



DIGITAL INFLUENCE: CONSUMER BEHAVIOR AND BRAND  
DYNAMICS IN FASHION  
**Bachelor Thesis**

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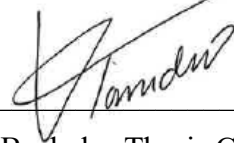
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IN FASHION

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'H. Mendes', is written over a horizontal line.

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## **Objective of the Thesis**

This study aims to investigate how digital marketing strategies influence consumer behavior within the fashion industry. In a context where purchasing decisions are increasingly mediated by online interactions, it becomes urgent to understand which tools are used (such as social media, influencer partnerships, or email marketing), and how these tools impact each stage of the consumer decision-making process.

It seeks to identify the strategies that most effectively capture attention, generate trust, and lead to purchase decisions. A central focus is placed on the psychological mechanisms at play: what makes a campaign resonate with its audience, and what elements contribute to a sense of authenticity and relevance?

We will explore consumer perceptions and reactions to various digital marketing tactics. By listening to how individuals interpret and respond to these messages, the study hopes to shed light on the elements that contribute to a positive brand-consumer relationship in the digital environment.

Our intention is to provide fashion brands with practical, evidence-based insights that support the development of more effective digital strategies that prioritize meaningful engagement and long-term customer loyalty.

## Abstract

This thesis investigates how digital marketing shapes consumer behavior and firm performance in fashion through a qualitative, multiple-case study of Gucci (luxury) and ASOS (fast fashion). Using secondary data (peer-reviewed studies, industry reports, company materials) and descriptive analysis of publicly reported indicators (social metrics, revenue trends, conversion effects), the study compares channel mixes (social/influencer, email/CRM, SEO/SEM), experiential tools (AR/VR), and data-driven personalization. Findings show that Gucci's blend of immersive storytelling, influencer strategy, and AR try-ons coincided with a rise in revenue from €3.9B (2015) to >€9.6B (2019) alongside follower growth from ~10M to >40M on Instagram; AR footwear try-ons were associated with conversion lifts of up to 300%. ASOS's multi-channel personalization (segmentation, recommendations, app notifications) contributed to material revenue uplifts (e.g., ~\$77.5M in one year), a 19% YoY rise to ~£3.26B, and rapid community growth, illustrating the commercial impact of data-centric execution at scale. The cross-case synthesis concludes that digital is not monolithic: for luxury, narrative depth and experiential media (AR/VR) best amplify perceived value and loyalty; for fast fashion, operational agility and mass personalization drive frequency and conversion. Managerially, brands should (i) align channel strategy to positioning, (ii) invest in privacy-aware data infrastructure and omnichannel orchestration, and (iii) treat AR/VR and creator ecosystems as performance levers, not mere brand theater. The study offers a practical framework linking tactic, consumer response, and business outcome, and outlines avenues for future research on causal measurement and long-horizon loyalty effects.

## **Key words**

Internet Marketing, Fashion Industry, Customer Decision-Making, Digital Platforms, Social Media Marketing, Email Marketing Influencer Collaborations, Consumer Engagement, Brand Visibility

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## 1. Introduction

The fashion industry, as has been documented, has been impacted by digital marketing and has subsequently influenced the ways in which consumers make their decisions. Fashion marketers have been quick to capitalize on the new opportunities the Internet allows, and have used the Internet to engage their consumer base since the 2000s due to the potential of the Internet, relating to new opportunities, flexibility, and effectiveness. Digital marketing has created a customized shopping experience to consumers since the late 2000s (Rathore 2018:11).

This thesis demonstrates that the consumer fashion industry is affected by digital marketing strategies, with an innovative and dominating role being played by social media, influencer marketing, and branded content itself, followed by how online advertising affects the consumer decision-making process.

Brands can reach consumers with unprecedented precision by messaging on Instagram, YouTube and TikTok, in a timely and algorithmically personalized manner. These days, what consumers expect to see has also changed, along with the rise of social media and smartphone access: immersive, sticky visual storytelling and regular brand engagement are now required to guide purchase decisions.

The fashion world has become increasingly digital, with companies actively adopting digital marketing platforms to reach their audiences. It has been identified as protagonist in the demise of customer loyalty and commitment (Edelman, 2010, p. 63). There has arguably never been more digital touchpoints between the consumer and the company, from influencer endorsements and social media shares to on-brand commercials, personal ads, and email campaigns.

While this has facilitated greater knowledge on the linkage between digital marketing strategies and consumer behavior in the context of the fashion industry, it also

points the way for fashion companies to increase sales and encourage customer loyalty through digital media.

### **1.1. Aim of the investigation**

This thesis aims to provide manufacturing companies with valuable information on increasing their market competitiveness and customer involvement in the digital era. It seeks to evaluate the influence of digital marketing tools on the purchasing choices of fashion consumers. Comparison of the efficacy of various digital marketing channels is at the heart of this study. What this study is trying to accomplish specifically is to determine which channels have the greatest impact on customer purchasing behavior, including social media, email marketing, influencer collaborations, SEO, and PPC.

It also investigates whether factors such as age group, number of children, perceived frequency of advertisements, and parental reactions (including childbearing, parity, religion, and economic status), as well as objective perception of advertising, use of modern methods, and knowledge about consequences and marketing techniques, influence purchasing behavior. These variables are collected and analyzed using a rational experimental method.

The study examines whether different channels vary in terms of ROI, reach, engagement, and conversion rates. The research is particularly interested in consumer responses and perceptual reality namely, how various digital marketing strategies used by fashion marketers affect consumers' perception of brand loyalty and brand value.

Additionally, it looks at the role of engagement and content in digital marketing, discussing different types of information (whether promotional or educational), and diverse types of engagement, including implicit and explicit. It considers how levels of interaction (such as likes, shares, and comments) influence consumer behavior enough to affect purchasing decisions.



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This study must also determine whether developing virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) as digital marketing tools enhances customer experience and strengthens relationships. It examines how personalization in digital marketing impacts consumer decisions, and how customer loyalty and retention can be optimized through machine learning, refactoring strategies, and advanced analytics that allow companies to target campaigns to individual needs.

Fashion labels will benefit from the findings of this thesis. In addition to offering ways to adopt new technologies and digital trends to stay relevant in a fast-changing market, it provides tips for increasing customer engagement and driving sales through digital marketing.

By achieving these objectives, the thesis aims to contribute meaningfully to the strategic knowledge base that fashion companies need to formulate more effective marketing approaches in the digital environment (methods that truly resonate with today's consumer). This holistic approach not only addresses the operational challenges of digital marketing but also broadens theoretical perspectives on consumer engagement and the digitalization of commerce within the fashion industry.

## 2. Theoretical Foundation

Through this section, we aim to give a grounded understanding of digital marketing and cover its wide spectrum. The chapter starts with a brief explanation of digital marketing and a description of its many elements, on which the research is grounded. It will delve into the digital marketing movement and how it evolved from traditional to current marketing techniques. Key turning points that had a critical impact on current practices are also highlighted, showing how transformations from earlier stages have shaped the marketing space in the information age.

This wide-ranging summary prepares the ground for the more detailed investigations in Parts Two and Three, and locates the role of digital innovation within contemporary marketing practices.

### 2.1. Digital Marketing Channels and Their Impact

In this section, the key channels for digital marketers will be introduced. Consumer engagement with platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and email marketing channels is analyzed.

Instagram was created in 2010 and quickly reached 100,000 users. Within two months, it had surpassed one million active users, growing significantly faster than other social media platforms. Instagram has influenced both young consumers and fashion brands, allowing the latter to showcase their products to a wide global audience (Ashkiani and Raju 2021: 577–78).

Ashkiani and Raju found that brand awareness has no significant influence on consumers' purchase intention, but fashionable innovativeness does have a positive influence. This is explained by the fact that some people prefer to adopt new things earlier

than others (Ashkiani and Raju 2021: 585). Al-Haddad et al. (2023: 1894) investigated user interaction as one of the key elements of Instagram's success.

In contrast to the curated content of Instagram, TikTok is seen as a space for creativity and authenticity. TikTok has quickly developed into a major platform for trends (Chikumbu 2021). It relies on short videos instead of images (Viñals, Pretel, and Arriaga 2024: 171). This app is particularly interesting for the fashion market: 44% of TikTok users have already made a purchase directly on the platform, and 25% of users shop on TikTok at least once a month (Safaya 2024).

This study also discusses the expanding impact of influencer marketing on consumer behavior and brand perceptions, particularly in the context of Instagram and TikTok. Influencers have a positive impact on the purchasing process. However, when working with influencers, it must be ensured that the endorsement appears as a natural recommendation and that the selected influencers are appropriate for the brand (Banna and Shahreen 2024: 144).

Email marketing is addressed as a consistent and effective technique for individualized communication. Email campaigns are cost-effective, simple, and results are easy to track (Datchayai and Vasikar 2023: 2). Data-driven strategies can be used to create tailored email campaigns and maintain long-lasting customer relationships (Datchayai and Vasikar 2023: 11). On the other hand, it is naturally less interactive than TikTok or Instagram.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is designed to help websites rank higher in search engine results. Companies have recognized the importance of SEO to drive organic traffic (i.e., without paid campaigns) to their websites (Ologunebi and Taiwo 2023: 7). Website usage is relatively inexpensive, but SEO reaches its full potential when combined with Pay-per-Click (PPC) advertising. Website ranking must also be monitored regularly

using tools developed for that purpose (Ologunbe and Taiwo 2023: 18). Edirisuriya (2023: 10) also proposes a combination of both strategies.

## **2.2. Consumer Behavior in the Digital Age**

This subsection explains how digital marketing has altered customer expectations and decision-making processes. It explains the nuances of customer engagement/cross-selling and why they affect both how customers buy and why they stick with those brands.

Digital marketing has changed everything. The consumer journey is no longer linear, mainly due to the impact of digital marketing. Today, customers expect instant communication, with content that aligns with their values and lifestyle. And to build brand trust, brands strategically use influencer testimonials, algorithmic content, social media, and reviews.

As such, fashion businesses need to keep evolving and spreading their message to continue meeting the needs of consumers and to remain front of mind in the market, that demands constant consumer attention.

## **2.3. Technological Advances in Digital Marketing**

To evolve, a digital marketing strategy needs the technology to advance. This section contains posts discussing how AI and machine learning can be utilized to customize marketing to individual customer preferences and behavior.

Solutions as real-time behavioral tracking, predictive analytics, and AI-driven recommendation engines allow brands to tailor product recommendations, content, and promotions to user data like never before, help fashion marketers better anticipate consumer intent and deliver timely, relevant content.

The influence of virtual and augmented reality on improving the customer shopping experience is also examined. Virtual try-ons, enabled by augmented reality (AR), allow consumers to preview apparel and accessories in their own environments at the time of purchase. These full-sensory experiences that VR can create: virtual showrooms or fashion events, for example, can enhance emotional attachment and reduce purchase hesitation. Both AR and VR technologies provide confidence to shoppers and bring online purchases to life in more exciting ways.

## **2.4. Challenges and Opportunities in Digital Marketing**

The duality of challenges and opportunities that come with digital marketing is what we aim to explore here. We are going to discuss in this section the viability of data privacy and security, particularly in relation to digital marketing efforts. Real-life examples of how companies deal with the challenge of protecting customer data while also using it for marketing highlight the relevance of these issues.

This component also explores the opportunities within digital marketing, supported by ongoing research and emerging technologies. It examines how these developments enable marketers to engage with consumers in new and exciting ways, provide more personalized experiences, and simultaneously make marketing more effective.

Increased consumer awareness and regulation (like the CCPA and GDPR) have pushed data security and privacy to the forefront of digital advertising. To safeguard user data, businesses must invest heavily in secure technologies, set clear data policies, and obtain user consent. If you don't, you jeopardize your customers' trust (and may even run into legal trouble. Responsible data mining is now a necessity), and a strategic advantage.

An analysis of digital marketing opportunities, and how they are being bolstered by continuous research and technology innovations, is also included in this section. It explores the implications these advances have on a marketer's ability to engage users in new ways, deliver more customized experiences, and increase the overall effectiveness of marketing efforts.

Blockchain for food traceability, voice search optimization, AI-driven personalization, and AR/VR immersive experiences are only some of the new options. These are the solutions that make the customer happier, the business smarter, and place marketers in the best position to create dynamic, real-time, and emotionally engaging content.

This forward-looking insight, developed ahead of 2019's Black Friday and Cyber Monday events, will help businesses shape the future of their marketing strategies, and build a clearer picture of what digital marketing looks like now and what we can expect moving forward.

## **2.5. Results of previous Case Studies: Successes and Lessons**

Edelman's analysis of the customer decision journey illustrates how the proliferation of consumer touchpoints through digital platforms has extended the stages at which digital marketing influences decisions, underscoring the importance of ongoing engagement in building long-term customer relationships (Edelman 2010: 64–65).

Barger, Peltier, and Schultz's research also examines how specific digital interactions (such as social media engagement, targeted advertising, and email campaigns) modify customer perceptions and ultimately motivate them toward purchase decisions, which may correlate with increases in consumer activity (Barger et al. 2016: 21–23).

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Social media has a huge impact on consumer attitudes and behavior; the fashion industry is no exception. Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok have become commercial spaces amidst territories of storytelling interest, “in which social media facilitate instantaneous, timely, and developmental dialogue”, allowing companies to adapt to shifts in customer trends and preferences and strengthen corporate-consumer relationships (Holliman and Rowley 2014: 25–28).

Other cases of famous fashion companies like ASOS and Gucci will serve as examples of how digital marketing methods can increase user engagement and market reach. Influencer collaborations and focused social media (a strategy that began in 2015) have been a critical part of Gucci’s efforts to breathe new life into a tired brand and connect with a younger audience, helping it grow both its social media following and its sales (Danziger, 2018).

Likewise, ASOS has been using data analytics to offer customized shopping experiences, which in turn has led to improved customer loyalty and sales performance (Mintel, 2021).

But digital marketing also has its challenges. Common issues include digital saturation and the difficulty of staying authentic while promoting across multiple platforms (Dwivedi et al. 2021:3).

Researchers such as Marr (2024) have suggested that AI and machine learning will revolutionize marketing strategies by enabling mass personalization, opening up new possibilities for fashion businesses to connect with their customers in more meaningful ways.

There is a considerable number of studies about the changing face of the fashion industry through digital marketing tools. These works also emphasize the urgent need for brands to adopt new strategies to keep pace with a rapidly evolving digital market.

Understanding how digital marketing influences consumer behavior can help fashion companies navigate complex markets, maintain stability, and foster loyalty among customers (Kotler and Keller, 2016; Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).

Based on this baseline study, future research into specific digital marketing strategies and their impact on consumer engagement and brand performance in the fashion industry may be conducted.



### 3. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative multiple-case design to examine how digital marketing strategies relate to consumer behavior and firm outcomes in the fashion sector. The approach prioritizes explanatory understanding over statistical inference, seeking analytic (theory-oriented) generalization through comparison across distinct market contexts.

Cases were selected purposively to maximize contrast and learning: one luxury brand and one fast-fashion/e-commerce retailer. Selection was guided by four conditions: documented strategic reliance on digital channels, abundant credible public information, clear differentiation in market positioning, and identifiable digital initiatives (e.g., creator programs, AR/VR experiences, CRM-driven personalization) that allow temporal tracing of actions and reported effects.

Evidence derives exclusively from secondary sources. Materials include peer-reviewed literature, industry and consultancy reports, reputable business journalism, and public company communications such as annual reports, investor presentations, press releases, and published executive interviews. Descriptive public indicators mentioned in credible sources (for example, follower counts, engagement highlights, or revenue notes linked to specific initiatives) are incorporated to contextualize patterns. No interviews, surveys, or proprietary datasets were collected or accessed.

Data collection followed a simple, repeatable protocol. Core themes were mapped at the outset (storytelling and creators, experiential media, personalization and CRM, and performance media/SEO). For each case, a concise timeline dossier of digital initiatives and reported outcomes was compiled. Documents were then harvested and screened for

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credibility and relevance, archived for auditability, and accompanied by brief analytic memos to register emerging interpretations and potential rival explanations.

Analysis combined thematic reading with within-case synthesis and cross-case comparison. Within each case, digital tactics were linked to plausible mechanisms (e.g., uncertainty reduction via AR try-ons, habit formation through lifecycle CRM) and to observed or reported outcomes. Cross-case analysis then identified convergent patterns and meaningful divergences attributable to positioning, audience, and channel mix. Numeric references drawn from sources are treated descriptively to support interpretation rather than to claim causality.

The design entails limitations. Secondary and observational evidence constrains causal attribution; public reporting may emphasize successes and understate failures; differences in positioning and customer bases limit direct metric comparability; and temporal coverage can be uneven across initiatives. Consequently, conclusions are framed as propositions about mechanisms and contingencies applicable to theoretically similar settings, rather than as statistically generalizable findings.

## 4. Case studies

The impact of digital marketing on boosting customer engagement and sales in the fashion industry is investigated in this study using a qualitative research design. To gain a deeper understanding of how customers behave, think, and engage with fashion businesses on social media, the qualitative approach was selected.

Investigating human behavior, motivations, and experiences using non-numerical data such as observations, interviews, or textual analysis is the main goal of qualitative research. It is perfect for researching consumer-brand interactions and perceptions because it enables researchers to evaluate complicated events in great detail (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). On the other hand, quantitative research measures variables and tests hypotheses by gathering numerical data and applying statistical techniques, frequently through surveys or experiments (Creswell, 2014).

Every strategy has benefits and drawbacks. Although qualitative research is flexible in design and offers rich, contextual insights, its results are frequently harder to repeat and less generalizable (Bryman, 2016). According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2017), quantitative research provides scalability, statistical significance, and clarity in assessing relationships; yet, it may oversimplify complicated social behavior and lack the complexity of human viewpoints.

The gathering of so-called secondary data will be essential to the study. Case studies of effective digital marketing initiatives from well-known fashion firms will be analyzed in order to identify best practices and strategies that have significantly increased sales and consumer engagement. To have a deeper understanding of market trends and previous research findings on digital marketing in the fashion sector, industry publications and scholarly journals will be reviewed. Patterns of consumer involvement,

including likes, shares, comments, and content virality, will also be examined using publicly accessible data and analytics from social media platforms.

Due to its affordability, ease of use, and capacity to offer a comprehensive and timely view of current trends and business performance, secondary data was employed. Sources including industry reports, corporate publications, earlier scholarly research, and internet analytics are all included.

Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019) assert that secondary data enables researchers to investigate contextual elements and longitudinal patterns without the time and resource commitments associated with primary data gathering. Additionally, it encourages triangulation, which, when paired with qualitative insights, increases the validity of results (Johnston, 2017).

Because of their opposing market positions (ASOS representing fast fashion, Gucci representing premium fashion), Gucci and ASOS were chosen as case studies. A comparison of the ways in which various digital marketing tactics function across brand categories is made possible by this contrast. While ASOS is renowned for its use of data analytics and customized digital experiences, Gucci has received notoriety for its use of immersive digital storytelling and high-end influencer partnerships (Danziger, 2018) (Mintel, 2021). A more comprehensive grasp of the effects of digital marketing on the fashion industry can be obtained by examining both.

#### **4.1.1 Company founding**

In the fashion industry, Gucci, which was established in Florence, Italy in 1921 by Guccio Gucci, has long been associated with sophistication and elegance. The company initially earned recognition for its premium leather goods, especially its purses, shoes, and accessories. Gucci has expanded its product portfolio over time to include

clothing, jewelry, and fragrances, all while consistently establishing trends in high fashion. The interlocking GG logo, the green-red-green stripe, and the bamboo-handled purse are just a few of the brand's iconic features that have come to represent its design philosophy (GUCCI 2024).

In the late 20th and early 21st centuries, Gucci had many challenges, such as internal family conflicts, financial difficulties, and managerial changes. However, the brand was able to navigate these difficult times with the help of a number of strategic efforts. A new era began in 1994 when Tom Ford was appointed Creative Director. A period of greater financial prosperity and cultural significance was ushered in by Ford's designs, which revitalized the company. (Solomatina, 2016)

#### **4.1.2 Branding strategy**

Marco Bizzarri became CEO in 2015 and Alessandro was appointed as Creative Director (Kering 2015). Gucci is the great beneficiary of this union of leaders and digital has been a transforming platform. What Michele wanted to do was appeal to a younger generation of fashion consumers while marrying the brand's storied past and an eclectic, modern feel. With their vibrant print, the rich textures and the mix between classical and modern architecture, his designs have given a new life to the brand (Università Bocconi 2021). Bizzare's plan was authenticated because they highlighted the role of sustainability as well as digital innovation. They wanted to make Gucci a brand for young, new consumers and for older, luxury customers alike (G&Go. 2024). Unified and compelling brand story across all touchpoints was what Michele and Bizzarri were striving for with their multifaceted strategic vision.

Digital innovation is part of this strategy, which involves approaching and interacting with customers directly through digital platforms. In order to enhance the

customer experience, this involved not just being active on social media but also utilizing cutting-edge technologies like virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR). Nguyen (2021) In order to recognize the growing significance of environmental responsibility among consumers, especially millennials and Generation Z, brands are integrating sustainable practices into their operations and product lines (Alders and Böttcher 2023). Reaching a wider, more varied audience by expanding the brand's appeal beyond conventional luxury purchasers is known as inclusive luxury. This meant collaborating with a wide range of influencers and producing content that addressed contemporary social and cultural concerns (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012).

E-commerce Growth: Enhancing Gucci's online store to offer a more luxurious and smooth online purchasing experience. This includes customized shopping experiences, innovative digital services like virtual try-ons, and superior product presentations (Kim & Ko, 2012).

Gucci started a revolutionary journey that changed its place in the market by fusing Michele's design philosophy with Bizzarri's focus on sustainability and innovation. The company's e-commerce, social media, and digital marketing initiatives have been particularly noteworthy since they show how a luxury brand can effectively navigate and take advantage of the digital era (Okonkwo, 2010).

Under Bizzarri and Michele's leadership, Gucci has achieved remarkable financial success, maintained and expanded its place in the cutthroat luxury market, and established new standards for digital marketing in the fashion industry. Global revenue rose to around €6 billion in 2017 and over €8 billion in 2018, after hovering around €4 billion prior to 2015 (Pimenta and Bajj 2024).

Understanding social media networks is crucial to Gucci's digital strategy. In order to reach a younger audience, Gucci works with up-and-coming platforms like

TikTok and Snapchat in addition to promoting its brand on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. By providing challenges and interactive content, platforms as TikTok and Snapchat aim to attract young people's attention, increasing user engagement and brand awareness among younger consumers (Matawalle 2023).

Gucci recognizes the importance of influencers in today's marketing scene, and to guarantee a wide reach across all customer categories, the company works with a diverse range of influencers, from well-known celebrities to specialized fashion bloggers. In order to humanize the brand and make it more approachable to potential customers, these partnerships typically involve personalized storytelling, where influencers relate their individual experiences with Gucci's products (Kapferer & Bastien, 2012).

Gucci's marketing campaigns now make better use of digital storytelling. The company creates fascinating stories about its products by building interesting narratives around its collections. The "Gucci Stories" section provides rich multimedia films, articles and interactive graphics on a myriad of subjects and sources of inspiration for collections (Okonkwo, 2010). Gucci has revamped its e-commerce strategy to improve the shopping experience for customers. The Gucci website must not only be a sales platform but a digital experience of the brand. It provides product information, pictures and recommendations tailored to the user. Gucci achieves the virtual "try-before-you-buy" with its shoes and watches via augmented reality technology (Kim & Ko, 2012). Those increased engagement numbers and the gains in revenue confirm the success of Gucci's digital marketing efforts. For example, the number of Gucci followers on Instagram grew from 10 million to over 40 million between 2015 and 2020 (Sabanoglu 2022).

Although follower growth is a valuable statistic, no specific KPIs, such as conversion rates, ROI, or engagement rates, are offered to assess success with certainty.

The brand's strategic content and engagement initiatives, which successfully target the digital-native consumer base, are the cause of this enormous expansion in digital footprint. Which successfully reach the consumer base of digital natives. Revenue increased dramatically in tandem with this surge in online visibility and interaction, with annual projections increasing from €3.9 billion in 2015 to over €9.6 billion in 2019 (Pimenta and Bajj 2024).

This increase demonstrates how digital initiatives that align with consumer expectations and brand identity may yield significant financial gains. It's crucial to acknowledge that, although if digital strategies were a major contributor, this financial success was probably also influenced by other elements like product innovation, price strategy, international market expansion, and leadership vision. Instead than being the only driver, digital marketing should be viewed as a major enabler.

Growth between 2014 and 2016 was comparatively slow. The modest growth in sales may be a sign of a cautious approach to e-commerce or a careful evaluation of the digital industry. Sales increased significantly starting in 2017, reaching 480 million US dollars. Growth began to pick up speed in 2019. From 987 million US dollars in 2020 to over 1.5 billion US dollars in 2022, sales grew steadily (Statista Research Department, 2024).

Gucci's market share, customer engagement, and brand loyalty have all improved as a result of its very successful digital marketing tactics. Indicators like increasing social media engagement rates, strong client retention rates, and steady increase in online sales all show these results (Statista, 2023). Digital artists were enlisted to rework the brand's iconography in campaigns like #GucciGram, which went viral and reached millions of users. In its first year, the hashtag generated over 50,000 Instagram photos (Business of Fashion, 2016). When paired with purposeful digital engagements, these creative



endeavors show how well Gucci's marketing strategy works to increase its market presence and develop digital brand equity.

## 4.2 Case ASOS

### 4.2.1 Company Founding

The only British online clothing and beauty retailer on this list, ASOS (As Seen On Screen) targets a younger 20–30 demographic. The business was created in London in 2000 by Nick Robertson and Quentin Griffiths and originally focused on reproducing on-screen celebrity style. Over time, it grew into a global e-commerce site offering its own private-label merchandise as well as 850 brands (ASOS plc, 2023). Focusing on personalisation, targeted messaging, and customer involvement on Instagram, YouTube, and ASOS's mobile app, the brand has made a name for itself with its data-driven digital marketing strategy.

To increase conversion and improve the customer experience, the company uses advanced analytics to suggest products based on a user's browsing behavior, previous purchases and preferred styles (McKinsey & Company, 2022). ASOS has always been different from the outset, opting to operate purely online, as opposed to having a physical presence on the high street. Consequently, ASOS has had the luxury to invest heavily in innovation and technology to date, particularly in social media channels and mobile shopping, in order to enhance the customer experience and engage with its predominantly young and tech-savvy customer (Brand Vision 2024).

ASOS achieved rapid growth to lead the first wave of e-consignment retailers in the UK, and later moved into the global market in the early 2000s. As of 2019, ASOS ships to around 200 countries worldwide (Spanou 2019). The brand achieved a significant milestone when the company's overseas sales exceeded those in the UK. ASOS did not

break \$1 million worth of sales in 2000. Sales had surpassed US\$1.4 billion by 2016 and grew another 26% in August 2018. In 2020, ASOS had more than 22 million social media followers and over 23 million active customers (Tadros 2021).

#### **4.2.2 Branding strategy**

A first mover in the online retailing sector, ASOS has developed an e-commerce platform based on the deployment of social media influencers and generated online content (Barnett 2024). It has also been a forerunner in creating a solid base in consumer data analytics by being instrumental in understanding consumer behavior and choice (Spanou 2019). ASOS is a role model in the way it uses data analytics best practices for optimizing its online marketing and commercial activities.

The firm leverages machine learning algorithms and big data technologies to customize marketing campaigns, balance inventory, and predict consumer demand. ASOS's use of these technologies powers increasingly personalised customer experiences, while improving the overall user experience and conversion rates. It also enables the company to reduce return rates (a common problem for online fashion retail) and improve its below-the-line stock inventory (Deloitte, 2021; McKinsey & Company, 2022).

ASOS does the benchmark in operations and digital marketing strategies maximisation with predictive analytics. It uses big data and machine learning to optimise the user's journey in different ways, including targeted advertising, dynamic pricing, and personalised product discovery. Predictive analytics at ASOS also predicts demand, which enables better inventory management and therefore less surplus stock and fewer returns. Given the volatile and unpredictable fashion retail landscape, these data-driven

initiatives allow the brand enhanced operating efficiency and the opportunity to provide richly personalised customer experiences (Deloitte, 2021; McKinsey & Company, 2022).

ASOS has millions of global customers and therefore has a huge amount of data at its fingertips, such as:

**Client interactions:** Data generated from the client's visits, purchase history, search information, transaction data, and search terms on the mobile application as well as the website (Twarogal and Puczyk 2024).

**Consumer insights:** Qualitative feedback channels such as social media, customer reviews, and feedback systems contribute to mapping consumer orientation (Hennig-Thurau, Hofacker and Bloching 2013:238).

**Behavioural data:** Navigation technology, cookies, and behavioural analytics are employed to better perceive navigation across digital mediums (Pandectes Expert 2023).

The brand uses various complex analytical algorithms to handle and interpret this data, as:

**Machine learning algorithms:** These algorithms sift through historical consumer information and recognise known patterns in order to predict the consumer's propensity for future shopping transactions. Based on browsing and purchase history, interests or demographic information, the company can show more relevant marketing messages and promotions. For instance, if you are a frequent shopper at a particular clothing store, your favourite store might send you a promotional code for a new outfit from the site. Demand-forecasting models are also used in inventory and sourcing decision-making to reduce waste and improve operations (McKinsey & Company, 2022; PwC, 2021).

**Customer segmentation:** ASOS classifies customers into multiple personality groups based on similar interests and purchasing behaviour, thus facilitating targeted marketing and personalised shopping (Xiao, Xu, & Gao 2024:10).

**Sentiment analysis:** Social listening tools monitor customer sentiment and influence marketing campaigns and product development (Hennig-Thurau et al. 2013:239).

By using analytics like this, ASOS can predict future trends and customer requirements - but also must remain ever-alert to the next new thing and shift with real-time developments. This helps boost product availability and enhances the concentration of focused marketing. The result is a smarter and more proactive approach that raises productivity levels for ASOS and gives the business a winning edge in the competitive online fashion marketplace (Deloitte, 2021; McKinsey & Company 2022).

ASOS is also mindful of the pervasive influence of social media over younger shoppers. Earlier, the campaign was community-led: users were challenged to develop their own horror-themed face filters. Another interesting project is the #AsSeenOnMe initiative, which encourages users to share pictures of themselves in ASOS gear. This kind of real-life visual feedback creates social proof and makes it easier for other potential customers to imagine products in their lives.

Influencer collaborations result in organic, user-oriented content, effectively blurring the lines between traditional advertising and actual customer experiences (Coppock 2022).

ASOS also integrated augmented reality into its mobile app, in which users can project models into their own surroundings to better understand how the clothing actually fits and moves. It all means less guessing when trying to buy, and increased product allure.

Personalised wish lists, exclusive promotions, and real-time alerts for new arrivals and flash sales keep customers engaged. These interactive features are designed to deepen brand–customer relationships and increase app usage (Business Insider, 2019; Retail

Dive, 2020). A feature called “Virtual Catwalk,” made in partnership with the augmented reality company HoloMe, allows models to be superimposed so they appear to wear a selection of the user’s items in the user’s physical space. It was launched with more than 100 ASOS Design products and was well received.

Aside from AR, the app improves the customer experience with personalized promotions and notifications to keep users connected and engaged with the brand (Retail Dive, 2020). ASOS makes an emphasis on good customer service, clearly through the long list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) offered to the customers, in addition to support through social media and live chat (ASOS 2024a).

ASOS Instant same-day online purchase and delivery appear to facilitate consumer convenience and pace and, as such, align with the brand’s position on being quick and easy (ASOS 2024b).

The brand has a multi-level revenue generation model, pairing customer data insights with one-to-one personalized interactions. The information is employed to guide where products are placed and at what price point, as well as how items are promoted. By monitoring browsing and purchasing habits, the business is able to predict customer needs and adjust inventory and campaigns in order to drive sales (Mixon 2021).

Personalisation is key to ASOS’s growth. The company employs machine learning to tailor the mobile and web browsing experience by analyzing browsing history, preferences, and purchasing activity. Showing them relevant items increases purchase rates and keeps customers happy (McKinsey & Company, 2022; PwC, 2021).

The company has done an excellent job with its mobile app, making it easy for customers to shop quickly and conveniently, which is vital in mobile commerce. Features like push notifications for sales, app-exclusive promotions, and a streamlined checkout

process enhance the experience. The app's usability and speed are a major focus (Vizard 2016).

ASOS also invests in content marketing to drive engagement and conversions. Through trend updates, style guides, and advice (shared via the ASOS blog, newsletters, and social media), the brand keeps a strong, active relationship with its audience (Brand Vision 2024).

### 4.2.3 Comparative Analysis of ASOS and Gucci

A comparison of Gucci and ASOS reveals different approaches and results that are motivated by their different positions in the fashion industry. Though their strategies and issues reflect their different target markets and brand values, both businesses employ digital marketing to boost customer engagement and profitability.

Gucci serves wealthy clients looking for exclusivity and superior quality. Its digital marketing strategies aim to draw in younger clients while keeping hold of current ones by fusing modern technological advancements with traditional luxury.

Gucci emphasizes its luxury branding and upholds its image of exclusivity and desirability through the use of excellent, artistic material and partnerships with well-known celebrities and influencers.

For instance, Gucci has teamed up with celebrities like Billie Eilish and Harry Styles, whose reputations for fashion and worldwide influence fit in well with the brand's character and appeal to younger luxury buyers (Vogue Business, 2022).

ASOS, on the other hand, bills itself as a fast-fashion retailer that serves stylish consumers who appreciate price, accessibility, and variety. The majority of its target audience consists of young, tech-savvy people who anticipate quick fashion turnover and instant brand connection.

ASOS's emphasis on mobile shopping, robust social media presence, and use of data analytics for personalization are all examples of a strategy that fits in well with the speed, convenience, and trendiness preferences of its target demographic.

Although both businesses invest heavily in technology to enhance customer satisfaction and streamline operations, their apps accomplish different strategic objectives:

Gucci emphasizes the exclusivity and excellence of its items, while enhancing the shopping experience with technology like augmented reality. Its augmented reality try-ons and superior digital storytelling are designed to enhance the brand's emotional bond while simultaneously evoking a refined air surrounding its products.

ASOS, on the other hand, leverages technology with an emphasis on efficiency and customisation. Innovative features, as the Virtual Catwalk and instant push alerts, together with its use of machine learning algorithms to customize product recommendations, appeal to a customer base that values a speedy, interactive, and personalized buying experience. The main goals of these technical applications are to generate conversions through a unified digital experience and increase user engagement at scale.

Both brands struggle to adapt to the rapidly evolving digital landscape and changing expectations of consumers. In contrast to ASOS, that must constantly innovate to keep up with fast fashion trends and preserve operational efficiency across a worldwide supply chain, Gucci faces the challenge of preserving its luxury essence in the internet age without weakening its brand identity.

Gucci should keep spending money on immersive digital experiences like AR/VR and NFTs that appeal to younger customers and promote exclusivity in order to overcome these obstacles. However, ASOS would gain by further developing supply chain

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automation and predictive analytics in order to react to changing trends more quickly while preserving sustainability.

To increase consumer loyalty in a digital economy that is becoming more and more competitive, both businesses should place a high priority on data privacy, omni-channel integration, and content personalization.

Despite the fact that both Gucci and ASOS employ digital marketing techniques successfully, their strategies diverge in high levels, because of their different target markets and brand positionings. While ASOS uses technology to enhance the shopping experience and serve fast-fashion clients, Gucci uses digital tools to expand its luxury appeal and target a younger demographic. These differences draw attention to the different strategies needed to be successful in various fashion market niches.



## 4. Results

The thesis's results part, which looks at how digital marketing techniques affect customer behavior with an emphasis on Gucci and ASOS, is essential for proving the efficacy of these tactics through in-depth research and strong statistical evidence, providing a thorough understanding of how digital marketing influences fashion consumers' decision-making in the theoretical foundation.

Both brand engagement and financial performance have significantly increased as a result of Gucci's successful integration of digital marketing with its traditional premium branding. According to statistics, Gucci's digital efforts have contributed to an increase in revenue from 3.9 billion euros in 2015 to over 9.6 billion euros in 2019 (see chapter 3.1.2). According to Sabanoglu (2022), their Instagram following grew from 10 million to over 40 million throughout the same period.

In addition to improving the shopping experience, the luxury brand's usage of augmented reality and online exclusives has increased online conversion rates by up to 300 percent, as seen in the case of shoes (AR STORIES 2024). The Experience Economy theory (Pine and Gilmore 1998), which holds that memorable brand experiences foster consumer loyalty and premium pricing acceptance, leading to higher sales, is supported by these findings.

Analytics and customisation have been key components of ASOS's sales-boosting strategy. A 2020 case study by Simon Data claims that ASOS's multi-channel personalization efforts, which combined customer data across devices and used email campaigns, app notifications, and on-site product recommendations, increased revenue by \$77.5 million in a single year (Simon Data, 2020).

Furthermore, according to Latterly, ASOS's consumer segmentation and proactive influencer marketing helped the company add 1.16 million Instagram followers in 2020

alone, which helped them reach £3.26 billion in revenues, a 19% increase over 2019 (Latterly, 2021). These numbers show how, over a quantifiable period of time, data-driven marketing strategies directly improved revenue, engagement, and client retention.

These findings align with the arguments made by Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019) in support of the usage of customized content to boost conversion rates and customer engagement. Measurable operational benefits have also been a result of ASOS's strategic use of real-time data analytics to modify price and inventory levels.

Industry evaluations show that this data-driven strategy has improved supply chain responsiveness, decreased markdown reliance, and decreased stockouts, all of which have contributed to the company's increased profits and customer satisfaction (Deloitte, 2021; McKinsey & Company, 2022).

Several digital marketing strategies tailored to the luxury and fast fashion industry segments are shown by comparing Gucci and ASOS. Gucci's strategy is predicated on creating a premium brand image and enhancing customer connections via superior, engaging digital experiences. Conversely, ASOS places a higher priority on mass customisation and efficiency, using technology to meet the demands of a wider range of more budget-conscious customers.

According to Vargo and Lusch (2004), both models adhere to the Service-Dominant Logic, which maintains that value is jointly and dynamically created with consumers. ASOS does this with highly customized and responsive shopping experiences, while Gucci co-creates value by engrossing shoppers in a rich brand narrative.

The findings of this study confirm the theoretical frameworks introduced in the theoretical foundation as well as reveal the considerable impact of digital marketing on consumers and business performance. By integrating these discoveries into current marketing theories, this thesis describes how the fashion industry can utilise digital

marketing effectively in different aspects within the fashion industry, paving the way for customer engagement and substantial business expansion. This combination of theory and practice can be useful for academics and practitioners alike.

## 5. Discussion

The findings of the study follow recent efforts to quantify the importance of digital marketing in boosting consumer engagement and fashion sales. For example, evidence that social media engagement and product personalization impact on brand loyalty and purchase intentions could support the findings about Gucci and ASOS. In addition, the increasing inclination towards digital disruption in retail persists to be proven with the successful incorporation of tech in market strategies, as evidenced by augmented reality and artificial intelligence.

Nevertheless, the findings provide new clues about the digital marketing elements that are most effective for luxury brands versus fast fashion ones. Storytelling and original digital experiences are tools brands such as Gucci can use, while personalization and data-driven marketing are becoming ever more important to the likes of ASOS. This differentiation underscores the importance of personalised digital marketing strategies that are in tune with consumer preferences and brand personality.

The hypothesis that strong online presence correlates with improved financial performance in the fashion industry is supported by the observed relationship between digital strategies and sales growth. These findings align with previous research emphasizing the relevance of digital platforms in contemporary marketing.

Furthermore, the results presented in this study contribute to existing knowledge by identifying which specific digital marketing strategies are most effective in driving consumer engagement and revenue. By offering concrete examples from brands such as Gucci and ASOS, this research expands on prior studies and provides a foundation for future investigation into the optimization of digital marketing in the fashion sector.

## 6. Conclusion

The theoretical and analytical reflection on the success of Gucci and ASOS digital marketing strategy brought here provided new valuable means of understanding how their digital strategy can lead to a noticeable change in the consumer behavior and the successful manufacturing administration in the fashion industry.

Digital marketing has to be the central activity of the firm for them to improve customer satisfaction and engagement and thus have a positive impact on firms' revenues growth and on brand building. By looking closely at the luxury branding and new technologies Gucci employs and combines, we can see a return to life of "old luxury" in the modern age.

Gucci has been particularly adept at attracting a young customer base to the heritage luxury brand while not diluting its high-end image by leveraging social media, augmented reality and immersive digital storytelling. The industry story is there to reinforce it: the fact that Gucci was the most visible in e-commerce and the best at mobile optimization and social engagement is what catapulted it to number one in the 2023 L2 Digital IQ Index for luxury brands. And also according to Luxe Digital, the brand had the most luxury fashion searches online in 2022 (15.7 percent, topping all of its international rivals).

This level of detail only reinforces Gucci's digital luxury leadership, and it's a sign of how the brand's mix of heritage and innovation plays a critical role in growing market share.

ASOS case is another creative, but also the kind of effective, discipline focused digital marketing story of our time, centred on adaption branding and efficiency. Through the use of complex analytics and technology to forecast and evaluate what it thinks its customer wants, the brand has truly mastered the art of mass customisation.

This is the information that has kept ASOS as a leader in the fast fashion segment and is proof that having a technology-led customer-centric strategy results in more revenue and satisfied shoppers. Each of these above case studies also offer some additional re-enforcement of the general ideals that are emerging in Digital Marketing that the Experience Economy (Gilmore and Pine, Museums and U.S. National Identity) and the Service-Dominant Logic (Vargo and Lusch, 2008) suggest that building relationships with clients is fundamental.

These engagements, whether experiential, tailored content, or experiential support, are critical to fueling repeat business and brand affinity. The theoretical foundation's approach that emphasizes the dynamic consumer-brand relationships in the internet economy has aided in understanding these implications.

In addition, the issues or problems faced that is even comprised the fast technology development and the international market flexibility request, clearly reveals the meaning of digital marketing strategy flexibility. There is still a competitive advantage in being responsive and Innovative within this constantly changing consumer and technological landscape, as both Gucci and ASOS have illustrated.

The knowledge gained through this thesis would enable us to comprehend the complex connections of digital marketing and consumers and have indicated several effective means for fashion companies in this respect. It demonstrates that digital marketing is not just a 'bolt-on' add-on process, an additional experience label, it is in all actuality the lifeblood of business strategy as well as customer interaction for the 21st century.

The findings of this study contribute to a best practice guide for other fashion firms to utilize the potential of digital marketing in expanding the market coverage and

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involving stakeholders. As the digital world reshuffles itself, the lessons of Gucci and ASOS will undoubtedly have an effect on what marketing, in fashion and beyond, looks like.

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I hereby declare that I have developed and written the enclosed bachelor thesis entirely on my own and have not used outside sources without declaration in the text. Any concepts or quotations applicable to these sources are clearly attributed to them.

This bachelor thesis has not been submitted in the same or a substantially similar version, not even in part, to any other authority for grading and has not been published elsewhere. This is to certify that the printed version is equivalent to the submitted electronic one. I am aware of the fact that a misstatement may have serious legal consequences.

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