

# Marketing strategies in luxury fashion SMEs

Sandra Siljestedt TE11

- The dream about Mary Katrantzou

## **Acknowledgements**

When I in August 2013 decided to do this journey on my own, following my employment, I had no idea it would equal as many ups and downs as it has done. Despite the downs it has been an incredible journey that I'm thankful for now that it is getting closer to the end.

I want to say a special thank you to the team at Mary Katrantzou that made this a possibility: Emma, Nicholas, Laura, Violetta, Vicky and Tamara. In addition I would like to thank my supervisor Martin Behre, I could never have done this without your encouragement. And to my amazing housemates Emma, Alice, Edward and Zoe – thank you for brightening up my days in London, and for making me smile every single one of them.

Sandra Siljestedt  
London, May 2014

# Abstract

Marketing strategies in luxury fashion SMEs – The dream about Mary Katrantzou  
2014

Sandra Siljestedt

Supervisor: Martin Behre

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to critically examine the marketing strategy and marketing communication within a luxury fashion SME, the case of Mary Katrantzou.

**Methodology:** This report has been conducted in a qualitative approach and six employees at the case study company have been interviewed. Three of the respondents are a part of the marketing department at the company, two are a part of the sales department and one member of the ecommerce team was interviewed. Moreover the interview approach was semi-structured interviews, and one on one interviews were conducted as well as written ones. Due to the access in the company the written interviews could be followed up by additional questions.

**Findings:** Mary Katrantzou works with the appropriate traditional tools for luxury fashion brands, apart from advertisement, as well as working with the digital channels most suitable. Accordingly the theory a cohesive brand identity is vital when it comes to luxury fashion firms, and the findings in this area showed that the company does not have a coherent brand identity that permeates the whole organization. Instead the opinions of the six respondents differed. Moreover the empirical findings showed that collaborating with other companies could increase brand awareness.

**Conclusion:** Mary Katrantzou's marketing strategy is, accordingly the theory collected, in line with how luxury fashion brands should work with marketing. For the future however the company could invest in one more traditional tool in the form of advertisement. Figuring out the true brand identity of the company is also of importance. Moreover collaborations have according to this study the ability to increase brand awareness and should therefore be of interest to research further in the near future.

**Value/originality:** The intimate access in the case study company in this report should be of high interest due to its rareness. From the inside examined fashion luxury brands are seldom researched, which adds value and originality to this study.

**Keywords:** marketing strategies, digital marketing, luxury fashion, branding, brand identity

# Abstrakt

Marknadsföringsstrategier i lyxiga mode SMFs - Drömmen om Mary Katrantzou  
2014

Sandra Siljestedt

Handledare: Martin Behre

**Syfte:** Syftet med denna studie är att kritiskt granska marknadsföringsstrategier och marknadskommunikation inom lyxiga modeföretag, SMFs, fallet Mary Katrantzou.

**Metod:** Denna rapport har tagits fram i en kvalitativ ansats och sex anställda vid fallstudieföretaget har intervjuats. Tre av respondenterna är en del av marknadsavdelningen på företaget, två är en del av försäljningsavdelningen och en medlem av e-handelsavdelningen intervjuades. Tillvägagångssättet var semi-strukturerade intervjuer, varav både fysiska samt skriftliga intervjuer genomfördes. På grund av tillgången i företaget har de skriftliga intervjuerna kunnat följas upp med ytterligare frågor.

**Resultat:** Mary Katrantzou arbetar med lämpliga traditionella marknadsföringsverktyg för lyxiga modemärken, förutom annonsering, och dessutom arbetar de med de digitala kanalerna som kan anses mest lämpade för just fallföretaget. Enligt den teori som lagts fram är ett starkt och enat varumärke av stor vikt när det gäller lyxiga modeföretag. Resultaten i denna studie visar att företaget inte har en stark varumärkesidentitet som genomsyrar hela organisationen, utan istället skiljer sig åsikterna hos de sex respondenterna åt. Dessutom visar de empiriska resultaten att samarbeten med andra företag skulle kunna öka varumärkeskännedomen, som visat i fallföretaget.

**Slutsats:** Mary Katrantzous marknadsföringsstrategi är följaktligen genom den teori som studien grundar sig i, i linje med hur lyxiga modemärken bör arbeta med marknadsföring. I framtiden skulle företaget kunna investera i ännu ett mer traditionellt verktyg, i form av annonser. Att ta fram den verkliga varumärkesidentiteten i företaget är också av betydelse. Dessutom genererar samarbeten med andra företag enligt denna studie möjligheter att öka kännedomen om varumärket och bör därför vara av intresse för framtida forskning.

**Värde/originalitet:** Den intima tillgång i fallstudieföretaget som har existerat igenom denna rapport bör vara av stort intresse på grund av dess sällsynthet. Från insidan undersökta lyxiga modemärken är sällan utforskade, något som tillför värde och originalitet till denna studie.

**Nyckelord:** marknadsföringsstrategier, digital marknadsföring, lyxigt mode, branding, varumärkesidentitet

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# 1. Introduction

This thesis will focus on marketing within the luxury fashion industry. A case study will be made on a smaller London-based company, Mary Katrantzou, where I am working during finalizing this report. The company will be presented in the methodology chapter. Furthermore this introduction chapter will discuss different aspects of marketing strategies and luxury fashion from previous studies and theories. The discussion will end with problem formulation and purpose.

Having the greatest product in the world means nothing if consumers do not know about it. And this is where marketing comes into the picture. In an article in the Guardian (Niven, 2014) Neil Addley, manager director at Trusted Dealers, says that “it all starts with a strategy, whether you’re a small business or a much larger one. Define what you’re trying to sell, to whom, where and when, and then work out how best to get to that target with the budget you have available”.

Social media started off as an entertainment tool and then developed into a marketing strategy due to the business fields advantages in the term of time, audience, relations and cost issues. It has become a way of reaching consumers globally and at the same time companies can receive valuable feedback from these consumers (Karahan and Kirtis, 2011).

In 2013 it was estimated by eMarketer.com that by the end of the year an average of 1,61 billion people would log into social networking sites at least once a month, an increase by 14,2 % from 2012. Furthermore it was predicted that by 2017, 2,33 billion people worldwide will use social media monthly. Additionally, in 2012 Facebook was stated to be the third largest ‘country’ in the world, with one billion users (Williams, 2012), which without a doubt classifies it as the world’s largest social media network (eMarketer.com, 2013).

Formulating a marketing strategy within a company when engaging in digital marketing is essential – as stated in an interview with Tom Ollerton, marketing director at We Are Social, in The Guardian (2013); “If you dip your toe into social media, the chances are you’ll get your leg bitten off”. According to Ollerton the most inappropriate social media marketing is when a company uses social media and they think they know their consumers and make assumptions about them (Anderson 2013).

## 1.1 Research overview

In their research the “Welcome to the experience Economy” Pine and Gilmore (1998) describe a few steps on how companies can stage experiences as marketing strategies. They highlight speaking in one voice, outline a cohesive theme throughout the experience, creating a memorable experience for the customers amongst other steps. Atwal and Williams (2009) research suggests that the world needs to move from the traditional marketing approach of features and benefits of products, to consumer experiences. Schmitt (1999) argues that this type of marketing, experiential marketing, is everywhere and suggests three simultaneous developments that affects the change in the principals of marketing to consumers: developments in information technology are pushing this change, the view of brands is changing due to the advancements in technology; they are becoming global and instant for consumers and as a result products are seen as tools to enhance consumer experiences, and lastly, due to everything becoming branded, companies would to a greater extent focus on entertainment and communication for the consumers. It is also stated that experiential marketing put consumers in center and therefore consumer experiences are a key part in this

type of marketing. Atwal and Williams (2009) also highlight the emotional focus, and these consumers will demand a marketing that is creative, interactive and connecting (Cova, 1996).

Accordingly Crittenden, Hanna and Rohm (2011) traditional marketing has been revolutionized by the advancements in technology. Social media platforms have converted internet from a place of information to a place for influence, and companies today view social media as an important part of their marketing strategy. It is stated however, even though this point being made, that social media should not stand alone; organizations need to take in consideration both social and traditional marketing as parts working towards the same goal. Haenlein and Kaplan (2010); Kaharan and Kirtis (2011) state that social media can help any type of company to advertise their products and services and in some cases even make companies survive through economic recovery due to the relatively low cost compared to traditional marketing. In addition Crittenden, Hanna and Rohm (2011) conclude that traditional marketing is often costly for companies, and social media marketing does not require the same large budgets. The same type of media that was once used is no longer in center, especially by younger consumers. Communicating through digital channels does not require the same budgets and developments as traditional marketing, and Haenlein and Kaplan (2010); Karahan and Kirtis (2011) state that digital marketing is not only for big, international enterprises but it is also valuable for small and medium sized companies, SME's<sup>1</sup>. Furthermore Crittenden, Hanna and Rohm (2011) state that integrating both traditional and digital marketing tools in a company is essential and will empower executives to ask questions like the following: Who is/are the target? On which traditional and social media platforms do these targets live? What story does the company want to tell? How can marketers propagate or feed this storytelling?

Haenlein and Kaplan's (2010) research states that a company should choose carefully what social media channels to use and be active on, this due to the amount of applications that exist; a company cannot simply be active on all of them. Kaharan and Kirtis (2011) states that companies need to critically examine what the goals are with the business to be able to use the appropriate digital channels for each of those intentions. Haenlein and Kaplan's (2010) furthermore argue that the digital marketing channels the company is active on should be accessible to employees, and in order to do this the company might have to define which employees should administrate the different digital channels. Fionda and Moore (2009) highlight the importance of the right people working internally to create the brand.

Kim and Ko (2011) suggests that luxury fashion brands that use digital channels as marketing activities entertains their consumers through offering free content and interaction, and Haenlein and Kaplan (2010) suggests the importance for companies to engage the end consumer. Crittenden, Hanna and Rohm (2011) argue that digital channels work as a means to reach and engage your consumers, and pinpoint that social media channels offer an opportunity to engage consumers and one way to encourage this is for the company to be unique. Furthermore they suggest that the interactions and conversations between companies and consumers add value and enables relationships, both with existing and potential customers.

Research conducted by Kim and Ko (2011) showed that social media marketing for luxury fashion's overall purpose is to improve the relationship between brand and consumer. Heine, Phan and Thomas (2011) argue that social media is an important and vital communication tool that easily can make or break your brand identity. One good way to protect your luxury brand within the fashion industry is to manage social media marketing the way you manage the production of the quality goods you produce – the company should cautiously control the

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<sup>1</sup> According to the European Commission SME's "are defined by a workforce between 10 and 250 employees and an annual turnover of 2-50 million euros or an annual balance sheet total of 2-43 million euros" (European Commission 2005).

content within social media and the utilization of these channels. The best content possible should be published and on the right platforms, furthermore everything should also go in line according to the company's brand identity. Fionda and Moore (2009) highlight the significance of a clear brand identity and understanding of the values of the brand within luxury fashion branding. Both which should differentiate the brand as well as appeal to consumers on a functional and emotional base.

Bastien and Kapferer (2009) argue that marketing within luxury fashion brands is turned upside down; these companies should focus in the brand identity of the company and communicate unique messages. Furthermore companies should express their creative identity and the passion of the creator of the brand. Fionda and Moore (2009) state that a clear brand identity is vital for luxury fashion brands, and companies need to seduce their consumers, both emotionally and functionally with this identity. Bastien and Kapferer (2009) also explain that it is important for luxury fashion brands to start with the story of the brand and as a company you have to spread the awareness of your brand beyond the target group, you have to communicate to consumer you are not really targeting. Fashion luxury brands need to seduce their consumers as the role of luxury fashion marketing is not to sell, but the idea lies in the creation and recreation of a dream, and in order for consumers to keep dreaming their minds must continuously be filled with these dreams.

## **1.2 Problem discussion**

Marketing today is centralizing consumer experiences (Atwal & Williams 2009; Pine & Gilmore 1998; Schmitt 1999). Speaking in one voice, develop a cohesive theme throughout the experience and creating a memorable experience for the consumers is highlighted as important when working with experiential marketing (Pine & Gilmore 1998). Traditional marketing has been revolutionized by the advancements in technology, and integrating both traditional and digital marketing is seen as important (Crittenden, Hanna & Rohm, 2011). Digital marketing however does not require the same large budgets as traditional marketing (Crittenden, Hanna & Rohm 2011; Haenlein & Kaplan 2010; Kaharan & Kirtis 2011). Furthermore the company should have the right employees executing the digital channels within the company (Fionda & Moore, 2009), and engaging and interacting with consumers is seen as a vital part for succeeding with your digital marketing strategy (Crittenden, Hanna & Rohm 2011; Kim & Ko 2011; Haenlein & Kaplan 2010). Within luxury fashion marketing it is important to have a clear brand identity (Bastien & Kapferer 2009; Fionda & Moore 2009; Heine, Phan & Thomas 2011), start with the story of the brand and seduce the consumers with the recreation of a dream of the brand (Bastien & Kapferer, 2009).

To a great extent, the marketing literature does not take into account luxury brands. Previous research highlights marketing strategies for all kinds of companies and because luxury brands are very different from other companies there is a gap in the literature. Furthermore the marketing and branding research that does exist in regards of luxury fashion brands is mostly focused on well-established luxury fashion brands (Heine, Phan and Thomas, 2011) and not on newly started SMEs with a significantly smaller budget. Mary Katrantzou, a luxury fashion brand based in London, can be considered an SME and is therefore chosen to be the case study of this paper.

## **1.3 Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to critically examine the marketing strategy and marketing communication within a luxury fashion SME, the case of Mary Katrantzou.

## 1.4 Problem formulation

Developing from previous discussion one problem formulation have been selected:

- What should Mary Katrantzou do differently in regards to their marketing strategy and marketing communications strategy?

## 2. Theoretical framework

This chapter of the study presents the theoretical framework for which the research is conducted from. It is divided into three sections with the most relevant theories and research for this report presented.

### 2.1 Experiential marketing

In 1998 Pine and Gilmore outlined a few steps in their research “Welcome to the Experience Economy” on how to stage experiences as a marketing strategy. One of the steps is developing a cohesive theme through creating a unique focused set of images and meanings for what is offered. The cohesive theme provides a unique identity and helps to create a better experience for the consumers. Consistent marketing communications, in-house communications and support materials helps obtaining the single voice throughout both the organization and the actual event taking place. Another step; forming impressions, indicates the creation of memorable experiences to the consumers, how the company would like the customers to describe the experience. Petkus (2004) research argues that the term experiential marketing has grown from the movement from a service to an experience economy, where consumers engage in activities. Schmitt (1999) argued that experiential marketing is everywhere. It was stated that companies had started to move away from traditional marketing towards a creation of experience for the consumers. Pine and Gilmore (1999) explains their view of experiential marketing as when a consumer buy an experience that person pays by spending time enjoying memorable events and engaging in a personal way. Atwal and Williams (2009) state that experiential marketing is the “essence of a product and amplifying it into a set of tangible, physical and interactive experiences that reinforce the offer”. Furthermore Petkus (2004) explains experiential marketing as something that provides consumers with tangible experiences so that they receive the right amount of information to make a purchase decision.

Schmitts (1999) research suggests that due to three simultaneous developments in the business environment this shift towards experiential marketing has taken place. Information technology: developments within technology were one of the factors pushing this change. Not only the improvement in speed would affect, but also the switch from print as media towards voice, and from sight to sound. Constantinides and Fountain (2008) also say that it is a shift in power due to the advances in technology. One effect of this shift is seen in consumer attitudes; new customer needs and value perceptions are emerging and buying behavior and how consumer search products are changing. The second development that Schmitt (1999) suggests is the brand: due to the progresses in information technology the information surrounding brands would also face a change. Information about them would be available to everyone both globally and instantly. Schmitt argued that even organizations people did not even think of as brands, such as schools, medical practices, TV stations, would as a result be treated and marketed as it. In addition it was said that fashion brands had extended to toothpaste, Paul Smith, bottled water, DKNY, or even popcorn boxes, Calvin Klein. In this new world, where the brand was in center, products would develop into a tool to provide and enhance the customer experience. Communication and entertainment: as a result of everything becoming branded it was said that everything would also become a form of entertainment and communication. Companies had become a lot better in marketing themselves as community- and consumer-oriented through providing entertainment for their consumers. Reports at this time showed that the Internet was full of terms as stimulation, connection and customer. Additionally it was stated that communication was no more one-way, developments had resulted in a two-way communication that enable consumers to communicate directly with the companies.

Furthermore Schmitt (1999) argues that traditional marketing was developed as a result of the industrial age, and not due to the revolution of branding, information and communications that the world is facing now. Hagel (1999) believes that the traditional model of communicating a lot of messages to sell more products is not the challenge within marketing; the challenge instead lies in capturing and retaining consumer's attention. Atwal and Williams (2009) research pinpoints that the world needs to move from the traditional marketing approach of features and benefits of products, to consumer experiences. They state that experiential marketing can be one solution in doing so; as the theory takes a post-modern view, in other words highlight consumers as emotional creatures with the ambition to achieve experiences. This emotional consumer will demand a marketing that is creative, interactive and connecting (Cova, 1996). Furthermore companies today have to keep a dialogue with consumers whereas the traditional marketing was more as a monologue where only the company spoke (Hagel, 1999).

Schmitt (1999) suggests that experiential marketing consists of four different characteristics. Consumer experiences: as experiential marketing focuses on the consumer experience this is an important part. Experiences happen through undergoing, encountering or living through things and they provide sensory, cognitive, emotional, relational and behavioral values that acts as replacements for values of functionality. Consumption as a holistic experience: marketing within experiential marketing does not think of a product as solely a product but as the experience surrounding the product: shampoo, blow dryer and perfume transforms into "grooming in the bathroom", and the essence lies in finding what products fit into this particular consumption situation and how they before being consumed can enhance the consumption experience. Consumers are rational and emotional animals: rationalistic thinking and emotions drive consumers; they as frequently engage in emotional choice as rational ones, and furthermore it was stated that traditional marketing highlights solely rational decision making where products have functional benefits and features. The last characteristic is that methods and tools are eclectic, where the meaning is that experiential marketing is not tied down to one method and tool; it's diverse.

## **2.2 Digital marketing**

Kaharan and Kirtis (2011) work states that due to the recession some firms had to cut down on costs, and amongst these costs were spending on marketing often found. Marketing through social media channels had obvious advantages in the business field; cost benefits as well as time, relations and audience. Crittenden, Hanna and Rohm (2011) highlights a few lessons to be learned when social media becomes a part of the marketing communications strategy. One of these lessons argues that social media strategy does not have to require an enormous budget, unlike traditional media that are often very costly for many companies. Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy and Silvestre (2011) highlight the importance of integrating the companies marketing strategy with the social media strategy, in order to point different consumers towards social media or traditional marketing. In Haenlein and Kaplan's (2010) study, integrating traditional and digital marketing is highlighted as a key element for succeeding, as they are both a part of a company's identity. Crittenden, Hanna and Rohm (2011) argue that consumers today, especially young consumers, do not use the same media as back in the past. If the budget is tight the social media marketing strategy has to take advantage of what media is owned by the company and available for free.

In Haenlein and Kaplan's (2010) research they make a few points for companies when using social media and doing so successfully. A company should choose carefully what social media channels to use and be active one. Due to the amount of applications that exist a company cannot simply be active on all of them. When choosing the channels the target group has got to be in mind together with what message the company wants to communicate. Crittenden, Hanna and Rohm (2011) argue that the company should visualize the digital

channels in terms of three types of media: owned by the company, paid for and earned for free in the open market. Kaharan and Kirtis (2011) state that firms need to critically examine what the aims are with the business to be able to use the appropriate social media instrument for each of those intentions. This pushes the company to get a clear idea to what extent each platform interacts with the others. Haenlein and Kaplan's (2010) next point is that the company should pick the application to use or create its own. However this is a guideline for companies that want to exist on platforms that has yet to be invented. Furthermore the digital marketing channels the company is active on should be accessible to employees. However the company might have to define which employees should administrate which channels. Relationships that exist both internally and externally should be developed through the culture, the expertise, of the organization, and highlighted is the importance of the right people working internally to create the brand (Fionda & Moore, 2009). Crittenden, Hanna and Rohm (2011) furthermore state that the company should identify and track key performance indicators on the digital channels that they execute. Focus should lie on conversion tracking of downstream metrics as sales, to whatever the degree possible, as an addition to metrics that indicate brand lift and brand engagement. The importance lies in identifying the key outcomes associated with the company's specific digital channels and quantify the related metrics where it is possible.

Kim and Ko's (2011) research shows that luxury fashion brands that use social media channels as marketing activities entertains their consumers through offering free content and interaction, which in turn can lead to word-of-mouth effects amongst consumers. The interaction provides consumers with a chance to communicate both with the brand and other consumers, which according to this study affects the relationship in a positive sense. Furthermore it is said that the main purpose of marketing communications is strengthening the relationship and to create purchase intent, and social media channels is a effective tool for luxury fashion brands to engage in, it attracts the luxury consumers as they want luxury values to be communicated to them. Kaharan and Kirtis (2011) argue that if companies post the most relevant content, and listen and communicate with consumers and other stakeholders, a social media strategy will be effective for both companies and consumers. It is a good way of reaching consumers globally and can be used for big companies as well as SMEs. Crittenden, Hanna and Rohm (2011) pinpoints that social media channels offer an opportunity to engage consumers and one way to encourage this is for the company to be unique. This will give the consumers a reason to engage on that specific company's platform and enhances performance indicators such as "likes" and "shares" etcetera. Furthermore their research suggests that the interactions and conversations between companies and consumers adds value and enables relationships to grow, both with existing and potential customers.

## **2.3 Communicating the brand**

Crittenden, Hanna and Rohm (2011) highlight the importance of beginning with the company story in terms of digital marketing. All companies needs to be clear about the story they want to share. The story could be about a new service, product, relationship or an overall theme. Heine, Phan and Thomas (2011) argue that social media is an important and vital communication tool that easily can make or break your brand identity. Interaction plays a key role, and marketers should talk with their consumers and not at them. The study suggests that a good way to protect your luxury brand within the fashion industry is to manage social media marketing the way you manage the production of the quality goods you produce – the company should cautiously control the content within social media and the utilization of these channels. The best content possible should be published and on the right platforms. Fionda and Moore (2009) suggest that the company should invest in a communications strategy. For luxury fashion brands to increase awareness they should employ all or a combination of the following tools: PR, advertising, fashion shows, celebrity endorsement and direct marketing.

Fashion shows tended to be look as a vital communications tool for luxury fashion positioning. To achieve fashion statues the company should invest in creativity and innovation. Fashion showpieces can be used for press, editorials etcetera, or VIP customers.

Kapferer (2012) argues that to be luxury today a company has to establish their brands more as pieces of art than as actual products, and building a luxury brand takes time. It is also important that a company understands that within the luxury world the classic distinction between communications and products is meaningless: products are in fact communication and should therefore be treated with the same care as any other product a company delivers. Kim and Ko (2011) suggests digital activities within fashion luxury brands also enable consumers to search for information and the activities should focus more on hedonic and empirical values rather than the direct value of the product. These values are touched by an indirect brand experience. Additionally even newly started brands should communicate their heritage, cultural references, inspiration and stance as if they were a company of cultural excellence. Keeping loyal to the history of the brand or the founding and current designer it is extremely important due to that is has the ability to maintain the authenticity of the brand (Fionda & Moore, 2009). Fionda and Moore (2009) highlight the importance of a signature that is iconic for the particular brand. Everything produced within the brand needs to be coherent and in line with the brand identity. Bastien and Kapferer (2009) argue that marketing for non-luxury companies aims to positioning the company, for example by proving their unique selling point. When it comes to luxury being unique is instead what counts, you have to express taste, creative identity, the passion of the creator etcetera.

Accordingly Badrinarayanan, Madhavaram and McDonald (2005) brand identity strategy equals the processes that include efforts of the brand when developing, evaluating and maintaining the brand identity. Communicating the brand identity to both external and internal individuals and groups responsible for the firm's marketing communications is also seen as part of the brand identity strategy. Bastien and Kapferer (2009) state that marketing, when it comes to luxury brands, is turned upside down. It is said that existing literature within marketing does not cover luxury marketing, and a few steps in showing how are presented. The study states that luxury fashion brands should forget about brand positioning and instead focus on brand identity. Fionda and Moore (2009) suggest nine different dimensions within luxury fashion brands that are crucial in the creation and also maintenance of the brand. Clear brand identity and values are seen as a vital step. Both have to be coherent and at the same time really differentiate and entice the consumers on a functional as well as emotional level. Heine, Phan and Kaplan (2011) state that the content published on digital channels should go in line according to the company's brand identity. In Haenlein and Kaplan's (2010) research on how companies successfully should use social media it is stated that a company should make sure that all activities on all channels are aligned and that the messages are coherent. In addition Crittenden, Hanna and Rohm (2011) highlight five social influences on digital channels in form of people: creators, critics, collectors, joiners and spectators. Knowing about these will help the company to decide what messages should be centralized throughout the different digital marketing channels used.

Bastien and Kapferer (2009) argue that the image is born itself and impossible to gain for example through seeing a business opportunity. The result with this is that the luxury brand should tell its own story, the real history of the brand, and to seduce consumers with it. The luxury brand is developed from the mind of the creator, and is driven on a long-term basis. Furthermore this study states that the role of advertising in a luxury fashion firm is not to sell but the recreation of a dream. The dream that as a consumer you want to buy the product, even if you do not have the financials to do so now. In addition research by McMahan-Beattie and Yeoman (2006) suggests a new trend by middle class consumers; they are starting to trade up products that meet their aspiration needs, meaning luxury products are consumed by a greater mass. Accordingly Bastien and Kapferer (2009) in order for people to keep dreaming

about a brand the dreams must continuously refill in the minds of the consumers. To measure marketing within luxury brands by the immediate effect on sales is therefore not a good method, it will not be very positive looking. As a company you also want to spread brand awareness beyond your target group by advertising to those you are not targeting. Luxury is based on two different values: luxury for yourself and luxury for others. The aim is it that even consumers out of the target group should recognize the brand and desire it in order to obtain the latter.

### **3. Methodology**

In this chapter the design of the study will be presented along with the scientific viewpoint and critical examination of the chosen methods. Data have been collected through qualitative methods that, according to Bell and Bryman (2011, p. 386), in comparison to quantitative methods are more concentrated around words than numbers. To be able to examine marketing strategy the empirical data had to be collected from the company itself. Qualitative methods in the form of interviews were conducted in order to get the information needed from relevant people with the correct knowledge. In most cases it also means taking a deductive view when speaking of the relationship between theory and research. A deductive view means that research develops from the theory in a study and not vice-versa. However no research is ever solely inductive or deductive so a slight inductive view will be visible in this study. Moreover an interpretive approach is adopted where the essence is to understand the social world, which happens through an investigation of the interpretation of that social world, by the participants in it. A constructionist approach is adopted as well, showing that social properties are outcomes of interactions between people rather than a phenomenon that is out there and that is separate from those involved in it.

#### **3.1 Company presentation**

The brand, that was founded in 2008 by Mary Katrantzou and is based in London, United Kingdom, is a fashion design house within the luxury segment. Mary Katrantzou first showcased at her first London Fashion Week in 2009, after showing her graduate show from Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design in London in 2008. The company solely designs for women in the segment ready-to-wear (RTW), which means that two collections per year are shown during fashion week (internal document 1). From 2014 the company also produces one resort collection a year (observation of author). Designs in the garments are centralized around prints and Katrantzou herself has been named “queen of prints” by numerous magazines (Fury 2011; Menkes 2012; Moorhouse 2013). The designs are also famous for their construction and shapes. Already after her debuting fashion show in 2009 the designer picked up 15 prestigious stockists including stores like Browns and Colette. The fashion house is famous for their frequent collaborations, with different fashion companies like Topshop, Longchamp, Christian Louboutin, Swarovski etcetera. In November 2011 the designer was awarded the British Fashion Award for Emerging Talent: Womenswear and in February 2012 named young designer of the year at the Elle Style Awards (internal document 1).

The brand strives to keep innovating and to every season propose something new. Mary Katrantzou pushes fabric techniques and digital printing. As digital printing is a relatively new technique the company is far from having reached its full potential (internal document 1).

In June 2012 the company had 17 employees, growing from a number of 12 six months before (Jones, 2012). By observation by the author, the company today has got 41 employees and approximately ten freelancers working full time, and the organization is constantly growing larger. The marketing department consists of four employees and the close working E-commerce department involves two people. Sales department consists out of three employees and can be stated to be the closest link to the marketing department together with E-commerce.

## **3.2 Research design: a case study**

Bell and Bryman (2011, pp.59-60) states that a case study can be: a single organization, a single location, a person or a single event, but the most common is using the term when referring to a geographical location, such as a workplace or an organization. The attributes that differentiate a case study from other research designs is that it focuses on a restricted system or situation. As this paper centralizes and examines a single organization, the company Mary Katrantzou, and is tied down to a restricted situation a case study became the natural research design for this study. It has been a revelatory case, meaning a phenomenon has been observed and analyzed that has been inaccessible for scientific examination before this study (Bell & Bryman, 2011, p. 62). Due to that the case is of revelatory nature, this study contributes to the existing marketing literature; the company has never been under examination before by a researcher that is also an employee within the organization. This access gives relevant contributions as the view is from inside the company, and not from the outside.

Other articles within the research areas of this paper have mostly been based on qualitative methods in the form of case studies (Crittenden, Hanna & Rohm 2011; Heine, Phan & Thomas; Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy & Silvestre 2011; McMahon-Beattie & Yeoman 2006), case studies with semi-structured interviews (Fionda & Moore 2009) and overviews, discussions and conclusions over the literature that exists within the research combined with real life examples (Atwal & Williams 2009; Bastien & Kapferer 2009; Constantinides & Fountain 2008; Cova 1996; Haenlein & Kaplan 2010; Hagel 1999; Kaharan & Kirtis 2011; Kapferer 2012; Petkus 2004; Schmitt 1999). One article has got a qualitative approach with questionnaires as methodology (Kim & Ko, 2011).

## **3.3 Semi-structured interviews**

Qualitative interviews have been conducted in this paper to examine what Mary Katrantzou's current marketing strategy is and how the brand is communicated. To be able to get the insight in how the company actually work in regards with their marketing strategy and brand communication, interviews were chosen as the best alternative as no internal documents could get the depth that interviews could. To be able to examine marketing strategies within a company the strategy has to be explained, and it this study interviews were decided to be the best method to use. In qualitative research it is important to investigate the interviewees own ideas and perspectives, a way to be open towards new views of the research. This way new questions that the interviewer may have can be asked and the interviewee's replies can be followed up in a more flexible way than when conducting quantitative interviews. In addition the chronological order of the questions can be changed during the interview and the wording can also be different from the questionnaire, also this method gives rich and detailed answers as well as enabling interviewing a respondent more than once, if needed (Bell & Bryman, 2011, pp. 466-467).

The interviewing approach chosen is semi-structured interviews due to the need of fairly specific topics to enable answers of the problem formulation leading this research. An interview guide, which is characterized by this interviewing approach, is seen as needed to maximize the purpose permeating this study. Additionally this approach is recognizable by following previous decided questions even if the way of interviewing is still as flexible, but in contrast to unstructured interviews, where a topic is more or less discussed, semi-structured interviews means following previous set guidelines (Bell & Bryman, 2011, p. 467). The reason for this chosen method is the need for some boundaries to work within when doing the interviews but at the same time keep the flexibility and make it possible for new insights to be highlighted. As this is research permeates of the view that theory grows out of the research no

strict approach is necessary. On the contrary flexibility have been very useful in pointing this research in the right way.

### **3.4 Sampling method**

The sampling method used in this report is a purposive sampling method, which, accordingly Bell and Bryman (2011, p. 442) means that the respondents were not chosen randomly. The goal has instead been to sample participants in a strategic way so that the respondents are relevant to the research. Due to this sampling method the conclusions in this report cannot be generalized towards a population.

Interviews have been conducted on six employees at Mary Katrantzou; three people from the marketing team, two persons from the sales team and one from the E-commerce team. The nature for choosing these interviewees have been due to the fact that they are the most relevant to answer questions about marketing strategies within the company. Other parts of staff members are seen as not relevant to be a part of this research as they are working in non-applicable departments for this study. Both one on one and written interviews have been conducted. The main reason for this has been due to time limitations in all employees' schedules and for one employee, a International Sales Assistant, who is based outside of the United Kingdom. However the accessibility in the company have enabled me to follow up with questions to all interviewees, and the main interviewee, the Brand Development Manager, was interviewed one on one and from that a lot of relevant empirical data was collected.

### **3.5 Critical examination of choice of methods**

Bell and Bryman (2011, pp. 408-409) pinpoint four different segments of critique regarding qualitative research. These four being that it is too subjective, difficult to replicate, problems with generalizing the conclusions drawn and the lack of transparency. Regarding the studies being too subjective the essence is that qualitative findings rely too heavily on the researcher's view of what is important and also on the relationship that gets created between the researcher and the people being studied. Qualitative research is hard to replicate due to the fact that this type of research is unstructured and many of the times reliant on the researchers inventiveness – there are almost no standard procedures to follow when doing a study, making it extremely hard to replicate it. When looking at a company as a case study, as in this report, bigger generalisations are problematic to do. How can one or a few more companies speak for a whole segment of companies or even an industry? Transparency can be hard to obtain because it is hard to know what the researcher actually did and how the conclusions were drawn. It might be hard to see why a specific person was chosen for an interview.

Accordingly Bell and Bryman (2011, p. 402) the social world as well as events examined throughout qualitative research must be seen through the eyes of the people that the research is studying. The social world has to be interpreted through these people because they are capable of giving meaning to their environments. With an unstructured interview method the odds of the interviewer having expectations beforehand decreases and can more easily see things as the participants see them. However, this is more important if searching for a genuine understanding of the views of people of a specific setting or respondents that share the same attributes (Bell & Bryman, 2011, p. 472), and not so imperative for this specific study as it has been an organisation being examined and the concrete strategies within this company.

According to Bell and Bryman (2011, p. 437), participant-as-observer means that I have been a full functioning member of the case study company, and other employees at the company have been aware of my status as a researcher throughout the work with this report. Furthermore there have been regular interactions between us and we have participated in each

others daily life. I have throughout the work with this report been continuously open with my research and also been a paid employer at the company.

Addressing the above issues is important and they have been taken into consideration throughout this report. There are complications about this study being too subjective, especially when qualitative research is supposed to have the view of the respondents and to be able to do so the researcher has got to get close to the people being studied. Bearing this in mind is essential. Respondents being chosen for interviews have been addressed previously in this study, and the conclusions being drawn has got to be easy to follow. Replicating this study is possible, just not as closely as it might be in quantitative research; choosing a similar company with related problem formulations will be possible to do in the future. Generalizing this paper and implementing it on other companies, industries etcetera might not be possible. But it can give an idea of a small trend that can be generalized on a bigger scale, qualitative research is not meant to represent a whole population but merely a way of generalizing against the empirical research being conducted. It is all about looking through the eyes of the respondents first and foremost and therefore this has been the most important step when analyzing data.

The fact that I have been a participant-as-observer has enabled me an access in the company that I could not have gotten in a case study company I would not be employed at. The interviewees in this report have been close colleagues and friends, and this has made it easier for me to ask for the information I need and their trust in me have enabled them to answer as truth worthy as possible, and in addition there has been an open communication about the questions and the understanding of these. Moreover my own knowledge about the company and marketing strategies used has enabled a trustworthy analyze with rich data.

## 4. Findings

The research findings are presented in this chapter of the study. The findings are structured into relevant themes and information conducted from different respondents is presented in each theme. Firstly a table of all six respondents is presented with characteristics that differentiate and describe each respondent.

<u>Respondent</u>	<u>Gender</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Education</u>	<u>Position in company</u>	<u>Number of years as employed</u>	<u>Number of years in a group</u>	<u>Main tasks/ Responsibilities</u>
A	Male	30	Bachelor Degree in International Relations and French	Special Project Manager/ Brand Manager	1,5	1,5	Project management of all special projects, fashion show, photo shoots, collaborative projects, in store displays, production of branding materials.
B	Female	25	Bachelor Degree in Textile Design	Digital Marketing and PR Coordinator	1,5	1,5	Manage all MK social media channels, uploading daily content, Manage Mary's World section of <a href="http://www.marykatrantzou.com">www.marykatrantzou.com</a> , Content generation, Main contact for external PR agencies, Sample traffic Overseeing.
C	Female	28	Bachelor Degree in Fashion Marketing	Sales Executive	0,5	0,5	Managing and developing business whilst identifying key accounts and opportunity for business globally, Planning and execution of sales strategy each season, Sales analysis, Researching existing markets increasing brand awareness, Preparation, execution and follow-up of sales campaigns.
D	Female	22	Bachelor Degree in English Literature	PA to Mary Katrantzou and part of the PR and Marketing team	7 months	7 months	Organizing Mary's schedule, main contact for all Mary's requests, sample traffic, organizing send outs, interviews.
E	Female	25	Bachelor	International	4	3	Approaching potential

			degree in international economics and management	Sales Assistant			stockists, establishing and growing the relationship with existing clients, ensuring that the brand is well represented in the stores, organization of the Sales Campaign, conducting buying appointments and reaching assigned budgets, coordinating production and marketing processes that affect the in store sales, running sell through analysis, regional analysis and international sales reporting and continuous communication with our stockists for issues concerning the brand.
F	Female	24	Bachelor degree in Russian Studies	Ecommerce Assistant	8 months	8 months	Catalogue management, maintenance of the website, analysis of orders (countries, items etc), analysis of customers and audience segmentation and customer service.

Table 1. Table of respondents

## 4.1 Marketing strategies

The marketing strategy at the company has been an evolution. Since respondent A started working at the company one and a half years ago him and the CEO never sat down and discussed what the marketing strategy should be. The marketing strategy has been developed continuously. According to respondent B the current marketing strategy within Mary Katrantzou has been built from scratch over the five years since the company was founded. Furthermore respondent A says that the marketing strategy is seen as a bit of a rough path; more a guideline than something they have to follow thoroughly.

All respondents state that Mary Katrantzou encompasses both traditional and digital marketing. Accordingly respondent A, Mary Katrantzou works with traditional as well as digital marketing in the sense that traditional marketing is seen as everything from shooting a look book to doing a fashion show. Respondent E states that traditional marketing has been used since the beginning of the brand but has only expanded the last year and a half. Respondent B says that the company works with both traditional and digital marketing to build a comprehensive and streamlined vision for the brand both on- and offline, and mentions celebrity dressing, editorials in fashion publications, events such as the fashion show and collaborations as different parts of the current marketing strategy. This is then broken down into five key divisions within the marketing strategy, as respondent B explains it; VIP seeding, publication and editorial content, events and brand exposure, collaborations and digital marketing. Respondent D believes that all of these tools increase the company's brand awareness, and accordingly respondent B by working with their two external PR agencies the brand positions themselves into a high-end bracket of the fashion market. Through this the company nurtures relationships, manage their reputation and delivers

considered and concise campaigns across multi-platforms, both digitally and in print. Mary Katrantzou does not however work with traditional marketing in the sense of advertisements. Respondent C pinpoints that the company have not done an ad campaign and posted posters and billboards all over the city, nor have they ever used ads on TV or in radio. Respondent C explains further that as a young designer brand the company cannot invest in advertisement, and traditional marketing often requires high investments. According to respondent E the company may add adverts in magazines as part of their marketing strategy in the future.

According to respondent A, traditional marketing is within the company seen as a bit more basic and obvious, and at the same time digital marketing is seen as something that the whole world is new at. The company are trying to work it out as they go along and they put more effort into it, as they have to think more about it than traditional marketing due to the constant change within the digital world. Respondent E adds that the marketing strategy has changed as it has been divided into markets and that the company not only focuses on fashion capitals but on many different markets.

#### **4.1.1 Fashion shows**

All respondents mentions the two fashion shows a year as means of traditional marketing. Accordingly respondent A it is the most important marketing initiative that the company engages in throughout the year. Respondent B adds that fashion shows can occur outside of the two main ones, for example when the company enters a new market a trip usually gets organised, with a publication, store or other company within that market, in order to draw awareness to the brand within that market. One of the events planned during this trip is normally a fashion show.

#### **4.1.2 VIP dressing and publication content**

All the work that is conducted with their two external PR agencies is seen as traditional marketing, whether it's celebrity dressing or features in high-end fashion magazines, according to all respondents, and that the company works very closely to their PR-agencies. Respondent B explains that the company works with two PR agencies; one for editorial exposure and one for VIP placements, and that both of them work towards key objectives in order to build and promote the brand values of Mary Katrantzou, this to increase brand awareness and sales across the board.

Respondent C says that recently the brand has been worn by celebrities like Beyonce, Sarah Jessica Parker, Marion Cottillard and Jessica Alba, and that a lot of these images are then published in different newspapers and magazines across the globe. Respondent B explains that their PR agency for celebrity dressing target VIPs to wear and endorse the brand at events across the globe. Furthermore she explains that every season a list is put together of tiered names of the highest calibre of talent. Tier one consists of primary targets who the company feels embodies the key values of the brand. Tier two consists of people who do represent the brand but they are less international, global names and perhaps more up and coming. Tier three means upcoming talents who are names to watch in the industry, and these can travel quickly to the second or even the first tier. Respondent C furthermore describes the real impact VIP dressing has when, after an image of Beyonce wearing the brand was posted online, the buying requests for that particular dress increased noticeably.

For publication content respondent B explains that Mary Katrantzou and their PR agency for editorial exposure works on a global basis. The PR agency has got offices in New York,

London, Paris and Asia, but the London office is the main one and they are in charge of the global strategy. All offices hold a set of samples to seed publications within their territory with. As with the VIP strategy the structure of editorial exposure works in a similar way; each territory has got a list of tier one, two and three of publications that they approach for brand features, editorials and shopping and style pages etcetera.

### **4.1.3 Collaborations**

Collaborations are not mentioned in the theory presented in this study, but according to the findings they are a big part of the traditional marketing strategy at Mary Katrantzou. Respondent E explains that this is a subtle way of marketing the brand; it is not obvious marketing like adverts but still a lot is gained for the brand in terms of press opportunities. Accordingly respondent B the company chooses carefully who to collaborate with; they must be in line with Mary Katrantzou's core values. According to respondent A the company has got an in-house design team of three employees that works full time with only collaborations. Either the company gets a certain design fee or an agreement of royalty for everything that is sold when it comes to these collaborations. Adding up the three full time staffs salaries against the royalties or design fees is according to respondent A however plus minus zero in revenue. It is stated by respondent A that the reason for doing collaborations is for the press; it is a good way for consumers to be talking about Mary Katrantzou and to reach consumers out there that has not yet heard about the brand. This is a way of reaching new and potential customers as well as making the company's designs available to their aspirational consumers who cannot yet afford the main line. Respondent A continues by stating that the amount of followers the company has got on Facebook is nothing compared to the million and a half that saw the announcement of the newest collaboration with Adidas on the latter's Facebook page. As the company tracks traffic online they see peaks when collaboration announcements are being made and on the day that the Adidas collaboration was announced Mary Katrantzou got 1000 new followers on Instagram, 700 new likes on Facebook and 150 interactions on Twitter, says respondent B. In addition respondent C says that on the announcement day she had stockists phoning her wanting to buy the collection, about six months before the collection is set to be start being sold. Respondent A states that all these collaborations are designed to get people talking and realizing the story of the brand. Furthermore respondent B states that it allows the company to get associated with other industries and build a story around the brand that is not necessarily just about clothing.

Respondent A explains that when doing collaborations, a strategy is designed for gaining most possible amount of attention from consumers. First an announcement is posted and then, after the look book shoot has taken place, images of the collaboration is released a few times before the collection starts to actually get sold. According to respondent A this is a way of working consumers appetite and the company releases multiple rounds of marketing events surrounding the particular collaboration, and in the end it is all about the marketing value for the brand. It is made clear by respondent A however that big collaborations are rare, both due to the high amount of resources needed and due to the company not wanting to communicate that they only do collaborations. He expresses the importance of having quieter periods to remind consumers to go and buy the main collections that the company produces.

## 4.2 Digital Marketing

### 4.2.1 Digital channels

Accordingly all respondents Mary Katrantzou is active on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google+ and Pinterest. The company also monitor their Wikipedia page, and have a LinkedIn profile. According to respondent C the company's marketing team spend a lot of time executing digital marketing channels. Respondent F explains that all the different digital channels followers are recorded daily and that all of them have seen a constant growth. Respondent B fills in by stating that the brands Instagram account grows at a rate of an average of 8000 followers per month. In addition, respondent B adds that after the fashion show during London Fashion Week in February 2014 the company gained over 10 000 followers in four days on Instagram solely. Since November 2013 the company also has got its own up and running website, something that respondents A, E, and F agrees to be the biggest change in a long time for the company when it comes to the digital marketing aspect.

The overall opinion amongst the respondents is that Instagram is the most important digital marketing channel that they use; this is where the company has got the most followers and the most interactions are made. However there are some disagreements; respondent B argues that the company website is the most widely used digital channel for the brand in terms of identity and Facebook is the most actively used digital channel when it comes to digital marketing. Respondent A highlights that both Instagram and Facebook are as equally important and the fact that they work together. Furthermore he explains that on Facebook the company explains more about what they are putting up, whilst Instagram offers more of an insight to the brand. A lot of the things the company posts on Instagram will go onto Facebook as well. Respondent A states however that the company, on the contrary to the previous, has got more followers on Instagram than likes on Facebook. He agrees to a certain extent when saying that Instagram is in fact their bestseller in regards of digital marketing. In addition the importance of Pinterest in the United States is highlighted by both respondent A and C. Accordingly respondent A the company realized that they had to put more effort into this channel after a work trip to the United States. He believes it is a great way for selling products online and because they are such a visible brand it is seen as a great way of getting the pictures out to consumers. In general the pictures that the company posts on their channels are spread the best through Pinterest, according to respondent A. Respondent C says that the company wants to reach as many potential buyers as possible, and that they therefore have to adapt to a marketing tool if this specific tool might work better than the other channels in one of Mary Katrantzou's different markets. Twitter is seen by respondent A as a channel that has dropped in importance, but he states it is still a tool for communicating in easier conversations with your consumers and can be good as a sales tool due to its visuality. Respondent C says that Instagram is definitely the most important channel, as the concept of the brand is visualised through this channel and the company's products stands out, furthermore images posted on Instagram can easily be shared on other digital channels. Respondent E states that apart from the visual product being communicated on Instagram followers can also easily interact, especially through hashtags. Respondent B explains however that Instagram is the most interactive channel as it has the biggest fan base. Respondent C says that the company has got approximately 108 641 followers.

Even if the company has got a lot of followers on their different digital channels, respondent A state the fact that you can never have enough. They believe it is something where you will never achieve your target; you need to continuously expand on all sides the visibility of the brand so that consumers engage and make sure that they are watching the company. When the company gets those consumers the focus lies in maintaining them.

#### **4.2.2 Posting content**

According to respondent A the marketing team at Mary Katrantzou works with a colour-coded calendar to ensure different posts of content are communicated through the different digital channels. One day they might be telling a story about the brand, the next day they will push people to shop and the third day they might just be talking about something that the brand likes. Different categories of stories are given a different colour and the essence is for a week to be as colourful as possible. The idea is not to push sales too much and too obviously as this would make the brand feel cheap and a bit horrible, according to respondent A, but still generate sales in the end. It is all about the balance between these colours and that they are all considered when posting different content.

#### **4.2.3 Right employees communicating the brand**

In terms of communicating the voice of the brand online in a correct sense the company trains the personnel in order to send out the right content, says respondent A. To make all messages cohesive the same employees writes all the content with a certain voice and posts it in a similar way; the voice is always the same due to that it is a team effort of trained staff and Mary herself. According to respondent B, Instagram is monitored by Mary Katrantzou as a personality and comes directly from her as a voice; this is in addition the most personal channel as mostly Mary Katrantzou herself creates the content. Respondent A continues by saying that in some aspects of communications Mary cannot be asked for approval, as she is very busy, but the personnel monitors much of the content, especially online, to make sure there is consistency in the messages going out to consumers. There are a lot of eyes on the content and respondent A explains it as they speak in the ways of a fictitious Mary Katrantzou. He continuous on by stating that the bigger the company gets the more controlled the marketing communications gets.

### **4.3 Communicating the brand**

According to respondent A; making sure that what Mary Katrantzou is communicating to the targeted consumers is continuous and cohesive is extremely important. Respondents A, D, E and F agrees that communicating a cohesive message is important on all channels. Respondent D says that consumers pick up inconsistencies so it is very important for the company to be as consistent as possible. One example given by respondent A is that the company would not hashtag “Justin Bieber” just because they had a feeling it would give them more followers. This would according to respondent A be the wrong consumer base for the company. Respondent D agrees that the company is very selective when creating content on digital channels, they don’t just post for the sake of it. Respondent A argue that the company have to make sure that their message is relevant to the people they want to attract, and once attracting those they need to turn them into actual purchases, for example through redirecting them to the site and have them engaging with the products and then essentially buy. Respondent C argues that the most important thing in the world of fashion is to stand out and always deliver new and intriguing content. Respondent E states that the strategy is to communicate the brand and to get followers, and that the main objective when

communicating the brand is to promote it and creating a dream of the brand for the consumers. Respondent C agrees: according to her it is not only about a product, you are also selling and communicating a dream.

According to respondent A social media is seen as a great way of getting the images out to consumers and getting them to interact over the images. As the company grows bigger the more expensive a photo shoot gets due to higher costs for better photographers, models, locations etcetera. Getting the image up on style.com for instance is not enough, as the company wants consumers to engage over the images to generate sales on that specific item. That way you can justify the cost for a photo shoot, something that the company cannot do with too little circulation of the images. In addition respondent F says that the company keeps their digital marketing consistent by posting the same types of images so that the brand is strongly communicated through all channels.

#### **4.3.1 Target group**

Respondent A says that they are trying to communicate to customers and potential customers what the brand is and what the brand looks like, and they want to reach everyone through their marketing. Important is also getting the message out there for the people who can't afford the products as these people are seen as future customers. The brand tries to be aspirational but then also making sure that the customers who can afford to buy Mary Katrantzou are choosing to do so over their contemporaries, states respondent A. Everyone is a potential customer due to their huge commercial lines, says respondent A, meaning that the amount of styles within each collection at the company can be consumed by a high amount of different consumers. Respondent D states that through digital marketing the company targets a younger consumer who might buy into the brand in a few years time. An example that respondent A gives is that the company wants to target University students with an interest in fashion, due to the fact that they want these consumers to, when they get their first pay check, save up some money until they have enough and can buy a piece from Mary Katrantzou. Respondent F believes that all marketing at the moment is more appealing to the younger audience who are made up by these aspirational consumers rather than actual buying consumers, but by doing this the company guarantees future customers. Respondent C says that social media channels are difficult as the people who appreciate your design might not always be the company's potential customers.

#### **4.3.2 Brand identity**

Respondent A says that the marketing strategy's greatest challenge within the company is always making sure that they protect their overall brand identity. Whatever they do; fashion shows or posts on social media channels, the company tries to make sure it is a cohesive message that is in line with the company's direction so that the brand speaks in one voice. They try to avoid sending off missed messages.

When it comes to the importance of brand identity and communicating it well through all the different marketing channels, it is said by some of the respondents that it is extremely important. Both respondent B and respondent F explain that the core brand values have always been the same since the company was founded in 2008; the clothes are wearable art. However when asked what the true brand identity of the brand actually is, the answers differ. Respondent A says he does not know the true brand identity at first, and then states that Mary herself is the brand identity and that they communicate the world through her eyes on all different marketing channels, the respondent thinks that this comes across in all the things the company does socially. He continues by stating that Mary Katrantzou herself is the ambassador of the brand and everything is communicated in a way that feels very personal

and Mary Katrantzou; it is all about the connection to her. Respondent D agrees that Katrantzou herself is the true brand identity; something that makes Mary Katrantzou seem normal and approachable, which respondent D believes makes her more likeable. Respondent E says that Mary Katrantzou herself is the personality behind the brand and she is actively involved in representing the company and her life is of interest to consumers, however when asked about the true brand identity it is said that it is about innovation, edginess, creativeness and to be artistic. Respondent C states that the true brand identity within the company is for consumers to reward themselves as they deserve it, and that strong women stand out.

## 5. Analysis

This chapter contains an analysis of the empirical findings against the chosen theories and research building this report. It is structured according to the themes found in chapter 2.

### 5.1 Experiential marketing

Pine and Gilmore (1998) argue that one step to stage experiences, as marketing strategy is to develop a cohesive theme through creating a unique focused set of images and meanings for what is offered. This theme provides a unique identity and helps to create a better experience for the consumers. Consistent marketing communications, in-house communications and support materials helps obtaining the single voice throughout both the organization and the actual event taking place. Schmitt (1999) suggests that experiential marketing focuses on the consumer experience and that there are not only one tool or method for it: it has an eclectic approach to marketing. Respondent B explains that Mary Katrantzous collections are shown twice a year at London Fashion Week. These garments are then worn by VIP targets and are placed in editorials in different fashion magazines across the globe. To make this possible the company works with two external PR agencies. Respondent A and C say that collaborations are a big part of the marketing strategy at the company. This enables the company designs to be available to a bigger mass of consumer. Respondent A furthermore states that images from the company are shared through the digital marketing channels, to increase the awareness and to get consumers to interact over them. When designs from the companies are trickled down from the show they are worn by VIPs, placed in high end fashion magazines, interpreted into new collections through collaborations and lastly imagery is offered to the big mass through digital channels. This enables a cohesive theme to permeate the whole marketing strategy and helps with obtaining the single voice of the organization. This also states the use of diverse tools and methods throughout the company's marketing. Pine and Gilmore's (1998) next step; forming impressions, indicates the creation of memorable experiences to the consumers, how the company would like the customers to describe the experience. Through visualizing the fashion show through different methods, as stated above, the consumers are fed with memorable experiences of the brand. In addition the company through this structure feeds the consumers with the experience the company wants them to experience and describe it. This can also be interpreted in Pine and Gilmore (1999): experiential marketing is when a person pays by spending their time enjoying memorable events and engaging in a personal way. Petkus (2004) research agrees to this; the term experiential marketing has grown from the movement from a service to an experience economy, where consumers engage in activities. When consumers engage in the fashion show through the images from these events being spread through different digital channels they spend their time enjoying the fashion show. Consumers can also engage through hashtags, as stated by respondent E, or "liking" the images etcetera.

Petkus (2004) argues that experiential marketing is something that provides consumers with the right amount of information to make purchase decisions, and Kim and Ko's (2011) state that one of the main purposes of marketing communications is to create purchase intent. Accordingly respondent A Mary Katrantzou have to make sure that their message is relevant to the people they want to attract, and once attracting those they need to turn them into actual purchases, for example through redirecting them to the site. The company therefore works towards the goal that their marketing should encourage purchases. Respondent C also states

that through celebrity endorsements they see higher purchase requests of the items worn by some VIPs, for example Beyonce as in the example.

Schmitt (1999) suggests that the brand, due to the progresses in information technology, would face a change as information about brands would be available to everyone both globally and instantly. Fashion brands would go beyond just products and the brand itself would be in center. Products would develop into a tool to provide and enhance the customer experience. Furthermore he argues that consumption as a holistic experience: marketing within experiential marketing does not think of a product as solely a product but as the experience surrounding the product. Hagel (1999) argued that the traditional marketing view had the aim to sell products through communicating a lot of messages, and that the challenge would lie in capturing and retaining consumers attention. Atwal and Williams (2009) state that we have started to move away from the traditional marketing with focus on products benefits and features towards experiences. Respondent C argues that Mary Katrantzou is not only selling a product, but also selling and communicating a dream to consumers. Respondent A furthermore says that the company strategy is to communicate different messages through their marketing, and never directly push sales. The different messages are set to keep consumers attention towards the brand. Schmitt (1999) furthermore state that due to the shift towards branding all marketing also turns into a form of entertainment and communication, and through providing this companies are more consumer focused. It becomes a two-way communication. Today we have moved from keeping a monologue with consumers to a dialogue (Hagel, 1999). Schmitt (1999) also states that rationalistic thinking and emotions drive consumers within experiential marketing; they as frequently engage in emotional choice as rational ones. Atwal and Williams (2009) argue that consumers are emotional creatures. Accordingly Cova (2006) these consumers demand a, amongst other things, interactive marketing. Constantinides and Fountain (2008) claim that there has been a shift in power from the companies to the consumers. Due to Mary Katrantzou being active on many digital channels, and through these channels providing content from traditional tools, as stated above, the company entertains their customers. Through the digital platforms a two-way communication is also made possible, which enables consumers a greater power to engage.

## **5.2 Digital marketing**

Haenlein and Kaplan's (2010) argue that integrating traditional and digital marketing is a key element for a company to be successful on digital channels; they are both a part of a company's identity. McCarthy and Silvestre (2011) also highlight the importance of integrating the company's marketing strategy with the social media strategy; in order to point different consumers towards social media or traditional marketing. Mary Katrantzou works with traditional as well as digital marketing as stated by all respondents. Respondent B says that the company works with both traditional and digital marketing to build a comprehensive and streamlined vision for the brand both on- and offline, and digital marketing is thereby a part of the company's overall marketing strategy. Digital marketing can be seen as cost reducing as it does not require the same budgets as traditional marketing (Crittenden, Hanna & Rohm 2011; Kaharan & Kirtis 2011). Respondent C at Mary Katrantzou state that the company does not use some traditional marketing tools due to the costs, as a young designer brand the simply cannot afford it.

In Haenlein and Kaplan's (2010) research their first suggestion for companies using social media as a marketing tool, and wanting to do so successfully, a company should choose carefully what social media channels to use and be active one. When choosing the channels the target group has got to be in mind together with what message the company wants to communicate. Kaharan and Kirtis (2011) agrees when stating that a company should chose appropriate media that goes in line with the business aims. Accordingly all respondents, Mary

Katrantzou is active on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google+ and Pinterest. They also monitor their own Wikipedia page, and have a LinkedIn profile. Since November 2013 Mary Katrantzou have got their own up and running webpage, something that respondents E and F agrees to be the biggest change in a long time for the company when it comes to the marketing aspect. The overall opinion amongst the respondents is that Instagram is the most important digital marketing channel that they use; this is where the company has got the most followers and the most interactions are made. However the different respondents highlight positives of each channel. Respondent A claims that Pinterest is important for the United States market as this digital channel is widely used there. This shows that the company are being present where they think they consumers are present. The company website is also seen as of great importance by respondents B and F as this is the company presence online. In addition, Crittenden, Hanna and Rohm (2011) highlight that a company should identify and track key performance indicators. Respondent F explains that all digital channels followers are recorded daily and that all of them have seen a constant growth. Respondent B fills in by stating that the brands Instagram account grows at a rate of an average of 8000 followers per month. It is also said that collaborations is a great catalyst for increasing the social following as merging with external brands.

In Fionda and Moore's (2009) nine dimensions they suggest the importance of the right people working internally to create the brand. Heine, Phan and Thomas (2011) state that the company might have to define which employees should administrate which channels. In terms of communicating and creating the voice of the brand online in a correct sense, the company trains the personnel in order to send out the right content, according to respondent A. To make all messages cohesive the same employees writes all the content to a certain voice and posts it in a similar way on the digital channels. Mary Katrantzou creates most of the posts on Instagram personally, accordingly respondents A and B. Due to this respondent A feel that the posts become very natural and that the voice is always the same due to that it's a team effort of trained staff and Mary Katrantzou. Accordingly respondent A there are a lot of eyes on the content and it is made in the voice of a fictitious Mary Katrantzou. Moreover respondent A says that the bigger the company gets the more controlled the marketing communications gets. In addition it is said by respondent F that the company try and keep traditional and digital marketing consistent by posting the same types of images via all tools and channels so that the brand is strongly communicated.

Kim and Ko (2011) highlight that luxury fashion brands should use digital channels to engage the brand with consumers. Kaharan and Kirtis (2011) argue the importance of posting relevant content and to communicate with consumers. This is an effective strategy and will enable the company to reach consumers globally. In addition, Kim and Ko (2011) say that consumers want luxury fashion brands to communicate luxury values to them. According to respondent A, Mary Katrantzou uses a colour-coded calendar as a tool when posting content on their different channels. One day a story about the brand can be posted and another day they can subtly push sales. This calendar enables posting relevant content at the same time as the company communicates with consumers. Respondent B explains that when the Adidas collaboration was launched the company gained a lot of interaction on their digital channels. This is an example of relevant content as well as proof of communication on Mary Katrantzou's digital channels. Crittenden, Hanna and Rohm (2011) state that one opportunity to engage consumers is to be unique as this gives consumers a reason to engage. When the Mary Karantzou and Adidas collaboration was announced Mary Katrantzou got a lot of engagement through "likes", according to respondent B. Respondent A furthermore states that collaborations like this one are rare, and can therefore be seen as an unique announcement.

### 5.3 Communicating the brand

Crittenden, Hanna and Rohm (2011) highlight the importance of starting with the company story when communicating, and the story has to be clear. All channels should be aligned and the message coherent (Haenlein & Kaplan, 2010). Heine, Phan and Thomas (2011) suggests that a good way to protect your luxury brand within the fashion industry is to manage social media marketing the way you manage the production of the quality goods you produce; the company should cautiously control the content within social media and the utilization of these channels. The colour-coded calendar that the company uses, accordingly respondent A, can be seen as a tool for communicating the right story. In terms of communicating the voice of the brand online in coherent way the trained personnel makes all messages cohesive as the same employees writes all the content to a certain voice and posts it in a similar way, according to respondent A.

Amongst Fionda and Moores (2009) nine different dimension within luxury fashion brands that are crucial in the creation and also maintenance of the brand they highlight the importance of marketing communications. Luxury fashion brands can increase awareness through employing the following tools: PR, advertising, fashion shows, celebrity endorsement and direct marketing. Fashion shows is a vital communications tool for luxury fashion positioning. According to respondent A, the most important marketing initiative that the company does is the fashion shows that take place twice a year during London Fashion Week. The company works with five key divisions within the marketing strategy, as respondent B explains it; VIP seeding, publication and editorial content, events and brand exposure, collaborations and digital marketing. Mary Katrantzou does not however work with traditional marketing in the sense of advertisements, as stated by respondent C, the company cannot afford advertisements of this form as of yet. Fionda and Moores (2009) argues that to achieve fashion statues a company should invest in creativity and innovation. Fashion showpieces can be used for press, editorials etcetera, or VIP customers. Moreover Crittenden, Hanna and Rohm (2011) argue that it is important for a company to know its social influencers as these will help decide what message to be centralized. Accordingly respondent C, the brand recently has been worn by celebrities like Beyonce, Sarah Jessica Parker, Marion Cottillard and Jessica Alba. Respondent C mentions that a lot of these images are published in fashion newspapers and magazines. Respondent B explains that every season a list is put together of tiered names, and the company's PR agency then approach these celebrities for dressing. Respondent C explains that when an image of Beyonce wearing the brand was posted online the request for that particular dress increased noticeably.

Kapferer (2012) argues that to be luxury today a company has to establish their brands more as pieces of art than as actual products. Products are a way of communicating. Both respondent B and respondent F explain that the core brand values have always been the same since the company was founded in 2008; the clothes are wearable art. As stated by Fionda and Moore (2009); keeping loyal to the history of the brand or the founding and current designer it is extremely important due to that it helps in maintaining the authenticity of the brand. Kim and Ko (2011) argue that even newly started brands should communicate their heritage, amongst other things. Respondents A, D and E agree that the brand communicates the world through Mary Katrantzou eyes and that this is a big part of the company. Respondent A believes that this makes the brand more personal.

Badrinarayanan, Madhavarani and McDonald (2005) state that the brand identity of a company should be communicated both externally and internally to the groups handling the company's marketing communications. Bastien and Kapferer (2009) argue that when it comes to luxury

fashion marketing, the strategy is upside down. Luxury fashion brands should focus on their brand identity, and also said to be important is being unique. Fionda and Moore (2009) say that it is very important for brands to have a clear, coherent brand identity. Heine, Phan and Kaplan (2011) further state that it is important that all the content being published goes in line with the company's brand identity. Heine, Phan and Thomas (2011) argue that social media is an important and vital communication tool that easily can make or break your brand identity and everything posted on different channels should also go in line according to the company's brand identity. In Fionda and Moores (2009) nine different dimensions one is having a clear brand identity and values that are coherent. Bastien and Kapferer (2009) state that states that luxury fashion brands, when it comes to marketing, should forget about brand positioning and instead focus on brand identity. Both respondent B and respondent F explain that the core brand values have always been the same since the company was founded in 2008; the clothes are wearable art. When asked what the true brand identity of the brand actually is, the answers differ amongst the respondents. Respondent A says he does not know the true brand identity at first, and then says that Mary herself is the brand identity and that they communicate the world through her eyes on all different marketing channels, Mary Katrantzou herself is the ambassador of the brand and everything is communicated in a way that feels very personal. Respondent D agrees that Katrantzou herself is the true brand identity; something that makes Mary Katrantzou seem normal and approachable. Respondent E says that Mary Katrantzou herself is the personality behind the brand and she is actively involved in representing the company, but when asked about the true brand identity it is said that it is about innovation, edginess, creativeness and to be artistic. Respondent C states that the true brand identity within the company is for consumers to reward themselves as they deserve it, and that strong women stand out.

Bastien and Kapferer (2009) explain that a luxury fashion brand's image is built by the story of the brand, and the consumers have got to be seduced by it. McMahon-Beattie and Yeoman (2006) argue that consumers are trading up for more expensive products, and that luxury goods therefor are consumed by a greater mass. Kim and Ko (2011) say that consumers want luxury brands to communicate luxury values to them. Bastien and Kapferer (2009) furthermore state that the role of marketing in a luxury fashion firm is not to sell, but the recreation of a dream. In order for people to keep dreaming about a brand the dreams must continuously refill in the minds of the consumers, both current and aspirational consumers. The idea is to spread awareness beyond the company target group. According to respondent A, a colour-coded calendar is used to send out different types of stories to consumers through the digital channels, which means that consumers are regularly fed with the dream of Mary Katrantzou. In addition respondents B and F state that the core brand values are "wearable art" which in turn can be seen as the dream the consumers are aspiring. Respondents A, D and F argue that the company are targeting their aspirational customers as well, as these in a few years might be able to buy the brand. Respondent A highlights that they want to target consumers that have the interest to save up money to then spend it on a Mary Katrantzou garment. Respondent E states that the main objective when communicating the brand is to promote it and creating a dream of the brand. Respondent C says that for her it is not only about a product, she is also selling and communicating a dream.

## 6. Conclusion

This chapter presents the answer to the research question asked in chapter one, and the conclusions are drawn from the analysis presented earlier. Moreover further research is suggested within this area.

The experiential marketing literature highlight that consumer experience is in focus within marketing; we have gone from a service world to a experience economy and this have had its effect on marketing. Consumers want to experience the marketing and companies have become branded. Mary Katrantzou works in line with experiential marketing in the sense that this study has shown that luxury fashion is all about the experience for consumers, the dream about the brand. Consumers takes part in the different events through digital channels, magazines etcetera; fashion shows, celebrity dressing, coverage in high-end fashion magazines, and this way consumers get fed memorable experiences of the brand continuously. Moreover consumers engage over the content being made by the company. Mary Katrantzou tries to communicate a relevant message and then when obtaining consumer's attention, turn it into actual purchases without really pushing to sell.

According to the literature conducting both traditional and digital marketing is important for companies. They should engage in both to increase awareness and a clear brand story is highlighted. Mary Katrantzou works with both traditional and digital marketing, however the company does not execute some of the traditional tools suggested, such as advertising, due to its high cost. However it is said by a few respondents that in the future the brand might do advertisement, and it is also highlighted as an important part of the communications mix in this study. Within traditional marketing the company works with fashion shows, collaborations, VIP dressing, editorials in fashion magazines etcetera. The fashion show is seen as important, but also highlighted is the noticeably positive affects of VIP dressing and collaborations, such as more integration on digital platforms and an increase in purchase requests. The digital marketing channels used by the company are Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Google+, Pinterest, website, Wikipedia and LinkedIn. In the literature it is highlighted the importance of choosing the right channels for your brand, it should go in line with business aims. The opinions amongst the respondents differ in which is the most important, but it is explained that Instagram have the highest following. In addition all of the channels see a steady growth in followers, and it is said that collaborations is a good catalyst for increasing following on these digital channels. The theoretical framework for this study highlight that it is vital for companies to have a coherent voice on all marketing channels, and everything needs to be executed accordingly. The digital channels at Mary Katrantzou are executed in a single voice due to staff training and that Mary Katrantzou herself is in charge of the Instagram account. In addition a colour-coded calendar is the guideline for what message should be communicated. An important aspect of the company is communicating everything through the eyes of Mary Katrantzou, as stated by a few respondents. This makes the brand more personal and keeps the voice coherent.

In the luxury fashion literature the importance of a clear brand identity is often recurrent. However when asked about the true brand identity of the case study company in this report, the respondents gave different answers. Most of them acknowledge the importance of this, but the opinions of the Mary Katrantzou brand identity varied remarkably. The brand identity within the studied company is seemingly not so clear, and this is something the company should work with. Even though it is not directly a marketing strategy it is the base that

marketing stands on in a luxury fashion company, where what you communicate is what matters, and therefore of big importance.

The affect of collaborations has not been covered by the literature in this study. However the findings suggest that this is something that can increase brand awareness and should therefore be of interest to research further in the future.

What should Mary Katrantzou do differently in regards to their marketing strategy and marketing communication strategy?

Mary Katrantzou should in regards of their marketing strategy try marketing through advertisement. This is seen as a part of the communications mix, and as traditional working together with digital marketing is highlighted throughout the literature as key, this could be of importance to the brand. The marketing communications strategy should be clearer in regards to brand identity. This is recurrent as extremely important within marketing a luxury fashion brand, and according to the findings in this study; the brand identity is unclear at Mary Katrantzou. Moreover the literature state that it is important to have both external and internal personnel that knows the brand identity correctly so that this can permeate the organization. Figuring this out is important for Mary Katrantzou, as the literature in this study shows the significance of it.

## **6.2 Further research**

Due to the findings of this study the research question have been answered, but also new questions have arise along the work with this report. Collaborations have been stated to work for the case study company when gaining brand awareness, but the theoretical framework has not been found to support this. However since actual data showcasing the increase in awareness as well as engagement from consumers, there is the possibility of this being accurate. New research fields for future research could therefore be if collaborations can be a strong marketing strategy within the luxury fashion world, or if collaborations can increase brand awareness and thereby help luxury fashion SMEs to grow.

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## **8. Appendix**

### **8.1 Interview guide**

Name:

Gender:

Age:

Degree:

Position in company:

Number of years employed:

Number of years in a group:

Main responsibilities/tasks:

#### **Marketing strategy**

Do you work with traditional marketing as well as digital at the company?

Can you please explain the current marketing strategy at MK?

- How long has this been the marketing strategy within the company?
- What digital channels are you active on?
- Which channel/s are the most widely used?
- Have you seen a gained interest in MK on the different channels?
- Which has been the best in terms of gained interest/interactiveness etc?

Has the marketing strategy changed during your employment? If so, how?

- What is the biggest change you have seen in regards of the marketing strategy during your employment?

Do you see a change in strategy for the future? If so, how?

Has MK ever done a bigger marketing campaign? If yes, please explain it.

What is the greatest challenge when it comes to the marketing strategy at MK according to you?

Do you look at any competitors when it comes to creating marketing strategies? If so who/why/how?

How do you think MK is unique to other, similar brands when it comes to marketing?

#### **Consumers and brand identity**

Which audience is the company trying to reach through the marketing according to you?

Who is the MK consumer? If you think there is more than one please explain all.

What is the main objective when communicating with consumers through the marketing (eg interact with consumers, promoting the brand, creating a dream for the consumer etcetera)?

What is the true brand voice/identity of MK according to you?

How do you think this identity is expressed through the marketing?

How do you think the company works with retaining the “image” online, meaning the voice of the brand that is shown to consumers?

Thank you so much!



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Besöksadress: Skaraborgsvagen 3 • Postadress: 501 90 Borås • Hemsida: [www.textilhogskolan.se](http://www.textilhogskolan.se)