THE CASE OF

BALMAIN

PARIS
1945  Pierre Balmain founds the Balmain Brand

1982  Pierre Balmain dies

1993  Oscar de la Renta leads the brand as its creative director

2002  

2004  Balmain files for bankruptcy protection

2005  Christoph Decarnin is appointed as the new creative director of the brand
Decarnin has revitalized the brand and brought back financial gains

- Completely disregarded the legacy of Pierre Balmain
- Increased fan base including celebrities
- Introduced menswear

The Era of Decarnin
2011 March: Decarnin fails to attend latest fashion show

Rumours around Decarnin’s health problems, and supposed conflicting views with Balmain’s management start circulating.

2011 April: Announcement of the end of collaboration between Balmain and Decarnin.
How is the position left by Decarnin to be filled?

Weigh all options that Balmain is facing in this decision by their benefits and risks.
HIGH FASHION INDUSTRY
FACTORS TO CONSIDER

- Scope of responsibility
  - Only creative, or also strategic responsibility?
- The fit of the candidate
  - Alignment to the Brand Core Values?
- Leadership abilities
  - Skills to lead? Visionaire?
- Level of dependency
  - How influential can the chosen option become?
- Costs of appointment
  - Salary, costs of possible changes of the design studio, retail stores’ design, communications…
- **Internal Recruitment**
  - Group of longstanding experts in their respective field
- No famous personalities
- A dedicated team of international designers working together collaboratively without anyone standing out
Design Team

In-House Recruitment

- Internal Recruitment
- 24 years old
- Not famous
- Worked for Balmain for the last 3 years
- Outspoken, charismatic, socialite, tech-savvy
1. Design Team

2. In-House Recruitment

3. Unknown Designer
   - External Recruitment
   - 25 years old
   - Not famous
   - Recently finished fashion school and won several design competitions
   - Passionate, idealistic, ambitious

4. 

5. 
• **External Recruitment**
• 29 years old
• Popular in the industry
• Runs his own fashion brand
• Quiet, understated, likes to stay in the background
• Has contacts to big international celebrities
1. Design Team
2. In-House Recruitment
3. Unknown Designer
4. Rising Star
5. Star Designer

- External Recruitment
- 55+ years old
- Popular in the industry and beyond
- Extensive portfolio of creative director positions held within luxury fashion houses
- Confident, focused, eye for detail, arrogant
- Affiliated with a wide array of celebrity friends
FURTHER TO CONSIDER

What are Balmain’s main issues as a result of Christophe Decarnin leaving?

If strategic marketing and communications are part of the job: What sort of personality traits are needed? Is personality important?

What is the possible impact on the reputation?
1. Design Team
   - Internal Recruitment
   - Group of longstanding experts in their respective field
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   - A dedicated team of international designers working together collaboratively without anyone standing out

2. In-House Recruitment
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OLIVIER ROUSTEING

- April 26th, 2011:

  Olivier Rousteing was appointed as Creative Director

- Rousteing was appointed despite his low profile, age and ethnicity

- Increase in global brand awareness and targeting of a new, young audience
THE BALMAIN ARMY
THE BALMAIN ARMY
“When we appointed him, we were expecting an evolution, but not a revolution”

Emmanuel Diemoz, former CEO of Balmain
CONCLUSION

Fashion industry is unpredictable.

What can brands do to protect themselves from dependency on those powerful leaders?