Haute Ecole

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ICHEC

BRUSSELS MANAGEMENT SCHOOL

How can a brand-new startup take advantage of inbound marketing in order to enter the fashion industry and develop its activity?

Mémoire présenté par:

Justine DECHAMPS

Pour l'obtention du diplôme de

Master's degree in International Business and Management

Année académique 2019-2020

Promoteur:

Mr. Jacques FOLON

Boulevard Brand Whitlock 2 - 1150 Brussels

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First, I would like to thank my promoter, Mr. Jacques Folon, as well as Mrs. Sabine Godts, my relay person, for their help and their advices in the construction of my thesis.

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And finally, I would like to thank my family and some of my ICHEC companions that have accompanied me throughout my thesis and have helped me by sharing with me advices and their experiences. And I would like to express my thanks especially to my parents, that have re-read this thesis and that have helped me correcting it.

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On my honor, I certify that I have read the aforementioned documents and I confirm that the Thesis presented is original and free from any loan from a third party who is not correctly cited. "

As part of this online filing, the signature consists of the introduction of the thesis via the ICHEC-Student platform.

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"The game has changed. Everyone knows that the Internet represents one of the biggest cultural shifts since the printing press, but I think society has been slow to recognize that it represents the biggest shift in history in how we do business. Like, ever" (Gary Vaynerchuk). In addition to that, the emergence of social media has changed the world, its way of functioning and the way of doing business. Social media have become an effective tool concerning the marketing field.

And an industry that is considered perfectly suited for social media is the fashion industry. Social media and networks have enabled fashion companies to connect with their customers and interact with them through social networking technology. Thanks to social media, the fashion industry is now able to identify and anticipate fashion trends and behaviors.

The power and influence of social media on fashion is undeniable. During the past decade, the presence of fashion designers, fashion stylists and fashion companies has been growing drastically. There has also been the emergence of social media influencers, mainly thanks to Instagram. And it has been increasing since then. Fashion influencers are booming. It has become a huge trend on social media, and it has become the perfect marketing tool for fashion companies.

Thesis Origin

I've always had huge interest in fashion and also in digital marketing. I've always been very interested in influencer marketing and I spend a lot of time on social media. Since the growing success of Instagram, more and more Instagram pages are related to fashion. There has been an explosion of fashion influencers. Even on YouTube, there are more and more video on YouTube of people showing their last fashion purchases. With the coronavirus, Tik Tok has also exploded. This social platform has also become a major key for fashion brands to expose their products.

I've also had the opportunity to make two internships related to digital marketing. The first internship was in a startup called BellePaga, which is a Belgian startup selling alpaca wool clothes in store and online. Then, I've made my second internship in a service startup called Bifabelo, located in Jette, that is sending packages between companies and to Africa. They didn't have a website, nor did they have social media presence. Therefore, I have worked with them on those projects.

Therefore, I have chosen to make a thesis related to those both interests of mine: fashion and digital marketing.

Furthermore, I have always wanted to create my own fashion boutique. That has always been a goal to me and something I needed to achieve in life. Therefore, I have seen this thesis as an opportunity to learn more about digital marketing, and more specifically related to the fashion industry. I have acquired more knowledge and I've decided to start my own online fashion boutique called Spicy Sweetie. Thanks to it, I've then learned many more things concerning the digital marketing field.

Thesis objectives

The objective of this thesis is to see what the many advantages of inbound marketing in the fashion industry are. What are the major advantages in inbound marketing that fashion brands can leverage to increase their presence online and to the eyes of the customers? Therefore, I've come to the following research question: "How can a brand-new startup take advantage of inbound marketing in order to enter the fashion industry and develop its activity?". In this thesis, we will see the major advantages of inbound marketing in the fashion sector and how fashion companies can leverage those.

Methodology

The methodology of this thesis is an applied research, meaning that we will first start with the theory to further investigate the practice, the real life. This thesis will be articulated into three main parts, starting from theoretical concepts and ending to practical cases. This thesis will be presented under the form of a funnel. We will start with broader concepts in order to refine them during this thesis.

The first part will be theory related to the fashion industry. We will first start by defining key concepts related to the fashion industry, the fashion e-commerce. The first chapter will be an introduction to the fashion industry. The second chapter will be a general overview. The third chapter will be the biggest players within the fashion industry. Then, the fourth chapter will be about the sector trends. The fifth chapter will be about the impact of the Covid19 on the fashion industry and the e-commerce. The 6th and 7th chapter will be Porter and Pestel analysis of the fashion industry. And finally, the last chapter of this first part will be about fashion e-commerce.

The second part of this thesis will be related to digital marketing theory. The objective here is to define key concepts that are related to the digital marketing field, by defining more precisely digital marketing, inbound marketing, influencer and social media marketing. Each of those concepts will then be applied to the fashion industry. The first chapter will be about digital marketing. And the second chapter will be concerned with all the inbound marketing levers such as SEO, content marketing, blog marketing, social media marketing, influencer and email marketing. The third chapter will be small case studies of famous brands that have had huge success thanks to inbound marketing and influencer marketing. And then, we will construct three hypotheses to answer the research question.

And finally, the third part will be concerned with practical cases. We will see how those concepts are useful and advantageous in real life, in the practice. Therefore, we will make a market study by asking questions under the form of a questionnaire to people online. Then, we will analyze data of this online quantitative survey made in the purpose of identifying what are the main inbound marketing techniques that seem the more effective in real life. The goal here is to check whether the data acquired through the online survey confirms the theory.

And then, there will be a small case study on my own online brand-new fashion boutique in order to apply all the theory learned throughout researches. This case study will also add further in-depth information.

Finally, we will confirm or refute our hypotheses based on our observations and quantitative data acquired during the online survey and case study.

The impact of the Covid19 on the realization of this thesis

The pandemic of the Covid19 has not impacted very much the realization of my thesis. I was not supposed to write about an event or something of that kind. Therefore, I've not been very impacted when writing my thesis.

I've been a little impacted because during the pandemic, it had become more difficult to go to libraries to borrow books or even to sit there to write this thesis. I often went to the library to be in silence and without any distraction in order to be productive and write. However, libraries have closed their doors for a certain period of time, and I had to write it at home.

It was also a bit difficult to stay focused on the realization of my thesis because it was the only thing I had to do at a certain point. We couldn't go out, do activities, see friends, so it was difficult to stay motivated on making research and writing the thesis during this period.

However, during this period, I've been able to focus on what I wanted to do and to open my first fashion boutique. It was the perfect time to start my boutique because I had acquired the knowledge in the digital marketing field related to the fashion industry. Therefore, this pandemic has allowed me to focus on all the different steps I had to take in order to open my boutique. Starting with a small business plan, followed by the administrative paperwork. I have had the time and the focus to make all of this because of the lockdown.

In addition to that, it has appeared that the lockdown had been beneficial for the e-commerce and businesses that were present online. The e-commerce has exploded during the pandemic. People were feeling safer when purchasing online than going into physical stores. Moreover, fashion stores were closed. And the only possibility for people to buy clothing was to do it online. I think it was a good period to start a fashion boutique.

Part 1: Introduction to the fashion industry

1. Introduction to the fashion world

"What you wear is how you present yourself to the world, especially today, when human contacts are so quick. Fashion is instant language." — Miuccia Prada

"Fashion is part of the daily air and it changes all the time, with all the events. You can even see the approaching of a revolution in clothes. You can see and feel everything in clothes." — Diana Vreeland

"Don't be into trends. Don't make fashion own you, but you decide what you are, what you want to express by the way you dress and the way to live." — Gianni Versace.

Fashion allows people to express themselves. It is a form of expression. The expression of one's style, one's personality, one's character. A lot of people and fashion consumers use fashion as an art they want to express. Fashion makes people feel more arty, more creative, trendier and more accomplished. Nowadays, fashion has a huge place in the world. There are more and more fashion bloggers, fashion influencers and fashion-based social media.

There are many different styles in fashion. It allows people to choose which style they prefer and which one they want to express. It is completely a way of expressing oneself. Many people will choose styles that are trendy, while other will choose some more artistic and creative styles. Some will buy in shops, other will wear their own designs and their own ideas. There is no rule in fashion. There is a lot of styles and pieces for everyone to find their own style and preferences. Fashion is a beautiful way for people to express their minds. Fashion allows people to express themselves, while being creative, innovative, and beautiful.

Fashion is a part of the construction of our identity. Appearance has a huge role in our daily lives. Through appearance styles, people express their identity as people, and they express what they hope and want to become. For example, youth people allocate more time to their public appearances. They are mainly influenced by their peers for creating their identity, and fashion is one of their main concerns for being part of a group. When a piece of clothing is made famous by a movie star, a singer, or an influencer, college students are the first ones that will follow that trend.

Fashion trends come and go. The success of a trend in fashion lies in the way the society is interpreting and judging this trend. The impact of the trend will be measured with the barometer of social acceptance. Today's consumers accept more easily a trend, even if it costs a lot of money. Nowadays, people pay more for fashion pieces and their cash is extended by the easy provision of loans provided by banks. Even some brands enable their customers to purchase from them on a credit basis, with offering them monthly payment options or even allowing them to pay for articles after they have received them.

Fashion can be distinguished between everyday fashion or elite fashion, also called haute couture. Everyday fashion is an interactive process. In everyday fashion, individuals try to project their bodies in a distinctive manner in the form of clothing style. Fashion is a form of non-verbal communication and a social etiquette, allowing individuals to communicate their values in the form of clothing, and that's what makes fashion so important in our daily lives.

1.1. The fashion and apparel industry

The fashion and apparel industry include a wide variety of pieces with a wide variety of textiles. Most often, it is subdivided into four categories: womenswear, menswear, childrenswear and sportswear (O'Connel, 2020). The process of clothing production requires fashion designers, patternmakers, merchandisers retail buyers, and salespeople. Concerning the manufacturing part of the process, fashion companies requires the help of assemblers, sewers, and pressers. Another part of this industry is the promotion of clothing. Companies fall back on fashion models, marketing and advertising experts, and support and administrative staff. In addition, economically, this sector is a key segment for investment, trade, worldwide employment and revenue (Vault).

1.2. Fast fashion vs Slow fashion

Before digging into the fashion world overview and its current trends, let us first start with some concepts that need to be defined. Fast fashion is the activity of imitating trends and styles of clothing from big brands and big names in the fashion industry. These fast fashion products are sold at a low price and offer the possibility to people to buy trendy clothes at a cheaper price. It allows people to enter fashion cheaply. However, those fast fashion companies are being held accountable for their negative impacts on the environment. Indeed, fast fashion businesses can create up to eleven collections a year, while standard fashion houses only produce 2 collections a year. According to the magazine Green Fashion Week (2019), it is hard to imagine that producing eleven collections a year, with a turnaround time of two weeks between paper design to production to retail, at a cheap price is conceivable. Indeed, it is thanks to unethical practices that it is being possible for those companies to produce that much amount of collections and clothing. Fast fashion companies use cheap labor workforce in countries such as Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Cambodia. In those countries, labor laws are also easily excluded, and garments mass production is very cheap. In addition to that, mass production has a huge impact on the environment. It releases billion of tons of greenhouse gas in the atmosphere. This industry also wastes a massive amount of materials and textile in order to be faster and to follow the trends.

Uniqlo, H&M, Zara, Beneton, ASOS, Primark, Victoria Secret, Forever 21, New Look, etc. are fast fashion brands. They offer trendy pieces of clothing at a very low price. However, those same brands are well known for their bad working conditions, low wages, children labor, slave-like working conditions, etc.

On the contrary, slow fashion aims at decreasing the speed and the production of clothing, while decreasing consumption. They promote the careful consideration when buying a piece of clothing. Slow fashion aims at producing ethical clothing without compromising on the quality, by paying attention to the materials used. Their main goal is to produce clothing that will last in time. They promote longevity. However, prices for those clothing are much higher than fast fashion products. However, is it worth it? Many influencers start to follow this line of conduct and promote the slow fashion industry on their social media platforms.

Amour vert, Reformation, Eileen Fisher, Everlane, Cuyana, etc. are brands which people are less aware of, but that offer slow fashion qualitative products.

1.3.   B2B, B2C and C2C

According to Jackson and Shaw (2008), there are three categories that regroup the global fashion industry: Business to Business (B2B), Business to Consumers (B2C) and more recently, Consumers to Consumers (C2C).

B2B "refers to the commercial relationship that exists between businesses in a fashion supply chain" (Jackson, Shaw, 2008, p.3). For example, a fashion B2B transaction may occur between a fashion retailer and a textile manufacturer.

B2C "refers to the commercial relationship that exists between a fashion brand and the end-consumer of the products supplied by that brand" (Jackson, Shaw, 2008, p. 3). B2C and B2B concepts need to be clearly understood because they are two separate commercial scenarios.

In addition, there is also a new category that has emerged more recently. It is the C2C fashion transaction, meaning that individuals are buying and selling fashion between them.

1.4.   Categories of fashion brands

The global fashion market is complex and contains variety of different types of fashion business. According to Jackson and Shaw (2008), fashion business brands can be categorized such as designer brand, luxury brand, fashion brand, retailer brand, and retailer sub brand.

Concerning designer brands, "established or rising major designer signature personality is the key attraction" (Jackson, Shaw, 2008, p. 263). It is different from a luxury brand and "it is worth drawing a distinction between living designers whose name is the brand and luxury brands which have new designers continuing a legendary name" (Jackson, Shaw, 2008, p. 263).

A fashion brand is primarily a business of design, production, and it franchises, wholesales, and licenses its products and has some retailing. These are companies such as Nike and Levi's.

Some examples of retailer brands are Topshop, Oasis and Next. They do not manufacture clothing, but they design and source their products from their retail network that comprises stores, e-commerce and concessions. Retailer sub brands are brands owned by a retailer and that is sold in the retailer's own stores.

2. General overview and industry figures

2.1. General overview of the apparel market

The global clothing market is expected to keep growing in value, going from 1,3 trillion US Dollar in 2015, to 1,5 trillion in 2020 (O'Connell, 2020). These figures indicate the rise of the worldwide demand for clothing and shoes.

The three world regions with the biggest apparel market shares are first the European Union, then the United States and then China.

As already mentioned in the introduction of the fashion and apparel industry, there are four main categories in the apparel and footwear market: womenswear, menswear, childrenswear and sportswear. According to O'Connel for Vault (2020), womenswear was the bestselling category of the fashion industry in 2017. Its sales amounted to 643 billion of US Dollars. Sportwear is showing a high level of growth, which amounted to 173,68 billion of US Dollars in 2018. Another thriving market is the second-hand market. This apparel resale market increased its value, going from 20 billion of US Dollars in 2017 to 24 billion in 2018.

Although there are many fashion retailers across the globe, big or small, the majority of the market is held by the biggest companies. These are Inditex, Nike, LVMH, TJX Companies, H&M, Hermes and Adidas (O'Connell, 2020). The top 20 fashion players will be seen in more detail hereafter.

Fashion industry evolution figures
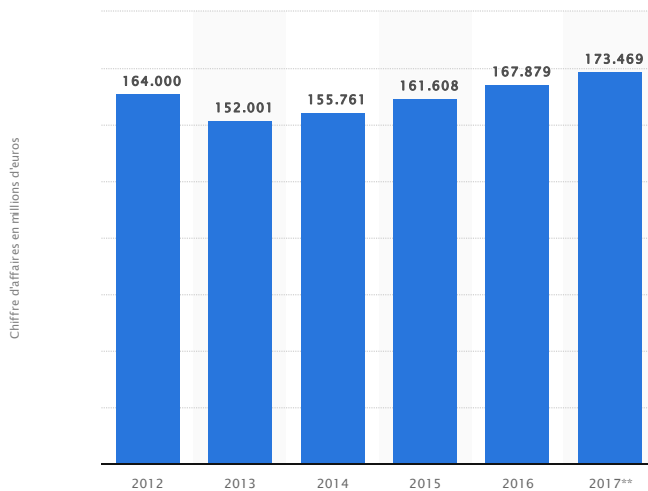
Figure 1: Textile and clothing sector turnover in the European Union between 2012 and 2017, in millions of €.

Source: Statista. (2020). *Chiffre d'affaires du secteur textile et habillement dans l'Union européenne entre 2012 et 2018*. Retrieved the 13th of March 2020 from https://fr.statista.com/statistiques/509957/chiffre-affaires-textile-habillement-union-europeenne/

This graph shows the evolution of the turnover of the textile and clothing sector, in millions of Euros. As we can see on this graph, textile and clothing sales have constantly increased between 2013 and

2017, after a sales decline in 2013. In 2020, growth and turnover are also expected to increase up to 3 or 4 percent (Statista, 2020).

Forecast of fashion industry sales growth in 2020
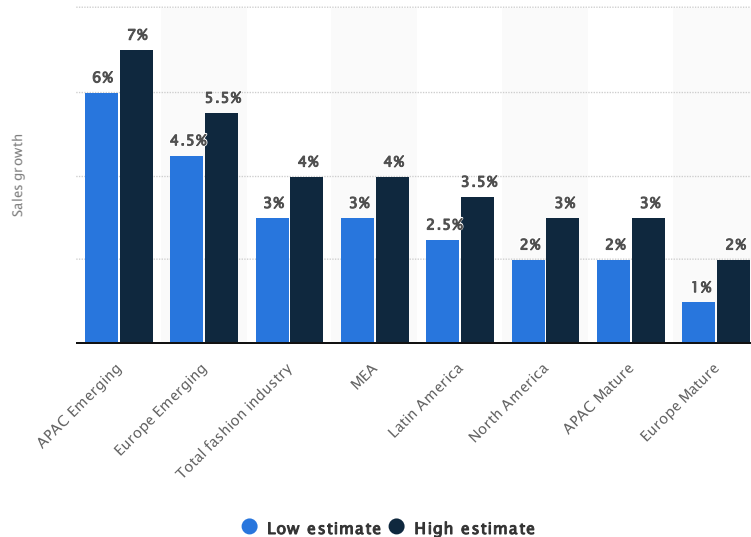
Figure 2: Worldwide forecasted sales growth in the fashion industry in 2020, by region

Source: Statista. (2020). *Worldwide forecasted sales growth in the fashion industry in 2020, by region.* Retrieved the 13th of March 2020 from https://www.statista.com/statistics/802943/fashion-industry-sales-growth-worldwide-by-region/

Here is a graph forecasting sales growth in the fashion industry in 2020, by region. These statistics are based on a McKinsey statistic report. As we can see, the Europe Mature market is expected to show the less sales growth in the fashion industry in 2020. Meanwhile, the emerging market of Asia Pacific (APAC) is the market that is expected to make the more sales growth in the industry, with 3% above the growth of the total fashion industry.

Sportswear and fitness apparel
According to MarketsInsider (2019), activewear/sportswear has had a robust growth in the past few years. However, despite this robust growth, sportswear is still quite a small portion of the global apparel market. According to the following graph, retrieved from Statista (2019), the sportswear industry is still expected to grow in the coming years.
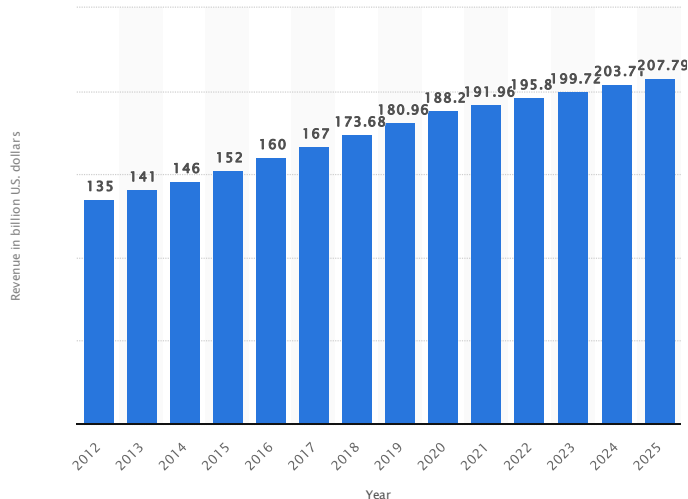
Figure 3: Total Revenue of the global sports apparel market from 2012 to 2025 (in billion U.S. dollars)

Source: Statista. (2020). *Total Revenue of the global sports apparel market from 2012 to 2025 (in billion U.S. dollars).* Retrieved the 13th of March 2020 from https://www.statista.com/statistics/254489/total-revenue-of-the-global-sports-apparel-market/

As we can see on this graph which is representing the total revenue of the global sports apparel market between 2012 and 2025, in billions of US dollars, the total revenue of the industry in 2018 amounted to 173,68 billion of dollars. In 2019, it amounted to 180,96 billion and in 2020, it is expected to amount to 188,2 billion of dollars.
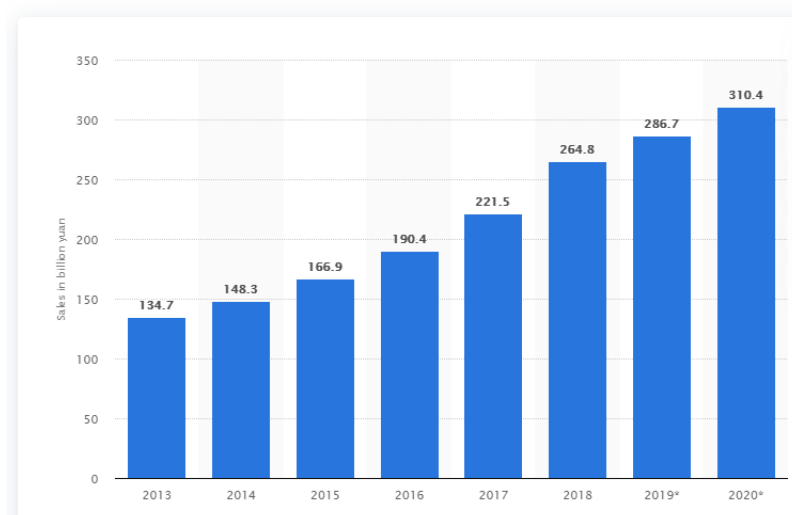
Figure 3: Sales value of Sportswear in China from 2013 to 2020 (in billion yuan).

Source: Statista. (2020). *Sales value of Sportswear in China from 2013 to 2020 (in billion yuan).* Retrieved the 13th of March 2020 from https://www.statista.com/statistics/819943/china-sportswear-retail-sales/

Here is a graph showing the retail sales in sportswear in China from 2013 until 2020, in billions of yuan. As we can see on this graph, sportswear sales have more than doubled since 2013. This graph is demonstrating the increasing growth and strength of Chinese in the sportswear market.

Slow fashion and apparel resale market

In the past few years, slow fashion has increased drastically thanks to the activism of Generation Z and the millennials. There is a wake-up call from the youngest generation towards the planet and the environment. Conscious buying has become a state of mind for more and more consumers. It is not the characteristic of privileged middle-class living in urban area anymore. According to Thred Up 2019 Resale Report (2019), statistics show that resale has grown 21 times faster than the retail clothing market in the past three years. In addition, the second-hand market should reach 51 billion of US Dollars in 2023. The second-hand clothing industry is expected to grow to 1,5 times the size of fast fashion by 2028.
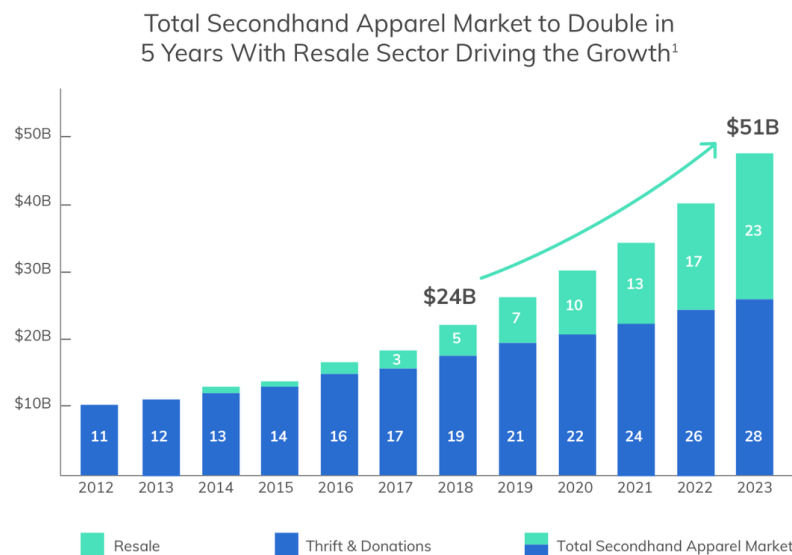
Figure 5: Total Secondhand Apparel Market to Double in 5 years

Source: Thred Up. (2019). *2019 Resale Report*.

Opportunities for the fashion industry is to lead their activity towards more sustainable alternatives, and fairer treatments of workers. According to the Pulse Report of 2018, more companies have started to work towards more sustainable activities and material, since 2017.

3. Biggest fashion industry players

3.1. The top 20 players in the fashion industry

According to McKinsey surveys, here are two lists of the twenty companies that dominated the fashion industry in the years 2017 and 2018. For those 20 top companies, the sun is shining. These companies have added more economic profit to the industry in 2018 than all other companies combined. As we can see, Inditex and Nike fight for the first place of the classification. Inditex is the worldwide leader in terms of textile and fashion. It regroups Zara, Bershka, Stradivarius, Pull & Bear, Massimo Dutti, Oysho, Zara Home, Uterque and Kiddy's Class. The third position in 2017 and 2018 was hold by the LVMH group. The group contains brands like Louis Vuitton, Kenzo, Givenchy, Dior, Bulgari, Fendi, Celine, Marc Jacobs, etc.

As we can see, Inditex has lost ground between 2017 and 2018, by going from 4 billion of dollars in economic profit to 2,9 billion in 2018. H&M's economic profit has also collapsed between 2017 and 2019, going from 1,2 billion of dollars to 401 million.

As we can see, Inditex, Nike, LVMH, T. J. Maxx, Hermès, H&M and Richemont are brands that have stayed in the top 20 since 2008. In addition, there have been some new entrants in the top 20 in 2018, such as Anta Sports, HLA, and Lululemon. Anta Sports is a Chinese sport brand based in China. HLA is also a Chinese menswear brand. And Lululemon is a Canadian fashion brand, mainly specialized in yoga clothing. This is reflecting the growing influence of Chinese apparel brands and the strength of sportswear.

Twenty companies—the 'superwinners'—dominate value creation in fashion.

Top 20 players, 2017, by economic profit, $ million   Companies consistently in the top 20, 2008–17 ■

Inditex	4,010
Nike	2,996
LVMH	2,332
T.J.Maxx	1,972
Hermès	1,345
H&M	1,281
Richemont	1,072
Ross Stores	1,061
adidas	1,059
Kering	943
L Brands	876
Pandora	871
Fast Retailing	783
Next Retail	713
VF	646
Luxottica	626
Michael Kors	597
Gap	537
Hanesbrands	495
Burberry	446
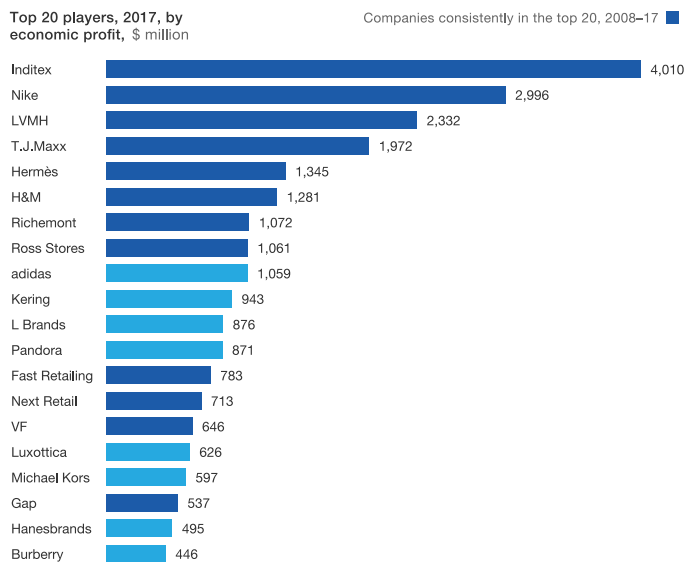
Source: McKinsey Global Fashion Index, based on data from Corporate Performance Analytics by McKinsey

McKinsey&Company

Figure 6: The top 20 players of fashion in 2017, by economic profit.

Source: McKinsey. (2018). *The State of Fashion 2019: A year of awakening*. Retrieved the 14th of March 2020 from https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/retail/our-insights/the-state-of-fashion-2019-a-year-of-awakening.

Twenty companies—the 'Super Winners'—dominate value creation in the fashion industry.

Top 20 players for 2018, by economic profit, $ million

■ 2019 New entrants

Company	Value
Nike	2,980
Inditex	2,910
LVMH	2,316
TJX Companies	1,669
Kering	1,513
Hermes	1,311
Fast Retailing	1,059
Adidas	1,008
Ross	897
VF	861
Pandora	641
Richemont	568
Anta Sports	532
Next	515
L Brands	483
HLA	413
H&M	401
Lululemon	400
Hanes	371
Burberry	315

Source: McKinsey Global Fashion Index

McKinsey & Company

Figure 7: The top 20 players of fashion in 2018, by economic profit.

Source : McKinsey (2019). *The State of Fashion 2020: Navigating uncertainty*. Retrieved the 14th of March 2020 from https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/retail/our-insights/the-state-of-fashion-2020-navigating-uncertainty

3.2.   Top Online Fashion Companies

According to SimilarWeb (2020), the major online fashion companies in the world are:

- Trendyol.com
- Hm.com
- Nike.com
- Zara.com
- Macys.com
- Asos.com
- Shein.com
- Uniqlo.com
- Gap.com
- Nordstrom.com
- Next.co.uk
- Zozo.jp
- Victoriassecret.com
- Marksandspencer.com

4. Sector trends

According to the McKinsey study (2020), fashion industry players will have to act strategically in order to seize any digital opportunity, to boost their earnings and to address the sustainability concern. 2020 is likely to be challenging for all fashion industry players. Indeed, many markets are expected to see slower growth and a decline in consumer confidence. In addition to that, fashion brands are more and more under pressure to embrace digital, to tackle sustainability and to boost their earnings. It is an uncertain time for fashion businesses, and they must prove they are resilient enough by taking strategic moves. However, there are reasons to stay optimistic. New channels and markets are representing new opportunities for companies that will be able to find the right formula. In addition to that, sportswear brands are still outperforming.

As every year, McKinsey in partnership with the Business of Fashion (BoF) through the State of Fashion, an in-depth research and an analysis focusing on the fashion sector, regrouping interviews, surveys of 275 global fashion leaders and pioneers, identify ten fashion trends for the year. In 2020, the following ten themes will be crucial for the fashion industry:
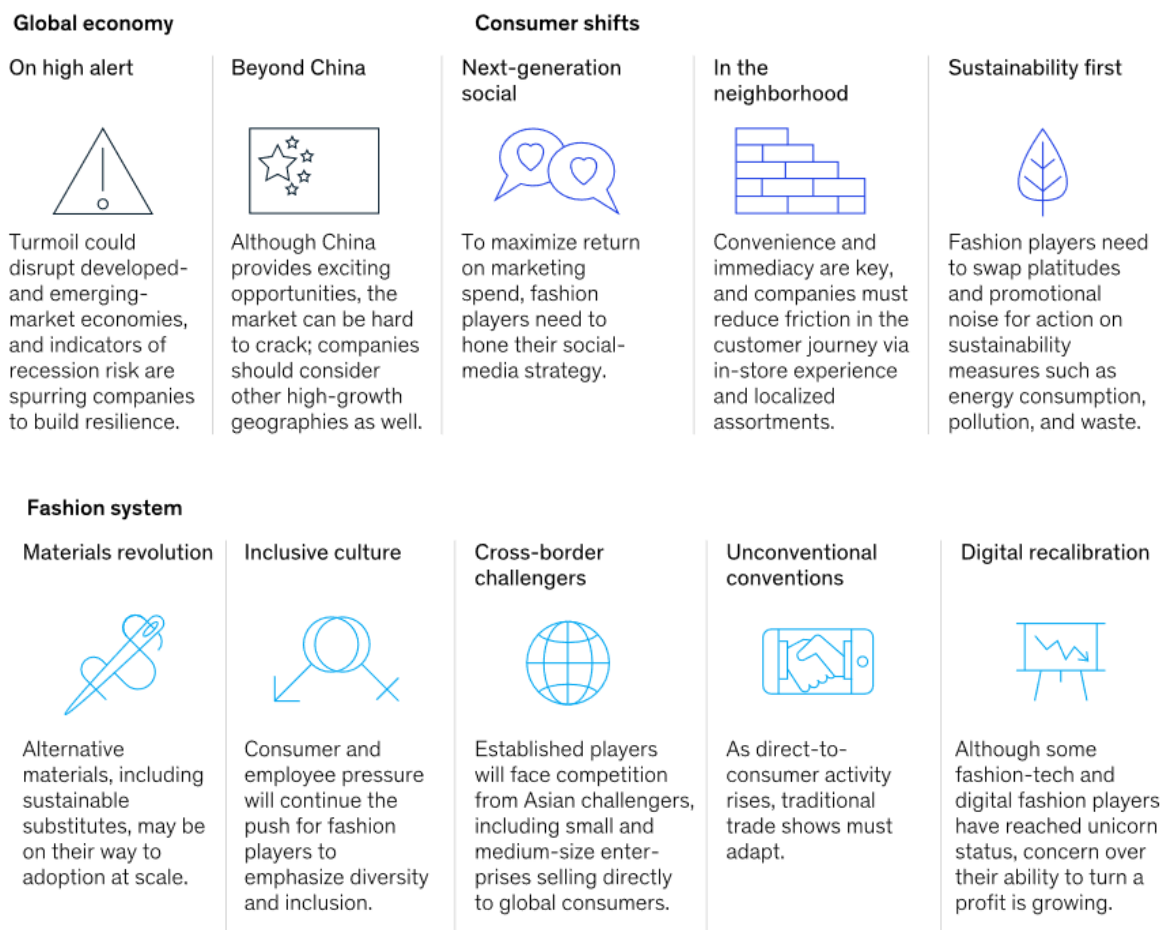
Figure 8: Ten sector trends in the fashion industry in 2020.

Source: McKinsey. (2020). *The fashion industry in 2020: Ten top themes from The State of Fashion.* Retrieved the 16th of March 2020 from https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/retail/our-insights/the-fashion-industry-in-2020-ten-top-themes-from-the-state-of-fashion

4.1.　　On high alert

The global economy is on high alert. After a strong economic growth, the growth expected in 2020 seems to be more subdued. According to the survey, 55% of the respondents of the BoF and McKinsey annual survey tend to believe conditions will worsen in the coming year. In addition to that, the fashion industry faces other challenges such as sustainability customer concerns, and the issue of generational shifts. Many fashion shops present in malls have filled bankruptcy because of the pressure of digital competition.

4.2.　　Beyond China

Moreover, fashion firms will need to regard new international markets, beyond China. Indeed, China represents a real opportunity for fashion brands. However, it is no pushover. It means that many brands have prospered in the Chinese market, but many have also struggled a lot. According to McKinsey (2020), China accounted for 38% of the global growth in the fashion industry. Luxury brands have prospered in China, while other brands like ASOS and New Look have struggled and have retreated from this market, due to the huge Chinese competition. According to McKinsey (2020), there is no easy way to succeed in the Chinese market. In addition to that, the economic growth in China is expected to slow down in the coming years. Given the uncertainty in China, brands will have to start seeking other growth markets. India represents a great opportunity, more particularly for price competitive players. Indeed, in 2020, the Indian clothing market will be worth 53,7$ billion. South Asia is also a great opportunity for clothing businesses. Russia also holds new promises for luxury brands, after 2018 where the country reported the highest sales for several years. In addition to that, the Middle East and the United Arab Emirates should also be considered.

4.3.　　Next generation social

Concerning the consumer shifts, fashion businesses need to seize the opportunity of social-media platforms. Facebook counts the half of the world population as customers. Instagram and WeChat are not far behind. Because those social media have become so popular among people, they have become advertising giants. Those social media websites attract each year more than ten billions of dollars in advertising. However, there is decline in engagement with social media advertising. People seem to spend less time looking at ads on their mobile feeds. Concerning influencer advertising, there is also a decline in engagement rates. It has become harder to inspire and influence the audience. According to McKinsey (2020), it is time for brands to rethink their social media marketing strategy and to assess how they can exploit their social platforms in a more effective way. Storytelling seems to be the key for some industry executives. It will become more important in the months to come. Storytelling will allow companies to create a high-quality content, rather than simple and boring product-focused advertising campaigns. In addition to that, gaming networks are also booming and could be used to tap into youth culture. Finally, social media commerce is still expected to grow in the coming years. However, 2020 is the year where brands are expecting to spend time evaluating those new trends and focus on content creation and storytelling.

4.4.   In the neighborhood

Furthermore, the impact of digital has changed mentalities. Instead of waiting for a product, customers want convenience and immediacy, which will result for an increase in brands going local. According to McKinsey (2020), fashion retailers will reinforce their presence in districts beyond commercial zones. Those stores will focus more on service, on convenience, on improved consumer experience and on personalization. Stores will be smaller and will be a part of a bigger omnichannel strategy. In addition, those stores will complement digital activities, and some may touch local communities. The goal is to raise brand awareness by creating a new image representing friendliness and familiarity.

4.5.   Sustainability first

Another trend fashion companies will have to address is the sustainability concern customers have. As known by many, it is true that the industry does not have the best reputation. Fashion companies are known to be very pollutive. They consume a large amount of energy and raw materials in the different steps of the process: in the process of manufacturing clothes, of transport, and or resell. According to McKinsey (2020), the fashion industry accounts for 20 to 35% of microplastic present in the oceans and increase the carbon footprint due to international flights. As a result, consumer ask fashion brands to clean up and to become more sustainable. Indeed, purchasing behaviors are more than ever influenced by the increasing sustainability awareness. It is why, fashion companies cannot ignore more longer their customers' preferences and concerns. Some companies are taking steps to reuse and recycle clothing while others commit themselves to transparency in the supply chain.

4.6.   Materials revolution

In addition to that, many fashion brands are expected to join the "material revolution", according to McKinsey (2020). 45% of companies surveyed by McKinsey and BoF are wanting and looking to integrate more innovation bio-based materials. Companies have filed many fiber-innovation patent applications in 2019. There are three main drivers to this trend which are the shift in consumer sentiment towards a rising environmental awareness, regulation, and a boost to investment. Indeed, there is an increase in larger brands working with startups or other peers in order to develop new technologies that will produce less waste or that will use less resources. Brands will also increase their investment in recycling.

4.7.   Inclusive culture

Concerning the inclusive culture trend, fashion industry should be meaning of inclusivity and diversity. However, diversity has taken years and years to take place, and is not totally true today. It is all starting to change now. In the coming years, it is expected from brands to make major steps in the creation of a truly inclusive culture. Diversity has been in the mind of customers for a long time and they will keep a close eye on those developments. Companies that will not follow this trend, will lose customers and investors. Over the past years, many brands have started to diversify their models, their products, and their messages to include black models, the LGBT community, less well served demographics, disable people, many different tailored sizes, etc.

4.8. Cross-border challengers

Regarding cross-border challengers, a new noticeable trend has been the increase in new business models, particularly in SME's and manufacturers. They have been selling directly to customers. And Asia has been in front. According to McKinsey (2020), it is expected that Asian manufactures will gain larger share of the global market. Indeed, they leverage the use of e-commerce platforms, such as Amazon, and their in-house design capabilities. The main driver of this trend is the fact that consumers are less interested in brand names, and that price is their main consideration, particularly young consumers.

4.9. Unconventional conventions

Digital has made attending trade shows less important. Nowadays, in this digital environment, we no longer see the value in attending a trade show, when we can do it online by looking at our mobile phones. Furthermore, fashion seasons have shortened. Let us take the example of companies like Zara and H&M. Both are fast-fashion companies and renew their clothing collection very often, and more often than other brands. It is why, those companies feel pressured to keep their websites and windows trendy. In 2019, according to McKinsey (2020), we have seen experiments about new multimedia experiences. It will be important, in the coming year, to keep up with this spirit of multimedia and digital innovation.

4.10. Digital recalibration

Digital is not going to stop. While some fashion-tech and digital players have reached a unicorn status, investors are not much enthusiastic about the fashion sector. According to McKinsey (2020), the potential for investors is not enough at the end. Therefore, the priority for fashion companies will be to review their business models and to boost their revenues.

5. How will Covid-19 impact the fashion industry?

Since the arrival of Covid-19 in China in the end of 2019, its impact has been felt across the global textile and apparel industry. Analysts have investigated the situation and have assessed the likely impact it will have on brands, importers, and consumers in the fashion industry. Indeed, China is a huge key partner for international transactions in the field of fashion. It is a growing market for international retailers and many brands. Therefore, the shutdown of Chinese cities and transportation systems from China is likely to have an impact on the fashion industry. However, the immediate and the biggest impact will be felt in China itself. The coronavirus will have a its biggest negative impact on goods and services sectors within China, and outside for those who rely on Chinese consumers and intermediary products. Besides that, offline retail sales will be dampened by the online sales.

However, apparel and footwear retailers will see less negative impact on their business compared to the travel and restaurant companies. Consumers, who will be forced to stay home during quarantine times will shop from home and will boost online retail sales. Concerning companies that rely on Chinese consumers, the travel ban will have a bigger impact on their sales. The reduction in tourists due to traveling bans in countries will also have a huge repercussion on airports retailers.

There will be a supply chain disruption due to stricter measures implemented by the Chinese government to dampen the Coronavirus pandemic. It will mostly affect companies and sectors that have a strong dependence on China for their products. It will be negative for apparel retailers in particular, which rely on Chinese suppliers whose activities could be harmed by the supply chain disruption.

However, many Western fashion companies have already taken measures trying to reduce their sourcing from China because of the trade war between China and the United States. The coronavirus serves as a reminder for those companies to reduce their exposure to sourcing in China and to diversify their sources of supply.

Nike has expressed its concern about the material impact the coronavirus will have on its operations in China. Michael Kors has expressed its concern about the lost sales of 100 million of US Dollars. In addition to that, many textile trade fairs have been postponed or cancelled. The sales of Adidas have slumped by 85% in China since the coronavirus. Moreover, Primark, which is strongly dependent on China for its products has warned customers that it will have products shortages because of the prolonged delays to factory production. There is also a delay of more than a month from Chinese suppliers to Central America. In the UK also, there is a supply chain disruption. Furthermore, Amazon blocked non-essential goods from warehouses. It was no longer possible, during this quarantine period to purchase non-essential goods from it. Many apparel companies have also switched their clothing production to masks production.

Furthermore, according to the agency SuperSuper (2020), the main consequence of the Covid19 is the massive shift to e-commerce shopping. Indeed, fashion companies have seen an increase in online sales and online purchases due to the coronavirus. The online time of people has been increasing during the pandemic, and the online sales have been multiplied.

6.   PORTER's five forces model applied to the fashion industry

The PORTER's five forces model is an "analysis of the competitive environment of an industry" (50MINUTES, 2015, p. 5). This model allows companies to understand better the different participants active in the industry. "The complete analysis examines five forces: customer bargaining power, supplier bargaining power, the threat of substitute products, the threat of new entrants, and intra-industry competition" (50MINUTES, 2015, p. 6).

6.1.   Customers bargaining power

According to Chaw and al. (2017), in the clothing industry, the end goal is to entice the customer to buy a product. However, the fashion market is a very competitive market, and it is important for companies to differentiate themselves. In the case of the fashion industry, the buyer power is a strong force. Clothes shoppers are mainly individuals, with no direct bargaining power. However, it is very easy for them to switch from one brand to another. Individuals do not have a particular incentive to stay loyal to only one clothing brand (Bush, 2016).

6.2.   Suppliers bargaining power

"The huge conglomeration of large international store groups, for example, have incredibly strong bargaining power over suppliers" (Jackson, Shaw, 2008, p. 304). Over the recent years, large international fashion groups have imposed price reductions because of their strong buying power. Therefore, in the fashion retail industry, supplier bargaining power is low. They do not have a significant force. As a result, the input prices in this industry are very low. Most clothing companies source their clothing and accessories from third world manufacturers. Those manufacturers only receive a small fraction of the profit made by fashion companies.

6.3.   Threat of new entrants

Concerning the force of the threat of new entrants, on the first hand, due to the low cost of entry, entrance in the market is easier. "Potential entrants into the clothing industry are very high as the start-up cost is relatively low" (Chaw and al., 2017, p. 6). It is very easy for apparel manufacturers to enter the clothing market and to establish a new business due to the low barriers to entry and the low technological needs. Moreover, according to Chaw and al., "the apparel industry is not a knowledge-based industry and therefore research and development is not an area that is heavily invested in" (Chaw and al., 2017, p. 6). However, textile development is one area of the clothing industry where companies need to invest more in on a regular basis. Nevertheless, "smaller niche market companies could remain competitive through their product type and being smaller gives the companies greater control of their product and gives them flexibility when reacting quickly to changes in trends and demands" (Chaw and al., 2017, p. 7).

On the other hand, according to Bush (2016), due to the high level of competition in this sector, it is hard for firms to enter the market with no intention of copying others. New entrants may seize the opportunity of this market when entering it, but they need to make sure they can popularize their products. The fashion industry is "high risk high reward" for new entrants (Bush, 2016). Furthermore, according to Pratap (2018), this is a densely populated industry and it requires a high level of differentiation. Fashion brands need unique ways to grow and to become popular.

6.4.　Threat of substitute products

According to Porter (1998), the threat of competition due to a substitute product happens when multiple products perform the same function. Concerning the fashion industry, this force is negligible. There is little if no substitution to clothing. The only substitution we can see is the products of a competitor (Bus, 2016). Threat of substitution comes from inside the industry (Pratap, 2018).

6.5.　Competition analysis

"The clothing industry is a very competitive marketplace" (Chaw and al., 2017, p. 6). According to Bush (2016), the fashion industry is quite complex and interesting when it comes to analyzing its competitive environment. There are many firms selling similar products and there is also the concept of brands. Branding enables fashion companies to sell their products at higher prices. However, the fashion market is beginning to be saturated because there is little innovation in this sector and many brands offer the same products.

In addition to that, this market is highly competitive also because of the low barriers to entry. According to Chaw and al, "the apparel industry, due to its low barriers to entry, is one of the most highly competitive manufacturing sectors in the world" (Chaw and al., 2017, p. 6).

However, bigger companies are more "protected by mobility barriers than smaller firms" (Porter, 1998, p. 145), and those bigger companies are more protected from rivalry among firms than smaller companies. As a result, larger firms tend to be more profitable than smaller ones. Nevertheless, smaller firms tend to be more differentiated from other firms because they can easily follow specific strategies. They "are able to follow specific strategies, and therefore are able to achieve higher product differentiation or superior service as in niche market products" (Chaw and al., 2017, p. 7).

7. PESTEL Analysis of the fashion industry

"The model helps in the evaluation process of the dynamic and competitive business environment. The model appraises each of the key factors, which are directly and indirectly affecting the business performance so that strategies could be developed to overcome the issues for a better market position" (Perera, 2017, p. 4). The components of this model are the political environment, the economic environment, the socio-cultural environment, the technological environment, the legal environment, and the ecological/natural environment.

7.1. Political

The government has the power and ability to encourage and promote companies to buy textile locally. Governments usually take those measures when taxation on imports from other countries are increasing.

In addition, there is also a political influence on fashion and clothing trends. As example, the first ladies are also scrutinized in their clothing choices. Not only actresses and social media influencers have an impact on the fashion trends (Frue, 2018).

7.2. Economic

Concerning the economic environment, the apparel market industry has been slowing down in 2019. However, online sales in the fashion industry are increasing. In addition to that, there is an increase in demand for alpaca wool clothing because there is a great awareness from customers regarding environmental protection, the quality of the production and the interest of small artisans.

7.3. Socio-cultural

About the socio-cultural environment, consumers are more and more aware and concerned about the environmental protection, animal welfare, and durable products. New trends have appeared, and consumers ask for vegan products and more respect for the environment. In addition to that, there is an increasing interest in the CSR policies of fashion brands from customers Jackson, Shaw, 2008).

Another trend concerning the socio-cultural environment is the increasing demand for fast-fashion companies such as Zara and H&M. Indeed, those companies propose record collections to their customers, changing very fast models and colors.

Music is also a factor influencing fashion trends. Fashion consumers are influenced by clothes worn in music videos, or by famous musicians and singers. (Frue, 2018).

7.4. Technological

Concerning the technological environment, thanks to the Internet, there are new ways to promote and distribute fashion. There have been many new ways of distributing fashion and engaging with customers. Communication has been made easier with social media networks and the e-commerce websites. And promotion has also been made easier thanks to digitalization.

As a result, online shopping has increased exponentially. It is now possible for people to scroll through their mobile devices in order to buy clothes. They have the possibility to make purchases while staying

home. Technology has helped customers to get what they wanted, while encouraging designers to make better designs (Frue, 2018).

7.5. Ecological/ Environmental

Fashion has a huge impact on the environment and people are getting more and more aware of the waste produced by fashion companies. Methods of transportation in the fashion industry such as cars, trains, jets and other release smoke and gases into the environment, polluting the planet. As a result, people are looking for more environmental-friendly goods and services. In addition, there is a trend towards which the fashion industry is going. More and more fashion clothing companies are going local in the coming years. They will produce and sell clothing locally.

7.6. Legal

Regarding the legal environment, the fashion industry must follow legal rules and regulations, as any other business and industry. They follow tax rules and restrictions, export restrictions, and inflation costs. They need to respect workers' rights, mostly when fashion companies have their clothing made in other foreign countries (Frue, 2018).

8. Fashion E-commerce

8.1. Shift towards e-commerce: general overview

According to Meena for the Forrester magazine (2018), after grocery, fashion is the second largest retail segment. E-commerce shift has had a significant impact in fashion sales. Indeed, a quarter of fashion spending is already happening online, and it is growing rapidly. The global fashion e-commerce market is expected to amount to 765 billion of US dollars by the year 2022. It is an expected increase of 281 billion.

The following graph is representing total online fashion retail sales in billions of US dollars and the e-commerce share of total fashion sales. This graph has been made from a survey realized across 32 countries. According to this graph, we can see that in 2022 it is expected that 36% of total fashion retail sales will occur online. In addition to that, we can see that in the past four years, the total online fashion retail sales have increased from 253 billion in 2014, to 484 billion in 2018, and it is still expected to grow up to amount to 765 billion in 2022. In addition, according to Statista (2020), the largest B2C market segment is fashion. This market is expected to increase ad 12,2% per year in order to reach a total of 991,64 billion of US dollars in 2024. According to Statista (2018), in 2018 clothing sales accounted for 65% of the fashion market. Footwear accounted for 25% of the market and bags and accessories accounted for 10% of the market.

Growth in the fashion industry is not just happening online. It is happening in the overall sector. Furthermore, the key countries contributing to this spending growth in clothing will be China, South Korea, Japan, the UK, the US, France, and India (Meena, 2018).
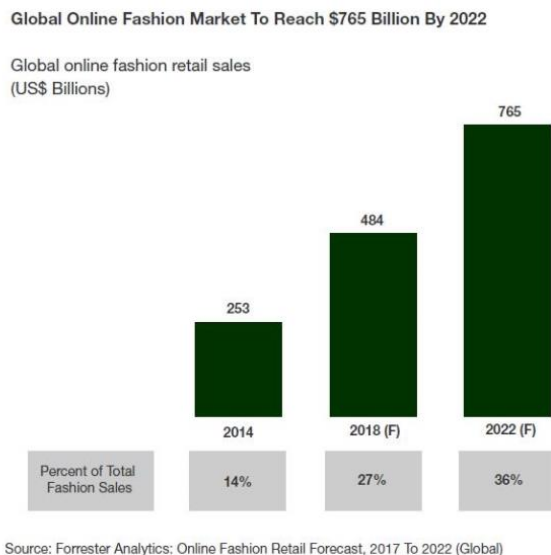
Figure 9: Global Online Fashion Market To Reach $765 Billion By 2022.

Source: Forrester. (2018). *eCommerce Will Account For 36% Of Global Fashion Retail Sales By 2022.* Retrieved the 20th of March 2020 from https://go.forrester.com/blogs/ecommerce-will-account-for-36-of-global-fashion-retail-sales-by-2022/

Share of Traffic and Sales by Device

Source: SaleCycle data from 500 global brands

SaleCycle | www.SaleCycle.com
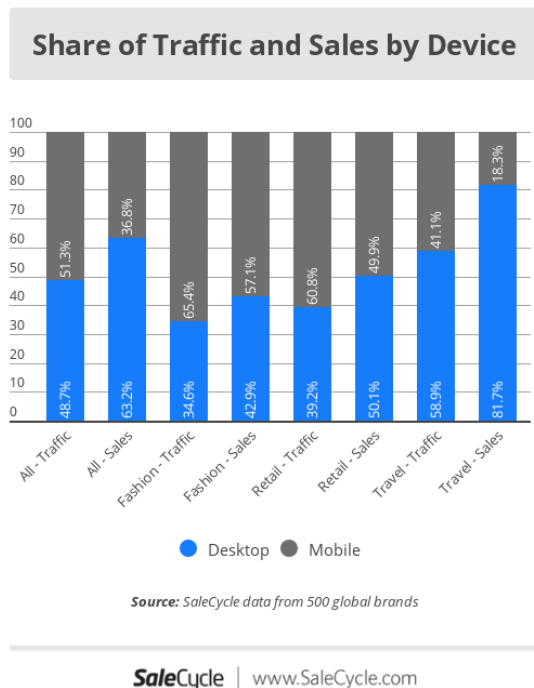
Figure 10: Share of Traffic and Sales by Device.

Source: SaleCycle. (2020). Why Are Mobile Conversion Rates Lower Than Desktop?. Retrieved the 25th of March 2020 from https://www.salecycle.com/blog/strategies/why-are-mobile-conversion-rates-lower-than-desktop/

Here is a graph demonstrating the share of traffic and sales by device: desktop and mobile. Concerning the fashion industry, as we can see of the graph, the traffic and sales are higher with mobile. As we can see, traffic for fashion is mainly generated through mobile, with 65,4%, while sales are mainly done through mobile, with 57,1%. In addition, mobile is more used in fashion sales than in the overall retail average.

8.2. Fashion consumer online behavior

According to Rakuten (2017), the main reasons why people buy online clothing is because they have more choice, they can find a bargain. Clothes are cheaper online, according to them. It is also easier to find online what people are looking for. Online consumers also can read reviews before purchasing a product.

Furthermore, the main reasons people give up their fashion online purchases are because there is a bad website functionality, a too long delivery time, concerns of bad clothing quality. People are also not sure about the quality of the product. Another reason is also that they have found a better price elsewhere, in another store. And finally, consumers also have issues concerning security of the website or the transaction (Rakuten, 2017).

8.3.   Worldwide e-commerce

According to Statista (2019), the ten largest e-commerce markets in 2019 in billions of US dollars were, in decreasing order, China, the US, the UK, Japan, South Korea, Germany, France, Canada, Russia and Brazil. The Chinese e-commerce market amounted to 740 BN$. The US amounted to 561 BN$. In third position, the UK amounted to 93BN$. Then, there is Japan with 87 BN$, Germany with 77 BN$, South Korea with 69 BN$, France with 55 BN$, Canada with 44 BN$, Russia with 19 BN$ and Brazil with 16 BN$. As we can see, China has been the first largest e-commerce market in 2019, followed closely by the US market.

8.4.   Fashion e-commerce
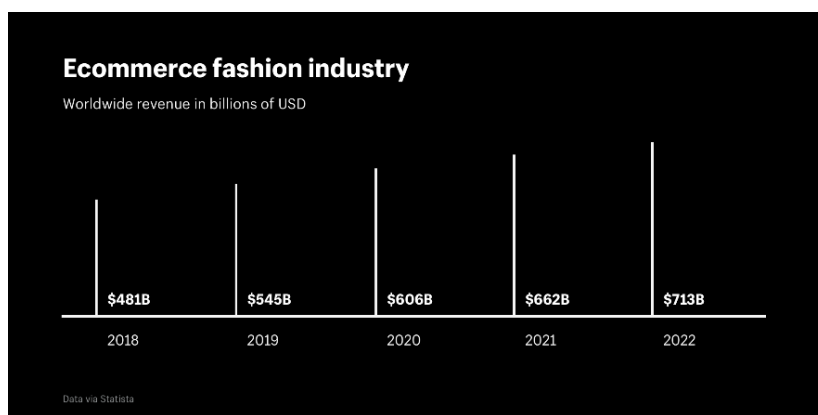
Figure 11: Worldwide Revenue of the Ecommerce Fashion Industry (in billions of USD).

Source: Shopify. (2019). *The State of the Ecommerce Fashion Industry: Statistics, Trends & Strategy*. Retrieved the 10th of April 2020 from https://www.shopify.com/enterprise/ecommerce-fashion-industry

As we can see on this graph from Statista (2019), representing the worldwide revenue of the e-commerce in the fashion industry, the fashion e-commerce revenue is increasing and is expected to reach 713 BN$ in 2022, while in 2018 it amounted to 481 BN$. As already mentioned before, it is a growing market and it is expected to still grow in the years to come.

8.5. Clothing segment

Ecommerce clothing segment

Worldwide revenue by billions of USD
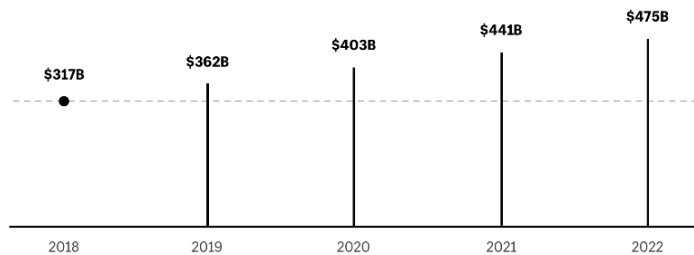
Figure 12: Worldwide Revenue of the Ecommerce Clothing Segment (in billions of USD).

Source: Shopify. (2019). *The State of the Ecommerce Fashion Industry: Statistics, Trends & Strategy*. Retrieved the 10th of April 2020 from https://www.shopify.com/enterprise/ecommerce-fashion-industry

As we can see this graph, representing the worldwide revenue of the e-commerce clothing segment, it is expected to grow and to amount to 475 BN$ by 2022. (Statista, 2019).

8.6. Shoes segment

Ecommerce shoes segment

Worldwide revenue by billions of USD
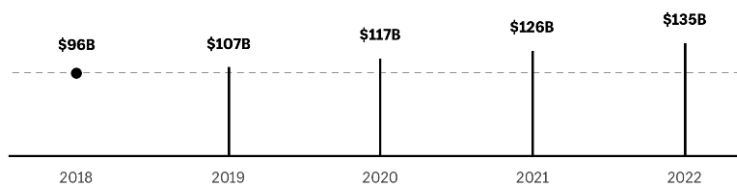
Figure 13: Worldwide Revenue of the Ecommerce Shoes Segment (in billions of USD).

Source: Shopify. (2019). *The State of the Ecommerce Fashion Industry: Statistics, Trends & Strategy*. Retrieved the 10th of April 2020 from https://www.shopify.com/enterprise/ecommerce-fashion-industry

Let's now take a look in the shoes segment of the fashion industry. Here is a graph showing the worldwide revenue of the e-commerce shoes segment. As we can see, it is also expected to grow and to reach the amount of 135 BN$ by 2022 (Statista, 2019).

8.7.   Bags and accessories segment
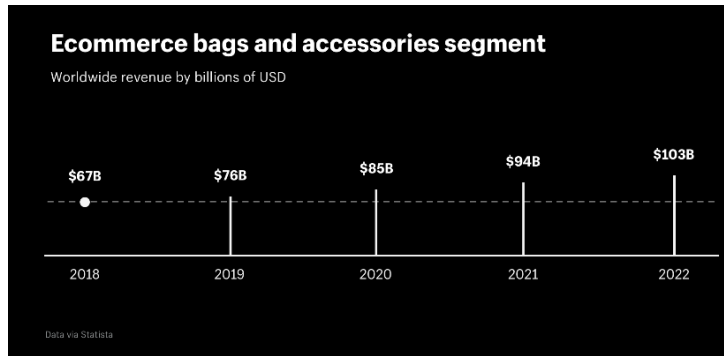
Figure 14: Worldwide Revenue of the Ecommerce Accessories Segment (in billions of USD).

Source: Shopify. (2019). *The State of the Ecommerce Fashion Industry: Statistics, Trends & Strategy*. Retrieved the 10th of April 2020 from https://www.shopify.com/enterprise/ecommerce-fashion-industry

Bags and accessories are a specific segment of the fashion industry. As we can see on this graph and, as I have already mentioned before, the fashion sector is still expected to grow in the coming years and it is reflected on this graph showing the growth in worldwide revenue concerning the e-commerce of accessories and bags. (Statista, 2019).

1. Digital Marketing

1.1. Definition

Mankad gives a simple definition of digital marketing and defines it by saying that "digital marketing is the promotion of products or brands via one or more forms of any electronic media. The Digital marketing is generally referred as online marketing, internet marketing or web marketing" (Mankad, Understanding Digital Marketing: Strategies for online success, 2019, p. 2). He also points out the fact that definitions may vary from author to author and some use internet marketing, e-commerce or even e-business as synonyms.

Digital marketing has a wider scope than internet marketing, or even e-business. "Internet marketing only refers to the Internet. While the Digital Marketing includes all of that and in addition to that all other E-marketing tools like: Intranets, Extranets, and Mobile Phones etc." (Mankad, 2019, p. 2).

Similarly, to that, Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick give the following explanation of digital marketing: it is the "use of digital media, data and technology to support marketing activities" (Chaffey, Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, chapter 1). However, the term of digital media used in this definition needs to be understood.

To complete this definition, "digital marketing is a reporting and analytics engine which can be layered within a brand campaign which allows the particular organization or any organization's specific product brand for monitoring purpose in the real-time and how the campaign is performing, like what is go into be viewed, how often, and other actions like product viewing, interest response rates and purchases response" (Mankad, 2019, p. 3). It is easier explained by Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick in their book Digital Marketing. "In practice, digital marketing focuses on managing different forms of online company presence, such as company websites, mobile apps and social media company pages, integrated with online communication techniques (…), including search engine marketing, social media marketing, online advertising, email marketing and partnership arrangements with other websites" (Chaffey, Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, chapter 1). The goals of these techniques are to acquire new customers and to develop and improve the relationship with actual customers through customer relationship management (CRM). Customer relationship management can be defined as "using digital communication technologies to maximize sales to existing customers and encourage continued usage of online services through techniques including a database, personalized web messaging, customer services, chatbots, email and social media marketing" (Chaffey, Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, chapter 1).

Furthermore, the goal for companies nowadays, is to create a multichannel, also called omnichannel marketing strategy. It is the use of multiple channels of communication to interact with the customers. An omnichannel strategy is defined as follow: "customer communications and product distribution are supported by a combination of digital and traditional channels at different points in the business cycle or "path of purchase"" (Chaffey, Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, chapter 1).

1.2.   Three key concepts for digital marketing

There are three main concepts that need to be understood concerning the field of digital marketing. These are permission marketing, content marketing, and customer engagement (Chaffey, Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).

- Permission marketing

Permission marketing is when "customers agree (opt in) to be involved in an organization's marketing activities, usually as a result of an incentive" (Chaffey, Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, chapter 1). As explained by Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick, in the years before digital marketing, we were bombarded only with 500 advertisings a day through traditional media. Nowadays, it has increased up to 3000 promotional messages a day. On the one hand, from a company's point of view, the fragmentation due to digital media has diluted the attention and the impact of their promotional messages on customers. On the other hand, from the customer point of view, customers are losing patience with all those promotional messages and expect to be rewarded for their attention. Therefore, permission marketing is important because it seeks the customer's permission before engaging in any kind of relationship.

- Content marketing

The second concept that needs to be understood is content marketing. The definition given by Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick for content marketing is the following: "the management of text, rich media, audio and video content aimed at engaging customers and prospects to meet business goals published through print and digital media including web and mobile platforms which is repurposed and syndicated to different forms of web presence such as publisher sites, blogs, social media and comparison sites" (Chaffey, Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, chapter 1).

Therefore, after having the approval and permission from the customer to engage in a promotional relationship, the second step is to create a content strategy and a content marketing. Thanks to a valuable content, companies may gain the engagement of audience and achieve business through it. "Today, by content we refer to the combination of static content forming web pages, but also dynamic rich media content that encourages interaction" (Chaffey, Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, chapter 1). Therefore, content represent a huge challenge for companies. Indeed, through content, it is possible for a brand to differentiate and to gain audience engagement. It is a huge challenge because there are so many different types and forms to content.

- Consumer engagement

The third and final concept is consumer engagement. As already mentioned before, there is an increasing difficulty for companies to gain the attention of customers and to deliver them their promotional messages, due to the diffusion of the messages because of the fragmentation of social media. There is a difficulty in gaining, but also in keeping customers' attention. Therefore, customer engagement is a huge challenge for companies nowadays (Chaffey, Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick define customer engagement as "repeated interactions through the customer lifecycle prompted by online and offline communications aimed at strengthening the long-term emotional, psychological and physical investment a customer has with a brand" (Chaffey, Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, chapter 1).

However, there is a difference between short-term engagement and long-term engagement. The term of customer engagement is often wrongly and loosely employed. Short-term engagement is "when a prospect engages with a single landing page, email or social medium update" (Chaffey, Ellis-Chadwick,

2019, chapter 1). Yes, it is important to boost response from the audience, but long-term engagement through time is way more challenging and rewarding for companies and brands. In addition, according to Yunanto (2019), we need to pay attention to the difference between the engagement in traditional media and in digital media. In traditional media, engagement is a "read only" concept. However, engagement on the web "means customers and stakeholders become participants rather than viewers" (Yunanto, 2019, p. 11).

1.3. The P-O-E-M framework

In order to develop a strong digital marketing strategy, we need to better understand the more complex and competitive buying environment of today. To do so, marketers need to consider three main types of media channels (Chaffey, Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). Also called the P-O-E-M framework, it will help organizing the digital marketing strategy (Gupta, 2018). They are the paid media (P), owned media (O), and earned media (E). Lets' dive directly into their differences.

- Paid media

The first one is called paid media and can also be called bought media. These are defined as "bought media where there is investment to pay for visitors, reach or conversions through search, display ad networks or affiliate marketing" (Chaffey, Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, chapter 1). According to Gupta, "paid media includes sponsored advertisements in different channels of digital marketing such as search engines, websites, Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. They include campaigns run through different platforms such as Google AdWords and Campaign Manager of Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter" (Gupta, 2018, Chap.1).

- Owned media

The second one is the owned media. These are media owned by a brand, by a company. For example, it can be the company's own blog, website, or mobile app. It can also be their presence and content on social media such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, etc. It is important to think about this kind of media because it can be an alternative to a paid media and will be a lower investment for brands (Chaffey, Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).

- Earned media

Finally, the third one is called earned media. "Earned media is organic and unpaid" (Gupta, 2018, Chap.1). It refers to "publicity generated through PR invested in targeting influencers to increase awareness about a brand" (Chaffey, Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, chapter 1). It is also composed of the word of mouth and includes engagement on social media through likes, comments, shares, retweets, replies, etc. Moreover, "it's useful to think of earned media as the sharing of engaging content developed through different types of partners such as publishers, bloggers and other influencers including customer advocates" (Chaffey, Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, chapter 1).

According to Gupta (2018), the combination of those three types of media channels is the best practice for companies in digital marketing. However, there should be a balance between all the types of media. It means that a brand should not only pay attention or focus on one type of media specifically. In addition to that, owned and earned media should be a part of a business long-term strategy because they are the two media that are organic. Because they are organic, they are the most credible and will provide greater quality traffic. However, they take more time than paid media to show results. That is

why, a business should allocate 50 percent of its digital marketing budget on paid ads and the other 50 percent on creating content for the organic media and getting engagement (Gupta, 2018). On the other hand, paid media will increase the reach and conversions in the short-term. Therefore, there should be a balance between short-term and long-terms media.

1.4.   Traditional vs digital marketing

For many years, marketing campaigns have only been based on traditional media that include television, radio, print media and mail. Since the arrival of the web concept, in the 1980's, by Tim Berners-Lee, the world of marketing has completely changed (Chaffey, Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). Nowadays, "the digital equivalents of these traditional media, which are known as digital media channels, are vital components of most marketing campaigns today" (Chaffey, Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, chapter 1).

Gupta adds that "while traditional marketing is spray and pray, wherein a marketer spreads the message among many audiences and hopes that some will be in the market to buy the product, digital marketing can be targeted to specific audiences who have interest in the product and hence are already in the market to buy those products" (Gupta, Digital Marketing, 2018, Chap.1). Moreover, digital marketing overcomes the waste in advertising produced in the traditional marketing. Digital marketing is about efficiency, while traditional marketing is about mass advertising.

According to the Management Association (2018), digital marketing differs from the traditional one by the fact that digital marketing allows companies to follow and analyze the actions in real time. It enables companies to know which item is being viewed, how many times, and which content is inefficient. Gupta (2018) goes in the same direction by saying that thanks to digital marketing, it is now possible to assess the performance of advertising in real time.

Furthermore, concerning prices, in digital marketing, prices are based on auction (Gupta, 2018). It means that instead of having a fixed rate as in traditional marketing, marketers bid in auction. On the contrary, "mass media is priced on rate card basis for 10 second spot on TV or column centimeter for newspaper" (Gupta, 2018, Chap.1).

Concerning the barrier to entry, the entry barrier in digital marketing is low and is an advantage for any large or small business. Any business can enter digital marketing even with a little budget.

Concerning the cost of failure in digital marketing, it is also low. If the digital campaign is not working, it is possible to take immediate corrective actions to counter it and the amount of budget lost will be small.

Here is a table summarizing the main differences between traditional and digital marketing.

	Traditional Marketing	Digital Marketing
Type of Marketing	Structured and clear advertising campaigns, service hotlines	Unstructured and unclear Status updates, ad campaigns, blogs, posts, comments, social media, etc.
Direction of Communication	Unidirectional (one to many) Information spread by company (active) Consumers only listen (passive)	Multidirectional (many to many) Both company and consumers talk and listen (both active). Consumers can also create content, like or post.
Scheduling	Long-term Ad campaigns are planned both over and for a long period of time	Short-term Ad campaigns are not planned in detail but reactions to comments and requests given
Communication with Consumer	Private Communication only between company and consumer (via email, phone); discussion is kept secret	Public Reactions to comments are public; anyone can read and join a discussion
Availability	During working hours No direct support beyond regular working hours (9 to 6)	All the time (24 × 7) Constant readiness to respond to negative comments and consumer requests
Language	Formal, legally safe Official	Genuine, direct personal responses and short answers
Response time	Longer; even if somebody is interested after seeing an ad in print or on TV they cannot see the additional information at that instant, they	Quickly; as soon as they see the ad, the consumers can click the link and can get more information so decision can be taken quickly

Table 1: Differences between Traditional Marketing and Digital Marketing.

Source: Gupta (2018). *Digital Marketing.* Chap. 1.

As we can see in this table, traditional marketing is clearer and more structured than digital marketing that is more unstructured and uncleared. Furthermore, the communication in digital marketing is unidirectional. The advertising message goes only in one way, to the customers, and that is it. Consumers listen to it only. They cannot respond and share it. However, thanks to digital marketing, the advertising messages have become multidirectional. It means that people can respond and share them. Both company and customers are active, talk and listen.

Concerning the scheduling time for both types of marketing, in the traditional one, the scheduling takes a lot of time and ads are planned for a long period of time. On the contrary, with digital marketing, the scheduling takes shorter time and campaigns are not planned in much details.

Nowadays, with digital marketing, the communication between a brand and customers is public. Everyone can share or join the discussion. With traditional marketing, the communication is private and kept between the customer and the brand. Concerning the availability of the ads, traditional marketing ads are exposed during the working hours. On the contrary, the ads in digital marketing are exposed all the time.

The language used in traditional marketing is more legal and safer, whereas the language used in digital marketing is more direct and personal.

Finally, about the response time, it takes longer to answer to someone in the case of traditional marketing, while the response time in digital marketing is very quick. Traditional marketing does not

offer the same possibility of interaction and immediate feedback from the customer than in digital marketing.

1.5. Digital Marketing in Fashion

What a time to be alive. And what a time for fashion companies and small businesses to be alive. Nowadays, thanks to digital technologies and social media, it is easier for brands to promote their business and their products. Digital marketing has made easier and cheaper for companies to advertise their products and services. Fashion trends change, but what remains the same is the need of a brand to stay in the mind of customers.

Digitization has had a huge impact on the fashion industry and fashion businesses. According to Deloitte (2018), fashion is one of the most challenging industry. Indeed, the fashion industry is highly impacted by global economic uncertainty, trends changes and industrial changes. With digitalization, consumers in general have shifted from passive observant to enabled dominance. Customer's expectations have increased with digitalization. They want to interact with the brands from which they buy, to belong and to influence brands. Nowadays, consumers want to be informed, to be selective and in charge of their purchases. This shift towards a more active consumer has been made possible thanks to digitalization and the emergence of social media. Consumers now look for products and information online. According to Deloitte (2018), the majority of consumers look online and use digital channels before, during and after their purchases.

There are new standards of experience and services. Fashion brands implement customer-centric propositions. Fashion companies that do not consider those new standards are found obsolete. It has become an urge and a need for a fashion brands to be present on the Internet and on social media.

However, digital transformation does not only come with positive parts. It is also challenging and complex. Companies need to pay attention and increase their vigilance towards their brands reputation. They need to manage reputational risks linked to the digitalization.

2. Inbound marketing

2.1. Definition

As first definition of inbound marketing, we could say that "inbound marketing is a new marketing approach which aims to attract consumers by gaining their attention thanks to the diffusion of quality content: a content that informs, educates and even inspires" (Truphème, 2016, p. 1). It is opposed to the old traditional marketing techniques that rather seek the attention of consumers in a more intrusive way, called the outbound marketing (Truphème, 2016).

Moreover, "in practice, inbound marketing is a connected system of online customer attraction and conversion. When a stranger becomes a lead, a lead becomes a customer, and that customer lives and advocates your brand ... that is the flawless execution of inbound marketing" (Anderson Miller, Inbound Marketing for Dummies, 2015, p. 10). Therefore, more and more companies are using inbound marketing in their strategies. Because 93% of them have seen an increase in lead generation (Anderson Miller, 2015). "Using this principle, inbound marketing specifically aims to attract those potential customers who have signaled or demonstrated an interest in what your organization has to offer. (…). Inbound marketing speaks directly to that need by creating conversations that connect with prospective customers, then facilitating a positive conversation action" (Anderson Miller, Inbound Marketing for Dummies, 2015, p. 11).

"At its most basic level, inbound marketing consists of:

- Attracting visitors to your website
- Nurturing those visitors, on their terms, within a structurally planned dynamic environment that facilitates action
- Converting those visitors into leads and, in turn, leads into customers through mutual exchange of valuable data (content for customer data) via a systematic process
- Reconverting prior customers into loyal, lifelong customers" (Anderson Miller, Inbound Marketing for Dummies, 2015, p. 8).

Moreover, thanks to inbound marketing, consumers now engage with businesses on their own terms and whenever they wish. Thanks to the enormous flows of information, consumers can make smarter shopping and openly sharing information with customers can increase the feeling of trust towards companies (Anderson Miller, 2015).

According to Anderson Miller in his book « Inbound Marketing for Dummies » (2015), inbound marketing is a science and an art at the same time. He explains it by saying « inbound marketing involves the science of measuring connections and making data-driven decisions, and the art of dissecting, analyzing, applying and testing initiatives that connect in a meaningful way" (Anderson Miller, Inbound Marketing for Dummies, 2015, p. 8).

2.2. Four objectives

According to Anderson Miller (2015), there are four main objectives of a high-performance inbound marketing system, which are attracting customers on their terms, engage with them through meaningful content so that visitors of the website can become lead, and to take actions to monetize those leads, and finally, the fourth and final objective is to reengage previous customers. Loyalty and trust are the main variables resulting in repeated customers.

Figure 15: Four Objectives of Inbound Marketing.

Source: Growth Hackers. (2017). Inbound Marketing Definition: what is it and how to implement it?. Retrieved the 15th of May 2020 from https://www.growth-hackers.net/inbound-marketing-definition/

- Attract

The first step of inbound marketing is to attract the interest of visitors through the Search Engine Marketing (SEM) and to engage with them through meaningful content. "The various forms of SEM that attract include:

- Pay-per-click (PPC) campaigns through Google AdWords re-targeting campaigns
- Bing ads in the U.S. and Baidu in China
- Online paid display advertising
- Paid listings
- Search retargeting and remarketing
- Search engine optimization (SEO) to be found in organic rankings
- Content marketing
- Social media campaigns on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest, and so on
- Email marketing" (Anderson Miller, Inbound Marketing for Dummies, 2015, pp. 15,16).

- Convert

The second step of inbound marketing is to cause customer conversion. In order to convert visitors into leads, qualitative content creation is important. The publication of content needs to be regular and consistent in order to attract and convert visitors. With content of quality, brands can win customers trust. To generate leads, companies use the following tool: the call to action (CTA). These are virtual buttons on which visitors can click that are virtual links. They are meant for visitors to take action. There are different types of CTA such as discounts, subscription to newsletter, etc. those CTA are highly effective when collecting customers' information.

- Close

The third step is the closing step, also called engagement phase. This is the step where brands and companies try to bring the leads accepting brands' offers and convert leads into sales. Once visitors have been converted into leads, companies need to publish and share the right content and to stay consistent with it. The right message needs to be delivered at the right time. Consistency and resilience

are keys when it comes to convert leads into customers. Brands need to stay in the minds of customers by providing useful and qualitative content.

- Delight

The fourth and final objective is to reengage with previous customers. It means building loyalty with customers in order to transform them into repeated customers. The third step of closing should not be the final step. Once a customer has bought from a company, he should not be forgotten. Companies should keep interacting with customers that have already purchased from them. Indeed, a happy customer will re-purchase and will share it with other people. It is free promotion.

2.3. Inbound vs outbound marketing

According to Anderson Miller (2015), traditional marketing, also known as outbound marketing, is not dead, but it is currently dying and with it, the methodology of interruptive push messages is dying faster.

As definition of traditional marketing, Tuten defines it by "the traditional forms of media, those that qualify under the umbrella of mass media, include television, magazines, newspaper, outdoor, and radio" (Tuten, Advertising 2.0: Social Media Marketing in a Web 2.0 World, 2008, p. 2).

Traditional marketing was founded on the basis of interruptive messaging centered on a product, and it relies on massive flows of messages that are not developing a personalized relationship with the customer. Furthermore, "more media choices mean more fragmentation" (Anderson Miller, Inbound Marketing for Dummies, 2015, p. 14). Indeed, nowadays, consumers are using multiple screens simultaneously such as the television, desktop, and mobile devices. This behavior divides the customer attention and erodes the commercial message. "Individual media consumption and behavior is migrating away from broadcast messaging. So, although traditional marketing consumption is still great when measured in terms of hours spent with traditional media, it is becoming less relevant and less effective" (Anderson Miller, Inbound Marketing for Dummies, 2015, p. 14).

Outbound marketing is more product-centric and inbound marketing is more customer-centric. With traditional marketing, there is a push messaging, while with inbound marketing, there is a pull messaging. The problem with traditional outbound marketing is the fact that it is interruptive, while inbound marketing is more attractive. Traditional marketing is one way of communicating, while the inbound one is more a two-way conversation. Inbound marketing is more relationship-based. It is more dynamic, while outbound marketing is more static (Anderson Miller, 2015).

An inbound marketing strategy may give better results than a traditional outbound marketing strategy because it does not interrupt the targeted consumer in his activity through advertisements, unsolicited phone calls, and mails (Truphème, 2016). Outbound marketing is intrusive in the life of the consumers and could have a negative impact instead of a positive one. Instead of retaining the attention of consumers, outbound marketing can have the opposite effect and consumers will pay less attention to future marketing messages. Tuten agrees by saying that "thinking of advertising as one-way communication limits what is possible, particularly online" (Tuten, Advertising 2.0: Social Media Marketing in a Web 2.0 World, 2008, p. 3).

Here is a summary showing the main differences between inbound and outbound marketing.
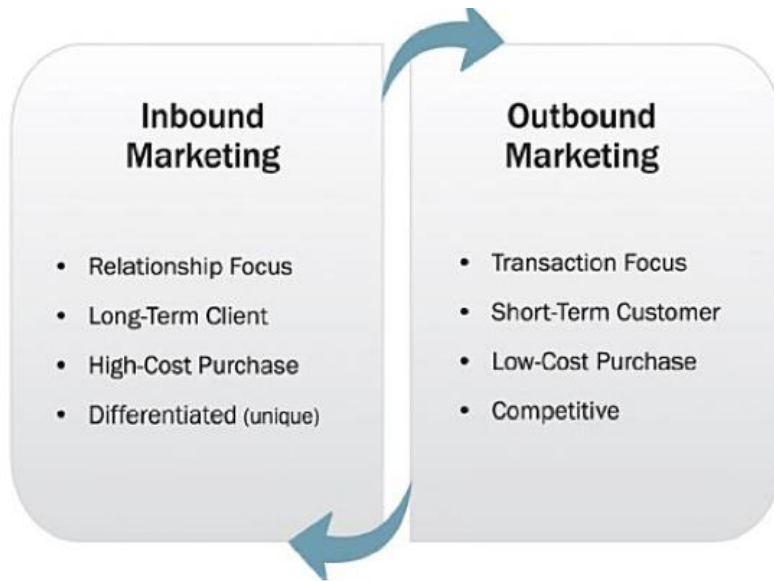
Figure 16: The 4 major differences between Inbound and Outbound Marketing.

Source: Cabage, Zhang, The Smarter Startup: A Better Approach to Online Business for Entrepreneurs, 2013.

As already mentioned before, inbound marketing focuses more on building long-term relationships with the customers, while adopting an outbound marketing strategy is more focusing on transaction with short-term customers. Thanks to the implementation of an inbound marketing strategy, the message is more differentiated and is well targeted. On the contrary, with an outbound marketing strategy, it is more competitive because it is not differentiated (Cabage, Zhang, 2013).

2.4.   Inbound marketing in startups

"As a startup, your marketing budgets typically can't afford that thirty second ad on the Super Bowl for $3MM, despite almost one billion people watch the game worldwide" (Deeb, Rocket Ventures, 101 Startup Lessons: An Entrepreneur's Handbook, 2013, p. 111). It means that a startup needs to be more frugal concerning its budget expenses in marketing. Startups should be looking for more cost-effective tactics concerning marketing. It is also best when a startup can first start with a small budget and see if the marketing campaign is working as planned, before adding more money into it (Deeb, Rocket Ventures, 2013).

Therefore, inbound marketing is the key for startups who would like to advertise and promote their product with a smaller budget. "Here you are talking about doing search engine optimization of your website for free inbound traffic, keyword based advertisements on Google's search results on an affordable cost per click basis, leveraging the powerful word of mouth benefits of social media via Facebook or Twitter, affiliate or cross marketing relationships with similar businesses, and PR based communications, to name a few" (Deeb, Rocket Ventures, 2013, p. 111).

2.5. Inbound marketing levers

2.5.1. SEO

2.5.1.1. Definition

SEO is an abbreviation and means Search Engine Optimization. "SEO is a process of affecting the visibility of a website or a webpage in organic search result" (Prusty, 2014, p.6). It is done to be higher ranked in organic search result. Complementary to that, SEO can be defined in a formal or informal way. As formal definition, SEO is "the process of refining your website using both on-page and off-page practices so that it will be indexed and ranked successfully by search engines" (Dodson, 2016, p.7). As informal definition, SEO is to "smell nice for Google" (Dodson, 2016, p.7).

"The optimization process of the website to higher rank in search engine globally, increases the amount of the organic traffic that any websites receive" (Mankad, 2019, pp.3-4). When we search on the internet by typing a keyword in the search engine in Google, we are actually looking into the index of Google on the Internet. It is a challenge for companies to understand how the search engine works and how to play it by the rules.

2.5.1.2. Benefits

According to Sabri (2020), search engine optimization is a tactic that is very valuable because it allows companies to make sure they get in front of the customers, before any other company. It helps companies by optimizing the brands abilities to be seen and discovered when a customer is trying to meet his need or to find a solution to an issue. This targeted visibility, which results from a good SEO, should lead to a greater monetarization.

According to Prusty (2014), here are the main benefits of a good SEO for companies: it helps companies to have more organic traffic towards their websites and it helps building brands because when a brand website is listed above another one, the higher listed brand has the more value.

2.5.1.3. Four steps

According to Dodson (2016), there are four steps in the SEO process: goals, on-page optimization, off-page optimization, and analyze. It is a cyclical process, meaning that after the last step, we go back to the first one.

a. Goals

The first step is to decide and set up clear and realistic goals. It also means to know which targets we have. It will be the key driver of the development and implementation of the SEO strategy. Goals will help in the creation of a strategy, of plans and of day-to-day tasks. Of course, goals will vary from one business to another. Some type of goals will be greater consumer engagement, visibility and conversions, while other types of goals can be reputational, credibility and status, market leadership, or even gaining a competitive advantage. After the creation of goals, the company will have to assess some KPI's in order to monitor their goals and track their progress (Dodson, 2016).

b. On-page optimization

Then, the second step is the one-page optimization. "It involves ensuring search engine can easily read, understand, crawl through, and navigate the pages if your site to index it correctly" (Dodson, The Art of Digital Marketing, 2016, p.8). This step starts with keyword research. Keywords are the main elements of one-page optimization. But what is precisely a keyword? According to Dodson, "it's a significant word or phrase that relates to the content on your website" (Dodson, 2016, p. 17). If you are a startup selling alpaca-wool clothing, alpaca socks or even alpaca scarf could be relevant keywords (See BellePaga Case Study). "Keywords are vital in ensuring your site displays in Search Engine Results Pages. They should be subtly incorporated into the content and meta data of your web pages in a way that reads naturally" (Dodson, 2016, p. 17). It means that in order to get in the top of the listings, a brand should create content with relevant keywords to the brand. In addition to that, "a search term is a commonly used phrase that users type into search engines to find you. (…). You must be able to know what customers are searching for and choose your keywords based on that" (Dodson, 2016, p. 17).

c. Off-page optimization

The third step is off-page optimization. "This refers to techniques used to influence website position in organic search results that cannot be managed by one-page optimization of your site" (Dodson, p.8). It is a long-term process by which the company seeks to gain website authority. "To put it simply, it's about building a digital footprint and earning online credibility" (Dodson, 2016, p.8). In this step, "you then need to optimize the technical mechanisms of your page and insert the keywords into them" (Dodson, 2016, p. 22).

Off-page optimization is built through different steps. The first step in off-page optimization would be the optimization of the technical mechanics on the web pages. It concerns the URL's, the names of the pages, the meta tags, breadcrumb navigation, the headings, paragraphs, and body of the text.

- URL

First, it is important to insert the chosen relevant keywords into the URL's of each web page of the site. It is important to make sure the URL's are optimized that way because it is an indicator for which the search engine look. A company should also remove any =&%? kind of symbols and replace them with easy keywords. URL's should be readable easily by both the search engine and the user. If a link is sent by social media and there is no keyword, the URL is not going to be descriptive and informative about the subject it refers to (Dodson, 2016).

- Page names

Furthermore, it is also very important to name the pages correctly because "page names act as labels that help us distinguish content and create meaning" (Dodson, 2016, p. 22). "It's about creating a user-friendly and informative browsing experience" (Dodson, 2016, p.23).

- Meta tags

"A web page is made up of hypertext markup language (HTML). Within the HTML are special tags, known as meta tags" (Dodson, 2016, p. 23). It gives important information about the content of the page and are used by the search engine to rank the site. Meta tags are great to add to the brand's SEO toolbox.

- Breadcrumb navigation

"This allows the customer to return to previous sections of the website without having to use the main navigation bar to do so" (Dodson, 2016, p. 23). The name of the website page will appear on the breadcrumb navigation graphic. Therefore, it is important for pages names to be descriptive.

- On-page headings

Webpages are usually divided into headings to facilitate reading. Headings structure the content and help understand how the text and ideas are connected and interconnected. It is important to have keywords into the first heading (H1) because users will better understand what the page and content is all about and because search engines also look at headings.

- First paragraph

Under the first heading is situated the first paragraph. As already mentioned before, the first heading should be composed of keywords, just like the first paragraph should be. The first sentence of the first paragraph should contain the relevant keyword chosen (Dodson, 2016). However, keywords should be placed in a smart and natural manner.

- Body of text

The standard for word counts in a webpage concerning a product is at least composed of 300. For an article it is 1000 words minimum. And concerning blogs, they should be composed of between 2500 and 3500 words. "Research has shown that articles containing 2500 words garner higher rankings than articles with fewer words" 'Dodson, 2016, p. 25).

Both search engine and users are looking for an informative and helpful content. Companies need to bear in mind that writing just to have the right amount of words is not advised. Companies should not also insert a maximum of keywords into the text of the articles they are writing. "Keyword density is now outdated and seen as SEO malpractice" (Dodson, 2016, p.25). "Help the search engine to understand what your content is about by inserting keywords once or twice into the body of text and its heading" (Dodson, 2016, p.25). Companies need to keep their content natural and most importantly professional.

Another important step in the off-page optimization is a link building strategy. "A solid link-building strategy will still positively affect your ranking, but this will be entirely dependent on your level of commitment and good judgment" (Dodson, 2016, p. 36). A link can either be reciprocal or in one way. "A one-way link is when somebody links to you, whereas a reciprocal link is when you link to each other" (Dodson, 2016, p. 37).

There are different techniques to use in order to focus on building inbound links of quality. These are the following:

- Evergreen content

It is a quality content that will always be relevant and fresh. It is a well-researched content that may be used by others as resource. "It naturally develops inbound links and helps your domain become authoritative" (Doson, 2016, p. 36).

- Influential blogs and social media

The links on the sites and social media have a great authority and lots of people are looking for them. However, those popular blogs and social media sites have already many links request. It means that only a great quality content will not be enough to get a link on those influential blogs and website. Therefore, it is important to build relationships and to network.

-   Local links

In the case of local businesses, "links from other local and relevant businesses, organizations, charities, social events, and media organizations are imperative" (Dodson, 2016, p.36). It is also important for a local business to be on the local listing sites such as Yelp, Trip Advisor, and Google My Business (Dodson, 2016).

-   Authoritative websites

"These are the crème de la crème. A link from an authoritative website is the golden nugget of off-page SEO" (Dodson, 2016, p.36). As an example, government websites have a lot of authority.

The next step is the creation of content. Content marketing is about "creating and sharing valuable, informative, and entertaining content with the aim of attracting customers onto your site - in order to drive sales and conversions" (Dodson, 2016, p.37). Even for marketing content, the content needs to be optimized with keywords, headings, meta-tags, etc.

The final step in off-page optimization is social sharing. It means sharing the content via social media and networks. Allowing customers to share as much as possible the created content is a way to increase popularity. In fact, "algorithms are placing increasingly more emphasis on popularity as a ranking factor, to help them distinguish between quality content and poor content. As such, search engines are now taking social endorsements into account" (Dodson, 2016, p.38). It means that the more people are sharing a brand's content, the best it is.

d. Analyze

The final step is analyzing. During this step, we look at the data we have and accordingly to that, we decide to change our goals, in case we need to make some adjustments. By this stage, the website should be optimized and there should be a lot of traffic and conversions as a result. In addition to that, this step should be the step where the brand reviews its goals and analyze the actual performances to see if they match the goals set in the first step of the SEO process (Dodson, 2016).

During this stage of the process, the brand should be aware of the traffic on its website and social media. It should also know where this traffic comes from and what keywords are bringing those customers on the website. There are many analytics tools in order to answer those questions and to see which page is giving the most conversions. Those analytics tools are for example Google Analytics, Moz or even Hubspot (Dodson, 2016).

2.5.1.4. Organic vs paid listing

"A SERP is the web page that a search engine, such as Google or Yahoo!, returns that lists the results of a user's search" (Dodson, The Art of Digital Marketing, 2016, p.9). At the top of a SERP, we always find paid listings. However, the listings that are beneath the paid advertising are organic search results, classifying from the most relevant to the least relevant with the search term entered in the search engine (Dodson, 2016). "Ninety-one percent of searchers will not click past the first results page, so it's time to adopt a competitive mind-set and strive to achieve a top-three organic listing" (Dodson, 2016, p.9).

Moreover, Dodson explains that "listings that are displayed on the first page of search engine results yield the highest search traffic – the higher the listing, the more clicks it will receive. Generally, paid

listings will garner a 30 percent click-through rate (CTR), with organic listings making up the remaining 70 percent" (Dodson, 2016, p.9). He also adds that 67% of click-throughs happen in the first five results shown by the search engine.

It is very important to be in the top of the organic listing. The goal is to be in the number one position or at least in the top three. The following are the benefits of being well listed.

- An increase in organic click-through rate (CTR).
- An increase in management because customers will want to engage with the company in every steps of the buying process.
- An enhanced reputation because "top listings yield both online and professional credibility, status, and reputation" (Dodson, 2016, p. 15).
- A competitive advantage and market leadership when being in the top of the listings.
- An increase in conversions

2.5.1.5. SEO in the fashion industry

Almost every internet user has already bought something online at least once. As a result, it is not surprising that there are more and more online shops appearing and more and more people are becoming more confident when buying something online. Many internet users and customers prefer this type of shopping because it is accessible to them 24/7. Clothing industry is one of the most popular business sectors. That is why it is hard for brands to not allowing customers to shop fashion online. Fashion has become a huge permanent part in the e-commerce around the world.

So, how do customers search for clothing online? According to Kinga (2019), the dominant option is the direct entry to the website in the case of famous and popular brands. The internet user simply writes the brand address from its memory in the search engine. It is often the case for Zalando and Zara. On the other hand, concerning smaller shops, not already very present in the mind of consumers, it will require from them to get traffic from other channels. Because the online fashion market is very competitive, smaller brands need to plan their SEO strategies in order to gain visibility. According to Hajalie (2019), for startups, it can be quite costly to work with SEO agencies. However, startups do not necessarily need experts to have a SEO strategy.

According to Kinga (2019), there are some key concepts smaller online fashion firms need to understand in order to implement a strong SEO strategy.

The first one is seasonality. Indeed, fashion is concerned with changes in seasonality and fashion brands need to prepare their SEO strategy well in advance because online fashion consumers are looking for winter jackets already in autumn. As a result, brands should start the SEO process well in advance.

Another key factor of a SEO strategy is keywords. As already mentioned before in this thesis, thanks to the appropriate keywords, brands can increase visibility on their websites. In this very competitive field, what works well is long phrases as keywords because it allows smaller brands to get in the top of the search results because they are less competitive. In addition, according to Gareth (2020), smaller brands should focus more on long tail keywords before using short tail ones because there is less competition and they reflect a more clearly search that will more likely result in a sale. "Men's jacket" is not likely to get at the top of the listing on the search engine. However, "men's brown leather jacket with fur" is going to be of greater help to get above in the ranking. Furthermore, brand should keep up with trends, especially in the fashion market. Indeed, brands should take advantage of Google Trends

data in order to have an idea of what keywords and phrases internet users are looking for during this season.

Convenient navigation through website is another key concept in SEO. It should be convenient and easy for customers to find what they are looking for when a website is well organized. Internal linking is another key in SEO. Thanks to internal linking, fashion brands draw consumers' attention to other products that are similar to the ones they are looking, or that can be complementary to the one they are looking. In this way, a consumer that was looking for a denim jacket can also leave with a new T-shirt. Brand should always keep in mind internal linking and place the most important links well in sight (Gareth, 2020).

However, brands should be cautious about keywords cannibalism (Gareth, 2020). Indeed, when two or more pages of the same website contain the same keywords, the search engine does not know which page should be ranked higher than the other one in the listing. It means that the website competes with itself. That is why, in order to avoid this issue, one page should contain one set of keywords.

Finally, one of the most powerful ranking factors would be to have backlinks from other fashion websites. As a result, your fashion website would rank higher in search engine. In order to get backlinks from other fashion websites, the first step would be to create amazing content another fashion brand would like to link to. Then, your fashion brand should reach out to fashion bloggers, interview an expert in the industry, or organizing offline events. Link building will build authority. And many fashion niches require this authority and to be acknowledged by others in order to succeed in this sector (Gareth, 2020).

2.5.2. Content marketing

2.5.2.1. Definition

Content marketing is not something new. Companies have been creating it for many years in order to attract new customers or to retain existing ones. Content marketing is defined as creating, posting, and sharing content such as videos, images, blogs and social media posts, to market a brand's products and services.

According to Lieb (2012), the goal of content marketing is to attain "content-ment". It is achieved through creating and posting content though different digital channels such as social media, websites, newsletters, blogs, videos sharing websites, etc. It is more the fact of publishing than advertising. However, there is a point of differentiation between traditional forms of advertising with content market and new, digital ones. Nowadays, using content marketing is not push marketing. Instead, it is a pull strategy, meaning that it is a marketing of attraction. "It is being there when consumers need you and seek you out with relevant, educational, helpful, compelling, engaging, and sometimes entertaining information" (Lieb, 2012, p.1). According to Turner (2019), content is key for developing a relationship between a brand and customers.

Content marketing is not a tactic, it is a real strategy. Creating content is part of the content marketing and companies should set a proper content strategy (Turner, 2019). "Companies that successfully address customer needs and questions with content add value to conversations that will take place online" (Lieb, 2012, p. xiii). It is important for companies to realize that content marketing has various benefits for their brands. "Content marketing aids in brand recognition, trust, authority, credibility,

loyalty, and authentiticy" (Lieb, 2012, p.2). It creates value and it helps people. It educates and make customers more informed. Content can reinforce existing relationships with customers, but also create new ones.

2.5.2.2. Content marketing in the fashion industry

According to Hallam (2018), content marketing is important to raise brand awareness. For fashion brands, it is a great opportunity. As already mentioned before, the fashion market is very huge and competitive. Therefore, fashion brands need to use the greatest marketing tactics in order to differentiate themselves and to ensure they are the brands where customers come first. If content marketing is done correctly, it will increase brands visibility, customers and then, it will increase sales. There is a huge opportunity for those brands to create successful content that will resonate with the target customers.

There are four types of content marketing fashion companies can create (Hallam, 2018). The first type is to tell about the brand's story. Each brand has a different history and serve different markets. And when a shopper is willing to purchase from a brand, he will look at the brand's story, message and what it stands for. For example, Burberry had released a trailer video showing the story of its founder, Thomas Burberry. This video has been seen more than 15 million times and was shared massively across social media.

Another type of content marketing is the use of influencers. Influencers' budget is increasing every year due to the success of this type of online marketing. Influencers can be used in the part of brand's marketing. They can show an outfit, participate to an event, or brands can even recruit them as brand ambassador. As an example, we can talk about Brandy Melville, which increased its followers' amount by 1,6% in March 2016, due to their successful influencer project. Indeed, the brand has worked with famous Instagram models during the period of the famous festival Coachella.

The third type of content brands can use is blogging. Nowadays, companies cannot afford not to have a blog, especially if they want to draw attention of customers to their brands and to increase traffic. There a plenty of opportunities of subjects that brands can write about. It could be about fashion weeks, new trends, new styles, how to style outfits, interviews with professionals in the industry, etc.

The final type of content for fashion brands is videos. Indeed, 87% of online marketeers create and use videos content. Every day, a billion hours of content is watched every day on YouTube (Hallam, 2018). A video generates more shares than a simple picture or image. After watching a branded video, 64% of consumers make a purchase. Videos could be used to show fashion runways. In addition, some brands use videos on their website to show how clothing fit on the model. It is the case of ASOS.

2.5.3. Blog Marketing

2.5.3.1. Definition

Patel defines blog as "a form of social-media marketing which uses blogs to create and publish content, while establishing relationship with the readers" (Patel, 2017, p.35). Blogging is an interactive way of publishing content on websites. Nowadays, "content has become a major part of internet marketing, thus increasing the percentage of blogging significantly. (…). This kind of content ensures that:

- Visitors will come back

- Visitors will be interested in your company
- Visitors will share content" (Patel, 2017, p. 35).

Blogs have become a very important part in online marketing (Patel, 2017). It has become more and more easier to write a blog. "Simple tools and publishing platforms have enabled the users without any programming skills to easily set up and manage blogs" (Patel, 2017, p.35). It is also possible for readers to leave comments under blog articles, which increase the social dimension of this network. It enables a connection with the readers and the building of relationships.

Nowadays, it is unlikely to position a website without any content or any social media connections. It has been possible in the past, but not anymore. "This is because search engines algorithms were adapted to this new trend of social media, and this has become integrated into search algorithms. Therefore, having social media accounts and blogs is said to be an important part of search engine optimization and online marketing in general as it allows to search engine to link your website to the identity you build through social media" (Patel, 2017, p. 36). Blogging is the best way to help improving the positioning of the website thanks to keywords in the content of the text that will be detected by search engines. It is also a good manner to present more information concerning a company. According to Patel (2017), the quality of the content is very important. "If the content is of value, it is more likely to get users engaged, which ultimately leads to successful social media strategy" (Patel, 2017, p. 36).

2.5.3.2. Blog marketing in the fashion industry

Blogs have appeared in 2006-2007 and have started as a sort of personal journal, a diary. The aim of it was for people to read it, to comment and to share it. It was 24/7 accessible and people could read it in any location. In 2016-2017, people began to show fashion on them. People would post fashion and street style pictures, while giving a description and adding a text. Nowadays, fashion is one of the most popular topics in blogs. So, 10 years, after the emergence of the first blogs, there were thousands and hundreds of thousands successful high earning fashion bloggers. It has become a part of our digital landscape (Mitterfellner, 2019). According to Kohler (2019), this industry is very popular because the audience of fashion blogs is huge, and readers are constantly looking for new sources of inspiration.

The power of blogs has become more evident in marketing. According to Mitterfellner (2019), even printed media have started to launch their own fashion blogs on their websites, such as Vogue Magazine. Blogging and more especially fashion blogging has become a lucrative sector. Fashion brands can get many benefits when working with fashion bloggers. When working with fashion bloggers, brands can get in return higher engagement and higher reach. Brands can also target the right customers, the ones that are more likely to respond positively to the message. And finally, it gives brands the opportunity of a potential increase in sales.

Either a brand can work with fashion bloggers, or brands can start their own blogs as well. According to Kinga (2019), for smaller online clothing shops, it is often a good idea to do a regular blogging because it allows brands to promote their offer. When starting an online fashion business, blogging should be a part of the marketing strategy. It is not just a way to entertain customers. It is a way to connect with them and to spread the word about the brand and to increase brand awareness. It is a useful way to promote one's business in a more authentic way. (Kohler, 2019).

2.5.4. Social media marketing

In the past few years, social media websites have appeared. With more and more users, and online time spent on these, social media have emerged as a strong marketing tool. Social media marketing is

concerned with promoting a brand or a company through social media networks. It helps companies building brand awareness, increasing traffic through their websites, and promoting products and services (Mankad, 2019). "Social media marketing is considered a necessary component of an interactive communication campaign" (Tuten, 2008, p.9).

2.5.4.1. Definitions
a)   Social media

Social media exists through the form of communities that are built through relationships that create, cocreate, share, comment and engage in content (Tuten, 2008). Social media have changed the way people communicate and interact together. It is a whole new way of exchanging and searching for ideas and information. The importance of social media in our everyday life needs to be taken seriously (Patel, 2017). "As a result, the communication, which is an important part of marketing, started to shift from traditional mediums such as television and newspaper ads, to social media" (Patel, Social Media Marketing Fundamentals - For Certifications, 2017, p. 11). Therefore, social media have become a huge platform for marketeers to take into account in order to advertise, to communicate and interact with customers. Patel defines social media as "a new mediator between business who want to promote their product and between consumers who use social media to learn more about a particular product" (Patel, Social Media Marketing Fundamentals - For Certifications, 2017, p. 11).

During the past years, consumers have started to allocate a numerous amount of their time online. Therefore, advertisers have followed the trend. This results in an increase in online advertisement spending and in specific forms of online advertising. Those opportunities have affected the way in which advertising is created, who it targets, how it is delivered, and how consumers interact online (Tuten, 2008).

b)   Social media marketing

We could define social-media marketing as "a form of online advertising that uses the cultural context of social communities, including social networks (e.g., YouTube, MySpace, and Facebook), virtual worlds (e.g., Second Life, There, and Kaneva), social news sites (e.g., Digg and del.icio.us), and social opinion-sharing sites (e.g., Epinions), to meet branding and communication objectives" (Tuten, 2008, p. 19). It is an important part of digital marketing. In addition, "social-media marketing – properly practiced – seeks to engage customers in the online social locations where they naturally spend time" (Yunanto, 2019, p. 7).

Social-media marketing enables a brand to build its brand equity, to increase its brand awareness, to improve the feelings and likeability of a brand and to differentiate itself from its competitors. It also enables companies to build customer databases, to provide pre-purchase information and to drive traffic to their websites (Tuten, 2008).

"Social-media marketing is a broad category of advertising spending, including advertising using social networks, virtual worlds, user-generated product reviews, blogger endorsements, RSS feeds of content and social news sites, podcasts, games, and consumer-generated advertising" (Tuten, 2008, p. 9). According to various studies, the spending on social-media marketing has increased exponentially. Nowadays, social-media marketing is considered as a necessary component in a campaign in order to gain interaction with customers.

It is important for brands to take all the advantages and benefits of social media and to create conversation and relationships with customers. Those conversations can be product-related, based on promotions or also customer service. Social media marketing is about "monitoring and facilitating customer-to-customer interaction and participation throughout the web to encourage positive engagement with a company and its brands" (Chaffey, Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, chapter 1).

2.5.4.2. Types of social media websites

According to Patel (2017), there is a misunderstanding in the concept of social media. Most people believe it is only concerned with Facebook or Twitter. In reality, this term refers to websites allowing interaction and exchange of information between users (Patel, 2017). There exist six types of social media, which are:

- "Collaborative projects
- Blogs and microblogs
- Content communities
- Social networking websites
- Virtual game-worlds
- Virtual social worlds" (Patel, Social Media Marketing Fundamentals - For Certifications, 2017, p. 14).

2.5.4.3. Main social media used

The most important social media used nowadays are Facebook, Twitter, Google+ and LinkedIn. It is not an exhaustive list and other play a central role in our daily digital lives such as Pinterest, Instagram, Flickr, YouTube, Vimeo, Foursquare and Yelp (Patel, 2017).

- Facebook

Facebook is considered as the most popular social network among people, with one billion subscribers (Patel, 2017). It is the most widely used social media. It is the biggest social network and therefore, it plays a major role in social-media marketing. It constantly provides brands and businesses with a huge visibility. The benefits for companies are numerous: brand awareness, an increase in community engagement and an increase in sales.

- Twitter

Twitter is a little bit less popular than Facebook, with 310 million users (Patel, 2017). What is different with Twitter is that it is used for posting micro-blogs, short messages, called Tweets. This is how content is created and shared by its users. It is very popular among politicians, celebrities, journalists and marketing and business professionals. Moreover, thanks to the usage of hashtags (#), people can see a content related to a specific topic. Content is also shared thanks to the possibility of "retweet" and enables people to repost a certain content. It is a great opportunity for companies to interact with its followers.

- Google+

Google+ "allows users to create Google profiles, which are supposed to be used by individuals, while Google+ pages are for companies and institutions" (Patel, 2017, p. 27). Moreover, Google+ allows integration with other Google's services such as Google Maps and Google Search (Patel, 2017). However, Google+ is not as much popular as Facebook, Twitter, or even Instagram.

- LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a network particularly popular within the professional sphere. "It is a good platform for B2B marketing. LinkedIn allows creating professional profiles or resumes, which are a good opportunity for both companies and individuals looking for job opportunities" (Patel, 2017, p. 30).

Besides the fact that those four social networks are very popular and more used in business, there are other social networks that are more suitable for specific types of business (Patel, 2017). Those include Pinterest, Instagram, Flickr that are more about sharing visual content in the form of videos or pictures. "They can be a good platform to reach potential clients by sharing engaging visual content, which is especially useful for online stores, decorators, clothing manufacturers, etc" (Patel, Social Media Marketing Fundamentals - For Certifications, 2017, p. 31). YouTube and Vimeo can help companies to host video files to interact with customers. Those videos require more skills than just posting images and can be promotional, informative, or instructional. When it comes to local companies, Foursquare and Yelp are more popular because they allow people to post pictures and reviews of places they visit (Patel, 2017). It is often used by tourists in order to have greater information when visiting new cities.

- Instagram

Fashion is one of the most topic talked about on social media. Instagram and Pinterest are the places to be when it comes to fashion. According to Liberge (2020), Instagram is the favorite social media of young people between 15 and 25 years. Instagram is not in the top three of the main used social media yet. The top three is composed of Facebook, WeChat, and WhatsApp. However, it is the social media with the highest engagement rate. Nowadays, there are 1 billion active users on Instagram and 500 million of users use the application every day.

2.5.5. Influencer marketing

2.5.5.1. Origin and definition

Two events have colluded in the creation of influencer marketing. According to Brown and Hayes (2008), these two events are the global economic downturn and the arrival of the web. Because of the economic downturn, people were not able to buy, and marketing budgets were cut dramatically. The arrival of the web has enabled businesses to live and to be visited. The new existence of the web has allowed companies to cut down on costs and firms started to downsize, making the market more fragmented than before, with 10 small firms instead of 4 big ones. Therefore, there is nowadays greater choice for customers. According to Brown and Hayes (2008), a long-term effect of this fragmentation is the arrival of influencers and the rise of influencer marketing concept. In the past decade, the rise in influencers has forced businesses to identify those "people influencing their prospects" and realign their marketing strategy accordingly.

Nowadays, every one of us almost has been aware of the concept of influencer marketing. It has had incredible results in the marketing field of today. Consumers trust more influencer marketing than any other marketing method because of the authentic message behind it. "The old or traditional marketing does still work, but we cannot deny the fact that most of the consumers were captivated already by influencer marketing" (Bren, 2019, pp. 11-12). Indeed, 84% of online consumers trust online reviews just as it was a recommendation made by a friend or a family member (Bren, 2019). Consumer trust more recommendations made by an influencer rather than advertisings from brands and companies.

So, how could we best define influencer marketing? "Influencer marketing is a strategy that orients itself around an influential person, a mouthpiece, or someone with a bit of online fame and an audience in a given industry" (Bren, 2019, p. 6). With influencer marketing, the influencer has already built a relationship with his or her audience. The influencer has already done the hard work of cultivating an audience.

"An influencer is someone who has a large social media following. The following of an influencer is going to trust him or her, which makes the idea of being an influencer a very powerful concept in social media" (Miller, Robbins, 2019, p.29). Due to his or her influencer, the followers are going to check daily what he or her posts on social media. "If the influencer recommends a product off a website, the fan base is going to take that recommendation seriously, and they will at least look at the linked product or website" (Miller, Robbins, 2019, p.29). The large audience influenced by this influencer is a potential group of buyers in a certain market.

2.5.5.2. Influencer types

Influencers can be categorized into different types according to the volume of followers they have, or even according to their role they play in people's lives.

Let us first see how influencers can be categorized according to the volume of their followers. When a certain number of followers is reached, influencers can be identified as nano, micro, or macro influencers.

- Micro influencers

Micro influencers have between 1000 and 10 000 followers on social media. They are becoming more numerous. According to Doki-Thonon and Jourdain (2019), micro influencers represent 47% of the total of influencers. And 30% of consumers are influenced by a micro influencer to buy one product (Briones, André, 2020). Micro influencers do not reach many people, but they have a great impact on the buying behavior of those influenced. We may believe that the more followers the better to choose an influencer. However, "a micro-influencer with 5000 highly engaged, targeted and trusting fans will deliver you better outcomes than something with 10x that following and none of the engagement relevancy" (Bren 2019, p. 9). They might have less followers, but these are quality followers.

According to Doki-Thonon and Jourdain (2019), 35% of influencers have between 10 000 and 50 000 followers. And 16% of them have between 50 000 and 100 000 and more on social media.

- Macro influencers

Macro influencers or top influencers are considered so when they have more than 250 000 followers on social media (Briones, André, 2020). However, only 3% of consumers are influenced by a celebrity to buy a product. People are reached by them, but they do not necessarily buy from them. Complementary to that, De Vaublanc (2019) adds that macro influencers have a bigger community but less engagement from it. He points out the fact that it is maybe best, as a business, to use the help of several groups of micro influencers rather than to require the help of a macro influencer.

If we categorize influencers according to the role they take in people's lives, there are 3 types of influencers: the aspirational, the authoritative, and, finally, the peer (Sinkwitz, 2018). So, what are the differences?

- The aspirational

The aspirational one is also known as the celebrity. It is the most known type.

- The authoritative

The authoritative one is the type we believe is an expert in his field and whose opinion we trust.

- The peer

The peer is an influencer considered as being our equal and has the most powerful influence.

TYPE	Reach	Relevancy	Trust	Inform	Commerce	Emotion
Aspirational	3	1	1	1	1	2
Authoritative	2	2	2	3	2	1
Peer	1	3	3	2	3	3

Table 2: Differences between the Aspirational, Authoritative, and Peer influencer.

Source: Sinkwitz. (2018). *The ultimate guide to using influencer marketing*.

In this table, the three types of influencers are given numbers from 3 (high) to 1 (low) in the different attributes. "Reach" is the audience touched by influencers. Many followers give higher reach. "Relevancy" is the relevancy of the marketing strategy on the targeted persona. As we can see in the table, peer influencer will offer more relevancy. "Trust" will be greater with our friends, family, peers than with a celebrity. The attribute "inform" will be greater in the case of an authoritative influencer considered as an expert in his/her field. The "commerce" attribute is the confluence of need and trust. Both are higher attributes in the peer influencer. Of course, we need to keep in mind that aspirational and authoritative influencers, when followed by lots of people will have a greater impact than peer influencers. Finally, concerning the "emotion" attribute, it will be greater when the relevancy and reach is greater.

As a conclusion, if we add up the different scores of each attribute, the aspirational type total score is of 9, the authoritative one is 12 and the peer influencer total is equal to 13. However, each type can be used specifically for different purposes.

2.5.5.3. Benefits

Influencer marketing has many benefits such as "lending credibility", "cost-effective targeting", "finding out what channels are their favorites", "developing brand awareness" and "helping build your online community" (Diamond, 2019, p. 493).

- Lending credibility

Concerning lending credibility, when an influencer writes or gives a review about a product, it gives more weight to the customers than just seeing the sale page of the company. When an influencer recommends a product, customers are more likely to pay more attention to it. "In a study, by Dimensional Research, respondents found that 90 percent said that positive reviews impacted their

buying decisions. Eighty-six percent said their buying decisions were influenced by negative online reviews" (Diamond, 2019, p.493). Those figures show the weight consumers give to influencers' point of view regarding a product.

- Cost-effective targeting

As already mentioned before, influencers have already built a community of people around a topic. Therefore, it is easier for companies to use the help of influencers to tap into an already existing community, rather than starting from scratch (Diamond, 2019).

- Favorite channels

In addition, a business should find out what channels are the most attractive to customers. "Influencer audiences point the way to the channels your potential customers spend time on, thereby saving you a huge amount of time and pointing the way to the best advertising venues" (Diamond, 2019, p.493).

- Brand awareness

Another benefit of influencer marketing is that it helps with increasing brand awareness amongst customers. "Not only is the influencer discussing your product, he is implicitly endorsing your brand" (Diamond, 2019, p.493).

- Building an online community

Furthermore, it can also help building an online community around the brand. It is difficult and takes a lot of time to build a community from scratch. Therefore, using the help of an influencer, which already has an existing community, is the best way for brands to install a community around their brands.

2.5.5.4. Measurement

According to Diamond (2019), there is a lot of controversy about the subject of measuring influence. "Marketers dislike the way some clout-ranking companies give a high rating to an influencer based solely on the number of Twitter followers he has or the amount of attention he garners on Facebook" (Diamond, 2019, p.494). Therefore, we need to take a range of factors into account in order to have the best measurement of their influence.

There are three attributes of influences: reach, relevance, and resonance.

- Reach

Reach concerns the audience reached through the social networks of the influencer. It serves to know if the audience is large and responsive to the influencer's activity.

- Relevance

Relevance needs to be taken into account to see if there is a match between the influencer's content topic and the message the brand wants to deliver. "Relevance means how aligned the influencer's platform is with your brand" (Bren 2019, p.8). The brand needs to make sure that influencer's quality content is matching the quality the brand's audience expects.

- Resonance

"Resonance is how well the audience receives the influencer's message" (Bren, 2019, p. 8).

2.5.5.5. Influencer marketing in startups

According to Diamond (2019), startups often turns to influencer marketing because they believe that influencer marketing is a cheap and fast way to gain a lot of brand awareness. However, it is not exactly true. There are different ways to make influencer marketing work for startups.

The advantage of a startup is that it is brand new and fresh. It is possible to invent a new concept or doing something someone has never done before. It is important for a startup to be creative and to find influencers that appeal to that and to the desire to be a part of something that has never been done before (Diamond, 2019).

When a brand-new company is starting with influencer marketing, it may be possible that it does not have the funds to pay influencers. However, it is possible to offer them versions of products, offer them looks, or stock/equity in the company.

As already mentioned before, influencer marketing is not only about having influencers writing reviews about a product. It may also be using them as beta testers, for example. Moreover, if a company does not have the budget, maybe the influencer will be willing to test the product and give a personal feedback about it to the company (Diamond, 2019).

However, the following are the most common mistakes startups do when it comes to influencer marketing. Each of them should try to avoid these mistakes. The first mistake is to believe that influencer marketing is cheap or even quick. "Influencer marketing takes a lot of time and resources, two things most startups don't often have" (Diamond, 2019, p. 488). It is important not to waste the startup's energy. The second mistake Diamond point out is to try influencer marketing when the product we are trying to sell is an app. Bloggers and influencer marketing will not convert at the rate a startup app needs. That is why it is important not to maximize the marketing budget and hire numerous bloggers to review the app.

2.5.5.6. Social media and influencer marketing in the fashion industry

In the past decade, social media has virtually revolutionized every industry in the world. Fashion is no exception. Indeed, every already existing big fashion companies have had to adapt to the digitalization and to add social media platforms to their activities. Social media has brought connection, innovation, and diversity into the fashion industry. Social media has done many incredible things for the fashion sector.

Nowadays, fashion companies use social media as a promotional tool. Social media has been the cheapest way to advertise for fashion brands. Social media is connecting buyers and marketers. It is a need for a fashion brand to be present on social media.

Fashion loves Instagram. Indeed, Instagram is the main social media on which fashion is displayed. With this tool, fashion brands can build their brands and find their own fans and followers. It has given fashion brands new opportunities. It has also enabled social media users to build their online fashion communities and build their own fanbase. Nowadays, they are called influencers. According to Statista (2019), Instagram is the social media where apparel brands get the most engagement. Per 1.000 followers, there are 13,71 interactions, while Pinterest counts 0,49 interactions per 1.000 followers, Facebook 0,43, and Twitter 0,17. It means that for fashion brands, Instagram is the most powerful social media to promote one's business and shouldn't be neglected by fashion companies.

Social media have influenced the fashion sector more than any other industry. Before, fashion brands put their clothing in magazines and organized walked fashion shows with models. It was a two-dimensional and one-sided industry. Consumers were getting inspiration by looking in magazines or by looking to fashion shows. Nowadays, social media have reframed this industry structure. Nowadays, fashion consumers not only consume fashion, they also contribute to it.

Concerning fashion industry promotion nowadays, it cannot practically be done without the use of influencers anymore. The fashion industry has been an early adopter of influencer marketing. influencer marketing is the use of an influential and relevant person used by a fashion brand in order to influence the buying behavior of the brand target customers. In exchange for money or brands' products, they present the products on their blogs or social media and review them. In addition, they place links for customers to get those items. According to Kinga (2019), influencer marketing has helped many fashion niches to enter and make their mark in this competitive industry that is fashion.

This type of digital marketing does work because it is a powerful marketing tool using the influencer as main driver. Indeed, we live in an era where customers are highly influenced by other people. In addition, people trust more other people than they trust brands. There have been studies demonstrating that the word-of-mouth (WOM) generates sales two times more than paid advertisements.

According to a study made by Hubspot (2018), 25% of all sponsored posts on Instagram concern fashion. The most active industry on Instagram and using influencer marketing is the fashion industry. Therefore, fashion brands are spending more and more in influencer marketing and social media marketing.

2.5.6.   Email marketing

2.5.6.1. Definition
Companies use email marketing to communicate with their targets. It is mainly used to promote content, events, discounts, and to direct customers to the company's website. Emails are sent to customers to encourage them to purchase from the company. "Emails may be sent as a part of a one-off campaign or can be automated, event-based, triggered emails, such as a welcome strategy that can be broadcast based on rules about intervals and customer characteristics" (Chaffey, Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, chapter 1).

2.5.6.2. Email marketing in the fashion industry
According to Matthews-Fairbanks (2010), email marketing is a great marketing tool to use when a business wants to grow. However, e-mail messages need to be as concise as possible in order to result in sales because readers don't have time to read every word. So, e-mail marketing messages need to be as clear and concise as possible, but there are also other messages brands should include, such as the value proposition of the brand, information to support the value proposition (testimonials, facts), and one or several call to action. "A call to action is a statement that asks someone to take specific type of action in a specific way" (Arnold, 2011, Chap.1).

According to the State of Email Marketing Industry report (2016), 33% of ecommerce and retail marketeers believe that excellent ROI is delivered through email marketing. Email marketing has also the ability to increase sales. "Subscribe to our newsletter and stay updated on our latest offers and

promotions". This sentence has been seen by every online fashion consumer. When customers sign up, it is most likely their email box will be flowing of sales, discounts, offers etc. It is the best way to turn a subscriber into a consumer. When having subscribed to a newsletter, fashion brands send more or less one email a day through email automation (Brui, 2018). What will turn a subscriber into a consumer is the content of the email. Indeed, 47% of the subscribers will open the email based on the first sentence of the email they will read. What catch subscribers' eyes is the content that provokes a fear of missing out. This will be created by special offers and promotions. Another thing that will catch our eyes is the use of emojis in the email. And then, another strategy used in email marekting is to draw subscribers' attention is the feeling of curiosity due to sentences such as "In the mood for something new?, Pssssst!, etc (Brui, 2018).

For fashion companies, email marketing is as important as running a store and maintaining merchandise (Avex, 2018). Fashion brands need to connect with customers and encourage them to buy. The best ways to do so is to send personalized emails. Personalized messages work very well. According to Avex (2018), personalized emails marketing sees an increase of 19% in total sales. However, in order to do online personalization on scale, brands require the help of algorithms. Dynamic and interactive emails content is the best way to catch one subscriber's attention. It creates a more enjoyable customer experience.

To sum up, fashion brands cannot afford not using email marketing. Indeed, it is a powerful tool in fashion companies marketing arsenals. Using email marketing ensures that fashion brands will delight their customers and will remain profitable.

2.5.7. Pay per click

Definition

Pay Per Click, or PPC is "a method of driving traffic to your website by paying a publisher every time when your ad is clicked" (Mankad, 2019, p.4). It is the term used when "a company pays for an ad to be displayed on the search engine results pages as a sponsored link (…) when a specific key phrase is entered by the search users" (Chaffey, Ellis-Chadwick, 2019, chapter 1). Whenever a potential customer clicks on the link of the ad, the company will pay for it. The brand will pay each time the link is clicked by users. The most popular PPC is Google Ad Words.

According to Sabry (2020), PPC is a cost-effective manner to advertise on other websites and search engines, such as Google. It is an effective tool in growth hacking. Brands only pay the search engine when someone clicks on the advertisements. Therefore, it is a cheap way to see which method of advertising works, and which does not. Pay per click tools allow companies to get noticed and seen quicker and much more by users when brands do the following: they run multiple pay per click campaigns, they promote their products on different platforms, they customize their advertisements, and they use analytics to know better which ads works best and which doesn't.

Furthermore, by only paying for the clicks, companies have much higher chances to build a good conversion rate. It is a very powerful tool in growth hacking methods.

According to Sabry (2020), the following are the three main benefits of PPC:

- It improves the conversion rates. When users click on the ads on the landing page or Click-To-Action (CTA), the more companies have chances to get higher conversion rates.

- It also enables companies to analyze results. If users do not click much on an ad, maybe companies should change their promotional messages.
- Finally, it allows companies to customize their marketing. Once they have tested out some different varieties of ads, they can choose which one works best and stick to it.

3. Case studies

3.1. Nasty Gal: Content marketing

Nasty Gal is a fashion company, founded in 2012, by Sophia Amoruso. She first started to sell vintage clothing on eBay, and then, she decided to open her own online boutique. Nasty Gal has seen a quick rise to the top of online fashion brands. In 2018, six years after the company had been created, profits amounted to 10 million $. What has differentiated this brand from others is the content.

Nasty Gal has been excelling in content marketing. Its main message is female empowerment. From this movement has come the famous Nastygal's GIRLBOSS hashtag. The main message is to empower female. According to Sophia Amoruso, her main goal is to make women smarter and to create a community with which to interact. From this movement, many women have started posting pictures of their outfits on social media with #GIRLBOSS as description. In addition to that, Nasty Gal also showcase globetrotting women, art, music, and food. We can say that Nasty Gal has had so much success because of its content and blog marketing. Creating content is a way to deliver the brand's message more easily. Therefore, it is important for a brand to figure out about a unique and resonating message to deliver to customers.

Nasty Gal also creates a lookbook for every new collection. For each collection, Nasty Gal tells a story about a girl and tells where she is going. It is a very effective strategy because each collection and story related to it are in synchronization with the seasons. They create new content and stories that go along with the target audience.

Furthermore, Nasty Gal has also used many inbound marketing strategies and tactics. Hereafter are the main inbound marketing strategies that have made Nasty Gal so successful.

Attract:

Sophia Amoruso has started building a community through MySpace before she had a business model. She has spent a massive amount of time on MySpace, that was the perfect audience for customers of vintage clothing at that time. She has identified her target audience clearly and knew she needed to become friend with those folks.

Then, she started a blog before blogs became trendy. She used to blog about every new piece of clothing that went up to her eBay shop. She says that she did not know what she was doing at that time, but she definitely was using two major keys to running a successful business. Those two keys were: first, knowing your customers, and two, knowing how to make free marketing. The Nasty Gal blog has been a main driver to the website.

Convert:

This part of the inbound marketing is to turn strangers into visitors and visitors into customers, and customers into promoters. Nasty Gal has been able to clearly identify the people to target and to target them the best way. Sophia Amoruso was focusing on girls between a certain age range and living in certain cities. She knew what music and musicians they were listening to, which magazines they were reading, which brands they embrace, where they went shopping for clothing, etc. Therefore, Nasty Gal's content was fresh and relevant for those girls and they started to engage in social conversations with the brand.

Furthermore, Nasty Gal's customer service was always on point and updated. The Nasty Gal team was always answering any tweets and any questions customers might have and the team was always

monitoring on social media to know what was hot and what was not. They even used SnapChat in order to interact and answer to customers.

Delight:

First of all, the importance of the products and the delivery and presentation are not to be neglected. Sophia Amoruso was paying careful attention to packaging, service and returns. Those components were top priorities. The experience with Nasty Gal was the most important element, according to her. From the styled and trendy pictures posted online and on the website to the careful and detailed packaging, every detail matter to improve customer experience.

The brand has become a lifestyle. Nasty Gal is constantly focusing on providing customers useful and relevant content. Contents such as photographs, videos, blog posts, social sharing on social media and advice.

As a conclusion, hereafter are the main keys to learn and to remember concerning the three different steps of inbound marketing implemented by Sophia Amoruso for Nasty Gal.

When it comes to attracting customers, content is key and should be fresh and relevant to the target audience. Relevant content will win the battle to gain customer's attention. In addition to relevant and fresh content, an online fashion brand should be social and connect with the target audience via social media. Social media enables companies to interact and have a deeper understanding of what their customers want.

Concerning the converting step, the customer service and the engagement with the audience are the main keys for a successful online fashion brand. There is a need to understand, listen to and respond to customers. It will drive more loyalty and a positive brand experience.

Finally, when it comes to delight, the major key to focus is to provide customers with relevant information. Each customer is in different stages of his life and content should provide relevant information related to their lives.

3.2.   Off-White: Influencer marketing

Off-white is a designer brand created in 2013 in Milan by the previous Kanye West's stylist, Virgil Abloh. It is a brand that is considered as one of the most influential brands of 2019 on the Internet.

The main target of Off-White is the millennials and it offers them stylish streetwear clothing and accessories. The goal of Off-White is to offer designer pieces at affordable prices so that millennials can purchase those. In normal times, T-shirts can cost between 300$ to 800$. But there has been a collection called "The for All collection", where clothing and accessories were costing between 95$ to 170$. The purpose of this collection was to give Off-White's fans the opportunity to buy a designer brand that normally is out of reach for millennials and young people. Therefore, the release of this collection was a huge success. Another important part to its success was the fact that the collections were limited. The brand limits inventory to make it more hype and urges customers to purchase fast.

The secret of Off-White's success resides also in the influential network Virgil Abloh has acquired during the times he was Kanye West's stylist. The main lever of his success was his massive army of influencers. On Instagram, the brand counts 9,2 million of followers, 175 thousand on Twitter and 195 thousand on Facebook. It is a very active community. As we can see here, young people let go of Facebook, to go on Instagram, and even Snapchat.

Finally, another key to Off-White's success was its famous collaborations with Nike, Moncler, Evian, Ikea, Kanye West and Jay-Z. Those collaborations have become famous because of the massive marketing campaigns behind it. There was a massive use of influencer on social media also.

3.3. Boohoo: Instagram marketing

Boohoo is an online British fashion retailer, specialized in clothing. This company was founded in 2006 by Mahmud Kamani and Carol Kane.

Since the creation, the company has been booming. Especially, in the past couple of years, the company has seen a huge rise in their profits. During 2019, the company's revenue has almost doubled, to reach 328 million £ of sales.

While retail sales in the United Kingdom still continue to fall, Boohoo is well above the rest. But why?

First of all, they have a great understanding of the persona. Understanding and engaging with customers if fundamental for an online clothing brand, and Boohoo's team members understand their target customers that are teenagers or young customers aged between 16 and 30, that like to buy clothes and to change their wardrobe often, at the lowest cost as possible. Boohoo has well understood those customers and offer them fast-fashion products at low prices. According to the online magazine Purpose Media, Boohoo's business model is to deliver its customers a rapid and continuous cycle of clothing at an affordable price. Their target audience are the millennials shoppers that have rising expectations and that are developing a "I want it now" mindset.

Furthermore, the company's business model is based on a test and repeat idea. They test many products in order to see if the customers are responsive to it and buy it. They are in constant experiment. They test a wide variety of garments to market-test and see which one sells the most, and then they re-order the most selling item. It is a very agile business.

Second, the main inbound marketing lever used by Boohoo is the influencer marketing. Boohoo has been perfecting its influencer marketing and promotes its clothing via famous celebrities such as Paris Hilton, and some other famous influencers. The Boohoo brand knows exactly how to use influencer marketing and its power in order to advertise. They know which famous influencer to use to impress its very-impressionable target market, that are the millennials.

Instagram has become the main platform on which influencers are promoting clothing brands and Boohoo has well understood that point. It has partnered with many famous Instagram influencers. As it seems to be, every brand that has succeeded well with influencer marketing is using a specific hashtag related to the brand's message. In the case of Boohoo, the hashtag used by its influencers is #BoohooBabes.

Instagram has been the main digital tool that has increased sales and profits when it comes to Boohoo. However, not only influencers have made Boohoo so successful. The brand has also found other ways on Instagram to engage with customers and increase brand awareness, such as emojis, "memes", fashion shots, etc. The content on their Instagram has also played a huge role in their success.

3.4. Balenciaga

Another example of effective Instagram marketing is the case of Balenciaga. Balenciaga is also a top mover in the fashion industry concerning Instagram and social media marketing. Their growth is mainly caused by the release of a new shoe model that has become very famous and that is called the Triple

S Sneaker. This model has had a huge success and has made a huge buzz on Instagram, which has increased traffic on the website. Therefore, the brand has seen a huge growth in its sales.

The success of Balenciaga during the year 2019 does not come from the model of shoe only. It is not only a trendy sneaker that has increased the sales of the brand. What has really made the success of this shoe and the Balenciaga brand has been the content posted on Instagram, by the new creative director of Balenciaga, Demna Gvasalia. Content posted on Instagram are mainly pictures. However, those pictures are appealing because they are wacky, bizarre, and quirky. The content posted on Balenciaga's social media is the opposite of what we can expect from a fashion powerhouse and a luxury brand.

There are many pictures with cats and other animals and, also mirror selfies. Unlike other famous luxury brands, Balenciaga does not portray perfection on its social media. That is what has made Balenciaga so appealing on social media, its content. Its engagement rate on Instagram is higher than other famous brands such as Gucci, Prada, and Nike, according to The Rosenrot (2019). Balenciaga content is highly engaging. The pictures posted on Instagram are of low quality, are cut, from tier selfies, etc. The Instagram page of Balenciaga is now considered as a meme page. Memes are funny pictures that represent a concept, or an idea propagated amongst the Internet.

There is a sense of imperfection and authenticity in the content of Balenciaga, which people and Instagram users love. Maybe the constant search for perfection is no longer what appeals to young Instagram users.

However, the digital marketing members of Balenciaga know exactly what they are doing. It is their purpose to post such content because it seems to appeal to a lot of people and they can relate to that content, more than they can relate to an ultra-luxurious content from luxury brands, or even photoshopped models from other big fashion brands.

3.5.   Nike: Social media marketing

Nike is a famous sportwear brand and was founded in 1971 by Philip Knight and Bill Bowerman. When it comes to digital marketing, Nike is well ahead of its competitors and the brand has well understood the importance of letting its customers express themselves and give them the word. Customers are not only spectators; they are also actors when it comes to Nike. The main goal of Nike is to connect with customers wherever they are in the world. They require an interaction with them. Therefore, Nike has used many different social platforms to engage with its customers.

Facebook:

Nike has created one Facebook page for each of its categories. Those are called: Nike Football, Nike Basketball, Nike Golf, Nike Running, etc. Nike has segmented each of its sport categories to better interact with customers related to a specific sport. It would have been negative for the interaction they seek to only have one Facebook page to interact with customers.

Every day, content is posted and updated. Their content is composed of pictures, videos of products and new arrivals, sport actualities, famous celebrities wearing Nike, quotes about motivation and sport, exercises ideas, etc.

Twitter:

When it comes to Twitter, the segmentation remains the same as on Facebook, with different Nike categories related to different sports. However, the content strategy on Twitter changes from

Facebook content strategy. On Twitter, it seems the brand is seeking more conversation and interaction as possible. With @NikeSupport, the brand is answering to hundreds of Tweets daily in real time. They create a privileged and personalized communication with customers.

Pinterest:

On Pinterest, the brand targets more females. Indeed, 44% of women worldwide have a Pinterest account, versus only 16% of men. Nike has created an account called: Nike Women. This is the smallest audience of Nike social media accounts. However, this target audience is very relevant because it is well targeted. The brand is posting Nike's products worn by female bloggers, and lifestyle pictures. Of course, behind every Nike's Pinterest pictures, there is a link sending customers back to Nike's website.

Instagram:

Concerning Instagram, Nike has been very fast to seize the opportunity that was representing Instagram. It is the most followed brand, with 113 million of followers, more than twice the following of Starbucks, that is in second place.

Nike+:

Nike has created its own social network: Nike+. After their success on Instagram, they have developed their own platform, on which millions of joggers can connect to control their performance. Via this app, Nike advises, challenges, and motivates its consumers. It also enables its consumers to communicate between them.

Nike+ has been a great tool to generate traffic to Nike's website and it has been a great way to do marketing.

YouTube:

The American giant knows perfectly how to use real time marketing in order to make coincide its videos with sport events. They often use famous celebrities to make marketing videos, generating millions of dollars. They often make short movies posted on YouTube, generating millions of views, in order to reach worldwide people.

In addition to that, they often post sport training videos and have created as a result Sport Academy. Nike is the sixth most followed brand on YouTube.

As a conclusion concerning Nike digital marketing strategy, we could totally say that Nike is the perfect example of an optimized use of social media. Nike has been able to seize the essence and personality of each social media by adapting its advertising according to their personal specificities.

3.6.   H&M, FarFetch: Email marketing

What separates successful fashion brands from others is their marketing and branding. Brands that have the best fashion email marketing campaigns can easily reach their target and can easily retain them. Therefore, brands that uses effective email marketing can easily convert their targets into sales, by optimizing conversions.

Concerning the subject of email marketing, we have decided to focus on two fashion brands: H&M and FarFetch. Both brands are quite effective concerning email marketing.

H&M is a worldwide famous fashion brands founded in 1947 by Erling Persson. Farfetch is a fashion website that sells designer and luxury clothing and accessories internationally. I was founded in 2007 by José Nevez.

When it comes to H&M email marketing strategy, the brand mentions its newsletter both in the header and the footer of its website. It is not prominent, but it is well present. They also offer 10% off when signing up for the H&M club. They also offer a free delivery when being an H&M club member. Therefore, in order to have a free delivery, customers need to subscribe and sign up for the H&M club.

When it comes to email frequency, FarFetch seems to send emails once a day. According to an experiment made by the blog called Email Octopus (2018), when subscribing to Farfetch newsletter, in a period of 18 days, they have received 13 emails from FarFetch. In addition to that, according to their experiment, the famous brands COS, Topshop and ASOS send less emails.

3.7. Key points to keep in mind

Here are the different key points I will keep in mind when operating my online fashion boutique.

First of all, the main point is to understand the target audience. A clear understanding is required when opening an online boutique.

Then, having a message and a story to tell consumers is primordial. Every big fashion brand has succeeded thanks to their message. It needs to be a compelling and touching message that the target population will approve and endorse.

Then, influencer marketing on Instagram seems to be the best option for clothing brands. According to my research, Instagram has become more important for clothing brands than Facebook. I believe fashion consumers tend to spend more time looking for a fashion brand on Instagram. They enjoy the fact that there are many ways to interact with brand and many sources of inspiration.

All those brands have something in common. They all aim constantly for perfection on social media. It is their priority when it comes to social media marketing. They post daily on social media and pay much attention to the content and the engagement they can receive in return from their customers.

4. Hypotheses construction

As a reminder, the research question of my thesis is "*How can a brand-new startup take advantage of inbound marketing in order to enter the fashion industry and develop its activity?*". In order to answer this research question, three different hypotheses have been developed. Those hypotheses will be confirmed or refuted at the end of this thesis based on the online quantitative survey realized, and based on practical experiences concerning a brand-new online fashion boutique created for the purpose of this thesis and thanks to all the theory acquired here before.

4.1. Hypothesis #1

The first hypothesis is that *Inbound marketing enables greater visibility and allow companies to reach more customers.* As expressed throughout the theoretical part, inbound marketing thanks to qualitative SEO strategies can increase the visibility of companies. This will enable companies to reach out to more customers. Furthermore, with consistency and a good comprehension of the Instagram algorithm, fashion brands present on Instagram can also boost their audience and their reach. They will, then, increase their following and therefore their potential customers and finally their sales. It requires consistency to post on Instagram and daily content is important to reach out to more customers. This is how the Instagram algorithm works. It requires a brand to post daily, to often post stories on Instagram and interact with customers. The more an Instagram page is seen and interacted on, the more it will be visible by other Instagram users, not following the brand initially.

4.2. Hypothesis #2

The second hypothesis that we have developed is that *Inbound marketing enables companies to have a better understanding of their target customers*. Indeed, thanks to the implementation of inbound marketing strategies, startups and bigger companies can better understand their target customers. Thanks to the analysis of keywords used by customer when they search for a brand or a specific product, companies can easily figure out what keywords are the most often used, in general or concerning their field of activity. It will allow companies to use the right keywords on their website and to use the keywords the most often used by their potential customers. The tools for a better keywords research are the following: HubSpot, Google Keywords tool, and SEMrush. Thanks to Facebook, companies can easily target their audience. They can choose an audience to target based on criteria such as age, hobbies and interests, geographical location, and more. There are many formats of targeting on Facebook Business, and many different ad parameters available. Mastering the Facebook targeting strategy is the key to get in front of specific and motivated segment of the audience.

4.3. Hypothesis #3

Our third hypothesis is that *Inbound marketing can create greater engagement through greater influence.* When it comes to engagement, online clothing brands and boutiques are able thanks to inbound marketing to create greater engagement from their customers. It is possible to do so with Instagram publications and stories, with the use of influencer marketing, with the use of Facebook publications and stories. Those platforms and levers of inbound marketing have the ability to increase the engagement through interaction between a brand and a customer. As I've already expressed in the theoretical part of this thesis, influencer marketing is a part of the inbound marketing. It has gained in popularity in the past few years. More and more companies spend lots of money onto influencer marketing and many marketeers believe that, in the coming years, influencer marketing will represent a big part of their marketing strategies.

1. Market study: Online Quantitative survey

1.1.   Intro

According to Heeringa and al. (2017), there are six fundamental steps to follow in order to make a survey data analysis. These are the following:

1. Definition of the problem and statement of the objectives
2. Understanding the sample design
3. Understanding design variables, underlying constructs, and missing data
4. Analyzing data
5. Interpreting and evaluating the results of the analysis
6. Reporting of estimates and inferences from the study

A survey data analysis is not only about being familiar with statistical software tools. It is also about a deeper understanding of the sample design, the survey data, and the results interpretation.

1.2.   Definition of the problem and statement of the objectives

According to Heeringa and al. (2017), the first step in conducting an online survey is to clearly define the problem to be addressed and the clear formulation of the objectives for the analysis. The objective of most survey data analyses is to analyze the characteristics of a target population. Survey data analysis can also be used for decision-making.

1.2.1.   Problem definition

As a reminder, the research question of my thesis is "How can a brand-new startup take advantage of the inbound marketing in order to enter the fashion industry and develop its activity?".

This problem can be divided into three parts. The first part would be the startup. The second part would be about the inbound marketing. And the third part concerns the fashion industry. Therefore, in order to answer this research question, I've decided to dig into those three concepts. I've decided to dig into the online consumption and influences on online fashion consumers. In order to have a deeper understanding of how inbound marketing can represent an advantage for startups, I've decided to question online fashion consumers about their opinion and feelings about their online fashion consumption and driving forces behind it.

1.2.2. Choosing an approach

1.2.2.1. Qualitative approach

According to Vernette and al. (2008), the purpose of a qualitative study is to answer questions such as "why", "how" and "in which conditions". We try to understand situations that are qualified as complex. "The specificity of a qualitative approach is to "favor in-depth, long and meticulous investigation, rather than being content with quick and superficial responses like those obtained with a standardized questionnaire" (Vernette and al., 2008, p.10). The objective of qualitative researches is to gain richer information and information that has more sense. Those are information that reflect the subconscious of people.

The main objectives of a qualitative approach are to enumerate, explore, understand, and interpret the results of respondents.

1.2.2.2. Quantitative approach

The main objective of quantitative studies is "to describe, simplify, explain or synthesize attitudes, behaviors" (Vernette and al, 2008, p. 11). The objective is to answer questions such as "Who is consuming what", "How much", "When" and "Where". Those quantitative studies are mostly called surveys.

"The quantitative approach facilitates the decision because it allows to count, prioritize, visualize or summarize information collected" (Vernette and al, 2008, p.11).

The main objectives of a quantitative approach are to describe, identify, predict, hierarchize, visualize, and summarize the data.

Both approaches: qualitative and quantitative are not necessarily opposed. Most times, both approaches are complementary and combined. Researchers first start with a qualitative study that is broader, and then they complete it with more numbers with the quantitative study. However, there are some limits to both approaches. For a qualitative study, limits are that it is a more subjective study and we cannot generalize the results. On the other hand, when it comes to quantitative studies, it is less in-depth than when making a qualitative study. However, in the case of a quantitative study, it is possible to generalize results.

For this thesis, the quantitative approach has been chosen. Indeed, the objective of this thesis is to have many respondents and representative data in order to make a generalization of the results. As a reminder, the objective of this thesis is to know how startups can take advantage of inbound marketing and to implement a better digital marketing strategy to enter the fashion industry.

1.2.3. Objectives

In order to have a better understanding and a first answer to my research question "How can a brand-new startup take advantage of inbound marketing in order to enter the fashion industry and develop its activity?", I've decided to make an online quantitative survey. The objective of this online study was to better understand how people's behaviors are influenced by digital marketing, and more specifically by inbound marketing. I also wanted to understand more how consumers were influenced when buying clothing online and what were the main reasons that pushed them to make a purchase online.

I also wanted to deepen my knowledge about influencer marketing, email marketing and affiliate marketing.

So, I've decided to make a quantitative study. "In general, quantitative research is based on data which can be described as numeric, statistic, and analytic data. Examples are all types of statistics, surveys, timescales etc. Usually, the data consist of standard measurements, surveys, and any kind of source which provides rough, numeric information. the more information is available or the larger the samples are the better" (Ernst, 2003, p. 2).

According to O'Dwyer and Bernauer (2013), a good quantitative research is not only about statistics. It is rather about problem quality, procedural quality, and design quality. And those criteria also apply to the qualitative research. The main differences between a quantitative and a qualitative survey, according to Oflazoglu (2017), are the following:

The quantitative method is more deductive, objective and has a wider scope, while a qualitative method for a survey is more inductive, subjective and has a narrower scope. Furthermore, for what it comes to population and sampling, it is possible, with a quantitative method, to have a random or a not random sampling. Whereas, when using a qualitative method, the purpose of sampling is important, and the quality is important. When it comes to data collection, there are strict structured questionnaire for quantitative studies, while observations and interviews in the case of a qualitative study are less structured. And another advantage of quantitative research is that it is more generalizable than a qualitative research. However, it is more superficial. The disadvantage of a qualitative study is that the results cannot be generalized easily, and results are indefinite.

1.3.   Understanding the sample design

The second step in conducting an online data analysis is to understand the sample design that is going to be used to collect data to be analyzed. Without understanding the sample design step, the analysis may be as a result inefficient or biased. Therefore, this step is not to be neglected.

1.3.1.   Sampling

1.3.1.1. Sample selection

According to Kalton and Graham (1983), one of the first steps in survey design is to define the population that will be studied. Here, the term "population" is used in the technical sense of the totality of the elements under study, where the "elements" are the units of analysis. The elements may be persons, but they could alternatively be households, farms, schools, or any other unit (Kalton, Graham, 1983, p. 6). Furthermore, both authors add that the population must be defined precisely and carefully according to the survey objectives because the results of the survey will depend on the definition of the population. After the process of defining the population, there is a need to make a sample design of the population. "The subject of sample design is concerned with how to select the part of the population to be included in the survey" (Kalton, Graham, 1983, p.7).

According to Henry, "using random selection removes subjective judgment from the selection of the sample and enhances credibility" (Henry, 1990, p. 33). The population I've decided to target in my survey was everyone that purchased once online and all the recurrent online customers. There were no strict conditions regarding their age, place of living, jobs or careers, or other personal characteristics. The objective of my survey was to have many different profiles of respondents in order

to have less subjective judgment and more accurate results. The objective of this survey was more to gain accurate data in order to generalize the results.

1.3.1.2. Sample method

In the case of my online quantitative survey, the main objective was to spread the survey to a maximum of people and to reach a high number of people in order to have a larger group of respondents. I've distributed this survey through different social media in order to get the most responses as possible. I've distributed it mainly through Facebook, and also through Instagram and Snapchat. Facebook has been an important tool in my survey because it has the ability to share at an increasing rate. In addition to that, because of the subject of my thesis that is inbound marketing, there was no better way than to spread this survey throughout the Internet and social media. The sampling method I've chosen for my survey was the random sampling. It is the purest form of sampling and does not require a specific amount of responses. It also provides equal chances to the respondents to being picked. As I've already mentioned before, I wanted to spread it to a huge amount of people to maximize the answers and have a huge database of respondents in order to have more accurate and generalized information.

1.3.1.3. Sample size

After knowing what my target population was, I've decided to have a certain number of respondents to my survey. This step is called sample size. It is the estimated number of people in the target population defined in the previous step. However, the sample size can also be influenced by other factors that can be budget and the time availability. In the case of my survey, I wanted to have a sampling based on a hundred of women and a hundred of men. In order for my study to be the most accurate as possible, I needed to have an equal amount of male and female respondents. I also wanted to separate different ages to be the most precise as possible when analyzing the data. There was the possibility to choose from four different age ranges that were 15-25 years, 26-35 years, 36-50 years, and more than 50 years. In order for my results to be the most accurate as possible, I wanted an equal amount of data from all age ranges.

1.4.   Understanding design variables, underlying constructs, and missing data

Due to fact that there are a lot of data available nowadays, and that can easily be accessed, analysts tend to become more complacent when attending to fully understand the properties and information contained in the data. Therefore, before analyzing data, there must be an understanding of the best choice of questions that will be asked to the respondents. While creating the online survey questionnaire, the analyst must ask himself questions that are: "Do my questions truly capture the objective I've expressed in the first step?", "Are my responses scalable? And can the responses be generalized?", "Are the responses suitable for the intended analysis?", "Are some data missing from my questionnaire that can have a potential impact on my analysis?".

During this third step, there will be the choice of the right survey technique in order to answer the objective. The choice of the right type of survey technique will take into consideration the most relevant questions to be asked to the respondents, and the questions to ask oneself in order to make sure the chosen questions will meet the objective fixed in the first step.

1.4.1. Survey technique

1.4.1.1. Online questionnaire

In order to build my quantitative study, I've decided to build a questionnaire with questions concerning the influence of digital and inbound marketing on online fashion consumers. I've decided to post it online through social media in order for my respondents to answer.

According to Sue and Ritter in their book called "Conducting online surveys" (2012), internet surveys have many advantages. The first advantage is the speed. Indeed, it is posted online, and it can potentially gather hundreds and thousands of answers in a short period of time. Then, another advantage is the audience. Indeed, the audience is broader on the Internet than in face-to-face interviews for example. We can reach a broader audience thanks to online surveys and we can also target every age range. Another advantage of conducting online surveys is its economic quality. It costs less or even zero euro to conduct an online survey and we can collect data from respondents that may be geographically spread. The fourth advantage of online survey is the possibility to ask respondents sensitive questions because the questionnaire may be anonymous. In that case, people will be more open and comfortable to answer sensitive questions behind their mobile phones or their computers. However, one disadvantage with conducting online surveys compared to face-to-face interviews is that there may be abandonments of answering the survey from respondents. Meanwhile during face-to-face conversations, it will be more difficult for the respondents to abandon the survey and abandon answering questions.

1.4.1.2. Design of the questionnaire

1.4.1.2.1. Structure of the questionnaire

Concerning the structure of my questionnaire (Appendix 1), I've decided to separate my questions into three parts. The first part of my questionnaire was more concerned with questions about getting to know better my respondents, with questions concerning their gender, their age, and their online activity. The second part of my questionnaire was more concerned about the different factors that may influence people when they are purchasing products online. In this part, I've also focus on the best social media for clothing brands, by asking my respondents on which social media fashion brands needed to be to promote their clothing. I've also asked questions concerning the most important factors that were pushing and driving customers to make an online fashion purchase. I've also asked a question about brand loyalty, by asking what were the factors that could make the respondents loyal to a clothing brand. And then, I deepen my questions about the best kind of content clothing brand could publish on social media. Finally, in the third part of my questionnaire, I've deepened my questions concerning influencer marketing, email marketing and affiliate marketing.

1.4.1.2.2. Types of questions

According to Vernette and al. (2008), there are different types of questions we can ask in the questionnaire of a survey. There are the close-ended questions and the open-ended ones. Thanks to open-ended questions, respondents have the possibility to respond using their own words. However, this process can be costly, hard to handle and most times, information resulting from this process are superficial. Meanwhile, close-ended questions require modality of registration of answers that are different than open-ended questions.

The following are examples of possible close-ended questions to put in a survey: The dichotomous questions are the types of questions that are answered by "yes" or "no". There are also the multiple-choice questions, where the respondents can choose between different responses. Then, there are questions of ranking. Respondents are asked to rank the responses in an order of importance.

There are also differential semantic questions that are questions to which respondents are asked to locate their opinions on a scale from one to ten, or low to high for example. Then, there are questions to which respondents are asked to express their opinion on some subject. They need to answer to those questions by expressing if their fully agree with it, partially agree to it, partially disagree to it or totally disagree.

Close-ended questions have the advantage of being less superficial, less costly, and less time consuming than open-ended questions. They are easier to answer to and they are less likely to be biased.

Therefore, I've chosen to use mostly close-ended questions in the questionnaire of my online survey (Appendix 1). The respondent could not write their own answers nor to answer in their own words. There only were options they could choose from. When comparing both close-ended and open-ended questions, the added value of open-ended questions was lower than with the use of close-ended questions.

In addition, in my online survey, I've mainly used dichotomous questions, multiple-choice questions and also multichotomous questions (Appendix 1).

1.4.1.2.3. Choices of questions

Concerning the choices of the questions I've presented in my online questionnaire; I've first asked my respondents if they were a man or a woman (Appendix 1). Then, I've asked my respondents to indicate their age range. The possible responses for the age ranges were: 15-25, 26-35, 35-50 and more than 50 years. I've segmented the respondents into 4 groups. The first group is the one of the youth people aged between 15 and 25. These are born and have grown up with the Internet and social media. As a result, I believe this group is more concerned with social media and the influencer world. Then, I've decided to make a distinction between people aged between 26 and 35, and the one ages between 36 and 50. People between 26 and 35 are brand-new workers. They have just started working or are quite new in the world of work. While people between 36 and 50 are more settled in their jobs and careers. Then, I've separated people that are more than 50 years. These are called seniors, according to the marketing field, and are a part of the other groups of respondents. Because of the ageing population, this group should be a great target for any marketeers in the coming years. By 2060, half of the French and Belgian population will be more than 50 years.

Then, I've asked the respondents "How often do you shop online?". And then, I've made this question more clothing and fashion specific by asking another one similar question: "How often do you shop for clothing and fashion items online? ». Those were questions to know better the online purchasing habits of the respondents.

The fifth question was "According to you, on which social network a clothing brand must absolutely be present? ». I've chosen to ask this question to have a better understanding of what people were expecting from clothing brands and on which social media clothing brands had to be present.

The sixth question was "What do you pay the most attention to when shopping for clothes online?". It was an important question for my future case study about my own online clothing startup. I wanted

to deepen my knowledge about what consumers are expecting from a brand when they are shopping online.

Then, I've asked the following question "What are the factors that have pushed you to buy clothing online?". I wanted to ask this question in order to understand better the factors that were really driving people to buy clothing online. It was to see if it has to do more with the entourage of the respondents, the inbound marketing implemented by fashion brands, or also if it has to do with traditional marketing methods such as a TV ad, a radio, ad, an ad in a magazine, or an advertising brochure in one's mailbox. In the similar range of questions, I've also asked "You're loyal to a clothing brand that…". I wanted to know what was the most important for consumers to remain loyal to a brand. I wondered if they were more loyal when the brand was sending them promotions, or if it was because the brand posted great quality content, or if it was the style and trendiness of the brand. Also, in the same category of questions, I've asked my respondents "On a clothing brand's social media, you're the most sensitive when". With this question, I wanted to better understand what type of content online consumers were the most sensitive to. I wanted to know if they prefer informative content, trendy content, photo or video content, or even content that was interactive with customers.

Then, I've asked questions concerning influencer marketing. My questions were "Have you ever bought a garment via an influencer because it appealed to you?" and "Have you ever bought a garment via an influencer in order to benefit from his/her promotional code?". In these two questions, I wanted to know how many people had already bought a product via an influencer. Then I've also asked the following question "Have you ever participated in giveaways from influencers or brands?". The possible answers for this question were the following. Yes, no, I don't know what this is. I wanted to know if consumers had already taken part in giveaways, if they were interested in that and I also wanted to know if they knew what it was because I believe some age ranges do, but some older age ranges don't really know what a giveaway is, or have never heard of it.

Then, to introduce questions concerning email marketing, I've asked "How often do you read your emails?". Then, I've asked "What email will drive/push you to go to the brand's website". I wanted to know what kind of email content my respondents were the most sensitive to. I wanted to know if it was the email that announces promotions, the arrival of the new collection, or the one whose subject was mysterious or interesting.

Then I've asked another question about email marketing: "You have already given your email address on a site when…". The objective of this question was to know if customers were more willing to give their personal email address on the website when there was a promotion or a percentage in return for their email address, when they wanted to subscribe to the brand's newsletter, when they were interested in an article that was temporarily unavailable or an article that will be released soon, when it allows them to win a price, or when they could win a price in return of their email address. I've also asked my respondents if they have ever made a purchase that was unplanned after receiving an email from a brand.

Then, I've asked if my respondents were reading blogs online because according to online and expert sources, blogs content can be effective in inbound marketing.

The last question was "Have you ever bought a product via an affiliate link on SnapChat, Facebook, Instagram, in a blog or none of those because they didn't like to click on affiliate links". I wanted to know if people saw no problem in clicking on affiliate links and if they did it.

1.4.2. Data collection method

There are several different data collection methods that are available to researchers. Indeed, there are for example face-to-face interviews, phone call interviews, online surveys, mail interviews, etc. (Vernette and al, 2008). For the online survey made to answer my research question, I've chosen to collect data via the Internet. As already mentioned before in this paper, I've posted this quantitative survey online throughout social media such as Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat. The main objective of this study was to better understand the online consumption and the driving forces behind the online consumption of clothing. Therefore, I thought it was wiser to post it online. The target population of my survey being online consumers, there was no better option than to post it online.

1.5.   Analyzing the data

1.5.1. Introduction

Finally, we have arrived at the step of analyzing the data. Usually, we are all tempted to jump straight to the analyzing of the data, without a deeper understanding of the three first steps. However, as already mentioned, there is time that need to be taken in order to be well prepared for the analysis of the data and to not have biased information.

There are two types of data analysis. Open-ended questions will be analyzed through content analysis methods, while closed questions will be analyzed through statistical methods.

As already mentioned before, the main questions in my online survey were closed questions. As a result, the main data analysis method that will be used will be the statistical one. This statistical analysis step lies at the heart of the entire process.

According to Caumont (2016), variables can be either quantitative (metrics), or qualitative (non-metrics), depending on the type of data and the type of questions. Both types of variables are not analyzed the same way. Therefore, it is important to make distinction between both.

1.5.2. First data analysis

I will first start with an overview of the main results and then, I will make a second data analysis based on the age range because it is important to make a distinction between the different age categories when it comes to digital and inbound marketing. Not every age category has the same behavior, uses the same social media and digital channels, and they do not have the same expectations when it comes to a brand and what it has to offer. The online consumption habits will depend upon their age.

First of all, I've had 151 respondents for my online survey (Appendix 2). 68,2% were female respondents, while 31,8% were male respondents. It amounted to 103 females and 48 males. Therefore, I've decided not to make a distinction between male and female respondents in my further analysis of the results because there was no equal proportion of males and females and the results could have been biased. I had not many male responses compared to the female ones.

The main part of my respondents was aged between 15 and 25 years. It amounted to 37,8% of the total of the respondents and they were 56 respondents in this age category. Concerning the age range of people aged between 26 to 35 years, they were 21 to respond, for a percentage of 18,5%. About the age range of 36 to 50 years, they were 32 respondents and it amounted to 19,9%. And finally,

concerning the respondents aged more than 50 years, they were 37 to answer, for a total of 24,5% of the respondents.

After this introduction to the characteristics of the respondents of my survey, I've decided to ask the following questions: "How often do you shop online?". The highest percentage of the respondents answer once a month. It represented 53 respondents out of 151. The second highest percentage of respondents answer they were online shopping several time a year. They were 49 to answer several times a year. Then, the third highest percentage of respondents answered they were doing online shopping once a week and it amounted to 22 respondents.

The second question in the questionnaire was the same as the previous one. But this one was more specific to clothing. I've asked: "How often do you shop for clothing and fashion items online?". The top three responses were composed of the following answers: once a month, several times a year, and never. They were 50 to answer several times a year (33,1%), 49 to answer once a month (32,5%), 21 to answer never (13,9%), 17 answered once a year (11,3%), and 12 to answer once a week (7,9%).

When comparing those two questions, we can see that clothing amounts for a big part of online shopping.

After having a deeper understanding of how much the respondents were online shopping and shopping online for clothing, I've decided to ask questions about online fashion brands and what was really important to my respondents when they were online shopping.

In this part, I've asked the following question "According to you, on which social network, a clothing brand must absolutely be present?". According to the responses, they were 82,1% to answer Instagram, 68,9% to answer Facebook, 24% to answer Pinterest and 17,2% to answer YouTube. With less than 10% of respondents, the answers were Twitter, Snapchat, and LinkedIn. It was clear with the results that the main two social networks on which fashion brand must be are Instagram and Facebook.

The next question was: "what do you pay the most attention to when shopping for clothing online?". The highest percentage of respondents, with a percentage of 58,9% was the answer of the price. It was one of the main factors they pay attention to when shopping online. Then, equally, with 51% of respondents were the answers of free delivery and the website reputation. The closest answer, with 49,7% of respondents was the quality. With 44,4% was the answer the security of payment. And equally, 41,1% of the respondents answered free returns and other customers reviews. Possible price reductions and promotions only amounted to 28,5%.

The next question was "What are the factors that have pushed/driven you to buy clothing online?". The highest rate answer was the entourage, friends and family. It amounted to a total of 69 of the respondents, for 45,7% of the respondents. Close to this answer, was the factor of online promotions (44,4%) and advertisements of Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat (45%). 37,7% of respondents answer that an email with a promotional code was a factor that had already pushed them to buy for clothing online. The smallest shares of respondents were distributed between the answers of an advertisement of television, radio, magazine and in the mailbox and an affiliate link. As we can see with those answers, traditional marketing is not dead. However, it is not as effective as it was before. And as we can see, social media and online promotions are really the main factors that have already pushed consumers to make online purchases. Another interesting share was the fact that 17,9% for a total of 27 out of 151 respondents answered that a positive review of an influencer has already pushed them to buy for clothing online.

Then, for the question concerning the brand loyalty, 47,7% of the respondents answered that they were more loyal to a brand that ensures the best customer service and guarantee of returns. And equally to that, 47,7% answered that they were more loyal to a brand that was always trendy and up to date. Then, with 36,4%, the respondents are the more loyal to a brand that offers promotional code and coupons via email. They were 55 to answer that. 32,5% answered that they were loyal to brands that were often doing online promotions. The lowest share of respondents (11,9%) answered the brand offering local products and slow fashion products. They were only 18 to select that answer. As we can see, the main factors to which people are paying attention to are the best customer service, and the fact that the brand is always following the trend. People are also enjoying when clothing brands are making online promotions and sending promotional coupons.

Concerning the question of "On a brand social media, you're the most sensitive when", and the respondents were asked to select answers among five propositions. The top three of responses was: a brand that publishes trendy content (60,3%), informative content (43%), interacts with clients and reposts customers pictures wearing the outfit (29,1%).

Then, I've chosen to focus on influencer marketing by asking two specific questions to that. 72,8% have never bought something via an influencer because this one had seduced them, while 27,2 have already. In addition to that, 78,1% have never purchased via an influencer in order to benefit from his/her promotional code, while 21,9% answered they had already done it.

The next set of questions was concerned with email marketing. In order to introduce the email marketing subject, I've asked how often the respondents were reading their emails. 63,6% read those several times a day. And 24,5% once a day. It means that 88,1% read those daily.

To keep on with email marketing, I've asked the respondent what email would push them to visit the brand website. 29,8% of responses concerned the answer of online promotions. 27,8% answered the one that gives a promotional coupon and 21,2% answered the email that announces the arrival of the new collection.

To deepen the answers about email marketing, I've asked if they had already given their email addresses and in which conditions. The main answers were: "you're interested in an article that is momentaneous unavailable or that will be released soon" (51%), "you will receive a promotion in exchange for your email address" (49%), "you create a customer account in order to benefit from a free delivery" (46,3%). In addition, to that, 47% of respondents have already made an online unplanned purchase following the reception of an email in their mailbox. Email marketing is very important, as already seen in the theoretical part of this thesis. It is shown here with a high percentage of people making an unplanned purchase due to an email.

To conclude my set of questions, I've asked the respondents if they were reading online blogs and if they had already bought something via an affiliate link and on which social media in order to see if those two types of inbound marketing were effective and used by consumers. Only 21,2% of the respondents read online blogs. And concerning the affiliation question, 62,4% of the respondents don't like clicking on affiliate links. However, for those who click on them, Instagram and Facebook are the two main social platforms from which they click.

1.5.3. Second data analysis
This second data analysis is based on the distinction between the different age ranges of the respondents. As I've already mentioned before, I've decided to make a distinction between the results

according to the age ranges. So, in my questionnaire, I've made a distinction between the following groups of age: 18-25, 25-35, 36-50 and more than 50. This age separation was made because the different groups of age have different concerns and expectations when it comes to an online clothing brand. The millennials are more used to those new technological and digital ways of communication, while the most part of the more than 50 years are still struggling to understand those. Furthermore, the people aged between 26 and 35 are the new adults, they are the freshly graduates. They often land their first jobs and receive their first pay packages. Their purchasing power has increased compared to the 15-25 years old.

I've decided not to make a distinction between male and female respondents because there was such a disproportion between males and females that have responded to my survey that the results would be biased. However, concerning the age range, the proportions of the different respondents were more or less equal. Therefore, I've decided to only focus on the age range distinction when further analyzing the results.

Concerning the questions asked in the questionnaire about the frequency of the respondent's online purchases, it seems that there is no strong trend between the different ages. It is very variable and depends upon the respondent himself.

Concerning the question "You are the main loyal to a brand that", the main respondents aged between 15 and 25 have answered that they were the most loyal to a brand that is posting a lot on social media and that often sends promotions. However, concerning the age range of the more than 50 years, the main answers were the fact that a brand sends regularly sends emails and newsletters and they are loyal to a brand that offers the best customer service (Appendix 2).

When asking the question "Have you ever bought a garment via an influencer because this one had seduced you", there is a strong trend in the respondents. Half of the 15-25 years respondents have answered yes, while only two out of 37 of the more than 50 had answered yes.

About the question "What are the factors that have already pushed you to buy clothing online?", the responses were very variable among the age categories. However, we can see a little trend that is that all the age categories have often be pushed to buy for online clothing due to a promotion or price reduction.

Concerning the question about the giveaway: "Have you ever taken part in a giveaway?". It seems that most of the respondents that have answered yes to this question are aged between 15 and 25 years. They amounted to 16 out of 25 respondents that had answered yes in taking part of giveaways. The main answer of the age category of the 26-35 was "I don't know what this is", and they were 7 to answer they had already taken part in a giveaway organized by a brand. Concerning the age range of the 36-50, the main answer to this question was "I don't know what this is" and only one answered with yes. Finally, the main answers of the more than 50 were no, and only one answered yes. Here we can clearly see that the age range of 15-25 is more aware of giveaways than the other ones. Giveaways are a digital marketing tool that needs to be mainly applied to the millennials and not to the older population.

About the question "According to you, on which social media a fashion brand should be?", the 15-25 have mainly answered Facebook and Instagram and some have answered YouTube. The 26-35 have mainly responded Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest and YouTube. The 36-50 have mainly responded Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn and Pinterest. And concerning the more than 50, they have mainly answered Facebook, Instagram and some have said Pinterest. We can see that Facebook and Instagram are the most important social platforms for fashion brands. However, concerning the more than 50,

there is a clear trend that Facebook is more important than Instagram, whereas for the 15-25, Instagram is the most important compared to Facebook.

Concerning email marketing related questions, the email that has already pushed the 15-25 to visit a brand website was the one that announces promotions and gives a promotional code. 26-35 years respondents feel the same and some have mentioned the email that announces the arrival of the new collection. 36-50 years respondents' main responses were the email announcing the arrival of the new collection and also the one that announces promotions. The answers were more variable for the more than 50. However, the main answer was the email that gives a promotion. With those answers, we can clearly see that online fashion consumers are more sensitive to email marketing when the email contains a promotion of any kind.

Concerning the questions about reading an online blog. The main responses were no. However, 9 out of the 32 respondents aged between 17 and 56 have said yes, 6 in the category of 26-35, 7 in the category of 36-50, and 7 in the category of the more than 50. As we can see, there is a bigger proportion of people reading blogs in the category of the more than 50. This is the main population that is reading online blogs, according to my survey. Blogs and content marketing should target the right audience that is an older population.

Concerning the following question: "On social media of a clothing brand, you're the most sensitive when", responses were varying a lot. However, the main answers that have popped were the brand that publishes trendy pictures, the brand that publishes informative and interesting content, and the brand that interacts with its customers. The 15-25 years respondents have mainly answered to this question with "A brand that publishes trendy pictures". Concerning the age category of the 26-35, the main answer chosen was "the brand that publishes informative and interesting content". Concerning the 36-50 years, the trend was for the answer "the brand that publishes trendy pictures" and also "the brand publishes informative and interesting content". The main answer of the more than 50 was the brand that publishes informative and interesting content".

1.6.   Interpreting and evaluating the results of the analysis

According to Heeringa and al. (2017), the steps of setting up the data, running statistical programs and putting results are not sufficient. There must be an interpretation and an evaluation of those results in order to constitute a complete treatment of the analysis of the problem. In addition to that, interpretation of the results must also take into consideration the possibility of errors.

As main results of this analysis, there are some important facts and trends that have appeared.

First of all, Instagram and Facebook are the most important social networks for a clothing brand to be on. According to the age range of 15-25, Instagram is more important than Facebook for clothing brands. However, concerning the more than 25, Facebook seems to be the most important compared to Instagram. In addition to that, Pinterest and YouTube have also received quite some votes during the survey.

Another big trend when analyzing the results was the price and promotion factors. Price remains the number one criterion when buying for clothing online. Online promotions and personal promotional coupons are the main factors that have pushed the respondents to buy online. When it comes to email marketing, the most effective email seems to be the one that announces an online promotion on the website, or that gives a promotional coupon to use when making a purchase on the website.

Furthermore, it may seem that email marketing is a very effective tool when it comes to inbound marketing. Indeed, almost a half of the respondents had already made an unplanned purchased following the reception of an email from a brand.

Finally, more than a quarter of the respondents already purchased a product via an influencer because this one has seduced them. The main that had already bought via an influencer were mainly aged between 15 and 36 years.

2. Case study: Spicy Sweetie Boutique

2.1.   Introduction

For the Case study part of my thesis, I've decided to build my own online fashion boutique. I wanted to do so for a long time because I'm very interested in the fashion and the digital world, and I've seen the opportunity to do so during the pandemic of the Covid19. I was home, writing my thesis and making research, and I thought it could be a great case study to start one fashion boutique from scratch. Furthermore, it was related to my thesis. Therefore, I've seen an opportunity to implement the knowledge I had acquired during my research to this online boutique. I wanted to see by myself and implement all the knowledge I had acquired into my online boutique.

Therefore, I've launched my online fashion boutique, called Spicy Sweetie. I wanted to sell clothes that would be trendy on Instagram, that was not seen in any other big fashion stores such as Zara, H&M, Bershka, etc. I wanted my clothes to be "Instagrammable", trendy on the net, and with a touch of originality that was not found here in physical shops.

After having drawn a plan of all the steps I had to take care of, I've started to complete all the administrative parts, such as the paperwork for becoming an entrepreneur, the creation of my business, my ECB number and my VAT number.

After all the paperwork has been done, I've started to buy merchandises from fashion wholesalers. I've mainly bought from English and French wholesalers. I had made a big clothing purchase from China, but it was taking too long to come over Belgium due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

After having received my merchandise, I've taken much time to make quality pictures to post on my boutique website. I've developed my website thanks to Shopify. It's very easy to create a professional website with Shopify.

And, finally, I've launched my boutique the 18th of July 2020, after 4 months of preparation, and 1500€ spent on it.

2.2.   What has been implemented so far

2.2.1. SEO

When creating the Shopify website for my online boutique, I've implemented some tips learned throughout my research in the field of SEO. Firstly, I've given a title to my online boutique. I've added keywords to the description that appears when searching for my boutique. Then, I've done SEO on each of my products pages. For each product page, I've chosen the right title, I've put some keywords in the product description, I've done SEO in the images of my website by putting keywords in the picture description. This text of keywords under my pictures are called alternative texts. This will help referencing my pictures on the search engine. And finally, in Shopify, there is an overview of the SEO in the search engine. There, we have the ability to modify the SEO of our sites and boutiques. I've put my boutique and brand name. Then I've put a "-", and the name of the product. Afterwards, I've the ability to change the description that will be seen in the search engine. In this part, I've written my product description with keywords, and I've finished each of these descriptions with a call to action. For example, I've used sentences such as "Don't hesitate", "Order now", "Hurry and order now", "Free delivery", etc.

Indeed, SEO optimization has allowed me to rank higher in the search engines. SEO optimization enables to rank higher and therefore to increase the quality and quantity to a website through organic search results. It has helped me gained more brand awareness by using keywords that were relevant to my business and that have attracted some customers.

2.2.2. Influencer marketing

As already mentioned in the theoretical part, influencer marketing has become a major key when promoting an online fashion boutique. Therefore, I've chosen to start by promoting my business thanks to influencers on Instagram.

As explained by Sinkwitz (2018), there are three types of influencers: the aspirational, the authoritative and the peer influencer. I've chosen to start with the peer influencer to start promoting my online fashion boutique. The peer influencer is an influencer that is considered to be our equal. It is someone that we know that we are close to and to who we can relate to. Furthermore, those are the least expensive influencers.

Therefore, I've chosen to start with this type of influencer because I didn't have a massive amount to spend when starting my boutique. I've asked to some women influencers I know to promote my products on their social media, mainly on Instagram. They had a great number of followers and were quite influential. It seems that one in particular had much influencer on her peers. She had 900 followers on Instagram, which is considered as a micro influencer. However, thanks to her following and her influence, I've been allowed to promote my business and to have my first orders.

She had been given a promotional coupon code, so that her followers could have a 20% discount when purchasing on my boutique. As I had seen during my online survey, one of the most important variables for people when buying clothing online is the possibility of having a discount or a promotional coupon code. Customers enjoy the fact that they can have a garment cheaper than the original price. They have the feeling to make a bargain. Therefore, I've decided to offer this 20% off. Thanks to that, I've started to have purchases and I've seen that micro influencers, even if they don't have a big following on social media, are very effective when promoting a business.

During the launch week of the Spicy Sweetie shop, mainly thanks to the marketing influencer, I gained followers, reaching 50 followers in two days, and made my first sales. Certainly, it is mainly thanks to the marketing influencer that I was able to launch my shop in the best possible way and that I gained brand awareness. With SEO alone, I would not have been able to start creating a community around my brand.

After having used micro influencers, I've decided to contact bigger influencers, with more followers on Instagram. I've based my research of influencers on the following criteria: their location, their number of followers and the cost it would be related to that, their Instagram's feeds, their fashion style, the image they were reflecting.

I wanted to start with bigger influencers that were located in Belgium. Then, I think I will focus on French influencers. Then, I've also looked at the amount of their followers. I didn't want to choose a macro influencer because it costs more money and because I wanted to do it gradually. I also wanted to see what the impacts and results for each category and size of influencers were. And, finally, I was also paying much attention to their styles. Because I have chosen to sell a particular style of clothing, I couldn't go with any influencers I found. I needed to choose carefully which influencers had matching styles with my collection.

Therefore, I've drawn a list of influencers that had between 10.000 and 50.000 followers on Instagram and that met all the criteria I had set. And, then, I've contacted them.

The first one I've contacted was a Belgian influencer called Aika that had 25.000 followers on Instagram. I've contacted her to make the promotion of my boutique by choosing two pieces of clothing and by making one Instagram publication and one Instagram story. The cost she asked for that was a hundred euro. I've also given her the possibility to offer to her audience a discount code of 20%.

I am now waiting to see the results of this influencer marketing campaign.

2.2.3. Tools to track results

Here are some tools I've had to implement to track results of the different actions I've undertaken to gain brand awareness and to boost sales.

2.2.3.1. Google Analytics

Another possibility on Shopify is to connect Shopify with our Google Analytics account. I've created a Google Analytics account for my boutique. Google Analytics is a free service from Google that is analyzing the audience of a website. It is a tool used to understand better the customers and visitors. It tracks visitors' sessions and customers' behaviors on the website.

Thanks to Google Analytics, I've the ability to see all the people that are visiting my website. I can see when they are visiting my website, how much are visiting my website at the moment, in real time, where they are coming from, what device they are using when visiting my website, what page they are looking the most. I can also see data that are measuring visitors' loyalty. I can also see the duration of their session on my website.

2.2.3.2. Facebook Pixel

First of all, I've implemented Facebook Pixel to my business. It is a tool from Facebook that is going to analyze every data from my clients from Facebook. It is a tool that allows me to have a better understanding and measurement of my clients' actions on my boutique Facebook page and on my website. Thanks to Facebook Pixel Helper, put in my favorites bar in Google Chrome, I have the ability to see when someone is on my website and what actions they are taken on it. I can see if a person is looking at an article, if someone is adding one article into the cart, and if someone has made an order and has paid. Pixel Facebook is a great tool to analyze the activity if my customers on my website.

On Shopify, it is possible to link my Shopify account to my Facebook Pixel in order to have all the data collected on Shopify also. Moreover, thanks to Facebook Pixel, I have the possibility to track the conversion of my Facebook ads and ads on Instagram, and to create retargeting audiences on the basis of the people and customers that have visited my website. Those are called personalized audiences.

To summarize briefly, Facebook Pixel has the following benefits for an online business:

- It tracks conversions such as a purchase, an action of add to cart, an inscription to a newsletter, etc.
- It enables to do retargeting, meaning that I can show a special and personalized advertising to specific people, such as people that have already visited my website, that have added an article to their cart and haven't bought it, etc.

- It enables to optimize the ads for conversion, meaning that Facebook Pixel is going to look for the people the most inclined to perform the event I have chosen to optimize.

2.3. Further recommendations to implement

2.3.1. Email marketing

I've already subscribed to an email marketing provider called Mailerlite. According to my quantitative research and all my research concerning inbound marketing in the fashion industry, I've realized I had to use a email marketing provider to do email marketing. It seems it is very effective. There are many benefits of email marketing. We can reach a global presence, it is easy to share thanks to email marketing providers, it is easy to measure, it is also easy to get started with it, it drives revenues and sales, it delivers targeted messages and it has low costs. It is easy, effective, and inexpensive. Email marketing is an effective and personal way to deliver a message to customers. Email marketing works best when it is personalized.

According to data, it seems that email marketing is one of the most effective tools in the inbound marketing field. According to a study from 2016 by Custora, customer acquisition via email marketing has more than quadrupled in the last few years and that growth is expected to keep growing.

Therefore, a further recommendation for my boutique would be to focus more on creating email content in order to send them to my subscriber list. However, given the fact that this is a new business and people still need to trust the boutique, I don't have a huge subscribing list of potential customers. I believe, I will start email marketing when my subscribing list will amount to a certain amount of people.

The email content I will create and use to do marketing are the following: welcome emails, content emails, promotional emails, abandoned cart emails, emails notifying about new stocks and new arrivals, post purchase emails and holiday and special events emails.

Welcome emails are useful to create a first good impression to the customer/subscriber. It is important to insert a "Thank you" message when sending those welcome emails. Some fashion stores also send coupon code of 10-20% off the next purchase in those welcome emails.

There are many possibilities of content in emails. Therefore, with content emails, there are many opportunities for sending different kinds of content to different kinds of subscribers. Meaningful content is important. As seen previously in my online survey, people are expecting mainly coupon code from emails, but also content that is informative. Subscribers enjoy great content instead of hard selling.

Promotional emails are also very important when doing email marketing. As seen in my online quantitative survey, the main factors that were driving people to visit the fashion brand website when receiving an email were the fact that they contained a promotional offer or a promotional coupon code.

Abandoned cart emails convert a lot. When sending abandoned cart emails, it is important to create urgency. It is also great to emphasize the fact that maybe it is a limited edition, or these are the last pieces of this clothing. This will create urgency and will drive the customer to make the purchase.

Emails notifying about new items in stocks are also to be considered when doing email marketing. More and more fashion brands are centered around engaging with their current customers by sending them new product inventory emails.

Post purchase emails are also important and are sent very often by fashion brands. Those emails should be used to offer discounts, to make cross-selling, and to promote the fashion brand social media pages because it is easier to retain an existing customer than acquiring a new one.

And finally, holidays and special events emails have a huge potential. Those are great periods for fashion brands and marketers are obliged to seize those opportunities to make fashion email marketing campaigns. Some of the best email marketing campaigns when it concerns special events and holidays are the following: back-to-school, Valentine's day, Christmas, Halloween, Mother's day and Father's day, etc.

2.3.2. Blog Marketing

I've seen on the Shopify platform that I've the possibility to write some blog articles. As I had seen during one of my internships is that many online boutiques write blogs in order to put keywords in it and to end up well referenced on Google or other search engines.

During my first internship, in the startup Bellepaga, selling alpaca wool clothes, they were paying very much attention to blogs and they were writing many blogs. Those blogs were informative, product descriptive, advices on how to wash alpaca wool clothing. They were also writing about the animal, the alpaca. They were putting a certain number of keywords inside the text of the articles and also in the meta-description of the blog articles. The meta-descriptions also contained a call to action. It needed to be appealing and finally, people should have felt the urge to act: to read the article, and finally to make a purchase on the website.

Therefore, I think writing blog articles is something I should focus on in the next months of running my online boutique. I've not started yet because it requires some inspiration as well as some time.

However, this is something I'm considering very seriously. This is a great way to do SEO, as well as creating a community around my products. As I try to make the following message: every body is beautiful and can be enhanced with the right clothing for the right morphologies, body shapes, I've the idea to write about body shapes, body types, clothing colors that are the best suitable for certain skin colors, etc.

2.3.3. Google Ads

One further recommendation I would made to my business would be to implement Google Ads.

Google Ads or Google AdWords is a tool that will show the ad to people that are likely to be interested in the products and services that we are selling, while it is filtering out people that are not likely to be interested in those products. Thanks to Google ads, we also have the possibility to track people that will click on the ad.

There are many benefits of Google ads for a business, and mainly an online business. First of all, we can target our ads with keywords, locations, ages, languages, day times, frequencies, and devices used. We can also control our costs. Another benefit of Google Ads is that we can measure our success. We can get valuable data, including the cost of advertising and the returns. We can also easily manage our Google Ads campaigns. Thanks to Google Ads, we can increase brand awareness, reach more

customers, easily reconnect visitors to the website, measure our performance consistently, and we can better tackle competition.

Therefore, I believe this is a very important tool to make more sales. However, because it is costly and we need to pay each time someone is clicking on the Google ad, I've decided not to implement that in the beginning of my business because I didn't have the funds to do it properly. However, I believe this is a major tool that I will need to implement in the future because the results are impressive.

However, I've started to create my Google Ads campaign. I'm waiting to have the funds to start it. The first step when undertaking a Google Ads campaign is to register information about the company and the location. Then, we can choose where we want our campaign to be broadcasted. I've chosen France and Belgium because I address people in French on my Instagram and I'm only doing Europe shipping at the moment. Then, I've chosen and selected an amount of maximum 10 keywords related to my boutique such as: "vêtements femme", "Mode femme", Vêtements en ligne", "tendances fashion", "mode à petit prix pour femmes".

The second step in creating a Google Ads campaign is to write an ad. I've chosen the first title: Spicy Sweetie. The second title is: Vêtements pour femmes. And the third title is: Les dernières tendances mode. Then I've added two descriptions to my ad. The first one is the one describing the boutique and what I'm selling on it. And the second one is a call-to-action to drive people to click on the ad.

Figure 17: Google Ads Campaign Example.

Source: Google Ads.

The third step is choosing a budget. I've chosen the budget with 47€ a day, and 1429€ a month. When choosing this budget, I'm sure the cost I will need to pay won't exceed 47€ a day. There is also the possibility to pay 92€ and even 129€ a day.

And finally, the fourth step is to confirm the ad and to enter payment data.

2.3.4. Facebook Ads

Facebook Ads is a paying tool from Facebook enabling companies to make adverting on Facebook, Messenger and Instagram.

The benefits of Facebook ads are numerous. First of all, the audience is huge. 2 billion of people are using Facebook each month. It is very fast to create one Facebook ads. More or less, it takes 15 minutes to create one. Facebook also enables businesses to have an extremely precise targeting. It is possible to define the target based on numerous criteria such as interests, location, age, gender, marital status,

etc. It is also possible to determine a time in the day or in the night to post the ad. Businesses that use the services of Facebook ads have a competitive advantage compared to their competitors that don't use those services. Facebook ads also allow companies to follow performances in real time and to take corrective actions.

Facebook ads can increase brand awareness, brand notoriety, boost the reach of the brand, help increasing the number of fans on Facebook and the number of followers on Instagram, help increasing engagement and commitment, etc.

Facebook ads generally appear on the right side in the feed of Facebook, on Instagram, and now, even on Messenger.

2.3.5. Facebook Ads VS Google Ads

The first main difference between Facebook Ads and Google Ads is that Facebook Ads is more of a push process, while Google Ads is more of a pull process. Facebook Ads is going to help a company finding prospects, customers, while Google Ads is going to help prospects to find a company.

Another difference between both is that on Facebook Ads, we are limited to the budget and the size of the audience, whereas, with Google Ads, we are credited by the number of clicks on the ad. Generally, the click rate on Google is higher than the click rate on Facebook because Google converts more.

3. Hypotheses testing

Hypotheses testing		
Hypotheses	Confirmed or refuted ?	Comments
Inbound marketing enables greater visibility and allow companies to reach more customers	Hypothesis confirmed	Thanks to SEO and a higher ranking in the search engines, companies have greater visibility and awareness from customers. Thanks to blogs, keywords and website optimization, companies can rank higher in the search engines. Thanks to Google Ads, companies are ranked higher in the search engine, what makes them more visible to the eyes of potential customers because customers tend to click on the first link that they see in the search engines. Thanks to influencer marketing, companies, and fashion brands gain in brand awareness and visibility.
Inbound marketing enables companies to have a better understanding of their target customers	Hypothesis confirmed	Thanks to Facebook Ads, Google Ads, and Google Analytics, it is easier for companies to track their target customers behaviors. It is possible to have a lot of information about prospects and actual customers, such as their location, their purchasing behavior, their behaviors, and actions on the website, etc. Google Ads and Facebook Ads enable companies to show ads only to online consumers that meet certain criteria such as their location, their online behaviors, their purchasing behaviors, the fashion website

		and social media they are looking the most at, etc.
		Google Analytics provides companies effective tools to better understand their customers and potential customers. Therefore, companies have a better understanding of their target customers.
Inbound marketing can create greater engagement through greater influence	Hypothesis confirmed	Thanks to influencer marketing, companies have now the ability to reach more potential customers.
		Influencers, hence, their name, have great influence on their followers. Therefore, it is an effective marketing strategy to use them to promote a business, a product, or a service.
		As seen in the online quantitative survey, half of the respondents had already bought via an influencer because he or she had a promotional code for his or her followers. And half of respondents had already bought via an influencer because he or she had seduced them. This shows the huge impact of influencer marketing on today's generation.
		As seen during our research, macro influences have a bigger reach, however micro influencers have more credibility in the eyes of their peers. Therefore, I've first started promoting my boutique with a micro influencer offering her own promotional code. Thanks to that first influencer, I've gained followers, and

| | | within the first week, I've had 5 purchases. Those were made thanks to the promotional code of that influencer. |
| | | What was also important to drive engagement when using the services of that influencer was offering a promotional code with it. As seen in the online survey, customers pay attention to promotional offers and discount codes. |

Table 3: Hypotheses Testing.

3.1. Hypothesis #1

Inbound marketing enables greater visibility and allow companies to reach more customers. This first hypothesis has been confirmed during our research and practical case study of the fashion startup Spicy Sweetie. Thanks to the creation and publication of original content on networks and on the Internet, inbound marketing makes it possible to increase a company's online visibility.

Firstly, thanks to SEO optimization, companies and clothing brands can be ranked higher in search engine results. It is thanks to the correct choice of keywords and a fairly thorough study of them that fashion companies looking to make a name for themselves can outperform their competitors. It is thanks to the correct choice of keywords and a thorough study of them that fashion companies looking to make a name for themselves can outperform their competitors. Indeed, the choice of keywords is very important. It must reflect the brand and its products, but it can also be a vector of differentiation. Indeed, some fashion companies will choose shorter and simpler keywords, while others will exploit niches and choose longer and more descriptive keywords.

A higher ranking in the search engines means more visibility, more reach, and more brand awareness. As a result, this leads to a better quality and quantity conversion, which means that more people will click on the website link.

Google Ads is also a tool that can be used to rank higher in the Search engine. However, this is called SEA: Search Engine Advertising because we are charged for this tool. Thanks to Google Ads, companies are ranked higher in the search engine, what makes them more visible to the eyes of potential customers because customers tend to click on the first link that they see in the search engines.

Second, as already mentioned before, it is mainly thanks to influencer marketing that I managed to make my Spicy Sweetie boutique known to people and potential consumers. It is thanks to the use of an influencer and her own promotional code that I managed to reach people. As also seen before during the quantitative study of the online survey, it was important to propose a promotional code offering a discount, a percentage or a tempting offer in order to attract the maximum number of people and push them to buy.

Therefore, thanks to influencer marketing, companies, and fashion brands gain in brand awareness and visibility.

As seen in the online survey, influencer marketing has become a huge part of our daily lives. As consumers, we spend a lot of time on social media, following influencers. Indeed, half of the online survey had already been seduced by an influencer and had bought via him or her.

3.2. Hypothesis #2

Inbound marketing enables companies to have a better understanding of their target customers. This hypothesis has been confirmed through the implementation of the case study about the Spicy Sweetie boutique. Inbound marketing enables communication adapted to consumers' expectations and habits. Inbound marketing also allows a real exchange with the customer. Once the relevant content has been submitted to the customer, a dialogue can ensue.

Thanks to tools such as Facebook Ads, Google Ads and Google Analytics, it is possible and easy for companies to track their results and better understand their customers and buyers. Thanks to these tools, it is possible to have very detailed information about the location of customers, their attitude on the website, the different actions they take on the website, their purchasing behavior, etc.

Moreover, these tools allow on the one hand a better identification of consumers and potential customers, but they also allow to target them with specific advertising campaigns personalized to their characteristics. It is possible to show one campaign to some people only, and another one to others. To do this, it is essential to define the purpose of the online advertising campaign and to choose which category of consumers could be targeted. It is possible, for example, to show an advertising campaign to people who have already been on the site once, who have put items in their shopping baskets, but have subsequently abandoned them.

On Google Analytics, there is the possibility to see different graphs representing reports. These reports concern the time spent on the website and the location of the visitor, the audience, the acquisition: the traffic, the results of Google Ads campaigns, search console, social media, and other campaigns, the behavior flows, and the conversions.

The reports showing the behavior flows shows the interactions of customers on the website and the abandoned carts. There is also the possibility to see what customers are searching for on the website such as terms of research, pages of research, etc.
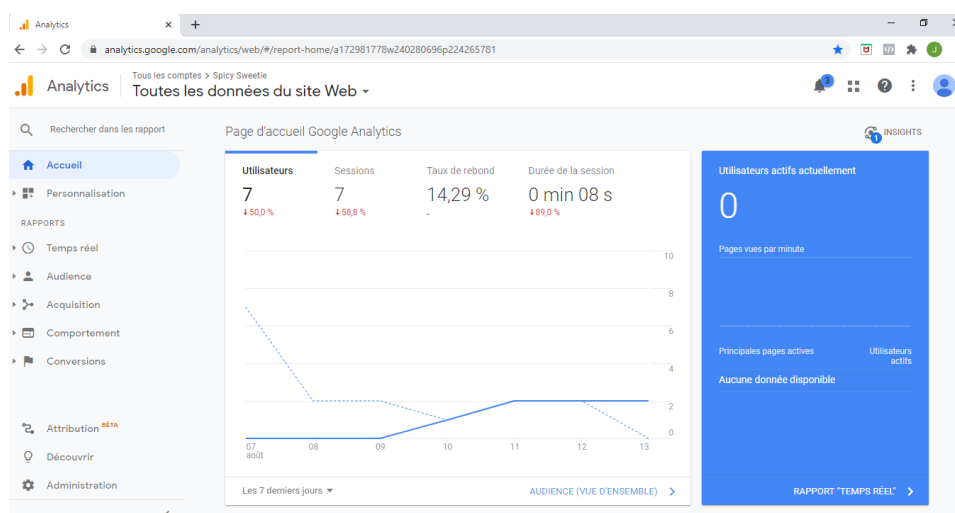

Figure 18: Google Analytics Reports.

Then, also thanks to influencers, it is possible to determine what customers expect from a clothing brand. Influencers can be used to better define an audience. Furthermore, influencers on social networks also have reports on the engagement and reach they have on their followers. Brands and companies can ask them. Thanks to this, it is also possible to evaluate the performance of the influencer but also to better understand their followers, our potential buyers.

3.3.   Hypothesis #3

Inbound marketing can create greater engagement through greater influence. This third hypothesis has been confirmed during our practical Case Study concerning the boutique Spicy Sweetie and during our quantitative research.

As already mentioned before, we now live in the digital and social network age. We spend time every day consulting our social networks such as Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, etc. That is why today influencers have exploded and have taken a big place on these social networks.

As seen in the quantitative study of this thesis, half of the respondents of the online survey had already bought a product through an influencer because they wanted to take advantage of its promotional code. And more or less half of the respondents had already bought a product through an influencer because it had seduced them. Thanks to this survey, we have been able to see how important and influential influencers are in our everyday life and in our purchases.

Their name is not a coincidence. An influencer inspires and influences his or her followers. This is exactly what companies, and especially fashion companies, are looking for. They are looking for people who will be able to promote or become the face of a fashion brand. These brands are looking for people of a certain influence who could fit the image that the brand is trying to represent.

It is advisable and beneficial for young fashion startups, who want to enter this sector, to use influencers. They will be able to promote a new company or brand in order to create brand awareness and subsequently a community around this brand.

During the launch of the Spicy Sweetie boutique, what helped a lot, and which mainly contributed to the creation of a community and the first sales was the use of an influencer. The marketing influencer was a huge asset to launch this boutique. Moreover, during the quantitative study, we saw that consumers were very careful about promotional codes and potential discounts. That is why, at the launch of the Spicy Sweetie boutique, the influencer chosen for the campaign offered a promotional code in her name. This was a 20% discount on the order placed through this influencer.

Afterwards, I've selected some Belgian influencers to promote my boutique and I've sent some products to one influencer, against a charge, so that she could provide me with a story and a publication on Instagram. I am still waiting for the launch of this campaign and its results.

The objective of this thesis was to know what the advantages of inbound marketing are, and how can brand-new fashion startups take advantage of it to enter this industry and make their businesses flourish, by answering the following research question "How can a brand-new startup take advantage of inbound marketing in order to enter the fashion industry and develop its activity?".

In order to answer this question, we have applied a methodology based on an applied research. Meaning that we have started with theoretical concepts to further investigate the practice and see in real life how those concepts were beneficial.

In the first two parts, we have analyzed and described some theoretical concepts. The first part focused on the fashion industry introduction and overview. And the second part concerned the digital marketing theory.

In the first part, we have described and analyzed the fashion industry, the major players in that industry, the sector trends. We have also made a Porter and a Pestel analysis of the fashion industry.

In the second part, we have identified and defined some key concepts in digital marketing and in inbound marketing such as SEO, email marketing, social media and influencer marketing, content marketing, blog marketing. Then, we have applied those concepts to the fashion industry to have a clearer understanding of those concepts when related to the fashion industry.

Afterwards, we have analyzed different fashion companies using inbound marketing effectively, under the form of small case studies. The objective was to see examples of fashion businesses that were using and leveraging the benefits of different inbound marketing strategies to increase their brand awareness and sales.

Then, we have expressed three hypotheses based on our learning and theoretical research to answer our research question. Our first hypothesis was that "Inbound marketing enables greater visibility and allows companies to reach more customers". Our second hypothesis was that "Inbound marketing enables companies to have a better understanding of their target customers". And finally, our third hypothesis was that "Inbound marketing can create greater engagement through greater influence".

In the third part of this thesis, we have tried to answer our research questions by confirming or refuting our hypotheses. To do so, we have implemented and created an online survey with mainly close-ended and multiple choice questions concerning inbound marketing strategies used by fashion brands and we also have done a case study based on a brand-new fashion startup called Spicy Sweetie, created thanks and for the realization of this thesis. The objective of this online survey was to ask respondents what the most important factors were when purchasing a fashion item online, and what were the key drivers and triggers that had already pushed them to make an online fashion purchase. And the objective of the case study about the startup Spicy Sweetie was to apply all the theoretical concepts described in the two first parts of this thesis and to confirm or refute our hypotheses. The major goal was to have a practical approach and to see in real life how all those concepts were beneficial or not for brand-new startups.

What has emerged from the results and analyses of our research and practical cases was that inbound marketing has become a major key in online advertising, especially for fashion brands. Nowadays, with social media and influencers, it has become essential for fashion brands to leverage those social media to promote their business. Not only it is cheaper than traditional marketing, but it is also faster and easier to use inbound marketing.

During our data analyses, we have managed to confirm our three hypotheses.

First, inbound marketing does enable companies to have a greater visibility and it enables them to reach more customers. Thanks to SEO optimization, fashion companies can rank higher in the search engine so that when customers are typing and researching for a specific keyword in the search engine, the brand is ranked higher. Thanks to Google Ads and keywords optimization in blog articles and website optimization, the chances are that the brand will be ranked higher in the search engine results page. People tend to stay on the first page of the results of the search engine and they tend to click on the first results they see. Therefore, SEO optimization enables companies to be more visible in the eyes of customers. And thanks to influencer marketing, brands are also more visible to customers.

Second, inbound marketing does enable companies to have a better and clearer understanding of their target customers and their behaviors. Thanks to Facebook Ads, Google Ads, and Google Analytics, it is now much easier for businesses to understand and target the right customers for their businesses. It is easier and affordable to have access to many information about a brand's prospects and their online behaviors. It is possible to have many different information related to customers such as their location, their purchasing behaviors, their interests, their behaviors on a website, etc. Therefore, thanks to inbound marketing tools, companies can, nowadays, have a clearer understanding of their target customers.

And finally, inbound marketing does help creating greater engagement through greater influence. We have seen that thanks to influencer marketing, fashion brands have the possibility to reach more customers. Fashion brands can gain in brand visibility and awareness and they reach more customers. In addition to that, influencers have influence on their followers. They have created an audience that is following them and engaging with them. Therefore, when using influencer marketing, greater engagement derives from it.

As we can see, brand-new fashion startups can leverage inbound marketing benefits by increasing their brand visibility, by having a clearer and deeper understanding of their customers and prospects, and by creating greater engagement through greater influence.

However, in a crowed sector such as the fashion industry, it is difficult to make a name for oneself and to make oneself known to the public and potential customers.

Every year, many fashion startups enter this market, seeing this industry as an opportunity. However, as seen previously in this thesis, in the part of the Porter analysis of the fashion sector, the competition is fierce. Is inbound marketing alone enough for all those companies? Isn't it going to be too much online fashion advertising? Are people going to become less aware of those, or worse, even angry at? Is differentiation alone the key to thrive in this market? Or differentiation and inbound marketing both combined are going to be enough?

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