

THE ROLE OF THE AESTHETICS IN THE MAKING OF A BRAND

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Abstract:

The aim of this paper is to distinguish the role of the aesthetics in the creation of a brand. Aesthetics is a new model of marketing and it guarantees to the firms the possibility to address to the consumers through a variety of sensory experiences and, as a consequence, it brings benefits both to the consumers and to the firms by promoting customer's satisfaction and loyalty. Those companies which are aware of the importance of creating a brand identity may get on the market a preference among consumers, its can add value to products and can impose higher prices. ZARA Company is a successful model succeeding from the beginning to use the aesthetics' advantages to create its own identity. ZARA, the main store of the INDITEX Group (Industria del Diseño Textil SA) is an already well known international brand, its most important feature being the transfer for the retail sector together with the imagine that reflects in the territory of several countries. Therefore, through company's name, logo, website, own style, corporate and brand expressions, we will try to illustrate how this company managed to create a positive image among customers using aesthetics.

Key words: the aesthetics in marketing, ZARA's identity, themes, products, presentations, publications

Introduction

In a world where most customers have their basic needs fulfilled, it is necessary for any organization, regardless the field of activity from which it comes, to realize that may benefit from the use of the aesthetics.

The term "aesthetics in marketing" refers to promoting sensory experiences related to products, designed to contribute to the brand's organization or identity.

The aesthetics in marketing, compared to other areas, refers to structural and referential qualities of the aesthetics of an organization or brand that are working together. While some of consumers' perceptions are direct, others are cognitively mediated. Satisfaction may be given both by the inherent qualities and structural features of the product and by the meanings

conveyed by the aesthetic image of an organization or a brand.

Nowadays, the role that the aesthetics plays in a firm is that of a main element of differentiation regardless the activity filed from which the firm derives from. Moreover, the success of many companies in competitive markets is not due only because of the high quality products or services, but also of using the aesthetics. In any field the differences between successful and less successful companies are observable in the general aspect of the spaces of production: starting with the company image, its logo and website, followed by exterior design such as: store façade, show windows, shop entrance, the floor and the lighting system, workers' uniforms and ending with audible and olfactory environment; briefly, the

shop's aesthetics is a very important and particular element in the differentiation of its main competitors.

The importance of the aesthetics in the making of the identity. ZARA - a successful model

The identity creates image both to the company and brand. Aesthetics is a powerful source for the impressions and reactions that costumers have about an organization or a brand. A very well consolidated identity based on aesthetics must represent the starting point of any effort aimed to gain and retain the clients.

The identity management should be the concern of many internal and external functions, of departments and specialists in graphic design, communication and environmental design. And so, the exhaustive, systematic and strategic integration of various components of identity through aesthetics is found in the very heart of identity management in the future. As a consequence, one must pay attention when choosing the firm's name and logo or the site's structure, as well as defining the company's style and themes.

Launching the name and the logo.

The logo helps costumers to find the shop, to know what it sells and to recognize the brand. So, the first ZARA store was opened on a central street in La Coruña and it was supposed to be named ZORBA, in the honor of the character performed by the favourite Ortega's actor, Anthony Quinn, but the company didn't get the permission to use it, so it played with the words until this feminine and exotic name was conceived. The logo that company used from the beginning is a simple, classic and suggestive one as the name of the company. In all the stores and sites, ZARA logo is capitalized, using a classic pattern for writing and one color for all four letters. ZARA logo on

websites or in other articles is written in black color which normally is associated with mystery and darkness, but, in this case, the black color symbolizes sophistry, elegance and sensuality. Regarding the logo on the store façades which is outlined using dark colors, it appears on a light whitish background. ZARA stores can be easily recognized due to its common light logo.

The website uses predominantly the name and the logo of ZARA company. The site, www.zara.com, is built around a sophisticated sense, its role being to lead traffic of the web-visitors towards the locations from the points of sale of the company. It acquires a sense of elegance and modernism as the brand's products, emphasizing on their appearance and functionality. At first sight, we can point out that the site offers, primarily, a lot of information about the company, it is not over loaded, but a simple and suggestive one that has the role to inform the users about what is new about ZARA.

The visitors may not buy various articles – such as clothes, perfumes etc. – online, otherwise, this fact respects the brand strategy that encourages the users who access the website to visit the ZARA stores for a direct experience.

Brand identity. The specialists discern three types of identity: monolithic identity, brand identity and guaranteed identity (Schmitt, Bernd; Simonson, Alex, 2002). In many cases, organizations with monolithic identity have specialized departments that perform interlinked activities. If companies prefer brand identity, the main company is little known by the consumers, because its identity is not present on the market. ZARA company also preferred a brand identity and that is the INDITEX Group, many clients have little information about this company. Identity elements are heavily used for brands (see the attractive packaging, the labels, the promotional

materials, the advertisements), but poorly used for the main company. The guaranteed identities are hybrids of the ideal types of the monolithic identity and brand. Mostly, these provide what is the best in each: in the case of a guaranteed identity, the company is the one that benefits from the brand identity and vice versa. The guaranteed identity can be frequently observed in the fashion industry too.

Style. From the beginning, ZARA company managed to create its own style that can be easily recognized by the target customers. Actually, ZARA products are a perfect combination between elegance, simplicity, unicity, modernism, quality and reasonable prices. ZARA stores created a very good image about their services and products appreciated by the clients due to the employees who do their job with professionalism and their various articles that are offered for sale.

Themes. ZARA's main theme is to offer for sale fashionable clothes. ZARA is also interested to propose secondary themes related to the months of the year, seasons, different tendencies that manifest in fashion and that's why ZARA may be associated with novelty theme, especially, the theme of innovation in fashion.

The analysis of corporate and brand expressions in ZARA company

According to the "4 P" of the marketing mix, we can distinguish four main categories of identity elements: the properties, the products, the presentations and the publications (Schmitt, Bernd; Simonson, Alex, 2002). The "4 P" are the highest level of analysis, constituting in the same time the four main components of expression of the identity and image management. In addition to this, they also correspond to the competence level of those who deal with aesthetics in an organisation: when we talk about "properties", we

may refer to specialists in esthetics and in space design (for instance, architecture firms, specialists in interior design), talking about "products", we may refer to competent managers and engineers, while we mention "presentations", we have in mind graphic and packaging firms; nevertheless, talking about "publications" we may refer to advertising agencies, public relation agencies and consulting firms.

Properties. Talking about properties related to ZARA company, we can set the following elements: the headquarters, the offices, the retail space and the storehouses. The headquarter of ZARA company is also the headquarters of the INDITEX Group placed on the logistics platform Galacia, La Coruna, which is a port nearby Arteixo city having the largest surface of the INDITEX headquarters. Another peculiar feature is the shape of the offices, its are cube-shaped and have a futuristic tint.

Shops location. ZARA pays attention where the stores are going to be built and the company always choose the best commercial locations from all over the world. Company's strategy is based on the viral marketing clients and intends to occupy large and spacious spaces with many windows and situated in central areas.

Interior and exterior design of ZARA stores. Store's characteristics – such as the exterior design: façade, show windows, shop entrance and interior design: the interior walls, the floor, the ceiling and the lighting shop – do naturally contribute to the creation of its own style. As a result, the prototype façade is linear being used to ensure a consistent image across the network of stores. The show window has the role to convince the client to enter the shop but in the same time it also manages to create a unitary image about the company. All the ZARA stores have show windows in dark colors and the

passer-by cannot see inside. This is a marketing strategy in order to exert a stronger influence on the exposed merchandise, assuring a more attractive arrangement of goods and a more efficient lighting.

ZARA contrived to realize a balance between the exterior and the interior design for each store. The interior walls are used to segment the shop space between sales areas and areas that upholds the sale. On the one hand, the stores attract through luminosity and have many mirrors that induce the sensation that you are in a larger place than it really is. On the other hand, the walls are painted in bright colors. The floor does contribute to maintaining the conditions of cleanliness and protection of the exhibited goods and the ceiling has a role in sustaining the lighting system and the pipes.

Products. Another element of the brand identity refers to products, among the most important elements from this category one can easily notice the specific attributes of the goods or services, namely, assortment of offered products.

The assortment of products occupies a dominant place in the trade policy of a firm. In its concrete form, it deals with the material goods that are provided to customers of a selling area. The assortment is limited and profound, ZARA being specialized in clothes and accessories.

ZARA addresses to a quite large public. Each store presents the following three lines of products which are designed not only for men and women but also for children (from babies to sixteen years).

The products have a specific design, a short time of execution and a wide range of products. The control parameters are: the design, the well organized management, good production capacities, special logistics, well trained people in the production

process, raw materials and a high capacity of production (CNN, 15 June 2001). In the production process, there are some important aspects that ZARA always keeps them in mind such as: quality, services, flexibility and very good working conditions.

Unlike most famous brands from the fashion sector that produce fall/winter and spring/summer collections, ZARA does renew its collection almost every month. The clothes sell very well and quickly. Renewing constantly its articles, the firm estimates that it is always capable to satisfy its clients by offering them the last trends, without being afraid of a commercial failure. Furthermore, each article comes in 10-15 000 copies. Limiting its own production, ZARA tends to reinvent itself day by day, proposing to its clients certain exclusiveness.

Presentations. The elements from this brand category refer to exterior aspects of the product such as: the pack, the price tags, the origin labels, the bags provided for free or the bags that have an inscription with the brand's name.

The package. ZARA uses those paper bags of different sizes and dark blue color. The company's name is written on the both sides of the bag in a classic manner, using beige color which is in contrast with the color of the bag and so the company's name stands plainly out. The labeling includes all the mentions of the brand. The images are the signs that illustrate the product and also offer technical information regarding the storage conditions of the clothing: how to wash or clean its and many other pieces of information that are likely to be known about the product.

Publications. ZARA publishes catalogs and brochures for its clients in order to promote their products. It is well known that the company chose an interactive relation with the clients, there are neither conventional, aggressive or

discreet advertising, nor bright partnerships or media collaboration. There are no posters, TV commercials or print.

Statistics reveal that in general any retailer of light industry and fashion spends on average 3,5% of their income for advertising, while the INDITEX Company allocates less than 0,3% of their profit in this direction, for all the owned brands, inclusive ZARA. Ortega does sustain that the stores' interior, its show windows are good enough to run all the necessary activities in order to promote the company (Business Week, 4 April, 2006).

All of these do not prove anything else but that INDITEX Company created a very known and genuine brand without investing massively in promotion, but just satisfying the needs of the market. Last but not least, customer service plays an essential role in promoting the company and the leaders claim that at this chapter the company excels. Company's target is to have as much interaction with the customers as possible. It can be even said that the most important company's promotion strategy is the *power of word* which helps it to personalize company's services and in the same time to communicate with the clients at the lowest possible cost.

Conclusions

The importance of aesthetics proved to be a real benefit for organizations. In this way, the companies that succeeded to use nimbly aesthetics, they hold a competitive advantage in any market sector. ZARA Company is a very eloquent example regarding aesthetics use for differentiation in the textile industry.

Identity elements are very well differentiated, having a special role to create an image and an identity for a firm. Instead of having an advertising budget, ZARA prefers to invest in design, namely: in a careful "construction" of prices, in the frequent renewal of stocks, in furniture, in the elegant setting of stores and in finding the most central locations. ZARA stores have a strategic location, the shop must be accessible and situated in elegant quarters or in malls where the shopping is encouraged. ZARA managed to create a very strong image about the company and an own style easily recognized by the loyal customers.

ZARA company is a successful model that became in time a source of inspiration for the main competitors: Mango, H&M are just two of the companies that profited from ZARA experience. All things considered, ZARA becomes more and more "the wave of the future" in the international fashion industry.

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