In a world where Blockchain and Internet of Things are the new reality, he shared that the next step would be to see how the luxury fashion industry could leverage some of the newer exponential technology in the short and long term to truly disrupt how products and
services are delivered. Social media is the baseline that all companies need to begin with, but the thesis consider the implications of future technological opportunities.
Conclusion

While there are many generic digital strategies that are implemented across industries, the fashion industry faces a unique set of differences from other industries. It is not enough to simply create an on-line presence, facilitate transactions, and provide customer support like other industries. Fashion brands, especially those in the luxury category, need to create an on-line experience that matches their off-line brand while simultaneously keeping up with rapidly evolving technology and consumer behavior trends. This is tough to execute for any company, but by using visual identity design as a core part of the branding strategy development and implementation, it is possible for luxury fashion brands to achieve a brand experience that resonates with consumers.

Social media platforms are a prime channel within which companies can focus their digital strategy efforts. Creating, iterating and applying modern visual identity design principles to the brand content on social media can create a seamless and even luxurious experience for customers.

To summarize the thesis observations and findings; luxury fashion brands need to incorporate 3 guiding principles when developing brand strategy roadmaps:

1. Luxury Fashion brands must accept that we are in the digital age; where customer engagement is expected, relationships are real-time, choice is infinite, delivery is on-demand, change is constant, and technology enables everything we do. Brands must build and design for digital.
2 Online Visual Identity is the gateway to the new 'first impression'. Brands have a small window before consumers metaphorically and in some cases figuratively swipe left or right on their products. To ensure that their customer’s attention is attracted, engaged, and retained, brands must utilize modern design techniques and aesthetics that speak to what matters to new and evolving desires of consumers.

3 Visual identity design must be scalable and responsive. Technology is continuing to evolve and so should design, especially in the luxury fashion industry where each season brings a new wave of change and influence. Designing in a way that core brand guidelines have longevity, but at the same time supplementary brand guidelines can adapt to changing needs will be important in the delivery of a consistent brand experience.
Appendix

Bibliography


T Timms, M. 2015. *Digital: the one fashion luxury brands can’t keep up with*.

http://www.theneweconomy.com/
Credits

Image Credits

Wang, Olivia. TELLER BLANC current logo. 2016


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