

Research on the Marketing Strategy of the Branch Products of Luxury Brands

- Taking Maison Margiela's Perfume Product Line as an Example

Ziqing Que^{1,a,*}

¹*Business School, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia*

a. z5405557@ad.unsw.edu.au

**corresponding author*

Abstract: As the digital age continues to evolve, the way luxury fashion brands market themselves has changed. With the traditional way of selling may not be able to target the needs of consumers in the current era well, companies need to constantly transform and upgrade their marketing strategies. Nowadays, luxury brands are shifting lots of their marketing resources from traditional to digital communication channels. Given the consumption habits of today's consumers, conventional marketing methods may not be able to meet the needs of consumers in this era as well as they should. Thus, companies need to constantly change and upgrade their marketing strategies. The purpose of this research paper is to analyse the reasons behind Maison Margiela perfume products being out of the loop in the luxury industry for a period of time as well as its marketing strategy for the product creating a lesson to be learnt from other product lines of the brand. The case study analyses the product concept, product strategy, marketing strategy and online and offline placement of the Maison Margiela No.3 perfume product line, analyses the marketing approach of the No.3 product line that went out of the circle, and side by side explores the brand's insufficient operation of other product lines.

Keywords: Maison Margiela, luxury brand marketing, consumer behavior, brand transformation

1. Introduction

Within a world defined by evolving consumer trends and consumer behavior, the luxury industry is in a position to move forward like a long-distance marathon race, with each brand moving forward. Cantista [1] stated that the experience of luxury changes over time and varies from culture to culture, just as it changes over the course of a person's life, with different meanings given to different phases of oneself. The exegesis of luxury is varied, and some would associate it with luxury and excellence, exclusivity, simplicity, elegance and so on, while others tend to define it negatively as the antithesis of vulgarity [1].

When trying to look deeper into the field of luxury brands, the value of the brand varies from one brand to another in terms of excellence of craftsmanship, prestige and glamour. Mademoiselle Coco Chanel mentioned that "fashion fades, only style remains the same", and she proved her point by

creating a series of iconic brand DNA/code and exclusive design styles to create a series of creations that are classic pieces of secular elegance [2]. Consequently, it is clear that the style of a brand's designer always represents the tone of the brand. Among so many distinguished and respected designers, Maison Martin Margiela is the epitome of avant-garde design and deconstructionism, which has gained prominence in the global consumer marketplace for its distinctive style and unrivalled craftsmanship. The analysis in this paper aims at revealing the secrets behind Maison Margiela's enduring appeal and exploring the complexities of navigating exclusivity and retribution.

Meanwhile, the luxury industries have undergone significant changes in recent years under the influence of the market economy, social consciousness and technological advances. The global luxury market, which consists of many categories, is quite large, with annual sales of the top 100 luxury goods companies reaching \$ 305 million in 2022, an increase of 21.5% over the previous year and higher than pre-pandemic levels [3]. The leaders, led by the LVMH group, have become the brands with the largest share of sales, at 32 %. At the same time, an emerging Italian company, OTB Group, is increasing its presence in the global luxury consumer market. Socio-economic disparities, changing consumer needs and the emergence of emerging luxury brands are forcing luxury brands to constantly evolve their ability to adapt to the global market, innovate and remain agile. Obviously, Challenges, transformations, opportunities and forces of change are, therefore, the elements that are reshaping the very nature of contemporary luxury.

Simultaneously, among the OTB group, which owns many fashion and luxury brands, the Maison Margiela clothing brand has made its presence felt in recent years, allowing the public to become familiar with the OTB group, which is rich in bravery, creativity, and an indomitable spirit.

Maison Margiela is killing it in the fashion industry with his deconstructed style and avant-garde designs, which seem simple enough for every brand can do. But how did he manage to lead the brand to get a slice of the luxury pie? What's behind the success? Based on case analysis, comparative analysis and data analysis, firstly, this study will focus on Maison Margiela's current business situation, marketing strategy, product range and consumer experience. Then, analyzing how he has shaped the brand's image, redefined the luxury experience and embraced sustainability in response to the luxury industry's push for sustainable development - products that are more environmentally friendly in response to the needs of a new digitally conscious and connected consumer base needs of a new digitally conscious and connected consumer base. Furthermore, the findings of this paper should help Maison Margiela to overcome the challenges and crises that it will face and propel the brand to a broader platform of sustainable development and influence in the industry.

2. Overview of Maison Margiela

When thinking about Margiela, they mostly think of stacked-heel and split-toe boots with a white cross logo sewn together with four white stitches. The brand evokes an air of mystery and fascination. Because few people know the Belgian designer behind the brand - the invisible designer of the fashion world - Maison Martin Margiela, who, after graduating from the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp in 1980, founded his own label, Maison Martin Margiela, which later became Maison Margiela, in Paris in 1988. The brand is known for its minimalist aesthetics, deconstructed design and emphasis on anonymity, often challenging traditional design concepts and using unexpected materials and design elements. Over the years, throughout his career, he has decided to avoid interviews, the press and public appearances, preferring to speak in terms of his own work, communicating with the public through the first-person plural ("We.... ") to communicate with the public, pushing the boundaries of fashion brands and redefining the norms of the fashion industry invented to play a significant influence.

Riot stated that the brand's "style" is described as the core of the "fashion system", part of a whole that combines real clothing, the words on the clothing (fashion magazines) and a wider system of

symbols made up of the connotations of dress codes in society [4]. Margiela has always been committed to the concept of equality, environmental protection and gender neutrality so that clothing is not limited by traditional gender stereotypes and is a combination of men's and women's clothing and a good mix of both sexes. The three-dimensional cuts, flat decorative lines, and asymmetrical stitching that Margiela embodies in each collection are undoubtedly a rejection of traditional concepts and a redefinition of the notion of gender. In his eyes, clothing has long been intertwined with the words of design and architecture and the awareness of the body's shape. Clothing is limited to not only the need to cover the body but also an expression of self-assertion and the existence of a work of art in general.

Simultaneously, a brand logo is an identifier of the brand graphic that triggers memories and associations, and it conveys the brand message to the public [5]. Margiela's distinctive design style can be found in his work. In addition to tabi, the Margiela family is also represented by Replica Sneakers, mm6 and ink splashes, etc. Maison Margiela is a mysterious fashion organisation, and when you look into it, you'll find more interesting phenomena than just the classics we've come across.

3. Marketing Strategy Analysis of Maison Margiela

3.1. Luxury Brands Are Entering the Perfume Industry

Despite experiencing a new coronavirus pandemic, the luxury fragrance industry remains a sustainable needle growth industry, with its market value growing from \$ 37 billion in 2016 to \$ 49 billion by 2022 (Statista). Luxury consumption relies on the emotional and psychosocial benefits to people, which are realised through the symbolism of expensive but prosperous uniqueness and aesthetic experiences [6]. Thalassa Cruso mentioned that the sense of smell can be extraordinarily evocative, bringing back pictures as sharp as photographs of scenes that had left the conscious mind." The scent is what can represent the uniqueness of a person, influencing human behaviour, mood and well-being, as well as cognitive abilities, and sensory landscapes are known for their special and close relationship with the emotional world [6].

What followed was that all the major luxury brands seized this opportunity and competed to be the first to launch their brand's fragrance line. A striking or high-quality packaging design is one way in which a new product can stand out from the packaged competition. If the design of a product's packaging conveys high quality, consumers tend to perceive the product as high quality and vice versa. In addition, consumers may have a perceptual response through its packaging, for example, product feels, appearance and also check the age of the product packaging [7]. Therefore, packaging design largely influences consumers' psychological perceptions (cpp) and plays a crucial role in the consumption process.

3.2. REPLICA-branch Brand of Maison Margiela

Maison Margiela used to be a niche perfume brand, but in just a few years, it has exploded and become a hot new brand in the perfume world. This phenomenon is closely related to the brand's marketing decisions. As early as 1944, Maison Margiela launched the first fashion item - REPLICA; each piece of REPLICA items is affixed with special labels, recording the origin of the original version of the clothing and things. Until 2012, it extended this concept to the creation of fragrances, following the replica ready-to-wear series of "special labels" fragrance bottles are also affixed to the minimalist style so that consumers can see them at a glance.

3.2.1. Unique Exposed Brand Identity

Additionally, Maison Margiela's fragrances capture another point - colour and scene. "Fragrance and memories traversed", with olfactory memory to awaken people's memories, and more recently, Maison Margiela is trying to make the scent to return the taste of a certain scene, aspiring to save the beautiful pieces of life into a scent, so that consumers can recall the beginning by smelling the smell. What's more, each of Maison Margiela's aroma products uses different coloured liquids to visually increase the consumer's sense of scent experience while at the same time linking with life scenes to create a unique sense of atmosphere. Closer to home, for example, with the figurative furniture life scene named the explosion - warm fireplace, with the imaginary and real behaviour named - the voyage of words, but also with the natural scenery named - rain after the first sunny day - Sycamore leaves in autumn.

Table 1: Maison Margiela's perfume product name.

Name	Note
Lazy Sunday Morning	Top notes: pear accord, lily of the valley accord, aldehydes. Middle notes: iris accord, rose absolute, orange flower accord. Base notes: Indonesian patchouli oil, ambrette seeds absolute, white musks. Olfactive family: floral musky Concentration: Eau de Toilette
Whispers in the library	Top notes: pink pepper essence, orange flower absolute, patchouli essence. Middle notes: Cypriol essence, tonka bean absolute, benzoin siam resinoïd. Base notes: vanilla absolute, cedarwood essence, vetiver essence Olfactive family: Ambery spicy Concentration: Eau de Toilette
Beach walk	Top notes: Bergamote essence, pink pepper essence, lemon essence. Middle notes: Ylang ylang essence, transluzone, heliotrope accord, coconut milk accord. Base notes: cedarwood essence, white musks, benzoin resinoïd. Olfactive family: floral. Concentration: Eau de toilette.
Springtime in a park	Top notes: pear accord, bergamot essence, blackcurrant accord. Middle notes: lily of the valley accord, jasmine absolute, rose damascena absolute. Base notes: Musks accord, vanilla accord, ambrox. Olfactive family: floral fruity Concentration: Eau de Toilette

3.2.2. Strong Sales Potential

As mentioned in the OTB group annual report 2022, the OTB group continues to expand, with the goal of growing the international market through the opening of mono-brand shops in high-potential regions such as Asia-Pacific, were China, which accounts for the majority of the consumer power market in the Asia-Pacific region. As such, Majella's infusion in the Chinese consumer market has largely fuelled the growth of the fragrance line. Further, in early 2020, Majira officially launched its perfume "replica" products in China, breaking the brand concept and sales methods, inviting celebrity endorsement through the celebrity will be placed on online and offline platforms and joint third-party large-scale retail companies such as Sephora, duty-free shops and fashion buyer sites to sell together. The products are also sold in conjunction with third-party mass retailers such as Sephora, Duty-Free Shop and fashion buyer websites. Online, the major e-commerce sales platforms, led by Tmall, landed the products on the shelves in a short period of time, which quickly exploded in popularity, and then the brand's popularity continued to rise to the fourth place of the website's "Perfume V List".

Table 2: Perfume V list (Recommended based on 88vip sales, number of transactions and brand heat on Tmall platform).

Ranking	Name	Price	Salability	Degree of praise
1	Chanel: Blue de chanel	¥770	9.4	95.5%
2	Chanel: Chance eau fariche	¥720	9.2	95.3%
3	Ysl-libre	¥860	9.0	94.8%
4	Maison Margiela- lazy Sunday morning	¥650	8.8	92.4%
5	Chanel-gabrielle essence	¥890	8.8	92.7%

As a new brand of perfume products, with the list of the first several well-known perfume brands Chanel and Saint Laurent's perfume products shoulder to shoulder, visible brand influence potential is huge.

3.2.3. Proactive Social Media Strategy

At the same time, in the Xiaohongshu, the TikTok community publicity platform carries out e-commerce live mode while explaining the product at the same time on the shelves of the product, so that consumers further understand the product. Offline, besides selling in the traditional retail counters, the brand is "overtaking" the Chinese market, following the current consumption pattern of Chinese consumers, and creating a social media publicity offline cooperation shop - little B - and selling. Simultaneously, the company has developed offline flash shops, cooperating with coffee shops/furniture shops in Shenzhen, Beijing, Shanghai, etc. The low-priced coffee is used as a diversion product so that more consumers/web celebrities/celebrities can visit the stores one after another, thus increasing publicity avenues. New media marketing is used online to promote the product through social media platforms to quickly increase exposure in the Chinese market. Maison Margiela's marketing strategy in China to capture celebrity endorsement has broken the brand's reluctance to market. Strategically choosing celebrities who align with the brand's philosophy helps to reach potential customers more effectively, differentiating Maison Margiela from its competitors and helping to redefine the brand's image. Sheehan mentions that celebrity spokespersons encapsulate both broad cultural concepts, such as values and norms, as well as more unique and personal meanings [8].

4. Maison Margiela's Co-branding Strategy

In the global context of luxury, luxury groups often use collaborations to break through. By incorporating the ambiguity of art into luxury brands, it may be a sound strategy to successfully integrate art into their business model, creating a combination of rarity and high prices [9]. At the beginning of 2023, Maison Margiela collaborated with Gentle Monster (GM), a Korean brand, to launch a collaborative eyewear collection. How did these two completely distinct brands, with their own unique identities in both the fashion and luxury sectors, rub off on each other and cause a firestorm?

To take it a step further, the gentle monster is known for its avant-garde and artistically designed eyes, bold and innovative sunglasses and optical eyewear, with frames that often defy traditional eyewear aesthetic design norms. Unlike conventional selling approaches, GM shops are also known for their adeptness in utilising immersive and unconventional retail methods, with these spaces often incorporating art installations and interactive elements, with the décor varying wildly from one

flashmob to the next. However, it is this unique style that has made the brand famous, with brand/celebrity collaborations and limited-edition releases that have set the trend in the industry. Before the collaboration with Maison Margiela, the brand had collaborated with brands and celebrities such as Jennie of Black Pink, Ambush and Marine Serre, and once launched, they were all very hot.

Maison Margiela's collaboration with GM has invariably taken its influence one step closer. Showcasing Gentle Monster's original eyewear designs, the collaborative collection incorporates authentic thread detailing of Maison Margiela's stitch logo, reflecting the brand's values of uncompromising creativity and self-expression. Products showcased in the collaboration reflect the brand identity of Gentle Monster and Maison Margiela through a unique touch, from the iconic four white stitching, 8 Maison Margiela digital logos and the top frame collection logo, epitomising the design DNA of both the Maison Margiela and Gentle Monster. Both brands' uncompromising approach to creativity, authenticity and the value of stylish self-expression is on display.

The launch of this collaboration has driven the impact of both brands and create market value for both brands. Firstly, a new audience was expanded. Collaboration with gm allows Maison Margiela to continue to tap into its existing customer base, presenting undeveloped products to a wide and potentially undeveloped audience and preparing the brand in advance for future product launches, price positioning, marketing methods and other positioning. Secondly, the cooperation approach increases storytelling, using the content of both brands to continue to innovate with each other. Providing an opportunity to tell a new and compelling story that captures the imagination of consumers, generates buzz about the two brands, creates hot topics, brings in a lot of traffic, and encourages consumers to purchase Maison Margiela and GM together is a win-win business partnership.

5. The Challenges and Crises Facing by Maison Margiela

The unprecedented growth of the luxury industry from a value of \$20 billion in 1985 to the current \$180 billion has been brought about by globalisation, opportunities to create wealth, new market segments, digital communications, international travel and cultural convergence, and has led to a set of challenges that Siler luxury practitioners have never known [10]. Therefore, the competition between brands and each other in the luxury industry is huge, and it is extraordinarily important to make upgrading and transformation strategies when necessary.

Maison Margiela, as a newborn niche brand, a short period of time quickly become known to everyone. Most of the efforts are attributed to its No. 3 fragrance line, But Maison Margiela has more than a few product lines, just relies on the product line of the No. 3 unremitting efforts to stand in the luxury line to stabilise the position of the brand is the sky side of the talk. No. 3 fragrance line product kernel is the core, with a niche salon incense and luxury attributes to the market after the launch of the OTB group cannot be separated from the back of the marketing of the dedication of the blood. With such a strong backing, why can't other product lines be as explosive as the No. 3 product line?

With the rising of new fashion brands, it is not realistic to rely solely on the No.3 hot fragrance line to support the brand founded on fashion and fashion, and it is impossible to continue to maintain the heat of the market. First, Maison Margiela's other product lines have a blurred consumer base, and there is no fixed group of consumers. Maison Margiela needs to identify and connect with its target audience in the potential market, which requires a different approach that takes into account the behaviours and desires of the luxury consumers that fit the different product lines. For example, in addition to the Maison Margiela 3 product line, the familiar line 6 (MM6) also captures the key point of identifying and connecting with consumer groups. MM6 is a straight line for women's fashion windows, with designs inspired by people's daily lives, and is also more practical and popular among the young masses, and the price is also particularly affordable. This clear product concept at the same

time, combined with a successful marketing strategy, successfully put it in this many product lines out of the circle. Next, the Maison Margiela brand needs to transform the marketing model of other product lines. While consumers tend to evaluate a company's/brand's message through their own subjectivity, luxury brands can broaden their communication channels by means of brand endorsement, which the company employs to externalise its brand identity in order to form a good brand image. Marketers' personnel can develop and maintain appropriate connections by means of appropriate tools. Celebrity endorsement represents a way in which meaning can be transferred to the brand [11]. Breaking away from the brand's reluctant marketing style, the Maison Margiela 3 line chose Li Yuchun as the global face of the brand at its launch in China in 2020, as well as the brand's first. In the following year, in 2021 and 2022, Jing Boran and Xiao Zhan were chosen as spokespersons for aromatherapy and scented body care. It can be seen that in this highly competitive luxury brand promotion, it is necessary to choose spokespersons to drive the promotion of the product when necessary, and the spokespersons play the role of cultural symbols, which help to create the luxury value of the brand [12].

6. Maison Margiela's Future Upgrade Strategy and Suggestions

The explosion of the Maison Margiela No. 3 fragrance line has invariably affirmed its marketing strategy while navigating the enthusiasm of consumers. However, this has left the brand's white knuckle ready-to-wear line not able to catch up with the wave. As a result, there is a need to reconsider the direction of the marketing of lines other than No. 3, as mentioned by Riedmeier, J and Kreuzer, M. Luxury goods and brands are increasingly shifting from traditional to non-traditional perspectives, which requires brand managers to redefine their understanding of luxury and to become more inclusive in their brand planning. The transition process is more revealing for managers of luxury brands [13].

In this case, we need to redefine and Challenge the Strategic Approaches of Maison Margiela's Other Product Lines. The reason why Maison Margiela's No. 3 is a big hit, here it can't be separated from its retailing strategy related to the product. The perfume line, with its emotional core, expresses moods and attitudes that resonate with consumers, in effect broadening the imaginative use of the products by those who buy aromatherapy products. Drawing on this, other product lines need to re-evaluate their existing offerings. Study different product lines to make different marketing strategies for their market trends, clarify the transformation methods and goals, and reposition the products and services.

Firstly, in response to the blurring of consumer groups in the other lines of Maison Margiela, we need to learn from the strategy of clear customer positioning in line 3 and line 6 to clarify the phenomenon of consumer stratification. Firstly, the products sold in the different product lines should be clearly positioned for potential consumers. For example, the mm6 of product line 6 is designed for women's daily wear, with a more affordable price, and the audience naturally becomes larger. Nowadays, most consumers subconsciously pay attention to the cost-effectiveness of products when buying clothes. Like the traditional Maison Margiela 0 / No. 2 / No. 10 main line of clothing, the price of pricing is also higher, which for a love of the brand and the daily wear needs of consumers to see the main line of such expensive clothing prices must fade away. Therefore, Maison Margiela needs to re-adjust the pricing of its products to meet the daily needs of today's consumers. But for No. 0 / No. 2 / No. 10 main line of products cannot be adjusted, which meets a small number of consumer groups who have always loved the show models of products Maison Margiela design style, but also meet the majority of consumers' daily consumption needs.

Then, For Maison Margiela need to change the marketing model of other products. In the current era of the Internet, more consumers choose to shop online; some people will feel that online consumption will be more cost-effective than offline consumption, from the shop site, hiring sales

staff, shop decoration and other costs. But in my opinion, although the current consumer trend is online consumption, we cannot ignore the operation of offline shops but need to pay more attention to re-adjust the decoration style of the offline shops. You can set up a flagship shop in some of the sales of good cities, will Maison Margiela all product lines can be collected in a large flagship shop, allowing different groups of customers can experience the Maison Margiela products.

7. Conclusion

All in all, this paper studies the phenomenon of Maison Margiela, a niche brand that has exploded in the luxury goods industry. Compared to the luxury brands in the public eye, the brand has tried its best to erase the brand logo but has used the digital expression of its own brand's super symbol to unintentionally harvest a large number of consumers who love this low-key niche brand. Analysing the sales of Margiela's hot perfume line No. 3, we found that the selling concept of the No. 3 product line is "Aroma from Memory", and the naming of the product is strongly scenario-based, creating a full sense of atmosphere, bringing consumers into the product scene and naturally associating it with their scent experience. However, the main brand and other product lines behind Maison Margiela, which has succeeded in making a name for itself as a perfumer, have not been brought to the attention of consumers. Therefore, the findings reported here provide new insights for Maison Margiela to rethink the transformation and upgrading of other product lines. With the advancement of the digital age and the mainstream purchasing needs of today's consumers, it is no easy task to take over the highly competitive luxury industry. Therefore, newborn luxury brands need to pay more attention to these two issues for different product lines' price positioning to develop different distribution channels to meet the different needs of different consumer groups. Therefore, it is important to change and upgrade the distribution strategy to effectively seize the opportunity of the global luxury consumer market.

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