

An exploratory study of Social media marketing and traditional media in the Irish Fashion Industry

Abstract

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Table of Contents

Introduction

Today, most business strategies are not complete without considering the role of technology, the internet and intuitive ways to reach both local and international consumers (Ahlberg, 2010, Freeman and Chapman, 2011). Simply put, most companies have needed to think beyond traditional channels of marketing and advertising and have needed to embrace change. This thesis will examine this transition, beginning by exploring the technological evolution of the internet and how technology has affected marketing practices. The overall aim of the research is to determine what the perceived benefits of using social media are and the impact that these have on traditional media. In particular, the thesis is concerned about the role of social media marketing in the fashion industry in Ireland and how companies are making the transition to adopting social media channels. This is of current relevance as literature has illustrated that the fashion industry has ignored social media for some time and only recently has opened up to the prospect of moving towards more collaborative, online communication processes (Preece, 2012, Lee, 2009).

To begin, the literature review of this work will examine how web 2.0 has been used for social media marketing and how many companies have placed social media into existing traditional strategies and in some cases replaced traditional channels altogether. Moving on, the literature review will next consider, in more detail, how digital channels have altered the communication processes with customers and highlight the benefits and challenges of this evolution.

As this research is focused on the adoption of social media within the fashion industry, the review will also explore how the social media has affected the fashion industry as a whole, examining how international and national fashion trends have changed due to postmodern influences on fashion genres (Mitchell, 2011) and commercial internationalisation (Kawamura, 2005, Crane, 2000). Finally, the literature review will conclude by reviewing how the fashion industry has been delayed in adopting social media and will introduce the context of this study, social media usage within highstreets stores in Ireland.

Building on the concepts reviewed from the literature review, chapter two of this study will next introduce the framework and methodologies from which primary data will be gathered and

analysed. In support of this, chapter two will also consider the selected participants were identified, ethical considerations and the limitations of this research.

Building on chapter two's overview of data analysis, Chapter three will present a cross-column analysis and thematical creation of the interpreted qualitative data. Using material gathered through five interviews, the chapter will discuss three emerging themes that are linked back to the dissertation's theoretical framework.

Finally, chapter four will discuss the implications of the analysed material and discuss the findings in relation to the themes identified, the literature discussed and the possible future research avenues. Through this discussion, the overall contribution of the thesis, limitations of research and wider considerations to the field of marketing will be explored.

Chapter 1: Literature review

There are over 3.5 billion word-of-mouth conversations occurring around the world every day, about two thirds of these are thought to make a reference to fashion, services, or products (Ahlberg, 2010, Evans, 2008). Whilst these high levels of discussions about products and fashion may seem superficial, it is important to keep in mind that people are motivated to discuss issues that relate to their own image and the image of other people in their lives (Mangold and Faulds, 2009).

Through the evolution of technology, these types of word-of-mouth -marketing (WOMM) (Brown, 2010) strategies are no longer limited to physical discussions but are spreading faster and further through the use of the internet (Evans, 2008). According to Elkin, Thomson and Wilson (2010) over a quarter of the world's population has access to the internet, and this number continues to grow on a daily basis. With the advancement of technology, users of the internet have now more control over how they interact and use online content. In terms of social media, this evolution has stemmed due to the advancement from Web 1.0 to 2.0 and the creation of user generated content (UGC) (Freeman and Chapman, 2011, Goo, Kuratani and Lai, 2011)

“Whereas Web 1.0 limited the control of creating and publishing content to specific individuals, Web 2.0 expanded the capabilities and granted control to all users of the

World Wide Web. This model of participatory and collaborative thinking became the platform behind the ideological and technological foundation of Social Media.”

(Goo, Kuratani and Lai, p2, 2011)

What is critical about this transition, from a marketing perspective, is that strategists have begun to rely less on standard techniques such as *pay per click* (PPC) and *search engine optimisation* (SEO) and instead have needed to enter into an arena where the control lies with consumers and friends of consumers (Mitchell, 2012).

Social Media

Social media can be described as series of internet based applications that allow for the collaborative sharing of ideas, experiences and opinions through user generated content (Freeman and Chapman, 2011, Ahlqvist, Halonen and Heinonen, 2008).

Social media differentiates from traditional media in many ways, in particular, flexibility, frequency, reach and quality (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Perhaps more importantly of all though, is the ability for two-way social communications, which allows for flexible and on the go interactions. Constantinides and Fountain (2008) identified five categories of Social Media, which have various levels of interaction, *Blogs*, *Social networks*, *content communities*, *forums/bulletins* and *content aggregators*.

Blogs

A blog is a webpage where readers can post and share opinions about a specific topic, many blogs are usually open to the public. A blog is used by businesses to improve customer relationships and is described as a powerful marketing and communication tool that is simple to use and maintain (Halligan and Dharmesh 2010).

According to Sedeke (2012, p2) “fashion blogs are enjoying great popularity because they offer an alternative opinion for anybody to actively create or consume fashion without requirement of any kind of costs”. An example of a popular fashion blog is “Inside-out” by Topshop (Topshop, 2013B). Blogs are used by Topshop to promote their products, this allows Topshop get an insight into what customer are saying about their brand, Topshop allows bloggers to read about the latest

fashion trends and show different styles. Topshop not only show styles of clothes, they also show tips on how models are wearing their hair and give useful tips to consumers on how to try it themselves. Topshop also gives tutorials on how to be fashionable and wear the brand in different styles.

Social networks

Social networking are based on an online structure that allows people to both express their individuality and meet people with similar interests using User Generated Content (UGC).

Asos is a popular fashion Facebook site “where you’ll discover fashion online”. Asos has 2.5 million followers/fans (Asos, 2013) and is used to create awareness and encourages users to discuss their products and tastes. Through social media, Asos engages with fans about exclusive offers and the hottest fashion trends. Asos try to educate fans on how best to wear the asos brand by showing images and video clips of catwalks. Asos also offers exclusive giveaways through regular updates and posts on the page.

Content communities

Content communities are in some ways similar to social networks because you need to register a login, similarly to when joining a social networking site. Also similarly, you have a homepage where the user controls who they share their content with, i.e, friends, family or with the community. Within the community the content shared is intended to for other members with similar interests and values (Beck, 2009).

Forums/bulletin

Forums and Bulletins are internet web applications that allows for discussions and posting user generated content. Bulletin boards are also known as message boards which are a threaded discussion (chronology of chats between users). The terms “forum” and “board” may refer to the entire community or to a specific sub-forums that is dealing with a specific topic. There are different types of forums, for example chat rooms and instant messaging among users who don’t have to be actively online (Felix, 2007).

Content aggregators

A content aggregator is an individual or organisation that gathers web content, which is later shared and distributed among news feeds of subscribers. The Content Aggregator can collect

broad news coverage across a wide range of media types, for example, music videos and pictures. In terms of customer control, the subscriber has the opportunity to select the content they are most interested in and eliminate media of no relevance (Shelly and Cashman, 2011).

These five types of social media can be gauged as being either effective or ineffective by calculating traffic directed to website, trends on twitter, likes on Facebook and hits on blogs (Mitchell, 2011);

“To augment traditional analytics, some retailers and fashion designers have applied analytic techniques to social media interactions to get real-time feedback on where fashion is going and what consumers think of their upcoming designs.” (Mitchell, 2011)

With this growing usage of online technologies and analytics, the field of digital marketing has expanded to include the remit of social media.

What is Social Media Marketing?

Social media marketing, according to McClure (2009), is more than just a buzzword. Today it is a way of life and a huge part of people’s lifestyles, due to the rise in online communities where people share common interests and stories with each other.

Businesses are witnessing the level of power that social media has over consumers; social media marketing has created new challenges for advertisers, companies and strategists. Modern marketers are noticing how these online tools can spread their intended message through online conversations, which has strengthened the power of consumer-to-consumer conversations in the marketplace (McClure 2009). This amplification can be best seen where traditional Media (e.g., newspapers, television) are supplemented by social media (e.g., blogs, YouTube, discussion forums and social networking sites, Facebook, Twitter, MySpace and LinkedIn).

When considering social media as a marketing tool however, it is important to examine how technology has created new opportunities as well as presented new challenges. In terms of new opportunities, Ahlberg (2010) claims that social media has facilitated new ways for industries to

strengthen and expand relationships with customers and build brands through the use of podcasts, Facebook, blogs and microsites.

Despite these new opportunities, many new challenges exist for managing customer relations. For example, if negative social media comments are created about a product, service or a company online, new or returning customers may be influenced negatively and decide to find an alternative provider or seller. In this way, social media marketers are obliged to communicate i.e. talk and listen to their consumers within online communities about related products and services they have to offer (Weber 2009). Through this single act, the entire principles of marketing have changed from a one-sided communication of products and services to a flip of power to the consumer.

Traditional and social media and the changes in customer communications

Due to this shift in power, traditional marketing tools are perceived today to be not as effective as they once were. The reason for this is because consumers trust in social media techniques and what they read online from other peers (Evans, 2012). Through social media, information is easily accessed online and information concerning a product or service is much easier to search for.

Weber (2009) and Drury (2008) identify that marketing through social media has required a revolutionary model of communication. Ahlberg (2010) and Mangold and Faulds (2009) expand upon this idea and describe this revolution as the rejection of a “single way” construct and the embracing of a two way process that allows for exchanging of perceptions and ideas:

(Fig 1.1: *The New Communication Paradigm*, Mangold and Faulds (2009), cited in Ahlberg, 2010)

Mangold and Faulds (2009) explicates that there has been a significant erosion in the control over content and the timing of content about products through digital channels. This exponential digital process has impacted the increasing decline of traditional methods such as TV, print, posters or magazines (Galal et al 2009).

McGlure (2009) also points out that social media marketing is significantly cheaper than using traditional marketing, simply because social media marketing does not have an overall fixed cost. In today's recession-conscious climate, many companies have opted to reduce upfront advertising costs to TV, billboards and magazines, choosing instead to turn to the most popular and free online alternatives such as *Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Youtube*.

Online social network sites such as these allow for individual followers to know about the company behind the brand, develop a shared identity as a fan of the brand and find others who have similar fashion interests;

“messages are shaped by communal interests and an individual's personality, leading to ownership of the brand's values and meaning. Social media gives people an unprecedented ability to connect with each other and because of this, consumers are abandoning their traditional passive role as recipients of brand-developed content and are exercising more control over the messages they receive, generate and share.”

(Brown, 2010, p 8-9)

This multi-layered affected has its roots in traditional “two-step communication” marketing where ideas are first received by ‘opinion leaders’ and later disseminated and made “cool” or attractive to the larger following population (Keller and Fay, 2009). Valente (1996) describes this process as the ‘diffusion of innovation theory’ and claims that there are four classifications of adopters, *early adopters, early majority, late majority* and *laggards*. From a social media perspective, this process of diffusion is very transparent as every time a user interacts with a brand on a site such as Facebook, that activity will be displayed in the news feeds of their Facebook friends. Even more so, Twitter has been acknowledged as being the most transparent and powerful social media tool for marketing and advertising as there are no limitations with regards liking pages, fan pages or private replies to complaints (Walters, 2010).

In this way, growing fashion trends are no longer simply adopted from fashion magazines or from movies but are disseminated locally, nationally and internationally through a variety of online discussions, shares, tweets, likes and blogs. Bearing this in mind then, it is important to consider just how the nature of fashion has changed as a result of technology and how in turn the fashion industry is responding to globalised trends and increased consumer power.

The impact of social media on the fashion retail industry

No longer restricted to clusters of local neighbourhoods, street corner shops or clubs, consumer choices are now affected by a pool of hundreds of online friends and clusters of friends of friends that exist on social websites.

Interestingly, some theorists such as Giddens (1999) and Fourie (2008) argue that with respect to the change in fashion trends and media content, globalisation has become *Westernisation* or *Americanisation*;

“Many of the most visible cultural expressions of globalisation are American, for example, Coca-cola, McDonalds, big names in the fashion, industrial and financial world, the products of Hollywood, dominance in the provision of popular English-language television programming.”

(Fourie, 2008, p 359)

This skewed process of globalisation is perhaps most evident in the postmodern fashion styles dominating the markets, where culture has seen the near extinction of ‘class fashion’ (Kawamura, 2005). Whereas this class fashion or ‘haute couture’ emanated from major fashion centers such as Paris and London, today’s fashion trends are based on ever-changing tv shows, personalities and social media;

“Instead of looking for fashionable items of the season in Paris, consumers look elsewhere, and sometimes youth cultures create their own styles with their own definitions of fashion. I would call this another type of fashion system” (Kawamura, 2005, 99-100 cited in Pihl, 2011).

Together, these levels of diffusion have facilitated the creation of three distinct categories of style, *luxury fashion design*, *industrial fashion*, and *street styles*” (Crane, 2000, Kawamura, 2005). In relation to engaging with social media, each of these three categories of style has different levels of commitment. For instance, Morrissey (2010) and Preece (2012) claim that many fashion brands within the luxury category remain way of social media, limiting their online presence to an official

website with minimal two-way interaction with customers. Street styles, on the other hand, have come more quickly to social media, with many highstreet chains such as *Tophshop*, *Riverisland* and *Warehouse* using blogs, facebook pages and instagram to connect with their target audiences.

Bearing this in mind, the focus of this thesis surrounds how highstreet retailers have adopted to using social media and what influence has this had on more traditional marketing procedures. This is believed to be an important study to carry out as insights gained from this work may be used to explore how other companies within any of the three categories could create a digital marketing strategy and a social media strategy.

Bearing this in mind, this work will contribute to existing knowledge about how social media marketing and digital activities have altered how the fashion industry advertises and maintains customer relations in Ireland. Furthermore, the thesis will explore real world challenges to staffing and managing digital channels and provide an insight into how some traditional channels are still important to maintain. The objectives of the research will surround the perceived benefits of using social media, how social media has impacted traditional marketing methods and what the perceived benefits and disadvantages are of both methods in contemporary marketing practices.

Conclusion

This first chapter has presented an introduction to the thesis topic and presented a literature review in the area of social media marketing. In doing so, the thesis discussed the fashion industry and outlined how the communication model has changed due to the adoption of social media activities. This level of change was highlighted as being unequal however, with some categories of fashion retailers acting more openly and collaboratively with their customer base. This varying level of engagement has influenced the types of retailers chosen for this research and the individual participants will be discussed in more detail in chapter two. Also in chapter two, an overview of the research process, data gathering and data analysis will be highlighted.

Chapter 2: Methodology

This chapter will outline the research methodology for this study. To begin, the chapter will present an insight into the research design, outlining the decision to use a qualitative framework to address the thesis objectives and research question. Following this, the chapter will outline each of the data gathering tools used, illustrating the strengths and limitations of each method. Building on this, the chapter will next describe the intended participants and ethical considerations for this study and subsequently how the gathered data will be analysed. Finally, the chapter will look at the limitations of this study and argue how this work could contribute to further research in this area.

Research Design

This dissertation will use a qualitative framework. Qualitative research is a type of research that covers a number of philosophical orientations and approaches;

“Qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences” (Merriam, 2009, page 5).

In this case, the type of study being undertaken is an evaluation of social media marketing, which looks at the benefits of online marketing tools, compared to traditional marketing methods. Qualitative research was undertaken in order to explore in an in depth manner, the effects of digital channels on traditional marketing strategies in the Irish fashion industry. As these effects are individual to the company, to the participant, qualitative methods were used in order to allow each participant to tell the story of how marketing has changed as a result of digital and social media activities. Whilst quantitative methods, such as surveys, could have been used in this study, this method would not have allowed the researcher to interact with the participants and prompt further areas of discussion.

This type of approach was adopted in similar social media studies such as Ahlberg (2010) who carried out qualitative research using semi-structured interviews to investigate social marketing approaches of fashion companies.

Justification for adopting qualitative methods

A qualitative approach was chosen for this study as the methods had been used in similar studies such as Ahlberg (2010) and Immonen and Joensuu (2009)

Ahlberg (2010) carried out five interviews in total. The participants of the five interviews were company representatives, all participants had experience and worked with social media marketing campaigns some participants were still highly involved.

Another study that used similar methods was Immonen and Joensuu (2009) who carried out qualitative methods to explore how new business opportunities were being exploited through digital activities. In their study, Immonen and Joensuu (2009) carried out eight semi-structured interviews, five digital service companies and three music producing companies.

This qualitative approach was adopted in order to address the following research objectives and research question which were derived as a result of a review of the literature in the area of social media marketing within the fashion retail industry in Ireland.

Research objectives and research question

“What are the perceived benefits of using social media marketing and the impact these have on traditional media?”

This question assumes that the incorporation of a social media strategy will have an impact on existing traditional methods and the nature of these impacts will shed light into how companies can prepare for the transition into social media marketing.

In terms of research aims and objectives, the thesis will undertake the following:

Research objective 1

To investigate the perceived benefits of using social media.

Research objective 2

To address the impact of social media on traditional marketing.

Research Objective 3

To Compare and contrast the benefits and disadvantages of both methods.

Context

The context for this study is Dublin, Ireland. The industry focused on is the fashion retail industry which is of interest due to the fact that the fashion industry is one of the final industries remaining to thoroughly embrace the potential of social media marketing.

Participants and Sampling

The data gathering for this study was focused on interview responses from Managers in the fashion retail sector in Ireland. In particular, the participating stores were chosen from within the

“street style” category of style (Crane, 2000), which are designed as an affordable way for people to keep up with current trends and styles.

Within this category, five stores were chosen in the local Dublin area. These five stores were chosen using Purposive sampling, a form of nonprobability sampling used when the researcher identifies a suitable group of participants who have expertise knowledge in the area been explored or investigated (Johnson and Christensen, 2010). Snowballing sampling was also considered for this work (Johnson and Christensen, 2010), however, this method would have not guaranteed that the participants held the required expertise, knowledge and experience needed to explore the impact of social media marketing on traditional methods in the Irish fashion retail.

According to Johnson and Christensen (2010) purposive sampling is limited as the ability to generalise findings from a purposely selected sample to the general population is flawed. To combat this, the researcher first identified all suitable stores in the wider Dublin city area and then randomly selected participants to engage with. However, from this group of “street style” stores (Crane, 2000), only five out of the targeted ten companies were able to participate due to company policies.

Once agreeing to participate, each store’s representative (Managers or Marketing Managers) were briefed on the purpose of the study and asked to sign a declaration of consent to allow their responses to be recorded and used within the study. Scanned copies of each participant’s consent form are located in Appendix C of this dissertation.

Topshop was first established in 1964 as a British brand, Topshop have 300 stores throughout the UK and over 100 stores world wide. Topshop is perceived as brand selling relatively inexpensive fashion-forward clothes and accessories for women. The target market for Topshop is 15 to 30 year old women and they offer a range of different styles for customers to choose from. Topshop have also a mens clothing line which is called Topman which targets 15-30 year old men. Topshop and Topman use celebrity endorsements for promotions (Topshop, 2013).

Consumers can find Topshop using the following digital and social media:

Official website www.topshop.com
Facebook Fan page www.facebook.com/Topshop
Twitter page twitter.com/topshop
Blog insideout.topshop.com
instagram.com/topshop
Youtube: www.youtube.com/user/TopshopPodcasts

(Table 1.1 Topshop digital activities)

The Topshop interview was carried out on the 21st of June 2013. The participant identified was Kate, the Store Manager. The interview took place in Topshop St Stephens Green, the interview lasted twenty five minutes and the participant mentioned some interesting points,

“Irish consumes are now shopping more online because it’s cheaper due to exchange rates the euro is trading low compared to the sterling. This is interesting because soon all Topshop customers may turn to online sales, if they are saving money causing some stores to close across Ireland.”

River Island the business started in 1948 as a small shop situated in East London selling only wool and ladies clothing. As the business increased and generated a high volume of sales, by 1968 there were 70 stores opened throughout the UK (River Island, 2013).

The stores were originally opened under the name of “Lewis Separates” continuing to make clothes for ladies. The company then expanded into men’s fashion in 1983 under the “Concept Man”. In 1988, due to the brand doing well within the markets, the development of a new brand concept of a themed store offering fashion for both men and women (Competition Commission, 2006).

The new brand was called “River Island” and today the product range includes men’s and women’s clothing and footwear, accessories and cosmetics.

All of the company’s designs are developed by a dedicated design team who create fashionable clothing at an affordable price under the River Island label (Competition Commission, 2006). The target market for River Island is 18-35 year old men and women. River Island currently have shops in over 180 locations in Britain and Northern Ireland, 9 shops in the Republic of Ireland and elsewhere in the world retails through franchises and has online website (River Island, 2013).

River Island digital activities and social networking sites are:

Facebook fan page: www.facebook.com/riverisland
Official website: www.riverisland.com
Trending on Twitter: twitter.com/riverisland
Fashion videos www.youtube.com/user/RiverIslandTV
Blog www.riverisland.com/styleinsider/blog

(Table 1.2 River Island digital activities)

River Island interview was carried out on July 10th 2013. The participant was Mary store Manager. The interview took place in River Island henry street Dublin 1. The interview lasted twenty minutes, the interview was interesting and some interesting points were mentioned by the participant “River Island Henry street store hasn’t got its own official River Facebook page or Twitter account. Management of River Island Henry Street are aiming to have both accounts set up and monitored in store. The Interviewee explained “Having both Facebook and Twitter accounts in store will allow for us to interact and engage with customers and potential customers and create customer relationships”

Miss Selfridge describes itself as a feminine brand that established itself in 1966 in London. During its 40 years, Miss Selfridge has become one of the High-streets greatest fashion brands for the young female generation of the 21st century (Dawe, Nathalie, 2011, Miss Selfridge, 2013). Miss Selfridge first started out as a department within London’s favourite fashion outlet *Selfridges*. Miss Selfridge describes its target market to be “feminine and stylish individual and self-assured customers aged 18-24” (Dawe, Nathalie, 2011). Miss Selfridge is determined to remain a brand for the young target audience. Miss Selfridge activities and social networking sites are:

Official website www.missselfridge.com
www.facebook.com/missselfridge
twitter.com/_miss Selfridge_
www.missselfridgeblog.com

(Table 1.3 Miss Selfridge digital activities)

The Miss Selfridge Interview took place on the 24th of July 2013 in the Jervis Shopping centre located in Dublin 1. The participant identified was Bridget Visual Merchandising Manager. The interview lasted 25-30 minutes. The participant discussed new interesting features available on the Miss Selfridge website;

“We currently have introduced a new feature on the website called “Miss Selfridge magic mirror” which is a motion capture technology that’s also a webcam to help customers try on clothing from their own laptops/desktops, instructions are available to customers on the website, this gives consumer the advantage to see what clothes look like on them before they purchase.”

Warehouse

The first Warehouse store opened in London in 1976, with a vision of ‘design for the high street’ to make fashion accessible and affordable to all (Warehouse, 2013). Warehouse went global in 1999 when the company opened stores in Singapore and later across South East Asia. Warehouse was one of the first fashion companies to utilise digital channels when in 2001 they launched Warehouse.co.uk.

Warehouse’s digital activities and social media are:

www.warehouse.co.uk
twitter.com/#!/warestyle
www.facebook.com/WarehouseFashion
www.youtube.com/user/warehousefashions

(Table 1.4: Warehouse digital activities)

Warehouse Interview was carried out on the 26th of July 2013. The participant identified was Julie who is assistant manager. The interview took place in Blancherstown shopping centre where warehouse is located. The interview lasted thirty five minutes.

Dorothy Perkins

Established over 90 years ago, Dorothy Perkins describes itself as one of the biggest fashion retailers in the UK. Dorothy Perkins has nearly 600 UK stores and 50 international outlets worldwide (Dorothy Perkins, 2013).

Dorothy Perkins' style ranges are updated weekly in store and online, Dorothy Perkins provides street fashions for women and also provides accessories and shoes. The Target audience would range between 25-40.

Dorothy Perkin's digital activities and social media are:

Website www.dorothyperkins.com
www.facebook.com/dorothyperkins
twitter.com/dorothy_perkins
www.youtube.com/user/OfficialDP
instagram.com/official_dorothyperkins

(Table 1.5: Dorothy Perkins digital activities)

The Dorothy Perkins interview took place on the 30th of July 2013. The interview took place in Jervis street shopping were Dorothy Perkins is located. The Participant was Christine, who is Store Manager. The participant of Dorothy Perkins discussed that their App was the latest digital activity they had introduced;

“Our app is quite new and is performing really well it's very similar to our website and is available to customers 24 hours. I feel the App makes it easier for customers to shop practically with the rise in smartphones most people now own one, our App is also free to download and provides customers with all the latest styles and trends.”

Data Collection (Interviews)

The data collection method used in this study will be interviews. Interviews were chosen for their ability to extract deeper insights that questionnaires cannot (Vaughn, Schumm and Sinagub, 1996). Interviews can be structured or non-structured to allow a deep discussion of individual or groups opinions of topic/topics. For the purpose of this research, semi-structured interviews were used.

Interviews are commonly used within qualitative research. An interview is a purposeful discussion between two or more people where the story of a topic is constructed in an open collaborative manner (Seidman, 2012). Whilst interviews can provide rich data on each participant's beliefs and knowledge, this level of detail can be somewhat timely to transcribe

(Bryman, 2001). Also, Seidman (2012) suggests that for novice researchers, interviews can be a daunting experience as in most cases, they are meeting new people and may need to overcome barriers such as shyness or capacities to listen actively.

Interviews help find relevant and useful data, the data sourced can relate back to the researchers research question. Interviews can be formal and structured using a set of questions that relate back to the researchers research question. The questions are presented to the participants who agreed to take part in the interview process. Some interviews carried out maybe informal and unstructured through conversations. The two most common interviews carried out in market research are structured and unstructured interviews (Saunders et al, 2009).

Semi-structured interviews

Semi structured interviews help explore and identify an area that the researcher is most interested in. Within semi structured interviews the researcher has a series of questions or has specific themes and topics they want to discuss with the participant (Saunders et al, 2009).

Whilst using the semi structured method, the researcher does not necessary need to follow the order of questions listed to ask the participant, once the conversation flows logically. Questions that are not listed may also be asked on the day of the interview as the participant may mention something interesting and as a consequence the conversation can provide the researcher with extra data.

Semi- structured interviews can be carried out in different methods, they can be face-face interviews, telephone interviews, and the interviewer may record or take notes of what is being said. There is also the option of videophone interviews (Saunders et al, 2009). This study could also have applied structured interviews which follows a more stringent and consistent set of questions. However, the nature of the intended interviews were approached in an open and flexible manner, where.

Interview procedures

Each of the five interviews were carried out in the exact same manner. All participants were firstly briefed about the purpose of the study and made aware of the types of questions being asked. Following this, each participant was asked to sign a declaration of consent form to allow the researcher to use their recordings and to identify the store's name in the study.

Following the signing of this, the recording of each of the interviews took part. These recordings were later transcribed into a Word document and from there manipulated using cross-column analysis and thematical coding (Loshin, 2010). This process of analysing and coding up the interview data will be discussed in more detail in chapter three.

Secondary research analysis

In support of primary research activities, the researcher also carried out secondary research analysis. This secondary research analysis took the form of exploring existing studies in social media marketing as well as the impact such had on traditional activities. In support of this the researcher also looked up the history of each participants company in order to have a more effective interview discussion with participants.

Participants and research ethics

This research will gather the views of fashion retailers and consumers. In relation to ethical considerations, the researcher will not gather opinions from people who are under the age of eighteen. Also interview questions will be created to gather non sensitive information. Opinions sought will not be of a sensitive nature. As an ethical consideration, all participants were asked to sign a declaration of consent which can be seen in Appendix A.

Resources and Limitations

This study will be carried out by one researcher over a four month period (May-September 2013). Considering this, the study is limited in terms of the scope and depth of the intended research. To complete this research, the researcher needed to record five individual interviews. The transcription and analysis of this data was quite timely and subsequently meant that more interviews could not be carried out. Adding to this, some multinational stores who were originally approached could not commit to participation due to internal marketing policies. In particular, these larger, multinational companies, with roots in the United States, apologised and explained that all marketing strategies are confidential in order to maintain competitive advantage over competitors.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the theoretical framework and specific methodologies of this research. Building on this the chapter also illustrated the participants used for the study and the procedures put in place to interview each participant. Also discussed in relation to previous studies was the specific analysis techniques adopted for the study and the strengths and weaknesses of this outlined. Following this, chapter three of this thesis will present the findings of the thesis, where the coded data from the five interviews will be presented through three identified themes.

Chapter 3: Results and Analysis

In Chapter two, the thesis methodology was described and critiqued in light of similar studies and theoretical frameworks. In chapter three, the results from the five identified interviewees will be presented and analysed using cross-column methodology (Loshin, 2010)) and coding which facilitates the creation of emerging themes. These themes have been identified by examining relevant earlier literature (Ahlberg, 2010, Freeman and Chapman, 2011, Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010) as well as the primary data coded. The chapter will begin by discussing the analysis procedure adopted. Following this, the chapter will discuss the first identified theme; *the transition from digital marketing to social marketing in the Irish fashion retail industry*. Building on this, theme 2 will describe *how companies are evaluating the effectiveness of digital channels compared to traditional*. Lastly, theme three will *examine the types of benefits experienced within the participants companies as a result of Digital channels and explore what challenges have emerged due to the adoption of digital channels*.

Finally, the chapter will conclude by summarizing the significance of these identified themes and outline the final stage of the thesis, chapter four's discussion and conclusion.

Cross-column and Thematical Analysis

The processes for coding and organising the following three themes follows the procedures outlined by Loshin (2010) and Marschan-Piekkari and Welch (2004) who argue that the generation of themes requires frequent referral back to the data and cross checking of the researchers assumptions. This iterative approach allows for more confidence in the final themes created.

Cross-column analysis can be used to explore the relationships that exist between different responses across the overall data set. As a way to validate the creation of a qualitative theme, cross-column coding processes allow for the frequency of response types to be considered alongside in a concise and centralised format (Loshin, 2010). From these tables, the researcher can then begin to construct themes using insights gained from the literature and/or solely from the data gathered (Loshin, 2010).

In this study, the data was coded from five structured interviews, where each question responses were summarised into tables. For the generation of themes, open-ended question responses were grouped together using key phrases and ideas that emerged from the recordings. An example of this coding process can be seen in Fig 1.1

(Fig 1.1: Cross-column coding for question 1)

These codes were linked back to pre-identified themes from the literature review in order to create the three themes uses in this study:

Theme 1: The transition from traditional marketing to social marketing in the Irish fashion retail industry

Theme 2: How companies are evaluating the effectiveness of digital channels compared to traditional

Theme 3: The types of benefits experienced within the participants companies as a result of digital channels and explore what challenges have emerged due to the adoption of digital channels

This theme generation is quite similar to thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006, Boyatzis, 1998) however the pre-coding process provides the researcher with more accuracy and confidence in the themes which are created.

What is thematic analysis?

Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within Data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). A theme captures and describes something important about the data captured by the researcher. It's important that the data captured is useful and be used by the researcher. When carrying out Thematic analysis it's important to relate back to the research analysis (Boyatzis, 1998). Whilst thematic analysis offers the researcher a structured way to present common responses and meaningful summaries of data, Braun and Clarke (2006) highlight that the method is often poorly branded in qualitative research as it is not as widely known as methods such as narrative analysis or grounded theory.

With this in mind, it is important that the researcher considers what data they collected can be used as a theme in their research. Not all data is used that is collected by the researcher can be used a theme.

Codes within thematic analysis are developed to represent themes and patterns.

Six phases of conducting thematic analysis

1. Becoming familiar with the data.
2. Generating initial codes.
3. Searching for themes.
4. Reviewing themes.
5. Defining and naming themes.
6. Producing the report.

(University of Jyväskylä, 2013)

Identified Theme 1: The transition from traditional marketing to social marketing in the Irish fashion retail industry

Many studies have indicated that traditional channels of marketing are becoming less and less frequent and that companies have needed to change their relationship with their customers to a more

collaborative framework (Preece, 2012, Lee, 2009). Despite this, some researchers have argued that the fashion industry has been delayed in their use of digital media (Lee, 2009). This first theme presents extracts from the cross-column analysis that reinforces these findings.

Experience from Interview one (Topshop)

Topshop reports that they use five digital marketing activities; official website, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Twitter. The Topshop Interviewee reported that their company spends 25-50% on traditional marketing strategies and 50-75% on digital marketing which reaffirms arguments by Sedeke (2012) and Mitchell (2011);

“ in store we have our own St stephen's green official Facebook, which we find much better because its more personal, interactive with customers, they have the benefit of seeing what exactly is coming into store on a daily basis, if clothes are back in stock again customers have the opportunity to leave messages and posts about products”

Kate, Store Manager

Experience from interview two (River island)

River Island reports that they use the following digital marketing activities, Official website, Facebook, App available for smart phones and androids, instagram, twitter and YouTube *The river island* interviewee reported that their company spends 25-50% on traditional marketing strategies and 50-75% on digital marketing;

“River island App which is available for smart phones and androids allows customers to shop wherever they are, River Island is targeting the app at its core consumers, who are perceived as young fashionable and tech-savvy, the app shows all of river islands product, the app is updated weekly with new product lines. The app provides consumers with an easy way to shop.”

Mary Store Manager,

Experience from Miss Selfridge

Miss Selfridge reported that they carry out the following digital marketing tools: official website, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, App available for smart phones and androids. The Miss Selfridge Interviewee reported that the company spends 0-25% on their traditional marketing tools, and 25-50% on digital marketing.

“Our main focus currently is introducing Instagram as part of digital marketing channels, we feel this will be an advantage to post pictures and market new product lines and highlight trends. This allows for followers to engage with the brand by following and sharing images. We have updated our website with a new feature called “Miss Selfridge magic mirror” which is a motion capture technology that’s also a webcam to help customers try on clothing from their own computer. The instructions are available for customers to access on our website, this gives consumer the advantage to see what clothes look like on them before they purchase.”

Bridget, Merchandising Manager,

Experience from Dorothy Perkins Interview

Dorothy Perkins report that they use the following digital channels, official website, Facebook page, Twitter, Instagram, youtube, App available for smartphones and androids, Jervis shopping Centre website where they are located. Dorothy Perkins interviewee also reported that their company spends 0-25% on traditional marketing and 50-75% on digital marketing activities.

“ Dorothy Perkins app which allows customers to Shop on demand and on the go, check over 250 weekly new arrivals and share fashion trends to their liking with friends via Facebook and Twitter.” We also have a store locator available on our app and official website making it easier for customers to find the nearest store.”

Christine, Dorothy Perkins Manager

Experience from warehouse interview

Warehouse report that they implement the following digital marketing activities, official website, their own Facebook page, which has a rough 69,229 likes, trending on Twitter, posting fashion video’s on YouTube they also use Google plus. The Warehouse Interviewee reported the company spends 25-50% on traditional marketing strategies and 50-75% on digital marketing.

“Our twitter advertising campaigns help us reach our current customers and potential customers, Twitter gives us the opportunity to reach and engage with customers nearly instantly. It also can be challenging however, because tweets need to be responded to very quickly or else it seems that we are ignoring queries.”

Julie, Warehouse Assistant Manager

Summary of theme 1

The points gained from the cross-column responses to questions 1-3 indicate that all participants use more digital than traditional activities to promote products and engage with their customer base. Similarly, each participant indicated that their companies spend more on digital activities. This is interesting considering that many of the social media channels available are free to use. Prices associated with managing these channels however are reportedly high considering that there is a need for a near instantaneous response rate to queries or complaints. Finally, there is evidence to support the argument that whilst all participants have embraced digital activities, some are being cautious in using many channels at once. This is also an expected trend as the fashion industry is only recently getting used to the fact that customers have greater control over what is considered fashionable and more importantly, what is considered a good product.

This theme is of importance as it highlights that the cost of adopting social media is perhaps a more complicated process than determining a company's overall budget for advertising. This theme also links directly to the first objective of the thesis, which was the intention to investigate the benefits of using social media. As new social media sites emerge and become more popular, the cost of managing each channel must be considered cautiously in order to make sure that there is sufficient staffing and time to manage relations

Theme 2: How companies are evaluating the effectiveness of digital channels compared to traditional

With the introduction of social media, indicators of effectiveness are no longer just measured through direct sales, but can also be measured using direct website traffic, online orders, social media "likes", re-tweets, and hits on YouTube (Mitchell, 2011). Together, these measures are a more diverse and effective way of measuring how communities of followers and opinion leaders have endorsed a brand as part of their identity. Evidence of the effects of these new measures can be seen throughout the interviewee responses.

Experience from Topshop Interview

Topshop reported that digital is more effective than traditional methods, especially as there is a growing emphasis on the importance of maintaining Facebook and Twitter accounts. Despite the interviewees opinion that traditional channels are dying out, Topshop still relies on canvassing and flyers outside its Dublin Stores for local sale events such as "Student Lockins", where a 20% discount is available for students in a disco-like event.

"Topshop interviewee reported Digital media is easier to measure and track one way of measuring digital media is through sales on our website. Our team at Topshop has noticed how profitable and successful the website is performing, because we get a ton of internet returns in store, refunds, exchanges for

product sizes etc. The growth within online sales has grown rapidly in the last two year, our website is currently taking in 40% of sales and we imagine that figure to grow even bigger”

“Traditional media is extremely difficult to measure because we can’t accurately tell who saw our billboards, posters, and magazines. It’s hard to measure what’s working effectively when it comes to traditional marketing activities. One way of measuring is traditional marketing would be when we promote a “student lockins event” Where Topshop staff would hand out flyers on the streets to promote our event we can measure by sales the store receives on that night”

Kate, Store Manager

Experience from River Island Interview

River Island interview reported that digital activities are easier to maintain and implement compared to traditional marketing tools, the participant also felt that some of their customers are moving away from traditional methods of buying and are engaging with the brand in a purely online manner;

“For Traditional marketing there is no exact way of measuring its effectiveness because customers who shop in store don’t tell us how they heard of our brand or explain if they saw our brand featured in a magazine or billboard (unless we asked at till point) One way of measuring traditional would be creating brand awareness through magazines, posters and flyers.”

“Digital marketing can be measured through events advertised on social media channels, online campaigns, online promotions, our sales from our website and App, observe conversations about our brand on Facebook and Twitter and engage when necessary.”

Mary, Store Manager,

Experience from Miss Selfridge

The Miss Selfridge interviewee reported that it is difficult to measure the effectiveness of traditional channels whereas with digital the process can be automated and gathered effectively and quickly;

“It’s difficult to measure traditional media compared to digital because with flyers, posters and magazines you never have a tangible figure of who noticed a poster

advertised, or who saw our brand in a magazine or who took time to read a flyer and automatically went and made a purchase. Where with digital its more straight forward with Facebook, you can measure by likes, comments and customers sharing photos of products on their own Facebook homepages making the brand go viral, reaching out to a bigger audience, Twitter we can measure by customer's retweeting posts engaging conversation among one another. Our website and App allows us to measure sales both are generating."

Bridget, Merchandising Manager

Experience from Dorothy Perkins

This participant highlighted that the effectiveness of digital media is easy to measure due a high volume of traffic both on their our website and app;

"We can measure digital marketing performance by feedback we receive on our website which we see as an opportunity to improve our website, we can also measure by the amount of traffic and sales our website receives, Our app is relatively new and is doing really good so far in terms of sales, this another way we measure digital marketing activities. Traditional marketing isn't as straight forward as digital, one way of measuring traditional would be if were holding a promotional event, we would print out flyers and posters to highlight the event around the city Centre, we would measure traditional by sales we receive on the night."

Christine, Store Manager,

Experience from Warehouse

The participant mentioned that there are more options available to their company to measure digital marketing because they feel it reaches their target audience in terms of seeing what products they have to offer from their own devices and mails:

"We can evaluate digital through Email marketing track our email responses to find out who opened or ignored our emails or newsletters. We meet on a regular basis with our sales and marketing team to discuss our marketing efforts particularly if we held an event in store or an online campaign. We can evaluate digital activities through sales and feedback our website generates, we can evaluate through promotional online campaigns (Twitter and Facebook) Traditional can be measure through feedback we receive in store and sales we generate when advertising promotions and discounts or new stock in store (Banner Ads, Poster and images in magazines)"

Julie, Assistant manager warehouse

The most significant points gained from the responses to questions 1-3 indicate that all participants use more digital than traditional activities to promote products and engage with their customer base. Similarly, each participant indicated that their companies spend more on digital activities. Finally, there is evidence to support the argument that whilst all participants have embraced digital activities, some have done so more thoroughly than others.

Summary of theme 2

The most important information gained from the responses to questions 3-5 are that all participants specified that digital media is easier to measure compared to traditional media. The reasons for this are primarily due to transparency, whereas traditional media effects are not immediately tangible, digital activities can be measured in terms of website sales, app sales, Facebook activity, tweets, trends and shares. In terms of methods to evaluate effectiveness, all participants evaluate both digital and traditional activities similarly.

This theme is important as it illustrates that companies with multiple stores need to consider whether an online presence is necessary for each individual store (which requires dedicated staff) or, more cautiously, can all digital channels be centralised through a larger central store (such as the experience noted with Topshop). This theme also directly relates back to objective two of this research which aimed to address the impact of social media on traditional methods.

Theme 3: The types of benefits experienced within the participants companies as a result of digital channels and explore what challenges have emerged due to the adoption of digital channels

This theme is created in light of the expressed views that digital activities have allowed for greater connections to each of the participant's customer base. Combined with this, extracts from each of the interviews indicate that digital channels have allowed customers in Ireland to create more personalised and in some instances, cheaper shopping experiences through online purchases.

All participants reported that either their website or app or both in some cases, are the most effective forms of digital.

Experience from Interview one (Topshop)

Topshop Interviewee reported that social media marketing is not only a source of sales, customer relationships can develop due to the popularity of digital channels. The interviewee stated that their efforts in social media marketing do create both sales and relationships.

“We feel the media has helped us engage with our customers a lot more. We are getting know our customers and what they expect from our brand. Our blog is really successfully (in-side out) where customers share opinion on our products. Our blog is public meaning anybody is can engage in conversation. We Use facebook , twitter and Instagram to engage with customers, updating what’s new in store, the latest fashion trends, we can share pictures and ask opinions on our products. If something was a really good seller and if its back in store to purchase we would update our Facebook page informing customers.”

Topshop interviewee also reported that their official website is the most effective mode of digital media, Topshop.com receives more than 500,000 daily views a day. The interviewee reported Customers shop online simply because it’s cheaper especially in Ireland with the exchange rates (Euro is weak against the sterling). For example, if something online was £38 in store it could be €53 to purchase, the markup is really high so what you’re paying in store is more expensive in Ireland than you actually would pay online.

Kate, Store Manager

In terms of whether this is truly a benefit to the industry however, River island’s experience reflects that a totally online shopper who merely purchases goods is difficult to engage with which means more activities are needed to gather feedback on price, quality, other needs and potential gaps.

Experience from River Island Interview

River Island participant reported their efforts in social media translate into sales but not necessarily increased customer relations:

“More of our customers are shopping online making it harder for us to build a relationship unless we are receiving feedback from customers on our website or sending out surveys to our customers email addresses. We do get feedback and try to create a relationship to get to know what are customers want. As we don’t officially have our own store Facebook and twitter accounts just yet it’s harder for us to engage in conversation and get to know our customers. We plan to have our have our own pages to monitor and engage in conversation to create a better customer relationship.”

“River island interviewee reported that there website and app would be most effective digital activates there both available for customers to shop anywhere once connected to Wi-Fi. Our website and app both user friendly and easy to navigate both have simple domain names. We offer promotions online particularly to our exclusive product lines that can’t be purchased in store we would also do free delivery. “

Experience from Miss Selfridge

Miss Selfridge interviewee reported that their efforts in social media marketing have translated into both sales and customer relationships:

“It would be a mix between both sales and relationships. We do create customer relationships online because we are engaging with customers who talk about our brand. when customers are making a purchase in-store we are asking for their email addresses which is signing customers up to the Miss Selfridge website they receive updates weekly on the latest trends ranging from clothes, shoes and accessories, online exclusive offers and promotions taking place in-store, when promotions are taking place in store consumers receive a promo code once they have signed up in store with missselfridge.com they simply print the code and show it at till point when making a purchase we feel this makes the customer feel important and we are benefiting sales. Miss Selfridge also has a website for Feedback, we receive both negative and positive feedback, if a customer is not happy with a product or their shopping experience in store, we aim to improve, we often receive product information on this site reviews are all public.”

Miss Selfridge interviewee reported their website is the most effective form of digital:

“our website is extremely popular particularly with exclusive lines that are not available in store consumers have no choice but to purchase these products lines on the website. The website is very straight forward and easy to navigate around also our website has an easy domain name missselfridge.com which we have advertised in store and on our shopping bags. We have a big customer base on our website We have a new feature on the website called “Miss Selfridge magic mirror” which is a motion capture technology that’s also a webcam to help customers try on clothing, instructions are available to customers on the website, this gives consumer the advantage to see what clothes look like on them before they purchase.”

Bridget, Merchandising Manager

Experience from Dorothy Perkins

Dorothy Perkins participant reported that whilst the company does rely on digital activities to build a relationship with their customers, more traditional methods such as talking with their customers can prove to be the most beneficial experience;

“For Dorothy Perkins it’s more sales however we do create some relationships with customers when they are given us feedback through our online website. We try to get to know our online customers through feedback we receive. I personally feel it’s much easier to create a relationship in store especially with regular customers faces become familiar and it’s very easy to create a relationship. In store we do ask customers at the till point how their shopping experience was, at Dorothy Perkins we like to think employees provide excellent customer service skills. To encourage relationships we do reward our customers, we would ask customers to sign up with their email address and send out promotion codes of discounts on specific product lines, and this way we feel the customer feel important and recognized, creating customer loyalty hoping the customer will keep coming back. “

Dorothy Perkins participant reported the most effective digital activity is their website;

“Our website is really beneficial and is doing really well we generate a lot of sales online, it’s becoming more popular because customers can access our website anytime, we also have our app as mentioned available to smart phones given customers the opportunity to make a product purchase. Customers have the opportunity to search product information before making a purchase. Customers can shop anywhere at any time and in their own comfort no hassle of queuing”

Christine, Store Manager,

Experience from Warehouse

Warehouse Participant reported

“Our efforts in social media marketing would translate into both sales and relationships because customer opinions can be heard clearly because of their comments and posts on Facebook, Twitter, Google plus and feedback from emails. It’s important to respond to any questions or negative comments left by our fans and followers before they feel ignored. Our marketing department focuses on listening to customers conversations online. Warehouse aim to keep customers interested by sharing interesting content that is relating to fashion, it’s important for us to interact as much as we can online to show customers we are interested in them. When our customer shop online was asked them set up an account asking for simple details one is their email address, we would try to get to know our online audience more by emailing them newsletters, surveys

acknowledge them in a “ Thank you email” for shopping with us. We can also view how many people watched out fashion blog available on YouTube”

Warehouse participant also reported that there official website is the most effective and popular form of digital marketing activities:

“Our online website would be the most beneficial its available 24 hours for customers to browse and shop can save customers time. Our website is updated 2-3 times a week with new product lines, clothes are available on the web before they reach our store it can always sometimes be cheaper to purchase online especially if we have “online advertising campaigns and promotions”

Julie, Assistant manager warehouse

Summary theme 3

Theme three has reinforced argument identified in chapter one by illustrating that digital activities have allowed for more flexibility, more customer control, greater ease and more choices (Ahlberg, 2010, Weber 2009). Despite this, there is a counter argument to be made here that with more online activities, the ritual of shopping, of communicating with other humans has been somewhat lost.

This theme is important as it is widely recognised that digital channels and online systems are important for the future of marketing. However, it also crucial to reflect on whether there is still a place in the fashion industry for talking with a shop assistant about colours, matches, the weather and all the other factors that make shopping an experience, not just a process. Finally, this theme is important because it highlights the final research objective of the thesis to compare and contrast the benefits and disadvantages of both social and traditional activities.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the analysed findings of this thesis, organised into three themes. These themes are supported with direct quotes from each of the participants and discussed in relation to trends identified in the literature.

Each theme has also been discussed in relation to its overall importance to marketing and to the research objectives and research question. The final chapter in this thesis will build upon this analysis and discuss these findings in relation to the purpose of the study, the literature and future possible research.

Chapter 4: Discussion

The aim of the research was to determine *“What are the perceived benefits of using social media marketing and the impact these have on traditional media”*. To explore this area, three research objectives were created in order to direct the focus of the research:

Research objective 1

“To investigate the perceived benefits of using social media”

Research objective 2

“To address the impact of social media on traditional marketing”

Research Objective 3

“To Compare and contrast the benefits and disadvantages of both methods”

This thesis explored how communication within the fashion industry has witnessed a dramatic change due to the adoption of social media marketing as a source of advertising and maintaining customer relations. The research focused on the fashion industry in Ireland, in particular the “street style” category of style (Crane, 2000). From this category, five interviews were carried amongst Irish fashion retailers, *Topshop*, *River Island*, *Miss Selfridge*, *Dorothy Perkins*, and *Warehouse*. All interviews took place in Dublin city Centre. All participants interviewed were store managers or marketing managers. Each participant was briefed on the purpose of the study and asked to sign a declaration of consent form which gave permission to identify their companies in the study.

The methods carried out for this thesis were carried under a qualitative framework. Qualitative research was adopted as semi-structured interviews were believed to allow the researcher and participant to explore topics and opinions in more autonomy than survey methodology. The interview data gathered was analysed using cross-column coding and thematical analysis (reference). These analysis tools were used to identify important data themes that were created using information from the literature review and from consistent and common responses from the data. Three themes were identified from this process and will be discussed in relation to the below research objectives. Each of the research objectives will also be reviewed in relation to existing research, primary data findings and future research directions.

Research Objective 1: *To investigate the perceived benefits of using social media*

The first research objective was chosen in order to investigate what perceived benefits, if any, social media has brought to companies. In order to explore this area, the study first reviewed existing research in the area of social media marketing and determined the types of benefits most commonly reported in the literature.

The types of benefits most reported relate to *more flexibility with sales*, increased exposure, *increased collaboration and contact with consumers*, *prediction of purchase intention* and a *perceived cheaper alternative to traditional activities* (references). With regards these perceived benefits, this study aimed to explore whether the targeted participant's responses aligned with existing findings or offered alternative views on the subject.

Through carrying out five semi-structured interviews, this thesis has found that *street style* (Crane, 2000) fashion retailers in Dublin, Ireland, are using common digital marketing activities such as, Facebook, official website, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, pinterest and google plus.

Through analysing each of the interviews it was found that all the companies believed that digital activities are the most beneficial mode of advertising media. These participants responses were grouped together and coded in order to create theme 1 of this study: *the transition from digital marketing to social marketing in the Irish fashion retail industry*.

Essentially, each of the interviewed companies suggested that digital marketing allows for greater exposure and engagement with customers and facilitates brand awareness. Each of the participants also claimed that social media benefits their company by giving them an insight into their target audience's needs and wants. Unlike traditional media, customers can interact instantly with the company to seek information, suggest changes or complain about services. This near instantaneous and public discussion allows for companies to see what customers are saying about their brand, unlike traditional media which relies on one-way communication (references). These comments suggest that whilst social media is a very positive development for marketing, there are a number of pitfalls that companies need to be aware of in relation to customer feedback, customer power and levels of online monitoring (reference). This is perhaps why (Lee, 2009) argues that many fashion retail companies have ignored social media for so long.

The interview data also revealed that three out of the five interviews carried out believe their efforts in social media activities translate into both new customer relationships as well as direct sales equally. In contrast, the remaining two participants indicated that their efforts in social media generally translate into more direct sales more than new relationships. Both of these companies (River Island and Dorothy Perkins), do recognise however that social media can be used to maintain and grow customer relations and aim to increase these collaborative opportunities in the future. To achieve this, the companies aim to monitor their own digital media activities in store instead of their head offices monitoring them.

Research objective 2: “To address the impact of social media on traditional marketing”

The second research objective was chosen in order to determine what impact or impacts social media has had on traditional marketing methods in the context of the Irish fashion retail sector. In order to explore this area, the study first reviewed existing research in the area of social media marketing and determined the types of benefits most commonly reported in the literature.

Due to this shift in power, traditional marketing tools are perceived today to be not as effective as they once were. The reason for this is because consumers trust in social media techniques and what they read online from other peers (Evans, 2012).

McClure (2009) points out that social media marketing is significantly cheaper than using traditional marketing, simply because social media marketing does not have an overall fixed cost.

Modern marketers are noticing how social media tools can spread their intended message through online conversations, which has strengthened the power of consumer-to-consumer conversations in the marketplace (McClure 2009). This has weakened the overall perceived benefit of many traditional media activities which are one-way directed.

In order to explore this area in more detail, the five participants in this study were asked to describe the role of social media and traditional media in their companies. Through analysing the data, the second theme of this work was created; *how companies are evaluating the effectiveness of digital channels compared to traditional*. In theme two, it was found that every one of the participants interviewed spend between 50-75% on digital marketing strategies, compared to 25-50% on traditional marketing strategies. Each participant interviewed also indicated that their companies rely more heavily on social media rather than traditional media because customers are now transitioning to communicating and buying through digital channels.

Each of the participant’s also clarified that advertising through social media reaches a wider audience. Each participant explained traditional media no longer influences customers today due to the power of social media. Customers are now influenced by online communities and peers rather than fashion icons, and centralised fashion centers such as London, Paris or New York.

Research Objective 3: *“To Compare and contrast the benefits and disadvantages of both methods”*

This objective is Important because new companies need to know how to create an effective social media strategy. It is important companies understand the advantages and disadvantages of both social media marketing and traditional media before they choose to adopt or avoid one of the methods.

According to Weber (2009), there exists many new challenges for companies adopting social media activities. In particular, companies are now required to communicate with their customers in a more collaborative manner.

As a result of this communication evolution, Mangold and Faulds (2009) argued that the control of marketing materials presented online has become eroded as a result of smartphones and other digital devices that can share media and ignore copyrighted materials.

All five participants' favored social media marketing over traditional media, however both digital and traditional media have their advantages and disadvantages, all participants explained the advantages of and disadvantages of both methods.

The participant's stated social media allows us to reach hundreds customers and potential customers, creates brand recognition, and allows for customer engagement, However due to the power of social media when customers are unsatisfied with a product they often post their complaints online explaining why they're not happy, the comments posted are visible for everybody to see. Public comments and complaints can damage company reputations, for this reason it is extremely important companies have staff responsible to monitor social media sites and somebody who is responding to the media presence. Hiring staff to monitor social media channels protects the company's online reputation.

As an unforeseen cost, all Participants reported, Social media marketing can be more time consuming than expected because it has to be monitored constantly and updated regularly. When adapting to traditional media there is no need for training of staff or technology.

Social media has the power to drive traffic to a company website, where traditional media is restricted to a certain place and word of mouth marketing.

Social media is perceived as being cost effective compared to traditional media, as most social networking sites are free to set up e.g. twitter, Facebook and Instagram , all channels are free to set up profiles and post information. Participants explained this gives them the advantage to learn

how to improve products and services and interact with customers by encouraging open communication through public comments.

For companies who are considering the choice to ignore social media??? Suggest social media has a phenomena, cannot be ignored. For instance, a great deal of employees engage with some form social media in the work place for their own personal use and this should not be ignored.

Social media and companies (good and bad)

<http://www.shrm.org/about/foundation/products/documents/social%20media%20briefing-%20final.pdf>

literature

Companies attempting to avoid social media altogether must recognize that many of their employees and customers are using it, which can directly affect the organization; they may lose out on potential customers.

Once social media is used and managed correctly it can benefit a company, however, if not managed effectively, it can create many legal, financial and personnel risks. Given the potential risks and benefits of social media in the workplace, it is critical for managers to develop policies and procedures governing its appropriate use. Social Media and Ageing workforce.

Currently there are no standards guideline developed to assist business leaders in managing social media.

Customers and clients also help shape a company's brand and image via social media. Customers frequently go online to rate products and services.

Positive word of mouth, a vital means of growing customers and profits, becomes infinitely more powerful in the digital world.

theme three will examine the types of benefits experienced within the participants companies as a result of Digital channels and explore what challenges have emerged due to the adoption of digital channels.

http://www.dol.gov/odep/pdf/NTAR_Employer_Strategies_Report.pdf

Conclusion

This thesis explored **“What are the perceived benefits of using social media marketing and the impact these have on traditional media in Irish fashion retail”**. Five semi structured interviews were conducted among Irish fashion retailers to gather data relating back to the researchers aims and objectives, *Research objective 1 “To investigate the perceived benefits of using social media” Research objective 2 “To address the impact of social media on traditional marketing” Research Objective 3 “To Compare and contrast the benefits and disadvantages of both methods”*.

The fashion industry ignored embracing social media for some time and only recently has opened up to the prospect of moving towards more collaborative, online communication processes (Preece, 2012, Lee, 2009).

Fashion brands were reluctant to interact with customers online via social media, fashion retailers were feared if they advertised on their websites and adopted social media their brand would be jeopardized.

However fashion retailers opinions have changed dramatically, fashion brands have witnessed the importance of their online presence. Interacting and posting photos of the latest fashion trends is what customers expect from fashion retailers.

Fashion brands are more recognized since there social media presence...

Online sales for fashion brands have boosted,

The interview data findings revealed all participants stated the most effective mode of digital was their company website, all interviewees offer exclusive products lines on their websites as a motivation for customers to return, each company website has an easy domain name and are easy to navigate around, making the customers shopping experience easy.

Retailers are no longer eager to make a quick sale they now want to learn more about their customers.

Customers now have the power to decide who provides them the best offer, companies want to find about customers' needs and interests,

http://openarchive.cbs.dk/bitstream/handle/10398/8526/Rina_Hansen_2011_5.pdf?sequence=1

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Appendix A

Declaration of Consent

My name is Jessica Doyle, I am an Msc in Marketing student with NCI. I am carrying out research into traditional and social media marketing strategies for fashion retailers in Ireland.

Before you agree to take part in this interview I would like to highlight that:

- your participation is voluntary.
- you are free to skip or not answer any of the questions.
- you can withdraw from the interview at any time.
- Any data and or notes that I record will be used in a dissertation as part of my studies.

As this research surrounds the fashion industry in Ireland, I would also like your permission to identify your company's name in my dissertation.

If you would like a copy of the dissertation, you can request a copy from me by emailing me at jess-doyle@hotmail.com.

Finally, I would like to thank you for taking part in this research.

Participant Name: Rachel Joyhin

Company: Topshop

DATE: 21 / 06 / 2013

Declaration of Consent

My name is Jessica Doyle, I am an Msc in Marketing student with NCI. I am carrying out research into traditional and social media marketing strategies for fashion retailers in Ireland.

Before you agree to take part in this interview I would like to highlight that:

- your participation is voluntary.
- you are free to skip or not answer any of the questions.
- you can withdraw from the interview at any time.
- Any data and or notes that I record will be used in a dissertation as part of my studies.

As this research surrounds the fashion industry in Ireland, I would also like your permission to identify your company's name in my dissertation.

If you would like a copy of the dissertation, you can request a copy from me by emailing me at jess-doyle@hotmail.com.

Finally, I would like to thank you for taking part in this research.

Participant Name: Julie Martin Company: WAREHOUSE

Declaration of Consent

My name is Jessica Doyle, I am an Msc in Marketing student with NCI. I am carrying out research into traditional and social media marketing strategies for fashion retailers in Ireland.

Before you agree to take part in this interview I would like to highlight that:

- your participation is voluntary.
- you are free to skip or not answer any of the questions.
- you can withdraw from the interview at any time.
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If you would like a copy of the dissertation, you can request a copy from me by emailing me at jess-doyle@hotmail.com.

Finally, I would like to thank you for taking part in this research.

Participant Name: Christie r/a

Company: Arccadia (OPs)

Declaration of Consent

My name is Jessica Doyle, I am an Msc in Marketing student with NCI. I am carrying out research into traditional and social media marketing strategies for fashion retailers in Ireland.

Before you agree to take part in this interview I would like to highlight that:

- your participation is voluntary.
- you are free to skip or not answer any of the questions.
- you can withdraw from the interview at any time.
- Any data and or notes that I record will be used in a dissertation as part of my studies.

As this research surrounds the fashion industry in Ireland, I would also like your permission to identify your company's name in my dissertation.

If you would like a copy of the dissertation, you can request a copy from me by emailing me at jess-doyle@hotmail.com.

Finally, I would like to thank you for taking part in this research.

Participant Name: Hay Rock

Company: River Island

Declaration of Consent

My name is Jessica Doyle, I am an MSc in Marketing student with NCI. I am carrying out research into traditional and social media marketing strategies for fashion retailers in Ireland.

Before you agree to take part in this interview I would like to highlight that:

- your participation is voluntary.
- you are free to skip or not answer any of the questions.
- you can withdraw from the interview at any time.
- Any data and or notes that I record will be used in a dissertation as part of my studies.

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If you would like a copy of the dissertation, you can request a copy from me by emailing me at jess-doyle@hotmail.com.

Finally, I would like to thank you for taking part in this research.

Participant Name:

Bridget Bowe

Company:

Miss Selbridge

Appendix B: Interview analysis using cross-column coding and thematic analysis

Q1: What is the breakdown of Digital and traditional Marketing Activities used in your company?

Respondent	Respondent Name	Company	Response received
1	Mary	River Island	(Digital: Facebook, Twitter, Website, App, Blog, Youtube) / Traditional: In-house Magazine, Flyers, Posters)
2	Kate	Topshop	(Digital: Facebook, Twitter, Website, Instagram, App, Blog, Youtube) / Traditional: Magazines, Posters, Posters)
3	Bridget	Ms Selfridge	(Digital: Facebook, Twitter, Website, App, Blog, Youtube) / Traditional: Flyers, Posters)
4	Christine	Dorothy Perkins	(Digital: Facebook, Twitter, Website, Instagram, App, Blog, Youtube) / Traditional: Magazines, Posters)
5	Julie	Warehouse	(Digital: Facebook, Twitter, Website, Blog, Youtube) / Traditional: Magazines, Flyers, Posters)

Q2: What percentage of your marketing budget would your company typically spend on traditional marketing strategies?

0 – 25%

25- 50%

50 – 75%

75- 100%

Respondent	Respondent Name	Company	Response received
1	Mary	River Island	25- 50%
2	Kate	Topshop	50-75%
3	Bridget	Ms Selfridge	0 – 25%
4	Christine	Dorothy Perkins	0 – 25%
5	Julie	Warehouse	25- 50%

Q3: What percentage of your marketing budget would your company typically spend on digital marketing strategies?

0 – 25%

25- 50%

50 – 75%

75- 100%

Respondent	Respondent Name	Company	Response received
1	Mary	River Island	50 – 75%
2	Kate	Topshop	75- 100%
3	Bridget	Miss Selfridge	25- 50%
4	Christine	Dorothy Perkins	50 – 75%
5	Julie	Warehouse	50 – 75%

Q4: Which type of media is more beneficial?

Respondent	Respondent Name	Company	Response received
1	Mary	River Island	“Digital media, for river island is more beneficial advertising on social media websites allows us to reach hundreds of potential customers, creates brand recognition, allow for engagements with customers and reaches to broader audience.”
2	Kate	Topshop	“Digital media is more beneficial there is such a big emphasis on twitter, Facebook and Instagram, official topshop website, online promotions, and blogs” “We have asked the Topshop marketing department in London if we could come together to pull a trade feedback policy, basically so we can let them know exactly what we need from them to achieve the best out of our digital marketing department “ “For example if there is an event going on in store or promotions we could ask their support. Because currently we have to do a lot of advertising ourselves particularly for in store events, like student nights, promoting festival clothes in the summer known as festival Friday. We have to send our own staff out around Grafton Street promoting our event with flyers we also post on our own Facebook and Twitter page. We would the digital media bigger and bolder because it reaches our target audience.” “I think traditional is dying out for Topshop anyway so our main focus is digital and we want to improve this for our advertising, engaging and creating customer relationships with our customers. “
3	Bridget	Miss Selfridge	“Digital media would be more beneficial to miss Selfridge simply because news about our new product lines reaches a bigger audience in so little time. Digital is more beneficial because we target the younger generation 15-24 women who are heavily involved in social media these types of consumers share clothing they like on their Facebook or twitter accounts to be influenced by peers this influences our customers to purchase our brand.
4	Christine	Dorothy Perkins	“Digital for our company is more beneficial because more customers are using social media. Our digital media channels make it much easier for us to connect with customers and potential customers. New products we get in which is almost every day we can upload

			pictures and product information to our social media channels right away. Social media is a great form of communication its good for us connecting and engaging with customers. “
5	Julie	Warehouse	“With traditional media our company has no direct interaction with the customer. Digital media would be more beneficial because our brand is more visible to customers when we share items of clothing on Facebook or Twitter, when customers talk about purchasing a product through social media friends can express opinions about the product and motivate them to make a purchase. Digital media grabs the attention of existing and potential customers. “

Q5: How do you evaluate the effectiveness of both digital and traditional media?

Respondent	Respondent Name	Company	Response received
1	Mary	River Island	<p>“Digital marketing it would be evaluated from feedback from our customers. We get fantastic feedback on our website we generate a huge amount of sales from our website. We can also measure online sales that come from our App which features a similar layout to our website how there is no confusion. “</p> <p>“For Traditional marketing there is no exact way of measuring because customers who shop in store don’t tell us how they heard of our brand or explain if they saw our brand featured in a magazine or billboard. One way of measuring traditional would be creating brand awareness through magazines, posters and flyers. “</p>
2	Kate	Topshop	<p>Digital</p> <p>“Mainly through sales each type of media generates, we feel in store we can see how profitable and successful the website is because we get a lot of internet returns.</p> <p>“we have noticed in store a huge growth in online sales particularly in the last two years, people are shopping more online and some customers are really honest when they come into store, they will try on clothing in their size and not purchase the products in store because they would prefer do it online.</p> <p>“Customers shop online simply because it’s cheaper especially in Ireland with the exchange rates (Euro is weak against the sterling) for example if something online was 38 pound in store it could be 53euro, the markup is really high so what you’re paying in store is more expensive in Ireland than you actually would pay online.</p> <p>Traditional is more tough to measure but can be done from sales in store.</p>
3	Bridget	Miss Selfridge	It’s very hard to measure traditional media compared to digital media, with flyers and

			<p>posters you never have a tangible figure of who seeing posters in-store or who actually bothered to read the flyer or noticed an advertisement.</p> <p>Where with digital its more straight forward with Facebook, you can measure by likes, comments and customers sharing photos of what new in store etc, Twitter you can measure by customer's rewetting posts and the website you can measure because of online sales and returns we receive in store.</p>
4	Christine	Dorothy Perkins	<p>We receive excellent feedback of our website on a regular basis we can measure digital media through sales on the website and our APP available for smart phones and androids e.g. ipads.</p> <p>We also offer our Tech savvy customers " Dorothy Perkins support link" on both our app and website this gives our customers the opportunity to share their opinions, ask product information or make a complaint.</p> <p>We also have a website where we get reviews on how well are App is performing because our App is only recently launched, we want to ensure its beneficial for customers and easy to negative.</p>
5	Julie	Warehouse	<p>For digital we can evaluate through Email marketing track our email responses to find out who opened or ignored our emails or newsletters.</p> <p>We meet on a regular basis with our sales and marketing team to discuss our marketing efforts particularly if we held an event in store or an online campaign.</p> <p>We can evaluate digital activities through sales and feedback our website generates. we can evaluate through promotional online campaigns (Twitter and Facebook)</p> <p>Traditional can be measure through feedback we receive in store and sales we generate when advertising promotions and discounts or new stock in store (,Banner Ads, Poster and images in magazines)</p>

Q6: Which mode of digital media is more effective and why?

Respondent	Respondent Name	Company	Response received
1	Mary	River Island	<p>“Our website and app would be most effective there both available for customers to shop anywhere once connected to Wi-Fi. Our website and app both user friendly and easy to navigate and have simple domain names. We offer promotions online particularly to our exclusive product lines that can’t be purchased In store we would also do free delivery. We receive excellent customer feedback from our website helping know exactly what our customers want. “</p>
2	Kate	Topshop	<p>“Official websiteTopshop.com would be the most beneficial, there is a lot gone into the official website examples celebrity collaborations Kate Moss at Christmas done a song. Chloe Green who Is Philip Greens daughter owner of Topshop has her own line of shoes which are only available to purchase online, the website is offering exclusive products that are not available to buy in store .</p> <p>Topshop website also has blogs, catwalks, videos of models wearing the brand, London fashion week which is new in Topshop for their boutique range of clothing. All mentioned are only available online.</p> <p>Topshop.com receives more than 500,000 daily views a day.</p>
3	Bridget	Miss Selfridge	<p>“The website is extremely popular particularly with exclusive lines that are not available in store consumers have no choice but to purchase these products lines on the website. The website is very straight forward and easy to navigate around also our website has an easy domain name miss selfridge.com which we have advertised in store and on our shopping bags.</p> <p>We have a big customer base on our website.</p> <p>We have a new feature on the website called “Miss Selfridge magic mirror” which is a motion capture technology that’s also a webcam to help customers try on clothing, instructions are available to customers on the website, this gives consumer the advantage to see what clothes look like on them before they purchase.</p>

4	Christine	Dorothy Perkins	<p>“Our website is really beneficial and is doing really well we generate a lot of sales online, it’s becoming more popular because customers can access our website anytime, we also have our app as mentioned available to smart phones given customers the opportunity to make a product purchase.</p> <p>Customers have the opportunity to search product information before making a purchase. Customers can shop anywhere at any time and in their own comfort no hassle of queuing”</p>
5	Julie	Warehouse	<p>“Our online website would be the most beneficial its available 24 hours for customers to browse and shop and can save customers time. Our website is updated 2 or 3 times weekly with new product lines, clothes are available on the web before they reach our store”</p>

Q7: How much time does your company spend on social media marketing?

Respondent	Respondent Name	Company	Response received
1	Mary	River Island	<p>Head office monitors our Facebook, Twitter and instagram accounts. Our website is updated every week or sometimes even more (depending on delivery)</p> <p>Customer feedback from our website is monitored by management here at our and if customers have queries or product information they get a quick response. Social media marketing isn't something that can be checked every now and again, head office would update are accounts weekly or something every day particularly around promotional events or change in season.</p>
2	Kate	Topshop	<p>"In store we monitor our Facebook page in the last six months we have assigned team leaders to monitor the Facebook account to ensure any queries by customers are answered and to keep customers update on what's new in store and our exclusive product lines only available to purchase online"</p> <p>"The visual merchandising team would be heavily involved in instgram" (picking and choosing different styles of clothing to promote) "</p> <p>"For the company we have our own internal pages there is a visual merchandising page for the VM managers throughout the regions they share weekly photos of what's new in store, what's going to be uploaded to our social media sites, what product is selling really well and what's coming back in stock.</p> <p>"A lot of time and effort would go into taking photos, collating information, putting together color stories and presentations to share with one another on our brands performance online and brand awareness."</p>

3	Bridget	Miss Selfridge	<p>“The marketing department would monitor our social media and have a team assigned to ensure all channels are being updated regularly and to see what customers are saying about our brand.</p> <p>The newest project the marketing department is working is introducing instrgarm as part of our digital marketing activities.</p>
4	Christine	Dorothy Perkins	This is competed through head office they have their own marketing department assigned for monitoring, updating and uploading of products.
5	Julie	Warehouse	“Head office have our marketing team assigned to monitoring our digital marketing channels, there would be a specific team for the monitoring, updating, engaging and maintaining all marketing activities. “

Q8: Does your efforts in Social Media translate into sales or more customer relationships?

Respondent	Respondent Name	Company	Response received
1	Mary	River Island	<p>Translates into sales because more of our customers are shopping online, because of this it's hard for us to build a relationship unless we are receiving feedback from customers on our website.</p> <p>As we don't officially have our own store Facebook and twitter accounts just yet it's harder for us to engage and get to know our customers. We plan to have our own pages to monitor and engage in conversation to create a better customer relationship.</p>
2	Kate	Topshop	<p>A bit of both sales and relationships, in the last six months we have got five ipads in store.</p> <p>The ipads are carried around by staff and managers on each floor, feel the ipads are really beneficial to our store because if a customer comes up to you in store explaining to us they have saw something online It's very easy and quick for our team to go online to Topshop.com put in the product description and answer the customer query, whether the item is in stock out of stock and we can show descriptions of similar items ensuring the customer is satisfied with their shopping experience.</p> <p>We Use facebook and twitter to engage with customers, updating what's new in store, the latest fashion trends, we can share pictures, or if something that was a really good seller and if its back in store to purchase we would update our Facebook page informing customers.</p> <p>We feel the media has helped us engage with our customers a lot more, even the topshop team they share topshop brands on their Facebook creating brand awareness.</p>

3	Bridget	Miss Selfridge	<p>It would be a mix between both sales and relationships :</p> <p>We do create customer relationships online because we are engaging with customers who talk about our brand.</p> <p>When customers are making a purchase in-store we are asking for their email addresses which is signing customers up to the Miss Selfridge website they receives updates weekly on the latest trends ranging from clothes, shoes and accessories, online exclusive offers and promotions taking place in-store, when promotions are taking place in store consumers receive a promo code once they have signed up in store with miss selfride.com , they simply print the code and show it at till point when making a purchase we feel this makes the customer feel important.</p> <p>Miss Selfridge also has a website for Feedback, we receive both negative and positive feedback, if a customer is not happy with a product or their shopping experience in store, we aim to improve, we often receive product information on this site reviews are all public.</p>
4	Christine	Dorothy Perkins	<p>For Dorothy Perkins its more sales however we do create some relationship with customers when they are given us feedback through are online website.</p> <p>We try to get to know our online customers through feedback we receive,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking customers does our website or APP needs any improvements? • Was the website easy to navigate around?

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the product look like it did on the model? <p>However I feel it's much easier to create a relationship in store especially with regular customers faces become familiar and it's very easy to create a relationship.</p> <p>in store we do ask customers at the till point how their shopping experience was, at Dorothy Perkins we like to think employees provide excellent customer service skills.</p> <p>to encourage relationships we do reward our customers, we would ask customers to sign up with their email address and send out promotion codes of discounts on pacific product lines, this way we feel the customer feel important and recognized , creating customer loyalty hoping the customer will keep coming back</p>
5	Julie	Warehouse	<p>"I would say both sales and relationships because Customer opinions can be heard clearly because of their comments and posts on Facebook, Twitter, Google plus and feedback from emails. It's important to respond to any questions or negative comments left by our fans and followers before they feel ignored. Our marketing department focuses on listening to customers conversations online. "</p> <p>"Warehouse aim to keep customers interested by sharing interesting content that is relating to fashion, it's important for us to interact as much as we can online to show customers we are interested in them. "</p> <p>"When our customer shop online was ask them set up an account asking for simple details one is their email address, we would try to get to know our online audience more by emailing them newsletters, surveys acknowledge them in a " Thank you email" for shopping with us. "</p>

			“We can also view how many people watched out fashion blog available on YouTube. “
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