

STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING LOCAL FASHION BRANDS IN THE CONDITIONS OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

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Abstract. The article examines the effects of digital transformation on local fashion brands' operations and their strategies for innovative development. In recent times, the Uzbek fashion industry has reached a new phase due to the emergence of the digital economy. In this context, strategies for efficient management of e-commerce, online marketing, brand recognition, and customer engagement via social media are becoming increasingly significant. The research established strategic pathways to enhance the competitiveness of regional fashion brands (Mursak, Suraya Collection, Inside by Sana, etc.) in the online landscape. Specifically, a strategy for personalization involving AI-driven design, boosting exports via digital platforms, and assessing customer experience is suggested. The findings provide a methodological foundation for the sustainable progress of local brands in the global market.

Keywords: digital transformation, fashion industry, local brand, digital marketing, strategic development, eco-marketing.

1. Introduction

In the context of digital transformation and changing consumer preferences, developing a fashion brand is becoming an urgent task for companies. This task is especially important for companies seeking to maintain competitiveness in a saturated market.

The purpose of this work is to study existing strategies for developing a fashion brand. The scientific novelty of the study is to synthesize the concept of engaging consumers through social networks and sustainable marketing approaches within a single model of developing a fashion brand. At the same time, the interrelationships between digital interaction with the audience and sustainable development initiatives are identified, which allows to increase the effectiveness of brand strategies.

The author's hypothesis is that the integration of active consumer engagement strategies through social networks and sustainable marketing initiatives will have a positive impact on the development of a fashion brand. As a result, audience trust will be strengthened and the offer of goods and services will expand.

2. Literature review

The results of other studies will also be analyzed within the framework of the study. The academic literature on fashion brand development strategies follows a multifaceted approach, covering issues of digital transformation, consumer engagement, sustainable development and eco-marketing.

For example, Yoo J. emphasizes the importance of digital communications and active consumer participation in social networks, which is especially important for brands in the luxury segment. Gómez M., Lopez C. and Molina A.'s study developed an integrated approach to audience engagement, which reveals the mechanisms for building trusting relationships and brand loyalty. At the same time, Chen R. and co-authors describe the characteristics of consumer engagement models focused on brand authenticity.

Research on sustainable development issues is also important. Neha J. P. and Kumar N.'s work highlights the role of eco-friendly initiatives in building a positive image of fast fashion brands. Chen Y.[1], Huang A., Wang T. and Chen Y.'s study analyzes environmental issues and emphasizes the need to maintain a genuine eco-friendly image.

In additional studies, Abrar M.[2], Sibtain M. M., Shabbir R., Fuchman L. et al., as well as Adamkiewicz J.[3] and co-authors, and Carter K.[5], Jayachandran S. and Murdock M. R. considered the company's sustainability reputation as an important factor in forming consumer trust and loyalty. Also, in the work of Akoglu H. E. [4] and Özbek O., the qualitative and emotional experience of the brand was emphasized, and the importance of emotional connection in forming long-term relationships between the brand and the consumer was shown.

Thus, an analysis of the modern literature shows a contradiction between the emotional-intuitive aspects of interaction with the brand and pragmatic methodological approaches aimed at assessing its environmental responsibility. The lack of sufficient development of tools to objectively assess greenwashing and the poor integration of traditional and digital branding tools highlight the need for more comprehensive research in this area.

3. Analysis and results

A set of theoretical and analytical methods aimed at synthesizing empirical data and integrating modern theoretical models was used as the methodological basis of the study. This approach covers the following areas:

The digital transformation in the fashion industry has fundamentally changed the nature of communication between brands and consumers. Social networks (YouTube and other

platforms) have become key platforms for implementing brand expansion strategies, allowing not only to broadcast the image, but also to form deep emotional and cognitive connections.

For a more in-depth analysis of the impact of these aspects on the development of a fashion brand, Table 1 is presented.

Table 1. Key aspects of engaging consumers through social media

Type of engagement	Definition	Brand Impact
Cognitive	The process of receiving and processing information related to the evaluation of brand content	Building awareness and brand knowledge, which helps reduce informational uncertainty
Affective	The emotional reaction that occurs during interaction with a brand, accompanied by a sense of empathy	Strengthening emotional connection, increasing trust and loyalty, and building a positive image
Behavioral	The active participation of users - interacting with content through likes, comments, reposts and other interactive actions	Strengthening social proof, expanding audience reach and encouraging further engagement, positively impacting brand recognition

The approach involves the use of analytical methods to monitor and evaluate the brand's activity on social networks. This allows for the development of effective recommendations for optimizing content and strengthening two-way communication between the brand and the audience.[6]

The strategic development of a fashion brand includes the following key principles:

- Diversification of the range - through horizontal expansion, an existing positive image can be brought to new product categories. This not only reduces information risk, but also helps to optimize advertising costs.

- Synergy between the parent brand and its extensions - vertical and service expansion, the success of a new product or service creates a "halo effect" that positively affects the acceptance of the entire brand. [8]

For further elaboration, Table 2 is presented, which summarizes the types of brand extensions, their main advantages and potential risks.

Table 2. Types of brand extensions and their characteristics

Expansion type	Description	Advantages	Risks
Horizontal expansion	Brand entry into new, related product categories using existing parent brand associations	Expanding the range, using a positive image, reducing information risk, saving on advertising costs	Blurring of brand identity, the possibility of products not meeting consumer expectations
Vertical expansion	Expanding a product or service within the same segment, but with a new positioning in terms of price or quality	Expanding the coverage of the target audience, strengthening the "halo effect", the ability to master a new price segment	Risk of a decrease in the level of perceived quality, inconsistency between the level of the new and existing brand
Service expansion	Brand entry into the service sector (restaurant, hotel business, etc.) beyond the established product offering	Creating synergy between product and service lines, reducing communication costs, strengthening trust and loyalty	Lack of direct connection between the main goods and new services, the risk of not meeting audience expectations

The theoretical approach defines sustainable marketing practices based on the following principles:

- The use of environmentally friendly technologies and materials - this serves to reduce the carbon footprint of the production process and minimize environmental risks [9]. At the same time, providing consumers with transparent information about social and environmental initiatives allows them to strengthen trust in the brand and positively direct its emotional reception.[10]

- Integrating social initiatives and partnerships - this serves to create a new level of interaction with the audience, as well as to stimulate innovative product lines.

A comprehensive approach developed on the basis of a synthesis of empirical research and theoretical models allows for a holistic understanding of fashion brand development

strategies in a changing market environment. The literature review emphasizes not only the importance of digital communications and consumer engagement, but also the relevance of integrating sustainable development principles.

Theoretical research methods, including the analysis of cognitive, affective and behavioral components, as well as modeling of diversification and synergy strategies, create a reliable methodological basis for future empirical research and practical recommendations.

The next section presents the results of many years of practical experience in the formation and growth of the Mursak clothing brand. The presented data reflect the evolution of the business model, the main difficulties, as well as the success factors in launching and expanding its own brand.

The founder of the brand developed the business from the initial stages, relying on experience in various industrial sectors: from independent work to managing his own small sewing workshop. The initial stage of development was carried out in collaboration with Tashkent designers, fulfilling orders for the workshop. However, based on the financial risks associated with the violation of payment discipline of customers and the desire to reach a new level, the following decision was made: instead of expanding the base of other customers, the strategy of creating his own brand was chosen.

At the same time, the initial goal was to offer affordable prices for basic clothing for the market, while maintaining high quality and recognizable style. Affordable prices and a wide range of products, especially in terms of color palette, allowed to form a loyal customer base. At the same time, attention was paid to creative experiments, and once a year designer capsule collections were presented, aimed at a narrow audience that appreciates originality and aesthetics.

The following are highlighted from the main management decisions:

Optimization of internal logistics and supply chains of fabrics and accessories;

Implementation of a clear quality control system;

Assortment development strategy - analysis of the popularity of individual positions and timely abandonment of undemanding models.

Since 2017, with the official launch of the Mursak brand on the market, sales volumes have gradually increased. This growth was directly related to the company's active participation in marketing platforms (Wildberries, Ozon, etc.). The company was able to offer customers a wide range of basic clothing, including: T-shirts, dresses, pants and other products.

One of the innovative decisions was to expand the color palette of products: while most competitors have a limited range of 10 color options, the Mursak brand was able to offer up to

60 colors. This significantly strengthened its competitive advantage. At the same time, professional photo shoots were introduced, which increased the quality of content on marketing platforms and emphasized the uniqueness of the design (according to the PR director).

The strategy for entering marketing platforms served to expand the business model. The following elements played a key role:

Professional preparation of product cards (photo content, descriptions, infographics);

The use of analytical tools for managing inventory and adjusting prices;

Flexible pricing policy and active participation in promotions.

As a result, it became possible to quickly respond to changes in demand. The effectiveness of this approach was confirmed by the growth of sales volumes during marketing campaigns and customer repurchase indicators.

Experience in cooperation with well-known companies confirmed the expert level of the brand manager. This ensured versatility and high competitiveness for the Mursak brand and jointly implemented projects.

If we focus on the important marketing channels, we can distinguish the following:

1. “Mursak” (Fig. 1.) – is an important platform for Russian designers. This channel allows you to increase brand awareness and reach new target audiences. The participation of the “Mursak” brand was awarded a diploma, which confirms its demand and artistic potential.



Fig.1. Mursak

2. “Suraya Collection” (Figure 2) is a program of the Tashkent Export Center, which unites local manufacturers. Through this platform, brands registered and operating in Tashkent have the opportunity to be represented at international exhibitions and confirm their compliance with high quality standards. Participation required the presence of production in the capital and at least six months of economic activity.



Fig.2. “Suraya Collection” katalog in website.

A particularly valuable aspect for the Mursak brand is its coverage in a number of reputable publications (Beauty Carte Blanche, Beautyhack, Fazanmag, Woman.ru, Buro247).

These articles focused on the favorable price-quality ratio and advanced design. At the same time, the profile is regularly represented at events and mentioned in the media.

4.Xulosa

Tashkent's production facilities and active cooperation with local suppliers have formed an ecosystem that serves the development of small and medium-sized businesses in the fashion industry. This has a positive impact on the entire industry, as it stimulates competition, introduces technological innovations and improves quality.

The experience of creating the "Mursak" brand has served as a template in the following areas:

B2B projects - corporate clothing, merch for TV channels and other partnerships;

Capsule collaborations - joint lines with other brands;

Localization of production - optimization of costs in conditions of currency fluctuations.

It is flexibility, an analytical approach to working with marketing platforms and harmonization of the cultural code of the main clothing line that made it possible to implement strategies aimed at long-term growth and high marginal profitability.

Thus, the experience of developing your own clothing brand shows that success in the fashion industry is achieved through a comprehensive and systematic approach. This approach includes: effective production management, analytical support of marketing campaigns, understanding the brand as a whole and continuous product improvement.

Successful development of a fashion brand in the digital era requires an integrated combination of strategies for active consumer engagement through social networks, methods of brand extension through diversification and synergy, and sustainable marketing practices focused on environmental and social responsibility. The implementation of innovative production and communication solutions not only helps to reduce information risks and improve the image, but also allows brands to quickly adapt to changing consumer expectations.

A promising direction for future research is to expand the model with additional variables, such as the impact of innovative technologies and digital trends, as well as conducting cross-cultural comparative studies. This will allow further improvement of the strategic platform developed for fashion brand development.

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