

Fashion Marketing & Retail Design

MAJOR FASHION RETAIL PROJECT

FA3 T04

*EMPOWERING WOMEN TO BE BODY POSITIVE BY
CELEBRATING INDIVIDUALITY WITH A CONCEPTUAL
ATHLEISURE RETAIL STORE*



[HTTPS://WWW.TEENVOGUE.COM/STORY/MODELS-LAUNCH-BODY-POSITIVE-CAMPAIGN/AMP](https://www.teenvogue.com/story/models-launch-body-positive-campaign/amp)

23RD SEPTEMBER 2018 TO 4TH MARCH 2019

Credit Weighting: 60

Project Rationale

For many years, fashion retailers have dismissed the fact that the average American woman is a size 16, by only carrying limited sizes, or selling a limited amount of styles for their plus-size consumers (Lawrence, 2017). Many brands have missed out on the opportunity to embrace “plus-size” women into the catwalk trends, however with the average woman being a size 16, it seems that these companies could be getting a lot more attention and positive feedback if they were to make the newest trends for all sizes.

In 2014, the underwear brand, Aerie, decided to do a “no re-touching” ad and launched a body positive campaign, #AerieReal and they have seen a 38% increase in sales for the first quarter this year (Alnuweiri, 2018). The public is clearly responding positively to the fashion industry breaking the rules of photoshopping their ads in order to appear perfect. The public can now relate to the brand and the models and therefore they feel more comfortable making a purchase.

However, even though the fashion industry is taking the next step by admiring women to feel confident about their bodies a recent study by UCL showed that body image issues are a greater problem than ever before (Taylor, 2017). The study found that 24% of 14-year-old girls suffer from depression, stating their body insecurities being one of the major causes (Taylor, 2017). Even though the fashion industry is headed in the right direction it is nearly impossible for teenage girls to ignore their Instagram pages, which are filled with women who have the perfect hourglass figure. The perfect hourglass figure stems from the Kardashians, who have a very substantial influence on our entire society. The fashion industry is headed in the right direction, however further steps need to be taken on social media in order to get the message of body positivity through to the next generation of teenage girls.

The fashion brand Primark introduced their new ‘curve model’ Sonny Turner (Kaye, 2018). Finding fame through her incredibly relatable Instagram account, the model prides herself on being an influencer that fans can see themselves in, saying that ‘After scrolling through accounts of perfectly photo shopped, enhanced, edited and posed accounts you can come to mine and get some realness’ (Kaye, 2018).

A survey done by The Model Alliance founder and researcher Sara Ziff revealed a glimpse into the reality of being in the fashion industry (Frausto, 2017). In her research, Ziff found that 62% of models were told to lose weight (Frausto, 2017). That's from a sample of people who are already considered underweight by World Health Organization standards (Frausto, 2017). More than half of the models in the fashion industry are told that if they do not lose weight that the model agency will no longer represent them (Frausto, 2017). Young girls strive to look like these underweight models in ads in order to feel accepted by society, however this is an unattainable goal that the fashion industry has created by rejecting models that they believe are not thin enough. As a result, 35-57% of adolescent girls are participating in crash dieting, diet pills, fasting, laxatives and self-induced vomiting (Frausto, 2017). In order to make body positivity an "ever-lasting trend" in the fashion industry, the model agencies will need to participate in advertising their stance on choosing women who are healthy, not just thin.

Project Brief - Offline

I will be creating an athleisure brand that promotes body positivity and will be partnering with Laura Walkovich, who will be doing the online portion of the brand. I will be assuming the role as the buyer for this brand and will be assessed on a buying/range plan. The job of the retail buyer begins with planning - identifying and analyzing consumer trends and patterns, which might work for their organization (Drapers Jobs, 2017). After identifying which products to acquire for their organization, retail buyers must meet with suppliers to agree on price and make purchases (Drapers Jobs, 2017). After discovering the beginning roles of a buyer I have decided to include the following in my buying/range plan:

- Photographs of the garments, using examples from the Internet
- Fabrics used
- Colour/pattern options that the garment comes in
- Cost of goods price
- Selling price
- Prepack sizes (ex. how many SM, MD, L, we are going to carry in each garment)

The buying plan will include two customer profiles in order to demonstrate our target consumer and how I made the buying decisions based off the needs and wants of our customers.

I will be creating the logo, the general theme/story of the brand, and as a result I will be creating a visual merchandising handbook using Google Sketch Up. In this I will include photos of the floor plan, the general theme and the stories in each section, the ads that will be in store, and the window designs.

I will be creating a seasonal promotional calendar that outlines significant dates/events and I will demonstrate the outcome of one of our promotional themes by creating a mockup of our seasonal subscription box. In order to make my brands customers feel apart of a community, our brand will send out seasonal subscription boxes to people with a membership. Since it is important for the brand to demonstrate that we are apart of a community, the box will hold many items from local boutiques around Cardiff, to show support for the local businesses. I will demonstrate what the box will look like through photos and descriptions. The calendar will also show when the launch of our brand is, which will be Spring/Summer 2019 and the promotions we have going on in store based off the season and/or a holiday in that season.

Aims of the Project

I hope to gain, as well as improve a various amount of soft skills while completing this project. One of the most important attributes to gain before entering the fashion industry is communication. Since Laura Walkovich, and I are working on this project together this will be one of the first skills that I learn, because in order for offline and online parts to coincide and flow, we will need to communicate. I also plan to collaborate with a student from the graphic designs course, in order to get more perspective on how the store visuals can remain consistent with the brand image. Collaborating with Laura and another student from graphic design will help improve my teamwork skills. In terms of hard skills, I will be learning how to use Google Sketch Up to create the store layout, and I will be improving my InDesign skills while creating the buying/range plan and research book. The main skill that I hope to improve on while doing this project is adaptability. There will probably be a lot of changes along the way and I want to be open to embracing new ideas. I hope to get industry knowledge, as well as skills that will help me be adaptable and flexible before I enter the workforce.

My motivation to create this brand and get our message across stems from all of the teenage girls who never feel good enough in their own skin, and when reading how many girls are depressed because of body insecurities it motivates me to create a brand that will get a healthy message across to the next generation of teenagers.

I am interested in this topic because I don't think that body positivity is discussed at a young enough age, and I hope our brand will change that. In terms of personal development, I think this will help me improve on many soft skills and give me a better view into the fashion industry. I think it will help my professional development because I will learn how to meet multiple deadlines, gain entrepreneurship skills, and create innovative ideas that the industry is keen to have right now.

Although I do not plan to create my own brand after graduation it has always been a future goal of mine and this project will show me the effort and amount of time/dedication that goes into building a brand. My main focus for this project is my buying/range plan and most of my time will be dedicated to learning the hard and soft skills that it takes to be a buyer, which will be beneficial for me because my career goal is to be apart of the buying industry.

Deliverables:

Research Book – 20%

My research journal will be created in InDesign and will be an in depth analysis of current details about body positivity in the fashion industry such as, where they have improved, which brands are participating and it will also include the rooms for improvement with body positivity in the fashion industry. It will also include how my brands theme progressed from October-February, such as colour palettes and inspiration. In this research book, I will give a reflective account at the end of this experience discussing my personal and professional development throughout the project as well as how this project will influence my career decisions. It will also include primary and secondary research about independent retailers in Cardiff, where they feel they have succeeded, and the pros/cons of being an independent retailer, as well as the trend of athleisure in Cardiff. My research book will be submitted both in physical and digital format, and the theme will remain consistent throughout all submissions.

Buying Plan – 35%

The buying plan will include two customer profiles in order to demonstrate our target consumer and how I made the buying decisions based off the needs and wants of our customers. It will also include:

- Photographs of the garments, using examples from the Internet
- Fabrics used
- Colour/pattern options that the garment comes in
- Cost of goods price
- Selling price
- Prepack sizes (ex. how many SM, MD, L, we are going to carry in each garment)

The buying/range plan will be submitted as a physical booklet.

Promotional Calendar and Outcomes - 25%

The seasonal promotional calendar will outline significant dates and events. The calendar will show when the launch of our brand is, which will be Spring/Summer 2019 and it will also show what promotions we have going on in store, which will be based off the season and/or a holiday. One of the outcomes will be a mockup of our subscription box and will demonstrate that our brand is about being apart of a community by including products from local businesses. The promotional calendar and mockup of the subscription box will be submitted online only.

Brand Guidelines and Store Visuals – 20%

This submission will be evaluated on how I demonstrate the overall aesthetic of the brand, the logo, colour palettes, and themes in store. The aesthetic of the store is going to be demonstrated through Google Sketch Up and will include visuals of what the layout will be, including the general theme and stories in each section of the store, the window displays, and ads posted around the store, as well as small amounts of text to explain my choices. The brand guidelines, and store visuals will be submitted online and in physical format.

Reading List

Articles

Bielefeldt Bruun, M. and Langkjær, M. (2016). Sportswear: Between Fashion, Innovation and Sustainability. *Fashion Practice*, 8(2), pp.181-188.

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Websites

Glantz, J. (2018). Entrepreneur Uses Data To Disrupt The Fashion Industry To Make Shopping Easier For Petite Women. [online] *Forbes*. Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/jenglantz/2018/10/22/entrepreneur-uses-data-to-disrupts-the-fashion-industry-to-make-shopping-easier-for-the-petite/#21d8eeec4603> [Accessed 29 Oct. 2018].

Jones, S. (2018). What is the Future for the Welsh High Street?. [online] *Business News Wales*. Available at: <https://businessnewswales.com/what-is-the-future-for-the-welsh-high-street/> [Accessed 29 Oct. 2018].

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Books

Goworek, H. (2012). *Fashion buying*. Oxford: Blackwell Pub. Ltd.

Jackson, T. and Shaw, D. (2001). *Mastering fashion buying and merchandising management*. Houndmills: Palgrave.

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Alnuweiri, T. (2018). Why body positivity in fashion is here to stay. [online] Well and Good. Available at: <https://www.wellandgood.com/good-looks/body-positivity-fashion-sales/>. (Accessed 15 Oct. 2018).

Drapers Jobs. (2017). Retail Buyers: Roles and Responsibilities. [online] Available at: <https://www.drapersjobs.com/article/retail-buyers-roles-and-responsibilities/> (Accessed 22 Oct. 2018).

Frausto, R. (2017). Body image issues within and outside the Fashion Industry. [online] Cooglife. Available at: <http://cooglife.com/2017/10/body-image/>. (Accessed 15 Oct. 2018).

Kaye, H. (2018). Positive Change – How is the fashion industry promoting body positivity?. [online] The Gryphon. Available at: <http://www.thegryphon.co.uk/2018/03/31/87041/>. (Accessed 15 Oct. 2018).

Lawrence, S. (2017). 11 Body-Positive Moments That Rocked the Fashion Industry in 2017. [online] Teen Vogue. Available at: <https://www.teenvogue.com/gallery/plus-size-fashion-body-positive-2017-highlights>. (Accessed 15 Oct. 2018).

Taylor, B. (2017). Body image in the fashion industry: how far have we come?. [online] Student Newspaper. Available at: <http://www.studentnewspaper.org/body-image-in-the-fashion-industry-how-far-have-we-come/>. (Accessed 15 Oct. 2018).