

Department of Business and Management  
Master's Degree in Management  
Chair of Luxury Management

**LUXURY STORYTELLING:  
FOUNDATION OF A GROWTH STRATEGY  
OR THING OF THE PAST?**

SUPERVISOR  
Prof. Alberto Festa

CO-SUPERVISOR  
Prof. Carlo Fei

CANDIDATE  
Sara Rossoni  
ID n. 680151

ACADEMIC YEAR  
2017/2018



A mia *madre*,  
complice e amica, sostegno e conforto,  
per i suoi sacrifici e il suo amore infinito,  
per la sua presenza costante,  
per aver dato inizio alla storia più bella, la mia.

A mio *padre*,  
il mio primo uomo e principe azzurro,  
a cui ogni giorno somiglio sempre di più,  
per i suoi preziosi consigli,  
per avermi spronato a mettermi in gioco in ogni occasione,  
per quella voce che dal nostro primo incontro mi emozionò.

Ad *Alessia*,  
l'altra metà di me, dolcezza pura, custode dei miei segreti,  
per aver condiviso tutte le gioie, le ansie e i dolori,  
per essermi stata accanto sempre.

A *Sveva*,  
la mia bimba, la mia roccia, la mia vita,  
la cosa più meravigliosa che mi sia capitata,  
l'unica che sa capirmi davvero,  
per avermi dato fiducia e importanza,  
per aver creduto in me,  
per essere stata la mia felicità in ogni momento,  
per essersi presa cura di me, nonostante tutto.

Ai miei *nonni*,  
la loro saggezza, premura e bontà,  
i primi a insegnarmi a vivere  
e a raccontarmi il mondo attraverso le storie.

A mio *zio*,  
i suoi teneri abbracci e l'indescrivibile bene che ci vogliamo.

A *Gianmaria*,  
che ogni giorno, da quasi cinque anni, sopporta i miei malumori e difetti,  
esalta i miei pregi, ascolta e sostiene,  
amandomi e proteggendomi senza nessuna riserva.  
A tutti i momenti vissuti, indescrivibili e unici.

Alla nostra bellissima storia.

A *me* stessa,  
allo studio e all'impegno di vent'anni,  
alle lacrime e ai sorrisi,  
alle notti insonni, ai sogni infranti e a quelli realizzati,  
perché dopotutto me lo merito.

# Acknowledgement

Un ringraziamento speciale al mio relatore, il professor Alberto Festa, che ha saputo trasmettermi fin dalla prima lezione la passione per il management e il mondo del lusso, rendendo sicura la scelta della mia carriera universitaria e ben chiara la mia speranza di sbocco professionale. Farò tesoro dei suoi utilissimi consigli e della sua grande esperienza.

Alla mia famiglia, per i loro sacrifici e il loro amore, il sostegno, l'incoraggiamento datomi durante tutto il mio percorso di studi e il loro interesse nei confronti di questa tesi; per avermi consigliato nelle scelte più importanti e per avermi lasciato scegliere, per essere stati di aiuto nei momenti di bisogno e presenti nei momenti di felicità. Grazie perché avete contribuito al raggiungimento di questo traguardo.

A Gianmaria e la sua famiglia, per il bene che mi vogliono, per le loro parole confortanti, i consigli, la presenza costante, la fiducia, l'immenso supporto.

Agli amici e compagni di corso, in particolare Marianna, confidente e consigliera, che da due anni sopporta e supporta le mie stranezze e pazzie, condivide gioie e dolori, nello studio come nella vita.

Ai colleghi del Career Services, grandi e "piccoli", con cui ho condiviso sei mesi intensi ma bellissimi, in particolare Alessandra, Adriano ed Emiliano che, con la loro professionalità e serietà, mi hanno formato e insegnato tanto e, con i loro sorrisi, le loro battute, la loro energia, mi hanno allietato le giornate più pesanti e fatto vivere un periodo indimenticabile. A Elda, diventata in pochissimo tempo una delle persone più importanti di questo percorso, per la sua pazienza e sopportazione, il suo entusiasmo e ottimismo.

Un pensiero alle persone, che per un motivo o per un altro, non vedo più da tempo. Nonostante tutto, siete e rimarrete per sempre nella mia testa e nel mio cuore.



# INDEX

<b>Abstract.....</b>	<b>8</b>
----------------------	----------

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>9</b>
--------------------------	----------

## **Chapter 1 Storytelling & Luxury: a possible marriage.....12**

➤ 1.1 Definition of luxury .....	12
— 1.1.1 The evolution of luxury.....	14
— 1.1.2 Differences with traditional marketing.....	19
➤ 1.2 How luxury communicates.....	22
— 1.2.1 The two sides of communication .....	24
➤ 1.3 Definition of storytelling .....	31
— 1.3.1 Definition of story.....	32
— 1.3.2 The four elements of storytelling.....	34
— 1.3.3 Storytelling in business.....	35

## **Chapter 2 Storytelling applied to luxury.....39**

➤ 2.1 How storytelling is used in luxury industry.....	39
— 2.1.1 How storytelling has arrived in luxury: from luxury democratization to branding.....	41
— 2.1.2 Luxury storytelling techniques.....	44
— 2.1.3 Luxury storytelling thematiques.....	46
— 2.1.4 Other narrative components.....	48
➤ 2.2 The role of the store.....	50
— 2.2.1 Store evolution and classification.....	53
— 2.2.2 Stories in store.....	56
➤ 2.3 How storytelling impacts the brand equity.....	62
— 2.3.1 Brand identity.....	64
— 2.3.2 Brand equity.....	68

— 2.3.3 Equity storytelling.....	71
➤ 2.4 Differences with fashion storytelling.....	75
— 2.4.1 Luxury world vs fashion one.....	76
— 2.4.2 Fashion storytelling.....	79
➤ 2.5 Digital storytelling.....	80
— 2.5.1 Advantages of digital storytelling.....	82
— 2.5.2 Storytelling in e-commerce.....	83
— 2.5.3 Transmedia storytelling.....	83
➤ 2.6 Are luxury brands failing their storytelling? Is storytelling dead?.....	85
 <b>Chapter 3 Storytelling in practice.....</b>	<b>88</b>
➤ 3.1 Examples of important luxury storytelling.....	88
— 3.1.1 Hermès.....	90
— 3.1.2 Chanel.....	92
— 3.1.3 Rolex.....	100
— 3.1.4 Bulgari.....	106
— 3.1.5 Louis Vuitton.....	111
➤ 3.2 What customers think about luxury storytelling: personal research.....	117
— 3.2.1 Research design and method.....	117
— 3.2.2 Results description and analysis.....	122
 <b>Conclusions.....</b>	<b>133</b>
 <b>Appendix.....</b>	<b>135</b>
 <b>References.....</b>	<b>157</b>
 <b>Summary.....</b>	<b>165</b>

# Abstract

Storytelling is one of the most powerful and effective tools of modern marketing strategies, one of the most creative ways of communication, an ancient art to affect human beings and their perception of the world. Stories are the sense-making devices in organizations, and, even more generally, in everyday life. Stories are illustrative and easily memorable, and if they are told in good way, they can bring a significant positive impact.

This thesis is intended to discover if luxury storytelling is still a foundation of growth or simply a memory of the past. Is luxury still telling about itself through stories? Are companies able to communicate in an effective emotional way, overcoming the contemporary challenges and introducing new tools to innovate themselves and involve their customers? Do today luxury consumers appreciate the brand universe and stories? Is storytelling a good technique to increase customers' awareness, engagement and loyalty towards luxury brands, enhance their intention to purchase, boost effective purchases and consequently raise companies' sales? Finding the answers to these questions is the goal.



# Introduction

“Storytelling is the most powerful way  
to put ideas into the world today.”  
[Robert McKee<sup>1</sup>]

Storytelling is one of the most powerful and effective tools of modern marketing strategies, one of the most creative ways of communication, an ancient art to affect human beings and their perception of the world. Stories are illustrative and easily memorable, and if they are told in good way, they can bring a significant positive impact.<sup>2</sup> Stories provide simple memorable frameworks that humans use to organize their world, bring excitement and empathy while comforting and educating, enhance connections and conversations. Stories contain locations, actions, attitudes, problems and characters, have a structure that engages the listener, include a message and make a point that is valued. Stories are useful for several reasons. First, stories convey information, both subjective and objective, such as values, culture, strengths and problems. Second, individuals remember people, places and events through stories; thus, stories build awareness. Third, stories may come with many touchpoints to the lives of listeners/viewers, creating emotional attachment in their minds. Some think that the best way to persuade is through a story: traditional advertising is necessary for awareness, but nothing can beat an interactive, participative and addictive story.

In recent years, there has been a lot of study on brand storytelling and its role of communicating with consumers, with the result that the researchers have widely recognized the power of stories in variety of disciplines such as psychology, social sciences, management and marketing. However, there is not enough research that addresses storytelling in some fields such as digital marketing, sales perspective and customer's loyalty, particularly referring to the luxury world.

“A luxury brand needs to be able to tease the clients, play it stubborn, intrigue them, mystify itself and spread stories around.”<sup>3</sup>

The idea behind this thesis came to my mind during a Luxury Management lecture about ‘Brand Management’. The Professor explained that to nourish a brand there are different possibilities, but, in any case, the keyword is ‘storytelling’. Then, I was impressed by some stories told by the same Professor, such as those ones regarding the Kelly bag by Hermès and Louis Vuitton's perfumes. From

---

<sup>1</sup> He is an author, lecturer and story consultant, who is widely known for his popular ‘Story Seminar’, which he developed when he was a professor at the University of Southern California.

<sup>2</sup> Y. Evrard, W.D. Hoyer, A. Strazzeri, *Introduction to the special issue on marketing*, Journal of Business Research, Vol. 58, Issue 3, pp. 241-396, March 2005

<sup>3</sup> L. Renoir, L. Ranga, *The ghost of strategy. Luxury strategy as storytelling*, Musgrave Vern, 2017, p.5

that moment, I wanted to deepen the topic, understand it better and analyse if it could still be a positive strategy for everyone, just like it was for me. After all, “we embrace stories which touch our hearts and keep them with us. Brands that manage to communicate through relevant and human emotion narratives are able to connect deeply with consumers.”<sup>4</sup>

The purpose of this thesis is precisely discovering if luxury storytelling is a good technique to increase customers’ awareness, engagement and loyalty towards luxury brands, enhance their intention to purchase, boost effective purchases and consequently raise companies’ sales. Moreover, it intends to examine if storytelling is still a foundation of growth or if it is simply a memory of the past. This second question will be analysed under two points of view. One relates to the same companies: are they able to communicate in an effective emotional way, overcoming the contemporary challenges and introducing new tools to innovate themselves and involve their customers? The second one concern today luxury consumers, the so-called millennials, who, growing up with digitalization and globalization, are less committed to brands, don’t perceive a reality without Internet and are influenced more by the opinion of their friends than by professionals, whereas older generations appreciate more the brand universe and love hearing stories. Will be the same for new generations? Going deeply, the thesis is composed by three parts, the first two theoretical, the third experimental, and it is structured as follows:

- The first chapter is dedicated to the definition of luxury and storytelling, describing first the evolution of luxury, the differences with traditional marketing and the ways luxury communicates with, and, second, what is a story, what is this necessary technique and how it has developed in the business world. The literature is at stake: generally speaking, storytelling is a good tactic to involve people: can the same thing be said in luxury business terms?
- The second chapter deals with one of the issues discussed before, that is how luxury industry – theoretically speaking – uses storytelling, with a focus on employed techniques, narrative components and addressed thematiques. Subsequently, the analysis moves on to the more practical roles of the store and digital channels in telling brand stories, arriving to the impact of storytelling on the brand equity and the differences with fashion storytelling. The doubt previously arisen seems to find an answer: luxury companies make great use of storytelling, effectively attracting new customers or creating more solid relationship with the actual ones; thus, storytelling results a growth strategy. But some questions close the chapter: are luxury

---

<sup>4</sup> V. Teo, *The age of transmedia: how brands can tell better stories*, ClickZ, July 2012, in <http://www.clickz.com/clickz/column/2282073/the-age-of-transmedia-how-brands-can-tell-better-stories>

brands employing storytelling in the right way or are they failing? And then, is storytelling dead for luxury consumers?

- The third and last chapter responds thanks to a practical approach: first, some real examples about luxury brand storytelling are reported, to examine the answer to the first question; second, a personal study is conducted – through an interview to 250 people, the majority millennials – with the aim to verify the answer to the second question. The result is surprising: not only considered companies have embraced this technique, but also their consumers appreciated it. In the future, it only gets better.

“Creating desire in the audience and then showing how your ideas fill that desire moves people to adopt your perspective. This is the heart of a story.”<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> N. Duarte, *Resonate: Present visual stories that transform audiences*, Hoboken, N.J: Wiley, 2010

# Chapter 1

## STORYTELLING & LUXURY: A POSSIBLE MARRIAGE

“Story is the song line of a person’s life [...]  
Story told. Story heard. Story written.  
Story read creates the web of life in words.”  
[Christina Baldwin<sup>6</sup>]

### 1.1 Definition of luxury

*“Le luxe n’est pas le contraire de la pauvreté mais celui de la vulgarité”* stated Coco Chanel<sup>7</sup> to explain what luxury really is. At a time of opulence as the 1920s and 1930s were, she understood the real essence of this world. Contrary to what most people think, luxury isn’t richness, comfort, sumptuousness, objective beauty, something that you can buy with money, luxury is a kind of stuff related to exclusivity, unicity, style, taste, grace. It has a very strong personal and hedonistic component, that’s why it isn’t snobbery, and it is characterized by the so-called attribute of intangibility. If we look up this term in the dictionary, we will find these general definitions: “something not tangible, incapable of being perceived by the sense of touch, as incorporeal or immaterial things”, “not definite or clear to the mind”, “existing only in connection with something else”<sup>8</sup>. More to the point, luxury is creating and satisfying desires, dreams, it’s something that everybody wants but nobody really needs, it’s a state of mind, the sense of belonging to a group. Tradition, uniqueness, aspiration, recognizability, affiliation, status are just some intangible features that characterize it. Luxury is not physical, you don’t find it simply buying expensive branded goods, its authenticity isn’t only in the finest materials used or in the quality delivered, you can discover it behind the history, stories, founder, employees, values of the brands. Exactly these concepts make the difference in price between one product and another one, between one brand and another. In a word, luxury is depth.

---

<sup>6</sup> Christina Baldwin is a writer, wanderer, teacher on the trail of community and story, advocate of storytelling. She is an eloquent, witty speaker and educator who integrates the spiritual journey and the practical path in her retreats and workshops.

<sup>7</sup> Gabrielle Bonheur Chanel (1883-1971) was one of the most influential people and famous French fashion designers and businesswomen of the 20th century. She is well-known as the founder of the brand that took its own name but also as the stylist who revolutionized the way women dressed and thought. In fact, she redefined the concept of elegance with linear and functional clothes, popularizing a sporty, casual, essential chic as the feminine standard of style.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.dictionary.com/browse/intangibility>

Etymologically speaking, the name ‘luxury’ comes from the Latin word ‘lux’ which literally means light. The metaphorical concept behind is that the light is helpful for the individual to see where he goes and the people who meets but it’s useful especially to be noticed by the others. This interpretation about the light, the good side, is linked to ‘luxus’ read as lustre, abundance, glory, perfection and detail. But lux can also have a negative meaning when associated to ‘luxuria’ in terms of excess, ostentation, waste, gap. Once again, as the Latins would say, “*in medio stat virtus*”.<sup>9</sup> Anyway, there’s no a unique and clear definition: it may change by country and region, the border with fashion is uncertain and price alone can’t help.

As well as in the definition, everything related to luxury is conflicting because the luxury market is full of contradictions and paradoxes. The first example is about the strategy of a luxury brand, in balance between the exclusivity and the accessibility. As I said before, the exclusivity is a primary feature: not everyone can afford a luxury product but, most importantly, not everybody has the taste and the attitude to buy it, participating to the dream and identifying with its values. This leads to the creation of a well-controlled scarcity, marked by high costs and prices, craftsmanship, limited distribution and selected promotional activity. At the same time, luxury is not snobbery, so it is open to all those people who want to belong to the community and, to do this, companies start to sell some low-priced products such as perfumes and sunglasses. The exclusivity drives the image, the dream, defining the brand style and allowing a premium price, whereas the accessibility drives the awareness and sales, supporting the Profit and Loss Statement, optimizing productivity and enlarging the customer base. The modernity-heritage paradox is based on the same concept: in fact, the tradition legitimates the positioning and so the price, while the innovation attracts new consumers. Luxury should find a balance also in this case.<sup>10</sup>

---

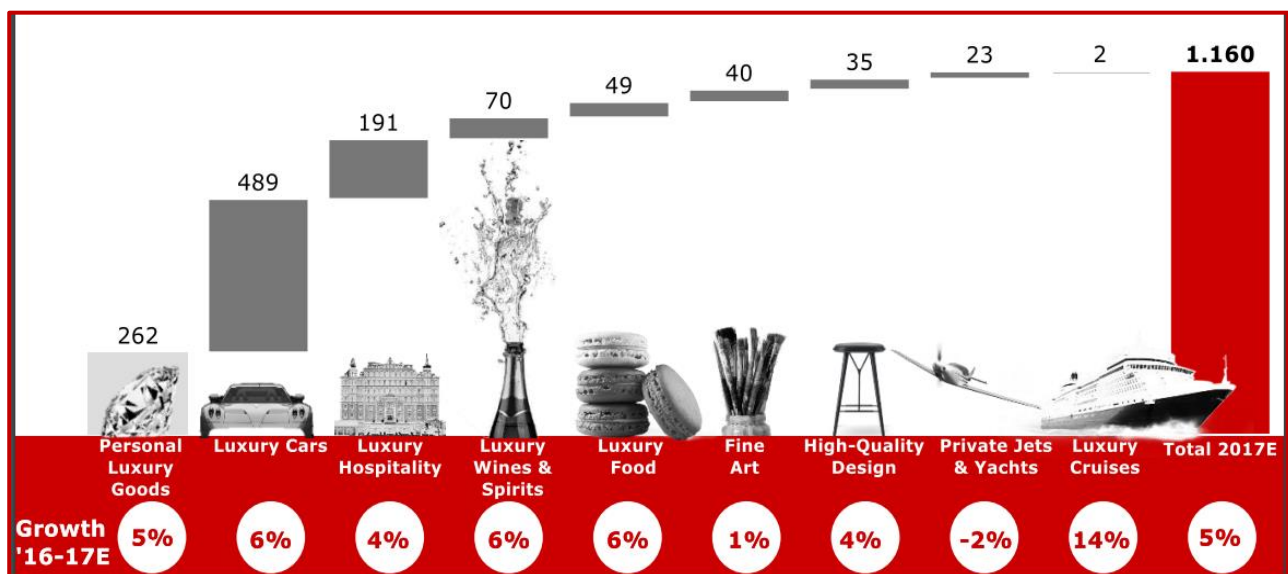
<sup>9</sup> We can translate this Latin expression to “reality lies somewhere in the middle”, meaning that we have to look for the equilibrium we can find between two extremities, putting aside every kind of exaggeration. It is attributed to the Medieval scholastic philosophers, even if it was already used in a similar manner by Aristotle in his *Nicomachean Ethics* (“μέσον τε καὶ ἄριστον” that we can translate to “the middle is the best thing”), Horatio in his *Satires* (“*est modus in rebus*” that we can translate to “there’s a measure in things” and Ovidius in his *Metamorphosis* (“*medio tutissimus ibis*” that we can translate to “following the middle way you’ll walk safe”).

<sup>10</sup> Balancing these different elements is a challenge but, at the same time, it’s a necessary ingredient to survive in the very competitive luxury market. In fact, the most successful luxury brands have in common the following factors: the number of stores opened (approximately 300 for independent companies, not belonging to a group); the brand extension, that is the use of a well-known brand for a new product or a new product category; a global presence; a good equilibrium between exclusivity and accessibility as well as between innovation and tradition.

### 1.1.1 The evolution of luxury

Over the past several years, luxury has evolved and some trends have even modified the basic concept behind: changes in tastes and buying behaviours, the rise of new markets, both in terms of countries and target, the advent of new media. According to Altagamma and Bain & Company's report<sup>11</sup>, contemporary luxury X factor is experimenting with experience: pure experiences – including hotels, cruises, restaurants – and experiencing goods – including cars, jets, yachts, fine art, food, wines and spirits – are growing much more than personal goods. This fact underlines a shift in consumers' preferences from material objects to immaterial ones, where gourmet meals, exotic holidays, 'nice motors' overcame a beautiful watch, jewel or bag. As we can see in the figure, the biggest market is that one of luxury cars, followed by personal goods and hospitality, but we can also notice that the growth percentage is a little bit different. In this case, cruises come out on top (with a 14% growth from 2016 to 2017), followed by cars, food and wines (all with a 6% growth). Briefly, experiences outperformed.

FIG. 1 – Global luxury markets 2017E | € B



[Source: Altagamma, Bain & Company, *Altagamma 2017 Worldwide Luxury Market Monitor. Millennial state of mind: the tailwind behind consumer behaviours and winning strategies*, October 2017]

<sup>11</sup> Fondazione Altagamma is the Italian luxury association composed of companies in the fields of design, fashion, food, jewellery, automobiles and hospitality. Together with the French Comité Colbert and the English Walpole, it is a worldwide reference point about the luxury market. Each year, the Foundation edits eight researches carried out with the most influential international partners. Bain & Company is a global management consultancy that provides advice to public, private and non-profit organizations. Together, they developed "*Altagamma 2017 Worldwide Luxury Market Monitor. Millennial state of mind: the tailwind behind consumer behaviours and winning strategies*".

Maybe the principal reason is that today customers come from new generations: Gen Y and Gen Z, consisting of young people aged between 15 and 35, with habits and dreams completely different from their parents, the so-called Gen X. The other explanation has always a lot to do with demographics but, this time, regards older people: millions of baby boomers, whose birth years start from the 1940s and end from 1960 to 1964, have reached or are going to reach the retirement age and so aren't more interested in material items because they had decades to enjoy this kind of materialistic luxury. The contemporary luxury market is healthier, above all the personal goods one, and has recently experienced a recovery after the crisis and following stagnation, leading to a period called the new normal. Millennials helped in this sense, representing 30% of the market and 85% of the growth. Local consumption rose everywhere and tourist expenditure provided an extra boost, both driven by volume and not by price, as in the past. This universal feature implies that all countries and nationalities participate to the purchase experience and, thanks to the eco-systemic attribute, they can do it through different channels and dealers. Finally, we have the post aspirational and curated elements. As I explained before and I'll discuss better later, there was a shift from the pure luxury to a less defined segmentation, where different product categories are relevant and their consumption is caused no more by the desire of belonging and fitting the group, the elite, but by the dream of being someone and sharing values with someone else. The term curated is all about the story. Customers want to listen to brand stories but also to live them; they want passion, experience, immersion, dialogue. Luxury companies have to inspire and engage them, make the store the epicentre of the brand because the real story-living.<sup>12</sup>

Moreover, today luxury is characterized by four main elements:

- Democratization

Thanks to the accessibility feature and to the possibility of dividing the sector in three segments, including the more affordable one<sup>13</sup>, customers have grown exponentially and will continue to grow, without necessarily implying a vulgarization or a loss of value. As the table shows, out of 400 million of luxury consumers, only 17 million are true-luxury consumers, being part of the absolute segment. Trendiness, casual style, self-expression, iconic products, young generations replace high quality, formal style, rigorous codes, social status, prestigious goods, elitism. This contemporary luxury available for everyone opposes to the past aristocratic perspective, where luxury is enjoyed by a little

---

<sup>12</sup> All these characteristics are described in the Altagamma and Bain's report mentioned above.

<sup>13</sup> We can divide the luxury market, as well as the fashion one, into three segments, according to the various products sold: the top luxury, that includes private collections, unique pieces and limited editions; the medium luxury, including regular products, advertised lines and collections; the affordable luxury, embodying accessories, perfumes and eyewear. Furthermore, according to the luxury 3As, we can name these market sectors as absolute, aspirational and accessible, each one with its peculiarities and attributes. Anyway, as Altagamma noticed, these lines are increasingly blurring.

number of people and unavailable to anybody else. It's necessary to underline once again that a good portion of consumers is constituted by millennials.

FIG. 2 – Luxury consumers | Mn



[Source: The Boston Consulting Group, Fondazione Altagamma, *The True-Luxury Global Consumer Insight*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, February 2017]

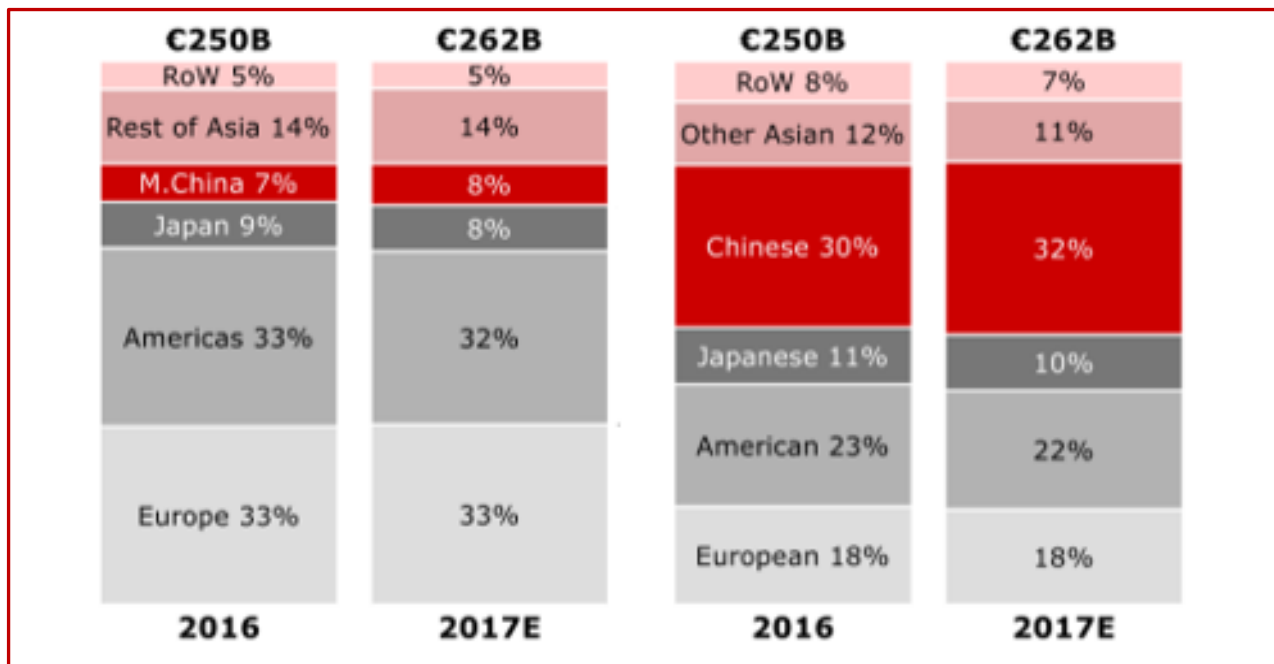
#### - Globalization

On the one hand, more and more customers are foreigners, they come to the country famous for its luxury brands and products and they buy them (for example, Chinese consumers are particularly known for this behaviour); on the other hand, brands develop a global presence, exporting their products outside or establishing their factories in foreign countries to attract new clients and to compete with their rivals. Thanks to the universal feature of luxury, the customer behaves as a stranger tourist at home and a local insider abroad.

As we can see from the figure, the biggest geographical markets for personal luxury goods are Europe and America (both with a 33% of the entire value), that however present a steady growth, whereas the main market by consumer nationality is represented by Chinese people (with a 30% and 32%). It's important to notice that the only positive growth is in China and Chinese purchases.



FIG. 3 – Personal luxury goods market by geography and consumer nationality | € B



[Source: Altagamma, Bain & Company, *Altagamma 2017 Worldwide Luxury Market Monitor. Millennial state of mind: the tailwind behind consumer behaviours and winning strategies*, October 2017]

#### - Communication

Brands increasingly communicate with their customers, putting them at the very top and trying to satisfy every dream and desire. Thanks to different and new communication channels (from the traditional advertising to the more appropriate public relations, from the sales promotion to the massive direct marketing), as well as the new focus on CRM<sup>14</sup>, companies know their clients better, can segment them<sup>15</sup>, enhancing their diversity, develop tailored contact strategy and use the right marketing tools, that should be based on a high qualitative and emotional storytelling focused on brand heritage and memorable stories.

#### - Increase in spending power

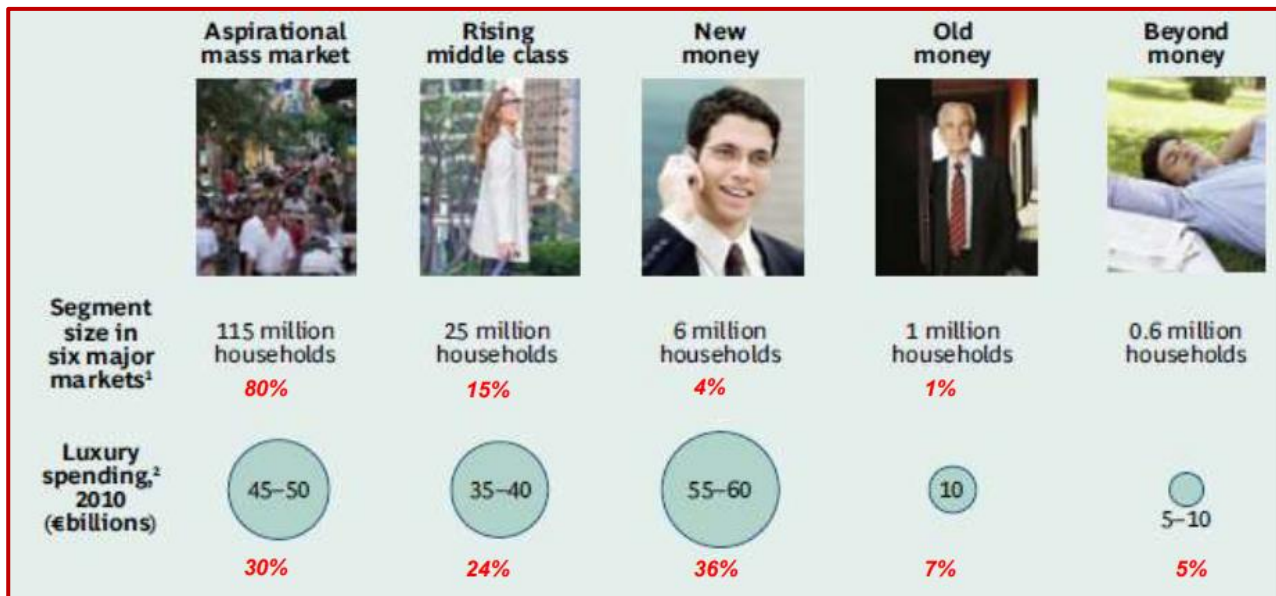
Leaving aside those people who inherit richness from their parents and continue to be rich, consumers of the present generations have access to more wealth, they are more enterprising, leading to a more intense and proactive job search, earlier recruiting and career development compared to their

<sup>14</sup> CRM stands for Customer Relation Management, an approach to manage company's interactions with its actual and potential consumers, based on data gathering, analysis and storage about client life, purchase behaviour and history. The main goal is clustering customers precisely to strengthen their loyalty and engagement with the brand.

<sup>15</sup> Segmentation allows to identify different groups and their relevance to the business. Customers can be divided according to their demographic, that is personal data, but also according to their purchase behaviour and these 3 criteria: recency, that is when was the last time they buy from that brand, frequency, that is how often they buy, and amount, that is how much they spend.

counterparts of previous generations. Having more money and benefits enables to change the way of living, or simply the taste and the style, buying more expensive and exclusive products. According to BCG and Concept M analysis<sup>16</sup>, there are 5 categories of luxury buyers: aspirational mass-market, with average jobs and backgrounds who want to achieve an above-average lifestyle; rising middle-class, with good background and well-paying jobs; new-money, very rich people who earned their wealth fast and by themselves; old-money, very rich people who inherited their wealth; beyond-money, very rich people who don't like the ostentation of their wealth. As we can see below, the first ones constitute the major segment size and the second spending group (whose primacy goes to the new money households).

FIG. 4 – Categories of luxury buyers



[Source: J. Bellaiche, A. Mei-Pochtler, D. Hanisch, “*The new world of luxury. Caught between growing momentum and lasting change*”, BCG and Concept M analysis, December 2010]

Obviously, the reason behind the purchase is different for every group, as well as the kind of products bought. The last categories buy according to their values, which are in compliance with luxury brands ones; they know the stories behind, they have experience about the entire world of luxury. Whereas emerging affluent, the new rich people, are younger, style conscious but also inexperienced, easily influenced by peers, they want to follow the trend, participate and share all that concerns the brand they love. Anyway, the challenge for luxury companies is to develop with them the same relationship

<sup>16</sup> J. Bellaiche, A. Mei-Pochtler, D. Hanisch, “*The new world of luxury. Caught between growing momentum and lasting change*”, 2010. BCG and Concept M, a European market-research company analysed buying behaviours in six mature and developing countries (Brazil, China, Europe, Japan, Russia and US) and segmented the total 150 million luxury consuming households, corresponding to the 90% of global luxury spending, according to their wealth and yearly spending on luxury items. For the accurate analysis, <https://www.bcg.com/documents/file67444.pdf>

they had with elder consumers, trying to attract them not only thanks to the prestige of the brand but thanks to the values that brought to that prestige. The world has achieved the consciousness that luxury is deeper than what the majority has always thought. But are new generations really ready to this depth?

Moving on with the evolution, we can notice some differences between the old luxury and the new one. There was a shift from an external perspective, where luxury was defined as the best of the best, according to a noun, a thing – that relates to the attributes of the product – and consumers bought for a narcissistic satisfaction, to own and be noticed, to belong to an elite and be distinguished in the society, to an internal one, where luxury is defined by a verb – that concerns consumer's experience and feeling – and the same customers give importance to the sense of community, sharing, being someone, personality distinction. In the past the main luxury pillars were quality, craftsmanship, recognizable design and style, uniqueness, reflection of creator's values, limited production, global reputation, association with a country of origin; now luxury puts emotional values at the centre of everything.

Other changes are more practical: we observed a turn from big companies outsourcing production to big groups of small specialized vertically integrated companies, from massive formal communication to WOM and PR, from a wide product range to a narrower one, from two issues (SS and FW) to more product issues yearly.

Finally, luxury assisted to the introduction of digital. Always reluctant and in conflict with it, gradually it is learning to accept and embrace the future. In fact, even if Internet is featured by too much accessibility, it can support the new luxury ideology of putting the client at the centre and giving him a sensational experience.

### 1.1.2 Differences with traditional marketing

As the title of Kapferer and Bastien's book<sup>17</sup> refers to, luxury is different from traditional marketing on several points. If we start from the marketing mix,<sup>18</sup> and so with the first decisions that a marketing manager has to make in order to develop a strategy, we can already notice the divergence. In luxury, products are not comparative and may not be perfect or best performer, so we can't talk about performance and value for money. They aren't created to follow and satisfy customers' needs

---

<sup>17</sup> I'm referring to J.N. Kapferer, V. Bastien, *The Luxury Strategy: Break the Rules of Marketing to Build Luxury Brands*, Kogan Page Ltd, 2012, textbook for the course I followed and bestseller to manage luxury products and develop a luxury strategy starting from the rules of marketing but adapting them to the context.

<sup>18</sup> The marketing mix is defined by Kotler (2012) as the "set of marketing tools that the firm uses to pursue its marketing objectives in the target". It's also known as the 4 Ps model: product, price, promotion and place.

and this fact doesn't represent a problem, because, as I've already said, luxury is something that everyone wants but nobody needs, it doesn't answer to any necessities. People don't buy driven by reason or perception of a real need. Emotions drive the purchase behaviour. Having too many customers and satisfying all the demand aren't the goals; exclusivity and scarcity are the main pillars. For this reason, purchasing and accessing the product could be not easy (narrow product range, few same products, precise number of stores, high price, no or limited e-commerce are some examples of the complexity of the purchase) and protecting big and loyal customers is preferred to attracting small and occasional ones. Luxury products don't follow the normal product life cycle, with a short time to market<sup>19</sup> and introduction phase, medium or long growth and maturity phases and finally a slow decline; luxury products often are fads, fashions that are adopted very quickly by the public, peak early and decline equally quickly, according to the trends. Moreover, if we expand these considerations to a luxury brand, we can say that it is anchored and progressively elaborated, not invented. It has a founder, a history, cultural and geographical roots, but it has no a date of birth. Its life cycle is not linear, it must constantly reinvent itself. Finally, it never dies. "Like the phoenix, a luxury brand can always rise from the ashes. To do so, it is necessary to understand to whom the 'dream aspect' of the brand 'talks', or could still talk, and to make that aspect live again".<sup>20</sup> Luxury products are even more influenced by the country of origin effect. Actually, this influence is so considerable that we can identify not only the country of product origin but also the country of design, manufacture, assembly, components of parts, brand origin. Continuing with the differences, an ordinary product is characterized by attributes, benefits and support services, instead a luxury product and brand is connoted by codes and DNA<sup>21</sup>.

Regarding the second P, price communicates product information, positions the product versus the competition and helps companies to generate profit and manage production volumes. In luxury, it's not always in this way: the product is described by other attributes, all the competitors sell their products at a similar price and production volumes are managed thanks to the scarcity paradigm. Furthermore, in contrast to mass-market product, there's a limited price elasticity, meaning that a price increase may result in a demand increase<sup>22</sup>, and a different pricing strategy, whose objective is

---

<sup>19</sup> Time to market is the length of time it takes from a product being conceived until it becomes available for sale. Rapid TTM is important for the competitive success of many companies: it reduces costs, allows premium prices, leads to a faster break-even point and consequently to greater overall profits and higher return on investment.

<sup>20</sup> J.N. Kapferer, V. Bastien, *The Luxury Strategy: Break the Rules of Marketing to Build Luxury Brands*, Kogan Page Ltd, 2012, p.120

<sup>21</sup> This topic will be developed in the next chapter. DNA and codes are a fundamental part of a luxury brand. They allow its identification and recognition, explaining where brand values come from and why the brand is so unique.

<sup>22</sup> The relation between price and demand in the luxury industry can be described by three different models: the Bandwagon effect demonstrates that consumers buy more because others do it, pushed by the trend and the willingness to fit in; the Snob effect explains that consumers buy less because others buy a lot, pushed by the desire of non-conformity

constantly to increase the average price of a product portfolio. In fact, luxury companies increase the unitary price of bestsellers, introduce new products with a higher price point, increase the product perceived value, pay attention to discounts, never de-localize production from the country of origin to cut costs.

With respect to promotion, topic that I'll deal with and deepen in the next paragraph, its role in luxury isn't selling a product but make it a dream and, for this reason, we don't find simple advertising and VIPs, but we talk about testimonials and brand ambassadors. To communicate, luxury brands use traditional channels and media, the so-called above-the-line advertising, but in particular employ below-the-line activities, such as public relations, events, brochures. A key rule is never talk about money, in terms of prices, discounts and financial results.

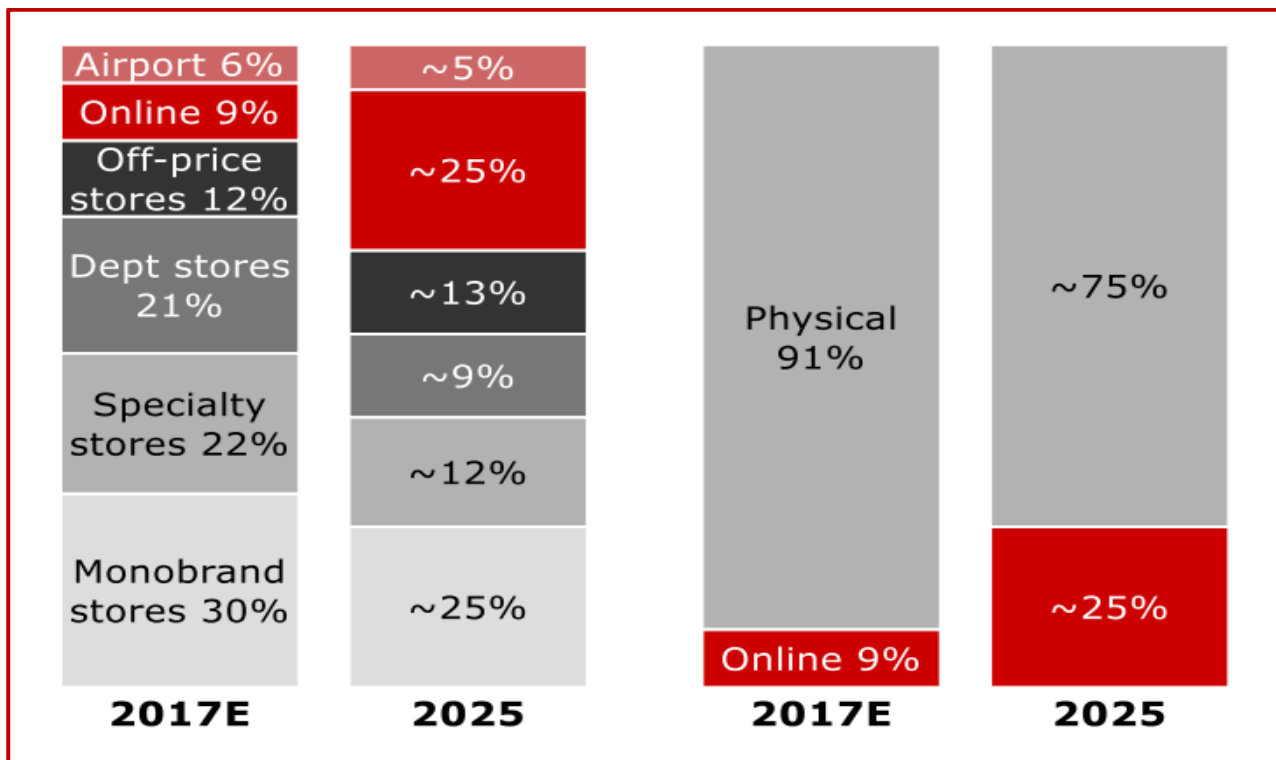
Finally, for what concerns the place, we can observe that in traditional marketing both wholesaler and retailer channels are relevant for the distribution and the most important decisions are about the channel length (different type of intermediary) and width (intensive, selective or exclusive distribution). Whereas in luxury, the retail prevails<sup>23</sup>. Stores play a fundamental role in the creation of the customer journey. Could you imagine the Fifth Avenue in New York or Place Vendôme in Paris without any luxury stores? The answer is immediate and, without doubt, negative. In the past the store was seen merely as a place where the company sold its goods, one of the few touchpoints for the client, small, secret, far and mythical; now it is considered a real temple, a space where the brand can communicate its values and provides experiences, it's a living storytelling. There was a transition from manufacturer to retailer because the last one knows customers better, can show the brand and controls the margin. As we can see in the figure, physical channels predominate, driven by monobrand stores, but online channel is expected to grow.

---

with the mass; the Veblen effect (that is what we are concerned with) says that the demand increases if the price increases too, maybe because customers associate a higher utility, quality and positive attributes to a product with a higher price.

<sup>23</sup> According to Altagamma and Bain's report, 2017 vs 2016 growth is about 8% for retail and 3% for wholesale.

FIG. 5 – Personal luxury goods market by channel | %



[Source: Altagamma, Bain & Company, *Altagamma 2017 Worldwide Luxury Market Monitor. Millennial state of mind: the tailwind behind consumer behaviours and winning strategies*, October 2017]

## 1.2 How luxury communicates

“Luxury and communication are consubstantial, since one of luxury’s two fundamental roles, that of recreating social stratification, is pure communication. Moreover, luxury is a transmitter of taste. It must therefore be active at a cultural level. [...] it results in a completely different use of communication from the habitual function of ‘making sales’. In luxury, you communicate in order to create the dream and to recharge the brand’s value, not in order to sell.”<sup>24</sup> Indeed, communication is one of the five elements, together with store, commercial policies, salesforce and product, that build a luxury brand image. It’s all about the brand and not about the product, and that’s because the luxury brand goes beyond the object. Once again, there’s a difference with traditional marketing: the role of communication isn’t providing the right information that buyers need to make purchasing decisions or persuading the customer to buy the product, its role is about informing and delighting the client about all those intangible values hidden behind the brand but that at the same time make the brand unique and the luxury world pretty mystique. What is more, communication is useful to fulfil the luxury ontological function of recreating the social distance, the gap, the recognizability.

<sup>24</sup> J.N. Kapferer, V. Bastien, *The Luxury Strategy: Break the Rules of Marketing to Build Luxury Brands*, Kogan Page Ltd, 2012, p.210

In particular, luxury communication has as much to intrigue, enchant, conquer new customers as to reinforce, strengthen, comfort current customers relationship. To do this, brands need to talk in a dreamlike but at the same time vague way, so that several people can identify with and share the dream<sup>25</sup>. Communication need to be refined, artistic, highly coded, without being too dated, direct or allusive. Luxury companies have to remember that the competitive market where they are playing is complex and crowded<sup>26</sup> and all brands appear to be communicating in the same way, with the same channels, utilizing the same initiative. To have success and a chance over their competitors, they have to differentiate and take in mind some fundamental rules. As said by Kapferer and Bastien, the value of a brand depends on the quality of its image more than on its recognition, it's fundamental to communicate well otherwise it's better not to communicate at all, a good communication should last for a long time. Moreover, luxury companies can't talk about money in terms of prices, discounts and financial results because, first of all, money is just a raw material that luxury uses and transforms to obtain more precise social stratification, secondly, talking about it means that there's nothing better to say about the product, the company and the brand. There's a difference between communicating and advertising and luxury companies don't advertise. So, they have to choose the right means of communications according to the level of their target, paying attention not to use much television – appropriate more for premium and mass prestige layers than for absolute luxury – but more PR, WOM, sponsorship and events, as I'll explain later. They have to think first about the brand, taking care of its codes, aesthetics and the general image, and secondly about clients. They should remember not to put anyone in their communication or not to use VIP but brand ambassadors. In the first case, companies respect the personal relationship that the client has with the brand and they don't destroy it replacing with the client-star relationship; in the second case, companies involve a personality that use the product underlining the concept 'ordinary product for extraordinary people' and recognizing the power of the brand.

The general and traditional communication strategy involves several practical steps. It starts analysing the communication process and its key attributes<sup>27</sup>, continues considering the objective and the budget and finally ends with the choice of the kind of communication (more massive/one-way or more

---

<sup>25</sup> In the second chapter, this topic will be developed. I'll analyse how stories can influence the brand equity and, vice versa, how the brand building and identity can include and strengthen the dream and the storytelling.

<sup>26</sup> From a general perspective, this isn't a bad thing. Luxury can't exist without competition, and the proof can be found directly looking at the famous places where luxury brands sell their products. All the luxury streets and squares are full of luxury brands. However, in this case, it's important to get some distance and differentiate.

<sup>27</sup> The key attributes of an effective communication are the sender, the receiver, the message and the channel, but we have to consider also some factors influencing the situation and acting as a 'noise', such as language, economic, sociocultural, legal and competitive differences. The communication process starts with the manufacturer or seller who transmits the message through any form of media to a target audience, becoming the initiator. However, we could have the opposite case: the seller and the buyer have already established a relationship and the initiative will come from the buyer thanks to its post-purchase experience.

personal/two-way), to which a different approach, channel, content and tone of voice correspond. An effective luxury communication strategy follows necessarily these steps but adds some extraordinary pillars, such as have a vision, be fast with a less over-thinking and more overdoing mood, find creative people who are able to generate ideas, behave creatively, find an enemy.

Going more deeply, a traditional brand wants to be a reference point for its customers and, for this reason, it invests on the positioning phase when it declares its benefits and competitive advantages (the so-called unique selling proposition) to position in the mind of customers in relation to certain competitors. The luxury brand isn't subject to a comparative logic, it cultivates its uniqueness being coherent and faithful to its own identity rather than comparing itself to competitors. Its distinction is based on what clients say about it, so its communication is about word of mouth. "This is why the luxury brand should be thought of like a story: there is no luxury brand without storytelling. [...] we like to tell stories that are perceived as authentic, somewhat secret, and capable of transmitting an implicit message, loaded with collective values. This is why the luxury brand should reveal its story, both in the historic and the mythical dimension: they give it status and at the same time feed the word of mouth. [...] Everything is useful for feeding the myth, the cult through the communication of a luxury brand. More than anything else, the luxury brand is an epic tale, carried by its stories: storytelling is its mode of expression".<sup>28</sup>

Obviously, companies need to adapt the communication register to the target clientele and tell different stories according to the relationship established with it, precisely in order to respect the function of social re-stratification. People can see luxury as an authentic experience, an exclusive art of living, a distinguished elite and, for this reason, company can narrate tales about its patrimony and heritage, timelessness and exclusive know-how; as self-expression and singularity, developing stories about its creativity and contemporaneity; as related to certain prestigious values and status, talking about myth, prestige, celebrity and social success; as a way of self-affirmation and display of wealth, sharing values of glory, excess and power.

### 1.2.1 The two sides of communication

As it can be understood from the introduction in the section above, luxury communication is complex and intriguing just like the whole luxury world. We can't talk about one kind of communication, that could be linear, standard, adaptable to every context, channel and target. Luxury communication has two sides: the media one, the most visible and well-known part, based on pure

---

<sup>28</sup> J.N. Kapferer, V. Bastien, *The Luxury Strategy: Break the Rules of Marketing to Build Luxury Brands*, Kogan Page Ltd, 2012, pp. 222-122



advertising, product, trends, tactical objectives, economic results, frequency of the purchase, and the creative one, the hidden part, based on the bigger picture, brand identity and values, strategical objectives, challenges and solutions, facts and interpretations. Naturally both are necessary to provide a complete and effective communication.

The first one, more practical and tangible, includes all kinds of media, from the most traditional to the most contemporary, characterized by their own goal, attributes, advantages and disadvantages.

FIG. 6 – Traditional and modern media and key attributes



[Source: Xtreme Insight, APAN 2009 Trends & Challenges. *O futuro da comunicação das marcas. 'New Media, New Challenges'*, November 2009]

The selection of the media to be used for advertising campaigns needs to be done simultaneously with the development of the message, part of the creative strategy. A key question concerns whether to employ traditional mass media and new media (such as Internet and social networks) – also referred to as above-the-line tools – to reach a big portion of the audience, or a more targeted approach, using the so-called below-the-line advertising tools.

The second one uses unconventional tools and is more one to one promotion. It involves PR activities, exhibitions and fairs, local promotion through events and roadshows, catalogues and brochures, direct mailing, visual merchandising. The definition comes from the financial and accounting world, where

revenues and costs are written above the line of profit whereas low-entity income and expenses are added at a second stage. In fact, one advantage of the BTL advertising is the cost because it tends to be less expensive and more focused than the ATL, and that's why this kind of communication is more popular with luxury companies. In fact, it follows the principles of exclusivity and selectivity. Moreover, it assures a direct contact with the client, allowing to establish a more personal relationship and, as a result, a better engagement.<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, there is also a disadvantage: it is more stressful because it needs to be planned in advance, often with only one possibility, manage different things and people contemporaneously, have certainty of success.

The selection of the media starts with some idea of the target's demographic and psychological characteristics and continues with the analysis of the characteristics of the tool, the impact and the cost of running a campaign.

The PESO model encompasses all the principal media. Paid media are whatever the company pays, all the advertising spaces bought according to the traditional logic of media buying or the more recent logic of programmatic buying. The target reached is composed by potential clients, the 'strangers'. Essentially, it's advertising such as traditional mass media, but also display ads, PPC ads, sponsorships, partnerships, influencers. Earned media, available at lower costs, are all the occasions of company visibility deriving from a spontaneous web activity and users' conversations. They can't be directly bought but encouraged and promoted. The target is composed by all the people involved, that we can call 'fans'. Mainly it's about PR, WOM, viral marketing, bloggers and influencers activities, appreciations on social media, ratings. Owned media, available at zero costs, are what the company creates, manages and controls, its properties and assets, including retail, packaging, website, mobile site, app, literature, corporate account on social media, corporate blog. The target reached is composed by current and possible future clients. Shared media, although very overlapping with the other three, revolve around shared content, word of mouth, referrals, community-driven content, co-creation, influencers.

Considering the most adopted media, both traditional and modern, we can recognize that television is the most used in traditional marketing, notwithstanding its high costs and regulation, but in luxury it's not so used because of its massive and dispersive approach and its main objective of awareness. Luxury products and brands haven't to be explained, they need to engage people and make them loyal. Cinema can capture audience and engage it through the video format, but its goal is once again awareness and the quality of the environment is not so good, not luxury at all. Radio is a lower-cost

---

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.investopedia.com/terms/b/below-the-line-advertising.asp>

broadcasting activity, but its goal of awareness, the lack of visual approach and the same tool aren't appropriate for luxury promotion. Newspapers have reliable content and wide distribution but the quality and the non-modernity lead customers to shift towards other media; moreover, the goal of awareness, the large number and the easiness of distribution make them not so exclusive as luxury is. Magazines have a narrower readership, a good quality, a specific content and go beyond the logic of awareness, but the crowded environment and the aim of positioning are two disadvantages. Outdoor or out of home advertising include posters, billboards, shop signs and transit ads. The big size and the quality are useful to satisfy the goal of impacting people, but the high costs and the touristic approach discourage the use. Digital display advertising, despite the crowded environment and the easiness of accessibility, seems to be an efficient medium, contemporary and able to satisfy the goals of both awareness and engagement added to visibility and storytelling. The same applies to social media, mobile and paid search.

Turning to the description of below-the-line tools, word-of-mouth advertising is not only cheap but is also very effective. PR is the marketing communications function that carries out programs designed to earn public understanding and acceptance, seeking to enhance corporate image building and influence favourable media treatment. The PR activity of a luxury brand is aimed to generate visibility and appeal for the relevant target and to maximize the advertising investment. In the past, it was based only on the product, whereas nowadays it has evolved, being integrated with the entire company, management and strategy. The range of target groups is wider here than in other communication tools, including employees, customers, distribution channel members and shareholders. In a more market-oriented sense, it is directed towards an influential, relatively small, target audience of editors and journalists who work for newspapers and magazines or towards broadcasting aimed at the firm's customers and stakeholders. It involves internal and external communication and includes editorial, press conferences, product placement, seminars, charity activities, sponsorship, publications, external relations, VIP gifting or endorsement.

Sponsorship is one of the fastest growing aspects of marketing communications. It takes two forms: event sponsorship, providing companies the opportunity to reach narrow lifestyle groups whose consumption behaviour can be linked with the event, and cause-oriented sponsorship, form of corporate philanthropy based on the idea that a company will contribute to a cause every time the customer undertakes some actions, enhancing brand image, incrementing sales, increasing brand awareness, broadening its customer base, reaching new market segments.

A luxury company shouldn't only communicate by itself its values, stories, products and so on, it has to involve also journalists, expert and technical people who can advertise it, promoting all the precious elements in a more efficient, engaging and credible way. They should be in constant contact with

editors to stimulate their interest on the brand in their articles and photo shooting, find a balance between advertising and editorial pages and investment and finally look at competitors' actions.

Another way of promotion is through VIP endorsement. Celebrities should be in line with the brand image, loving its style and sharing its values. Companies have to do a careful research and selection and the collaboration has to be continuative. The result will be more favourable advertisement ratings and product evaluations and positive impact in financial returns. Consumers tend to believe that major stars are motivated by genuine affection for the product rather than by endorsement fees. Celebrities are particularly affective endorsers because they are viewed as highly trustworthy, believable, persuasive and likeable. The effectiveness varies according to different factors such as the fit between the celebrity and the advertised product.

Product placement is the form of advertisement where a branded product is placed in a context usually without ads, such as films, the storyline of television shows or news programmes. The goals are increasing consumer's awareness about the brand or the product and strengthening demand, driving purchase intention.<sup>30</sup>

A kind of communication that luxury brands love is that one developed through events. Their double function takes back that one of luxury: to legitimize the brand status as a creator of taste, a cultural transmitter and to create a social distance through the game of inclusion and exclusion. A well-balanced event plan should address both strategic and tactical objectives. First of all, companies need to select the real objective – that could be for example image building (sponsorship, charity, co-branding actions), product presentation (in or out of store presentations, fashion shows), customer delight (one-to-one actions, art or sport event invitations), sales building (special sales, family and friends), store opening (no co-branding but social media campaign and cooperation with a PR agency) – without mixing but explaining well to the public. After the objective definition, there are timing and planning, where companies consider competitiveness and external constraints (direct competition, other events, sport events, city habits, seasonality, week-end attitude, lunch dinner) and advance invitation; mailing and redemption to know the exact number of people to invite and will attend; location with decisions regarding in particular the newness, convenience, dimension, layout, capacity of the place; animation, but always putting brand first and paying attention to the costs; co-marketing to enlarge the customer base, earn synergies, cost saving and visibility; finally costs and budgeting.

---

<sup>30</sup> S. Hollensen, *Global Marketing*, Pearson, 7<sup>th</sup> edition, 2017

To conclude, we can find catalogues & brochures and newsletters or direct email marketing, the first ones, also called rich materials, more appropriate for the middle-class segment to show pieces, the second ones more appropriate for the achievable segment to inform, animate and entertain. Obviously, our interest is for the second side of communication, the more theoretical one.

FIG. 7 – The two sides of communication



[Source: Luxury Management Course Slides, a.y. 2016-2017, LUISS Guido Carli]

Luxury brands need to communicate a great story. They can't simply advertise their products, they have to promote them in a different way, using creative tools that can express their values, history, identity behind. As I said at the beginning, luxury is deeper than what people often think. It's not only richness and elite, it's not snobbery, it's the idea born from normal but brilliant people, the dream created and turned into a reality, the aspiration and desire of other people to participate to that dream. To communicate in this way, they need to employ narrative marketing. Narrative marketing is merely storytelling. According to the general definition, it's a strategic soft-sell approach that focuses on extended ad cycles with strong emotional hooks, targeting customers who want to connect with a company's mission in addition to its products or services. It focuses on communicating the ideals and values of the business founder and owner and using the connection that's developed through sharing those goals to encourage engagement. It's important to remember that narrative marketing is more

than just advertising with a plot; using traditional narrative tools, it allows the company to connect with customers' emotions and bridge the engagement gap.<sup>31</sup>

But why is narrative marketing the answer? The explanation is given by the following reasons: stories are welcomed whereas ads are resisted; stories capture the attention because inspired by insights; stories are authentic and transparent, fearless but not reckless, they are easier to remember, with more probabilities to create an emotional connection with the audience (while the second ones have a lower engagement rate); stories endure because of their metaphors, characters, landscapes and morals. Storytelling is about brain science: stories are memorable because of the images and emotions contained in them; when we listen to the story we see images and feel emotions, we experience immediately the story, we live it. The lesson of the story sticks because it's embedded in an image, and this image isn't a fixed picture but a motion picture, a movie. The brain remembers pictures first, then remembers the emotional context and, finally, it remembers the language. In his book *Brain Rules*, the molecular biologist John Medina explains this phenomenon saying that when the brain detects an emotionally charged event, the amygdala releases dopamine into the system, whose function is aiding memory and information processing.<sup>32</sup> Jonathan Gottschall's work *The Storytelling Animal*<sup>33</sup>, based on neuroscience and evolutionary biology, wants to prove that the 'master formula' of story is a fundamental part of human psychology. Moreover, the author Jonas Sachs in his *Winning the story wars* refers to stories as "ancient mythological formulas" that are "deeply engrained in our DNA"<sup>34</sup>.<sup>35</sup> Stories are shareable and unite the audience, who can talk and comment; they are social at the core, being always on, surprising, delighting and fascinating. From a more practical point of view, stories don't make the budget spread and aren't dependent on technology, they move the brand needle and amplify its messages. Last but not least, companies have no choice. The future is no more rational or cultural but is getting emotional. Brands need to become publishers, incorporating images and videos to their stories and distributing content across social platforms. In fact, storytelling has always existed, but businesses today need to capitalize on a variety of new tools to tell their brand stories in the most compelling ways possible.

---

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.fieldpulse.com/academy/narrative-marketing-contractors/>

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.td.org/insights/storytelling-and-brain-science-this-is-your-brain-on-story>

<sup>33</sup> I'm referring to J. Gottschall, *The storytelling animal: how stories make us human*, New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012

<sup>34</sup> J. Sachs, *Winning the story wars: why those who tell (and live) the best stories will rule the future*, Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2012, p. 4

<sup>35</sup> S. Fernandes, *Curated stories: the uses and misuses of storytelling*, Oxford Scholarship Online: University Press Scholarship Online, June 2017

### 1.3 Definition of storytelling

“Today’s world is overflowing with fancy buzzwords. The vast majority of them however, refer to short-lived phenomena that have been invented for the sole purpose of selling hot air. They are gone as quickly as they arrived. Others are a product of the times but have deeper roots. They touch upon something familiar, but contribute to a new consciousness, and take a firm hold in our future vocabulary. ‘Storytelling’ is one of them”.<sup>36</sup> It has always existed, starting from the Paleolithic tribes who told stories around a campfire, arriving until the modern society, where politicians and religious figures tell stories to explain, inspire, convince, continuing even in today’s companies, where strong leaders are at the same time good storytellers who talk about company’s values and culture to their employees and customers. Both in the past and in the present, in every context, telling and sharing stories define ‘who people are’, ‘what people believe in’, ‘which emotions they want to feel’ but also ‘where they are going’. Translating this discussion into a business standpoint, companies have to understand that customers don’t want simple products anymore, they want unique experiences, appealing to their dreams and emotions, adding meaning to their lives. What makes the difference between one brand and another is no longer the physical product but the story, the real bond between the company and the consumer. In fact, when companies communicate through stories that clients appreciate and share, they help them to find their way, to express themselves and their values. In other words, the brand story gradually becomes synonymous for how people define themselves as individuals, and products become the symbols that they use to tell the story of themselves. It can be said that there’s a natural link between branding and storytelling: both come out of the same starting point, that is emotions and values. A great brand is based on clearly defined values, while a good story communicates those values; a strong brand has emotional connections with all the stakeholders and in particular with employees and customers, whereas a good story speaks to people’s emotions and bonds people together; finally, storytelling has the power to strengthen a brand both internally and externally. We can say that branding is the goal and storytelling is the means.<sup>37</sup> What is more, storytelling is a quintessentially social activity. It requires not only readers or listeners, but also other storytellers. Stories are at once the raw material and the cultural product of memory. Their telling creates a sense of immediacy, the willingness to share and the ‘universal feeling of taking

---

<sup>36</sup> K. Fog, C. Budtz, B. Yakaboylu, *Storytelling. Branding in practice*, Springer, 2005, p.9. This is the preface to a book whose goals are explaining how companies can build their brands by finding their unique story and trying to eliminate the confusion to what the term “storytelling” actually means when it comes to its practical application. In fact, the authors say that “there is still a conspicuous lack of critical insight as to how and why storytelling can make a difference. For most companies, storytelling remains an abstract concept, at best reserved for PR and advertising executives, at worst, wishy-washy claptrap with no real value”.

<sup>37</sup> K. Fog, C. Budtz, B. Yakaboylu, *Storytelling. Branding in practice*, Springer, 2005. In the next paragraphs this relation will be better explained.

part'. At the same time, what they tell is highly particular: descriptions of individual actions, emotions and outcomes that can be unique and take people somewhere else. For this reason, every story is a travel story, able to organize space and mark out boundaries and, at the same time, able to allow people to transcend them, exposing them to different ways of thinking.

As Walter Benjamin wrote, "storytelling is the art of repeating stories" but not in a simple way. "The storyteller takes what he tells from experience – his own or that reported by others. And he in turn makes it the experience of those who are listening to his tale". The best storytellers interpret without giving easy explanations for what they impart. Through this subtlety, they open their audience's imagination and the "story's richness and generative power endures"<sup>38, 39</sup>

### 1.3.1 Definition of story

There are several interpretations in the organizational literature regarding the differences between stories and narratives or storytelling and narrating. Terminologically, they are often used interchangeably, but many authors attempted to give a definition. Czarniawska<sup>40</sup> defines narratives as a "spoken or written text giving an account of an event/action or series of events/actions, chronologically connected", whereas stories need to be emplotted because more complicated, imbued by emotions, descriptions of tensions and moral conclusions. Gabriel<sup>41</sup> argues that "not all narratives are stories; in particular factual or descriptive accounts of events that aspire at objectivity rather than emotional effect must not be treated as stories", whereas stories are a specific type of narratives, an important part of the construction of the lifeworld of individuals and expressive form of organizational life. Stories can be interpreted as emotion-generating narratives through which experienced events become charged with symbolic significance, facts are turned into stories and stories into facts. Boje and others<sup>42</sup> write that narrative is distinguished from a story in that the latter one has a plot linking a set of events in causal sequence. Ricoeur<sup>43</sup> says that "a story describes a sequence of actions and experiences done or undergone by a certain number of people, whether real

---

<sup>38</sup> The three sentences in quotes come from W. Benjamin, *The storyteller: reflections on the works of Nikolai Leskov*, in *Illuminations: essays and reflections*, transl. H. Zohn, New York: Schocken Books, 1968, pp. 5- 87-90

<sup>39</sup> J. W. Scott, *Storytelling*, Wiley for Wesleyan University, in *History and Theory*, Vol. 50, n.2, pp. 203-209, May 2011

<sup>40</sup> B. Czarniawska, *Narratives in social science research. Introducing qualitative methods*, London, England: Sage, 2004, p. 17

<sup>41</sup> Y. Gabriel, *Storytelling in organizations: Facts, fictions and fantasies*, Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 5

<sup>42</sup> D. M. Boje, *Narrative methods for organizational and communication research*, London, England: Sage, 2001

D. M. Boje, G. A. Rosile, C. L. Gardner, *Antenarrative, narratives and anaemic stories*, in N. Taher, S. Gopalan (Eds.), *Storytelling in management* (pp. 30-45), Hyderabad, India: ICFAI University Press, 2007

<sup>43</sup> P. Ricoeur, *Time and narrative Vol. I*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1984, p. 341



or imaginary”.<sup>44</sup> The sociolinguist William Labov<sup>45</sup> describes narrative as a sequence of events in the order in which they occurred to make a point. Others indicate the story as that one including relevant events, whose causal links aren’t based on formal logic or probability but on plot, and characters with which the audience usually feels a sense of empathy. Finally, in a story, events project a desirable or undesirable future. Storytellers rarely say to their audiences which is the moral. The story’s larger meaning seems to be given by the events themselves, while requiring interpretation on the audience’s part.

In the Storytelling Diamond Model<sup>46</sup>, storytelling is defined as the intra-play of narratives with living stories, where antenarratives make a process connection between them. The living story is what Bakhtin<sup>47</sup> describes as the polyphonic and dialogic manner of story and what Merleau-Ponty<sup>48</sup> calls ontological or lived story, a Being-in-the-world, situated in place, in time and in material processes of the collective. They are relevant, contextualized and inspirational, connect to the “life and process of the natural world” becoming vehicles for the transmission of culture<sup>49</sup>. On the other hand, narratives consist of representative accounts of reality that are unique and generalizable, may be factual or fictional and may concern the past, the present or the future, presenting a beginning, middle and end structure.<sup>50</sup>

Even if stories seem appealingly authentic, democratic, entertaining, powerful, symbolically aligned with common sense rather than science, engaging and concrete rather than abstract, we can’t say that popular opinions about them are only positive. On the contrary, people often worry that stories are misleading and unserious and that their authenticity is a creative scheme. ‘It’s just a story’ refers to a weak credibility, and ‘it’s just her story’ refers to a one-sided and subjective character.<sup>51</sup>

---

<sup>44</sup> W. Küpers, S. Mantere, M. Statler, *Strategy as storytelling: a phenomenological collaboration*, Journal of Management Inquiry, Vol. 22, Issue 1, pp. 83-100, 2013

<sup>45</sup> W. Labov, J. Waletzky, *Narrative analysis: oral versions of personal experience*, in *Essays on the verbal and visual arts*, ed. J. Helm, Seattle: Univ. Wash. Press, pp. 12-44, 1967

<sup>46</sup> The Storytelling Diamond model, based on wider social science ontological, epistemological and methodological considerations, has six paradigms: narrativist, living story, materialist, interpretivist, abstractionist and practice, all of these integrated by the antenarrative process. To know more,

G. A. Rosile, D. M. Boje, D. M. Carlon, A. Downs, R. Saylor, *Storytelling diamond: an antenarrative integration of the six facets of storytelling in organization design research*, Organizational Research Methods, Vol. 16, n. 4, Sage, pp. 557-580, February 2013

<sup>47</sup> M. M. Bakhtin, *The dialogic imagination*, Austin: University of Texas Press, ed. M. Holquist, transl. C. Emerson and M. Holquist, 1981

<sup>48</sup> M. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of perception*, New Dehli, India: Motilal Banarsidass Publisher, 1962

<sup>49</sup> G. Cajete, *Native science; natural laws of interdependence*, Santa Fe, NM: Clear Light Publishers, 2000, p. 94

<sup>50</sup> G. A. Rosile, D. M. Boje, D. M. Carlon, A. Downs, R. Saylor, *Storytelling diamond: an antenarrative integration of the six facets of storytelling in organization design research*, Organizational Research Methods, Vol. 16, Issue 4, Sage, pp. 557-580, February 2013

<sup>51</sup> F. Polletta, P. C. Bobby Chen, B. Gharrity Gardner and A. Motes, *The sociology of storytelling*, in Annual Review of Sociology, Vol. 37, n. 1, Annual Reviews in collaboration with JSTOR, pp 109-130, 2011

### 1.3.2 The four elements of storytelling

To understand deeply the concept of storytelling, we have to define what constitutes a story and what makes a story really good. Storytelling is characterized by so many factors that it's impossible to find a fixed formulation or a strict set of rules, anyway there are some basic guidelines, recognized by the literature.

“For the narrative psychologist Jerome Bruner<sup>52</sup>, a story includes characters as free agents with expectations about the world, a breach in the expected state of things, efforts by the character to come to terms with that breach, and then a resolution or outcome. Gottschall<sup>53</sup> argues for a universal grammar of stories that is based on trouble as the key ingredient. Sachs<sup>54</sup> similarly asserts that without a conflict, there is no story”.<sup>55</sup>

Anyway, the four elements that must be always present when telling a story are the following ones.

- Message

Also called the premise, it is an ideological or moral statement working as a central theme. To have success, a story needs to present only one message or, at least, in the case of more than one, to prioritize, otherwise it can run the risk of being unclear and messy. From a strategical perspective, there is no reason to tell stories without a well-defined premise.

- Conflict

It is the driving force of a good story. Without conflict, there is no story. The explanation is that stories' goal is to capture the attention of the audience but, without battles and rivalry, it isn't so obvious; stories become simply boring, the perfect opposite of exciting and, consequently, easy to forget. The reason lies in human nature. Human beings don't like stress and anxiety, they constantly search harmony and balance and, once they reach them, they do everything to maintain it. When there's a problem, an unpleasant situation or feeling, they instinctively try to find a solution. Conflict forces action to restore harmony. Good stories capture the attention because they address the emotional need to bring order to chaos. Going back to the definition, the story starts when a change disturbs the harmony and ends when the conflict is solved. Anyway, it's important not to exaggerate with the chaos, otherwise the story could appear too monotonous or confusing.

---

<sup>52</sup> J. Bruner, *Making stories: law, literature, life*, Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2002

<sup>53</sup> J. Gottschall, *The storytelling animal: how stories make us human*, New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012

<sup>54</sup> J. Sachs, *Winning the story wars: why those who tell (and live) the best stories will rule the future*, Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2012, p. 20

<sup>55</sup> S. Fernandes, *Curated stories: the uses and misuses of storytelling*, Oxford Scholarship Online: University Press Scholarship Online, June 2017, p.5

- Characters

As the classical fairy-tale, every story has its actors. They play a part and have a role in relation to each other. The main figure is the hero, who has some arms of support, an assistant and special skills to achieve his goal. He fights against an adversary, that could be both physical and psychological, to resolve the conflict. Often there are also a beneficiary, that could be the same hero or another character, and a benefactor, who provides a help or advantage to the hero. In the case of a company, the hero could be the founder, the owner, the company itself and the adversary could be a competitor, customers without confidence in the company or employees without faith in their abilities.

- Plot

It is represented by the flow of the story and the progression of its events, whose sequence is fundamental. At the beginning, the scene is set; in the middle, the change creates conflict; at the end, the conflict is solved.<sup>56</sup>

### 1.3.3 Storytelling in business

Storytelling can be employed both as a strategic branding concept and as an operational communication tool.

In the two decades since storytelling was called the ‘sensemaking currency of organizations’, a lot of research methods have been developed to study processes and material conditions occurring inside organizations, the effectiveness of storytelling and the relationship between the two. The common conclusion is that storytelling plays a crucial role in creating and sustaining the organizational identity.

In fact, more and more researchers have begun to consider storytelling as a relevant strategic practice in organizations and have theorized that there are at least two ways in which stories can be important for the study of strategizing: the ontological and the instrumental ones.

The principle behind the first one is that strategy is narrative, a story told about the life, experiences, identities of narrators and futures of organizations. The organizational strategy is even defined as a form of fiction, developed through a polyphonic storytelling, practiced by multiple and interconnected narrators. Moreover, recent research has suggested that narratives contain guiding principles that can facilitate the decision making in complex environments. Stories’ elements – such as themes, characters and plots – structure experiences, enable the emergence of a collectively

---

<sup>56</sup> K. Fog, C. Budtz, B. Yakaboylu, *Storytelling. Branding in practice*, Springer, 2005

sustained organizational culture and identity, create power relationships between and among individuals, allow organizational actors to express emotions and values and to exchange interpretations. In this sense, organizations have been identified as narrative entities, achieved through the telling of stories that “capture organizational life in a way that no compilation of facts ever can [...] because they are carriers of life itself, not just ‘reports’ on it”<sup>57</sup>.

Whereas the idea behind the second one is that storytelling is useful and advantageous for the adoption of strategic plans and the communication of strategic intent throughout the organization because it makes the content of the strategy more easily understood, enhancing the relationship with and among the employees.<sup>58</sup>

From a pure strategic branding standpoint, companies need to work with their brand as if it was a continually evolving story. They should tell specific, concrete, contextualized stories, using images and not numbers to explain and represent organization’s values, culture, identity, hitting customers’ head and heart. By doing so, storytelling takes an important role in the internal branding process, becoming an effective means to create an entire brand concept. Since storytelling is considered from a strategic point of view, the traditional thinking about brands has evolved, passing from perceiving a brand as a set of values to looking at it as a living story. The explanation behind is simple: values are words without real content. Indeed, when a company present them as a list of bullet points in the annual report or during executive meetings, they become anonymous and irrelevant, speaking to the mind but not to the heart. On the contrary, by telling a story, the same values come to life through powerful images and a more dynamic context. Everybody understands and appreciates. The story has captured the attention in all senses.

The story better connected to the brand is the so-called ‘core story’, that, functioning as the central theme, being anchored throughout the entire organization and integrated across different departments and sections, connects and creates consistency in all the company communications, both internal and external. To develop the core story, companies should create a shared mental image of its reason for being, useful to address both the rational and the emotional side and to define the path the company is pursuing. This step is also called the obituary test because the company ask itself if there’s something that, if missed, would make the company die. Subsequently there’s the screening of basic data, both internal (that is about identity, culture, vision, mission, values, milestones, employees’ stories) and external (that is about image, market trends, customers, partners, opinion leaders’ ideas),

---

<sup>57</sup> B. Czarniawska, *Narrating the organization. Dramas of institutional identity*, Chicago: IL: University of Chicago Press, 1997, p. 21

<sup>58</sup> W. Küpers, S. Mantere, M. Statler, *Strategy as storytelling: a phenomenological collaboration*, Journal of Management Inquiry, Vol. 22, Issue 1, pp. 83-100, 2013

and the distilling of basic data, where the company can understand its true essence and see if there's a gap between its identity – the internal conception – and image – the external perception. At this point, it's possible to define the core story, using the four elements of storytelling and explaining how the company makes the difference. Finally, there's the acid test, to understand if the company's core story is unique in relation to that one of its competitors.

Then, the core story is transferred to the surrounding environment through concrete stories, relevant for all the stakeholders. If we imagine the brand as a tree, the trunk represents the core story, the foundation; branches and leaves are stories and anecdotes, giving nourishment to the entire system.

Here, the second function of storytelling – the operating one – comes into play: stories and anecdotes can be used when communicating the company's message, to strengthen the brand in different contexts. Companies can invent them, or they can just look at all over the organization to find the raw material for a good storytelling. There's no reason to create fictitious stories if they already have everything genuine, stronger and more credible in their business environment. The only problem is understanding where to search, but the sources are infinite. Employees can talk about company's values and culture, can be strong brand ambassadors and explain how their company makes the difference; they live the company and know all the possible stories behind. The founder and the CEO are symbolical figures, around which multiple stories, real or mythical, are created, stories that can become legends; in particular, stories about passion, core values, mindset, roots, authentic identity can be found and better developed. By the way, a company is better equipped to face the future if it knows its past. Milestones, namely events of special significance, are decisive in shaping company's present and future. Successes can be transformed in heroic stories where the company made an extraordinary performance; crises can be translated in messages and lessons to learn. The same product can say something about how it was invented and made. As well as, there are stories from customers, working partners and opinion leaders, who can bring company's values to life, show in real terms how the company makes the difference, adding credibility and personal experience.

Furthermore, stories don't communicate only company's values, but they also communicate knowledge. They are easier to remember because the information is packaged in a meaningful context that allows to better understand the depth and relevance of the information itself. Some scientists believe that stories stimulate the use of both the logical and creative parts of the human brain, allowing to understand the info visually and emotionally.

Only the companies that really have something to say and consistently communicate their message through one core story can be remembered. What is more, it's indispensable to communicate intelligently, ensuring that media support the story's message making it relevant and interesting for the target.

To conclude, storytelling works as a supplement to traditional management tools. The task for managers is using storytelling to hold the company's values, vision, culture within the organization, identifying those stories that best communicate the message and ensuring that they will be told again and again. It's necessary to keep in mind that storytelling is a dynamic and continuous process: stories must be identified, developed and communicated on an ongoing basis.<sup>59</sup>

There are many applications for using storytelling as a management tool: stories can be used to communicate visions and values, to strengthen the company's culture, to show the way and manage the company through change, to share knowledge across the organization. Moreover, it is used in traditional advertising, as part of the branding strategy and as a sales promotional tool, to create recognition and identification and to achieve consumer's engagement and loyalty, through all the possible media.<sup>60</sup>

So, what is storytelling going to become in relation to branding? The ending is open. Surely, "the time of rational argument is gone. Emotions are taking over. Development and progress require new ways of thinking. The brand has to drive the company forward and storytelling in the engine that can get the movement going".<sup>61</sup>

---

<sup>59</sup> This is the so-called storytelling circulation. In the searching phase, stories are identified and gathered; in the sorting phase, they are listed and selected; in the shaping phase they are processed and finally in the showing phases they are communicated and shared.

<sup>60</sup> K. Fog, C. Budtz, B. Yakaboğlu, *Storytelling. Branding in practice*, Springer, 2005

<sup>61</sup> K. Fog, C. Budtz, B. Yakaboğlu, *Storytelling. Branding in practice*, Springer, 2005, p.226

# Chapter 2

## STORYTELLING APPLIED TO LUXURY

“If your stories are all about your products and services,  
there’s not storytelling. It’s a brochure.  
Give yourself permission to make the story bigger”  
[Jay Baer<sup>62</sup>]

### 2.1 How storytelling is used in luxury industry

As explained in the previous chapter, storytelling is a marketing strategy increasingly used by companies in every kind of industry, including the luxury one. More specifically, most of companies are still wondering whether the introduction of storytelling in their strategies can be pertinent, whereas luxury firms have made their choice for a long time, using storytelling techniques as the key to success, to create around them those peculiar universes that make them so irresistible.

Just to come back to the idea, as stated in the French site <http://www.definitions-marketing.com>, “*le storytelling est littéralement le fait de raconter une histoire à des fins de communication. Le storytelling consiste donc à utiliser une histoire plutôt qu’à mettre classiquement en avant des arguments marque ou produit. La technique du storytelling doit normalement permettre de capter l’attention et de susciter l’émotion.*” Therefore, storytelling isn’t a marketing strategy oriented towards a mere product, but towards the brand and its universe: the goal is to tell a story, communicate the brand values, history and intrinsic features, enhancing brand image and raising clients’ attention, awareness and loyalty. Storytelling also allows to improve the brand image and to create a preference in consumers’ minds, telling a story, an anecdote. It’s necessary to make clients dream, to create a relationship with them because simply presenting a product is no more sufficient.

Luxury brands have rapidly shared these concepts and included storytelling in their communication strategies. In fact, the connection between storytelling and luxury is clear: luxury brands are interested in using this technique because they prefer communicating their history and values and their

---

<sup>62</sup> Jay Baer is an entrepreneur, advisor and business strategist. He’s a New York Times best-selling author, a member of the Professional Speaking Hall of Fame and the world’s most inspirational marketing and customer service keynote speaker.

consumers want to have experience and emotions rather than a simple possession, be satisfied with themselves and feel special.<sup>63</sup>

Luxury has experienced its biggest transformation in an overexposed and increasingly competitive market for the last thirty years, becoming the emblem of a search for meaning and experience, beyond a symbol of social status. In concrete terms, luxury has become a trade of feelings, and the numbers prove it, placing the experiential purchases at the first place. The result is that experience and feeling have become at least as important as the product. It's required to add something to the product, giving importance not only to its external image, but also to its sourcing, durable development, ethical values, history beyond. The essence of luxury brand is in the offer, but nowadays the demand becomes even more important and it's necessary to listen to the consumers and analyse their purchase behaviour. To live a unique experience, customers want a moral engagement, they don't buy a product for its functionality but for the emotional bond created with it and with the brand in general. Following this path, also the communication has changed. Its goal isn't talking about the finished product but about all that happens from its fabrication to its placing on market. As said by Julie El Ghouzzi, manager of the Centre du luxe et de la création<sup>64</sup>, *"L'histoire ne peut plus être apposée sur le produit. Elle doit être intrinsèque au produit et à la vie de l'entreprise; on passe ainsi du 'storytelling' au 'storyproving' "*.<sup>65</sup>

*"Le storytelling que nous connaissons narre avec créativité et émotion l'histoire d'une maison de luxe. Mais ce storytelling se transforme et met de plus en plus l'accent sur des valeurs plutôt que sur des objets ostentatoires."*<sup>66</sup> Storytelling is a pure and simple underlying trend of the luxury industry, able to mash the tradition with the modernity, the business logic with consumers' feelings, making people more receptive towards the brand. Moreover, the trend has evolved: before luxury storytelling used to stage some pieces of a collection, whereas now it underlines the fashion house and company own values. Luxury brands promote less and less an emblematic product, symbol of an ostentatious luxury, and prefer being focused on their genetic heritage. Thanks to storytelling, there's a marketing dematerialization.<sup>67</sup>

---

<sup>63</sup> L. Capoferri, *Le storytelling des grandes marques de luxe*, April 2017, in <http://adworld.iscomdigital.com/2017/04/07/storytelling-de-luxe>

<sup>64</sup> The *Centre du luxe et de la création* is a think tank of strategic, prospective and advisory analysis, that every year organizes a luxury summit. The 16<sup>th</sup> edition, which took place last January, was about the new values in the luxury world in 2018.

<sup>65</sup> H. Dewintre, *Le luxe doit passer du 'storytelling' au 'storyproving'*, March 2018, in <https://fashionunited.fr/actualite/business/le-luxe-doit-passer-du-storytelling-au-storyproving/2018031915161>

<sup>66</sup> BALISTIK#ART Agency, *La metamorphose du storytelling de luxe*, in BLSTK Replay, November 2015, <http://www.influencia.net/fr/actualites/art-culture,luxe,metamorphose-storytelling-luxe,5850.html>

<sup>67</sup> BALISTIK#ART Agency, *La metamorphose du storytelling de luxe*, in BLSTK Replay, November 2015, <http://www.influencia.net/fr/actualites/art-culture,luxe,metamorphose-storytelling-luxe,5850.html>



In luxury companies, in particular in famous French *maisons de luxe*, we can't just talk about marketing, what really matters is exceptional creation, *métiers d'art* and *savoir faire*, in an effort to preserve rare actions, a taste for excellence and a craftsmanship as fragile as precious. In fact, the priority of luxury marketing is to safeguard the brand prestige and image and to assure the respect for its codes. Therefore, three dimensions are stressed: an extraordinary heritage, the artistic directors' extreme creativity and the exclusivity of the buying experience. The marketing means to communicate these values and pillars to consumers are the product design and presentation (also through the shop window), the communication and PR, the distribution.

Luxury marketing is unique because it develops different ways to communicate and show company values, heritage, knowledge and excellence. Luxury companies have adapted to the phenomenon of social media and the virality of contents, translating intangible elements, such as tradition, creativity and experience in visual elements. Images, videos, audios have been created to show the *savoir faire*, describe the actions and explain the creation process of a product. VIP clients are regularly invited to visit private ateliers where they can meet the creators and artisans. The storytelling about every brand is carefully elaborated by the employees, above all by the salesforce, with the aim to involve clients. Flagship stores are places full of stories, unique and magnificent palaces seen and visited as museums. Other marketing techniques are the fashion shows, the *maisons* open days and the retrospective expositions to see the heritage and iconic pieces. *“La force du marketing de luxe n'est pas dans sa capacité à inventer de nouveaux concept: [...] on doit reconnaître au marketing du luxe un talent indéniable dans sa capacité à interpréter et s'approprier de façon avisée et sophistiquée les codes et méthodes de l'art et de la création afin de préserver l'exclusivité et la magnificence du luxe. Sa grande supériorité reste dans la capacité de ses artisans à dompter la matière et dans la vision de ses créateurs, dictant les tendances et changeant la société”*.<sup>68</sup>

### 2.1.1 How storytelling has arrived in luxury: from luxury democratization to branding

With the industrial era, a new paradigm has appeared: the democratization of luxury, named popular luxury because accessible to the majority of people. The term 'luxury' is extremely *vendeur* given that it inspires a part of desires and dreams and allows the individual who consumes to have the impression of getting closer to certain ideals vehiculed by the society.

---

<sup>68</sup> G. Kretz, *Marketing du luxe, un storytelling savamment orchestré*, Grandes Écoles et Universités Magazine – Hors-Serie Special Finance et Marketing, n. 3, May 2016, in <http://www.mondedesgrandesecoles.fr/marketing-luxe-storytelling-savamment-orchestre/>

According to the author Benoit Duguay<sup>69</sup>, the consumption of luxury products serves essentially to fulfil three kinds of personal satisfaction: the satisfaction of a desire; the self-esteem in relation with the whole of personal relationships and purchase ambitions; the membership to a group representing an ideal, as well as the self-image that the individual wants to project to other people. The same author said that “*ce n'est pas dans l'objet qu'origine le luxe, mais dans des désirs humains, la soif de pouvoir et la possession de bien qui symbolise ce pouvoir*”.

Gilles Lipovetsky<sup>70</sup> determines three times in the consumption evolution to explain luxury impact, understand contemporary communication strategies and know why brands use branded content to stimulate consumers: the birth of mass market, the age of the mass consumption society and the age of emotional consumption. The increasing demand of products and services and innovative technologies for serial production explain the advent of mass market, starting in the 1880s and developing during the Second World War. The serial production allows to reduce fabrication costs and consequently to increase the offer, to the point where the production overcomes the demand. Companies have to advertise their products, valorising them and demonstrating they are better than competitors' ones: the brand starts to play a crucial role, there's the introduction of merchandising and the understanding of the importance of consumers' experience and loyalty. The beginning of the mass consumption society follows the Second World War, in the 1950s, lasting for thirty years. If the mass market allows to *bourgeoisie* to buy goods previously reserved to an elite, the following age democratizes the consumption, making it accessible to the medium class. Demonstrations of this democratization are the use of television as principal mass media, the major influence of the advertisement, the malls changing the way of distribution. The last époque starts around the end of 1970s: the consumer has the choice, is more mobile, looks for pleasure and satisfaction of his desires, consumes for himself. To comply this hedonism and the desire to show and distinguish from other people, products become easily recognizable thanks to a logo. There's the birth of branding, a new relationship with luxury and life quality that translates the contemporary brand cult.

Actually, the conception of branding is a few years older. In fact, at the end of 1940s, companies become aware of the fact that a brand is something more than a mascot, a formula or an image stated on the product label, and realize that they can have a brand identity or a commercial conscience. Then, at the beginning of 1980s, the marketing strategy of branding appears. Big enterprises don't produce simple products anymore, they start to produce brands to sell their products. The branding essentially

---

<sup>69</sup> B. Duguay, *Consommation et luxe: la voie de l'excès et de l'illusion*, Montréal: Liber, 2007

<sup>70</sup> G. Lipovetsky, *Le bonheur paradoxal. Essai sur la société d'hyperconsommation*, Coll. Folio essais (n. 512), Paris: Gallimard, 2006

regards the logo and the graphics; so, the brand tries to implement its identity and personality through its logo and its advertisement.

Nowadays, the communication is multiplatform and changes according to the public. It goes beyond its logo and products, vehiculing brand values and history. Also, the consumption has evolved from an utilitarian conception, based on the usage value, to an activity producing meaning and having symbolic field, at the point that consumers don't buy products but the sense behind them. The experiential marketing consists of proposing to customers some extraordinary experiences, rather than purchases of simple products, with the goal of responding to their existential desires and consequently making them more loyal. Luxury industry uses a lot this kind of marketing. Brands use immersive strategies characterized by a stimulation of the five senses and of the imaginary that passes through plays, stories, intrigues, images built around the brand in a ludic approach. Anyway, the access to the experience is very complex and subjective because not all the consumers react in the same way. They need to have some attitudes, be ready and open to the experience. Therefore, brands produce different experiential contexts, whose more famous are brand stores, brand plants, brand festivals and brand websites. Moreover, the brand content is an experiential content that brands communicate to consumers through several advertising platforms. It is a marketing strategy employed by enterprises for 150 years, an editorial content created with the goal of advertising and communicating with the public, capitalizing the company cultural capital. Its use allows brand to develop the symbolic imaginary around its product, make a cultural production that inserts in the logic of brand culture. If the symbolic value given by the public is positive, the brand notoriety will increase, inscribing it in the eternity.

In this context, storytelling as a marketing technique can be introduced. In fact, it derives from branding, taking in consideration some of its principles but overcoming some of its limits. This communication method is a remarkable foundation of the learning process because it jogs the memory, stimulates the brain and the emotions, allowing to gather words and images, and easily memorising data and info.

Starting from the 1990s, storytelling lives a period of popularity, extending to different domains of marketing, in particular in politics, management, life of the organizations and communication or advertising. Storytelling in management has the objective to create uniform and coherent messages to increase the feeling of belonging in the employees of a firm and, as a result, their job performance. In the early 1980s, theorists say that prosperous companies need to produce brands, not only products; ten years later, they argue that it's necessary to go beyond the brand and create stories. Thus, storytelling is a strategy very used in luxury marketing because it greatly enhances the desirability and the memorability of products among consumers, thanks to that story that makes people dream.

This branded storytelling offers a real emotional connection with the products. In the luxury universe, brands inspire trust, embody quality and prestige, own a substantial symbolic value, evoke their *savoir faire* with their history and eternal presence. Everything is underlined by a story.<sup>71</sup> In particular, in terms of organization life, it is a support of human resources. The fact to tell events linked to each other and subject to the narrative spirit constitutes an element to animate the organizational *savoir-être*<sup>72</sup>, inviting to the creative imagination. The story unifies a multitude of elements, experiences, ideas, projects, a tacit comprehension that the public concerned has in mind. Beyond the goal of sharing the knowledge and the experience within the organization, storytelling regards everything is management: it valorises the human, putting him in the relation with the company. In the communication field, it is involved in all the cases of narrative setting. Storytelling has for ambition to overcome the rhetoric of a descriptive and linear communication. A narrative communication is more evocative and salient: it doesn't propose the environment of an external reality through an agreed speech, cliché, wise nomenclature; it practices everyone's mind in situations that link the imaginary and the experience, the particularity to the globality, the personal unconscious to the collective one.<sup>73</sup>

## 2.1.2 Luxury storytelling techniques

Among the different storytelling techniques used by luxury companies, particular emphasis should be placed on the five most effective, employed to create a brand environment both exclusive and fascinating.

- Prefer visual storytelling

It's useless to make long speeches to sell a luxury product, a photo can be often sufficient. Rather than exposing a content to convince the audience, it's necessary to let the product or the brand do the talking. If the product is beautiful, original, unique and so on and so forth, it won't need anything else: a little text will have simply the function of underlining and supporting its exceptional features. A self-evident example is Rolex that on its website shows its watches, creating a special relationship with its clients, who can integrate immediately and easily with its history and values. It's interesting

---

<sup>71</sup> J. Poitras, *Le storytelling au cœur des stratégies des marques de luxe: une analyse de la campagne publicitaire Prada Candy L'Eau 2013*, May 2005, in <https://archipel.uqam.ca/7804/1/M13990.pdf>

<sup>72</sup> Intended as behavioural, social, life capacities, all things that could be defined as soft skills.

<sup>73</sup> J. Blancherie, *Le storytelling ne raconte pas d'histoires*, Espace 298, December 2011, in [http://www.academia.edu/5468220/Le\\_storytelling\\_ne\\_raconte\\_pas\\_dhistoires](http://www.academia.edu/5468220/Le_storytelling_ne_raconte_pas_dhistoires)

to observe that an enterprise such as Apple has applied this method come from the luxury world to sell its computers and digital watches.

- Develop a mythic brand history

Storytelling doesn't mean telling the whole story of the company, because it isn't attractive, consumers aren't interested to listen to it and companies can't lose the focus on the future; anyway, it's important to make the history passionate and easy to remember, maybe underlining some exciting details about the founder, the values, the successes and adding others more fictitious to attract the attention. Companies have to create a mythic image, making customers confused about what is real and what is a legend. Examples are Chanel, Yves Saint-Laurent and Louis Vuitton, whose founders, fashion designers, managers have become an integral part of the brand identity, so much so that they are now excellent communication and business levers.

- See the product as a result of the *savoir-faire*

It's an essential dimension of luxury brands, because what characterizes a luxury product, beyond the finished product, is the whole of techniques used to get it. Here, the *savoir-faire* confines with the brand history: the product itself holds a story, that one made by women and men who have applied their experience and abilities to create the product, from the first phase of the creation to the last one. A practical example can be Bulgari, that uses videos to show both the development of its jewels and the skills of its craftsmen. Furthermore, the trend and the reputation of *Made in France* is itself a storytelling of the French *savoir-faire*.

- Make the client a VIP

In luxury world, the client isn't only a person who buys, he deserves more attention because he owns, beyond the product, a privileged relationship with the entire brand. In particular, one luxury marketing rule is to protect big and loyal customers from small and occasional ones, treating the first ones as VIPs, giving them some unique and exclusive benefits and advantages and converting them in real and faithful ambassadors. An example is Ralph Lauren with its concept store opened in Milan, aimed to receive its best clients on appointment.

- Reward the ambassadors

Both clients and famous people know the brand, its values and history, share its ideas and lifestyle, love it and, precisely for this reason, make the right promotion of the brand, convincing other people to buy the product and participate to the whole universe (this is what it's called relationship

marketing<sup>74</sup>). It's necessary to invite them to the fashion shows, presentations of new collections, private events, to give them specific and special benefits.<sup>75</sup>

### 2.1.3 Luxury storytelling thematiques

Communication about luxury products employs some precise thematiques with the aim to generate desire towards the product and the brand, maintaining an elitist status and avoiding the devaluation of the symbolic value to the public. Practically speaking, it praises the brand, selling a content that makes consumers dream. Moreover, products are included in the advertisement, but they act as accessories of a story, adding a symbolic and aesthetic value to its content. Luxury companies make a promotion of their products but subtly. Customers notice the product, consciously or unconsciously, and associate it to the symbolic brand universe. Theoretically and symbolically speaking, different communication strategies are applied according to different stories, focusing on the consumer and his experience, creating a meaning. The brand and its products become symbolic to the public because storytelling help to memorize. Consumer integrates brands who loves to his lifestyle because they represent facets of his personality and personal history. Consumers are an accomplice to marketing, they believe in stories. But, to create and tell efficient stories, companies need to know and understand customers, their experiences, values and desires, analysing their view of the world and respecting their expectations. Moreover, a story is better believed and followed if a company is considered a myth: thus, brands need to learn how to become famous and recognizable in consumers' mind.

- Consumers' view of the world

Every person is different and unique, has different stories, experiences, believes, values, desires, prejudices and buys in a different way. This whole of features creates its own view of the world, its reality. *“Le [storytelling] [en] marketing réussit quand il rejoint un groupe de personnes qui en raison de leur vision du monde commune, sont prédisposées à croire l'histoire qu'on leur raconte”*<sup>76</sup>, so much that their attitude and intentions change to reflect the story, until losing themselves in the story.

---

<sup>74</sup> As written in <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/relationship-marketing.html>, the relationship marketing is the whole of marketing activities aimed at developing and managing trusting and long-term relationships with larger customers. Customer profile, buying patterns and history of contacts are maintained in a sales database, and an account executive is assigned to one or more major customers to fulfil their needs and maintain the relationship. Other website, <https://searchcrm.techtarget.com/definition/relationship-marketing>, states that it's a facet of customer relationship management that focuses on customer loyalty and long-term customer engagement rather than shorter-term goals like customer acquisition and individual sales. Its goal is to create strong, even emotional, customer connections to a brand that can lead to ongoing business, free word-of-mouth promotion and information from customers that can generate leads.

<sup>75</sup> L. Clémont, *Storytelling: 5 techniques des marques de luxe particulièrement inspirantes*, May 2016, in <https://www.storytelling.fr/storytelling-5-techniques-marques-de-luxe-particulierement-inspirantes/>

<sup>76</sup> S. Godin, *Tous les marketeurs sont des menteurs*, Montréal: Les éditions transcontinental, 2006

Moreover, Seth Godin<sup>77</sup> identifies three factors that influence consumers' opinion when they are going to buy a new product. The first one is the attention: the consumer will pay less attention to a product he needs. The second one is the a priori: according to the consumer's taste, the new product could be attractive, useless or indifferent. The third one is the style: the consumer is interested in both what people say and how they say it, he's sensitive about the media, tone of voice, words employed. Therefore, a firm's goal is to find the group of people with the same features to capture their attention with a targeted story. This brand story has to be consistent with actual and potential consumers' view of the world, with the goal to create desire around the product and encourage customers to buy. Furthermore, consumers' view of the world constantly changes. The market and its brands need to adapt to realize people's desires, modifying stories according to that evolution.

- Consumers' expectations

According to Duguay<sup>78</sup>, luxury democratization is explained by the continuous effort of the individual to distinguish itself from other people, the definition of its own identity and the need to build and then protect its image. People don't buy for a social pressure or for a social status, they don't show off anymore, but they buy for pleasure, desire, emotions. For this reason, consumers have certain expectations of luxury products. The functional expectation corresponds to the utilitarian nature of the object; the symbolic expectation has a representative nature, regarding values behind the product; the imaginary expectation has a symbolic nature, regarding an individual's aspirations, values, self-esteem, image. The sensorial expectation has a hedonistic nature, satisfying desires, pleasures and stimulating human senses; the aesthetic expectation is about beauty and fashion trends. Then, there are the financial expectation (a more expensive product implies more expectations); the social one, related to community and historic time; the relational one, concerning consumer's purchase experience. Brands need to respond to these requirements and balance the importance of each one to understand the choice of a customer, increase sales and loyalize the client base.

- The myth of a brand

According to the author George Lewi<sup>79</sup>, to hold and keep its status of myth, a brand needs to accomplish four criteria. The first one is the notoriety: the brand has to be known by as many people as possible, one condition that it is noticed for its positive qualities. The second one is the sensorial existence: the brand has to confer a sensorial perception to the consumer, stimulating all the five senses, to be memorable and assure a good place in the consumer's mind. The third one is the brand essence, its emblematic identity, the recognizability of its logo, history, values, classical products,

---

<sup>77</sup> S. Godin, *Tous les marketeurs sont des menteurs*, Montréal: Les éditions transcontinental, 2006

<sup>78</sup> B. Duguay, *Consommation et luxe: la voie de l'excès et de l'illusion*, Montréal: Liber, 2007

<sup>79</sup> G. Lewi, *Mythologie des marques. Quand les marques font leur storytelling*, Paris: Pearson éducation, Coll. Village Mondial, 2009

such as a phenomenon of collective memory. The fourth and last one is the brand behaviour, able to distinguish itself from the other brands operating in the same industry or market.

Consumers will adopt a brand with a strong identity, that respects its promises in terms of values and projects a sense of celebrity. A brand with such personality is more stimulating and inspires a more important part of desire, creating a sort of affective relationship with its public.

What is more, storytelling helps with the promotion of the brand personality and has a considerable influence on people's affective attitude. In fact, as explained by the authors Stephen Herskovitz and Malcom Crystal, the brand personality creates an effective durable relationship between the brand and the public, because it is immediately recognizable and memorable. For its part, the narration allows the use of emotions, being considered very effective to reinforce the relationship between the sender (that is the brand) and the receiver (that is the public) of the message through the invention of a story. The individual can identify himself with the brand because it conveys a common meaning. Briefly, a brand becomes famous for the *"pouvoir d'une bonne histoire et le sens partagé d'une narration. La marque de légende n'est en fait qu'une histoire porteuse de sens et crue par le peuple, enracinée dans le temps, même si cet enracinement reste invérifiable et finalement relayé et transmis par les générations successives"*<sup>80, 81</sup>

## 2.1.4 Other narrative components

As I have already said, in literature, the term 'storytelling' refers to the communication through a story and its narration, whose goal is to deliver a message. The story can be fictitious or real and can take different shapes and be conveyed by a multitude of supports, such as texts, voices, images. It is an old way of expression, allowing to tell the brand history, showing a part, point, feature or moment, adding concrete things, situations and experiences, using symbolism and imagination but starting from lived elements. Moreover, it isn't about simple communication, but it deals with emotions, state of mind, sensibility, art. It provokes imagination and affects both the receiver and the giver. The most efficient storytelling allows everyone to build interiorly a corresponding story, because the proposed story is, first of all, a picture and an incentive to project, dream, build or come again own memories and mental representations. Therefore, it's a question about imaginary and subconscious places. But it isn't a purely individual question. If the process of individualism is necessary, it wouldn't work out of the collectivity, common culture, beliefs, myths. A well-conducted storytelling gives concrete situations and emotions, experience and sensibility, singularity

---

<sup>80</sup> D. Assadi, *Storytelling, Génie des Glaciers*, Coll. Les Mini-Génies, France, 2009

<sup>81</sup> J. Poitras, *Le storytelling au cœur des stratégies des marques de luxe: une analyse de la campagne publicitaire Prada Candy L'Eau 2013*, May 2005, in <https://archipel.uqam.ca/7804/1/M13990.pdf>



but relationships. It's true, it's human. Analysing storytelling under the narrative point of view, we can find other relevant features:

- Narrative imagination

Contrary to rationalist or empiric prejudices that consider stories as something not real, storytelling is more concrete and precise than rational and descriptive speech. It doesn't demonstrate anything, it suggests globality starting from a particular background; it doesn't enumerate, it isn't employed to substitute the reality through a description of it, it symbolizes. It doesn't try to mask the mentalization process, it is based on narrative imagination; it doesn't substitute the public, but it stimulates its capacities to imagine. The whole is contained into the part included in the whole. The story doesn't try to capture everything, but it focuses on a point, feature, instant that includes the totality of the information. The symbolism plays a crucial role in the relation between the reality and the imaginary that storytelling puts into stories. For storytelling, narrative imagination is the key to success with the public. Another way to say this concept is that the entire world loves stories. Moreover, narrative imagination is indispensable for the construction of the individual as such, because he can put himself in different situations and positions.

- Narrative anthropology

It's the indication: it solicits the subjective dimension explicitly and at different levels, that one of the authors, the scientists and, at the same time, the individuals, interlocutors, readers, people who haven't the same culture, values, view of the world. The narration, the story, allows to obtain a coherence and accessibility that a priori seemed foreign to everyone.

- Narrative setting

*La mise en récit* can be practiced voluntarily, with the aid of storytelling specialists. This way is often preferred because the habits of language and expression paralyse the actors. The expert will work with existent materials and situations and will put in narration contents, events, places, characters, emotions; he can transform, through some examples, the expression, to make it live, concrete, really interesting. He can also propose a participative method, consisting in making involved people contribute to a free narrative expression, listening to both the founders and the employees, putting aside a rigid and top-down oriented communication. These internal storytellers will provide some anecdotes, views, elements that can be used to sustain each field of storytelling application.

- Symbolic capital

With storytelling, brands connect their history to their identity and constitute the so-called symbolic capital. This bond also regards territories, even if it isn't a question of reducing them to a brand or a concurrential object. The brand capacity of carrying the public in their universe doesn't come from their historic reality but from the legend they build. The immaterial component and its promises are essential to the consumption of luxury products (as well as for products or services related to travel, art, culture), because linked to dreams, everyone's mental representations and projections but also to experiences, feelings, singularity. Luxury supply, on one hand, has to present concrete possibilities of realization, on the other hand, has to allow to the client to build his personal story.

- Sharing of sense

The public can evolve and technologies facilitate this change. To address people in a narrative way, the elementary intention is wanting to share the sense. Storytelling consists of conceiving messages that talk in a living way to the subjectivity of the interlocutors, starting from the subjectivity of the locutor. Thus, the communication becomes relational. Its intention isn't influencing people's behaviours but making them present and vivid. The relationship between the creator's personality, the equipe's mind, the enterprise's vocation and the public proves to be strong and deep. The story produces sense.<sup>82</sup>

## 2.2 The role of the store

The brand perception, identity and image are given not only by the product and communication but also by the store and the way it is managed, meaning the commercial policies (how brands behave commercially) and the salesforce (how and who put people in touch). In particular, luxury brands can communicate their distinctive personality, values, stories to the public through four relevant ways:

- Corporate brand communication

Everything previously described, from simple advertising to promotion through events and public relations, with the aim to deliver a message about both functional and aspirational principles, craftsmanship, core ideas, history.

- Museums and exhibitions

There are collaborations between arts and luxury *maisons* that establish a closer connection between the two distinctive realms. Luxury brands have two possibilities to preserve heritage and honour arts

---

<sup>82</sup> J. Blancherie, *Le storytelling ne raconte pas d'histoires*, Espace 298, December 2011, in [http://www.academia.edu/5468220/Le\\_storytelling\\_ne\\_raconte\\_pas\\_dhistoires](http://www.academia.edu/5468220/Le_storytelling_ne_raconte_pas_dhistoires)

at the same time: making exhibitions in famous existing museums or setting up own personal museums, transforming from museum sponsor to museum exhibitor, using ‘heritage’ marketing to present history and values through products, past collections, famous limited editions, different typical objects become a veritable tale and entered in the eternal vision of the brand. Obviously, the final goal is to attract and convert customers. “The quid pro quo has been visibility and the warmth that comes when the mantle of philanthropy is draped around the shoulders of a commercial enterprise. However, in recent years the worlds of luxury and the arts have become so close that what was a symbiotic relationship has become a full union.”<sup>83</sup>

- Corporate social responsibility

Also called corporate sustainability, sustainable business, corporate conscience, corporate citizenship or responsible business, it is the field regarding the ethical implications within the business strategic vision. It’s the companies’ manifestation of will to effectively manage social impact problematics in the environment surrounding their operations.<sup>84</sup> Luxury companies’ initiatives in this sense can include restoring monuments or financing the infrastructure of a city, giving money to help people in need and associations looking after these ones – such as Save the Children and Unicef – producing ethically-made products, donating to charity, organizing volunteer activities.

- Monumental flagship stores

The term ‘flagship’ comes from naval traditions, where the flagship vessel is the lead ship in a fleet, that is the largest, fastest, newest, most heavily armed or most well-known. In the same way, a flagship store is the lead store in a retail chain. It acts as a showcase for the brand, focusing on experience, drawing customers into the brand and making more sales. There’s no one route to become a flagship store. It could be the brand’s first store, the largest store in the chain, the best known. It could have the widest product range and/or exclusive items, unique design or décor, or be in a prominent or prestigious shopping location able to attract lots of customers. It could also combine

---

<sup>83</sup> N. Foulkes, *Luxury brands’ museum shows*, How to spend it – Financial Times, February 2014, in <https://howtospendit.ft.com/watches-jewellery/47843-luxury-brands-museum-shows>

See also V. Chen, *Luxury brands are setting up their own museums to preserve heritage and honour arts*, South China Morning Post, August 2015, in <https://www.scmp.com/magazines/style/article/1845191/luxury-brands-are-setting-their-own-museums-preserve-heritage-and>

T. Blanchard, *Forget fashion shops: how designers embraced art exhibitions*, The Guardian, September 2015, in <https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2015/sep/19/why-fashion-houses-are-staging-their-own-exhibitions>

B. Pellegrin, *Selling fashion as art: how luxury brands use “heritage” marketing to convert customers*, Bertrand on brand, August 2018, in <http://blog.bonbrand.com/selling-fashion-as-art-luxury-brands-use-heritage-marketing-to-convert-customers/#.W4bq4yQzaW8>

<sup>84</sup> [https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Responsabilit%C3%A0\\_sociale\\_d%27impresa](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Responsabilit%C3%A0_sociale_d%27impresa)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate\\_social\\_responsibility](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility)

some or all of these traits.<sup>85</sup> Just few examples are Louis Vuitton in Paris, Burberry in London, Fendi in Rome, Ralph Lauren in New York.

Specifically, the store is considered a real window of brands' deep identity, a destination that people want to visit and that brands have to exploit to attract more consumers, increase sales and loyalty. To do this, the keyword is one more time storytelling. Stories fascinate people and are more easily remembered than facts, stories can be used to create and reinforce positive brand associations and consumers exposed to stories describe the brand in much more positive terms and are willing to pay more for the product.

Flagship stores stage products in a unique environment creating spatially 'tellable' branded stories and, in this way, contribute to an integrated branding concept. They are an amalgam of roles, including both physical characteristics (location, exterior design, interior layout and so on) and the experience the customers receive on entering them. Flagship stores are becoming the physical expression of the product's cultural domain. Customers are invited to experience contextual notions of lifestyle and identity that are embedded within the store's physical boundaries. "Brands do not just sell products. Indeed, they sell identities and experience of imaginary lives"<sup>86</sup>. Brands sell the experience of consumption. The marketing intentions are summarized in the concept of highlighting the product and, at the same time, establishing a spatial bond with customers through the cultural activities that take place inside the boundaries of its world.<sup>87</sup>

The store plays a fundamental role in the creation of the customer experience journey. In fact, if in the past it was seen merely as a place where companies could sell their goods, now it is considered a real temple, a space where they can communicate their values and provide brand experiences. Moreover, notwithstanding the advent of Internet that changes the buying behaviour in commodity and fashion market, with both researches and purchases online, the store in luxury maintains its relevance as a touchpoint with the consumer, seen as both place to visit independently of purchases and place to purchase. Luxury companies have to organize this space intelligently, setting products, images, objects, decorations and so on and so forth in a way to attract, impress and convince their clients. Thus, the store needs to tell stories. The store itself has to be a story.

---

<sup>85</sup> For more information, see C. Trotter, *What is a flagship store?*, Insider Trends, September 2016, in <https://www.insider-trends.com/what-is-a-flagship-store/>,

B, Farfan, *Retail definition of flagship stores*, Retail Small Business, October 2017, in <https://www.thebalancesmb.com/definition-of-flagship-stores-retail-2892224>, <https://www.globalnegotiator.com/international-trade/dictionary/flagship-store/>

<sup>86</sup> G. Palaiologou, A. Penn, *The branded experience: decoding the spatial configuration of flagship stores*, In: S. Sonnenburg, L. Baker (eds), *Branded Spaces. Management – Culture – Interpretation*, Wiesbaden: Springer Wiesbaden, 2013, pp. 135-156, p. 136

<sup>87</sup> M. Osipova, *Transmedia storytelling in luxury fashion industry: real vs virtual space*, September 2015, Writing Assignment, Karlschochschule International University

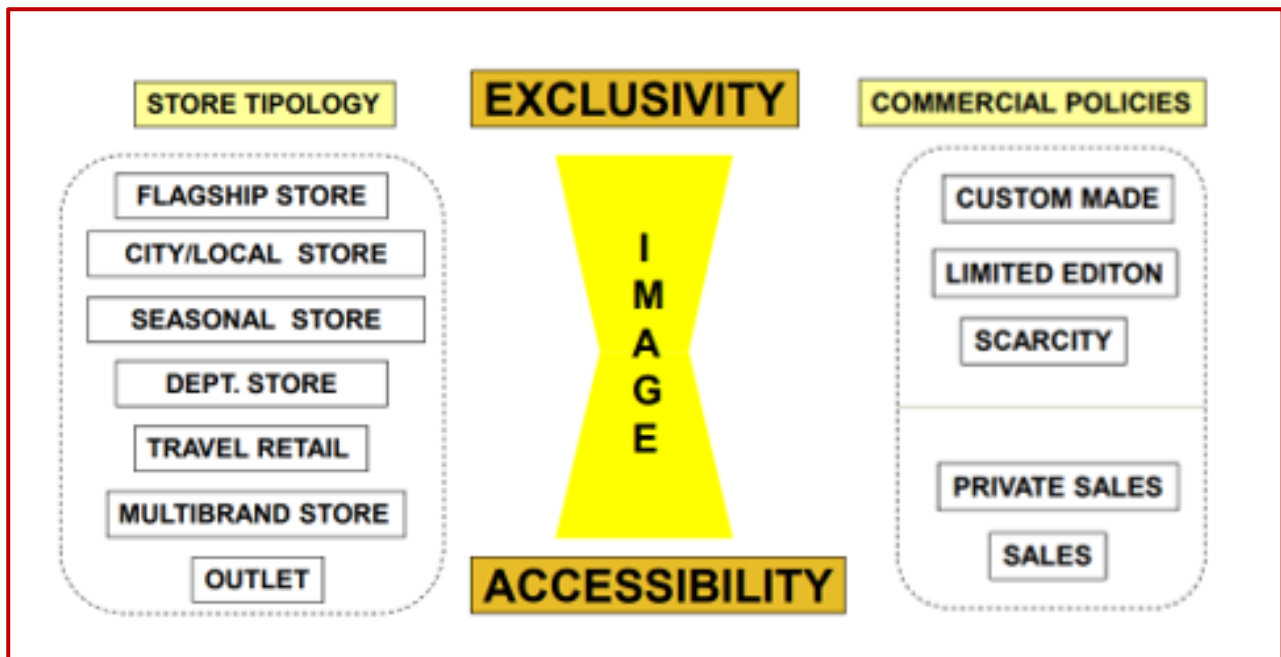
### 2.2.1 Store evolution and classification

In recent years, there has been an evolution in luxury and fashion industry, with respect to the store, bringing to the transition from the manufacturer to the retailer. This transformation was necessary, in particular for three reasons: an economic one, because a retailer can acquire the margin, controlling all the chain, from the production cost to the retail price; a more psychological one, given the fact that a retailer knows better the customers, understands their needs and desires and, thanks to a direct interaction with them, can enhance the customer experience; an aesthetic and ethical one, because a retailer can show the brand, its products and updated collections, according to the brand image and personality. Certainly, in this context, we are interested in the second and third rationales, because a way to create a deep contact with the client, improve the customer purchase experience and get the brand remembered is using storytelling.

Other change has concerned the veritable role of the store and its conception in consumers' mind: from a secret boutique with one category, it turns into a large monobrand store with many product categories; from being considered far and mythical, maybe due to the fact that it was located just in big capitals, to being seen accessible and easy to be reached and visited, because now located everywhere; from being employed just for purchases linked to big occasions to being used in different moments, even without real shopping. In fact, today the store is not the place where the product is sold but a brand declination where the consumer meets the dream.

Obviously, according to the different typology of store, the luxury dream met as well as the image communicated will be more or less exclusive, and the commercial policies will change.

FIG. 8 – Store classification by typology



[Source: Luxury Management Course Slides, a.y. 2016-2017, LUISS Guido Carli]

The flagship store, a large one with all the product variances in stock and all the services available, the local store, a mid-size one located in secondary cities and dedicated to serve local clientele, the seasonal store, a small one located in touristic spots, usually opened few months and characterized by unique layout style and assortment, and the department store, a small store or concession located in a large department store close to other comparable brands, are the more exclusive ones. For this reason, they operate through custom made – that is selling products in unique samples from a specific customer point of view – to enhance craftsmanship and heritage, maximize customer need and satisfaction and guarantee total exclusivity; limited editions – meaning small sub-series of products characterized by a small variance from the standard version and sold for a limited time – to increase the brand appealing and the product image, generate extra sales, stimulate collection; the principle of scarcity to increase the product appealing, price and profit. On the contrary, the travel retail, a small store usually located in airports dedicated to travellers, the multibrand store (also called corner or shop in shop), a small area of a larger multibrand store, dedicated to the brand with a strong layout personalization, and the outlet, a store located in an outlet complex, dedicated to reduce stock surplus of past collections, are the more accessible ones. The commercial policies employed are private sales – dedicated to a selected group of people, by invitation only, both for new products and vintage collections – with the objective of stock reduction, please loyal customers, support sales; discounts – price reductions for limited time, usually in predetermined periods of the year – to reduce the remained stock.

Concerning the channel classification, as I've explained in the first chapter, channels are coming together in an interdependent and integrated ecosystem around the customer, where retail and wholesale have a complementarity of roles, online channel is used as a support platform for physical ones, travel retail and outlets are employed to enlarge customer base and shopping occasions. Luxury companies have to manage this network efficiently. As we can see in the graph in the first chapter (Fig. 5), 91% of channels used in 2017 is physical (with the higher percentage in monobrand stores, equal to 30% and corresponding to 20,000), but the online channel is destined to grow and the directly operated stores to decrease, passing from 1000 in 2012 to 350 in 2017, to even less in 2025.<sup>88</sup> The success of a store, considered a small independent company in the new retailing concept, is a combination of soft and hard elements. The first ones include salesforce quality (with a particular attention to their market and product knowledge, selling techniques and welcoming), store climate and marketing plans (including marketing tools such as PR, visual merchandising, promotion, advertising, CRM, and different presentations and events); the second ones comprehend store layout, location and assortment.

Moreover, the store needs to be built according to the customers' necessities, taking into account what customers really want or not. A client likes and desires to touch products, look himself in a mirror, find things on his own, speak, be considered and get a good deal. On the contrary, he doesn't want to find the product he wants out of stock, see too many mirrors, find unreadable labels, be obliged to ask silly questions, face intimidating sales staff, queue up.

Also, the store localization is a strategic decision that should be considered because it can affect the brand image and its future profitability. Companies have to bear in mind the city influence radius, both in local customers and touristic flows, purchasing behaviours, competition of other luxury brands, possible cannibalization to other stores of the brand or of third-party distribution, city or shopping centre evolution.

What is more, there the so-called retail equation that explains which variables affect the success of a luxury store: traffic – that is people passing in front of the store and people entering in the store – influenced by the ability of the brand to attract people, street attractiveness and store location, store front size and windows, visibility, store layout; conversion rate – that is the number of buyers-affected by salesforce effectiveness, promotions, store layout, shopping experience, customer loyalty; average ticket – given by price and unit per transaction – affected by discounting, upgrading/upselling (purchase of the same product at a higher price), crossselling (purchase of more than one unit).

---

<sup>88</sup> Altagamma, Bain & Company, *Altagamma 2017 Worldwide Luxury Market Monitor. Millennial state of mind: the tailwind behind consumer behaviours and winning strategies*, October 2017

Being aware of these considerations, the retail of the near future will be characterized by more attention to clients, growth of shopping malls, increase of total surface and non-selling surface, major presence of entertainment, additional services, new technologies, store segmentation, attention to architecture and environment.

### 2.2.2 Stories in stores

Storytelling is a recurrent topic in the world of retail, especially when it comes to fashion and luxury. In fact, companies often argue how to define the identity of their store or brand, how to present their store or brand in a way that matches their identity, but also what makes branding so important and brands so impacting and irresistible. And, obviously, the first answer is through storytelling. But how to tell an authentic story that consumers will identify with? How to design, build, develop a store so that it can tell an impressive memorable story?

Despite the recognition of its importance, it's actually really hard to find good examples of storytelling in retail. Perhaps, this is due to the fact that brands don't see how their business could benefit or simply they sell using an analytical approach filled with facts. Moreover, it's also not necessarily an easy thing: everybody can write or say the words 'once upon a time' but creating a complete and engaging story is a little bit harder.

The tales continuously stimulate people's mind, giving rise to many positive images and strong emotions and carrying meaningful messages that won't be forgotten. For this reason, the so-called retail storytelling is gaining a great attention. It's the discipline consisting in telling a story to stimulate a desire in the audience, capture the attention and communicate a message. In marketing, it is used to stimulate needs and engage customers with the aim of creating a solid relationship based on trust. The most important brands are employing this communication method to leverage clients' emotions and feelings and increase their fidelisation. Actually, it's not a piece of cake! This technique requires a lot of abilities, imagination, brilliance, capacity to communicate the right message with the right dose of emotivity and cunning.

Today, clients aren't only interested in the product but in the whole of values that the company communicates. Telling stories with love, imagination, emotivity is the key to create a contact and forge strong bonds between the enterprise and its consumers.<sup>89</sup> If people feel connected to a brand or retailer, then it's harder to switch to another one because of a single offer. If brands are offering more

---

<sup>89</sup> C. Toffolo, *Retail storytelling: marketing emozionale che conquista!*, January 2016, in <https://marketingtechnology.it/retail-storytelling/>



than just products but actual great shopping experiences with a tailored, personalised approach, then people are going to be more loyal to them. If they tap into their heart and mind, they'll have them. Storytelling is a great way of conveying what a brand is about, of making those connections; it's the ultimate engagement and retention tool. Storytelling can help humanise a brand, educating, entertaining and engaging, creating memories that root a brand in the customers' consciousness. Stories appeal to customers' emotions, which can be another powerful motivator. For physical retailers, storytelling helps create personal interaction and attracts attention, enabling to tickle clients' senses to create rewarding experiences that they can't get anywhere else, experiences that they remember.

To get started with storytelling in retail, a company needs to identify a story. Is there a particular message it is trying to convey? Is there a cause it believes in? Is there something unique about its products? Does it have an ethical or sustainability mission? Does it have a long and interesting heritage? Is there something interesting about its store designs and visual merchandising? Whatever the story is, it needs to be real, believable but with something extraordinary, easy to tell and to remember, with credible and interesting characters, a simple meaning and a precise goal, able to attract, persuade and provoke emotions. Simplicity sells: the simpler the story, the more people will understand the message. Once the company knows the story, it has to tell it, making customers part of the story, making clear the value brought.<sup>90</sup>

If a brand can tell a great story, creating an emotional link with customers, then it will be remembered for it. Retail storytelling is one of the most critical factors in creating a great experience for the customer, transforming the brand to a lifestyle choice; it generates a sense of belonging in the customer and makes him feel part of something big and important. When customers discover a good story, they will want to share it with everybody, become a part of it, fight for its cause, participate to its reality, promises, challenges, higher standards, live the dream and, finally, buy.

Here some general guidelines brands must follow for a successful retail storytelling, with the main goal of delivering a superior customer experience:

- Attract customer's attention

A great place to start the offline storytelling is the window display, the first point of non-digital interaction of the brand with the customer. This is a way for brands to create the right amount of curiosity in the customer and make him enter the store.

---

<sup>90</sup> C. Trotter, *How storytelling can improve your retail business*, Insider trends, March 2017, in <https://www.insider-trends.com/everything-you-need-to-know-about-storytelling-in-retail/>

- Make information more memorable

Storytelling is based on the idea that people remember information better when it is told as a story rather than presented with a list of facts. The higher the connect, the greater the experience.

- Make people aware of the brand

Storytelling helps brands achieve that iconic element of recall among customers. Brands that immerse the customer in their story are more memorable and profitable.

- Humanise the brand

Storytelling gives the brand a voice and moves it away from the image of a retail entity. The personality makes the brand more human and allows the customer to connect with the brand on a more personal level.

- Educate customers

Facts might tend to overwhelm the customer, hence imparting information through a storytelling format will help get the point across.

- Engage customers

Storytelling makes customers feel involved, a part of the brand, and hence inspiring them to the next step in the retail journey becomes a natural course of progression. This is especially important because people are loyal to people, not to products. People buy people first. So, if the salesforce is able to engage clients, there will be the creation of a solid relationship between consumers and the brand.

- Build customer loyalty

Storytelling helps in building a trusting relationship with the customer, converting him into a brand advocate. The more brand advocates, the more the reach increases, with a direct effect on sales.<sup>91</sup>

- Believe in the story told

When a brand believes in the story that it tells, its audience will believe in the product sold. The more a company believes in the story it sells, the more authentic it will be.<sup>92</sup>

- Empower the salesforce

---

<sup>91</sup> L. Mukhedkar, *Retail storytelling – an art of building a more human brand*, Entrepreneur India, April 2017, in <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/292301>

<sup>92</sup> Team Flagship, *7 storytelling principles luxury brands must incorporate*, April 2018, in <https://www.flagship.com/blog/7-storytelling-principles-luxury-brands-must-incorporate/>

To remain relevant, luxury sales associates can't rely solely on their extensive product and market knowledge, nor on their helpful intent, because nowadays customers have a lot of information by their own. Obviously, they should add sophistication and newness to the customer experience by using today's technology to its fullest potential (for example, using CRM to collect customers' data, learn their personal needs and consequently offer exclusive items and programs to the most loyal ones). But they must also be educated about brand's history and values, in a way that they can be the first ambassadors for the company, telling stories that will impress and convince clients.

- Go beyond customers' expectations

Luxury shoppers have high expectations and tend to be harder to please than regular consumers. Successful luxury department stores know how to target the right customers by making the shopping experience both quick and convenient. By making their customers' lives easier, high-end retailers can create endless opportunities and also attract customers that normally wouldn't visit nor their websites or their stores. Companies need to understand that they must go where their potential and actual customers are going, satisfying first their desires and then offering something that goes beyond their dreams.

- Include younger shoppers in the sales strategy

With Millennials as the largest generation, it is fundamental that luxury retailers involve them. Younger shoppers want luxury stores to be destinations more than simply transactional retail outlets, expecting to enjoy all the interactions they have with the brand, both online and offline. Having a strong brand identity is extremely important. While there are many distinctive ways luxury retailers can market their brands, storytelling is a strategy that tends to resonate with younger people the most.<sup>93</sup>

- Invest in and use technology

Not only to empower salespeople, but for every necessary operation, always while using a customer-first approach. Digital has a place also in retail storytelling. Social media is a great way to bring customers into the story by encouraging them to share their brand experiences. It gives them an active role in the brand, which again makes them feel closer to it. Likewise, websites and social media channels can be used to give customers a look behind-the-scenes through extra content and video. Moreover, there are some platforms that help transform retailers into storytellers offered some

---

<sup>93</sup> *How luxury brands can boost their retail sales*, Mi9, March 2018, in <https://mi9retail.com/luxury-brands-can-boost-retail-sales/>

insightful tips that brands can use to improve their storytelling strategy and boost consumer engagement.

- Be part of the audience experience rather than expecting them to join yours

If a brand sincerely wants to be a part of culture and influence people, then its priority should be to meet and connect with its audience where they are, tailoring storytelling to their existing experience. Otherwise, the audience members will view its actions as intrusive and, consequently, they will ignore it. The right approach is asking audience to participate in telling the story, directly asking consumers about their experiences and preferences.<sup>94</sup>

Nuanced storytelling can enhance the in-store experience, connect people in-person and online and lead to more business and sales.<sup>95</sup>

As brands look to stand out and to elevate shopping above price-point comparison, stories have become a primary asset in the shopping experience. It's the birth of the so-called 'retail 2.0', which encompasses the way in-store retail and the Internet are coming together to create a full loop of communication between consumers and retailers. In fact, it includes not only all the technological advancements, as the e-commerce and m-commerce, but also the concept that content has become fundamental in retail marketing. Retail is treated as a media, curating the merchandise every month, and considering the story as a leader of the 'new retail experience'. An innovative method is the in-store proximity marketing, that is the highly personal targeted communications between retailers and shoppers via devices. Retailers use this new technological connectivity not only to offer deals and rewards, but also to deliver original content that tells the story of the company and its products.<sup>96</sup>

Brands can no longer expect consumers to fall head over heels with their products through glossy advertisements; they need to entice and engage the consumer with a full customer experience. Consumers want to relate to a brand, to partner with a brand for life through developing trust in their products and connecting to the brand's identity on an emotional level. Brands have to see marketing far beyond the creation of beautiful products, they have to recognize the need to exude dreams and emotions.

Retail animation involves working on bringing the brand and its products to life for the consumer at the point of sale through 360° marketing concepts. It's not about placing a product on a beautiful

---

<sup>94</sup> S. Olenski, *How brick-and-mortars retailers can use storytelling to go beyond the store*, Forbes, July 2018, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/steveolenski/2018/07/13/how-brick-and-mortar-retailers-can-use-storytelling-to-go-beyond-the-store/#36370785426d>

<sup>95</sup> L. Olsen, *Brand storytelling key to better in-store experience*, October 2017, in <https://wwd.com/business-news/business-features/brand-storytelling-pmx-11036964/>

<sup>96</sup> S. Petulla, *Storytelling and technology: the secret ingredients of retail 2.0*, August 2014, in <https://contently.com/2014/08/20/storytelling-and-technology-the-secret-ingredients-of-retail-2-0/>

display in the store, but rather telling a relevant story and bringing an emotional experience to life in store. This encompasses everything from reinforced storytelling, targeted product offers, creating podium designs with strong visual impact, and innovative marketing tools such as new digital assets for social media & e-commerce.<sup>97</sup>

It's important to underline that storytelling can be used in the store, starting from the window and continuing during the sale process, when salesforce has to describe the product, to overcome an objection or to share the customer's experience (this is sometimes referred to as the 'Feel, Felt, Found' method of selling because the salesperson tells the customer that she understands how he feels, that she felt that way too when she was looking for something, that the feeling changed when she found the Product/Brand); on the company website, probably in the 'About' section, describing what the brand does and why, what makes the brand different, which obstacles it overcame, keeping it brief and real; in different events, presenting not only products, but also ideas, values, history through simple but memorable stories.<sup>98</sup>

To conclude, we all know that, apart from hidden values and intangible reasons that characterize them, luxury goods and services are those ones available to few people, produced at a low quantity but sold at an high price and through exclusive channels, and luxury consumers are an elite group who buys for reaching the finest things in life, showing off, standing out from the crowd and demonstrating wealth and success. Consequently, if people are attracted to the luxury sector as a means of telling the world a story about themselves, the best way to stand out in the crowded and competitive marketplace for luxury experiences and goods is to have the best story. Used well, storytelling can help marketers convert potential customers into advocates and devotees, and actual customers in the most loyal ones.

What makes a story compelling? In the luxury sector, it comes down to showing that a brand is authentic, precious and, ultimately, human. Marketers should craft stories that focus on how the product or experience was constructed, the rare materials used or long hours of skilled craftsmanship required to bring it to life, and the people – with their unique knowledge and backgrounds – responsible for creating it. A little mystique doesn't hurt, either. Successful luxury brands create a rich backstory through the use of many small myths and anecdotes.<sup>99</sup>

---

<sup>97</sup> *Luxury retail animation and the consumer*, Beauty tomorrow, July 2017, in <https://beautytmr.com/frank-folberth-6d382fbaa840>

<sup>98</sup> *How selling with storytelling will increase your retail sales*, Bob Phibbs The Retail Doctor, April 2016, in <https://www.retaildoc.com/blog/how-storytelling-will-help-increase-your-retail-sales-selling>

<sup>99</sup> S. Abboud, *The key to marketing luxury brands is storytelling*, March 2015, in <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/key-marketing-luxury-brands-storytelling-samer-abboud>

## 2.3 How storytelling impacts the brand equity

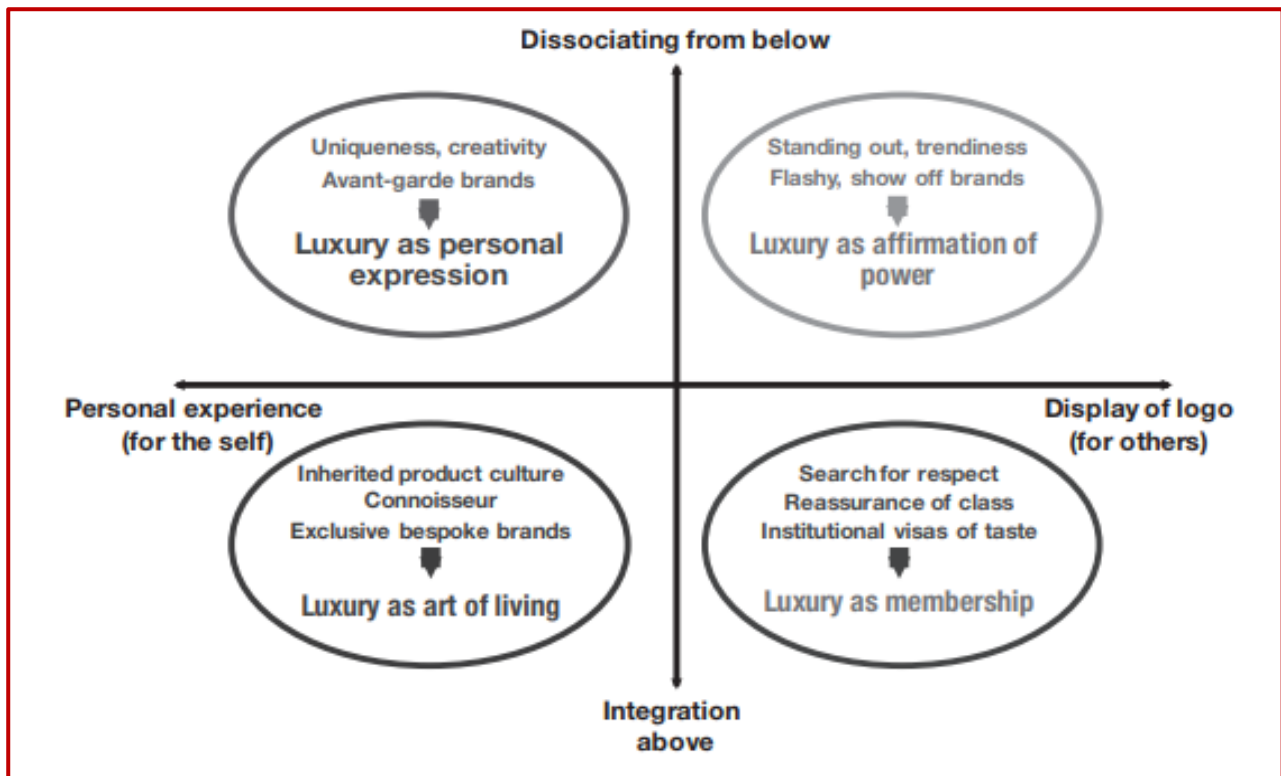
Before talking about the impact of storytelling on the brand equity, it's necessary to explain what a brand is, which are the distinctive features of a luxury brand and how it can build its own identity, value and thus equity.

There is no luxury without brands: luxury brands go beyond the product, that is considered a mere object, the visible part of a bigger world hidden behind them; they are built through the reputation coming from their objects and service within the social groups. In particular, the luxury brand is subsequent to the product, since it is built progressively, then it slowly abstracts itself from the first product which made it known and survives long after the product has gone. A luxury brand relates back to a latent social and cultural stratification and fulfils the essential recognition function of luxury, that one of recreating distance, making the purchaser someone apart and easily recognized by others. The brand is therefore the social visa, the stratifier, the hallmark, both of the product and the person. The brand is the voice of the product, it creates around the product a net of meaning who makes the product unique. The product performs, the brand means. A luxury brand is a brand first, and luxury second.

A luxury brand can be considered a real and living person: founded by a person, it contributes in some way to the creator's survival after death; its universe is rich and complex as the personality of a human being; it has roots, such as ancestors, history, cultural principles and geographical context, so it is anchored, not invented. Differently from a living being, a luxury brand hasn't a life cycle: there is no birth or date of launch, since a luxury brand is not created *ex nihilo* in a moment but progressively elaborated; it has rarely a linearity because it constantly reinvents itself; it hasn't a final death because it can always live again. The best brands today are in touch with their own humanity and the humanity of others. They listen to consumers, employees and investors and respond to the messages they receive. They want to know how people really feel about their company, they gather input and use it to drive innovation. Brands evoke emotions, they fulfil and delight, they are reliable, familiar, exciting and surprising. They are woven into people's memories, fantasies and dreams. They have the power to touch and change people because they are human creations, invented in response to both their deepest and most practical needs.

Academic research proposes various typologies of luxury brands but, unfortunately, they are mainly descriptive and lack theoretical foundations. In the figure below, we can see a classification based on the core social functions fulfilled by luxury brands in a given society.

FIG. 9 – A functional perspective on luxury segmentation

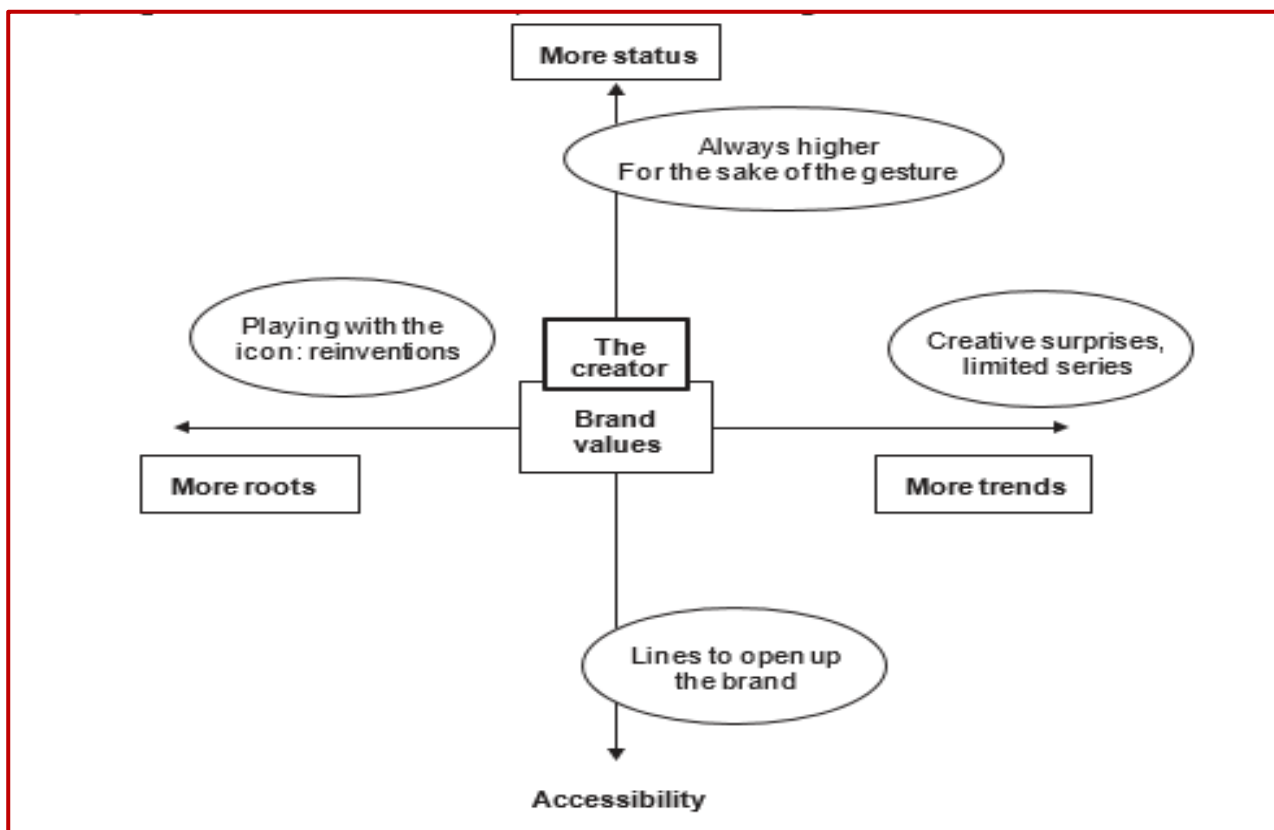


[Source: J.N. Kapferer, *The challenges of luxury branding*, Research Gate, January 2009, p. 484, adapted from J.N. Kapferer, V. Bastien, *The Luxury Strategy: Break the Rules of Marketing to Build Luxury Brands*, Kogan Page Ltd, 2012]

The bottom of the vertical axis symbolizes the need to be integrated into an aspirational class, even symbolically, whereas the top symbolizes a dissociation movement, meaning that consumers seek to stand out from the crowd. The horizontal axis refers to the need to show superiority, either through a product culture or by the exhibition of logos. Four types of luxury segments and brands are created. The lower right quadrant is the bulk of the luxury business: these brands, whose logo has to be visible, are worldwide visas of distinction and consequently a guarantee of taste. Because they are so well known, they confer respect onto their owners. They induce no risk, so the size of the brand and its growing volume of sales is not a problem, as long as prices keep rising. The upper right quadrant is a consequence of the growth of the former category. If some brands become adored by the happy many, the happy few must differentiate themselves another way. To satisfy this high need of recognition and power, they choose more expensive, very visible and ostentatious brands. The upper left quadrant also provides differentiation, but through edgy brands or even start-ups, found in selective, multi-brand shops, which prosper by discovering new and creative talent. The lower left quadrant is the connoisseur corner. These brands promote a product culture, selling excellence in life and stating that there aren't any luxury brands but only luxury products, guideline that represents their ideological, self-serving storytelling.

Luxury brand management implies a balance between four poles: the reference to the past and some icons, the pursuit of status and prestige, the modernity that gives it vibrancy, emotion and creativity, and some accessibility, as shown in the figure below. These poles represent exactly the two paradigms I have explained in the first chapter, that are exclusivity-accessibility and innovation-tradition. A strong luxury brand has to learn to play with both, by placing its values at the centre of this context and telling them through stories that take in consideration all these aspects.

FIG. 10 – Luxury brand architecture: poles and product roles



[Source: J.N. Kapferer, V. Bastien, *The Luxury Strategy: Break the Rules of Marketing to Build Luxury Brands*, Kogan Page Ltd, 2012, p. 131]

### 2.3.1 Brand identity

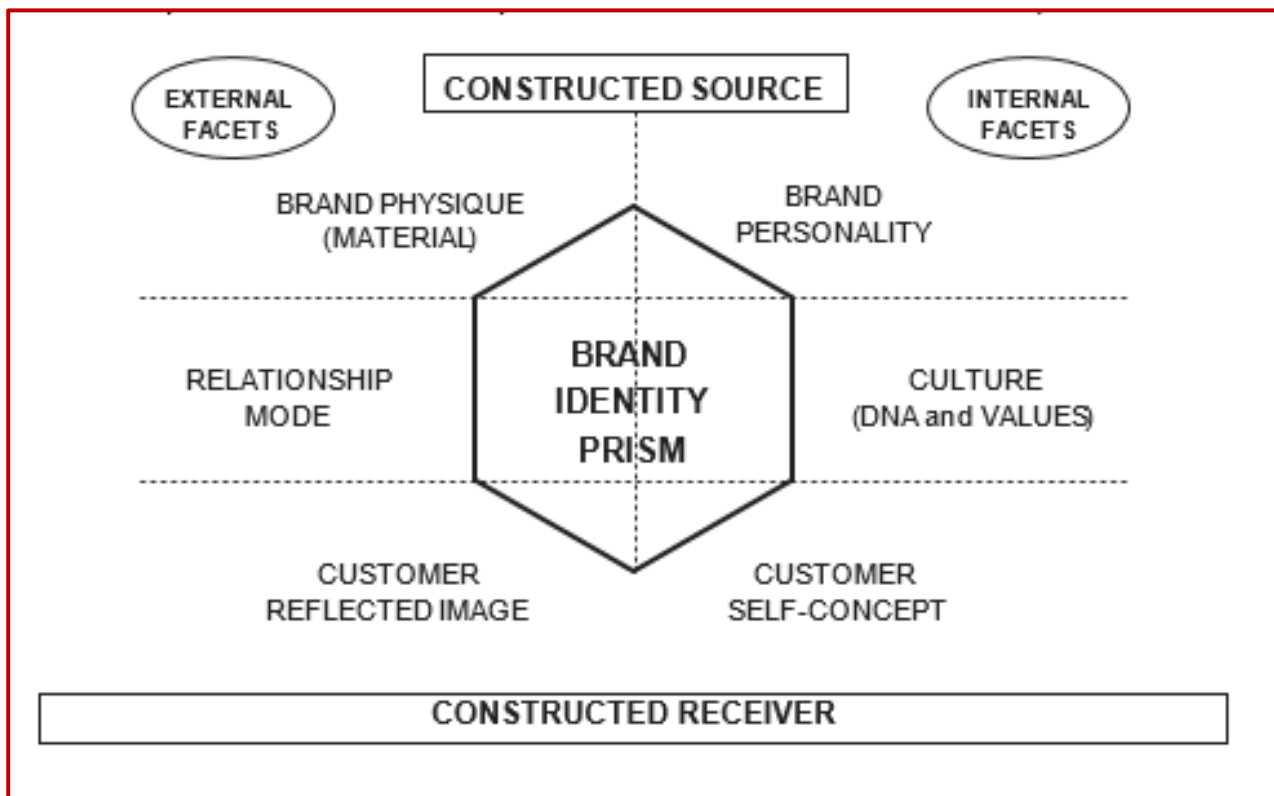
There are nine systematic and necessary elements of signature of a luxury brand: the figure of the brand's creator, who made the brand a work and not a production; the logotypes, short and very visual; a visual symbol that accompanies the logotyped signature; a repeated visual motif; a brand colour; a favourite material; the cult of detail; the constant hymns to the artisans' manual work and excellence; a way of doing things that is typical of the brand.

But the core of the luxury brand is its identity and uniqueness, built through the coherence with what it initially represents and not through the concern about its positioning and competitive advantage



respect to other brands. When the creator has gone, it is necessary to codify the brand identity in order to make it last through time. “Identity expresses the tangible and intangible specificities of the brand, those that make the brand what it is, without which it would be something other. Identity is not something that can be bolted on: it is nurtured from the brand’s roots, its heritage, everything that gives it its unique authority and legitimacy in a specific territory of values and benefits. It translates its DNA, the genes of the brand.”<sup>100</sup> It’s the whole of the elements that make the brand recognizable and finally recognized, contributing to build the identity of the same customers. For this reason, the brand must be analysed as a holistic whole: the identity prism in the figure below helps to explain the different but linked symbolic facets of a brand.

FIG. 11 – Luxury brand identity prism



[Source: J.N. Kapferer, V. Bastien, *The Luxury Strategy: Break the Rules of Marketing to Build Luxury Brands*, Kogan Page Ltd, 2012, p. 122]

The superior part of the identity prism represents the constructed source, a brand physical and personality traits. The first aspect is the facet that defines the family resemblance necessary within the brand, such as the codes and all the physical elements that make the brand recognizable. Codes are external symbols of the brand, what can be seen from the outside such as the logo, graphic motifs,

<sup>100</sup> J.N. Kapferer, V. Bastien, *The Luxury Strategy: Break the Rules of Marketing to Build Luxury Brands*, Kogan Page Ltd, 2012, p. 122

colour, pattern, and also sensual elements. They must belong to the brand not to the category, they must be unmistakably recognized by the client, applied to all brand aspects from product to packaging, visual merchandising, advertising, headquarters, used to revitalize the brand and innovate. Some important rules to take into account are not to overuse the logo or underuse the other codes, mix traditional and contemporary codes to attract new clients without losing heritage and authenticity, maximize the impact of communication and keep consistency. The more the products have a symbolic, social and cultural function, the more importance has the brand non-verbal imagery, that has to be created to express itself uniquely. The second aspect is the personality, inherited from the creator and developed during the years and expressing that anthropomorphic vision of the brand explained earlier. The inferior part relates to the constructed recipient or receiver. A luxury brand is a reflection of self offered to others, a kind of external mirror. This is why people are able to describe a luxury brand through the image that they have of its clients, even if these ones aren't present in luxury advertising. In the meanwhile, a luxury brand is also a mentalization, a consumer's self-concept, the internal mirror, that is how the client constructs himself through the brand, concerning less a question of luxury in relation to others but the intimate relationship with luxury. The middle part is composed by relationship and culture. It's through culture and values that a luxury brand creates a cult and develops followers. It's the essential facet of its identity, but it has to be analysed deeply, overcoming superficiality and too generic words and understanding its real DNA. This one is defined as the driver of everything connected to the brand. It is described through four elements: brand personality is the whole of human descriptors that express the brand style, tone and attitude; products and services are features, attributes and functional characteristics embedded in the product side of the brand; internal beacon of the brand represents the internal views of the brand, why people believe the brand can win, inspires, motivates or challenges; consumer views of the brand relate to an assessment of how the consumer sees the brand both in a good and bad prospective. The DNA has to be unique and unmistakable, connected to the origin of the brand and the creator's vision, not influenced by client perception nor quickly altered, carrying the original meaning and the dream of the product. It can be discovered looking at the founder, time of creation, original location, act of creation, early adopters and first clients. The challenge for luxury companies is having strong DNA and codes to create an image both consistent and innovating to transfer to consumers, translating them into perceived experience through products, communication, store and people. The last facet defines the nature of the relationship installed between the brand and its clients. It's the conjunction of all the facets that builds the identity and creates the singularity of a brand, allowing to develop emotional connections with customers, to the point that some of them become proselytes, ambassadors or devotees. To do this, it is necessary to make them know the deeper meaning of the

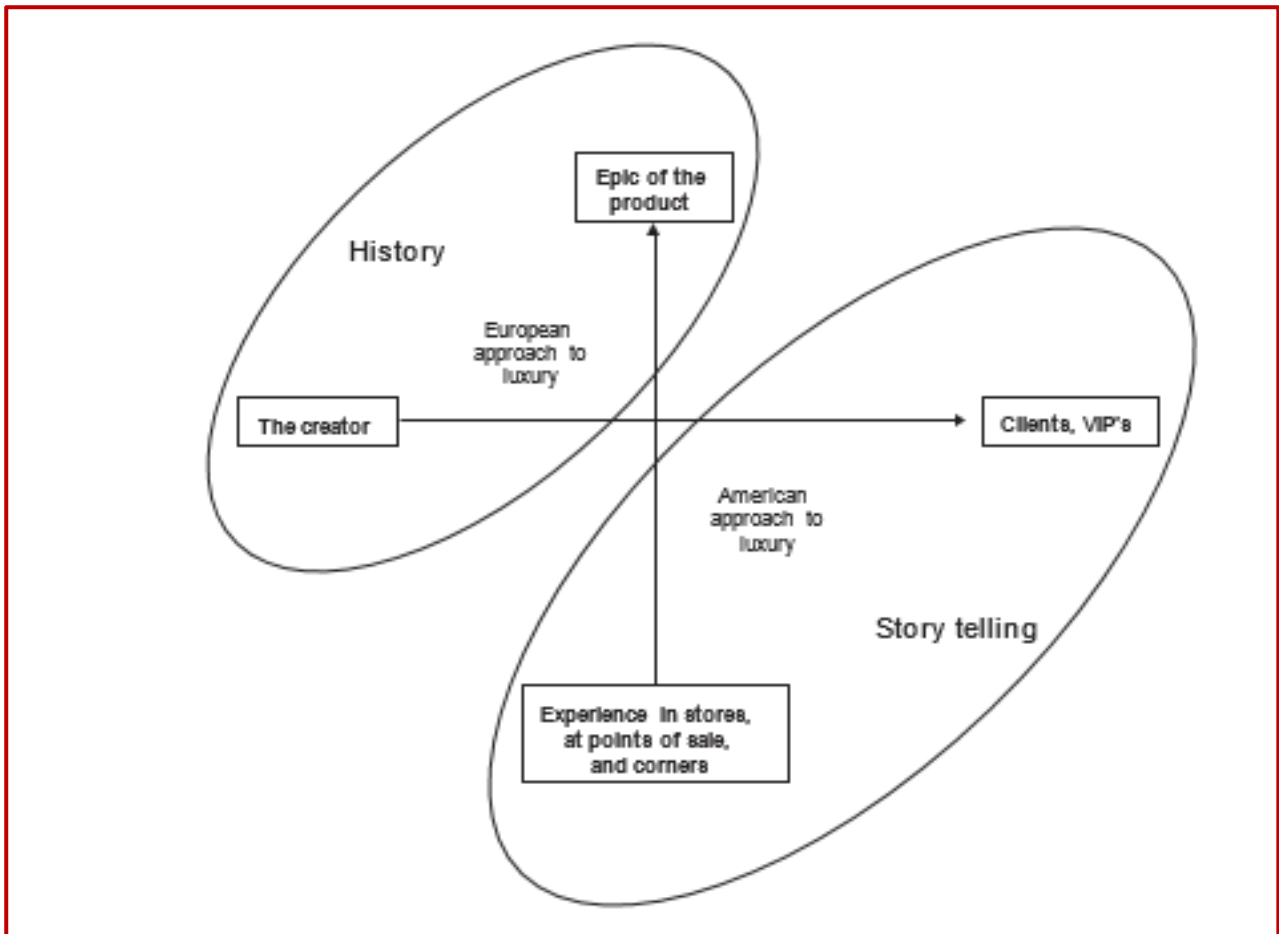
brand and its creative manifestations. In fact, the clients don't know the identity prisms, they simply live the brand products and experiences. To make them go from the experience to the essence, the brand perception has to be built up through coherence, innovating and surprising but, at the same time, remaining faithful to own identity. To ensure over time this brand coherence in all the products and communications, companies must respect the core of the identity prism, identifying and distinguishing the central and peripheral facets, making sure that every manifestation of the brand strongly expresses these distinctive values in its own way.<sup>101</sup>

Building a brand is building a unique, strong identity. In luxury, the brand perception must also be inspired and aspirational. There are two models of luxury brand building, different in characteristics but nowadays converging. The first one has a more European vision and is based on the creation of value, product quality and cult of the product and heritage. It is nurtured at a symbolic level by history, of which the brand is the modern emanation, remaining faithful to the spiritual heritage of its founder, who is embodied in a new creator to reincarnate the original spirit of the brand. The second mode has an American origin: lacking such a history of its own, it invents one; it also gives importance to the store in creating an atmosphere and a genuine impression, wanting to make the brand's values palpable there and prioritize the experiential and consequently clients' perceptions. At this point storytelling comes into play. In fact, it is explicitly at the basis of the second strategy, because stories are created to attract customers, make them understand brand values and make the store more accessible, but it is also used in the first method, given that from the history, the importance of the creator, the heritage can be built stories to make the brand more interesting and recognizable.

---

<sup>101</sup> J.N. Kapferer, V. Bastien, *The Luxury Strategy: Break the Rules of Marketing to Build Luxury Brands*, Kogan Page Ltd, 2012

FIG. 12 – The two modes of luxury brand building



[Source: J.N. Kapferer, V. Bastien, *The Luxury Strategy: Break the Rules of Marketing to Build Luxury Brands*, Kogan Page Ltd, 2012, p. 128]

## 2.3.2 Brand equity

Once built the brand identity, companies can recognize and talk about three brand levels: the trade mark is a particular and recognizable sign, design or expression which identifies the products of one business from those of other ones (the determinant is therefore the identification); the brand name is the name of the company, often taken from the founder, and also the principal name of the product (here the determinant is the guarantee); the brand equity is the deepest identity, refers to the state of the relationship between a specific offer and a demand and underlines how much the brand is strong and known in the market, (the determinants are more than one, such as loyalty, recognizability, personality, coherence, perceived quality).<sup>102</sup>

<sup>102</sup> J.N. Kapferer, V. Bastien, *The Luxury Strategy: Break the Rules of Marketing to Build Luxury Brands*, Kogan Page Ltd, 2012

According to different definitions, brand equity is the value given from brand assets once subtracted its liabilities, it describes the value of having a well-known brand name, based on the idea that the owner of a well-known brand name can generate more revenue simply from brand recognition. Simply, it refers to the value of a brand. Brand Equity is a qualitative measure of the brand's positive recognition or goodwill in the minds of the consumers considering the brand as an independent entity. Brand Equity is the tangible and intangible worth of a brand. The degree of premium that a brand can charge on its offering is a direct measure of the equity it possesses with its customers. Brand Equity is kind of power that the brand has over its competitors or the generic brands and is developed over time. It's the incremental value of a business above the value of its physical assets due to the market position, achieved by its brand & the extension potential of the brand. Brand equity can be said to be coming from the aggregate worth of the following constituents in the minds of its consumers: brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, other proprietary brand assets.<sup>103</sup> Aaker<sup>104</sup> describes these elements as follows:

- Brand awareness

It is stated that people tend to buy product they have knowledge about. Brand awareness means that the consumer already has an opinion or feeling about the brand. In this case storytelling is an effective tool to make sense of information, which means that stories are easier to remember for the consumer, leading to a higher awareness. The reason that stories can create a higher awareness lies within the fact that stories are easier to assimilate. Sellers use stories to capture the consumer's interest, persuasive and communicate information, the best way to convince a person.

- Brand associations

“Consumer who were exposed to the story talked more about the brand and behaved much livelier when making associations”<sup>105</sup> When looking at brand associations' benefits, product attributes, lifestyle of consumer, user, uses, rivalry and product classification is taken in account. The brand association that a consumer feels affects the buying decision. The associations can be how they differentiate from other similar products, with other word what feeling and emotion that are being associated with the brand. To be able to create a strong brand it is vital that the consumer make positive association with the brand, which will raise the value of it. A study gives underlying evidence

---

<sup>103</sup> <http://www.bms.co.in/what-are-the-factors-that-determine-brand-equity/>  
<https://www.mbaskool.com/business-concepts/marketing-and-strategy-terms/1860-brand-equity.html>  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brand\\_equity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brand_equity)

<sup>104</sup> D. A. Aaker, *The value of brand equity*, *Journal of Business Strategy*, Vol. 13, Issue 4, pp.27-32, 1992

<sup>105</sup> A. Lundqvist, V. Liljander, J. Gummerus, A. van Riel, *The impact of storytelling on the consumer brand experience: the case of a firm-originated story*, *Journal of Brand Management* Vol. 20, pp. 283-297, February/March 2013

on storytelling's impact on consumer brand experience, emphasizing the higher perceived quality for the product, a higher willingness to pay, a stronger attachment to the product. They argue that this has a direct effect of the brand associations triggered by the story. The story itself did not only serve as an information source but also as a way to engage the consumers around the brand.

- Brand loyalty

The reason that brand loyalty is an important component is that a loyal customer leads to higher revenues, which creates a higher value for the company. The reason consumer stay loyal towards a brand is because the consumer feels an added value when purchasing the product, that is using storytelling to connect with the consumer will lead to more loyal customers.

- Perceived quality

The perceived quality is the buyer's opinion over the quality of a product or service when comparing to other options in the same market. It directly impacts the value of a brand and product. A high quality gives the consumer a reason to buy the product and will also affect how much the company can charge for its product or service. A high perceived quality means that a higher price will be accepted and will lead to higher revenue streams.<sup>106</sup>

Companies regularly measure their brand capital or brand equity, asking to consumers four questions about brand awareness, level of consideration, purchase behaviour and ability to create fanatics and active proselytes. With luxury it is different because there's no simple consideration but dreams. Luxury is access to a dream. And, also in this case, storytelling is at stake, because luxury companies want to engage people communicating this dream dimension through stories.

Specifically, a dream has two dimensions: a social one and a sensorial one. The first one concerns the fact that luxury confers immediate class because it refers to the implicit hierarchy of society. The second one relates to the sensorial compression that the luxury object offers; in fact, the product is a source of intrinsic pleasure due to its multi-sensory nature and the epic tale of its gestation. This distances it from the purely functional world of constraints, of price-quality ratios and usage value. The dream can be also measured, identifying its determining factors and marking out its progression. This is what is known as the luxury dream formula or equation:

---

<sup>106</sup> H. Johnler, A. Olsen, *A Good Story Always Wins. A Qualitative Study on Storytelling's Affect of Emotional Connection and the Impact on Brand Equity*, 2015, Bachelor of Science in Business and Economics Business Administration, Luleå University of Technology Department of Business, Administration, Technology and Social Sciences, in <http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1031770/FULLTEXT02>

$$\text{Dream} = -8.6 + 0.58 \text{ Awareness} - 0.59 \text{ Purchase}$$

The dream is measured by a question formulated as follows ‘If you won the choice of a present in a competition, which are the five brands (from a list) that would give you the greatest pleasure?’ to remove the price barrier, since a dream is by definition the negation of the obstacles to the attainment of desires. The statistical analysis of the interviewees’ responses shows that the dream is a function of the difference between brand awareness and the rate of owners of the brand. Here again, the fundamental notion of luxury as separation (referred both to society and quality, excellence, price) comes to light, pointing out that the luxury dream is stimulated by the distance between those who know and those who can. The operational consequences of this equation are considerable. First, without awareness there is no dream: the brand needs to be known in order to provoke the desire driver. Second, if awareness is high, the dream is created by the distance between the number of people who recognize it and the number of purchasers of the brand. However, for luxury brands, a perceived diffusion means less exclusivity that in turn means loss of the luxury social driver and of the impulse of the desire of others, killing the dream. Thereby it’s necessary to reduce diffusion and increase the obstacles to access the brand, like rising the price, reducing distribution, increasing selectivity, adapting the communication: by doing so true luxury clients are divided from the false or occasional ones.<sup>107</sup>

### 2.3.3 Equity storytelling

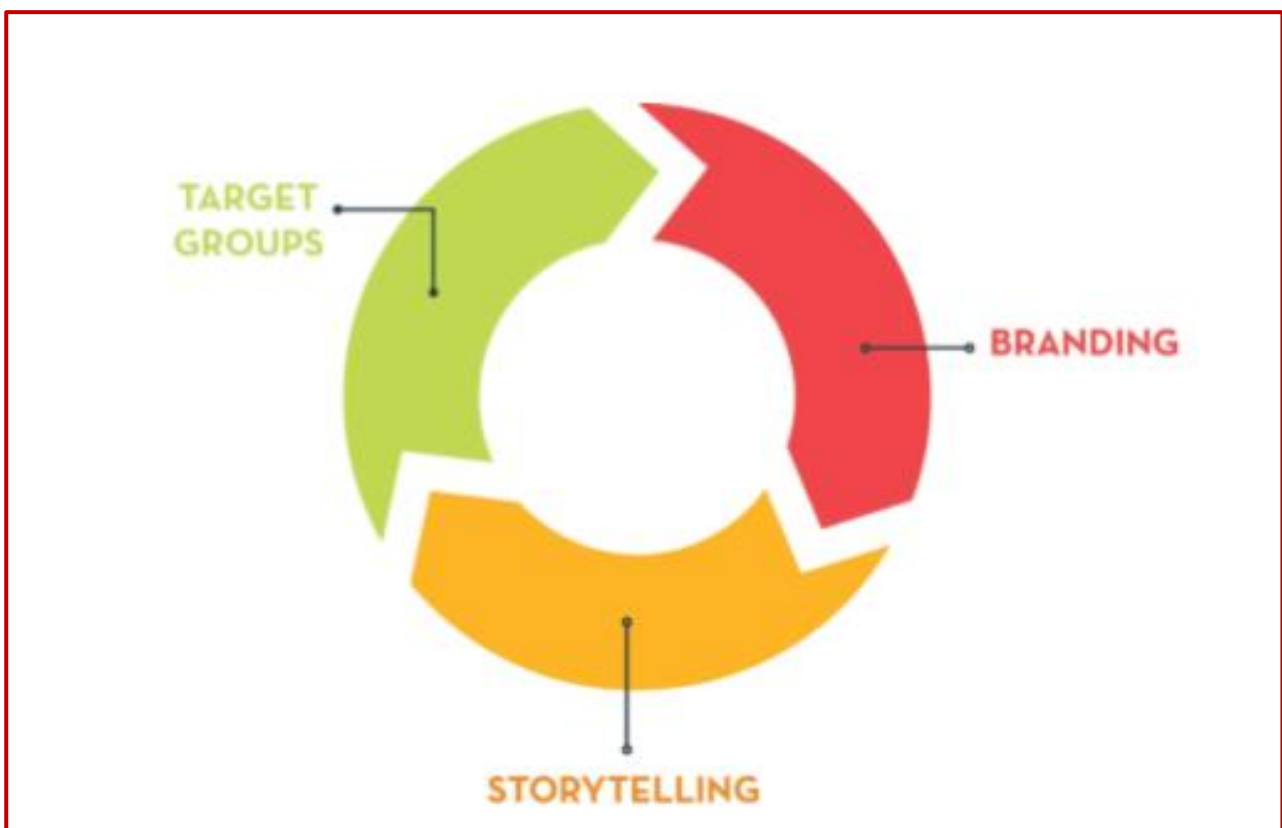
The key element of a successful company is a carefully designed and executed brand, able to attract customers, enlarge the customer base, succeed financially. Ultimately a brand attracts consumers and builds a trustful relationship with them by appealing to people’s emotions. Brands that are reliable and popular add value to the company itself and therefore create brand value. Advertising is perhaps the most effective way to gain the attention of a customer and start the process of capital creation. But simple promotion isn’t sufficient. Storytelling is necessary. Every business regardless of its size or line of business has a story to tell and it is capable to improve their business results by using storytelling to market their products, increase the products value itself and therefore makes the product easier to sell. In the case of luxury, storytelling isn’t used only to sell the product but to allow clients to perceive the world behind the brand, engaging people through real emotions and making them participate to the dream.

---

<sup>107</sup> J.N. Kapferer, V. Bastien, *The Luxury Strategy: Break the Rules of Marketing to Build Luxury Brands*, Kogan Page Ltd, 2012

But how does storytelling make a brand stronger? How does it impact the brand equity? We have seen in the first chapter as storytelling can be used in business with two different functions, intending strategic branding tool and operating communicational tool. Focusing on the first definition, storytelling is a form of branding, a way to represent a strong brand. When the brand concept mixes up with storytelling logic, the brand is no more conceived as a set of values and words that talk to the people's mind, but as a story that inserts those values in a dynamique context and touches people's heart. In particular, the relationship between branding and storytelling, already mentioned in the first chapter, can be described by the figure below.

FIG. 13 – Branding is the goal. Storytelling is the means



[Source: K. Fog, C. Budtz, B. Yakaboylu, Storytelling. Branding in practice, Springer, 2010]

If companies are able to deliver messages by storytelling to the target groups, they are able to create a stronger brand, so that storytelling is the means to reach the objective of branding. On the other hand, the brand is developed through an emotional connection with the consumer and a strong corporate culture. In this case, the target group is a means to connect the storytelling to branding, by comprehending company's value and message.

We have seen that a feature of luxury goods is the discrepancy between the production cost and the sales price and we explained that the high price, and consequently the creation of economic value, is



due to the presence of intangible values which emphasize the uniqueness of the goods and differentiates them from other ones. “Qualities such as craft processes, the high quality of the materials, and traditional know-how are evoked in marketing and advertising campaigns to stimulate consumer longing. Since the early 1990s, storytelling has become one of the major techniques to build brands and to add economic values to goods. Based on the idea that telling a story is much more profitable than having a discourse based on facts [...] In the specific case of luxury and fashion, the importance is even higher than for common goods, due to the necessity to differentiate and to add more emotional value to a brand. Something very important here is history, as heritage and tradition are at the core of the storytelling process in the luxury and fashion industry.”<sup>108</sup>

Investors pay more for a company when they buy its story. For this reason, storytelling is also called equity storytelling. The value proposition of equity storytelling can be summed up in three sentences: a good equity story turns a company into something tangible, which stimulates the imagination of potential investors, which in turn bumps up the value of the company. Why is that? The simple answer is because we love stories. They go straight to our heart, they are exciting, tangible, memorable. To gain the success a brand needs to think, creating the content for a good story, tell, gaining the attention of the potential investor, and finally sell a story, translating attention into purchase and loyalty.<sup>109</sup>

Businesses are always looking for ways to set themselves apart. While unique products, innovative services and other distinguishing factors play a crucial role, branding is what typically fosters a unique identity. A particular strategy, closely connected to storytelling, is the so-called heritage branding. In the traditional sense, a heritage brand is a company that’s been around for decades, even centuries, and finds a way to tap into this history in order to procure loyalty and drive future sales. Anyway, it’s not necessary to be a classic heritage brand to implement elements of heritage branding into the marketing strategy, because that strategy is not about having decades of history but about having some history, telling a story and humanizing the brand. Companies no longer need a legacy of years of brand equity, they just need brand equity itself. Heritage storytelling is a way to get there. It enhances heritage branding because, by making an investment in content marketing, companies can tell their brand’s story and relay their heritage to connect with customers on an emotional level and encourage loyalty. Also in this case, there are some guidelines:

- Record history

---

<sup>108</sup> P. Donzé, B. Wubs, *LVMH: storytelling and organizing creativity*, March 2018, in [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324106149\\_LVMH\\_Storytelling\\_and\\_organizing\\_creativity\\_in\\_luxury\\_and\\_fashion](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324106149_LVMH_Storytelling_and_organizing_creativity_in_luxury_and_fashion)

<sup>109</sup> V. Etzold, T. Ramge, *Equity storytelling*, Springer, March 2014, in <https://veit-etzold.de/en/storytelling-equity-storytelling-2/>

Only knowing their history, companies can tell stories to their customers. While they obviously can recollect where things began and how the business has evolved, they have also to take the time to actually put pen to paper and record the time line, dates and important moments. In doing so, they'll begin to see some common trends and identify a story that connects who they are now to who they were at the beginning.

- Be authentic

Even if companies haven't a real compelling history, they shouldn't try to compensate it by fictionalizing. Authenticity is the key to successful heritage branding.

- Focus on people

A company history is interesting, but customers want to hear stories about people. That's why the focus should be less on corporate elements and more on the people who have built the brand from the ground up. This is the true heart of a heritage brand.

- Evoke nostalgia

Nostalgia has a way of intoxicating people and making them align with certain brands.

- Never stop innovating

It's one of the luxury paradigms: innovating while still acknowledging heritage to remain competitive and survive.<sup>110</sup>

As I said more than once, stories have always fascinated people and are more easily remembered than facts. Well-told stories allow a brand to have the potential to influence consumers' brand experience, which consists of all the "sensations, feelings, cognitions, and behavioural responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of brand's design and identity, packing, communications, and environment".<sup>111</sup> Consumers seek experiences appealing to their emotions and dreams and stories help to create such experiences. Stories catch consumers' interest and convince by what is called narrative transportation. Stories also help consumers understand the benefits of the brand, are less critically analysed and provokes less negative thoughts than regular advertisements. Storytelling generates positive feelings in customers and is perceived as more convincing than facts, increasing brand trust, raising awareness increasing positive emotions and making the brand unique. Stories are stored in memory in multiple ways, factually, visually and

---

<sup>110</sup> A. Johansson, *How compelling storytelling can help you build a heritage brand*, April 2018, in <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/311178>

<sup>111</sup> J. Brakus, B. H. Schmitt, L. Zarantonello, *Brand Experience: What Is It? How Is It Measured? Does It Affect Loyalty?*, Journal of Marketing Vol. 73, May 2009

emotionally, making it highly likely that the consumers will remember them. A story also creates expectations, which affect subsequent evaluations of the brand. The story can convey positive features of a good or service, without being perceived as commercial. Based on the above, it can be assumed that stories may add favourable and unique associations to a brand, becoming a value adding asset which can increase customer brand equity. The story makes the brand more interesting to talk about and consumers are more likely to become ambassadors of the brand. They better describe the brand, the product, all its features. In essence, the story had a filtering effect, changing the evaluation of the brand, raising its value. Stories add symbolic value to goods and services, and can be used to sell a broad array of products. A good story may engage consumers to become ambassadors of the brand, spreading positive word-of-mouth and recommending the brand to others. Due to its relationship-building elements, storytelling is also well suited for customer-to-customer marketing.<sup>112</sup>

## 2.4 Differences with fashion storytelling

“Luxury is everywhere, or at least the word ‘luxury’ appears everywhere: luxury is in fashion, and the fashion is for luxury. Every product declares itself to be a luxury product, aspires to be a ‘true luxury’ for everyone... or for the chosen few. The word ‘luxury’ has become commonplace, and a commonplace word becomes progressively emptied of meaning. We no longer speak of ‘luxury’ but of ‘accessible luxury’, of ‘true luxury’, ‘new luxury’, etc. the systematic adjunction of the adjective is there to remind us that the word ‘luxury’ has become an imprecise one.”<sup>113</sup> This statement explains that there is a lot of confusion about what luxury really means, what are its frontiers and which is the relationship with fashion and premium. This is because the concept of luxury isn’t an absolute category: what is luxury for some people isn’t for other ones, and today luxury isn’t nor what it was yesterday or what it will be tomorrow. What is certain is that luxury isn’t managed in the same way as non-luxury, even upper range: in fact, there are differences between luxury (that, as I wrote in the first chapter, it could be divided into three major areas: absolute, aspirational and accessible), premium and fashion’s essences. Obviously, if there are discrepancies in definitions and principles, consequently, there will be also in the storytelling field. After a brief description of the general vision, I’ll deal with the specific topic of the thesis.

---

<sup>112</sup> A.Lundqvist, V. Liljander, J. Gummerus, A. van Riel, *The impact of storytelling on the consumer brand experience: the case of a firm-originated story*. Journal of Brand Management, Vol. 20, pp. 283-297, February/March 2013

<sup>113</sup> J.N. Kapferer, V. Bastien, *The Luxury Strategy: Break the Rules of Marketing to Build Luxury Brands*, Kogan Page Ltd, 2012, p. 38

## 2.4.1 Luxury world vs fashion one

This is the most ambiguous and confusing relationship: on one hand, a lot of luxury brands behaviour in the same way of fashion ones, becoming a sort of ‘fashionable’; on the other one, fashion brands want to share several features of luxury to improve its status. Moreover, until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, fashion belonged to the luxury world, and only then they diverged, creating a bit of a mix-up. For this reason, it’s necessary to clarify some concepts. The main difference can be found in the social function: we have seen that luxury *raison d’être* is the social stratification, to escape social chaos and imitative disorder born of undifferentiation, recreating strata according to own dream and freedom. Instead, the importance of fashion comes from the consequences of urbanization such as anonymity and unnatural life, becoming a means to make up for lost time or creating an illusion of time. In particular, fashion gives back a rhythm to time in a society become timeless, adding a cycle to a linearity given by progress and history; creates an artificial differentiation, distinct from that one due to luxury because the first one is horizontal and allows people to be recognizable to everyone at first glance, whereas the second one is vertical; rejects social stratification and escapes the vertical organization of social positioning. Linked to what has been just said, other differences concern the relationship to time and the relationship to self, meaning that luxury has the feature of durability and it’s for oneself whereas fashion is characterized by the ephemerality and it’s pure showing off.<sup>114</sup> Furthermore, going more deeply, luxury has high entry barriers due to the artisans, salespeople, creator’s know how and experience, big number of competitors, high investments and cash flows, market appreciation, high level of distribution; the market is generally concentrated, with French and Swiss conglomerates that include more companies with a non-differentiated offer, but there are also some small companies based principally on craftsmanship (in any case there’s a high brand value and strong awareness among consumers); the real market awareness is achieved over time; companies are mostly international but they are proud of their origins; the prices are high and the key point is achieving a high quality but in line with what customers want, not according to trends. On the contrary, fashion has low entry barriers due to the presence of small competitors, high turnover, lower investments and returns; the real market awareness is achieved with strong communication; the market is more diversified, with companies that are mostly local and want to be constantly updated; the prices are lower and the key point regards the compliance to trends. Talking about specific production features, in luxury, the core is the product development and the attention to the details; the time from creation to delivery is long and can be calculated in terms of months; the suppliers and

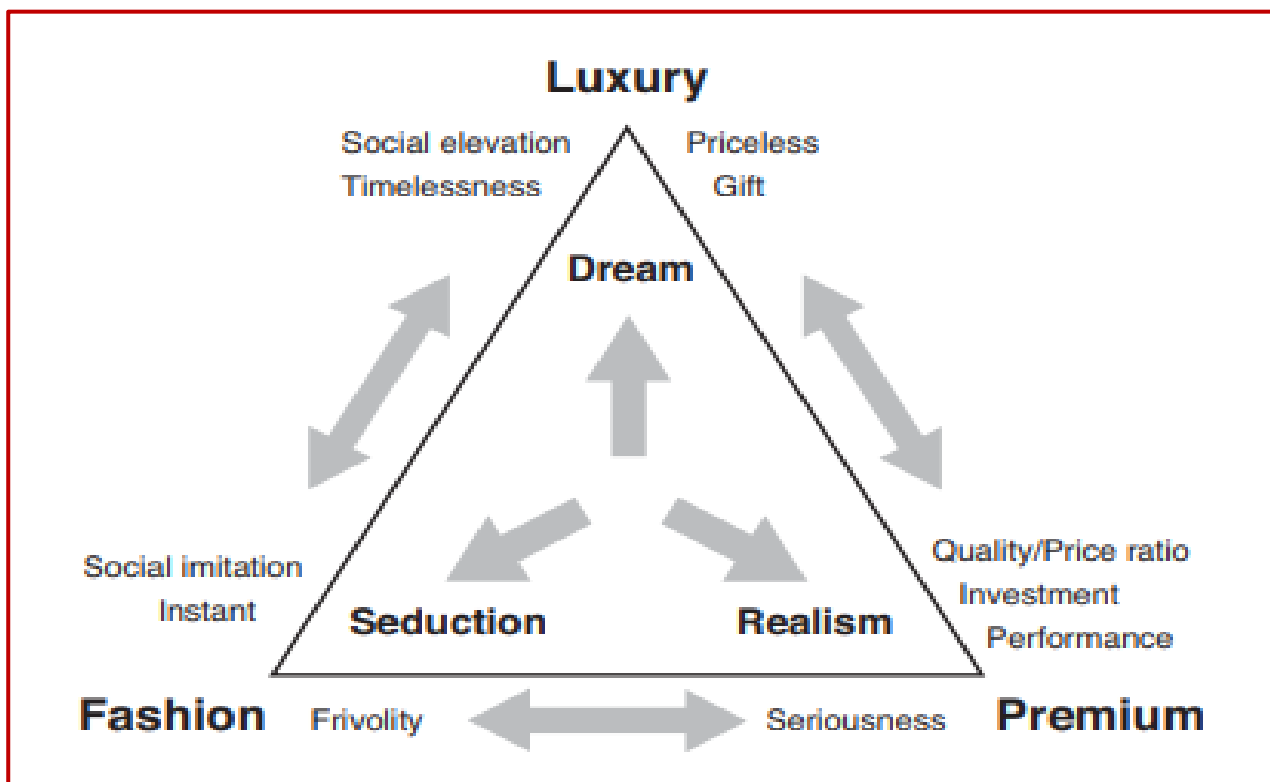
---

<sup>114</sup> J.N. Kapferer, V. Bastien, *The Luxury Strategy: Break the Rules of Marketing to Build Luxury Brands*, Kogan Page Ltd, 2012

contractors are few and located in districts; the product life is long, even years; the main skill is to improve the product standard; sales come first and then there's production. By contrast, in fashion, the core is the speed; the time from creation to delivery is fast and can be measured in weeks; the production means are everywhere; the product life is short, even weeks; the main skill is to be flexible and able to turn from a product to another one; there's first production and then sales.

Both play a crucial role in today social and economic life, for this reason it's important not to be confused. To be even more clear, the graph below shows the position of luxury, fashion and premium business models in the three vertexes of a triangle, in which any brand has to be positioned, and their principal characteristics. Although the general public might call them all 'luxuries', due to their excess price relative to function and for the sake of pleasure and status, research needs to go beyond their obvious actions, not relying only on what they say or what their clients think. In fact, an in-depth analysis of their sources of profitability, economic engines and value equations reveals three different patterns, and, more important, it reveals that only one of them deserves to be called a luxury strategy.

FIG. 14 – Luxury, fashion and premium position triangle



[Source: J.N. Kapferer, V. Bastien, *The Luxury Strategy: Break the Rules of Marketing to Build Luxury Brands*, Kogan Page Ltd, 2012, p. 35]

As we know, luxury is based on intangible values, self-distinction, social elevation, elitism, rare quality, the goal of making consumers' dreams come true through a participation to an incredible

world. It is priceless, timeless and non-comparable. If the basic product corresponds to a need, the branded one corresponds to a desire and the luxury one to a dream.

Fashion is based on social imitation and showing off; it is instantaneous and frivolous. Fashion brands are threatened by the fact of not being fashionable anymore. Their time perspective is necessarily short term, unlike luxury, which always thinks long term. Each season, fashion brands must make their profits quickly, often by leveraging artificial rarity and the contagion of desire, because after a few months, any unsold products (which are no longer fashionable) need to be sold at deep discounts or sent to factory outlets. Precisely because fashion is ephemeral, its primary obsession isn't quality. Premium or upper-range is based on realism and seriousness, calculations about the convenience of the investment respect to the performance, quality respect to price, and includes *masstige*, term that refers to mass-marketed products evoking an image of class.

Luxury is not 'more premium'. There is a limit on the price of premium brands, because they are comparative in essence, so any increase in price must be justified. With a luxury strategy, no one ever talks about price or justifies it by function or performance, because it is art. It is the price of singularity, built by intangibles such as heritage, history, country of origin. If it was based solely on tangible differences, such that every gap in price was justified by superior performance, it would be a premium or super-premium product, not a luxury one. The prices would be capped, because premium brands cannot access very high prices, due to their lack of intangibles.<sup>115</sup>

The confusion between premium and luxury is due to two main mistakes: one deriving from the fact to consider luxury as high price, the other one deriving from the accumulation and convergence of genres. Even if luxury has almost always the highest prices, also other products are expensive and premium ones can be costlier than the equivalent luxury ones. The accumulation of genres happens when one house sells both luxury and premium products, whereas the convergence of genres happens when non-luxury brands are inspired by luxury behaviours. It's easy to do a mistake! But, if we don't consider luxury as a category, denying its specificity, it can be explained as "the extreme limit on a certain number of attributes, none of which would be sufficient by itself to define it. [...] It's the ultimate version of a range, marked by all the well-known criteria of rarity, high price, sensuality, creativity, attention to detail, age, quality, imagination. [...] To succeed in luxury it is necessary to add other things, and in particular prestige [...] If this analysis is correct, the inverse strategy, moving downwards away from luxury, should work very well, since luxury would mean a little 'more' everywhere; it would be enough to put in less, to reduce prices, and the job would be done."<sup>116</sup>

---

<sup>115</sup> J.N. Kapferer, *The challenges of luxury branding*, Research Gate, January 2009

<sup>116</sup> J.N. Kapferer, V. Bastien, *The Luxury Strategy: Break the Rules of Marketing to Build Luxury Brands*, Kogan Page Ltd, 2012, p. 40-42

What is more, each of these business models also seems to attract different countries, as revealed in the table below. Most Italian luxury brands behave as fashion brands, whereas US brands act as premium brands with a good image. French luxury brands employ the principles of a luxury strategy, which since then has been adopted by brands all over the world, abandoning traditional marketing rules.

FIG. 15 – Cultural differences in business models

	<i>French model</i>	<i>Italian model</i>	<i>American model</i>
Typical brand	L.Vuitton, Chanel	Prada, Armani	R.Lauren, Coach, . . .
Value proposition	THE DREAM	THE TREND	THE LIFESTYLE
Communication	Heritage, creativity	Fashion, Live Italian	Stores as storytellers
Distribution	Exclusive	Selective	Mass Prestige, Factory outlets and Web
Excellence in . . .	Creativity	Fashion	Marketing
Production	Workmanship	Materials and craft	Mass produced, emphasis on design
Place	Made in France	Made in Italy, some made in China	Brand USA, made in China
Price level	Expensive No sub-brands	Segmented with sub-brands	From accessible to expensive trading-up
Level of control	No licenses	OK for licenses	OK for licenses

[Source: J.N. Kapferer, *The challenges of luxury branding*, Research Gate, January 2009, p. 484, adapted from J.N. Kapferer, V. Bastien, *The Luxury Strategy: Break the Rules of Marketing to Build Luxury Brands*, Kogan Page Ltd, 2012]

## 2.4.2 Fashion storytelling

The main differences between luxury storytelling and fashion storytelling comes from the general discrepancies between luxury world and fashion one.

As I have said, luxury is a transmitter of taste with a socio-cultural function, and for this reason the role of its communication is different from that one of making sales. In luxury, companies communicate to create the dream and to recharge the brand's value, not in order to sell. On the contrary, fashion respects the traditional communication and its storytelling has the objective of selling more and more products and attract more and more consumers. Luxury storytelling is all about the brand and not about the product, and that's underlines the fact that the luxury brand goes beyond the object. Luxury brands are not selling a handbag, perfume, ready-to-wear, they are selling a hope, a dream and an aspirational lifestyle that is attached to that product. Luxury storytelling is conceived to promote the brand's values, to make know some stories and particularities about the company, to

highlight the systematic elements of signature of a luxury brand, such as the figure of the creator, the artisans' work, expertise and excellence, the cult of quality and detail, the typical way of doing things, the history of codes. On the opposite, fashion storytelling follows the traditional marketing strategy that only provides information about products and just a little bit about brands and their values. Its goal is simply to give info that customers need to make purchases or even to be persuaded to buy the product. There are no stories about intangible values, mystique world, delights, no references to the dream, no particular attention towards the clients. Luxury communication uses both advertising and promotion through events and public relations, telling stories in the store, thanks its layout and the salespeople working inside, through mailing, catalogues, brochures, a little bit of TV adv and social media. On the other hand, fashion communicates stories through a greater use of TV, magazines, fashion shows and social networks because they want to reach more people, they have less things to say, they want to follow the trends and they can easily tell stories with the same characteristic of the fashion world, the ephemerality. Moreover, storytelling in fashion is not so developed, or better, it's employed but it's difficult to find data and information about it, maybe because it is used in the wrong way and often treated as a mere advertising.

## 2.5 Digital storytelling

“The art of storytelling is how luxury brands have remained relevant and have created the special position that they hold on our culture. The huge changes that technology has brought about in recent years have affected not only the way these brands communicate with consumers, but also the way consumers are getting involved in the stories of the brands they love.”<sup>117</sup> Notwithstanding the controversial relationship luxury has with the digital world, cross-device behaviour, omni-channel marketing and the merging of the online with the offline now top the agenda for many luxury brands. Customers, above all millennials, are techno-savvy, they use Internet and social media for everything, they are born, live and develop with technological innovation, they want their favourite brands to keep up with the times and to be updated. As a consequence, a growing priority for many luxury brands is expanding the role of digital, both in terms of communication, and so advertising, promotion, storytelling, both in terms of sales, introducing the e-commerce. Obviously, technology has to be seen with consumers in mind and used on their behalf, taking digital beyond the screens.<sup>118</sup>

---

<sup>117</sup> P. van Gils, *Digital storytelling in luxury retail*, Catchpoint, April 2017, in <http://blog.catchpoint.com/2017/04/21/digital-storytelling-in-luxury/>

<sup>118</sup> *Storytelling through digital: key trend for luxury marketers*, Think with google, October 2015, in <https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/intl/en-gb/consumer-insights/storytelling-through-digital-key-trends-for-luxury-marketers/>



“Luxury brands have reinvented their marketing and business strategies to adapt and approach emerging markets eager to consume luxury fashion, which is why digital marketing becomes an essential tool for the communication of leaders luxury brands with their audiences, especially the younger ones and although many of them still resist the sale online considering as a path not adapted to the criteria of the luxury experience, digital marketing becomes important in each of their strategies, helping in brand awareness, consumer interaction and purchase motivations.”<sup>119</sup>

Some brands, more than other ones, have joined digital marketing strategies to get closer, attract and connect to their customers, using storytelling technique on digital platforms. Just to quote some of these, Prada, Chanel, Louis Vuitton and, above all, Burberry<sup>120</sup> use social networks, influencers such as celebrities and bloggers, mobile devices, blogs, corporate website, videos to create an emotional relationship with their clients, telling stories in their own unique and creative voice, that one representing the ultimate expression of the brand’s culture.

Anyway, although technology and modernity are necessary, brands have to follow some rules also in digital storytelling, in order to carefully manage the Internet and to balance the line between maintaining sophistication and reaching their audience: know themselves, dream, be authentic, trust their instincts and beliefs, engage, entertain and excite their audience; use their rich legacy as a focal point around which they weave their content; keep emotion at the centre of their story; identify new potential customer groups and connect with them in places they frequent; showcase expertise in their field through content; create quality content that equals their commitment in product creation but goes beyond the product to capture customers.<sup>121</sup>

### 2.5.1 Advantages of digital storytelling

Digital and social media offer excellent opportunities for a more sophisticated storytelling, bringing a lot of advantages to luxury companies:

- Luxury companies can globally deliver a message to their customers, using high-quality images, audios, videos and highly advanced web technology.

---

<sup>119</sup> Z. F. González Romo, I. García-Medina, N. Plaza Romero, *Storytelling and social networking as tools for digital and mobile marketing of luxury fashion brands*, iJIM – Vol. 11, n. 6, pp. 136-149, 2017, p. 136, in <http://online-journals.org/index.php/i-jim/article/view/7511>

<sup>120</sup> Burberry is the pioneer to enter the social, nowadays one of the most followed luxury brands, having Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Pinterest, Instagram, YouTube (from 2009), Google+ (from 2011) accounts and an interactive social-net-working website. It closed the year 2014 as one of the most followed luxury brands in social media, with over 16 million fans on Facebook, 3 on Twitter and 2 on Instagram.

<sup>121</sup> C. Joy, *9 epic content marketing examples by luxury brands*, Epictions Blog, May 2017, in <http://www.epictions.com/blog/content-marketing/content-marketing-examples-luxury-brands>

- Luxury brands can communicate using a high level of personalization, going beyond demographics and making considerations on a person's passions and priorities.<sup>122</sup> Data reveal not just what consumers are declaring about themselves, but what they are really doing, making brands understand what consumers really want and personalising marketing communications to give them something relevant that adds value. Using data to drive storytelling enables brands to become more effective communicators. Telling the right story to the right consumer has never been more achievable.
- The luxury consumer has become a curator, creator and influencer. Thanks to social media, he has the power to influence hundreds or thousands of his peers, assuming a fundamental role. Companies have to engage and convince him to make them the first brand ambassador, for this reason, marketing and strategic actions have evolved from broadcasting, meaning speaking at customers, to speaking with and listening to consumers. Consumers aren't just invited to travel the brand, but they can have a parallel communication with the brands, communicating and being part of the communication, interacting and becoming part of the brand world.
- Luxury communication need style and substance. Heritage is central to the narratives of many luxury businesses, but it can't be the unique story that brands rely on. It's crucial to be relevant to consumers now, moving beyond campaigns or stories where messages are only being pushed out to more engaging content, often by introducing an element of playfulness that appeals to audiences. Digital means can help to face this challenge.<sup>123</sup>

## 2.5.2 Storytelling in e-commerce

Luxury brands may have been slow to include e-commerce in the heart of their business, but they certainly have been doing their best to catch up. E-commerce is both an opportunity and a risk for luxury retailers because brand value and heritage are extremely valuable and cannot be put at risk. This explains why these brands are moving with care and caution to ensure long-term value creation and do anything to avoid cannibalizing their offline channel.<sup>124</sup>

---

<sup>122</sup> P. van Gils, *Digital storytelling in luxury retail*, Catchpoint, April 2017, in <http://blog.catchpoint.com/2017/04/21/digital-storytelling-in-luxury/>

<sup>123</sup> *Storytelling through digital: key trend for luxury marketers*, Think with google, October 2015, in <https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/intl/en-gb/consumer-insights/storytelling-through-digital-key-trends-for-luxury-marketers/>

<sup>124</sup> P. van Gils, *Digital storytelling in luxury retail*, Catchpoint, April 2017, in <http://blog.catchpoint.com/2017/04/21/digital-storytelling-in-luxury/>

A lot of people once believed that luxury e-commerce was a chimera: how can luxury consumers do without the immersive experience of walking into a luxury store and being greeted by a thoughtfully curated assortment of products and knowledgeable salespeople? Nowadays companies accept that, even if in-store experience is critical to the success of luxury brands, e-commerce can be another winning channel. Online luxury sales are expected to triple as a proportion of the total global luxury market sales by 2025, reaching USD \$91 billion. Nearly one-fifth of all personal luxury sales will take place online, above all thanks to millennials. Luxury brands have to work hard to use e-commerce correctly and offer high-end experiences on web, without losing their exclusivity and credibility, always remembering their origins and finding ways to communicate their value and heritage. This is done by an emphasis on brand storytelling and acute attention to detail, marrying the e-commerce experience with the in-store one through attention to customer service and a focus on driving to stores. Storytelling is, without doubt, the most important aspect of the luxury e-commerce experience. Luxury brands are defined by their heritage, rich history, craftsmanship and design, all aspects that must be communicated online to differentiate from competitors and communicate their values. What is more, in the online world, without all the benefits of the in-store experience, customers need a reason to commit to expensive purchases. Storytelling is all about telling customers what makes the brand and its products special.<sup>125</sup>

### 2.5.3 Transmedia storytelling

Transmedia storytelling has transformed the way brand value is created. It arises when the elements of the story are spread across multiple media. The term ‘transmedia’ was coined in 1991 by an American scholar Marsha Kinder, while the transmedia storytelling concept was developed by the researcher Henry Jenkins. “A transmedia story unfolds across multiple media platforms, with each next text making a distinctive and valuable contribution to the whole. In the ideal form of transmedia storytelling, each medium does what it does best”<sup>126</sup>. If stories create relevant connections between the consumer and the brand, transmedia stories strengthen this relationship, leading to positive attitudes, higher purchase intent and greater loyalty. They build consumer awareness, comprehension, empathy, recall and meaning, facilitating consumer interaction and integration of personal experiences. They create new nodes and links in memory, inducing stronger self-brand connections

---

<sup>125</sup> G. Shaoorian, *The luxury -ecommerce experience: what can small businesses learn from brands like Burberry and Gucci*, Forbes, March 2017, in <https://www.forbes.com/sites/gabrielshaoorian/2017/03/27/the-luxury-ecommerce-experience-what-can-small-businesses-learn-from-brands-like-burberry-and-gucci/#74f950797fbc>

<sup>126</sup> H. Jenkins, *Convergence culture: where old and new media collide*, New York and London, NY: University Press, 2006, pp. 95-96

so that consumers form more favourable evaluations, have a greater likelihood of purchase and greater commitment to the brand.

What makes transmedia storytelling possible is the so-called media convergence. Generally speaking, convergence is “an umbrella term that refers to the new textual practices, branding and marketing strategies, industrial arrangements, technological synergies, and audience behaviours, enabled and propelled by the emergence of digital media”<sup>127</sup>. In this context, convergence refers to “the flow of media across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behaviour of media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want.”<sup>128</sup>. Going deeply, it relates to the shift from the traditional models of audience interaction through medium-specific content to content flowing across multiple channels, digital networked technology, increased interdependence of communication systems and multiple modalities of accessing content. Moreover, it reflects a cultural mood: social networks and electronic devices made digital communication possible and brought a convergence between the old and new ways of telling stories and distributing content; it’s consumer-centric and participatory, at a time where customers look for new information and make connections across various media.

It’s important to underline that, in transmedia storytelling, the same stories aren’t repeated in different media, but different elements of the story are dispersed across different media platforms, each making a unique contribution to the whole, that is to a story that is so big or complex it can’t be told with one medium. Transmedia storytelling delivers all of the benefits of storytelling, such as awareness, involvement, participation, creating empathy, conveying brand meaning, and amplifies them. It offers a multi-faceted story where consumers are more interactive, have more contact, use more platforms, are more engaged, manifest deeper self-brand connections and develops his own branded content. In fact, the different modalities allow the user to continue the story, even transforming him in a character of the story or in a brand ambassador.

Ilhan<sup>129</sup> defines transmedia in several ways. First, there is transmedia as intertextuality, that is connections between texts, in particular the original work, secondary texts making reference to the first text and tertiary texts focusing on meaning. Second there is transmedia as extension: it offers different stories through different media or access points for different users. Third there is transmedia as a systematic and coordinated process, whose stories expand into even more stories across different

---

<sup>127</sup> M. Kackman, M. Binfield, M. T. Payne, A. Perlman, B. Sebok, *Flow TV: television in the age of media convergence*, New York, NY: Routledge, 2010, p.1

<sup>128</sup> H. Jenkins, *Convergence culture: where old and new media collide*, New York and London, NY: University Press, 2006, p.2

<sup>129</sup> B. Ilhan, *Transmedia consumption experiences: consuming and co-creating interrelated stories across media*, Doctoral Dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2011, in <https://www.ideals.illinois.edu/handle/2142/26398>

media. Fourth there is transmedia as a unified narrative since there's a single driver across all texts that keeps everything in harmony.<sup>130</sup> Transmedia storytelling stimulates the collective intelligence of clients and brands to work together to deepen and map the stories across different media and from many different perspectives. The value of transmedia is that it encompasses not only cross-platform storytelling but also allows the audience to participate in the storytelling. A diverse mix of digital technologies enables people to get involved more fully in shaping the brand. Obviously, to engage consumers, companies need to motivate them, with elements such as surprise and newness to maintain their interest. Transmedia storytelling contributes to raising brand awareness and improving perception of brand image. Anyway, despite the beneficial effects this strategy brings, brands need to be aware of communication processes involving social platforms to protect their brand reputation.<sup>131</sup>

## 2.6 Are luxury brands failing in their storytelling? Is storytelling dead?

Despite the evidence that storytelling still exists and luxury brands use it as a business strategy, considering it valid nowadays as well as in the past, towards millennials as well as older generations, and notwithstanding different researches and studies confirm its influence on purchasing behaviour, some people have a bad consideration. Certain people think that it's useless because consumers don't have time to pay attention to brands' stories. Other think that today companies employ it in a wrong manner. In any case, they regard storytelling as dead.

"It's time to stop pinning our marketing and communications strategies around storytelling. Stories take time, and time is our greatest luxury. If most consumers can't afford the luxury of diving deep into your brand story, is a long-winded narrative about heritage and craftsmanship the right strategy? Of course not. [...] One final nail in the coffin for storytelling: it can be downright dangerous for your brand. We live in the era of transparency and access, so it's easier than ever for consumers to sniff out inauthentic back stories and eyebrow-raising claims".<sup>132</sup>

This negative point of view is based on two assumptions: stories are invented, false, at most half-true, used to surprise unaware clients; stories are full of words that simply annoy the listener. Anyway, we know that it is not real: stories can be fictitious, but they aren't solely a pure invention, there's a world behind. If brands don't have a story, they can create it, but in most cases these tales regard some peculiarities about the company's history, founder, values, famous products, so they are realistic and

---

<sup>130</sup> N. Granitz, H. Forman, *Building self-brand connections: Exploring brand stories through a transmedia perspective*, Journal of Brand Management, Vol. 22, pp. 38-59, March 2015

<sup>131</sup> M. Osipova, *Transmedia storytelling in luxury fashion industry: real vs virtual space*, September 2015

<sup>132</sup> B. Jiva, *Is brand storytelling dead?*, Bernardette Jiva's The story of telling, July 2015, in <https://thestoryoftelling.com/is-storytelling-dead/>

substantial. By the way, stories aren't copies. Moreover, a story can be told or not: it's what people believe when they come across a brand, the impressions and assumptions created after each interaction. Customers understand and are engaged with a story even if they don't consciously pay attention; as long as humans are in possession of any one of their five senses, stories will survive. Stories exist also before the transformation in words and images: products, pricing, packaging, location choices, user experience, staff are all part of a story; every action tells a story. Brands don't tell simply a story and customers simply don't listen to it: everybody lives stories.<sup>133</sup>

Other theory is that luxury companies talk about dreams, imagination, history and heritage, but they are bad in telling their stories.

“One would think that, once digital media liberated storytelling from the confines of video and print, the luxury industry would rush to seduce customers with its rich tales. Archives would be opened, books would be dusted and dreams unleashed. Luxury brands would finally have the opportunity to weave the fabric of their fables in an interactive, immersive and compelling way, across all customer touchpoints. They would participate in a larger cultural conversation and provide their audiences with references, inspiration and lifestyle ammunition unmatched by any other industry. This hasn't happened. Instead of a brand spirit speaking the language of modern audience, we got content strategy. Instead of a brand point of view expressed through enduring aesthetics, we got temporary campaigns shot by the latest photographer du jour. Instead of being inspired to tell their own stories, we got influencer marketing programmes.”<sup>134</sup>

In this case, the assumption is that content strategy has replaced brand stories. But the mistake is that nobody said or wanted that content strategy takes the place of all the world existing behind a story, starting from the founder's vision and passion that captivated the first clients. Content marketing is only a strategy to tell stories in an efficient, convincing and memorable way.

The same philosophy affirms that luxury brands in the past were able to tell stories, whereas talented companies in this field today represent an exception. These successful brands build their business on the direct relationship with their customer, using relevant stories to evoke the spirit of their founder, turning them into modern culture.<sup>135</sup>

However, as we're going to see in the next chapter, lots of luxury companies employ storytelling as a tactic to attract consumers, increase their loyalty towards the brand and consequently sales.

---

<sup>133</sup> B. Jiva, *Is brand storytelling dead?*, Bernardette Jiva's The story of telling, July 2015, in <https://thestoryoftelling.com/is-storytelling-dead/>

<sup>134</sup> A. Andjelic, *Luxury brands are failing in their storytelling*, The Guardian, November 2015, in <https://www.theguardian.com/media-network/2015/nov/23/luxury-brands-marketing-failing-storytelling>

<sup>135</sup> A. Andjelic, *Luxury brands are failing in their storytelling*, The Guardian, November 2015, in <https://www.theguardian.com/media-network/2015/nov/23/luxury-brands-marketing-failing-storytelling>

Furthermore, luxury customers like storytelling, know some stories and wish to hear other ones. In particular, some interviews revealed that consumers with stronger brand connections prefer stories focused on the brand's experiential value, told through interactive media, whereas consumers with weaker brand attachments prefer stories about the utilitarian dimensions of the brand, told through more traditional media. On one hand, consumers would like to hear stories about brand's commitment, history, product reliability, philanthropy and other customers' experiences, through media such as websites, social networks and news media. On the other hand, the kind of stories that consumers know can be divided in two groups: organizational ones, focusing on company/brand's history, founders and what differentiates the brand from other brands; personal experience ones, concerning product reliability, the relationship between a client and the brand, family and friends' connections to the brand. These stories are learnt thanks to word of mouth, corporate website, brand usage, social media, news and traditional ads.<sup>136</sup>

By the way, the theory about the usefulness or futility of storytelling will be discussed in the last chapter, with a personal research aimed to verify its importance as a business strategy and examine customers' consideration towards it.

---

<sup>136</sup> N. Granitz, H. Forman, *Building self-brand connections: Exploring brand stories through a transmedia perspective*, Journal of Brand Management, Vol. 22, pp. 38-59, March 2015

# Chapter 3

## STORYTELLING IN PRACTICE

“Stories have power.  
They delight, enchant, touch, teach,  
recall, inspire, motivate, challenge.  
They help us understand.  
They imprint a picture on our minds.  
Want to make a point or raise an issue?  
Tell a story”  
[Janet Litherland<sup>137</sup>]

### 3.1 Examples of important luxury storytelling

“Opulence. Extravagance. Desire. Luxury brands have these three words and the emotions derived by them at the heart of their positioning. But what does that translate to, for present day marketing where purchase boundaries are no longer limited by geography?”<sup>138</sup> The answer is using unique storytelling techniques to create and tell riveting stories. Nowadays these stories can be spread through Internet, using both company website and social media, the store layout and the salespeople, the advertising through traditional media such as TV but also contemporary media such as display ads, the promotion through events, public relations but also catalogues & brochures and mailing. The means is often different according to the typology of customer that luxury companies want to reach. Anyway, it doesn't matter the tool or the way in which the story is told, what matters is simply telling that story. Every luxury brand has a story to tell. Often they even have many stories, regarding the codes used, the founder, a renowned product, the brand name and so on and so forth. Some of these stories are well-known, other are unfamiliar but really impressive. *“Les grandes marques aiment nous raconter des histoires. Et nous, souvent, nous aimons les écouter! Nous entrons dans le monde du storytelling et de la communication narrative, là où une mise en scène subtile permet à l'entreprise de générer les émotions fortes qui rendront ses clients plus réceptifs à sa marque, malgré eux.”*<sup>139</sup>

---

<sup>137</sup> Janet Litherland is a master weaver of stories that span time and space to marry history and modern sensibilities. Formerly a professional actor, singer, dancer, she is an author of novels, music/drama-related scripts, nonfiction books, numerous articles and stories for national magazines, professor in creative writing, editor and writing coach.

<sup>138</sup> C. Joy, *9 epic content marketing examples by luxury brands*, Epictions Blog, May 2017, in <http://www.epictions.com/blog/content-marketing/content-marketing-examples-luxury-brands>

<sup>139</sup> C. Volery, *Un exemple de storytelling? Les belles histoires que les marques racontent à leurs clients*, Plus Sept, in <https://www.plussept.com/blog/exemple-de-storytelling/>



Most luxury brands understood that a powerful and evocative narration is the starting point for a strategy of content marketing, thus using different means to do storytelling, including digital platforms.<sup>140</sup>

Hermès translates a product to an experience: its website, blog, videos, collections, events, store engage the customer; every step forward in the exploration brings him closer to each creation and leads to a seamless purchase experience. Chanel uses content and visual storytelling to essay its rich legacy to the audience: it tells explicitly its stories; its website, through the section ‘Inside Chanel’, is all about storytelling; with videos, images and words that make customers feel part of an exclusive club, of a privileged world, this sacred temple describes the identity of a brand that crossed the history but remains timeless. Tiffany showcases its legacy and creates a romance: the purchase is all about emotion, nothing says happily-ever-after like a perfect little blue Tiffany box. Burberry goes where its audience is through different digital social platforms, films and campaigns characterized by user generated content, a strategy that allows to make customers participate in conversations about the brand, engaging them. Dior translates the product to art, using content to make product creation an artistic experience. Rolex extends the brand philosophy, goes beyond the product to identify wearer persona and create content and directly appeal to its audience. Louis Vuitton becomes a publisher with videos, events, happenings, campaigns, stories, high-quality images; with the introduction of shoppable videos, the new frontier of e-commerce, the brand allows customers to see products, click and directly buy them. Patek Philippe in its website showcases its expertise, mixing up tradition and innovation.<sup>141</sup>

In the next subparagraphs, I’m going to describe some particular stories that have made famous the brands chosen. I chose Hermès, Chanel, Rolex, Bulgari and Louis Vuitton because they understood the real importance of storytelling, making it an indispensable everyday strategy. I also tried to vary, both in terms of geography and in terms of products divisions, with the result of having three French brands, one Italian with Greek origins and one Swiss, three specialized in leather, ready-to-wear and accessories, one in jewellery and one in watches.<sup>142</sup>

---

<sup>140</sup> I want to remember the difficult relationship that luxury has with the digital world. In fact, the last one is too ‘accessible’ and ‘democratic’, opposing to the exclusivity of luxury. Anyway, today society lives and develops thanks to Internet, the customers demand even more digitalised things, so also luxury companies have to adapt to this context and use, at least in part, these means to involve their clients. Some luxury companies have already understood this compromise and their channels are converging.

<sup>141</sup> C. Joy, *9 epic content marketing examples by luxury brands*, Epictions Blog, May 2017, in <http://www.epictions.com/blog/content-marketing/content-marketing-examples-luxury-brands>  
M. Farese, *4 brillanti esempi di content marketing nella moda*, April 2016, in <http://www.yourbrand.camp/marketing-camp/fashion-travel/4-brillanti-esempi-di-content-marketing-nella-moda>

<sup>142</sup> Obviously, I reported only the most interesting and memorable stories about these brands. In reality there are many more stories: just go on their websites, pay attention to their promotion and advertising, visit their stores, listen to their salespeople... to discover the other ones!

### 3.1.1 Hermès

Hermès International S.A., or simply Hermès, is a French high fashion luxury goods manufacturer established in 1837. It specializes in leather, lifestyle accessories, home furnishings, perfumery, jewellery, watches and ready-to-wear. Its logo, since the 1950s, is of a Duc carriage with horse and its colour is orange. By 2008, Hermès had 14 product divisions that encompassed leather, scarves, ties, men's and women's wear, perfume, watches, stationery, footwear, gloves, enamelware, decorative arts, tableware and jewellery, with sales composed by about 30% leather goods, 15% clothes, 12% scarves, and 43% other wares. In 2016, the company had €5,202.2 million revenues.

In 1837, Thierry Hermès first established a harness and saddle workshop, dedicated to serving European noblemen. He created high-quality wrought harnesses and bridles for the carriage trade. His son Charles-Émile took over management from his father in 1880 and moved the shop to 24 rue du Faubourg Saint-Honoré, where it remains. With the help of his sons Adolphe and Émile-Maurice, Charles-Émile introduced saddlery and started selling his products retail. The company catered to the élite of Europe, North Africa, Russia, Asia, and the Americas. After Charles-Émile Hermès's retirement, sons Adolphe and Émile-Maurice took leadership and renamed the company Hermès Frères. Throughout the 1920s when he was the sole head of the firm, Émile-Maurice added accessories and clothing collections. He also groomed his three sons-in-law Robert Dumas, Jean-René Guerrand and Francis Puech as business partners. During the 1930s, Hermès introduced some of its most recognized original goods such as the leather '*Sac à dépêches*' in 1935 (later renamed the 'Kelly bag' after Grace Kelly) and the Hermès *carrés* (square scarves) in 1937. In 1949, the first perfume, '*Eau d'Hermès*', was produced. Robert Dumas-Hermès, who succeeded Émile-Maurice after his death in 1951, closely collaborated with brother-in-law Jean-René Guerrand. Dumas introduced original handbags, jewellery, and accessories and was particularly interested in design possibilities with the silk scarves. Despite the company's apparent success in the 1970s, exemplified by multiple shops' being established worldwide, Hermès began to decline, compared to competitors. Some industry observers have assigned the cause to Hermès's insistence on the exclusive use of natural materials for its products, unlike other companies that were calling on new man-made materials. Jean-Louis Dumas, the son of Robert Dumas-Hermès, became chairman in 1978 and had the firm concentrate on silk and leather goods and ready-to-wear, adding new product groups to those made with its traditional techniques. In 1984, the actress Jane Birkin replaced her handbag with a leather Hermès handbag, that was called the Birkin handbag. There's the creation of a complete home line, bed and bath linens, furniture, silverware, crystal and porcelain, baby gifts and office accessories.

Patrick Thomas, who had joined the company in 1989 and who had worked with Jean-Louis as the co-CEO from 2005, replaced him. Thomas became the first non-Hermès family member to head the company. In February 2015, Hermès has announced an increase of its turnover of 9.7%, which represents more than €4 billion in sales.<sup>143</sup>

- Logo

Obviously, after having explained Hermès' history, the logo appears clear. There's a rider who observes a carriage with a horse, precisely because the origin of the business lies in the equestrian world. But many people don't imagine that a brand selling important products in all categories started selling saddles, harnesses and bridles for the carriages of noblemen. Moreover, it's interesting to know that, even if the company was founded in 1837, its iconic logo was not introduced until the early 1950s. It is believed the designers turned to the French painter Alfred de Dreux (1810-1860) and his painting *'Le Duc Attele, Groom a L'Attente'* as their primary inspiration source.<sup>144</sup>

- Colour

The so-called Orange Hermès has its roots in the brand history. The most employed Hermès boxes used to package its products were neutral colours, a kind of beige with brown edging (before of them, they used cream boxes with golden borders). But in 1945, during the Second World War, these beige boxes were unavailable. Émile-Maurice Hermès found orange boxes and used them, changing forever the *maison* history. To complete the package, he also added a brown ribbon (bolduc) with white decorations and logo, a jockey/rider observing carriage driven by a horse. Today the orange is a Hermès' recognizable symbol: it is used not only for the packaging, but also for the store layout, the principal outfit during the fashion shows, the most famous products.<sup>145</sup>

- Kelly Bag

Its history dates back to 1937. The handbag was initially thought as a large bag used for holding a saddle and it was known as *haut à courroies* because of its high handle. Adolphe and Émile-Maurice thought to intervene, decreasing its dimensions and transforming it in an elegant one. In 1923, Émile-Maurice Hermès and Ettore Bugatti designed a simple and plain bag for Hermès's wife Julie. It was meant to fit into a car door and to allow riders to carry their saddle. In the 1930s, Hermès's son-in-

---

<sup>143</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hermès>

<sup>144</sup> The Loupe, *The story behind the logo: Chanel, Rolex, Hermès and Longines*, February 2015, in <https://www.truefacet.com/guide/story-behind-logo/>

<sup>145</sup> L. Redaelli, *Perché l'arancione è il colore di Hermès?*, April 2017, in <https://www.gioia.it/moda/abbigliamento/a3935/hermes-colore-arancione-storia/>

A. Turcato, *Arancione Hermès: la storia di un brand in un colore (Parte I)*, February 2017, in <http://blog.leatheredgepaint.com/it/arancione-hermes-storia-brand-colore>

law Robert Dumas redesigned it as a spacious travel bag called *sac à dépêches*. It was a sharp contrast to the dominant purses of the time, which were simple, small and flat, resembling envelopes. The handbag gradually went on to become stiff and boxy. In 1954, Hitchcock allowed the costume designer Edith Head to purchase Hermès accessories for the film ‘To catch a thief’, starring Grace Kelly. Kelly fell in love with the bag and used it also in her private life. In 1956, the pregnant Princess of Monaco was photographed using the handbag to shield her growing belly from the paparazzi. Princess Grace was a fashion icon and the handbag immediately achieved great popularity. Although the handbag instantly became known as the Kelly bag, it was not officially renamed until 1977.

Hermès now creates 32 styles of handbags, but the Kelly persists as the manufacturer's best-seller and a Hermès' status symbol. It's one of the most elegant, beautiful and loved bags in the world, source of inspiration for the best artists. The construction of each Kelly bag requires 18 hours to fully realize. Customers may currently wait from six months to one year for delivery of one of the house's signature bags. It is realized in seven different sizes, for each season, colours, materials.

#### - Birkin Bag

Another famous Hermès handbag, it was named after English actress and singer Jane Birkin. She met Jean-Louis Dumas, Hermès stylist and then president, on a flight Paris-London, and, after the content of her bag fell down, she complained that there was no practical bag for everyday use. Consequently, he invited her to France where they co-designed a bigger bag, with a pocket, in 1984, that took her name. In July 2015, however, Birkin asked Hermès to stop using her name for the crocodile version due to ethical concerns. The Birkin bag has the longest wait list for an accessory today, 6 years. Even now, it is considered an elegant but comfortable bag, appropriate for work and everyday life.<sup>146</sup>

### 3.1.2 Chanel

Chanel S.A. is a French high fashion house, a privately held company owned by Alain Wertheimer and Gérard Wertheimer, grandsons of Pierre Wertheimer, early business partner of the founder Gabrielle Bonheur Chanel. It specializes in women's haute couture and ready-to-wear clothes, luxury goods and fashion accessories. Its creator and fashion designer, Coco Chanel, is famous for having revolutionised the 19<sup>th</sup> century fashion (haute couture and prêt-à-porter) replacing the opulence, over-design, constriction with elegance. In particular she replaced structured-silhouettes

---

<sup>146</sup> M. Vignali, *Storia delle borse: Kelly e Birkin di Hermès*, February 2015, in <https://alvufashionstyle.com/2015/02/16/storia-delle-borse-kelly-e-birkin-di-hermes/>  
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hermès>  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kelly\\_bag](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kelly_bag)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Birkin\\_bag](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Birkin_bag)

with garments that were functional, simple-line designed and at the same time flattering to the woman's figure; moreover, she used colours traditionally associated with masculinity, such as grey and navy blue, to denote feminine strong personality. The House of Chanel is known for the 'little black dress', the perfume Chanel No. 5 and the Chanel Suit. In 2017 it had \$9.6 billion revenues.

Gabrielle Bonheur Chanel was born in 1883 in Saumur, France, by a laundrywoman and an itinerant street vendor of clothes, living in poor conditions. When Gabrielle was 12, her mother died and her father sent her and her two sisters to the convent of Aubazine (her two brothers were sent out to work as farm laborers). At the age of 18, Chanel went to live in Moulins and found employment as a seamstress, while singing in a cabaret. After having realized that she couldn't do a career in the second field, she concentrated in the first one. She met the young French ex-cavalry officer and wealthy textile businessman Étienne Balsan, living with him a rich life in his château Royallieu. Later, Chanel began an affair with one of Balsan's friends, Captain Arthur Edward 'Boy' Capel, a wealthy member of the English upper class, that lasted nine years. The House of Chanel (Chanel S.A.) originated in 1909 when Gabrielle Chanel opened a millinery shop at 160 Boulevard Malesherbes, where she could sell the hats she designed and made. Thanks to Capel, in 1910, she opened a boutique at 21 rue Cambon, Paris, named *Chanel Modes*, where she could sell her millinery creations. In 1913, Chanel opened a boutique in Deauville, where she introduced pret-à-porter deluxe casual clothes suitable for leisure and sport. In 1915 she opened an establishment in Biarritz. By 1919, Chanel was registered as a *couturière* and established her *maison de couture* at 31 rue Cambon. In 1921, she opened what may be considered an early incarnation of the fashion boutique, featuring clothing, hats, accessories and later expanded to offer jewellery and fragrance. In these years, she created the famous Chanel suit and the perfume N°5, whose success encouraged Chanel to offer it for retail sale (originally it was a gift to clients), to expand perfume sales beyond France and Europe and develop other perfumes. To gain the capital, in 1922 Théophile Bader, founder of the Paris Galeries Lafayette, introduced Chanel to the businessman Pierre Wertheimer, and, in 1924, there was an agreement between them that led to the creation of 'Parfums Chanel'. The Wertheimers agreed to provide full financing for production, marketing and distribution, receiving 70% of the profits, Théophile Bader would receive a 20% share, and Chanel, for 10% of the stock, licensed her name. Despite the success, the relationship between Chanel and Wertheimer wasn't good, arriving to point the finger at each other and to call lawyers. She was introduced to many famous people, composers, aristocrats, politicians, royals, movie producers such as Igor Stravinsky, the Duke of Westminster, Winston Churchill, Edward the Prince of Wales, Samuel Goldwyn. She went to Hollywood to design costumes to stars and she was the mistress of some of the most influential men of her time. In 1939, at the beginning of World War II, Chanel closed her shops, moving to Hotel Ritz with her German lover, Hans Günther von Dincklage,

and becoming a Nazi collaborator. After having been accused, arrested and freed thanks to Churchill, in 1945, she moved to Switzerland, where she lived for several years. The question with Wertheimer about *parfumerie* was still open, until 1954, when she decided to reopen her couture house and accepted his financing. It was the period of leather handbags (with either gold-colour chains or metal-and-leather chains, which allowed carrying the handbag from the shoulder or in hand), the so-called ‘2.55’ for the launching date, and of the expansion into masculine *parfumerie*. She died in 1971, at 87 years old. In 1974, Alan Wertheimer, Pierre’s grandson assumed control of Chanel S.A. and revamped Chanel N°5 in USA, where it was not selling well, by reducing the number of outlets carrying the fragrance to ensure a greater sense of scarcity and exclusivity and using famous people to endorse the perfume. Looking for a designer who could bring the label to new heights, he persuaded Karl Lagerfeld to end his contract with fashion house Chloé, and, in 1983, Karl Lagerfeld took over as chief designer for Chanel. New styles were experimented, new fragrances and watches were launched, new boutiques were opened. Maison de Chanel increased the Wertheimer family fortune to \$5 billion USD. In 1994, Chanel had a net profit equivalent to €67 million on the sale of €570 million in ready-to-wear clothes and was the most profitable French fashion house. While Wertheimer remained chairman, Françoise Montenay became CEO and President.<sup>147</sup>

#### - Logo

It’s the most recognized in the world. The opposite-facing and interlocking Cs is a striking and bold design, created by the brand’s namesake and founder, Coco Chanel, in 1925. Apart from the most obvious interpretation, representing the founder’s initials<sup>148</sup>, the other stories behind the logo’s inspiration are somewhat mysterious. Some people believe the logo was a modification of the C-patterns used by the French Queen Claude and her daughter-in-law Catherine de Medici. Other people assert the logo is an homage to Coco’s lover and business partner Arthur ‘Boy’ Capel. The Château de Crémat in Nice is another possible inspiration source; in fact, Coco’s friend, Irene Bretz owned the estate and frequently invited Coco to visit. The legend supposes Bretz gave Coco permission to use the interlocking Cs, that were the symbol for the vineyard and decorated property’s the doorways and windows, as the logo for Coco’s new company. Similarly, a final theory credits a stained-glass window in the Aubazine Chapel in central France, where Coco spent a portion of her childhood, as the

---

<sup>147</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chanel>  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coco\\_Chanel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coco_Chanel)

<sup>148</sup> Gabrielle Chanel acquired the name ‘Coco’, while she was singing in the cabaret. The explanations were two: the first one is based on two popular songs with which she became identified, ‘Ko Ko Ri Ko’ and ‘Qui qu’a vu Coco’; the second one was an allusion to the French word for kept woman, *cocotte*.

inspiration, because the window featured interlaced curves which could have been abstracted into interlocking Cs.<sup>149</sup>

- Colour

Usually associated with black and white, the company website explains that actually the representative colours are more than these two.

“Black. White. Beige. Gold. Red. Black because accentuates the essential and recalls the monastery rigor of the uniforms at the Aubazine orphanage. Because for Gabrielle Chanel *‘il rend visible le rayonnement d’une female’*. Thanks to Chanel, the black evolved from the garments of servants and those in mourning to become, since 1926, the colour of elegance, epitomized by the little black dress. *‘J’ai imposé le noir. Il règne encore car le noir flaque tout par terre’*, Mademoiselle declared. White because in the beginning there was white, because it captures light, illuminates the face, enhances beauty. Because it is the colour of absolute, transparency and transcendence. White because it reminds Coco of the cornetts of the nuns from her childhood and the communion dress given to her by her father. Beige because it is warm, simple, natural. Because it is the colour of the worn earth of Mademoiselle’s native Auvergne and of the beaches of Deauville, Biarritz and the Venetian lido. Because it is for her the colour of the outdoors, of a natural complexion and the healthy glow of skin kissed by the sun. Gold because it embraces both the genuine and the faux: the genuine gold given to Gabrielle by the Duke of Westminster, the imitation gold of the costume jewellery that she endlessly invented. Gold because of the religious relics and the cleric’s brocade robes that ornamented her childhood. Gold because of the treasures from Saint Mark’s Cathedral in Venice, the Byzantine Empire and the Baroque art always inspired her. Red, because *‘c’est la couleur de la vie, du sang’* as Gabrielle said. Red because it permits, when used as the lining of a purse a quick find of what one is looking for. Red because, worn on the lips, it became Gabrielle’s signature and her declaration of good spirit. *‘Si vous êtes tristes, mettez du rouge à lèvres et attaquez: les hommes détestent les pleureuses’*. Black because it creates depth among other colours, because it stands out against a white label, shines in the make-up cases’ luxurious lacquer, lines eyelids and enhances lashes. White because it illuminates Coco’s strands of pearls, her camellias and the bouquets of flowers that surround her with perpetual spring. White like her timeless silk pyjamas, like the dress that she wore to Diaghilev’s funeral, white like satin, like chiffon and, offset with black braids, the white tweed of the Chanel suit.

---

<sup>149</sup> The Loupe, *The story behind the logo: Chanel, Rolex, Hermès and Longines*, February 2015, in <https://www.truefacet.com/guide/story-behind-logo/>

Beige, because, against the sacred union of black and white, it offers a counterpoint, an element of neutrality and heightened elegance. Beige because, with Chanel make-up, it revives the skin. Gold, because it shines within the N.5 bottle, because it adorns the chain of the quilted bag and the buttons of suits. Gold because is the triumph of Chanel. Red because it is the colour of passion, of courage, of fire and of energy. Finally, black and white together, because one cannot exist without the other, because they are absolutely pure and in perfect accord. Because they are the stroke of Karl Lagerfeld's pen. Because they are the signature of Chanel.”<sup>150</sup>

- Camellia

First used as a decorative element on dresses, the camellia has become a symbol associated to the House of Chanel, used to embellish clothes, jewels, accessories according to different techniques and materials. How has it become Gabrielle Chanel's favourite flower?

“I remember how Gabrielle Chanel never really said why I was her favourite flower. Some things, though, go without saying. I remember that at age 13, young Coco was said to have been deeply moved by Sarah Bernhardt's performance of ‘The Lady of the Camellias’. I remember that Marcel Proust, along with his dandy friends, would wear me pinned to their jacket lapels, as a sign of refinement, unity and ambiguity. [...] I remember that she also loved me because I have the delicacy of not exuding any fragrance, offering women the freedom to choose their own. I remember how we were quite alike, she and I: I bloom in the winter, always one season ahead, and I never lose my leaves, allowing me to remain ‘*irrésistible à tout âge*’. I remember how one day Mademoiselle surprised me: when a lady asked her what she was having for breakfast, she answered ‘*Une camélia*’. I remember how Gabrielle always preferred me in white, illuminating any surrounding like a bouquet of light. [...] Finally, I remember how my petals form perfect letter Cs that interlace and create a double C. I remember that I am more than just a camellia: I am the flower of Chanel.”<sup>151</sup>

- Lion

It's another symbol associated to the House of Chanel, that we can find on jewels, decorations on accessories such as bags and belts and, more recently, also on dresses. Why was Gabrielle Chanel obsessed with this animal? The history narrates that she spent a period of her life in Venice, whose emblem is exactly the lion. But the story behind is deeper and more ancient.

---

<sup>150</sup> <http://inside.chanel.com/en/colors-of-chanel>

<sup>151</sup> <http://inside.chanel.com/en/the-camellia>

To see the complete video, go on Chanel website.



“The lion is majestic. One can admire it, fear it, chase it, conquer it. Gabrielle Chanel decided to tame it. The lion is Coco: born on August 19<sup>th</sup> under the fifth sign of the Zodiac. The two numbers will become a good luck charm, the lion would be her constellation. The lion is a personality: audacious, instinctive, passionate, radiant. *‘Je suis lion, et comme lui, je sors mes griffes pour empêcher qu’on me fasse mal’*, - Mademoiselle declared - *‘mais je souffre plus de griffer que d’être griffée’*, she added. The lion is an emblem. All her life, Gabrielle Chanel, kept a small statue of the king of animals besides her cigarettes and her scissors, and engraved it on the buttons of her tweed suits. The lion is an inspiration. A favourite subject to Chanel jewellery: it roars from necklaces, pendants and brooches, as if to protect the secrets of Mademoiselle and watch over her for all eternity. The lion is the spirit of Chanel.”<sup>152</sup>

- N°5

Despite it’s a perfume created in 1921, it is still the best-selling and most famous fragrance in the world, resisting the changes of fashion and the passage of time, as if Chanel has found the formula for the feminine eternal. The story behind it has something magnificent, both in its creation, in terms of function, ingredients, bottle, and in its name.

“For the first time, a couturier revolutionizes the insular world of perfume by creating in 1921 her own fragrance, the first of its kind. Coco Chanel seeks, in her own words, *‘un parfum qui incarne le féminin, un parfum de femme à odeur de femme’*. Her scent should be as important as her style of dress. *‘Une femme’* - she says - *‘devrait le porter partout où elle souhaite être embrassée’*. For the first time, N°5 defies the conventions of perfume, which glorify single flower fragrances. Coco Chanel calls upon Ernest Beaux, perfumer to the Czars. In search of inspiration, Ernest Beaux ventures as far as the Arctic circle, finding his muse in the exhilarating air issuing from the northern lakes under the midnight sun. the couturier encourages him to be even more audacious, demanding still more jasmine, the most precious of essences. May rose, Haitian vetiver, ylang-ylang, sandalwood, orange blossom, essence of Neroli, Brazilian Tonka beans. He composes a bouquet of over 80 scents for her. An abstract, mysterious perfume radiating an extravagance floral richness. For the first time, N°5 transforms the alchemy of scent through Ernest Beaux’s innovative use of aldehydes, synthetic components which exalt perfumes, like lemon which accentuates the taste of strawberry. Aldehydes add layers of complexity, making N°5 even more mysterious and impossible to decipher. For the first time, N°5, a code, an identification number, makes the sentimental names for the perfumes of the day seem instantly out of date. It receives its name because

---

<sup>152</sup> <http://inside.chanel.com/en/lion>

Mademoiselle Chanel prefers the fifth sample Ernest Beaux presents to her. According to some, she also chooses the number 5 because of its magical luck-giving qualities. For the first time, a perfume is presented in a simple laboratory flacon. Pure, austere, as bare as a vial, the minimal lines of the N°5 bottle distinguishes it from the mannered bottles of the 1920s. Its sobriety ensures its timelessness. By some accounts, its stopper, cut like a diamond, is inspired by the geometry of the Place Vendôme. The original bottle adapts imperceptibly to its time. N°5 becomes an icon of the 20<sup>th</sup> century [...]”.<sup>153</sup>

- Diamond

After having developed a jewellery based on colourful gems and pearls of the Orient, in 1932, Gabrielle Chanel directed her attention on the diamond, starting the first and only High Jewellery collection but so legendary that she established a timeless code where creativity won on ostentation and lightness on exaggeration, timeless because, as Mademoiselle said, *‘les belles choses ne sont-elles pas fait pour circuler?’*. What does it represent? And how is it employed?

*“‘Si j’ai choisi le diamant, c’est parce qu’il représente, avec sa densité, la valeur la plus grande sous le plus petit volume’*. Gabrielle Chanel simplifies jewellery settings rendering the previous styles out of date. No longer is the stone itself supreme, but, as in couture, lines and patterns. [...] Resolutely, she makes fluidity a principle and liberty a virtue, removing clasps, lengthening necklaces, sending comets sparkling across shoulders and showering the décolletage with stars. *‘Je veux’* - she said - *‘que le bijou soit aux doigts de la femme comme un ruban’*. Poetically, Gabrielle Chanel plucks the stars out of the Parisian sky. *‘J’ai voulu couvrir les femmes de constellations. Des étoiles de toutes dimensions scintillant dans les cheveux’*. Symbolically, she selects five themes for the ‘Bijoux de Diamants’ Collection. Five, her lucky number, the key to her style expressed in the magic of stars, the rays of the sun, the fluidity of ribbon, the style of the fringe and the lightness of feathers. Secretly, Mademoiselle illuminates the darkest period of her childhood by recreating in diamonds, stars, crescent moons, suns and crosses of Malta which were laid out in the paving stones of the Abbey of Aubazine, upon which the young orphan trod every day on her way to mass. [...] Brilliantly, today’s collections are enriched by those of yesterday, reinterpreting stars, fringes and ribbons and invoking other elements of the universe of Mademoiselle: the camellia, the lion, the pearl. Insolently, today, a diamond necklace worn over a simple t-shirt becomes an evidence, better,

---

<sup>153</sup> <http://inside.chanel.com/en/no5>

See the second part, concerning the history of the perfume, in the video on Chanel website.

an elegance. An unspoken homage to one for whom beauty was not an obligation or a convention but simply a way of being, an allure. Freely, these are the women who choose Chanel diamonds. Today, their jewels are no longer trophies given by admirers, but symbols of liberty. A cluster of diamonds on the jacket, on the skin or in their hair, adorning them with their brilliance, their strength and their fire. Eternally Chanel and the Diamond.”<sup>154</sup>

#### - The Jacket

As I said before, Chanel revolutionized the way of dressing, simplifying lines and overcoming uncomfortable beauty and exaggeration to leave room for lightness and functionality. But how do these changes come her to mind? When she transferred to Deauville, capital of elegance and luxury, with Boy Capel, she saw inspiration everywhere. Observing every single person in different places, she noticed that women dressed in heavy, bulky, uncomfortable clothes, limiting their freedom of movement and she guessed the necessity of a softer outfit. Accompanying Boy Capel to hippodrome and polo matches, she understood that the male wardrobe could be perfect for her new creation.<sup>155</sup>

This is the start of a way of thinking that will bring her to the creation of the famous Chanel suit, still representing the cornerstone of the contemporary fashion. The Chanel tweed suit consisted of a jacket and skirt in supple and light wool or mohair tweed and a blouse and jacket lining in jersey or silk. To reach her objective, meticulous attention was placed on detail during fittings, taking measurement on customers and conducting tests with models in different positions and situations. Chanel wanted to make sure women could do everyday things while wearing her suit, without accidentally exposing parts of their body they wanted covered. Each client would have repeated adjustments until their suit was comfortable enough for them to perform daily activities with comfort and ease.<sup>156</sup>

“*‘Gabrielle Chanel est une veste d’homme qui est devenue un vêtement typiquement féminine et qui est définitivement devenue le symbole d’une certaine élégance féminine, nonchalante, hors du temps, ça veut dire de tous les temps’*, Karl Lagerfeld said. 1954: the fashion of the day is flamboyant, exuberant. The balconnet necklines, wasp waists, and froufrous of the prevailing designers evoke a hesitant culture, struggling to break with the successes of the 1940s. Gabrielle Chanel is 71 years old and raring to go. She plays a masterstroke and reopens her Maison de Couture. She adopts elegance, movement, minimalism, and straight cuts, in a

---

<sup>154</sup> <http://inside.chanel.com/en/diamond>

To see the complete video, go on Chanel website.

<sup>155</sup> <http://inside.chanel.com/en/deauville>

<sup>156</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coco\\_Chanel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coco_Chanel)

time which is desperately struggling for modernity. The functional logic is unstoppable. What is the hardest thing in your work? *‘Permettre à femmes de bouger aisément, ne pas se sentir déguisées, ne pas changer d’attitude, de manière d’être, selon la robe dans laquelle elles s’enfiler. C’est très difficile. Et le corps humain bouche tout le temps’*. From Scotland, which she discovered in her youth with the Duke of Westminster, Chanel brought back tweed, which would be the basis of her jacket. The wrap-over skirt stops at the knee. The jacket, inspired by menswear, is straight and fluid, without interfacing. The ensemble provides absolute freedom of movement: four real pockets, braid in matching tones or contrasting; buttons stamped with the symbol of the house and, especially, new for the period, no buttons without buttonholes; finally, sewn into the silk lining, a delicate chain, to ensure that the jacket falls perfectly. A revolution. It was an incontrovertible success [...] <sup>157</sup> that nowadays still goes on. *‘Il y a des choses qui ne passent jamais de mode dans la mode: le jeans, une chemise blanche et une veste Chanel’*, concluded Karl Lagerfeld.

### 3.1.3 Rolex

Rolex SA is a Swiss luxury watchmaker, the largest single high-end watch brand, owned by the Hans Wilsdorf Foundation. The company and its subsidiary Montres Tudor SA design, manufacture, distribute and service wristwatches sold under the Rolex and Tudor brands. Forbes ranked Rolex 64th on its 2016 list of the world's most powerful global brands. In 2016 it had \$4.7 billion revenues. <sup>158</sup> Pioneer of the wristwatch since 1905, Rolex is at the origin of landmark innovations in watchmaking, including the first waterproof wristwatch and the Perpetual rotor self-winding mechanism. For over a century, Rolex watches have accompanied explorers and achievers around the world, from the top of the highest mountains to the deepest reaches of the ocean.

The history of Rolex is inextricably linked to the visionary spirit of Hans Wilsdorf, its founder. In 1905, at the age of 24, he founded a company in London specialising in the distribution of timepieces. He began to dream of a watch worn on the wrist. Even if wristwatches were not very precise at the time, he foresaw that they could become not only elegant, but also reliable. To convince the public of the reliability of his resolutely innovative timepieces, he equipped them with small, very precise movements manufactured by a Swiss watchmaking company. In

---

<sup>157</sup> <http://inside.chanel.com/en/jacket>

To see the complete videos, go on Chanel website.

<sup>158</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rolex>

1908 there's the birth of the name. Wilsdorf wanted a short name for his watches, easy to say and remember in any language, looking good on watch movements and dials. He said, "I tried combining the letters of the alphabet in every possible way. This gave me some hundred names, but none of them felt quite right. One morning, while riding on the upper deck of a horse-drawn omnibus along Cheapside in the City of London, a genie whispered 'Rolex' in my ear."

Rolex first concentrated on the quality of the movements and, in 1910, a Rolex watch was the first wristwatch in the world to receive the Swiss Certificate of Chronometric Precision, granted by the Official Watch Rating Centre in Bienne. Four years later, in 1914, Kew Observatory in Great Britain awarded a Rolex wristwatch a class 'A' precision certificate, a distinction which until that point in time had been reserved exclusively for marine chronometers. In 1919 Rolex moved to Geneva, a city renowned internationally for watchmaking. Montres Rolex S.A. was registered in Geneva in 1920. In 1926, the creation by Rolex of the first waterproof and dustproof wristwatch, the 'Oyster' marked a major step forward. Successively (1930s-1950s), it was tested in different field: sport, aviation, motor racing, expeditions, scientific explorations, deep-sea diving, mountain climbing. In 1931, Rolex invented and patented the world's first self-winding mechanism with a Perpetual rotor, an ingenious system that today is at the heart of every modern automatic watch. The year 1945 saw the birth of the Datejust, the first self-winding wrist chronometer to indicate the date in a window on the dial. In 1953, the Oyster Perpetual Explorer celebrates the victorious ascent of Everest while the Submariner was the first divers' watch waterproof to a depth of 100 metres. In 1955 the GMT-Master was developed to meet the specific needs of airline pilots, whereas in 1956 the Oyster Perpetual Day-Date was the first wristwatch to display the date and day of the week spelt out in full in a window on the dial, and the Milgauss watch, designed to meet the demand of the scientific community, could resist magnetic fields of up to 1,000 gauss. From 1960s to nowadays other watches have been created to satisfy every kind of demand and to improve the features previously developed: women, extreme conditions under the sea, motor racing, polar explorers, world travellers, giving the birth to Lady-Datejust, Deep Sea Special, Cosmograph Daytona, Oyster Perpetual Sea-Dweller, Oyster Perpetual Explorer II, Sea-Dweller 4000, Oyster Perpetual Yacht-Master, Oyster Perpetual Sky-Dweller. In 2013, in keeping with its history of close ties to motorsports, in 2013 Rolex entered into a long-term partnership with Formula 1® Racing as Official Timekeeper and Official Timepiece.<sup>159</sup>

---

<sup>159</sup> <https://www.rolex.com/rolex-history.html>

## - Logo

First of all, the name Rolex itself has an unknown story. Some historians believe it was borrowed from the French phrase '*horlogerie exquise*' which translates to 'exquisite watchmaking'. Another common theory is that Rolex is derived from the sound of a winding watch. Other people assert founders Hans Wilsdorf and Alfred Davis liked the crisp sound of *Rolex*, which was simple to spell, easy to pronounce and sounded good regardless of own native language. Moreover, the name was short, simple, easy to remember and appeared gracefully on the watches dials.

Wilsdorf and Davis trademarked the Rolex logo in 1925. The original design was a five-pointed crown in gold above Rolex in green text with a gold outline. The logo embodied the Rolex slogan, 'A Crown for Every Achievement', symbolising royalty, high quality, prestige and perfection.

## - Colour

The representative colours, also chosen for the logo, are green and gold, the first one symbolising uniqueness and prosperity, the second one representing the brand's excellence and rich tradition in watchmaking. The Rolex logo underwent two major updates in the brand's history regarding its colours. In 1965, the crown was changed from gold to bronze and the text to a pewter blue. However, in 2002, Rolex reverted back to its original colour scheme: a gold crown and a green font.<sup>160</sup>

## - Watches

Every Rolex has been created for a particular reason, to satisfy a special need or request of a group of people. Every person wearing a Rolex bought it according to a real necessity, desire or dream, to remember something, to participate to something, both in the past and nowadays. Every Rolex tells a story.<sup>161</sup> "A Rolex is always cherished but is also transcends its material value and takes on a personal meaning. Whether it is an heirloom, a milestone of success or a gift, a Rolex watch frequently becomes an emotional symbol that brings to life exceptional moments."<sup>162</sup>

---

<sup>160</sup> The Loupe, *The story behind the logo: Chanel, Rolex, Hermès and Longines*, February 2015, in <https://www.truefacet.com/guide/story-behind-logo/>

<sup>161</sup> I chose the most memorable and attracting stories, for me, trying to take an example of different people's jobs and reasons behind the purchase, but in Rolex website there are a lot, concerning distinct famous people who wear various models of Rolex.

<sup>162</sup> <https://www.rolex.com/every-rolex-tells-a-story.html>

James Cameron is a film-maker, director, producer but also an explorer. His watch is the Oyster Perpetual Submariner, representing a symbol of the enduring quest to discover the unknown, of friendship and of personal memories. “When I made Avatar, I did a lot of research on indigenous cultures [...] I had become friends with Ropni, the chief of the Kayapo people, deep in the Amazon. He gave me some great gifts, things that had great meaning to him including making me one of the Kayapo people with a naming ceremony. In their culture, these are treasured things. And I thought, ‘What do I have that I can give him that’s like that, something that’s very personal to me, and has a value to me that’s equivalent to what his gifts to me meant to him.’ So, I gave him my Rolex Submariner. I had bought that watch 20 years ago and it was with me every day [...] The watch I am wearing today I bought as a replacement for the one that I gave to Ropni. When I look at it, I think of all the things my previous Submariner had been through. I see all the places it’s been, from the bottom of the ocean to playing with my kids to sitting writing a story. It’s the one constant companion. People come and go, the watch is always there. This watch is just getting started.”<sup>163</sup>

Lindsey Vonn is a US World Cup alpine ski racer. Her Oyster Perpetual Day-Date 40 represents fearlessness, strength and perseverance. “Skiing is like nothing else on earth. I love it. I think everyone should at least try it once in their life. At the top of a mountain, I feel free, it’s my home. When I’m racing, it’s all instinct. I’ve always been a fearless person and I definitely think that’s given me a big advantage in my career as a skier. I’m never afraid to go faster; I’m always pushing myself to the limit. I’ve had a lot of injuries in my career, but it was my mother who told me to never give up. [...] My setbacks and my injuries have made me a stronger person. I got my Rolex after I recovered from my second knee surgery. It was a dark period, but the watch signified to me that I had come back, that I had made it, that I’d overcome the biggest hurdle in my life and that I wasn’t finished yet. I wear it as a reminder to never give up. It shows me that I can do anything I set my mind to [...].”<sup>164</sup>

Roger Federer is one of the greatest tennis players of all time, holding 20 Grand Slam® titles and the record for most titles at Wimbledon. His Oyster Perpetual Datejust II represents a victory and consequently a sense of greatness and satisfaction for the magnificent result achieved and the efforts made to reach it. “Breaking records was never really important for me. My goals were very down to earth, very normal, hoping to be maybe a top 100 tennis player at some point, possibly top 10. However, reaching for my dreams was always something I tried to do. [...] I realised I could be the first Swiss to be World Number One. That’s when I was reminded that

---

<sup>163</sup> <https://www.rolex.com/every-rolex-tells-a-story/james-cameron-rolex-watch.html>

<sup>164</sup> <https://www.rolex.com/every-rolex-tells-a-story/lindsey-vonn-rolex-watch.html>

everything that has not been done before, I could achieve it. And that's what happened. So, I embraced it and took inspiration and motivation out of rivalries, out of records that could be broken, out of tournaments that I loved playing. Then came 2009. I had just won the French Open for the first time that summer and I was going to Wimbledon trying to break Pete Sampras' all time Grand Slam® record. When I did win and broke the record, in an epic five set match against Roddick, I couldn't believe it. I couldn't break the whole match until the last game, and that gave me victory. When I was finally able to lift the trophy, I was wearing my Rolex on my wrist. This is why this watch is particularly important to me. When I look at it, I remember that day very vividly [...] A lot of tennis legends were present. And when I walked out, they all came down the stairs to greet me and congratulate me for breaking the record. It was so nice to feel the love from the tennis family, which to me is very important. Every time I put on my Rolex, it reminds me of those great moments. It also reminds me that if you do not work hard, somebody else will, and they eventually will pass you. So, you've got to be tough and even ruthless to some extent, but always be fair and play with style. I think that's really important.”.

Gary Player is one of the most successful golfers, known as one of 'The Big Three' of his era. His Oyster Perpetual Day-Date remembers his father and the adversities faced when he was young. “I grew up in South Africa. My mother died when I was nine and my father worked in a gold mine, going down 8,000 feet, making 100 pounds a month. My brother was at war at 17 and my sister was at boarding school. And my father said to me, ‘Play golf because it's a sport that you can play forever, and you will travel the world if you are any good.’ I became a champion because I knew how to suffer. I came home to a dark house. Nobody there. At the age of nine, I had to iron my clothes, cook my food. I lay in bed at night crying because I was so lonely and scared of the dark at that age. Although not in every case, I believe the more adversity you go through, the better you can do in life. I didn't feel sorry for myself; I accepted the challenge. I said to my father: “Dad, I am going to become a professional.” I was 17. I was determined that hard work was the answer. [...] If I had lived a life of luxury, I would never have become the world champion I did. When my father, who was as I said, a very poor man, saw me practising so hard and having some success, he said, ‘You keep working hard like this and one day you might even buy yourself a Rolex.’ He was just sort of joking because obviously Rolex had had such a name for all those years. Well, I did indeed buy my first Rolex after I won my first Grand Slam. It's hard to go back 60 years in your career and remember everything exactly but I remember saying, ‘Dad, I've got the Rolex watch.’ Having bought my first Rolex, I'll tell you how I felt. When you're not entitled to anything in life and you get a



gift or you purchase something of value, there's a certain thing called gratitude. [...] The watch I'm wearing today, I acquired several years ago. It's gold and reminds me of my first Rolex and of my father working in a gold mine. I think a watch is an emotional possession, depending on how you came about it and how it's related. And in my case, it's more than just a watch, it's a story. I still associate my father with a Rolex [...]"<sup>165</sup>

Yundi is a classical pianist, winning numerous prestigious international piano competitions. His Oyster Perpetual Cosmograph Daytona remembers him his accomplishments and the sacrifice of his family. "In many Chinese families, parents have very high expectations for their children. But my parents were different. They gave me a lot of freedom to do what I wanted to do. They are very open-minded and tolerant. I think these qualities do have an impact on my pursuit of music and art. It's thanks to my parents that I was able to fully unleash my potential. [...] Winning was never on my list, so when I did, I was shocked and the first people I called were my parents. After winning that prize, I was thinking about giving myself a special gift. To me, time was the most important thing back then, so I wanted to find a watch which will always be with me. In my eyes, Rolex has always been a symbol of good quality, precision and the pursuit of perfection. As this is similar to my values and my pursuit of music, I decided to buy myself a Rolex Daytona. It was the watch that I really wanted to have at that moment. So, I did my best, like what I did to pursue my music dream, to get one. This watch was actually with me at every important moment [...] It is more than just a watch. It witnessed my growth and faced all the challenges along with me. At any time, whether I was happy or not, I had it with me. I do think it has its own life. I was thinking about giving my father a special birthday gift to thank him for all that he had done for me; I wanted him to have something that reminds him of me every day. That is why I gave him his own Rolex, hoping it could accompany him as my watch has accompanied me. Since then, we somehow have a special bond. Now I perform all around the world and, wherever I am, I feel that we are always connected by time and by these two watches [...]"<sup>166</sup>

Rolex has also been used in many films. Just to mention some of the most important and famous ones, there are 'Dr. No' and 'Goldfinger' respectively in 1962 and 1964, where the protagonist James Bond, interpreted by Sean Connery, wears a Submariner; 'The Great Escape' in 1963 with Steve McQueen and an Oyster Chronograph that tell the importance of this Rolex during the Second World War, where, thanks to its technical features, it helps allied soldiers to escape

---

<sup>165</sup> <https://www.rolex.com/every-rolex-tells-a-story/gary-player-rolex-watch.html>

<sup>166</sup> <https://www.rolex.com/every-rolex-tells-a-story/yundi-rolex-watch.html>

from a German camp; ‘Winning’ in 1969 where Paul Newman wears a Chronograph Pre-Daytona; ‘The Hunter’ in 1980, where Steve McQueen wears a Submariner.

### 3.1.4 Bulgari

Bulgari S.p.A is an Italian luxury brand known for its jewellery, watches, fragrances, accessories and leather goods and currently part of the LVMH Group. In 2010 it had €1.069 billion revenues.

Bulgari was founded in Rome in 1884 by the Greek silversmith Sotirios Voulgaris as a single jewellery shop that has, over the years, evolved and become an international brand and important player in the luxury market. The first store was in Via Sistina, whereas, in 1894 he opened the first store in Via Condotti, 28, and in 1905, he inaugurated the Via Condotti, 10, shop (the three shops coexisted for years). In its early years, Bulgari was known for silver pieces that combined elements of the Byzantine and Islamic tradition with allegorical, floral and foliate motifs. The Parisian fashion influenced Sotirio's designs: jewels of the 1920s were characterized by Art Deco platinum mounts and jewels of the 1930s were featured by geometric motifs in diamonds or coloured gemstones. In 1932, Sotirio passed away, leaving the business to his two sons, Giorgio and Costantino. It was the period of convertible jewels and of Bulgari's Trombino, the small trumpet-shaped ring. During the Second World War, jewellery creations were produced in gold with little use of precious gemstones and design became softer and more naturalistic. At the end of the 1940s, Bulgari introduced Serpenti bracelet-watches. The post-war boom led to a return to precious white metal covered with diamonds. High jewellery was still Parisian, but with more sinuous motifs and softer lines. Between the 1950s and 1960s Bulgari created floral brooches called Tremblant and started its own style, with more structured, symmetrical and compact shapes in yellow gold and with coloured gems. Cabochon gemstones were a further innovation, as this cut was reserved for gemstones of lesser value. After Giorgio's death in 1966, his son Gianni led the company as co-chief executive with his cousin Marina. During the 1970s, Bulgari stores opened in New York, Geneva, Monte Carlo and Paris, marking the beginning of its international expansion. A variety of new motifs made their debut: angular forms, strong colours, oval elements with cabochons, chains and sautoirs. The predominant use of yellow gold conveyed the concept of wearable jewellery, becoming Bulgari trademark. In 1977, Bulgari entered the world of *horlogerie* with the launch of the Bvlgari Bvlgari watch. In the early 1980s, to oversee all production of Bulgari watches, Bulgari Time was founded in Switzerland. In 1984, Paolo and Nicola Bulgari, Gianni's brothers, became Chairman and Vice-Chairman, while their nephew, Francesco Trapani, became Chief Executive Office. In 1985, Gianni resigned as CEO, but, in 1987, he left the family business after selling his one-third stake in

the company to his brothers. The 1980s jewellery was characterized by gold, volume, colour, clean shapes, stylized motifs, precious gemstones combined with others of minor value. The concept of wearability went on, developed through modular jewels, such as Parentesi. Chokers and rigid necklaces were integrated with decorative elements, ranging from diamonds or emeralds to sapphires. It also introduced a new way of mounting gemstones using coloured silk cords to complement outfits. The 1990s jewels had more subtle chromatic combinations and motifs and less structured necklaces, with fringes of diamonds sunbursts replacing the previous rigid collars. Yellow gold continued to be preferred and nature or unconventional materials inspired collections. Bulgari diversified its brand in 1993 with the launch of its first fragrance, *Eau Parfumée au The Vert*, and the founding of Bulgari Parfums in Switzerland. In 1995, Bulgari was listed on the Milan Stock Exchange. In 1996, the brand launched its first accessories collection, beginning with silk scarves and then developing a range of leather accessories and eyewear. The year 2000 was the beginning of a period of verticalization consisted in different acquisitions. The opening of the first Bulgari Hotel in Milan in 2004 further confirmed the expansion strategy of the brand and was the result of a joint venture with Luxury Group, a division of Marriot International. The new millennium saw a radical change in Bulgari design. The brand's distinctive creations became more two-dimensional, the new style saw a return to white gold and platinum and a tendency to chrome-coloured metals. Nonetheless, Bulgari has remained faithful to its traditional style: cabochons, yellow gold, wearability for rare and precious stones, predilection for sapphires and use of both transparent and opaque gems of every imaginable kind. In 2011, Bulgari signed a strategic alliance with LVMH SA, the world's leading luxury group. In 2014, Bulgari celebrated the 130th anniversary of the brand, redesigning the shop at Via Condotti and donating € 1.5 million to the city of Rome for the restoration of the Spanish Steps. For Bulgari the Eternal City is not only a beautiful stage, but also an inexhaustible source of inspiration thanks to its art and architecture. A few months after the Grand Opening, the *Domvs* was inaugurated in the redesigned Bulgari boutique, creating a gallery space to house of Bulgari's Heritage Collection. From 2015, it financed the restoration of the polychrome floor mosaics of the western entrance palestra of the Baths of Caracalla and the renovation of the lighting system of the museum Palazzo Braschi's grand staircase. The 'Bulgari y Roma' and 'Bulgari tribute to femininity' exhibitions are another testimony of the adoration for Roman treasures.<sup>167</sup>

- Logo

---

<sup>167</sup> <https://www.bulgari.com/en-fr/heritage-forever-bulgari-timeline>  
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bulgari>

The name Bulgari comes from the Italianization of the founder Greek name, that is Sotirios Voulgaris. The BVLGARI logo was used for the first time in 1934, when its gilded brass letters graced the central doorway of the Via Condotti flagship. The font and the letter 'V' replacing the 'U' were chosen to echo the style of ancient Roman inscriptions, and a logo was born. Since then, the trademark is written BVLGARI in the classical Latin alphabet. More specifically, in 1905 the central sign 'S. Bulgari', at Via Condotti 10, was surmounted by the wording 'Old curiosity shop' followed by 'Napoli, Nucerna, St. Moritz Bad', indicating Sotirio's ongoing activity in other locations, both in Italy and abroad. Furthermore, the store's English name, taken from a Charles Dickens' novel, also showed Sotirio's aim to address a foreign clientele. The most important transformation of the façade occurred between 1933 and 1934, soon after Sotirio's death. The architect Florestano di Fausto redesigned the façade, including four large openings for display windows and a central doorway all framed by green African marble cornices. The central doorway was crowned with gilded brass letters spelling 'BVLGARI'. Both the façade and the inscription have remained unaltered.<sup>168</sup>

- Colour

Some stories conferred to the brand the black, synonymous of elegance, sophistication, sobriety, exclusivity. It's a classical but, at the same time, a contemporary colour. Other stories say that, when Bulgari started to expand in Asia, it had to change its representative colour from black to gold, because in Asia the first one is seen in a bad manner, and is associated to depression, sadness, death. On the contrary, the yellow or gold is considered the most beautiful colour, associated to good luck, freedom from worries and neutrality. Anyway, there aren't official stories about the representative colour. Actually, colour is often one of the most recognisable and iconic features of a Bulgari creation. In fact, the brand has established itself as the master of coloured gemstones in its high jewellery pieces. As we have seen in its history, starting from the 1950s, it began a real colour revolution, exploring unusual colour combinations such as rubies and emeralds, and sapphires of the entire palette. Jewellery came alive in a rainbow of colour combinations.

Bulgari is a name emblematic of Italian excellence, artisanal craftsmanship and symbolic storytelling. Emboldened by 2700 years of Roman history, Bulgari honours its rich past within modern designs. Bulgari pieces are immediately recognisable for their powerful opulence, stylistic audacity, creativity, exquisite beauty, rich colours and sense of volume. Tightly linked to its Mediterranean origins, classical Greek creations and magnificent Roman art and

---

<sup>168</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bulgari>  
<https://www.bulgari.com/en-fr/temples/rome>

architecture, Bulgari and its designers, over the decades, have absorbed and transformed millenary, immortal symbols and lines into highly distinctive, recognizable jewellery creations. Most of the brand renowned icons tell a story that is precisely linked to those ancient origins, multinational and secular inspirations.

- BVLGARI BVLGARI

It's Bulgari famous luxury watch, one of the most iconic designs in the history of horology. Everybody knows it, but most people don't know the stories behind it. Why was it launched? And where did the brand find the inspiration for its creation?

The BVLGARI BVLGARI watch was launched on the wave of a limited-edition digital watch with the inscription 'BVLGARI ROMA' sent to the top 100 clients at Christmas in 1975. The great success of the model led to the launch of the timepiece, in 1977, and, even if not advertised, it attracted more and more customers. The engraved BVLGARI BVLGARI logo was integrated into the timepiece design. The inspiration came from ancient Roman coins, where the effigy of the emperor was surrounded by inscriptions of power and prestige. Likewise, its cylindrical case was inspired by the columns of Roman temples, an apparently simple feature that is actually the result of meticulous architectural study marking the beginning of a new era of design and experimentation.

- *'Monete'*

One of the most celebrated Bulgari icons ever, the pieces mounting antique coins have been introduced to follow the ancient Rome tradition in jewellery. Thanks to Nicola Bulgari, an enthusiastic coin collector, Bulgari monet jewels made their debut in the 1960s. In all the pieces the coin's structure remained unaltered and the mounts followed the contours highlighting the play of contrasts. The premiere coin jewels made in 1966 were as elegant as modern, engraved with the name of the emperors, the dates they were in power and the type of coin. This educational element became a permanent part of the coin collections.

- *'Serpenti'*

Always used in jewellery, Bulgari was one of the first 20<sup>th</sup> century jewellers to turn the snake millenary motif into a watch timepiece. The snake embodies the most ancient and audacious symbol of the mythologies of all civilizations, representing wisdom, rebirth and vitality and being used as an ornament or a talisman. Bulgari has given new life to this symbol through new interpretations of its design and materials, adopting it as one of the milestones of its style. In the very stylised models of the late 1940s, the supple body was of polished yellow gold,

either in the flexible tubogas bands or in gold mesh. Then, the serpent tubogas versions explored every possible shape of case and dial white materials ranged from gold to steel. In the 1960s, the numerous separate elements simulated the reptile's scales while the watchcase was concealed in its head. In the 1970s, the tubogas technique provided the Bulgari snake watches with a cutting-edge look. Whether in a realistic or geometrically abstract manner, the snake winds along Bulgari's history as an embodiment of its hallmarks: love for colour, juxtaposing materials, unmistakable wearability and state-of-the-art goldsmith techniques.

- *'Parentesi'*

The Parentesi module has been one of the most extensively copied designs of its time. In the 1980s Bulgari guessed that the time to make jewellery suitable to modern women's lifestyle had come: they wanted comfortable and wearable jewels, to put on in the world of business from morning until night. The answer to this necessity and desire was modular jewellery, where each single element could be produced in series, finished by hand and then connected to one another, always providing high quality design and manufacture. The first shot of Bulgari modular jewellery was exactly the Parentesi collection. Interestingly, one more time, Rome was a source of inspiration because the Parentesi sign came from a detail of the Eternal City pavements, the travertine junctions used to link the stone blocks.

- Tubogas

It is a flexible band with rounded contours produced without soldering and requiring hours of specialist work. This technique, developed during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, was revived by Bulgari in the 1970s becoming one of the firm's trademarks. Sleek and flexible, the tubogas motif was inspired by the shape of the gas carrier pipes in use from the 1920s onwards.<sup>169</sup>

- *Domvs*

Located on the first floor of the historic store in Via Condotti, it is where the story and the evolution of the brand are displayed with unique pieces, photographs and sketches that are part of the Heritage Collection<sup>170</sup>. The name '*domvs*', home in Latin, conveys the intimate and welcoming nature of rooms which host the heart and roots of Bulgari. The domus is where Bulgari cultural events, performances and private exhibitions of works art take place. It is a

---

<sup>169</sup> <https://www.bulgari.com/en-fr/bulgari-heritage-icons>

<sup>170</sup> It consists of around six hundred unique jewels, watches and accessories created over decades and supported by over sixty thousand documents, vintage photographs and sketches which tell the story of Bvlgari as a jeweller-artist. Special mention must be made of the collection of jewels once belonged to Elizabeth Taylor, bought back by Bulgari in 2011.

space for all those who wish to immerse themselves in Bulgari's world, experiencing all the magic of art, glamour and of the skilled craftsmanship of the 130 years of its history. A unique place, where history and stories come to life, bringing new reflections and facets to the present.<sup>171</sup>

### 3.1.5 Louis Vuitton

Louis Vuitton Malletier, commonly referred to as Louis Vuitton or shortened to LV, is a French fashion house and luxury retail company selling trunks, leather goods, ready-to-wear, shoes, watches, jewellery, accessories, sunglasses and books. From 2006 to 2012, Louis Vuitton was named the world's most valuable luxury brand. Its 2012 valuation was US\$25.9 billion. In 2017 it had US\$9.9 billion revenues.

Louis Vuitton's heritage as a trunk maker preceded even the founding of the company. In 1837, when he was only sixteen years old, Louis Vuitton made a decision that would not only change his own life but the lives of his sons and future generations: he would become a trunk-master. He arrived in Paris by foot and started apprenticing for Monsieur Maréchal. At the time, horse-drawn carriages, boats and trains were the main modes of transportation, and baggage was handled roughly. Travelers called upon craftsmen to pack and protect their individual objects. Louis Vuitton quickly became a valued craftsman at the Parisian atelier of Monsieur Maréchal. These were the roots of his highly specialized trade; the beginnings of his career in an artisanal industry that called upon skills to custom design boxes and, later, trunks according to clients' wishes. Louis Vuitton stayed for 17 years before opening his own workshop at 4 Rue Neuve-des-Capucines near the Place Vendôme, in 1854.<sup>172</sup> In 1858, Vuitton introduced his flat-bottom trunks with trianon canvas, that allowed the ability to stack with ease for voyages. Before the introduction of Vuitton's trunks, rounded-top trunks were used and thus could not be stacked. In 1886, Georges Vuitton revolutionized luggage locks with an ingenious closing system that turned travel trunks into real treasure chests. In the 1900s, travellers carried all their essentials inside wardrobes and flat trunks, which, unfortunately, often attracted burglars. Louis Vuitton sought to help his clients protect the goods inside their travel pieces, so in 1886, father and son adopted a single lock system with two spring buckles, the tumbler lock. In 1892, Louis Vuitton died, and the company's management passed to his son, Georges Vuitton, who began a campaign to transform the company into a worldwide corporation. In 1896, the company launched

---

<sup>171</sup> <https://www.bulgari.com/en-fr/the-heritage-domvs>

<sup>172</sup> <https://us.louisvuitton.com/eng-us/la-maison/a-legendary-history>

the signature Monogram Canvas and made the worldwide patents on it. In 1901, the Louis Vuitton Company introduced the *Steamer Bag*, a smaller piece of luggage designed to be kept inside Vuitton luggage trunks. By 1913, the Louis Vuitton Building opened in different places. In the 1930s, the Keepall bag, the Noé bag and the Speedy bag were introduced. In 1936 Georges Vuitton died, and his son, Gaston-Louis Vuitton, assumed control of the company. During World War II, Louis Vuitton collaborated with the Nazis. During this period, Louis Vuitton began to incorporate leather into most of its products, which ranged from small purses and wallets to larger pieces of luggage. In 1966, the Papillon cylindrical bag was launched. In 1997, Louis Vuitton made Marc Jacobs its Artistic Director. In March of the following year, he designed and introduced the company's first prêt-à-porter' line of clothing for men and women. Jacobs also created the charm bracelet, the first ever piece of jewellery from LV, within the same year. In 2002, the Tambour watch collection was introduced. In 2004, Louis Vuitton celebrated its 150th anniversary. In early 2011, Louis Vuitton hired Kim Jones as its "Men Ready-to-Wear Studio and Style Director", in 2013, Darren Spaziani to lead its accessory collection and Nicholas Ghesquière to replace Marc Jacobs as artistic director of women's collections, finally, in 2018, Virgil Abloh as artistic director of men's wear.

- Logo

In 1858, Louis Vuitton introduced his flat-bottom trunks with trianon canvas, but to protect against the duplication of his look, he changed the Trianon design to a beige and brown stripes design in 1876. Due to the continuing imitation of his look, in 1888, he created the Damier Canvas pattern, with a logo that reads '*marque L. Vuitton déposée*', which translates into 'L. Vuitton registered trademark'. In 1896, Georges Vuitton launched the signature Monogram Canvas and made the worldwide patents on it. Its graphic symbols, including quatrefoils and flowers as well as the LV monogram, were based on the trend of using Japanese Mon designs in the late Victorian era. The logo remained this one, but some changes have been added during the years. By 2001, Stephen Sprouse, in collaboration with Marc Jacobs, designed a limited-edition line of Vuitton bags that featured graffiti written over the monogram pattern. The graffiti read *Louis Vuitton* and, on certain bags, the name of the bag. In 2003, Takashi Murakami, in collaboration with Marc Jacobs, masterminded the new Monogram Multicolour canvas range of handbags and accessories. This range included the monograms of the standard Monogram Canvas, but in 33 different colours on either a white or black background (The classic canvas features gold monograms on a brown background). Murakami also created the Cherry Blossom pattern, in which smiling cartoon faces in the middle of pink and yellow flowers were sporadically placed atop the Monogram Canvas. In 2008, Louis Vuitton released the



Damier Graphite canvas, featuring the classic Damier pattern but in black and grey, giving it a masculine look and urban feel.<sup>173</sup>

Louis Vuitton represents, in the luxury industry, the brand doing the best in terms of communication. This success can be partly explained through the use of a pertinent strategy that follows for years the same guideline. Not everybody knows the real origins of the brand, but all its storytelling has always been based on the voyage theme.

The 19th century saw the Paris of the revolution change under Napoleon III's initiative, who wanted the city to become a modern capital and an example for Europe. This transformation led to changes in social habits: people started to travel, to discover the world, and Louis Vuitton was inspired by that situation.

A century later, Bernard Arnaud, decided to establish Louis Vuitton storytelling around the voyage. *“Non pas le voyage, en tant que simple déplacement physique, mais comme une expérience personnelle ponctuée de nombreuses rencontres. Une façon de se retrouver avec soi-même, et où les produits de la marque deviennent des compagnons de route. Ainsi, le voyage est indissociable de l'identité même de la marque. Il constitue le socle de base du storytelling de la marque Louis Vuitton, duquel toute la stratégie est élaborée”*. The inspiration is the poem ‘*L'invitation au voyage*’ by Charles Baudelaire, from the first part of ‘*Fleurs du mal, Spleen et Idéal*’. The poem remembers the unique sensation about discovering the unknown, a new world.

*Vois sur ces canaux  
Dormir ces vaisseaux  
Dont l'humeur est vagabonde;  
C'est pour assouvir  
Ton moindre désir  
Qu'ils viennent du bout du monde.  
– Les soleils couchants  
Revêtent les champs,  
Les canaux, la ville entière,  
D'hyacinthe et d'or;  
Le monde s'endort  
Dans une chaude lumière.  
Là, tout n'est qu'ordre et beauté,  
Luxe, calme et volupté.*

(Charles Baudelaire, *Les fleurs du mal, L'invitation au voyage*)<sup>174</sup>

---

<sup>173</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis\\_Vuitton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_Vuitton)

<sup>174</sup> *Étude de cas: le ‘voyage’ au centre du storytelling de la marque Louis Vuitton*, Uni, August 2018, in <https://agence-uni.com/etude-de-cas-le-storytelling-de-la-marque-louis-vuitton/>

## - Perfumes

Intimate, abstract and metaphorical, travel is not a destination, it's a feeling. Inspired by suspended moments in time, *Les Parfums* Louis Vuitton celebrates continuous movement that nourishes body and spirit, inviting to explore the senses and set off for new horizons. The women collection now counts nine olfactory emotions, signed by Maître Parfumeur Jacques Cavallier Belletrud. The brand tells these fragrances were created after that Mr Cavallier smelt a lot of flowers during different trips in villa in Grasse. The interesting thing is that the villa was opened after the creation of perfumes! After all, if a brand doesn't have a story, it can invent it. Anyway, behind each perfume, there's a story describing distinctive functions and ingredients. Following this concept, the men collection counts five fragrances, delving into the heart of their instincts for freedom and their pioneering sensibility, paying homage to the adventurer on a quest for self-revelation, capturing breath-taking discoveries and evoking a masculine energy right on the skin's surface, without clichés or caricatures.<sup>175</sup>

### *Attrape-Rêves*

To discover distant horizons and have unexpected and magical experiences. Fascinated by rare phenomena and the possibility to live them, Louis Vuitton Master Perfumer Jacques Cavallier Belletrud created an enchanting composition to remember these fantastic moments: a perfume that shakes the senses and inspires surprise. "Cocoa as airy-light as a wondrous journey somewhere between dream and reality. Like the Northern Lights appearing out of nowhere, is the fragrant embodiment of supernatural phenomena forever embedded in the memory of some far-flung exploration. Inspired by such waking dreams, the Master Perfumer Jacques Cavallier Belletrud imagines a trail like a shower of shooting stars, where raw cocoa powder mingles with a bouquet of peonies. Then comes the patchouli heart, animated by litchi's fresh and sparkling notes. A festive fragrance in celebration of wonderment."

### *Le jour se lève*

"A radiant mandarin to taste the first light of dawn. The first fresh and bright rays of daybreak always seem miraculous. They pierce the night sky with the promise of a blank page, a new adventure to experience. A special moment that the Master Perfumer has sought to capture with a sun-drenched mandarin. Revealing all of its facets in broad daylight, the fruit is illuminated by sambac jasmine and imbued with the freshness of a blackcurrant accord. [The perfume] is an optimistic and stimulating breath of early morning air. An invitation to set off for new horizons."

---

<sup>175</sup> I reported only the feminine fragrances. To learn the stories behind the masculine ones, go on Louis Vuitton website <https://us.louisvuitton.com/eng-us/stories/les-parfums-homme-louis-vuitton#savoir-faire>

### *Rose des vents*

“A whisper of petals opens up new horizons. A navigator’s indispensable tool, [it] is the traveller’s faithful companion. An olfactory guide, Master Perfumer transports us to the middle of a field of roses in Grasse. Buffeted by the wind, this singular flower seems to breathe. Sleek and stately thanks to iris and cedar, this perfume takes on glazed accents as it comes into contact with pepper. Gradually, the composition becomes as delicate as the skin of a velvety fruit. As golden as the first light of day.”

### *Apogée*

“The lily-of-the-valley ascends to blissful heights. Some getaways let us reconnect with ourselves by placing us before the immensity of nature. The chance to commune with the planet feels like a renaissance. [It] illustrates this sensation with a poetic elixir of innocence. A radiant lily-of-the-valley enlaced with petals of jasmine, magnolia and rose. A base of subtly smoky guaiac wood and sandalwood essence support the bouquet like slender stems reaching skyward.”

### *Matière noire*

“A blend of dark wood and white flowers ventures into a world of mystery. Exploring the universe is the ultimate travel fantasy and most thrilling adventure. [The perfume] plumbs intangible depths with a journey through the darkest, most precious woods, namely patchouli and agarwood. The agarwood’s animal notes are intensified by blackcurrant and contrasted with the whiteness of narcissus and jasmine, a floral vibration that cuts the darkness like a comet. Plumes of sacred notes unfurl on the skin. The disruption is total, almost mystical.”

### *Mille feux*

“An incandescent fusion of raspberry and leather creates an ode to light. A golden ray, a starlit sky, the aurora borealis: light contributes to the magic of travel. To capture its incandescence, Master Perfumer sought a colour to weave into this theme. On a visit to one of Louis Vuitton’s leather ateliers, he saw a craftsman transforming raspberry-coloured leather into a luxurious handbag. The skin as bright as ripe fruit gave him an idea: to associate the scent of leather with that of the berry. He shaped the composition with osmanthus, a white flower with an animal and apricot scent, iris and saffron. Mille Feux is like an emotional bombshell. Fireworks.”

### *Contre moi*

“An unexpected vanilla in a fusional embrace. [The perfume] evokes the fusion of two travellers. A sensual outpouring that lets emotions rush to the surface. Ever fascinated by vanilla, Master Perfumer transports it to uncharted territory by giving it unprecedented freshness. Madagascar and Tahitensis vanilla blend in a delicate tulle of orange flower, rose and magnolia petals. A subtle touch of bitter cocoa reaffirms the perfume’s rebellious temperament.”

### *Turbolences*

“An extreme tuberose to stir the heart. Discovering faraway lands can sometimes feel like soaring among the clouds. Inspired by a feeling akin to love at first sight, the perfume pays tribute to the most narcotic of flowers: the tuberose. Here, it fuses with the most precious petals of jasmine. A light touch of leather, and you swoon. Intensely. Deliciously.”

#### *Dans la peau*

“An infusion of leather, an invitation to explore the senses. Traveling often has the power to embolden desire. [The perfume] imprints on the skin like indelible ink. An exclusive infusion of natural leather from Louis Vuitton’s workshops intertwined with accents of almost-candied apricot, jasmine from Grasse and sambac jasmine from China. Then absolute of narcissus appears, followed by a chorus of musk. It does not feign desire. It lays it bare.”<sup>176</sup>

#### - Speedy bag

One of the first Louis Vuitton accessories that comes to mind, the chest-shaped bag, known from everyone with its proper name, Speedy, and present in the market in four different measures (from 25 to 40). Created in the 1930s, it was thought as a reduced version of the Keepall Bandoulière, a duffel bag. The planned name wasn’t Speedy but Express, then it was changed to underline the new way of travelling, more and more quick and future-oriented. Other name was Vernet, in homage to a street adjacent to Monsieur Louis Vuitton’s home. The success was reached in the 1960s, when a young Audrey Hepburn fell in love with it and demanded a personalized smaller version (25 cm instead of 30), giving the birth to the Speedy 25.<sup>177</sup>

#### - Neverfull bag

Other famous and very used Louis Vuitton bag, soon becoming an icon of the Maison. The first model was launched in 2007 in the Monogram line and nowadays is available in three versions (small, medium and big) and different variants. The curiosity is in the name: the meaning is the literal one, because the bag was thought to put inside everything without making it full, but the amazing particular is that, notwithstanding it weighs only 700g, in theory it could arrive to contain 210kg! It was realized to satisfy a need and a dream of the feminine universe: a woman brings all her life in a bag, and the Maison, in creating the Neverfull bag, understood perfectly this concept. It is perfect for a workday, for a holiday, for a promenade,

---

<sup>176</sup> <https://us.louisvuitton.com/eng-us/lv-now>

<https://us.louisvuitton.com/eng-us/stories/les-parfums-femme-louis-vuitton#the-collection>

<sup>177</sup> F. Crippa, *Louis Vuitton Speedy: la storia di un mito*, Grazia, June 2016, in <https://www.grazia.it/moda/tendenze-moda/louis-vuitton-speedy-bauletto>

for everything. Obviously, also this bag, took inspiration from the travelling theme. In fact, its internal lining took back the first Louis Vuitton chests' canvas.<sup>178</sup>

### 3.2 What customers think about luxury storytelling: personal research

According to many examples found, some of these previously described, we can conclude that luxury brands bet on storytelling nowadays as much as in the past. For them, storytelling is a good strategy to clearly manifestate their identity, communicate their ideas and values, attract customers, increase sales, confirming what literature expresses. But to understand if storytelling is really a foundation of growth or a simple theory functioning only with past generations, it's necessary to interview the interested persons and bear their opinions about the topic. After all, every luxury action is based on its clientele! Consequently, I decided to argue my thesis carrying out an observational and experimental study on hundreds of people. Their answers will confirm or disprove what luxury brands think, claim and put in practice: if the respondents have a positive vision about storytelling as a business strategy, the result will be that, at least for the few samples interviewed, even today it's important that luxury is able to tell stories about its world, to share something intangible but special, to make clients participate in the dream, using storytelling as a means; on the contrary, if the respondents have a negative vision, the result will be that actual consumers prefer other things, maybe more practical, rather than this abstract and mythical luxury.

#### 3.2.1 Research method and design

To interview people, I created a survey with <https://docs.google.com/forms/u/0/> that later I distributed through mails, social media and direct contact, also going in front of some luxury stores in Via del Corso, Via dei Condotti, Via del Babuino, Piazza San Lorenzo in Lucina and Piazza di Spagna, to collect data from real luxury consumers. The questionnaire is structured as follows: totally there are eleven questions, one personal, about the age, the others both concerning simply luxury products and considerations about luxury storytelling. In particular:

- The first question, that I considered question n. 0 because not strictly linked to the topic, is about the age, the only personal information that I chose to ask. The reason is that I don't need to analyse personas in their general characteristics such as gender, age, profession, place of

---

<sup>178</sup> *Storie di successo: la Neverfull di Louis Vuitton*, Istituto Mordatech|Blog, July 2014, in <http://blog.modartech.com/storie-successo-neverfull-louis-vuitton/>

origin, on the contrary I have to analyse buying personas, people in relation of their purchasing behaviour and habits. Precisely following this idea, I divided the answers according the Generations known: Silent Gen (1925-1945), Baby Boomers (1945-1964), Gen X (mid-1960s-1980), Gen Y or millennials (1980-2000), Gen Z (2000 onwards), respectively with an age of 93-73, 73-54, 54-38, 38-18, less than 18. Readjusting a little bit, considering older people part of the same group and dividing millennials in students and workers according to the university period, I obtained the following age groups: under 18, 18-24, 25-38, 39-54, 55-70, over 70.

- The second, third, fourth questions, renamed questions n. 1-2-3, are about luxury products and purchasing behaviour, in particular they are about occurred or not purchase, reasons that influence the purchase, name of luxury products bought or desired. Here, the fundamental consideration is that I didn't assume all respondents are luxury consumers. There are possibilities for a response reflecting the real life: a person could be a luxury consumer and, consequently, can answer to the questions describing his effective and practical relationship with the luxury world, or he couldn't be a luxury client, but maybe a potential one who desires to buy that kind of products/services, and, by consequence, he can express his opinions, wishes, dreams, imagining a future possible relationship with the luxury world.
- The fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, tenth, eleventh questions, renamed questions n. 4-5-6-7-8-9-10, are about storytelling. Going deeply, the first two are general, aimed to analyse the respondents' awareness and engagement towards luxury brands' stories: it is asked if there are some stories well-known and, if the answer is positive, which is the brand whose stories are most known. The other ones are more specific, aimed to test consumers' interest towards luxury storytelling as a business strategy: it is asked if storytelling is seen as effective tactic to increase sales and customers' loyalty, if customers are interested to hear some stories during the purchase, if salespeople need a training also in the storytelling field, if store has to be organised to tell stories, if digital channel, such as company website and social media, have to be used to tell stories.

The survey design is reported below.<sup>179</sup> People who received the link of the survey through e-mails or social media could respond anonymously and later send me the answers easily thanks to Google method, whereas people who received the survey on paper, thanks to a direct contact, answered on

---

<sup>179</sup> To see the real survey on Google, go on [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScXNkZ\\_nYHBgy6mn-4FrF2rdqJILihXQOip85EVPIFrw6jibQ/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScXNkZ_nYHBgy6mn-4FrF2rdqJILihXQOip85EVPIFrw6jibQ/viewform?usp=sf_link).

the sheet and, after having collected enough feedbacks to respect the privacy and anonymity principle, I personally reported in the digital platform.

Finally, I obtained 250 answers, that I'm going to examine in the next subparagraph. I have included, first, Google original graphs and answers. Unfortunately, beyond the graphs realized with the answers to closed demands and the reached percentages, the system wasn't able to work very well for what concerns the more qualitative demands, recognizing some mistakes due for example to typing or lack of knowledge or writing all the complete answers. For this reason, I have also reported the complete answers, derived from an Excel document that Google allowed me to download, in table in the Appendix. For some questions, I realised personal graphs with Excel.

## Survey

0) How old are you?

Under 18

18-24

25-38

39-54

55-70

Over 70

1) Have you ever bought luxury products/services?

Yes

No

2) Why did/would you buy luxury products? (Max 3 answers)

Special events

Sales

Follow the trend

Like the product/brand

Meet own lifestyle

Showing off

Share brand stories and values

For yourself

For someone else

No reason

Other reasons

3) Which luxury brands did/would you buy? (Write 3 names)

---

4) Do you know some peculiarities or stories about luxury brands?

Yes

No

5) If yes, write the name of the brand you know its stories most

---



6) Do you think that storytelling is a good strategy to increase sales and customers' loyalty?

Yes

Probably yes

Probably not

No

7) Would you like to know some stories about the product/brand while you are buying?

Yes

Probably yes

Probably not

No

8) Do you think that salespeople should receive training also in the storytelling field?

Yes

Probably yes

Probably not

No

9) Do you think that the store should be organized in a way that can tell stories?

Yes

Probably yes

Probably not

No

10) Do you think that the company website and social media could be used to tell stories?

Yes

Probably yes

Probably not

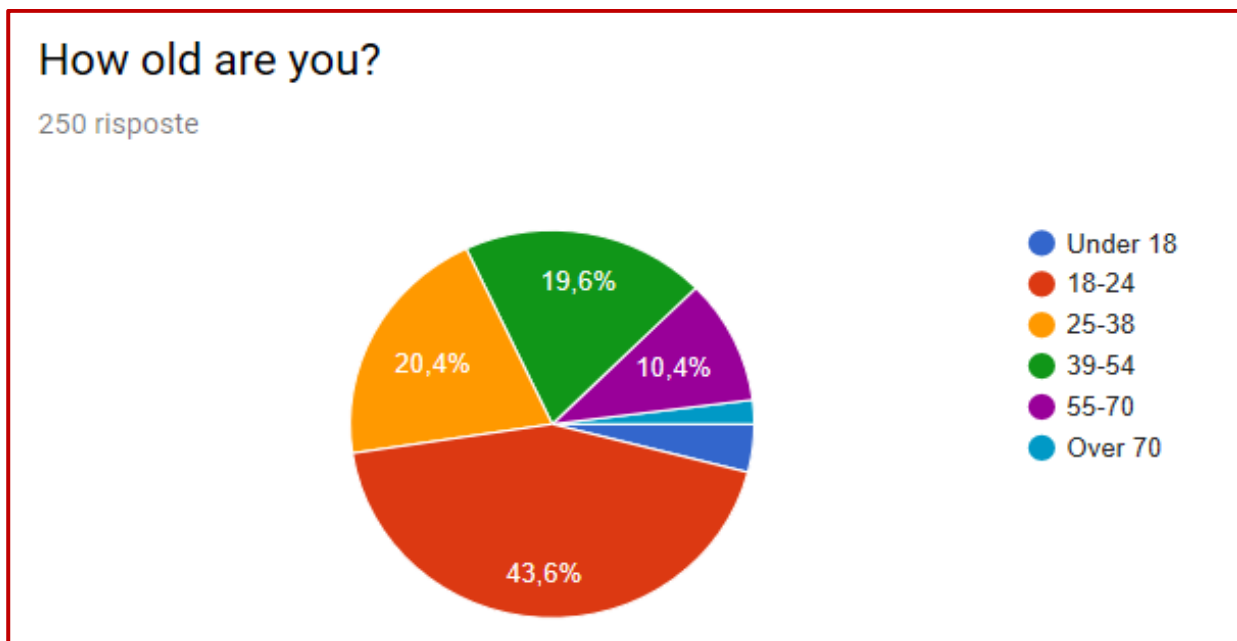
No

### 3.2.2 Results description and analysis

The respondents belong for 4% to the under 18 category, for 43.6% to the 18-24, for 20.4% to the 25-38, for 10.4% to the 39-54 and for 2% to the over 70, corresponding respectively to 10, 109, 51, 49, 26, 5 people. The predominance of the millennials, born between 1980 and 2000, totally representing the 64% of the interviewees, is a positive element for two reasons:

- Millennials are the actual generation: young but approaching the new working world, responsive and engaged beyond expectations, with clear tastes and behaviours influencing other generations, they already represent 30% of the market and they are the next future for luxury, becoming the main growth engine. Luxury has to consider them as the principal audience and address to them in order to amplify their advocacy and spending power.
- Millennials are useful to understand if storytelling is really a foundation of growth, because older generations are more involved in stories, values, abstract features and are already engaged with an intangible luxury. Literature, and also Altagamma report<sup>180</sup>, says that consumers don't want to just listen to brand stories, but want to live the story, giving importance to self-expression, dialogue, immersion, passions, experience. Will it be true also for younger generations?

FIG. 16 – Question n. 0 | Age in %

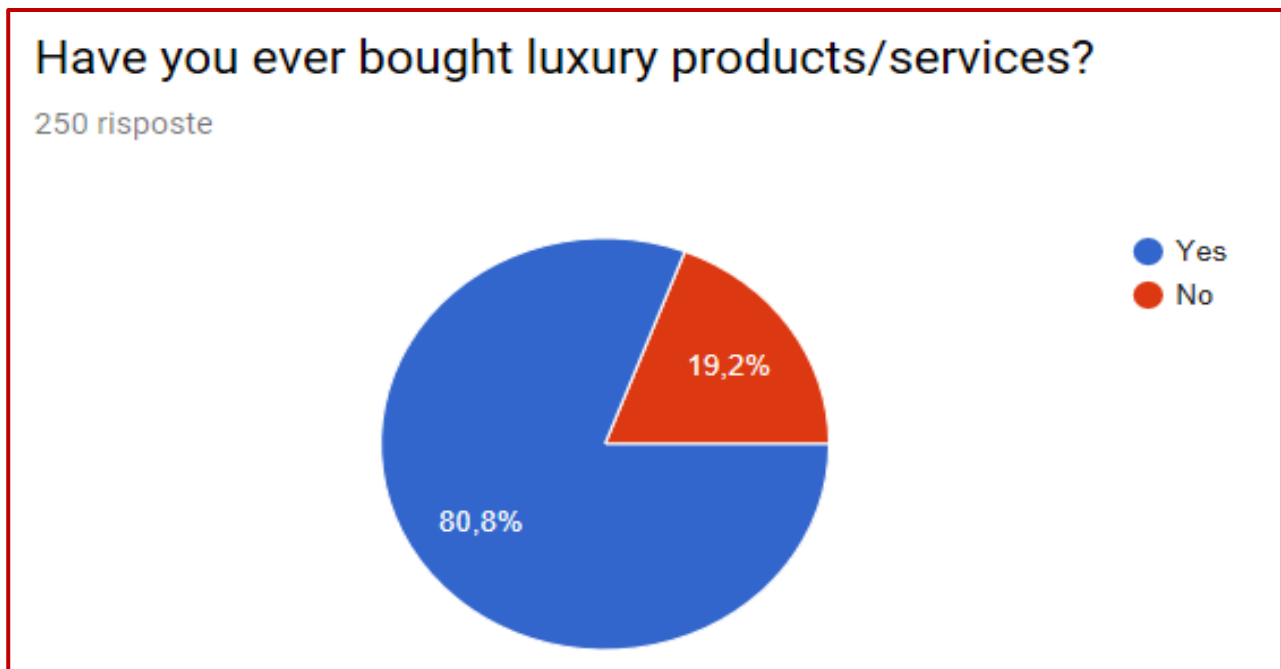


[Source: personal survey, <https://docs.google.com/forms/u/0/>]

<sup>180</sup> Altagamma, Bain & Company, *Altagamma 2017 Worldwide Luxury Market Monitor. Millennial state of mind: the tailwind behind consumer behaviors and winning strategies*, October 2017

More than half of the respondents said that at least once in life they have bought luxury products. Precisely, 80.8% of them answered positively to the question about luxury purchases. Obviously, this data element is fundamental to move forward: indeed, the fact that 202 people out of 250 are luxury consumers, gives a sort of permission to make the other questions and associates the topic of storytelling to that one of luxury. I'm talking about a 'sort of' because, relying only to this answer isn't sufficient to understand if all the respondents are true luxury clients. Maybe, they think to have bought a luxury product or service, when the reality is that they bought premium or fashion products. This kind of situation will be verified with the next two questions.

FIG. 17 – Question n. 1 | Luxury purchase



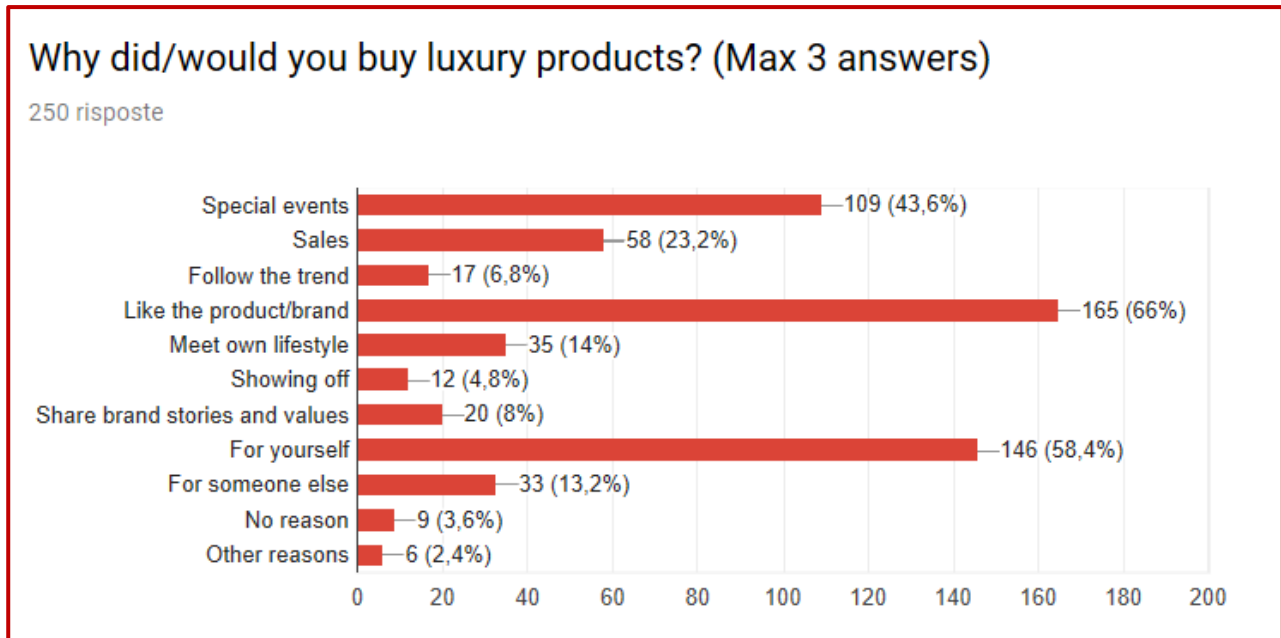
[Source: personal survey, <https://docs.google.com/forms/u/0/>]

Let's start analysing the reasons pushing luxury consumers, or at least these respondents, to buy luxury products and services. The three most popular choices are: 'like the product or brand', 'for yourself' and 'special events', respectively with 165, 146 and 109 respondents, corresponding to 66%, 58.4% and 43.6%. The three least popular ones are: 'other reasons', 'no reason' and 'showing off', with only 6, 9 and 12 interviewees having selected them. Middle values, in decreasing order, have obtained the answers relative to 'sales', 'meet own lifestyle', 'for someone else', 'share brand stories and values' and 'follow the trend', with the numbers we can see in the figure below. Various considerations can be made:

- The main driver to the purchase is the physical and aesthetical aspect, that is reflected in 'like the product/brand'. In particular the answer is connected to the tangible aspect if the interviewees referred to 'like the product', because consumers love a product when it has a precise and nice look, certain functionalities, distinctive features such as practicality, comfort, adaptability... It is less connected to the mere aesthetic, if the interviewees referred to 'like the brand', because clients can adore a brand, not only for the beauty, style, good design and materials of its products, but also for its creativity, quality, unicity, excellence and so on and so forth, all elements that can be associated to something more general and intangible. Anyway, the conclusion is that if people don't like the brand universe, they won't buy.
- This concept can be linked to the next two considerations: the first one is that people buy much more for themselves than for others. This situation perfectly reflects the luxury world that, as we have seen in the first and second chapters, differently from fashion, is something dedicated to oneself, to self-expression. Just to remember the notion, one of the luxury transformations recently occurred is the passage from the importance of belonging, fitting the elite, being recognised as part of a group with shared status to the importance of being, standing out as individual, feeling part of a group with shared values.
- Following this idea, few people buy to follow the trend and even less people buy for showing off. One more time, this reflects the effective difference between fashion and luxury, where the first is based on social imitation and showing off, being instantaneous and frivolous, whereas the second one is based on social stratification, being timeless and dream-driven.
- An important comment needs to be done about the few answers in favour of storytelling, explained in the question as 'share brand stories and values'. Only 20 respondents put this choice, underlining the evidence that people don't buy because they are convinced by a story, maybe they don't even know the existence of these stories or, even they know, they don't realize the real importance or they simply don't mind. Anyway, this problem will be approached later, when the survey will be more specific about storytelling.
- The fact that the answer 'sales' is at the middle of the results can be interpreted as follows: on one hand, the respondents aren't absolute luxury consumers, otherwise they wouldn't mind about discounts; on the other hand, they aren't even accessible luxury clients, otherwise they all would take advantage from discounts. They are luxury

customer on the average. Moreover, the fact that this answer doesn't predominate represents the reality where luxury doesn't talk about price and doesn't make discounts except in rare occasions.

FIG. 18 – Question n. 2 | Reasons behind the purchase

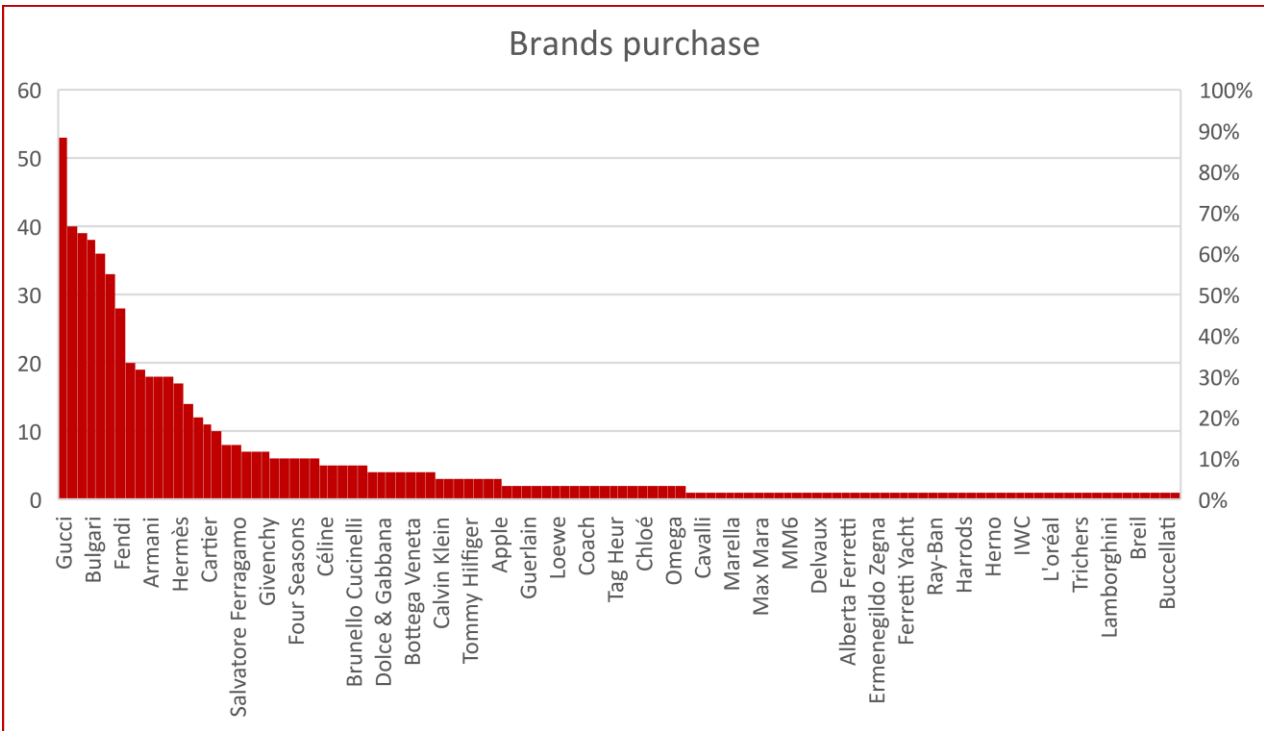


[Source: personal survey, <https://docs.google.com/forms/u/0/>]

For the question, 'Which luxury brands did/would you buy?', I realized two graphs: one which comprehends all the answers (in terms of design, because in terms of words is not complete for a reason of space), the other representing the most selected brands. Some evidences can be noticed:

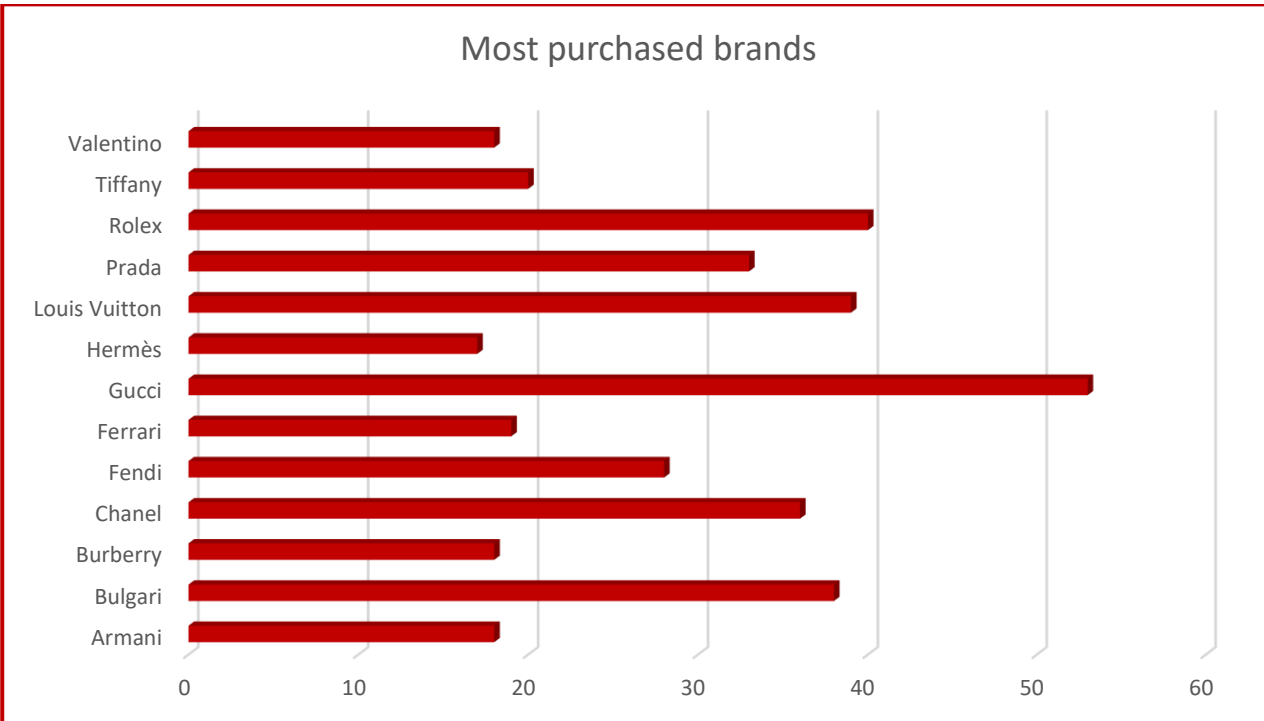
- Not everybody knows the difference between fashion, premium and luxury, because lots of respondents named brands that aren't luxury, whereas true luxury brands received very few considerations.
- Not everybody really bought luxury products, some of the respondents simply desire to buy them. This can be understood from the fact that many names are written in a wrong way. If you actually buy Louis Vuitton, can you write that you bought 'Luis Vuitton'? Surely not. And as far as a margin of error exists, due to typing mistakes, it isn't possible to have it several times.
- The most purchased or desired brand is Gucci, with 53 interviewees, followed by Rolex, Louis Vuitton and Bulgari, respectively with 40, 39 and 38.

FIG. 19 – Question n. 3 | Brands purchased



[Source: personal survey, Excel document]

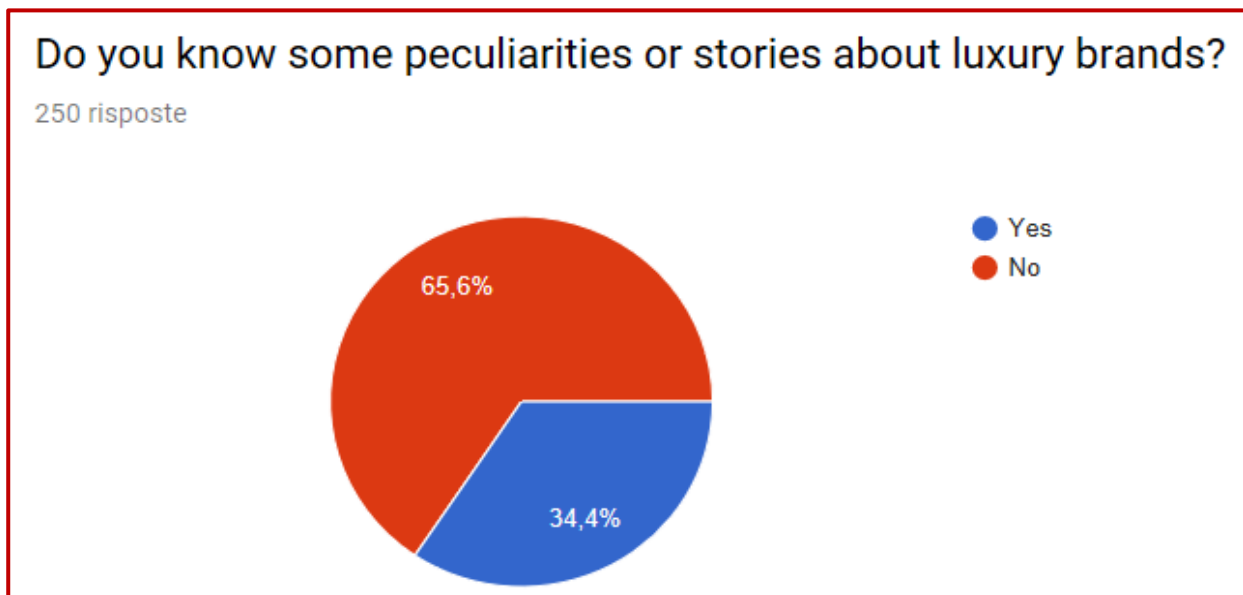
FIG. 20 – Question n. 3 | Most purchased brands



[Source: personal survey, Excel document]

From this point, the part strictly related to storytelling starts. To confirm the situation emerged from the question n.2, I mean the fact that the majority of luxury consumers doesn't buy for the awareness and engagement towards brands' stories, 65.6% of respondents answered that they don't know stories or peculiarities about luxury brands. Fortunately, the remaining interviewees said the opposite. Personally, I expected two different situations, both with a completely diverse proportion in the results: the first one characterized by unaware people being almost the totality, precisely for the reason just explained; the second one characterized by aware people being at least a 80%, because it's easy to confuse brand's history with brand's stories, and almost everyone has knowledge about the history of the favourite brands.

FIG. 21 – Question n. 4 | Stories awareness

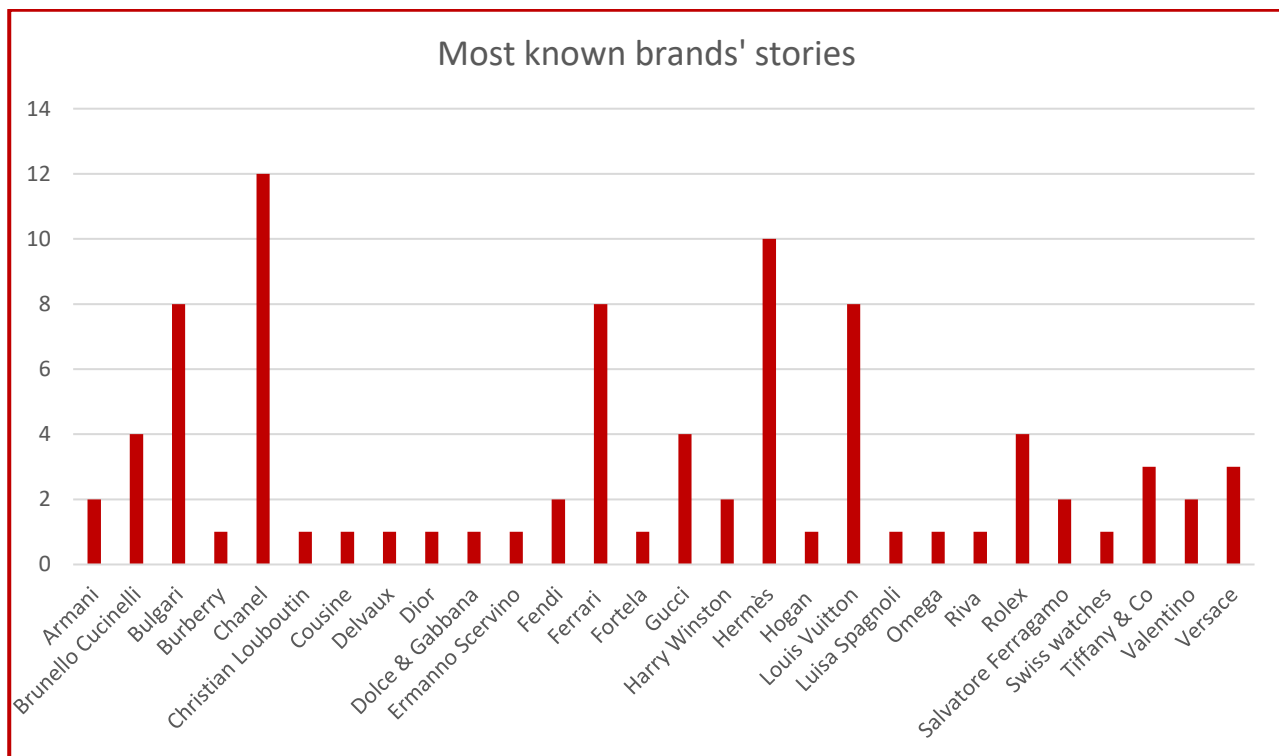


[Source: personal survey, <https://docs.google.com/forms/u/0/>]

To understand if positive answers were given judiciously and to find out which brands are the most known in terms of stories told, it's necessary and appropriate to analyse the next question. I recreated a graph on Excel because the graph done by Google was a little bit confused: some respondents wrote in a wrong way brands names (for example, Louis Vuitton has become Luis Vuitton, or Luiss Vuitton), others didn't really understand the question, writing down more than one name, so Google realised an equally incorrect figure. Other answers didn't concern specific names but a general sector, such as 'Swiss watches' or 'Cuisine', or didn't concern strictly luxury brands but fashion or premium ones. To resolve the first mistake, I rewrote the names correctly, to resolve the second one, I simply decided to consider the first name chosen, whereas I decided to leave unchanged the third typology of 'wrong' answers. Then, I created

the graph. The most chosen brands are Chanel, Hermès, Louis Vuitton, Bulgari and Ferrari, respectively with 12, 10, 8, 8, 8 people. There's no an example of stories learnt, so actually I don't know if the respondents are really aware of these brands' stories or confuse them with simple history, as well as I don't know which stories they refer to. Anyway, they wrote more or less the same brands I have previously chosen, meaning that these brands are real models of good storytelling.

FIG. 22 – Question n. 5 | Most known brands' stories



[Source: personal survey, Excel document]

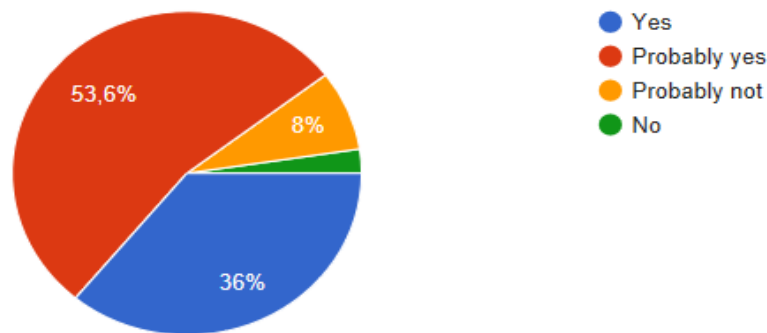
Arriving to the most crucial part, 53.6% of respondents consider almost surely storytelling as a good strategy to convince to make purchases, increasing customers' loyalty and consequently company's sales; 36% are sure about this statement; whereas, only an 8% say the opposite. This result is very interesting: in fact, notwithstanding people admit that storytelling isn't actually a driver of purchase, they take it into account, regarding it as a possible good tactic to make them more involved. Probably, this outcome is given by the fact that most brands, even if they believe in and predicate this theory, don't really commit in telling memorable and enticing stories, failing into practice. Other reason is that, despite brands do their best to engage people with this strategy, consumers don't care about it.

FIG. 23 – Question n. 6 | Storytelling as good strategy



Do you think that storytelling is a good strategy to increase sales and customers' loyalty?

250 risposte



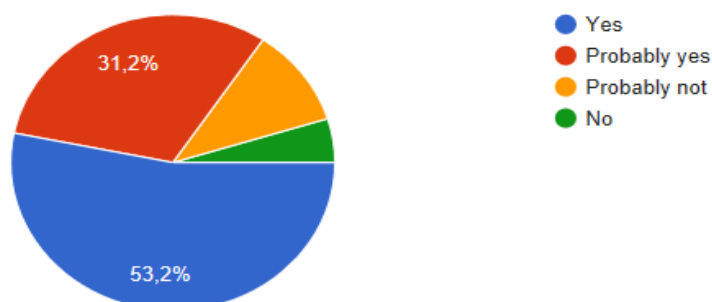
[Source: personal survey, <https://docs.google.com/forms/u/0/>]

The result is even more interesting when we pass to the analysis of the next question. Even if people don't buy pushed by stories and even if the majority of people isn't completely sure that storytelling is a good business strategy, they want to know some stories while they are making the purchase. This is the choice of 53.2% of respondents, who are certain to want to be informed and involved to feel part of the luxury brand world. Human beings, for their nature, are curious and stories have always had the power to fascinate them. Consequently, they can't be indifferent to the topic of storytelling, above all if they are stimulated.

FIG. 24 – Question n. 7 | Stories during the purchase

Would you like to know some stories about the product/brand while you are buying?

250 risposte



[Source: personal survey, <https://docs.google.com/forms/u/0/>]

As a consequence, luxury consumers believe that salespeople have to be trained in the storytelling field. Precisely, 56.4% of respondents think so and 35.6% are pretty sure. In fact, the most effective way to know about stories is going into the store and listen to the sales assistants. The personal learning is too difficult for the nowadays society, characterized by speed and attention to time. If someone else learns for us and then reports us the story, it's more convenient! Moreover, clients justifiably believe that people who work for a brand have to know everything about that brand, as a good example for new entries in that world. All the more reason, if customers demand something or want to know some peculiarities about a product, the brand and so on, they must be able to answer correctly and convincingly!

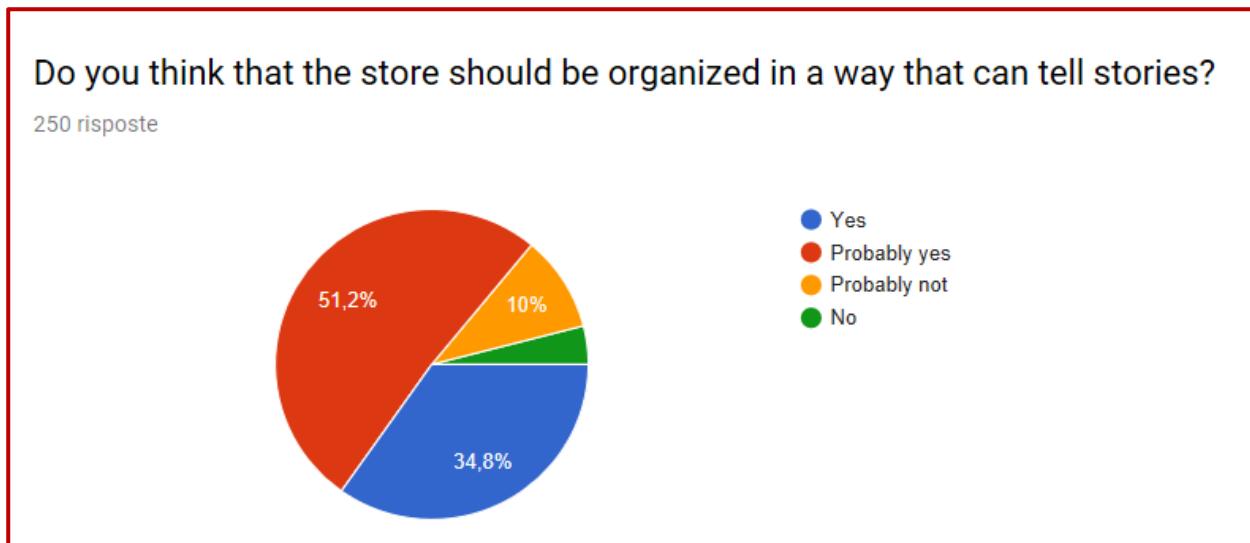
FIG. 25 – Question n. 8 | Salespeople training in storytelling



[Source: personal survey, <https://docs.google.com/forms/u/0/>]

Other important aspect is the organization and layout of the store. In the second chapter, I dedicated it a paragraph to explain the importance of this structure for telling stories. Stores are 'temples', in a simple and quick way they can illustrate brands' history and stories on their own. In this case 51.2% of interviewees responded that they probably want a store properly set up to tell stories, 34.5% want it certainly, whereas only a 4% don't believe it's necessary. The greater presence of 'probability' instead of 'certainty' can be caused by the fact that not all companies are able to arrange a store in such a manner. Consequently, consumers are not so familiar to this context, or simply they don't mind about it and they don't give so many importance to the 'box' but more to the 'content'.

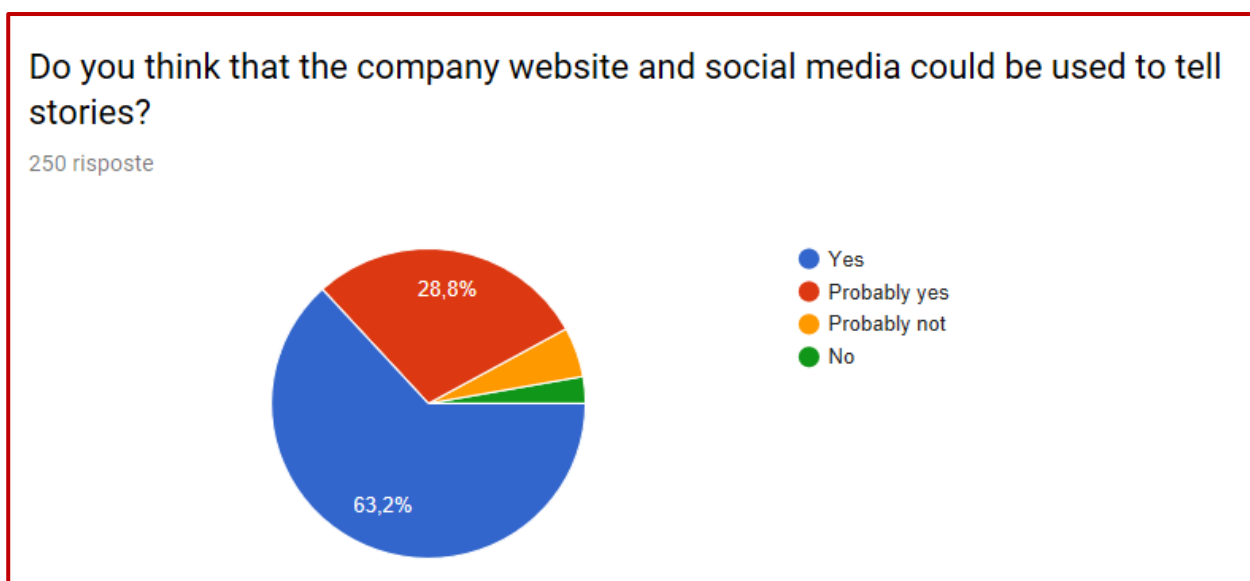
FIG. 26 – Question n. 9 | Stores with stories



[Source: personal survey, <https://docs.google.com/forms/u/0/>]

The outcome is completely different when we talk about digital channels. 63.3% of respondents are sure that the corporate website and social media have to be used by luxury brands to tell their stories and 28.8% are almost sure. It's a quick way to learn something, they can learn at home, previously to the purchase and they can go to the store more informed and engaged. Even if luxury doesn't accept completely the Internet, it should to embrace it because nowadays is a fundamental means to communicate, it leads to lots of advantages and customers demand its use. After all, if they don't do it for customers, for whom should they do?

FIG. 27 – Question n. 10 | Digital channels



[Source: personal survey, <https://docs.google.com/forms/u/0/>]

To conclude, the research demonstrates that storytelling is appreciated by luxury consumers and recognised as one of the most creative, powerful and effective tools of contemporary business strategy and communication. It is memorable. It impacts. It engages. It builds trust. It creates or improves the relationship between the brand and the customer.

Finally, “the most powerful person in the world is the storyteller. The storyteller sets the vision, values and agenda of an entire generation that is to come”<sup>181</sup>, thus “great brands and great businesses have to be storytellers too”<sup>182</sup>.

---

<sup>181</sup> Steve Jobs (1955-2011) was an American entrepreneur and business magnate, Apple Inc.’s chairman, chief executive officer and a co-founder, Pixar’s chairman and majority shareholder, a member of The Walt Disney Company's board of directors and the founder, chairman, and CEO of NeXT.

<sup>182</sup> Angela Ahrendts is an American businesswoman, actually the senior vice president of retail at Apple Inc., CEO of Burberry from 2006 to 2014.

# Conclusions

“Storytelling is about connecting to other people  
and helping people to see what you see”  
[Michael Margolis<sup>183</sup>]

This thesis was intended to discover if nowadays luxury storytelling is a foundation of growth or if it is simply a memory of the past. Are companies able to communicate in an effective emotional way, overcoming the contemporary challenges and introducing new tools to innovate themselves and involve their customers? Has luxury lost its mystique? Is luxury still telling about itself through stories? Do today luxury consumers, the so-called millennials – who grow up with digitalization and globalization, are less committed to brands, don't perceive a reality without Internet and are influenced more by the opinion of their friends than by professionals – appreciate the brand universe and stories? Are consumers still buying because they like and share intangible values or because they want to achieve something else, maybe more practical and aesthetical? Is storytelling a good technique to increase customers' awareness, engagement and loyalty towards luxury brands, enhance their intention to purchase, boost effective purchases and consequently raise companies' sales?

After a first theoretical part including definition and evolution of both luxury and storytelling, the importance of stories and their function in businesses, the result was that the literature considered storytelling a good tactic both in strategical terms and in operational ones, because it impacts the brand equity, increasing companies' value, and it's a fundamental communication tool to involve people.

The aim of the second part was to examine if the same concept can be applied to luxury industry. The chapter explained that luxury companies have always been aware of the importance of storytelling and used it, both in the past and nowadays, finding some techniques, thematiques, components more appropriate to the goal of attracting the consumers, making the brand appear as unique, valuable and rich of emotions. Here's the difference with fashion storytelling, more focused on describing and showing product characteristics. Digital channels, such as corporate website and social media, are becoming even more important, even if the role of real storyteller belongs to the store, the sacred temple of luxury brands. The result is that, putting into practice these elements, consumers are contacted, engaged and become loyal. Thus, storytelling is a growth strategy. At this point, the goal

---

<sup>183</sup> He's CEO and founder of Get Storied, a storytelling and culture-making company. Strategic advisor, two-time TEDx speaker, visiting instructor at Top 50 Business Schools, teaching fellow at NASDAQ Entrepreneurial Center and instructor at General Assembly.

of the thesis was to discover if all luxury brands use storytelling in the right way, with the right means and to reach the right objective, and if storytelling is considered only by older generations of luxury consumers or also by younger ones.

With a practical approach, the last part dealt with these two questions. Real example of luxury brands and their storytelling were reported, supporting the position that at least the most famous brands are operating in the correct manner. A personal research, based on a survey with 250 respondents, the majority millennials, verified that, even if luxury consumers don't know so many stories, they want to be informed, share the dream, discover and participate to the magnificent luxury world hidden behind famous luxury products. Human beings, for their nature, are curious and stories have always had the power to fascinate them. Consequently, they can't be indifferent to the topic of storytelling, above all if they are stimulated. Stories are memorable. They impact. They engage. They build trust. "The power of stories lies in their capacity to encompass thinking and feeling about issues and thereby to compel people to take certain actions and avoid others."<sup>184</sup> This appreciation and recognition confirmed that storytelling is one of the most creative, powerful and effective tools of contemporary business strategy and communication.

In the future, luxury companies have to continue to trust storytelling, remembering to innovate according to the times. For what concerns the next future, it will be characterized by a stronger presence of digital and transmedia storytelling. Luxury brands have to embrace it, bearing in mind its origins and values. "We need to remember the roots [...] and be sure to keep telling stories. [...] Although the shape and form of our stories will surely change to meet the expectations of this digital age, the human need for storytelling is not likely ever to go away"<sup>185</sup> because it's "a form of human expression and communication, [...] as old as humanity itself. We are in the constant pursuit of finding a great story or doing something that will create one."<sup>186</sup>

---

<sup>184</sup> F. Polletta, P. Ching, B. Chen, B. Gharrity Gardner and A. Motes, *The sociology of storytelling, in annual review of sociology*, Vol. 37, n. 1, 2011, Annual reviews in collaboration with JSTOR, pp 109-130, p. 111

<sup>185</sup> W. Cronon, Storytelling, *American Historical Review*, Vol. 118, Issue 1, February 2013, pp. 1-19, p. 5

<sup>186</sup> Mukhedkar L., *Retail storytelling – an art of building a more human brand*, *Entrepreneur India*, April 2017, in <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/292301>

# Appendix

Age	Luxury purchase?	Why?	Which brands?	Know stories?	Which brand?	Story-telling = good strategy	Stories while buying	Sales-people	Store	Digital channels
18-24	No	Special events, Sales, Like the product/brand	Chanel Louis Vuitton Bulgari	No		Probably yes	Probably not	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes
18-24	Yes	Like the product/brand, Meet own lifestyle, For yourself Special events, For yourself, For	Gucci, Chanel, Dolce e Gabbana	No		Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes	Probably yes	Probably yes
18-24	No	someone else Special events, Like the product/brand, For yourself Like the product/brand, For yourself, For	Tiffany Bulgari Rolex	Yes	Chanel	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
18-24	Yes	someone else Special events, Follow the trend, Like the product/brand	Bulgari, Valentino, Gucci	No		Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes
18-24	Yes	Like the product/brand, For yourself Like the product/brand, For yourself, For	Louis Vuitton, Gucci, Prada	No		Yes	Yes	Yes	Probably not	Yes
18-24	Yes	someone else Special events, Follow the trend, Like the product/brand	Jimmy Choo, Michael Kors, Coach	No		Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes
25-38	Yes	Like the product/brand, For yourself Like the product/brand, Meet own lifestyle, For yourself	Corneliani. Brunello C. Hermes	Yes	Brunello c.	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes	Yes
39-54	No		Burberry, Fendi, Giorgio Armani	Yes	Luisa Spagnoli	Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes

18-24	Yes	Sales, Like the product/brand, For yourself Special events, Like the product/brand	Tommy Hilfiger, Veuve Clicquot, Chanel	No		Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
39-54	Yes	Sales, Like the product/brand, For yourself Special events, Sales, Like the product/brand	Prada, Rolex, Daniele Alessandrini	No		Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes
18-24	Yes		Lewis, Tiffany	No		Probably yes	Yes	Probably not	Probably yes	Yes
18-24	No	No reason Special events, Sales, Like the product/brand, For someone else Special events, For yourself Special events, Follow the trend, Like the product/brand	none	No		No	No	No	No	No
18-24	Yes	Sales, Like the product/brand, For someone else Special events, For yourself Special events, Follow the trend, Like the product/brand	Porsche, Martin & co, gucci	No		Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes
18-24	No		Gucci, michael kors, burberry	Yes	Versace	Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes
39-54	No		Valentino, Cartier, Vuitton	No		Probably yes	Probably not	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes
18-24	Yes		Rolex, Prada, Louis Vuitton	No		Probably yes	Yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes
39-54	Yes	Sales, For yourself Meet own lifestyle Sales, Like the product/brand, Meet own lifestyle Special events, Like the product/brand, For yourself	Armani, Damiani, Pomellato Gucci BMW; Dondup; Fendi	No		Probably yes	Yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes
18-24	Yes		Rolex Hermes Gucci	No	Ferrari	Yes	Probably yes	Yes	Probably not	Probably yes
39-54	No		Bulgari, Fendi, Chanel	No		Probably yes	Yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes



18-24	Yes	Special events, Like the product/brand, For yourself	Gucci Fendi Luis Vuitton	No		Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes
25-38	Yes	Special events, Sales Like the product/brand	Four seasons Prada balenciaga chanel	Yes	Ferrari	Yes	Probably yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes
39-54	Yes	Follow the trend, Like the product/brand, Meet own lifestyle	Louboutin, Louis Vuitton, Chanel	Yes	Chanel	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Probably not	Probably yes
18-24	Yes	Like the product/brand, Meet own lifestyle, For someone else	Dior Gucci Bulgari	Yes	Dior	Yes	Probably yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes
25-38	Yes	Special events, Follow the trend, Share brand stories and values	Ermanno Scervino, Salvatore Ferragamo, Gucci	Yes	Ermanno Scervino	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes	Yes
39-54	Yes	Like the product/brand, Share brand stories and values, For yourself	balenciaga	No		No	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably not	Probably not
18-24	Yes	Special events, Meet own lifestyle, For yourself	Rolex, Prada, Mont Blanc	No		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
39-54	Yes	Special events, Like the product/brand, For yourself	Tiffany, BMW, Creed	No		Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes	Probably not	Yes
55-70	No	Sales Follow the trend, Like the product/brand	Cucinelli	Yes	Cucinelli	Probably yes	Yes	Probably yes	Probably not	Yes
18-24	Yes		gucci, celine, prada	No		Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes

39-54	No	nd, For yourself Special events, Sales, Like the product/brand	rolex-ferrari-philipp plein	No		Probably not	Probably not	Probably not	Probably yes	Probably yes
18-24	Yes	Sales, Like the product/brand, For yourself Sales, Like the product/brand, For yourself	Louis Vuitton, Fendi, Montblanc	No		Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
25-38	Yes	Sales, Like the product/brand, For yourself Sales, Like the product/brand, For yourself	Thom Browne, off white, balmain	No		Probably not	Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
18-24	Yes	Sales, Like the product/brand, For yourself Sales, Like the product/brand, For yourself	Prada/ Dior/Versace	Yes	Versace	Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Probably not	Yes
18-24	Yes	Sales, Like the product/brand, For yourself Special events, Sales, Like the product/brand, For yourself	Hermes	Yes	Cucinelli	Yes	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes
25-38	Yes	Special events, Sales, Like the product/brand, Like the product/brand, Meet	Apple, luis vuitton, calvin klein	Yes	Luis vuitton	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
55-70	Yes	own lifestyle Like the product/brand, Meet	Bulgari, Ferrari, Rolex	No		Probably not	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
18-24	Yes	own lifestyle Like the product/brand, Meet	Rolex, Chanel, Montblanc	No		Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably not	Probably yes	Probably not
39-54	Yes	own lifestyle, For someone else Sales, Like the product/brand	Mercedes Benz-apple i-Phone's-Hugo boss	No		Probably yes	Probably not	Probably yes	Probably not	Probably not
25-38	Yes	own lifestyle, For someone else Sales, Like the product/brand	Kiko, Garnier, L'Oréal	No		Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes	Probably yes
18-24	No	own lifestyle, For yourself Special events, Sales, Like the product/brand	Rolex, Ferragamo, Riva	No		Yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably not	Probably yes
25-38	Yes	own lifestyle, For yourself Special events, Sales, Like the product/brand	Valentino, Gucci, Armani	No		Probably not	No	Probably not	No	Probably yes

18-24	Yes	Showing off Special events, Sales, Like the product/brand	Gucci	No		No	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Probably not
18-24	Yes	Like the product/brand, Showing off, For yourself Sales, For someone else	Gucci, Hermes	Yes	Hermes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	No	Probably yes
18-24	Yes	Special events, Sales, Like the product/brand	Balenciaga, tod's, hermes	No	Christian Louboutin	Probably yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes	Yes
18-24	No	Special events, Sales	Burberry, Michael Kors, Tommy Hilfiger	No		Probably yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes	Probably yes
25-38	Yes	Special events, Sales	Hogan Moschino Armani	Yes	Hogan	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes
18-24	No	Special events, Sales, Like the product/brand	ralph lauren	No		Probably yes	Probably not	Probably not	Probably yes	Probably yes
18-24	Yes	Special events, Sales, Like the product/brand, No reason	Prada, Fendi, Armani	No		Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
18-24	Yes	Special events, Sales, Like the product/brand	Michael kors; Fendi; Ferragamo	Yes	Gucci	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes	Yes
18-24	Yes	Special events, For yourself	Montblanc, Gucci, hermes	No		Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Probably not
39-54	Yes	Special events, Sales	Stella Mc Cartney, Ralph Lauren, Tods Loro Piana, Montblanc, Church	No		Probably yes	Probably not	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes
25-38	Yes	For yourself Meet own lifestyle, For yourself	Special events, Like the product/brand, Showing off	No		Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes
18-24	Yes	Special events, Like the product/brand	Gucci , Bulgari, ysl	Yes	Hermes	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes
18-24	Yes	Showing off	Lancôme, Dior, Chanel	No		Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes

25-38	No	Sales, For someone else	Moschino, Louis Vuitton, Chanel	No		Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably not	Probably yes
25-38	Yes	Special events, Like the product/brand, Meet own lifestyle	Hugo Boss, Trickers, Sartoria Rossi	Yes	Ferragamo	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Under 18	No	Special events, Like the product/brand, For yourself	Dolce e Gabbana, Gucci, Louis Vuitton	No		Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes	Yes
18-24	Yes	Like the product/brand, Share brand stories and values, For yourself	Ferrari	Yes	Riva	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes	Yes
18-24	No	Sales, No reason, Other reasons	Rolex, Gucci, BMW	No		Yes	Probably not	Probably not	Probably not	Yes
39-54	Yes	Special events, Like the product/brand, For yourself	Max Mara- Dior- Armani	Yes	Valentino	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes	Yes
18-24	Yes	Special events, For yourself	Dior, Versace, Valentino.	No		Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
18-24	Yes	Special events, Sales, For yourself	Prada, Yves saint laurent, Chanel	No		Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes
39-54	Yes	For yourself	Fendi and Vuitton ed gucci	Yes	Fendi, Vuitton, Gucci	Probably yes	Probably not	Probably yes	Probably yes	No
18-24	Yes	For yourself	Balenciaga, Ferrari ,	Yes	Ferrari	Probably yes	Yes	Probably yes	Probably not	Probably yes
25-38	Yes	Special events	Furla, Philipp Plein, Gucci	Yes	Dolce e Gabbana	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
39-54	No	Meet own lifestyle, For someone else	Rolex Prada Bulgari	No		Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Probably not	Probably yes
39-54	No	Special events, Like the product/brand, For yourself	Porsche, Louis Vuitton, Harry Winston	No		Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes

25-38	Yes	Follow the trend, Like the product/brand, Meet own lifestyle Special events, Like the product/brand	Gucci, burberry, D&G	No		Probably yes	Yes	Probably yes	Probably not	Yes
18-24	Yes	For yourself	Rolex	Yes	Rolex	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably not	Yes
18-24	Yes	Like the product/brand, Meet own lifestyle, For yourself Special events, Like the product/brand	Rolex	No		Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
18-24	Yes	For yourself Special events, Like the product/brand	Herno, Montblanc, Fay	No		Probably yes	Probably not	Yes	Yes	Yes
55-70	Yes	For yourself Like the product/brand	Valentino tiffany Prada	Yes	Valentino	Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Probably yes
39-54	Yes	For yourself, No reason Special events, Like the product/brand	Mont blanc Rolex channel	No		Probably not	Probably not	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes
18-24	No	For yourself Like the product/brand	Chanel, Bulgari, Cucinelli	Yes	Bulgari	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
25-38	Yes	For yourself Sales, Follow the trend	Apple Gucci, Stella McCartney, Prada	Yes	Versace, Apple, D&G ecc	Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes
18-24	Yes		Rolex, Armani, Versace	No		Probably not	No	No	No	No
25-38	No	Sales Special events, Sales, For someone else Like the product/brand		No		Probably not	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Probably yes
55-70	No		car, tecnologia, house	No		Probably yes	Probably not	Yes	Yes	Probably yes
55-70	Yes	Special events, Like the product/brand	Cavalli,skin ceuticals, prada	No		Probably yes	No	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes
18-24	Yes	Special events, Like the product/brand	Valentino,tiffany e chanel	Yes	Chanel	Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

18-24	Yes	nd, For yourself For yourself Like the product/brand, For yourself, For	Prada, Furla, hogan	No		Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes
18-24	Yes	For someone else Sales, Like the product/brand, For yourself, Sales, Follow the trend, Like the	Tiffany, Prada e Fendi	No		Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes
18-24	Yes	product/brand, For yourself Sales, Follow the trend, Like the	Rolex, Gucci, hublot	No		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
55-70	Yes	product/brand Like the product/brand Like the product/brand, For yourself Special events, Sales, For someone else Special events, For yourself Special events, Like the	Cartier, Ferrari, Bulgari	No		Probably not	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes
39-54	No	product/brand Like the product/brand, For yourself Special events, Sales, For someone else Special events, For yourself Special events, Like the	Michael Kors / Maserati	No		No	Probably yes	Probably yes	No	No
39-54	Yes	product/brand, For yourself Special events, Sales, For someone else Special events, For yourself Special events, Like the	Tiffany Michael Kors Prada	No		Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes
39-54	Yes	product/brand Special events, Sales, Like the	Armani Bulgari Stella Mc Cartney, Fendi, YSL	No		No	Yes	No	No	Yes
25-38	Yes	product/brand Special events, Sales, Like the	Chanel, MM6, Bottega Veneta	Yes	Hermes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably not	Probably yes
25-38	Yes	product/brand Special events, Sales, Like the	Louis Vuitton	No	Chanel, MM6, Bottega Veneta	Yes Probably yes	Yes Probably yes	Yes Probably yes	Yes Yes	Yes Probably not
18-24	Yes	product/brand Like the product/brand, For yourself, For someone else Special events, Sales, Like the	Valentino	Yes	Fortela	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably not	Probably yes	Yes
18-24	No	product/brand, For yourself, For someone else Special events, Sales, Like the	na Gucci, Balenciaga, Rolex	No		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
18-24	Yes	product/brand, For yourself, For someone else Special events, Sales, Like the		No		Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes	No	Probably yes

55-70	Yes	product/brand, For yourself Special events, For yourself, For someone else Special events, Sales,	Rolex	No		Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes
25-38	Yes	Follow the trend Special events, Sales, Like the	Givency, Prada, Fendi	No		Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Probably yes
18-24	Yes	product/brand For someone else For someone else Special events, Like the	Gucci, Fendi, Louis Vitton	No		Probably not	No	Probably not	Probably yes	Probably yes
39-54	Yes	For someone else For someone else Special events, Like the	Gucci fendi. Prada	No		Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes	Probably yes	Probably yes
18-24	Yes	product/brand, Meet own lifestyle Like the	Dodo, Bulgari,	Yes	Bulgari	Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
18-24	Yes	product/brand, Meet own lifestyle Like the	Loro Piana, Rolex, Patek Philippe	Yes	Chanel, LV, Loro Piana, Berluti	Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Probably yes
25-38	Yes	product/brand Other reasons Special events, Like the	Rolex Ferrari mv agusta	Yes	Ferrari	Probably yes Probably not	Probably not Probably not	Probably yes Probably yes	Probably yes Probably not	Probably yes Probably yes
55-70	No	product/brand, For yourself Other reasons Special events, Like the	Gucci, levis, dior	No		Probably not	Probably not	Probably yes	Probably not	Probably yes
25-38	Yes	product/brand, For yourself Other reasons Like the	Hermes; Louis Vuitton; Bulgari	Yes	Bulgari;	Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes
39-54	No	product/brand, Share brand stories and values, For yourself	Prada	No		Yes	No	No	No	No
18-24	Yes	Special events Special events, Sales, Like the	Omega, patek philippe, vacheron constantin Gucci mont blanc luis vuitton	Yes	Omega	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Probably yes
18-24	Yes	Special events Special events, Sales, Like the		Yes		Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Probably not	Probably yes
39-54	No		Armani, Calvin Klein, Valentino	No		Probably yes	Yes	Probably not	Probably yes	Yes

25-38	Yes	product/brand Special events, For yourself, For someone else	Boss Bulgari rolex	No		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Probably yes
18-24	Yes	Special events, Like the product/brand, For yourself	Rolex, Apple, Lacoste	No		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Under 18	No	Special events, For yourself, Other reasons	Gucci luois vuoitton chanel	No		Probably yes	Probably not	Probably yes	Yes	Probably yes
39-54	Yes	Sales, For someone else	Valentino Prada Gucci	No		Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes
39-54	Yes	Special events, Sales	Armani	No		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
18-24	Yes	Special events, Like the product/brand, For someone else	stella mccartney/ bulgari/stuart weizman	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
55-70	Yes	Special events, Like the product/brand, Share brand stories and values	Gucci, Tiffany, Channel	No		Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes
25-38	Yes	Special events, Sales, Like the product/brand	Bag, food & beverage, clothing	Yes	Gucci, Moët chandone, dom perignon	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
39-54	Yes	Special events, Follow the trend, Like the product/brand	BULGARI, PRADA, ARMANI	Yes	ARMANI	Probably yes	Probably not	Probably not	No	Probably yes
25-38	Yes	Special events, Sales, Follow the trend	Harry Wilston, Prada, Gucci	No		Yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes	Yes



25-38	Yes	Special events, Sales, Other reasons For someone else	Pandora; tiffany&co; cartier	Yes	Tiffany&co	Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes
39-54	No	Special events Sales, Share brand stories and values, For yourself	Pandora, uno de 50, breil Guess Marella luisa spagnoli	No	Luiss Vuitton	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes
39-54	No	Special events Sales, Share brand stories and values, For yourself	Gucci, Mont Blanc, Lamborghini	No		Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
18-24	Yes	Special events, Sales, Like the product/brand	Versace	Yes	Ferrari	Yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes	Yes
18-24	Yes	Special events, Like the product/brand, No reason	Louis Vuitton, Chanel, Givency	No		Probably yes	Yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes
18-24	Yes	Special events, Like the product/brand, No reason	Trussardi, michael kors, burberry	Yes	Chanel	Probably yes	Probably not	Yes	Probably yes	Probably yes
18-24	Yes	Special events, Like the product/brand, Meet own lifestyle, Showing off	Hermes, Harry Winston, Louis Vitton	No		Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes
39-54	Yes	Special events, Like the product/brand, Share brand stories and values	BMW, Ritz-Carlton Hotels, Burberry Rolex, Gucci, Fendi	Yes	Hermes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
55-70	Yes	Special events, Like the product/brand, Share brand stories and values	Calvin Klein Armani Gucci	No		Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
39-54	Yes	Special events, Like the product/brand, Share brand stories and values	Prada Gucci Louis Vuitton	No		Yes	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes
18-24	Yes	Special events, Like the product/brand, Share brand stories and values	Gucci, Burberry, Louis Vuitton	No		Probably yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes	Yes
55-70	No	Special events, Like the product/brand, Share brand stories and values		No		Probably yes	Yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes
39-54	No	Special events, Like the product/brand, Share brand stories and values		No		Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes

18-24	No	nd, For yourself Sales, No reason, Other reasons	Chanel, Prima classe, Cartier	No			Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes
55-70	No	Special events Special events, Sales,	Cucinelli	Yes	Ferrari Cucinelli	Probably yes Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
18-24	No	Meet own lifestyle Special events, Like the product/brand	Rolex ferrari ferragamo	No		Yes	Probably not	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes
25-38	Yes	Like the product/brand Like the product/brand, For yourself Special events, Like the product/brand, For yourself	gucci givenchy celine	Yes	gucci	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
18-24	Yes		Gucci	No		Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes
39-54	Yes		Yves Saint Laurent, Prada, Giorgio Armani	No		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
18-24	Yes	Special events Follow the trend, Like the product/brand, No reason Follow the trend, Meet own lifestyle Like the product/brand, For someone else	Gucci, Lanvin, Ferragamo	Yes	Ferragamo, Versace, Armani	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably not	Probably yes
39-54	Yes		carlo pignatelli, tommy hilglingher, ralph lauren	No	i know only cousin's brands stories	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Under 18	Yes		subdued, max mara, guess	No		Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Over 70	Yes		chanel, renato balestra, fendi fiorella	No		Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes
55-70	Yes	Sales, For yourself Special events, For yourself, For someone else Special events, Like the product/brand	rubino, valentino	No		No	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably not	No
18-24	Yes		Bulgari Fendi Chanel	Yes	Hermes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
25-38	Yes		Porsche, Louis Vuitton, Harry Winston	Yes	Louis Vuitton	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

39-54	Yes	nd, For yourself Like the product/brand, Share brand stories and values, For someone else Special events, Meet own lifestyle,	Cartier, Ferrari, Bulgari	Yes	Harry Winston	Yes	Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Probably yes
39-54	Yes	For yourself Sales, Like the product/brand, For yourself Special events, Like the product/brand, For yourself Like the product/brand, For yourself, No reason Special events, For yourself, For someone else Like the product/brand, For yourself, For someone else Special events, Like the product/brand, Meet own lifestyle, For yourself Special events,	Loro Piana, Rolex, Patek Philippe	Yes	Rolex	Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
18-24	No	Like the product/brand, For yourself Special events, Like the product/brand, For yourself Like the product/brand, For yourself, No reason Special events, For yourself, For someone else Like the product/brand, For yourself, For someone else Special events, Like the product/brand, Meet own lifestyle, For yourself Special events,	Chanel Louis Vuitton Bulgari	Yes	Bulgari	Yes	Probably not	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes
18-24	Yes	Like the product/brand, For yourself Like the product/brand, For yourself, No reason Special events, For yourself, For someone else Like the product/brand, For yourself, For someone else Special events, Like the product/brand, Meet own lifestyle, For yourself Special events,	Valentino Tiffany Ralph Lauren	Yes	Tiffany	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
18-24	No	Like the product/brand, For yourself Like the product/brand, For yourself, No reason Special events, For yourself, For someone else Like the product/brand, For yourself, For someone else Special events, Like the product/brand, Meet own lifestyle, For yourself Special events,	Harry Winston Bulgari Four Seasons	Yes	Chanel	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes	Probably not
25-38	Yes	Like the product/brand, For yourself Like the product/brand, For yourself, No reason Special events, For yourself, For someone else Like the product/brand, For yourself, For someone else Special events, Like the product/brand, Meet own lifestyle, For yourself Special events,	Tiffany Bulgari Rolex	No		Probably not	Probably not	Probably not	Probably not	Probably not
55-70	No	Like the product/brand, For yourself Like the product/brand, For yourself, No reason Special events, For yourself, For someone else Like the product/brand, For yourself, For someone else Special events, Like the product/brand, Meet own lifestyle, For yourself Special events,	Rolex Patek Philippe Audemars Piguet	Yes	Rolex	Yes	Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Probably yes
Under 18	Yes	Like the product/brand, For yourself Like the product/brand, For yourself, No reason Special events, For yourself, For someone else Like the product/brand, For yourself, For someone else Special events, Like the product/brand, Meet own lifestyle, For yourself Special events,	Louis Vuitton Chanel Fendi	Yes	Louis Vuitton	Yes	Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Under 18	Yes	Like the product/brand, For yourself Like the product/brand, For yourself, No reason Special events, For yourself, For someone else Like the product/brand, For yourself, For someone else Special events, Like the product/brand, Meet own lifestyle, For yourself Special events,	Chanel Burberry Fendi	Yes	Chanel	Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
25-38	No	Like the product/brand, For yourself Like the product/brand, For yourself, No reason Special events, For yourself, For someone else Like the product/brand, For yourself, For someone else Special events, Like the product/brand, Meet own lifestyle, For yourself Special events,	Valentino	Yes	Hermes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes

18-24	Yes	Sales, For someone else Follow the trend, Like the product/brand, Meet own lifestyle	Ferrari	No		Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes
39-54	Yes	Sales, Like the product/brand, For yourself Like the product/brand, Meet own lifestyle,	Ferragamo, Cucinelli, Loro Piana	Yes	Cucinelli	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
55-70	No	For yourself Like the product/brand, For yourself	Ferrari, Maserati, Porsche	Yes	Ferrari	Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes
Under 18	Yes	Like the product/brand, For yourself	Burberry Tiffany Louis Vuitton	No		Probably not	Probably not	Probably not	Probably yes	Probably yes
Under 18	Yes	Like the product/brand, For yourself Special events, For yourself,	Chanel Prada Fendi	No		Probably yes	Probably not	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes
25-38	Yes	For someone else Like the product/brand, For yourself,	Louis Vuitton-Gucci-Bulgari	Yes	Louis Vuitton	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes
18-24	Yes	For someone else Like the product/brand, For yourself	Chanel Dior Guerlain	Yes	Chanel	Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes
Under 18	Yes		Longchamp, Louis Vuitton, Fendi	No		Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes
55-70	Yes	Like the product/brand, For yourself Like the product/brand, For yourself	Vacheron Constantin, Audemars Piguet, Patek Philippe	No		Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes
25-38	Yes		Givenchy Celine Gucci	No		Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes
18-24	Yes	Like the product/brand, For yourself Special events,	Burberry, Prada, Fendi	Yes	Fendi	Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes

25-38	No	nd, For yourself Like the product/brand, For yourself Special events, Like the product/brand	Bulgari Cartier Harry Winston	Yes	Bulgari	Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes
25-38	Yes	nd	Rolex Swatch Montblanc	Yes	Rolex	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
39-54	No	Special events Like the product/brand, For yourself Like the product/brand	Dom Perignon Ferrari Rolex Ermenegildo Zegna, Bottega Veneta, Balenciaga	No		Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
39-54	Yes	Like the product/brand, For yourself Like the product/brand		No		Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes	Probably yes	Probably yes
18-24	No	nd, For yourself Special events, Like the product/brand	Valentino Bulgari Hermes	Yes	Hermes	Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes
55-70	Yes	nd, For yourself Special events, Like the product/brand	Cartier Hermes Four Seasons	Yes	Hermes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
18-24	Yes	nd Special events, Like the product/brand	Fendi Chanel Louis Vuitton	Yes	Louis Vuitton	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
18-24	No	nd, For yourself Like the product/brand	Harry Winston, Rolex, Bulgari	Yes	Harry Winston	Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
18-24	Yes	nd, For yourself, No reason Special events,	Chanel Ferrari Rolex	No		Probably not	Probably not	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes
18-24	Yes	Sales, For yourself Like the product/brand	Louis Vuitton Fendi Prada	No		Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes
25-38	Yes	nd, For yourself Like the product/brand	Swatch Rolex Loro Piana	No		Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes
18-24	Yes	nd, For yourself Special events,	Dior Prada Burberry	No		Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes
25-38	Yes	Sales, For yourself	Ferragamo, LV, Bulgari	No		Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes

55-70	No	Like the product/brand, For yourself	Valentino Cartier Ferrari	No		Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes
18-24	Yes	For yourself, For someone else	Gucci Fendi Chanel	No		Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes
55-70	Yes	Like the product/brand, Meet own lifestyle, For yourself	IWC Omega Zenith	No		Yes	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes
39-54	Yes	Like the product/brand, For yourself	Hublot Tag Heuer Loro Piana Longines	No		Yes	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes
25-38	No	Special events, For yourself	Harrods Bottega Veneta	No		Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes
Under 18	Yes	Follow the trend, Like the product/brand, For yourself	Longchamp, Balenciaga, Tiffany	No		Probably not	Probably not	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes
Over 70	Yes	Special events, Like the product/brand	Rolex Chanel Versace	Yes	Chanel	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
18-24	Yes	Like the product/brand, Meet own lifestyle, For yourself	Celine Chloé YSL	No		Yes	Probably yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes
18-24	Yes	Like the product/brand, For yourself	Hermes Tiffany Louis Vuitton	Yes	Hermes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes
Over 70	Yes	Like the product/brand, Meet own lifestyle, For yourself	Bulgari Dior Ferragamo	No		Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
39-54	Yes	Special events, Like the product/brand, For yourself	Bulgari Cartier Valentino	Yes	Bulgari	Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes
55-70	Yes	Like the product/brand, Meet own lifestyle, For yourself	Rolex Ferrari Harry Winston	No		Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes

55-70	Yes	nd, For yourself Special events, Like the product/brand	VCA, Four Seasons, Ferretti Yacht	No		Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes	Probably yes	Probably yes
25-38	Yes	Like the product/brand, Meet own lifestyle, For yourself Like the product/brand,	Gucci Burberry Louis Vuitton	No		Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes
18-24	Yes	Showing off, For yourself	Ferrari, Dom perignon, Rolex	No		Probably not	No	Probably yes	Probably not	Probably not
25-38	Yes	For yourself Special events, For yourself, For someone else	Armani, Dolce e Gabbana, Dior	No		Probably yes	Probably not	Yes	Probably yes	Probably yes
25-38	Yes	Like the product/brand, Share brand stories and values, For yourself	Tiffany Gucci Fendi	No		Yes	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes
39-54	Yes	Like the product/brand, Share brand stories and values	Bulgari, Louis Vuitton, Dior	Yes	Bulgari	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
18-24	Yes	Special events, Like the product/brand, For yourself	saint laurent, ferrari, patek philippe	Yes	Most of all swiss watch manufactures	Yes	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes
18-24	Yes	Like the product/brand, Share brand stories and values, For yourself	Bulgari Gucci Chanel	No		Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
18-24	Yes	Like the product/brand, Share brand stories and values, For yourself	Rolex, Armani, Gucci	Yes	Armani	Yes	Probably not	Probably not	Probably not	Probably not
18-24	Yes	For yourself Special events,	Dior Hermes Harry Winston	No		Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
25-38	Yes		Gucci, Givenchy	Yes	Gucci	Yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes

55-70	Yes	Sales, Meet own lifestyle Like the product/brand, For yourself Special events, Like the product/brand, For yourself	Maserati, Cartier, Audemars Piguet	No		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Under 18	Yes	Like the product/brand, Share brand stories and values, For yourself Like the product/brand, Meet own lifestyle, For yourself	Tiffany, Louis Vuitton, Gucci	No		Probably not	Probably not	Probably not	Probably not	Probably not
Over 70	Yes	Like the product/brand, Share brand stories and values, For yourself	Chanel, Rolex, Hermes	Yes	Chanel	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
18-24	Yes	Like the product/brand, Meet own lifestyle, For yourself	Burberry, Louis Vuitton, Chanel	Yes	Louis Vuitton	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
25-38	Yes	Like the product/brand, Meet own lifestyle, For yourself	Bulgari Harry Winston Hermes	No		Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Probably yes
25-38	Yes	Like the product/brand, Meet own lifestyle, For yourself	Prada Valentino Fendi	No		Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes
39-54	Yes	Like the product/brand, Meet own lifestyle, For yourself	Ferragamo, Bulgari, Porsche	No		Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes
18-24	No	For someone else	Harry Winston Ferrari Bulgari Prada Armani Vacheron Constantin	Yes	Bulgari	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
39-54	Yes	Like the product/brand, Meet own lifestyle, For yourself		No		Probably not	No	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes
55-70	Yes	Like the product/brand, Meet own lifestyle, For yourself	Hermes Cartier Ferrari	No		Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes



39-54	Yes	For yourself Like the product/brand, Showing off, For yourself Like the product/brand, Share brand stories and values, For yourself	Moet et chandon, Audemars Piguet, Maserati	No	Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes
18-24	Yes	Follow the trend, Showing off, For yourself	Gucci Valentino Prada	No	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes
18-24	Yes	Meet own lifestyle, Showing off, For yourself	Chanel Armani Fendi	No	Yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes
18-24	Yes	Special events, Sales, Share brand stories and values	Louis Vuitton Rolex Chanel	No	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes	Yes
18-24	No	Showing off, For yourself, For someone else	Chanel Fendi Bulgari	No	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes
18-24	Yes	Showing off, Share brand stories and values, For yourself	Louis Vuitton Bulgari Gucci	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
18-24	Yes	Share brand stories and values, For yourself, For someone else	Chanel Valentino Bulgari	No	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes
18-24	Yes	Showing off, Share brand stories and values, For yourself	Armani Gucci Bulgari	No	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes
18-24	Yes	Like the product/brand	Valentino Gucci Fendi	No	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes
25-38	Yes		Gucci, Burberry and Armani	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes

25-38	Yes	nd, For yourself Like the product/brand, For yourself Like the product/brand, For yourself Like the product/brand, For yourself Like the product/brand, For yourself Special events, Like the product/brand, For yourself Like the product/brand, For yourself Like the product/brand, Meet own lifestyle, For yourself Like the product/brand, Meet own lifestyle, Share brand stories and values Special events, Share brand stories and values, For yourself Special events, Meet own lifestyle Special events Meet own lifestyle	Coach Burberry Jimmy Choo	Yes	Burberry	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
18-24	Yes		Givenchy celine chloe	No		Proba bly yes	Yes	Yes	Proba bly yes	Yes
25-38	Yes		Versace guerlain dior	No		Proba bly yes	Proba bly yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
39-54	Yes		Ysl, Chanel, Gucci	No		Proba bly yes	Yes	Yes	Proba bly yes	Yes
25-38	Yes		Louis Vuitton Harry Winston Hotel ritz	No		Proba bly yes	Yes	Yes	Proba bly yes	Yes
18-24	No		Bulgari Four seasons Hermes	Yes	Hermes	Yes	Proba bly yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
25-38	Yes		Givenchy, balmain, Alberta ferretti	No		Proba bly yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
39-54	Yes		Ermanno Scervino, Christian Laboutin, Jimmy Choo	No	Delvaux ha inventato la borsa da donna	Proba bly yes	Yes	Proba bly yes	Proba bly yes	Proba bly yes
39-54	Yes		Delvaux, Goyard, Loewe Vacheron Costantin, Harry Winston, buccellati Vhernier, Hublot, Audemar Piquet	Yes		Yes	Proba bly yes	Proba bly yes	Proba bly yes	Yes
25-38	Yes			No		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
25-38	Yes			No		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

39-54	No	Special events, Like the product/brand	Hotel plaza, dom perignon, maserati	No		Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes
18-24	Yes	Special events, Like the product/brand	Tiffany Gucci Louis Vuitton	Yes	Tiffany	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
18-24	Yes	Like the product/brand, For yourself	Burberry, Prada, Tiffany	No		Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably yes
Over 70	Yes	Special events, Like the product/brand	Hotel ritz Chanel Rolex	Yes	Chanel	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Probably yes
39-54	Yes	Like the product/brand, For yourself	Tag heur, berluti, bottega veneta	No		Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes	Probably yes	Probably yes
25-38	Yes	Like the product/brand, For yourself	Swatch Ralph Lauren Tommy Hilfinger	No		Probably not	No	Probably yes	Probably yes	Probably not
25-38	Yes	Like the product/brand, For yourself	Loewe, Balenciaga, Gucci	No		Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes
55-70	Yes	Like the product/brand, Meet own lifestyle, For yourself	VCA, Valentino, Vacheron Constantin	No		Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
18-24	Yes	Sales, Like the product/brand, For yourself	Ray-Ban, LV, Chanel	Yes	Louis Vuitton	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
18-24	Yes	Special events, For yourself, For someone else	Tory Burch, Tiffany, Burberry	No		Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes
18-24	Yes	Like the product/brand, For yourself	Fendi, Dior, Prada	No		Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes
18-24	Yes	Special events, Showing off	Dom Perignon, Ferrari, Rolex Bulgari,	No		Probably not	No	Probably not	Probably not	Probably not
39-54	Yes	Special events, Like the	Porsche, Four seasons	No		Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes

55-70	Yes	product/brand Special events, Like the product/brand Special events, Like the product/brand	Loro Piana, Audemars Piguet, Hotel Ritz	No		Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes	Probably yes	Probably yes
18-24	Yes	Like the product/brand	Montblanc, Ferrari, Moet et Chandon	Yes	Ferrari	Probably yes	Probably yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes
18-24	Yes	Like the product/brand, For yourself	Tiffany Prada Gucci	No		Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes
55-70	Yes	Like the product/brand	Fendi, Cartier, Hermes	No		Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes
25-38	Yes	Like the product/brand, For yourself	Bulgari Chanel LV	No		Probably yes	Yes	Yes	Probably yes	Yes

# References

- Aaker D. A., *The value of brand equity*, Journal of Business Strategy, Vol. 13, n. 4, pp.27-32, 1992
- Abboud S., *The key to marketing luxury brands is storytelling*, March 2015, in <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/key-marketing-luxury-brands-storytelling-samer-abboud>
- Ahsan A., *Consumer ratings-reviews and its impact on consumer purchasing behaviour*, 2017, Degree Project in Computer Science and Communication, Master's Programme in Media Technology, KTH Royal Institute of Technology School of Computer Science and Communication, in <https://kth.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1162127/FULLTEXT01.pdf>
- Altagamma, Bain & Company, *Altagamma 2017 Worldwide Luxury Market Monitor. Millennial state of mind: the tailwind behind consumer behaviours and winning strategies*, October 2017
- Andjelic A., *Luxury brands are failing in their storytelling*, The Guardian, November 2015, in <https://www.theguardian.com/media-network/2015/nov/23/luxury-brands-marketing-failing-storytelling>
- Assadi D., *Storytelling, Génie des Glacier*, Coll. Les Mini-Génies, France, 2009
- Bakhtin M. M., *The dialogic imagination*, Austin: University of Texas Press, ed. M. Holquist, transl. C. Emerson, M. Holquist, 1981
- BALISTIK#ART Agency, *La métamorphose du storytelling de luxe*, in BLSTK Replay, November 2015, in <http://www.influencia.net/fr/actualites/art-culture,luxe.metamorphose-storytelling-luxe,5850.html>
- Bellaiche J., Mei-Pochtler A., Hanisch D., “*The new world of luxury. Caught between growing momentum and lasting change*”, BCG and Concept M analysis, December 2010, in <https://www.bcg.com/documents/file67444.pdf>
- Benjamin W., *The storyteller: reflections on the works of Nikolai Leskow*, in *Illuminations: essays and reflections*, transl. H. Zohn, New York: Schocken Books, 1968
- Blanchard T., *Forget fashion shops: how designers embraced art exhibitions*, The Guardian, September 2015, in <https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2015/sep/19/why-fashion-houses-are-staging-their-own-exhibitions>
- Blancherie J., *Le storytelling ne raconte pas d'histoires*, Espace 298, December 2011, in [http://www.academia.edu/5468220/Le\\_storytelling\\_ne\\_raconte\\_pas\\_dhistoires](http://www.academia.edu/5468220/Le_storytelling_ne_raconte_pas_dhistoires)
- Blancherie J., Dangel S., *Storytelling du luxe*, Éditions de désir, 2010
- Boje D. M., *Narrative methods for organizational and communication research*, London, England: Sage, 2001

- Boje D. M., Rosile G. A., Gardner C. L., *Antenarrative, narratives and anaemic stories*, in N. Taher, S. Gopalan (Eds.), *Storytelling in management* (pp. 30-45), Hyderabad, India: ICFAI University Press, 2007
- Brakus J., Schmitt B. H., Zarantonello L., *Brand Experience: What Is It? How Is It Measured? Does It Affect Loyalty?*, *Journal of Marketing*, Vol. 73, May 2009
- Bruner J., *Making stories: law, literature, life*, Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2002
- Cajete G., *Native science; natural laws of interdependence*, Santa Fe, NM: Clear Light Publishers, 2000
- Capoferri L., *Le storytelling des grandes marques de luxe*, April 2017, in <http://adworld.iscomdigital.com/2017/04/07/storytelling-de-luxe>
- Chen V., *Luxury brands are setting up their own museums to preserve heritage and honour arts*, *South China Morning Post*, August 2015, in <https://www.scmp.com/magazines/style/article/1845191/luxury-brands-are-setting-their-own-museums-preserve-heritage-and>
- Ching G., *How Burberry is redefining luxury storytelling*, *Medium*, November 2016, in <https://medium.com/@gordonching/how-burberry-is-redefining-brand-storytelling-2893cfc19ac8>
- Clémont L., *Storytelling: 5 techniques des marques de luxe particulièrement inspirantes*, May 2016, in <https://www.storytelling.fr/storytelling-5-techniques-marques-de-luxe-particulierement-inspirantes/>
- Crippa F., *Louis Vuitton Speedy: la storia di un mito*, *Grazia*, June 2016, in <https://www.grazia.it/moda/tendenze-moda/louis-vuitton-speedy-bauletto>
- Czarniawska B., *Narrating the organization. Dramas of institutional identity*, Chicago: IL: University of Chicago Press, 1997
- Czarniawska B., *Narratives in social science research. Introducing qualitative methods*, London, England: Sage, 2004
- Dewintre H., *Le luxe doit passer du 'storytelling' au 'storyproving'*, March 2018, in <https://fashionunited.fr/actualite/business/le-luxe-doit-passer-du-storytelling-au-storyproving/2018031915161>
- Donzé P., Wubs B., *LVMH: storytelling and organizing creativity*, March 2018, in [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324106149\\_LVMH\\_Storytelling\\_and\\_organizing\\_creativity\\_in\\_luxury\\_and\\_fashion](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324106149_LVMH_Storytelling_and_organizing_creativity_in_luxury_and_fashion)
- Duarte N., *Resonate: Present visual stories that transform audiences*, Hoboken, N.J: Wiley, 2010
- Duguay B., *Consommation et luxe: la voie de l'excès et de l'illusion*, Montréal: Liber, 2007

*Étude de cas: le 'voyage' au centre du storytelling de la marque Louis Vuitton*, Uni, August 2018, in <https://agence-uni.com/etude-de-cas-le-storytelling-de-la-marque-louis-vuitton/>

Etzold V., Range T., *Equity storytelling*, Springer, March 2014, in <https://veit-etzold.de/en/storytelling-equity-storytelling-2/>

Evrard Y., Hoyer W. D., Strazzieri A., *Introduction to the special issue on marketing*, Journal of Business Research, Vol. 58, n. 3, March 2005

Farese M., *4 brillanti esempi di content marketing nella moda*, April 2016, in <http://www.yourbrand.camp/marketing-camp/fashion-travel/4-brillanti-esempi-di-content-marketing-nella-moda>

Farfan B., *Retail definition of flagship stores*, Retail Small Business, October 2017, in <https://www.thebalancesmb.com/definition-of-flagship-stores-retail-2892224>,

Fernandes S., *Curated stories: the uses and misuses of storytelling*, Oxford Scholarship Online: University Press Scholarship Online, June 2017

Fog K., Budtz C., Yakaboylu B., *Storytelling. Branding in practice*, Springer, 2005

Foulkes N., *Luxury brands' museum shows*, How to spend it – Financial Times, February 2014, in <https://howtospendit.ft.com/watches-jewellery/47843-luxury-brands-museum-shows>

Gabriel Y., *Storytelling in organizations: Facts, fictions and fantasies*, Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2000

Godin S., *Tous les marketeurs sont des menteurs*, Montréal: Les éditions transcontinental, 2006

González Romo Z. F., García-Medina I., Plaza Romero N., *Storytelling and social networking as tools for digital and mobile marketing of luxury fashion brands*, iJIM – Vol. 11, n. 6, pp. 136-149, 2017

Gottschall J., *The storytelling animal: how stories make us human*, New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012

Granitz N., Forman H., *Building self-brand connections: Exploring brand stories through a transmedia perspective*, Journal of Brand Management, Vol. 22, pp. 38-59, March 2015

Haven K., *Story proof: the science behind the startling power of story*, Libraries Unlimited, 2007

Hollensen S., *Global Marketing*, Pearson, 7<sup>th</sup> edition, 2017

*How luxury brands can boost their retail sales*, Mi9, March 2018, in <https://mi9retail.com/luxury-brands-can-boost-retail-sales/>

*How selling with storytelling will increase your retail sales*, Bob Phibbs The Retail Doctor, April 2016, in <https://www.retaildoc.com/blog/how-storytelling-will-help-increase-your-retail-sales-selling>

Ilhan B., *Transmedia consumption experiences: consuming and co-creating interrelated stories across media*, Doctoral Dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2011, in <https://www.ideals.illinois.edu/handle/2142/26398>

Jenkins H., *Convergence culture: where old and new media collide*, New York and London, NY: University Press, 2006

Jiva B., *Is brand storytelling dead?*, Bernardette Jiva's The story of telling, July 2015, in <https://thestoryoftelling.com/is-storytelling-dead/>

Johansson A., *How compelling storytelling can help you build a heritage brand*, April 2018, in <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/311178>

Johnler H., Olsen A., *A Good Story Always Wins. A Qualitative Study on Storytelling's Affect of Emotional Connection and the Impact on Brand Equity*, 2015, Bachelor of Science in Business and Economics Business Administration, Luleå University of Technology Department of Business, Administration, Technology and Social Sciences, in <http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1031770/FULLTEXT02>

Joy C., *9 epic content marketing examples by luxury brands*, Epictions Blog, May 2017, in <http://www.epictions.com/blog/content-marketing/content-marketing-examples-luxury-brands>

Kackman M., Binfield M., Payne M. T., Perlman A., Sebok B., *Flow TV: television in the age of media convergence*, New York, NY: Routledge, 2010

Kapferer J.N., Bastien V., *The Luxury Strategy: Break the Rules of Marketing to Build Luxury Brands*, Kogan Page Ltd, 2012

Kapferer J.N., *The challenges of luxury branding*, Research Gate, January 2009

Kretz G., *Marketing du luxe, un storytelling savamment orchestré*, Grandes Écoles et Universités Magazine – Hors-Serie Special Finance et Marketing, n. 3, May 2016, in <http://www.mondedesgrandesecoles.fr/marketing-luxe-storytelling-savamment-orchestre/>

Kretz G., de Valck K., *"Pixelize me!": Digital storytelling and the creation of archetypal myths through explicit and implicit self-brand association in fashion and luxury blogs*, in Russell W. Belk (ed.) *Research in Consumer Behavior* (Research in Consumer Behaviour, Vol. 12) Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 2010, pp. 313 – 329

Küpers W., Mantere S., Statler M., *Strategy as storytelling: a phenomenological collaboration*, Journal of Management Inquiry, Vol. 22, n. 1, pp. 83-100, 2013

Labov W., Waletzky J., *Narrative analysis: oral versions of personal experience*, in *Essays on the verbal and visual arts*, ed. J Helm, Seattle: Univ. Wash. Press, pp. 12-44, 1967

Lewi G., *Mythologie des marques. Quand les marques font leur storytelling*, Paris: Pearson éducation, Coll. Village Mondial, 2009



Lipovetsky G., *Le bonheur paradoxal. Essai sur la société d'hyperconsommation*, Coll. Folio essais (n. 512), Paris: Gallimard, 2006

Lundqvist A., Liljander V., Gummerus J., van Riel A., *The impact of storytelling on the consumer brand experience: the case of a firm-originated story*. Journal of Brand Management, Vol. 20, pp. 283-297, February/March 2013

*Luxury retail animation and the consumer*, Beauty tomorrow, July 2017, in <https://beautytmr.com/frank-folberth-6d382fbaa840>

Merleau-Ponty M., *Phenomenology of perception*, New Dehli, India: Motilal Banarsidass Publisher, 1962

Mukhedkar L., *Retail storytelling – an art of building a more human brand*, Entrepreneur India, April 2017, in <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/292301>

Olenski S., *How brick-and-mortars retailers can use storytelling to go beyond the store*, Forbes, July 2018, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/steveolenski/2018/07/13/how-brick-and-mortar-retailers-can-use-storytelling-to-go-beyond-the-store/#36370785426d>

Olsen L., *Brand storytelling key to better in-store experience*, October 2017, in <https://wwd.com/business-news/business-features/brand-storytelling-pmx-11036964/>

Osipova M., *Transmedia storytelling in luxury fashion industry: real vs virtual space*, September 2015, Writing Assignment, Karlschochschule International University

Palaiologou G., Penn A., *The branded experience: decoding the spatial configuration of flagship stores*, In: S. Sonnenburg, L. Baker (eds), Branded Spaces. Management – Culture – Interpretation, Wiesbaden: Springer Wiesbaden, pp. 135-156, 2013

Pellegrin B., *Selling fashion as art: how luxury brands use “heritage” marketing to convert customers*, Bertrand on brand, August 2018, in <http://blog.bonbrand.com/selling-fashion-as-art-luxury-brands-use-heritage-marketing-to-convert-customers/#.W4bq4yQzaW8>

Petulla S., *Storytelling and technology: the secret ingredients of retail 2.0*, August 2014, in <https://contently.com/2014/08/20/storytelling-and-technology-the-secret-ingredients-of-retail-2-0/>

Poitras J., *Le storytelling au cœur des stratégies des marques de luxe: une analyse de la campagne publicitaire Prada Candy L'Eau 2013*, May 2005, in <https://archipel.uqam.ca/7804/1/M13990.pdf>

Polletta F., Bobby Chen P. C., Gharrity Gardner B., Motes A., *The sociology of storytelling*, in Annual Review of Sociology, Vol. 37, n. 1, Annual Reviews in collaboration with JSTOR, pp 109-130, 2011

Redaelli L., *Perché l'arancione è il colore di Hermès?*, April 2017, in <https://www.gioia.it/moda/abbigliamento/a3935/hermes-colore-arancione-storia/>

Renoir L., Ranga L., *The ghost of strategy. Luxury strategy as storytelling*, Musgrave Vern, 2017

Ricoeur P., *Time and narrative I*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1984

Rosile G. A., Boje D. M., Carlon D. M., Downs A., Saylor R., *Storytelling diamond: an antenarrative integration of the six facets of storytelling in organization design research*, Organizational Research Methods, Vol. 16, n. 4, Sage, pp. 557-580, February 2013

Sachs J., *Winning the story wars: why those who tell (and live) the best stories will rule the future*, Boston: Harvard business review press, 2012

Scott J. W., *Storytelling*, Wiley for Wesleyan University, in History and Theory, Vol. 50, n.2, pp. 203-209

Shaoolian G., *The luxury e-commerce experience: what can small businesses learn from brands like Burberry and Gucci*, Forbes, March 2017, in <https://www.forbes.com/sites/gabrielshaoolian/2017/03/27/the-luxury-ecommerce-experience-what-can-small-businesses-learn-from-brands-like-burberry-and-gucci/#74f950797fbe>

*Storie di successo: la Neverfull di Louis Vuitton*, Istituto Mordatech|Blog, July 2014, in <http://blog.modartech.com/storie-successo-neverfull-louis-vuitton/>

*Storytelling through digital: key trend for luxury marketers*, Think with google, October 2015, in <https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/intl/en-gb/consumer-insights/storytelling-through-digital-key-trends-for-luxury-marketers/>

Team Flagship, *7 storytelling principles luxury brands must incorporate*, April 2018, in <https://www.flagship.com/blog/7-storytelling-principles-luxury-brands-must-incorporate/>

Teo V., *The age of transmedia: how brands can tell better stories*, ClickZ, July 2012, in <http://www.clickz.com/clickz/column/2282073/the-age-of-transmedia-how-brands-can-tell-better-stories>

The Boston Consulting Group, Fondazione Altagamma, *The True-Luxury Global Consumer Insight*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, February 2017

The Loupe, *The story behind the logo: Chanel, Rolex, Hermès and Longines*, February 2015, in <https://www.truefacet.com/guide/story-behind-logo/>

*The luxury value of storytelling*, Zeke Blog, in <http://www.zekecreative.com/Blog/The-Luxury-Value-of-Storytelling>

Toffolo C., *Retail storytelling: marketing emozionale che conquista!*, January 2016, in <https://marketingtechnology.it/retail-storytelling/>

Trotter C., *How storytelling can improve your retail business*, Insider trends, March 2017, in <https://www.insider-trends.com/everything-you-need-to-know-about-storytelling-in-retail/>

Trotter C., *What is a flagship store?*, Insider Trends, September 2016, in <https://www.insider-trends.com/what-is-a-flagship-store/>,

Turcato A., *Arancione Hermès: la storia di un brand in un colore (Parte I)*, February 2017, in <http://blog.leatheredgepaint.com/it/arancione-hermès-storia-brand-colore>

Van Gils P., *Digital storytelling in luxury retail*, Catchpoint, April 2017, in <http://blog.catchpoint.com/2017/04/21/digital-storytelling-in-luxury/>

Vignali M., *Storia delle borse: Kelly e Birkin di Hermès*, February 2015, in <https://alvufashionstyle.com/2015/02/16/storia-delle-borse-kelly-e-birkin-di-hermes/>

Volery C., *Un exemple de storytelling? Les belles histoires que les marques racontent à leurs clients*, Plus Sept, in <https://www.plussept.com/blog/exemple-de-storytelling/>

Woodside A. G., *Brand-consumer storytelling theory and research: introduction to a psychology & marketing special issue*, in *Psychology and marketing*, Vol. 27(6), pp. 531-540, June 2010

<http://inside.chanel.com/en/colors-of-chanel>

<http://inside.chanel.com/en/deauville>

<http://inside.chanel.com/en/diamond>

<http://inside.chanel.com/en/jacket>

<http://inside.chanel.com/en/lion>

<http://inside.chanel.com/en/no5>

<http://inside.chanel.com/en/the-camellia>

<http://www.bms.co.in/what-are-the-factors-that-determine-brand-equity/>

<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/relationship-marketing.html>

<http://www.dictionary.com/browse/intangibility>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Birkin\\_bag](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Birkin_bag)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brand\\_equity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brand_equity)

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bulgari>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chanel>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coco\\_Chanel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coco_Chanel)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate\\_social\\_responsibility](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corporate_social_responsibility)

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hermès>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kelly\\_bag](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kelly_bag)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis\\_Vuitton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Louis_Vuitton)

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rolux>

[https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Responsabilit%C3%A0\\_sociale\\_d%27impresa](https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Responsabilit%C3%A0_sociale_d%27impresa)

<https://searchcrm.techtarget.com/definition/relationship-marketing>

<https://us.louisvuitton.com/eng-us/la-maison/a-legendary-history>

<https://us.louisvuitton.com/eng-us/lv-now>

<https://us.louisvuitton.com/eng-us/stories/les-parfums-femme-louis-vuitton#the-collection>

<https://us.louisvuitton.com/eng-us/stories/les-parfums-homme-louis-vuitton#savoir-faire>

<https://www.bulgari.com/en-fr/bulgari-heritage-icons>

<https://www.bulgari.com/en-fr/heritage-forever-bvlgari-timeline>

<https://www.bulgari.com/en-fr/temples/rome>

<https://www.bulgari.com/en-fr/the-heritage-domvs>

<https://www.fieldpulse.com/academy/narrative-marketing-contractors/>

<https://www.globalnegotiator.com/international-trade/dictionary/flagship-store/>

<https://www.investopedia.com/terms/b/below-the-line-advertising.asp>

<https://www.mbaskool.com/business-concepts/marketing-and-strategy-terms/1860-brand-equity.html>

<https://www.rolex.com/every-rolex-tells-a-story.html>

<https://www.rolex.com/every-rolex-tells-a-story/gary-player-rolex-watch.html>

<https://www.rolex.com/every-rolex-tells-a-story/james-cameron-rolex-watch.html>

<https://www.rolex.com/every-rolex-tells-a-story/lindsey-vonn-rolex-watch.html>

<https://www.rolex.com/every-rolex-tells-a-story/yundi-rolex-watch.html>

<https://www.rolex.com/rolex-history.html>

<https://www.td.org/insights/storytelling-and-brain-science-this-is-your-brain-on-story>

<https://www.theguardian.com/fashion/2015/sep/19/why-fashion-houses-are-staging-their-own-exhibitions>

Slides of the Luxury Management course, A.Y. 2017-2018

Personal survey: Excel file and Google doc in

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScXNkZ\\_nYHBgy6mn-4FrF2rdqJILhXQOip85EVPIFrw6jibQ/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScXNkZ_nYHBgy6mn-4FrF2rdqJILhXQOip85EVPIFrw6jibQ/viewform?usp=sf_link)

# Summary

Storytelling is one of the most powerful and effective tools of modern marketing strategies, one of the most creative ways of communication, an ancient art to affect human beings and their perception of the world. Stories are illustrative and easily memorable, and if they are told in good way, they can bring a significant positive impact. Stories bring excitement and empathy while comforting and educating, enhance connections and conversations. Stories convey information, both subjective and objective, such as values, culture, strengths and problems. Stories perpetuate awareness because individuals remember people, places and events through stories. Stories may come with many touchpoints to the lives of listeners/viewers, creating awareness and emotional attachment in their minds. In recent years, there have been a lot of research and study on brand storytelling and its role of communicating with consumers, with the result that the researchers have widely recognized the power of stories in variety of disciplines such as psychology, social sciences, management and marketing. However, there is not enough research that addresses storytelling in some fields such as digital marketing, sales perspective and customer's loyalty, particularly referring to the luxury world. The purpose of this thesis is precisely discovering if luxury storytelling is a good technique to increase customers' awareness, engagement and loyalty towards luxury brands, enhance their intention to purchase, boost effective purchases and consequently raise companies' sales. Moreover, it intends to examine if storytelling is still a foundation of growth or if it is simply a memory of the past, analysing if today luxury companies are able to communicate in an effective emotional way, overcoming the contemporary challenges and introducing new tools to innovate themselves and involve their customers, and if today luxury consumers, the so-called millennials, appreciate the brand universe and want to hear brand stories as well as older generations.

The first chapter is dedicated to the definition and evolution of both luxury and storytelling, the importance of stories and their function in businesses. The literature recognises storytelling as a good tactic to involve people. The second chapter examines if the same concept can be applied to luxury industry. Luxury companies have always been aware of the importance of storytelling and used it, both in the past and nowadays, finding some techniques, thematiques, components more appropriate to the goal of attracting the consumers, making the brand appear as unique, valuable and rich of emotions. Here's the difference with fashion storytelling, more focused on describing and showing product characteristics. Digital channels, such as corporate website and social media, are becoming even more important, even if the role of real storyteller belongs to the store, the sacred temple of luxury brands. The result is that, putting into practice these elements, consumers are contacted,

engaged and become loyal. Thus, storytelling is a growth strategy. At this point, the goal of the thesis is to discover if all luxury brands use storytelling in the right way, with the right means and to reach the right objective, and if storytelling is considered only by older generations of luxury consumers or also by younger ones. With a practical approach, the last part dealt with these two questions. Real example of luxury brands and their storytelling are reported, supporting the position that at least the most famous brands are operating in the correct manner. A personal research, based on a survey with 250 respondents, the majority millennials, verifies that, even if luxury consumers don't know so many stories, they want to be informed, share the dream, discover and participate to the magnificent luxury world hidden behind famous luxury products.

The name '*luxury*' comes from the Latin word '*lux*' which literally means light. The metaphorical concept behind is that the light is helpful for the individual to see where he goes and the people who meets but it's useful especially to be noticed by the others. This interpretation about the light, the good side, is linked to '*luxus*' read as lustre, abundance, glory, perfection and detail. But *lux* can also have a negative meaning when associated to '*luxuria*' in terms of excess, ostentation, waste, gap. There's no a unique and clear definition, but, contrary to what most people say, luxury isn't richness, comfort, sumptuousness, objective beauty, something that you can buy with money, luxury is a kind of stuff related to exclusivity, unicity, style, taste, grace. It has a very strong personal and hedonistic component, that's why it isn't snobbery, and it is characterized by the so-called attribute of intangibility. It is about creating and satisfying desires, dreams, it's something that everybody wants but nobody really needs, it's a state of mind, the sense of belonging to a group. Tradition, uniqueness, aspiration, recognizability, affiliation, status are just some intangible features that characterize it. Luxury is not physical, you don't find it simply buying expensive branded goods, its authenticity isn't only in the finest materials used or in the quality delivered, you can discover it behind the history, stories, founder, employees, values of those brands. It's about the balance between different elements, such as exclusivity and accessibility or modernity and heritage.

Over the past several years, luxury has changed and the following trends have characterized this evolution: changes in tastes and buying behaviours, the rise of new markets, both in terms of countries and target, the advent of new media. Contemporary luxury experiments with experience: pure experiences and experiencing goods are growing much more than personal goods, underlining a shift in consumers' preferences from material objects to immaterial ones. The luxury market is healthier and has recently experienced a recovery after the crisis and following stagnation. Local consumption rose everywhere and tourist expenditure provided an extra boost. This universal feature implies that all countries and nationalities participate to the purchase experience and, thanks to the eco-systemic attribute, they can do it through different channels and dealers. The post aspirational element signs a

shift from the pure luxury to a less defined segmentation, whereas the curated one is all about the story, with luxury customers wanting to listen to and live the brand stories. The democratization implies that customers have grown exponentially and will continue to grow, without necessarily lead to vulgarization or loss of value. On one hand, more and more customers are foreigners, they come to the country famous for its luxury brands and products and they buy them; on the other hand, brands develop a global presence, exporting their products outside or establishing their factories in foreign countries to attract new clients and to compete with their rivals. Luxury brands increasingly communicate with their customers, putting them at the very top and trying to satisfy every dream and desire. Thanks to different and new communication channels, as well as the new focus on CRM, companies know their clients better, can segment them, enhancing their diversity, develop tailored contact strategy and use the right marketing tools, that should be based on a high qualitative and emotional storytelling focused on brand heritage and memorable stories. Consumers of the present generations have access to more wealth, that enables to change the way of living, buying more expensive and exclusive products. Moreover, old luxury was based on product's attributes and past consumers bought for a narcissistic satisfaction, to own and be noticed, to belong to an elite and be distinguished; nowadays luxury focuses on consumer's experience and feeling, and the customers give importance to the sense of community, sharing, being someone, personality distinction.

Notwithstanding these changes, the main differences between luxury and traditional marketing have remained the same. Apart from various considerations on product, place, price, in this context, the most important one, regard the way of doing communication. Communication is one of the five elements, together with store, commercial policies, salesforce and product, that build a luxury brand image. It's all about the brand and not about the product, and that's because the luxury brand goes beyond the object. Its role isn't providing the right information that buyers need to make purchasing decisions or persuading the customer to buy the product but is about informing and delighting the client about all those intangible values hidden behind the brand but that at the same time make the brand unique and the luxury world pretty mystique. What is more, communication is useful to fulfil the luxury ontological function of recreating the social distance, the gap, the recognizability. In particular, luxury communication has as much to intrigue, enchant, conquer new customers as to reinforce, strengthen, comfort current customers relationship. To do this, brands need to talk in a dreamlike but at the same time vague way, so that several people can identify with and share the dream. There's a difference between communicating and advertising and luxury companies don't advertise. So, they have to choose the right means of communications according to the level of their target, paying attention not to use much television, appropriate more for premium and mass prestige layers than for absolute luxury, using instead more PR, WOM, sponsorship and events. The luxury

brand isn't subject to a comparative logic, it cultivates its uniqueness being coherent and faithful to its own identity rather than comparing itself to competitors. Its distinction is based on what clients say about it, so its communication is about word of mouth. And this is why the luxury brand should be thought of like a story, authentic, secret and capable of transmitting an implicit message. We can't talk about one kind of communication, that could be linear, standard, adaptable to every context, channel and target. Luxury communication has two sides: the media one, more practical and tangible, based on pure advertising, and the creative one, based on promotion and involving PR activities, exhibitions and fairs, events, catalogues and brochures, direct mailing, visual merchandising. Luxury brands need to communicate a great story, expressing their values, history, identity behind.

To communicate in this way, they need to employ narrative marketing or storytelling. It focuses on communicating the ideals and values of the business founder and owner and using the connection that's developed through sharing those goals to encourage engagement. It's more than just advertising with a plot: using traditional narrative tools, it allows the company to connect with customers' emotions and bridge the engagement gap. But why is narrative marketing the answer? Stories are welcomed whereas ads are resisted, the first ones capture the attention because inspired by insights, authentic and transparent, fearless but not reckless, they are easier to remember and have more probabilities to create an emotional connection with the audience, while the second ones have a lower engagement rate; stories endure because of their metaphors, characters, landscapes and morals. Storytelling is about brain science: stories are memorable because of the images and emotions contained in them; when we listen to the story we see images and feel emotions, we experience immediately the story, we live it. The lesson of the story sticks because it's embedded in an image, and this image isn't a still picture but a motion picture, a movie. The brain remembers pictures first, then remembers the emotional context and, finally, it remembers the language. Stories are shareable and unite the audience, who can talk and comment; they are social at the core, being always on, surprising, delighting and fascinating. From a more practical point of view, stories don't make the budget spread and aren't dependent on technology, they move the brand needle and amplify its messages. Last but not least, companies have no choice. The future is no more rational or cultural but is getting emotional. Brands need to become publishers, incorporating images and videos to their stories and distributing content across social platforms. In fact, storytelling has always existed, but businesses today need to capitalize on a variety of new tools to tell their brand stories in the most compelling ways possible. Companies have to understand that customers don't want anymore simple products, they want unique experiences, appealing to their dreams and emotions, adding meaning to their lives. What makes the difference between one brand and another is no longer the physical product but the story, the real bond between the company and the consumer. It can be said that there's



a natural link between branding and storytelling: both come out of the same starting point, that is emotions and values. A great brand is based on clearly defined values, while a good story communicates those values; a strong brand has emotional connections with all the stakeholders and in particular with employees and customers, whereas a good story speaks to people's emotions and bonds people together; finally, storytelling has the power to strengthen a brand both internally and externally. Branding is the goal and storytelling is the means.

To understand deeply the concept of storytelling, we have to define what constitutes a story and what makes a story really good. The four elements that must be always present when telling a story are the following ones. The message is an ideological or moral statement working as a central theme. To have success, a story needs to present only one message or, at least, in the case of more than one, to prioritize, otherwise it can run the risk of being unclear and messy. The conflict is the driving force of a good story. Without conflict, there is no story. The explanation is that the goal is to capture the attention of the audience but, without battles and rivalry, it isn't so obvious; stories become simply boring, the perfect opposite of exciting and so easy to forget. Conflict forces action to restore harmony. Good stories capture the attention because they address the emotional need to bring order to chaos. The characters play a part and have a role in relation to each other. The plot is represented by the flow of the story and the progression of its events, whose sequence is fundamental.

From a business standpoint, storytelling can be employed both as a strategic branding concept and as an operational communication tool. The principle behind the first one is that strategy is narrative, a story told about the life, experiences, identities of narrators and futures of organizations. The organizational strategy is even defined as a form of fiction, developed through a polyphonic storytelling, practiced by multiple, interconnected narrators. Whereas the idea behind the second one is that storytelling is useful and advantageous for the adoption of strategic plans and the communication of strategic intent throughout the organization because it makes the content of the strategy more easily understood, enhancing the relationship with and among the employees. Storytelling also works as a supplement to traditional management tools. The task for managers is using storytelling to hold the company's values, vision, culture within the organization, identifying those stories that best communicate the message and ensuring that they will be told again and again. Luxury brands have rapidly shared these concepts and included storytelling in their communication strategies; they are interested in using this technique first because they communicate their history and values and second because their consumers want to have experience and emotions rather than a simple possession. Luxury has become a trade of feelings. It's required to add something to the product. To live a unique experience, customers want a moral engagement, they don't buy a product for its functionality but for the emotional bond created with it and with the brand in general. Storytelling is

a pure and simple underlying trend of the luxury industry, able to mash the tradition with the modernity, the business logic with consumers' feelings, making people more receptive towards the brand. Moreover, the trend has evolved: whereas before luxury storytelling used to stage some pieces of a collection, now it underlines the fashion house and company own values. Luxury brands promote less and less an emblematic product, symbol of an ostentatious luxury, and prefer being focused on their genetic heritage. Luxury marketing is unique because it develops different ways to communicate and show company values, heritage, knowledge and excellence. Luxury companies have adapted to the phenomenon of social media and the virality of contents, translating intangible elements such as tradition, creativity and experience in visual elements. Images, videos, audios have been created to show the *savoir faire* describe the actions and explain the creation process of a product. VIP clients are regularly invited to visit private ateliers where they can meet the creators and artisans. The storytelling about every brand is carefully elaborated by the employees, above all by the salesforce, with the aim to involve clients. Flagship stores are places full of stories, unique and magnificent palaces seen and visited as museums. Other marketing techniques are the fashion shows, the *maisons* open days and the retrospective expositions to see the heritage and iconic pieces. Storytelling is a strategy very used in luxury marketing because it greatly enhances the desirability and the memorability of products among consumers, thanks to that story that makes people dream, and offers a real emotional connection with the products. In the luxury universe, brands inspire trust, embody quality and prestige, own a substantial symbolic value, their history and eternal presence evoke their *savoir faire*. Everything is underlined by a story.

Among the different storytelling techniques used by luxury companies, particular emphasis should be placed on the five most effective, employed to create a brand environment both exclusive and fascinating, that are preferring visual storytelling, developing a mythic brand history, seeing the product as a result of the *savoir-faire*, making the client a VIP, rewarding the ambassadors. Communication about luxury products employs some precise thematiques with the aim to generate desire towards the product and the brand, maintaining an elitist status and avoiding the devaluation of the symbolic value to the public. Practically speaking, it praises the brand, selling a content that makes consumers dream. Moreover, products are included in the advertisement, but they act as accessories of a story, adding a symbolic and aesthetic value to its content. Luxury companies make a promotion of their products but subtly. Customers notice the product, consciously or unconsciously, and associate it to the symbolic brand universe. Theoretically and symbolically speaking, different communication strategies are applied according to different stories, focusing on the consumer and its experience, creating a meaning. The brand and its products become symbolic to the public because storytelling help to memorize. Consumer integrates brands who loves to his lifestyle because they

represent facets of his personality and personal history. Consumers are an accomplice to marketing, they believe in stories. But, to create and tell efficient stories, companies need to know and understand customers, their experiences, values and desires, analysing their view of the world and respecting their expectations. Moreover, a story is better believed and followed if a company is considered a myth: thus, brands need to learn how to become famous and recognizable in consumers' mind.

As I said, the brand perception, identity and image are given not only by the product and communication but also by the store and the way it is managed, meaning the commercial policies and the salesforce. Through all these elements, luxury brands can communicate their distinctive personality, values, stories to the public. In particular, the store is considered a real window of brands' deep identity, a destination that people want to visit and that brands have to exploit to attract more consumers, increase sales and loyalty. To do this, the keyword is one more time storytelling. Again, stories fascinate people and are more easily remembered than facts, stories can be used to create and reinforce positive brand associations and consumers exposed to stories describe the brand in much more positive terms and are willing to pay more for the product. The store plays a fundamental role in the creation of the customer experience journey. In fact, if in the past it was seen merely as a place where companies could sell their goods, now it is considered a real temple, a space where they can communicate their values and provide brand experiences. Moreover, notwithstanding the advent of Internet that changes the buying behaviour in commodity and fashion market, with both researches and purchases online, the store in luxury maintains its relevance as a touchpoint with the consumer, seen as both place to visit independently of purchases and place to purchase. Luxury companies have to organize this space intelligently, setting products, images, objects, decorations and so on and so forth in a way to attract, impress and convince their clients. Thus, the store needs to tell stories. The store itself has to be a story. Retail storytelling, the discipline consisting in telling a story to stimulate a desire in the audience, capture the attention and communicate a message, is gaining a great attention. In marketing, it is used to stimulate needs and engage customers with the aim of creating a solid relationship based on trust. The most important brands are employing this communication method to leverage clients' emotions and feelings and increase their fidelisation. Nuanced storytelling can enhance the in-store experience, connect people in-person and online and lead to more business and sales. As brands look to stand out and to elevate shopping above price-point comparison, stories have become a primary asset in the shopping experience. It's the birth of the so-called 'retail 2.0', which encompasses the way in-store retail and the Internet are coming together to create a full loop of communication between consumers and retailers. In fact, it includes not only all the technological advancements, as the e-commerce and m-commerce, but also the concept that content has become fundamental in retail marketing. Retail is treated as a media, curating the merchandise every month,

and considering the story as a leader of the 'new retail experience'. Retail animation involves working on bringing the brand and its products to life for the consumer at the point of sale through 360° marketing concepts. It's not about placing a product on a beautiful display in the store, but rather telling a relevant story and bringing an emotional experience to life in store. This encompasses everything from reinforced storytelling, targeted product offers, creating podium designs with strong visual impact, and innovative marketing tools such as new digital assets for social media & e-commerce.

Storytelling impacts the brand equity, but what is a brand? Which are the distinctive features of a luxury brand? How can it build its own identity, value and thus equity? There is no luxury without brands: luxury brands go beyond the product, that is considered a mere object, the visible part of a bigger world hidden behind them; they are built through the reputation coming from their objects and service within the social groups. In particular, the luxury brand is subsequent to the product, then it slowly abstracts itself from the first product which made it known and survives long after the product has gone. A luxury brand relates back to a latent social and cultural stratification and fulfils the essential recognition function of luxury, that one of recreating distance. The brand is therefore the social visa, the stratifier, the hallmark, both of the product and the person. The brand is the voice of the product, it creates around the product a net of meaning who makes the product unique. The product performs, the brand means. A luxury brand is a brand first, and luxury second. There are nine systematic and necessary elements of signature of a luxury brand: the figure of the brand's creator, who made the brand a work and not a production; the logotypes, short and very visual; a visual symbol that accompanies the logotyped signature; a repeated visual motif; a brand colour; a favourite material; the cult of detail; the constant hymns to the artisans' manual work and excellence; a way of doing things that is typical of the brand. But the core of the luxury brand is its identity and uniqueness, built through the coherence with what it initially represents and not through the concern about its positioning and competitive advantage respect to other brands. It's the whole of the elements that make the brand recognizable and finally recognized, such as physique, personality, relationship, culture, customer reflected image and customer self-custom. Once built the brand identity, companies can recognize and talk about three brand levels: the trade mark is a particular and recognizable sign, design or expression which identifies the products of one business from those of other ones; the brand name is the name of the company, often taken from the founder, and also the principal name of the product; the brand equity is the deepest identity, refers to the state of the relationship between a specific offer and a demand and underlines how much the brand is strong and known in the market. Brand equity is the value given from brand assets once subtracted its liabilities, it describes the value of having a well-known brand name, based on the idea that the owner of a well-known brand name

can generate more revenue simply from brand recognition. Simply, it refers to the value of a brand. Brand Equity is a qualitative measure of the brand's positive recognition or goodwill in the minds of the consumers considering the brand as an independent entity. Brand equity is the tangible and intangible worth of a brand. The degree of premium that a brand can charge on its offering is a direct measure of the equity it possesses with its customers. Brand equity is kind of power that the brand has over its competitors or the generic brands and is developed over time. It's the incremental value of a business above the value of its physical assets due to the market position, achieved by its brand and the extension potential of the brand. Brand equity can be said to be coming from the aggregate worth of the following constituents in the minds of its consumers: brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, other proprietary brand assets. Companies regularly measure their brand capital or brand equity, asking to consumers four questions about brand awareness, level of consideration, purchase behaviour and ability to create fanatics and active proselytes. With luxury it is different because there's no simple consideration but dreams. Luxury is access to a dream. And, also in this case, storytelling is at stake, because luxury companies want to engage people communicating this dream dimension through stories. The key element of a successful company is a carefully designed and executed brand, able to attract customers, enlarge the customer base, succeed financially. Ultimately a brand attracts consumers and builds a trustful relationship with them by appealing to people's emotions. Brands that are reliable and popular add value to the company itself and therefore create brand value. Advertising is perhaps the most effective way to gain the attention of a customer and start the process of capital creation. But simple promotion isn't sufficient. Storytelling is necessary. Every business regardless of its size or line of business has a story to tell and it is capable to improve their business results by using storytelling to market their products, increase the products value itself and therefore makes the product easier to sell. In the case of luxury, storytelling isn't used only to sell the product but to allow clients to perceive the world behind the brand, engaging people through real emotions and making them participate to the dream. Storytelling can be used in business with two different functions, intending strategic branding tool and operating communicational tool. Focusing on the first definition, storytelling is a form of branding, a way to represent a strong brand. When the brand concept mixes up with storytelling logic, the brand is no more conceived as a set of values and words that talk to the people's mind, but as a story that inserts those values in a dynamique context and touches people's heart. If companies are able to deliver messages by storytelling to the target groups, they are able to create a stronger brand, so that storytelling is the means to reach the objective of branding. On the other hand, the brand is developed through an emotional connection with the consumer and a strong corporate culture. In this case, the target group is a means to connect the storytelling to branding, by comprehending company's value

and message. Storytelling has become one of the major techniques to build brands and to add economic values to goods. Investors pay more for a company when they buy its story. For this reason, storytelling is also called equity storytelling. The value proposition of equity storytelling can be summed up in three sentences: a good equity story turns a company into something tangible, which stimulates the imagination of potential investors, which in turn bumps up the value of the company. The importance of storytelling can be further highlighted analysing the differences with the fashion world and then with fashion storytelling. The main difference between luxury and fashion can be found in the social function: we have seen that luxury *raison d'être* is the social stratification, to escape social chaos and imitative disorder born of undifferentiation, recreating strata according to own dream and freedom. Instead, the importance of fashion comes from the consequences of urbanization such as anonymity and unnatural life, becoming a means to make up for lost time or creating an illusion of time. In particular, fashion gives back a rhythm to time in a society become timeless, adding a cycle to a linearity given by progress and history; creates an artificial differentiation, distinct from that one due to luxury because the first one is horizontal and allows people to be recognizable to everyone at first glance, whereas the second one is vertical; rejects social stratification and escapes the vertical organization of social positioning. Other differences concern the relationship to time and the relationship to self, meaning that luxury has the feature of durability and it's for oneself whereas fashion is characterized by the ephemerality and it's pure showing off. Luxury is based on intangible values, self-distinction, social elevation, elitism, rare quality, the goal of making consumers' dreams come true through a participation to an incredible world. It is priceless, timeless and non-comparable. If the basic product corresponds to a need, the branded one corresponds to a desire and the luxury one to a dream. Fashion is based on social imitation and showing off; it is instantaneous and frivolous. Fashion brands are threatened by the fact of not being fashionable anymore. Their time perspective is necessarily short term, unlike luxury, which always thinks long term. The main differences between luxury storytelling and fashion storytelling comes from the general discrepancies between luxury world and fashion one. As luxury is a transmitter of taste with a socio-cultural function, the role of its communication is different from that one of making sales. In luxury, companies communicate to create the dream and to recharge the brand's value, not in order to sell. On the contrary, fashion respects the traditional communication and its storytelling has the objective of selling more and more products and attract more and more consumers. Luxury storytelling is all about the brand and not about the product, and that's underlines the fact that the luxury brand goes beyond the object. Luxury brands are not selling a handbag, perfume, ready-to-wear, they are selling a hope, a dream and an aspirational lifestyle that is attached to that product. Luxury storytelling is conceived to promote the brand's values, to make know some stories and

particularities about the company, to highlight the systematic elements of signature of a luxury brand, such as the figure of the creator, the artisans' work, expertise and excellence, the cult of quality and detail, the typical way of doing things, the history of codes. On the opposite, fashion storytelling follows the traditional marketing strategy that only provides information about products and just a little bit about brands and their values. Its goal is simply to give info that customers need to make purchases or even to be persuaded to buy the product. There are no stories about intangible values, mystique world, delights, no references to the dream, no particular attention towards the clients. Luxury communication uses both advertising and promotion through events and public relations, telling stories in the store, thanks to its layout and the salespeople working inside, through mailing, catalogues, brochures, a little bit of TV adv and social media. On the other hand, fashion communicates stories through a greater use of TV, magazines, fashion shows and social networks because they want to reach more people, they have less things to say, they want to follow the trends and they can easily tell stories with the same characteristic of the fashion world, the ephemerality. Moreover, storytelling in fashion is not so developed, or better, it's employed but it's difficult to find data and information about it, maybe because it is used in the wrong way and often treated as a mere advertising.

To better communicate and involve customers, luxury is expanding the role of digital. Notwithstanding the controversial relationship luxury has with the digital world, cross-device behaviour, omni-channel marketing and the merging of the online with the offline now top the agenda for many luxury brands. Customers, above all millennials, are techno-savvy, they use Internet and social media for everything, they are born, live and develop with technological innovation, they want their favourite brands to keep up with the times and to be updated. Digital and social media offer excellent opportunities for a more sophisticated storytelling, bringing a lot of advantages to luxury companies. They can globally deliver a message to their customers, using high-quality images, audios, videos and highly advanced web technology; they can communicate using a high level of personalization, going beyond demographics and making considerations on a person's passions and priorities; they can use customers as influencers and first brand ambassadors. Storytelling is used also in e-commerce, to offer high-end experiences, without losing exclusivity and credibility. Furthermore, transmedia storytelling, occurring when the elements of the story are spread across multiple media, has transformed the way brand value is created. In fact, if stories create relevant connections between the consumer and the brand, transmedia stories strengthen this relationship, leading to positive attitudes, higher purchase intent and greater loyalty. They build consumer awareness, comprehension, empathy, recall and meaning, facilitating consumer interaction and integration of personal experiences. They create new nodes and links in memory, inducing stronger

self-brand connections so that consumers form more favourable evaluations, have a greater likelihood of purchase and greater commitment to the brand. Transmedia storytelling delivers all of the benefits of storytelling, such as awareness, involvement, participation, creating empathy, conveying brand meaning, and amplifies them. It offers a multi-faceted story where consumers are more interactive, have more contact, use more platforms, are more engaged, manifest deeper self-brand connections and develops his own branded content. In fact, the different modalities allow the user to continue the story, even transforming him in a character of the story or in a brand ambassador.

Despite the evidence that storytelling still exists and luxury brands use it as a business strategy, considering it valid nowadays as well as in the past, towards millennials as well as older generations, and notwithstanding different researches and studies confirm its influence on purchasing behaviour, some people have a bad consideration. Certain people think that it's useless because consumers don't have time to pay attention to brands' stories. Other think that today companies employ it in a wrong manner. In any case, they regard storytelling as dead. This negative point of view is based on two assumptions: stories are invented, false, at most half-true, used to surprise unaware clients; stories are full of words that simply annoy the listener. Anyway, this is not real: stories can be fictitious, but they aren't solely a pure invention, there's a world behind. If brands don't have a story, they can create it, but in most cases these tales regard some peculiarities about the company's history, founder, values, famous products, so they are realistic and substantial. By the way, stories aren't copies. Moreover, a story can be told or not: it's what people believe when they come across a brand, the impressions and assumptions created after each interaction. Customers understand and are engaged with a story even if they don't consciously pay attention; as long as humans are in possession of any one of their five senses, stories will survive. Stories exist also before the transformation in words and images: products, pricing, packaging, location choices, user experience, staff are all part of a story; every action tells a story. Brands don't tell simply a story and customers simply don't listen to it: everybody lives stories. Other theory is that luxury companies talk about dreams, imagination, history and heritage, but they are bad in telling their stories. In this case, the assumption is that content strategy has replaced brand stories. But the mistake is that nobody said or wanted that content strategy takes the place of all the world existing behind a story, starting from the founder's vision and passion that captivated the first clients. Content marketing is only a strategy to tell stories in an efficient, convincing and memorable way. The same philosophy affirms that luxury brands in the past were able to tell stories, whereas talented companies in this field today represent an exception. These successful brands build their business on the direct relationship with their customer, using relevant stories to evoke the spirit of their founder, turning them into modern culture. However, lots of luxury companies employ storytelling as a tactic to attract consumers, increase their loyalty towards the



brand and consequently sales. Furthermore, luxury customers like storytelling, know some stories and wish to hear other ones.

Every luxury brand has a story to tell. Often they even have many stories, regarding the codes used, the founder, a renowned product, the brand name and so on and so forth. Some of these stories are well-known, other are unfamiliar but really impressive. Most luxury brands understood that a powerful and evocative narration is the starting point for a strategy of content marketing, thus using different means to do storytelling. Hermès translates a product into an experience, engaging consumers and make them feel part of an exclusive club, a privileged world; in this sense, famous stories regard the Kelly and Birkin bags. Chanel uses content and visual storytelling to essay its rich legacy, telling explicitly its stories through its website and the section 'Inside Chanel'; the logo, the colours, the symbols, the most recognizable products, the history of the founder are explained through videos, images and words. Rolex extends the brand philosophy, goes beyond the product to identify wearer personas and their needs. Every Rolex means, every Rolex tells a story, every person wearing a Rolex bought it according to a real desire or dream, to remember something, to participate to something. Bvlgari, through a symbolic storytelling and modern designs, honours its rich past; most of the brand renowned icons tell a story that is precisely linked to those ancient origins, multinational and secular inspirations, such as BVLGARI BVLGARI watch, *monete*, *serpenti* or *parentesi*. Louis Vuitton becomes a publisher with videos, events, campaigns, stories, high-quality images, with a storytelling around the voyage theme, such as in the case of fragrances.

According to many examples found, the conclusion is that luxury brands bet on storytelling nowadays as much as in the past. For them, storytelling is a good strategy to clearly manifestate their identity, communicate their ideas and values, attract customers, increase sales, confirming what literature expresses. But to understand if storytelling is really a foundation of growth or a simple theory functioning only with past generations, it's necessary to interview the interested persons and bear their opinions about the topic. A research is carried out through an observational and experimental study on hundreds of people. Their answers will confirm or disprove what luxury brands think, claim and put in practice: if the respondents have a positive vision about storytelling as a business strategy, the result will be that, at least for the few samples interviewed, even today it's important that luxury is able to tell stories about its world, to share something intangible but special, to make clients participate in the dream, using storytelling as a means; on the contrary, if the respondents have a negative vision, the result will be that actual consumers prefer other things, maybe more practical, rather than this abstract and mythical luxury. The survey is composed by eleven questions: one about the age, the only personal information asked, because the interest is in buying personas and their purchasing behaviour; the other ones concerning simply luxury products (occurred or not purchase,

reasons that influence the purchase, name of luxury products bought or desired) and considerations about luxury storytelling intended both as awareness and engagement through luxury brand stories and as business strategy.

The respondents belong for 4% to the under 18 category, for 43.6% to the 18-24, for 20.4% to the 25-38, for 10.4% to the 55-70 and for 2% to the over 70. The predominance of the millennials totally representing the 64% of the interviewees is a positive element for two reasons: they are the actual generation, representing 30% of the market, and they are the next future for luxury; they are useful to understand if storytelling is really a foundation of growth, because older generations are more involved in stories, values, abstract features and are already engaged with an intangible luxury. More than half of the respondents said that at least once in life they have bought luxury products. Precisely, 80.8% of them answer positively to the question about luxury purchases. The three most popular choices about the reasons pushing luxury consumers to buy are: 'like the product or brand', 'for yourself' and 'special events', respectively with a percentage of 66%, 58.4% and 43.6%. The three least popular ones are: 'other reasons', 'no reason' and 'showing off', whereas middle values have obtained the answers relative to 'sales', 'meet own lifestyle', 'for someone else', 'share brand stories and values' and 'follow the trend'. Various considerations can be made: the main driver to the purchase is the physical and aesthetical aspect; people buy much more for themselves than for others, reflecting the self-expression of luxury; few people buy to follow the trend and even less people buy for showing off, reflecting the difference with fashion; there are few answers in favour of storytelling, explained in the question as 'share brand stories and values', underlining the evidence that people don't buy because they are convinced by a story, maybe they don't even know the existence of these stories or, even they know, they don't realize the real importance or they simply don't mind. The most purchased or desired luxury brands are Gucci, Rolex, Louis Vuitton and Bulgari. Moving on, 65.6% of respondents answered that they don't know stories or peculiarities about luxury brands; the remaining said that the most known stories are about Chanel, Hermès, Louis Vuitton, Bulgari and Ferrari. Arriving to the most crucial part, 53.6% of respondents consider almost surely storytelling as a good strategy to convince to make purchases, increasing customers' loyalty and consequently company's sales; 36% are sure about this statement; whereas, only 8% say the opposite. This result is very interesting: in fact, notwithstanding people admit that storytelling isn't actually a driver of purchase, they take it into account, regarding it as a possible good tactic to make them more involved. The result is even more interesting when we pass to the analysis of the next question. Even if people don't buy pushed by stories and even if the majority isn't completely sure that storytelling is a good business strategy, they want to

know some stories while they are making the purchase. This is the choice of 53.2% of respondents, who are certain to want to be informed and involved to feel part of the luxury brand world. As a consequence, luxury consumers believe that salespeople have to be trained in the storytelling field. Precisely, 56.4% of respondents think so and 35.6% are pretty sure. In fact, the most effective way to know about stories is going into the store and listen to the sales assistants. The personal learning is too difficult for the nowadays society, characterized by speed and attention to time. If someone else learns for us and then reports us the story, it's more convenient! Moreover, clients justifiably believe that people who work for a brand have to know everything about that brand, as a good example for new entries in that world. All the more reason, if customers demand something or want to know some peculiarities about a product, the brand and so on, they must be able to answer correctly and convincingly! Other important aspect is the organization and layout of the store. Stores are 'temples', in a simple and quick way they can illustrate brands' history and stories on their own. In this case 51.2% of interviewees responded that they probably want a store properly set up to tell stories, 34.5% want it certainly, whereas only 4% don't believe it's necessary. The outcome is completely different when we talk about digital channels. 63.3% of respondents are sure that the corporate website and social media have to be used by luxury brands to tell their stories and 28.8% are almost sure. It's a quick way to learn something, they can learn at home, previously to the purchase and they can go to the store more informed and engaged. Even if luxury doesn't accept completely the Internet, it should to embrace it because nowadays is a fundamental means to communicate, it leads to lots of advantages and customers demand its use. After all, if they don't do it for customers, for whom should they do?

To conclude, the research demonstrates that storytelling is appreciated by luxury consumers and recognised as one of the most creative, powerful and effective tools of contemporary business strategy and communication. It is memorable. It impacts. It engages. It builds trust. It creates or improves the relationship between the brand and the customer. The storyteller is the most powerful person in the world, thus great brands have to be storytellers too.