Creativity and Marketing

This is a long-overdue study of creativity and marketing for the 21st century that is packed with delights. Creativity is central to the real world of marketing, yet as technology has completely reshaped marketing activity, books on creativity have not kept up – until now! Combining theory, empirical evidence, and case studies, just a small snapshot of the imaginative, eclectic content includes clean beauty, art co-creation for luxury brands, and using artificial intelligence to design recipes and flavours for beer. I greatly enjoyed reading this book and hope that you do too. It is an excellent text for undergraduate and postgraduate students, scholars, and marketing practitioners.

Charles Dennis, Professor of Consumer Behaviour, Middlesex University.

Creativity and Marketing: The Fuel for Success

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

To Vincenzo (Grillo) and Vincenzo (Forciniti) because they've always been there for me.

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Preface

To date, marketing is about constantly innovating to deliver successful strategies and provide new customer solutions (Grewal, Noble, Roggeveen, & Nordfält, 2020; Inman & Nikolova, 2017; Pantano, Priporas, & Stylos, 2018; Pantano & Vannucci, 2019). The ability of managing new and creative approaches and appraising the relative role and value in the marketing development would secure the company's profitability, resulting in the longevity of the company and its brands (Mazerant, Willemsen, Neijens, & van Noort, 2021; Meesuptong, Jhudra-Indra, & Raksong, 2014; Slater, Hult, & Olson, 2010). However, it goes beyond the development and marketing of new products. Thus, also marketing discipline requires new visions, artistic talents, communications strategies, and so on.

In spite of much discussion about creativity and innovation (Beverland, Micheli, & Farrelly, 2016; Christensen, Noeskov, Frederiksen, & Scholderer, 2017; Coelho, Augusto, & Lages, 2011; Hemonnet-Goujot, Manceau, & Abecassis-Moedas, 2019; Merlo, Bell, Mnguc, & Whitwell, 2006; Reinartz & Saffert, 2013; Titus, 2018), few marketers still demonstrate a remarkable ability to respond creatively and cope with the marketing uncertainties. For this reason, there is a need for a strong piece of work collecting and synthetising the actual fragmented contributions, from the creativity in strategic marketing planning and marketing mix, to the creativity in store design and consumers' salesperson relationships, from the creativity in the brand management and communication, to the creativity of artificial intelligence in new product development.

The aim of this book is to combine these contributions in a way that is accessible for academic researchers, students who want to understand creativity as part of their expertise in marketing (including branding and communication, retailing and store design and new product development), and for practitioners who are experiencing the need of new creative approaches to the marketing strategies. This book is designed to strengthen the overall understanding of the creative opportunities in marketing. In particular, it encourages readers to adopt future-facing, creative approach to marketing management.

The book will consist of three sections: (1) Creativity in marketing management, (2) Creativity, design thinking and innovation, and (3) Creativity challenges and opportunities for marketing. Chapters included in the first section investigate creative marketing strategies and the fundamental role of creativity in communication strategies and planning, with recent and relevant supporting case studies. Chapters included in the second section mainly investigate design thinking to

develop new products able to better meet market expectation, and to innovate in marketing. Chapters included in the third section investigate the actual challenges for marketing and the opportunities, from the risk of creative messages on brand reputation to the successful management of virtual (fake) influencers, to guide scholars on teaching creativity to marketing students.

Thus, this book provides a strong collection of theories, empirical evidence, and case study applications synthesising the emerging research on the creativity for marketing management in an accessible way. Seeking to understand how marketers might take advantage of creativity principles, this book proposes empirical and theoretical contributions, and case studies that further offer new and provocative solutions. Enjoy your reading!

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Section I

Creativity in Marketing Management

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Chapter 1

Creative Marketing and the Clothes Swapping Phenomenon

Claudia E. Henninger

Abstract

Swapping as part of collaborative consumption is not a new phenomenon per se, but might gain increased importance after the recent COVID-19 pandemic that has seen a shift in consumer attitudes, consumption, and disposal behaviour. Swapping as one form of collaborative consumption, however, is currently neither mainstream nor target towards the general population, but rather a niche population (secondhand consumers). With sustainable issues (environmental, economic, and social) remaining a key concern, and consumers seeking to dispose of their garments, swapping might become an increasingly attractive alternative, yet currently it may not be communicated as such. This chapter explores the potential of creative marketing communications to enhance the uptake of swapping in order to overcome a key challenge in the industry: fashion waste.

Keywords: Collaborative consumption; swapping; fashion Industry; creative marketing; sustainability communications; challenges

Learning Outcomes

- To gain a better understanding of the fashion industry during the COVID-19 pandemic which magnified sustainability issues it is facing.
- To investigate current issues in the fashion industry.
- To define and critically evaluate collaborative consumption and swapping practices.
- To explore what type of creative marketing swapping events utilise and how these could be enhanced further.

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1. Introduction

This chapter provides an insight into collaborative consumption in the fashion industry (here swapping practices), thereby centring on creative marketing, which, ideally, enhances the meaningful novelty of an item and thus, moves away from competing solely on price (Andrews & Smith, 1996; Fillis, 2002; Fillis & McAuley, 2000). Fillis and McAuley (2000, p. 8) point out that 'creativity can be messy, unexpected, a mystery, or merely frustrating', yet for marketers it can also be very rewarding, as it provides an opportunity to look outside the figurative box and focus on interrelated aspects. To explain, swapping, the exchange of idle capacity without paying an access fee (Henninger et al., 2020), could be seen as the combination of secondhand fashion and 'retailing', yet due to its lack of a monetary exchange, its association with sustainability and the sharing economy, meaning can be changed from being solely transactional to becoming emotional – an aspect that is looked at within this chapter.

This chapter puts an emphasis on events that have dominated the majority of 2020: the COVID-19 pandemic. Although it could be suggested that this pandemic is (hopefully) a one-off event and thus, may be dated in relevance, it is argued that COVID-19, is just one in many events that have impacted the fashion industry and magnified issues surrounding sustainability (e.g. Blazquez, Henninger, Alexander, & Franquesa, 2020; Brydges & Hanlon, 2020; Henninger, Alevizou, & Oates, 2016). To explain, sustainability issues have been discussed since the 1960s, when people became more conscious of the impact their consumption practices have on the natural environment (e.g. Brown, 2011; Peattie, 1995). In the 1980s and early 1990s, media attention centred on labour law issues, which re-surfaced with the collapse of Rana Plaza, a factory accident, in which thousands lost their lives (Business of a Better World, 2012; Parveen, 2014a, 2014b). Moreover, Channel 4's (2010) Dispatches programme has reported on 'fashion's dirty secret', thereby uncovering 'shocking' working conditions in fashion companies in the UK. Thus, it may not be surprising that there has been increase in academic publications focussing on modern slavery and its legislation in the fashion industry (e.g. Benstead, Hendry, & Stevenson, 2019).

Thus, COVID-19 in this chapter is used to illustrate challenges the fashion industry is facing and that have been magnified as a result of the pandemic, yet it is argued that it remains relevant for the future, as the issues highlighted remain and need to be addressed in order to create a more sustainable future. Creativity marketing is one solution that can enable organisations to communicate with their current and potential customer base and create a relationship bond that has the power to facilitate more sustainable consumption, as will be outlined in the chapter.

2. The Fashion Industry Pre- and Post-COVID-19

The twenty-first century was predominantly concerned with creating a more sustainable future, with the United Nations (UN, 2020) having moved 'sustainability' from a simple buzzword to becoming a top global priority. Sustainability's

most iconic definition was published by the Brundtland Commission (WCED, 1987) as focussing on the current generation's needs without compromising those of future ones, thereby centring on social, environmental, and economic aspects and its related issues (Athwal, Wells, Carrigan, & Henninger, 2019; Henninger et al., 2016). Until quite recently, media outlets covered Greta Thunberg's call for climate action (Carrington, 2019) and the various events organised by the Extinction Rebellion (2020), yet times have changed. With the COVID-19 outbreak, sustainability has arguably taken a backseat, with fashion retailers currently fighting for survival, and thus, potentially spending less on sustainability measures as originally anticipated (Berg, Haug, Hedrich, & Magnus, 2020; Brown, 2020; Orlova, 2020).

Pre-COVID-19 the fashion industry could best be described as a thriving sector, being the third largest manufacturing industry, only overtaken by the automotive and technology sector, and estimated to be worth US$1.4 trillion in 2018 (Berg et al., 2020; Lissaman, 2018). Growth rates in 2019 were predicted to be between 3.5% and 4.5%, and thus, seen to continuously increase (Danziger, 2019). The economic worth of the industry and the growth rates highlights two key aspects: first, fashion concerns every single person, as it provides a basic commodity (WRAP, 2020a) and is more than simply a trend. Fashion in the sense of garments, showcases our personality and belonging to social groupings (e.g. hipster, punk, and goth), it highlights our desire to be unique and creative, as well as our lifestyle. As such, fashion visualises who we are or who we want to be (e.g. Myzelev, 2013; Powell & Gilbert, 2009), which can be enhanced through creative marketing, by focussing on meaning (Mkhize & Ellis, 2020). Second, the fashion industry, as alluded to, is a key employer, as manufacturing fashion is highly labour intensive and supply chains are long and complex spanning often across the globe (Henninger, Alevizou, Oates, & Cheng, 2015, chapter 6). Yet, the economic worth and the industry's glamour, enhanced by catwalk shows and TV series, for example, *Top Model*, come at an ethical and environmental cost, such as labour law violations, modern-day slavery, and waste, with garments being wrongfully disposed of in landfill (e.g. Environmental Audit Committee, 2019; Henninger et al., 2016; McFall-Johnsen, 2020; UN, 2019). The latter aspect can be linked to the Environmental Audit Committee's (2019) *Fixing Fashion* Report, which highlights that the current consumption and production patterns (take–make–use–dispose) are leading to a 'throwaway culture', hyper consumption practices, and waste problems in the UK and other countries.

Enhanced by the emergence of the fast fashion (take–make–use–dispose) phenomenon, clothing production has doubled between 2000 and 2015 (WRAP, 2020a), with companies increasingly competing on price as opposed to meaningful novelty (creative marketing) (Andrews & Smith, 1996; Blazquez et al., 2020). The cheap prices in retail stores enhance the consumers' 'fashion appetite' (Sharma & Hall, 2010), which has environmental costs in that more raw materials and finishings are needed, and CO_2 emission increased as products are delivered to the end-consumer, as well as social costs, with manufactures feeling the need to cut corners (e.g. safety measures and wages) in order to stay competitive (Blazquez et al., 2020; Henninger, Alevizou, Goworek, & Ryding, 2017; Henninger et al.,

2016; Skov, 2008). To explain, the increased pace of fashion consumption and the pressure to produce items that are 'cheap and cheerful' can have devastating consequences, as witnessed in the Rana Plaza incident in 2013 that saw thousands of garment workers lose their lives (Burke, 2013; Parveen, 2014a, 2014b; WRAP, 2020a).

The year 2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic brings forward further challenges as the fashion industry will be 'faced with 27 to 30 percent contraction in global revenues' (Berg et al., 2020, p. 5), and is 'currently focused on crisis management and contingency planning' (Berg et al., 2020). Various fashion retailers and well-known department stores had to go into administration or reduce their physical stores in an attempt to stay afloat, which had and still has consequences across the supply chain (Vogue, 2020). Jobs in the retail sector, as well as along the supply chain, are lost due to current stock that remains unsold, and orders being cancelled (Vogue, 2020). Whilst the post-COVID-19 world accentuates social issues in the fashion industry, environmental issues have, even for just a short period, improved, as the standstill of manufacturing sites has meant reduced pollution, in form of CO_2 emission, and consumers becoming increasingly conscious of the impact their purchases have on the natural and social environment (Berg et al., 2020; Edited, 2020; WRAP, 2020b).

Thus, we are currently at the proverbial crossroads, in that we can try to go back to the way things have been pre-COVID-19, or we take the opportunity and foster change by creating a new 'normal', thereby refocussing on the 'oxygen' of marketing: creativity (Geoghegan, 2020). This chapter explores the following research questions:

(1) Whether and how organisations are currently utilising creative marketing to promote their swapping events.
(2) How could creative marketing be used to overcome perceived risk?

3. New Opportunity – Swapping and Changing Consumer Attitudes

3.1. Collaborative Consumption and Swapping

As aforementioned, waste in the fashion industry is a key issue as it can occur as pre- and post-consumer waste (Philip, Ozanne, & Ballantine, 2019; Weber, Lynes, & Young, 2017). This chapter focusses on the latter (post-consumer waste) and the UK context, where the average consumer disposes of 30 kg of garments and textiles annually per capita (WRAP, 2012, 2020a). Fast fashion has enabled any individual to access garments, which on the one hand increased consumption, and on the other hand the creation of waste, as the cheap price tags seem to justify a decline in utilisation (WRAP, 2020b). Over a 15-year period between 2000 and 2015, garments have been worn less, with 20% of these discarded items ending up in landfill, where they may sit for over 200 years to decompose, depending on the material (Close the Loop, 2020; Ellen McArthur Foundation (EMF), 2017).

Pre-COVID-19 sustainability had taken centre stage, with fashion organisations actively trying to incorporate measures to counteract social and environmental issues. The industry has seen dramatic changes, with the emergence of the circular economy, that moves away from the linear process of take–make–use–dispose, to closing the loop, by reutilising 'waste' (Henninger et al., 2020; Henninger, Jones, Boardman, & McCormick, 2018; McKinsey, 2019). Currently the annual worth of pre-maturely disposed garments globally is US$500 million (EMF, 2017), thus it may not be surprising that new business models have emerged that are often described as 'disruptive', and capitalise on these 'waste' materials and/or idle capacities (Armstrong, Niinimäki, Kujala, Karell, & Lang, 2015; Henninger, Bürklin, & Niinimäki, 2019; Henninger et al., 2018; Mukendi & Henninger, 2020). The most prominent examples of disruptive innovations in the fashion industry are *Rent the Runway*, a rental service that allows consumers access to garments for a specified timeframe in return for a fee and without transferring ownership, and *Depop*, a re-commerce platform that facilitates the selling and purchasing of mainly used items, thereby transferring ownership (Battle, Ryding, & Henninger, 2018, chapter 3; Hu, Henninger, Boardman, & Ryding, 2018, chapter 3; WRAP, 2020a). More recently, swap shops have emerged and although swapping is not new per se, but rather has been in existence as long as mankind (Belk, 2014), it not only remains a niche market, but also lacks investigations from a marketing communications perspective (Henninger et al., 2019). Swapping falls within the remit of collaborative consumption and is seen to be a more environmentally friendly alternative, as 'waste' materials are re-looped and garments' useful lives are extended, without any monetary transactions (Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Iran & Schrader, 2017; Lang & Armstrong, 2018).

Collaborative consumption in simple terms implies exchanging goods and/or services (e.g. Botsman & Rogers, 2010). The exchange can be between individuals that are familiar with each other (e.g. family and friends), referred to as *sharing-in*, or between strangers (*sharing-out*) (Belk, 2014). The latter has been enabled through technologies, and more prominently social media, which allows people to connect without any physical boundaries, thereby overcoming time/space constraints (Park & Armstrong, 2017). The concept of collaborative consumption has been discussed as early as the 1970s, with key contexts including the automotive and tourism industry, with only more recent work focussing on the fashion context (Armstrong et al., 2015; Bardhi & Eckhardt, 2012; Botsman & Rogers, 2010; Lang & Armstrong, 2018; Tussyadiah & Pesonen, 2016). Even though there is a trajectory of collaborative consumption research, there is no consensus on what it entails (Henninger et al., 2019; Iran & Schrader, 2017). Felson and Spaeth (1978) indicate collaborative consumption includes any activity that brings people together and 'collectively' consume a good or service. This, however, has been criticised as being too broad, as having coffee in a café could then also be seen as collaborative consumption. Botsman and Rogers (2010) narrowed down the definition to include 'traditional sharing, bartering, lending, trading, renting, gifting, and swapping' (p. xv). Although this provides a good baseline, there are still some challenges with this definition, seeing as there are different modes of acquisition and ownership (re-distribution, non-ownership, and permanent transfer)

involved. Whilst providing a clear-cut definition is beyond the scope of this chapter, understanding the challenges associated with it are key, as these are mirrored in the communication strategies used to promote collaborative events, more specifically swap shops, which is discussed later on in this chapter. Here, in line with previous research (Belk, 2014; Henninger et al., 2019; Iran & Schrader, 2017), swapping is defined as an exchange that can happen between individuals that either know each other or are strangers (online or offline), thereby re-distributing the ownership of a swapped garment, without any monetary exchange.

Collaborative consumption, including swapping, has been described as more environmentally friendly business models, seeing as they are utilising 'waste' and idle capacities, by re-looping these back into the economy, and thus extending their useful life (e.g. Philip et al., 2019; WRAP, 2020a). This aspect might be even more important in the post-COVID-19 world, in that two in every five people in the UK have had a clear-out during the lockdown months, thereby, on average, 'disposing' of 11 items (18 if accessories, such as shoes, bags, and jewellery, are included) (WRAP, 2020b). Although a majority of people surveyed by WRAP (2020b) indicate that they prefer to donate unwanted garments to charities and might keep these items until charities have re-opened, 20% of these items have already ended up in landfill. It is also noteworthy to highlight that the disposable options mentioned in the survey did not explicitly mention swapping. A reason that could be provided here is the fact that swap shops can be stigmatised as being too 'alternative' or 'hipster' and thus, exclude individuals who do not associate with these social groupings.

3.2. Consumer Attitudes, Swapping, and Creative Marketing

One positive outcome of the recent pandemic has been the change in consumer attitudes, in that consumers are posing more questions and consider the impact their purchases have on the social and natural environment, with Orlova (2020) pointing out that we can anticipate 'a shift in the consumer mindset' that is expected to accelerate even further post-COVID-19. Similarly, WRAP (2020a) insinuates that consumers, who have been classified to love shopping and seen to be value and trend driven, are increasingly interested in alternative fashion models (e.g. renting, swapping, and re-commerce). This could provide an opportunity for swap shops (here also referred to as swapping events) to become a more popular opportunity to 'dispose' of garments, whilst at the same time refreshing one's wardrobe. Although consumer attitudes are changing, the uptake of swapping events may not, which could be in line with barriers that have previously been identified (Armstrong et al., 2015; Battle et al., 2018; Becker-Leifhold & Iran, 2018; Henninger et al., 2019; Lang & Zhang, 2018; Pedersen & Netter, 2015), such as the quality of garments that are being brought to swaps, hygiene aspects, availability of sizes, infrastructure (accessibility and availability of swaps), and status. Some of these barriers to utilising swapping events could be overcome through creative marketing and effective communication strategies, which is explored in the following section.