

THE
STRATEGIC BRAND MANAGEMENT:
MASTER PAPERS

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STRATEGIC BRAND MANAGEMENT

MASTER PAPERS

Eighth Edition

Student Papers

2022
September - October

How fragrance brands can create a memorable and positive brand experience online

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to analyze how digitalization can improve brand experience in the fragrance industry.

Methodology: A qualitative study was conducted to answer the two research questions of this paper. Primary data was collected through two focus group discussions, while secondary data was collected by carrying out an analysis of two case studies - Pinrose and Molton Brown - and a literature review.

Findings: Product trial, storytelling, digital communication, brand reputation and personalization lead to hedonic values and are the main antecedents of a memorable and positive brand experience online in the fragrance industry.

Research Limitations: This study is specific to the fragrance industry and cannot be applied to other industries. Only two case studies were conducted and this research is overall western biased. Therefore, more research is needed to make the research findings more reliable and valid.

Implications: The fragrance industry being olfactory and multisensory has more ties to brick and mortar than any other industry (Sandler, 2021). The findings of this study can be used by managers in the fragrance industry to overcome the difficulty to sell perfumes online by combing all the identified drivers into a multi-channel marketing strategy online. Digitalizing the brand experience will help shorten the fragrance buying process while engaging customers on a deep emotional level on each customer touchpoint. Digitalizing the brand experience of fragrance brands can be used as an advantage by managers as it enables to make the experience more personal to each individual customer.

Original/value: This study contributes to the field of brand experience. It is based on previous studies from Moon & Han (2019); Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantonello (2009) and Altschwager, Conduit & Goodman (2013) but further develops the theoretical framework, identifying new drivers of a memorable and positive brand experience online specific to the fragrance industry.

Keywords: Digitalization, brand experience, fragrance industry, hedonic value, storytelling, digital communication, product trial, brand reputation, personalization, Molton Brown, Pinrose.

Paper type: Research Paper

Introduction

Within the beauty industry, specifically the fragrance sector, being olfactory and multisensory has more ties to brick and mortar than any other beauty category (Sandler, 2021). However, with digitalization and fast changing consumer trends, perfume brands are forced to shift online (Euromonitor, 2022). After the pandemic, e-commerce has turned into the primary purchase channel in many industries, including beauty (Euromonitor, 2021). Consumers are getting more and more tech-savvy, valuing e-commerce due to its speed and convenience (Euromonitor, 2022). Online shopping is taken to the next level with the use of virtual and augmented realities, extending to immersive virtual worlds known as metaverse (Euromonitor, 2022).

While many industries have managed to shift digital using these new online shopping experiences, the fragrance industry has struggled. Fragrances are mostly hedonic products consumed for sensory and affective gratification (Kim & Morris, 2007). Therefore the purchase process of fragrances is also very emotive, primarily using the sense of smell to trigger memories and emotions in consumers' minds (Wright, 2022). Smell cannot easily be transferred to a digital brand experience and without this olfactory experience it is hard to reach an emotional response in consumer's minds (Schiffer, 2022). Linguistics also prove to be an issue in effectively communicating information about a scent online, as the majority of consumers are unable to express and identify notes and scents of fragrances (Altendorf et al., 2021). Online descriptions don't really match what the consumers picture in their minds. Therefore, consumers usually purchase fragrances they know – most often discovered through brick & mortar - and do not like experimenting with new fragrances online (Altendorf et al., 2021).

The purpose of this study is to analyze how digitalization can be used in the fragrance industry to improve online brand experience. The main research question of this study can therefore be defined as follows:

What do consumers perceive as the main drivers of a memorable and positive online brand experience in the fragrance industry?

A sub-research question was developed in aim to dive deeper into the subject:

How do existing fragrance brands use digitalization in their brand experiences?

The broader aim is to understand what aspects of digitalization can help perfume brands reach a better brand experience online, to not only have to rely on brick & mortar anymore. A successful online brand experience is important in the long term as it directly impacts the bottom line (Schueller, 2022). It is a major competitive advantage and a driver of online sales (Brakus et al., 2009). It can also foster brand loyalty and trust (Roswinanto & Strutton, 2014). Overall, a successful digital brand experience will help maintain online growth as it provides a deeper connection with consumers, making them choose one brand over another (Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2009).

This study will not include a differentiation between the different sectors within the fragrance industry such as luxury, niche and mass market, and generalize the findings to the whole fragrance industry.

Literature review

Brand experience

A brand experience refers to individuals' internal and subjective responses, such as their cognition, feelings, and sensations evoked by brand-related stimuli (Iglesias, Markovic & Rialp, 2019). Through brand experiences, consumers can relate to the

personality that is communicated and develop relationships and strong emotional bonds with the brand (Ramaseshan & Stein, 2014). Earlier research claims that brand experience captures the essence of branding, because what matters most to customers is if brands can provide an attractive experience for them (Schmitt, 2009). The brand experience can either be direct through physical contact with the product, or indirect when a product is presented virtually (Kaushik & Gokhale, 2021)

In addition, brand experience can be defined through four dimensions: sensations, emotions, cognitions and behaviours (Brakus et al., 2009). Sensations capture the extent to which the brand appeals to the customers and determines whether they will engage with them (Schmitt, 2009). It represents a feeling or emotion that connects individuals' cognition with their senses, which is very important in the fragrance industry due to fragrances being hedonic products (Pezoldt et al., 2014). Sensations can form perception, image and mental conceptions from products or services. Emotions towards a brand can either be positive or negative, depending on the consumer's experience of it (Pezoldt et al., 2014). Positive emotions can lead the consumer to engage with the brand and spread positive word-of-mouth, while negative emotions can lead to unloyalty and negative word-of-mouth (Brakus, et al., 2009). Furthermore, cognitions of a brand covers the ability to engage consumers thinking when interacting with a brand. When interactions with brands can induce interesting cognitive processing, it may generate positive brand evaluation. Lastly, the behavioural aspect of brand experience can be evoked by both human and functional signals of a brand (Paramita et al., 2021).

In order for companies to differentiate from their competitors, they should create exciting and positive brand experiences that make consumers remain loyal (Brakus et

al., 2009). Brands that are capable of delivering a superior brand experience cannot just gain differentiation, but customer's preference over other brands (Brakus et al., 2009). Earlier research claims that developing strong brand loyalty is one of the best ways to build a firm's success in the current competitive marketplace (Roswinanto & Strutton, 2014). In addition, consumers develop trust toward a brand because of their positive experience with that brand (Roswinanto & Strutton, 2014).

The most common drivers of brand experience that have been studied in the past are event marketing, brand clues and marketing communications (Khan & Fatma, 2017) . However, the researchers chose more specific drivers of online brand experience which apply to the studied phenomenon of digitalization in the fragrance industry. These drivers are digital communication, hedonic values, product trial and storytelling.

Digital Communication

For a positive and memorable brand experience to happen consumers need to be engaged at different levels (rational, sensorial, physical and spiritual). Direct or indirect interactions between a brand and consumers has been identified as one of the main drivers of a favourable brand experience (Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2009). Interactions lead to customer engagement which in turn leads to a response on the behavioural and cognitive level and evokes brand experience (Beig & Khan, 2018). Within marketing, these interactions go under the broader term "communication" (Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2009). Communication can include one-way communication such as advertising, two-way communication such as personal selling and customer service, or direct marketing including two-way or one way communication such as sales promotion (Khan & Fatma, 2017).

Not long ago communication would most often happen through physical touchpoints using traditional marketing communication tools such as direct mail or broadcast. Indeed, many researchers have proven that traditional marketing communication is an important stimulus to brand experience (Khan & Fatma, 2017), (Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2009). However, through digitalisation, communication shifted to new online touchpoints such as the brand's website or social media channels which provide a variety of customer services and support (Beig & Khan, 2018). Social media (SM) are interactive platforms that enable free flow of information between consumers and a brand. SM also creates consumer communities by connecting consumers with similar backgrounds and interests with each other (Beig & Khan, 2018). These communities do not only foster interactions but also stimulate consumers to share content. Content sharing also engages consumers and can lead to favourable brand experiences (Beig & Khan, 2018). Today, websites have become the most visible and visited assets for a majority of businesses and social media is increasingly the most chosen engagement and communication tool. (Carey, 2022). The main focus for this research will be on these new digital forms of communication which this study defines as "digital communication".

A final important aspect to mention, which is specific to the fragrance industry, is that amongst consumers, linguistic is an issue in effectively communicating information about a scent online. Indeed, most consumers are unable to express and identify notes and scents of fragrances. This could lead to miscommunication (ESPC business school, 2021).

Product trial

Online, consumers are less engaged on the sensory level. Indeed, online sensory engagement is mainly restricted to sight and hearing. This is a major challenge in the

fragrance industry, where brand experience almost always involves a sensory engagement through smell which triggers memories and emotions in consumers' minds (Altendorf et al., 2021).

Product trial through for instance sampling is very similar to actual product usage and stimulates consumers with all five senses - taste, sight, hearing, smell and touch (Kim & Morris, 2007). It gives consumers information that is very difficult to receive from other kinds of marketing efforts - whether online or in brick & mortar (Kim & Morris, 2007).

In Marketing events consumers engage with the brand or brand offerings, which evokes a response on the behavioral and cognitive level. Therefore, previous studies have shown that marketing events can lead to a favorable brand experience through brand exposure, awareness and product trial (Altschwager, Conduit & Goodman, 2013). These experiences, as consumed, become anchored in the consumer's memory (Altschwager, Conduit & Goodman, 2013).

However, with digitalization, physical marketing events such as pop-up stores become less of a focus. Therefore, for this study, given the importance of the sense of smell in the brand experience of the fragrance industry, the researchers chose to focus on only the product trial attribute of a marketing event. As mentioned in the study of Kim & Morris (2007), for hedonic products such as fragrances, the product trial leads to a more affective response, engaging the consumer on an emotional level thus influencing brand experience.

In a digital setting, product trial is usually the first physical contact a consumer has with a brand. Therefore, differentiation through for example personalization of the offering can help evoke a stronger consumer engagement and a more memorable brand experience.

Storytelling

Through digitalization communication channels have been shortened and it is easier for brands to reach consumers. However, a rising challenge is that consumers are being bombarded with ads through emails or direct messages (Hattar, 2022). It becomes more difficult for brands to differentiate and stand out. Storytelling transforms information into more engaging content and creates an emotional connection between a brand and consumers through the brand's affective involvement (Crespo, Ferreira & Cardoso, 2022); (Hattar, 2022). Moreover, it also improves consumer cognitive responses through humanizing the brand which lets consumers identify better with the brand (Crespo, Ferreira & Cardoso, 2022).

With digitalization, storytelling has been taken to the next level through technology-enhanced storytelling via for example augmented digital humans, AR, artificial intelligence (AI) or mixed reality (MR) (Sung et al., 2022). Technology-enhanced storytelling has been proven to evoke a favorable brand experience as it increases consumer engagement and it boosts immersion (Sung et al., 2022); (Crespo, Ferreira & Cardoso, 2022). Overall, there is an urge for firms to adopt technological innovations to stay competitive in a consumer-centric market.

Storytelling engages consumers on an emotional and cognitive level and thus evokes a favorable brand experience (Sung et al., 2022); (Crespo, Ferreira & Cardoso, 2022).

Hedonic values

Hedonic values are centred around emotional aspects as essential determinants of consumer responses related to a brand, including brand experience (Kaushik & Gokhale, 2021). Hedonic value refers to emotional benefits, including arousal, pleasure, fun and excitement (Overby & Lee, 2006). According to Gentile, Spiller &

Noci (2007), "the customer experience originates from a set of interactions between a customer and a product, a company, or a part of its organisations, which provoke a reaction". This experience is personal and implies the customer's involvement at different levels (physical, sensorial, emotional, rational and spiritual)". Brand experiences include hedonic dimensions such as feelings, fantasies and fun and occurs during and after consuming something (Brakus et al., 2009).

Perfume is a hedonic product involving characteristics such as enjoyment and pleasure (Pezoldt et al., 2014). This means that the hedonic value and symbolic value for fragrances is much more important than the instrumental value (Weifang, 2011). Customers desire something that excites them and touches their hearts (Brakus et al., 2009). In this way, hedonic values are an antecedent of a memorable brand experience (Moon & Han, 2019).

Methodology

Primary and secondary data collection

To analyze how digitalization can be used in the fragrance industry to improve online brand experience, a qualitative study was conducted to find potential drivers of brand experience online. A combination of deskresearch and fieldresearch was used. As deskresearch, a comprehensive literature review was conducted to help answer the main research question. In order to find journal articles, the researchers used snowballing. The purpose of the literature review was to gather an overview of previous studies in order to gain a deeper understanding of existing drivers of an online brand experience. Then fieldresearch was undertaken, to find out about drivers of an online brand experience more specific to the fragrance industry.

There were two face-to-face focus group discussions of approximately one hour. A

focus group is a qualitative research method in which a group of people is brought together to discuss a predetermined topic (Wilkinson, 1998). The goal of using a focus group is to gather data from a purposefully selected group of individuals, instead of a bigger, statistically representative sample of the population. According to Bryman, Bell & Harley (2022), an advantage of focus groups is the possibility to have a discussion about topics that require multiple interpretations and views. The researchers chose to do two focus groups that were homogeneous, in order to increase the validity of the study; the first focus group consisted of eight female participants and the second focus group consisted of six male participants around the same age, selected via convenience sampling. Homogeneous convenience sampling has a clear generalizability as an advantage, because the homogeneous sample reduces the chance of bias (Jager, Putnick & Bornstein, 2017)

In order to answer the study's sub research question, a multiple case study was used in addition to the focus group discussions. A case study can be used to provide in-depth understanding of a phenomenon and its function in the social context (Bryman et al., 2022). Two companies in the fragrance industry were analysed by means of a case study; Molton Brown and Pinrose. An advantage of doing a multiple case study is that it's a measure to increase generalizability (Leonard-Barton, 1990). Another advantage of using a multiple case method is that it gives the researcher multiple sources of evidence, which increases the reliability and validity of the research results (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009). The literature review conducted first, was used as the theoretical foundation for the analysis of the cases and the focus group discussions.

The primary data was collected through the two face-to-face focus group discussions, which lasted approximately sixty minutes

each. Participants had different nationalities, mostly from Europe and around the same age (20-25 years old). The aim was to select participants that represent potential customers of online fragrance brands. Both focus groups were recorded and transcribed via Otter.ai and can be found under Appendix B. Recording interviews gives the interviewer the chance to focus more on the interviewee and less on missing important information during the interviews (Bryman et al., 2022).

The secondary data was collected for the literature review, mostly via Google Scholar and the Lund University data base. In addition, the websites of the cases Molton Brown and Pinrose were used. Furthermore, old reports from these companies were used in order to gain knowledge about the way they dealt with digitalization with regards to maintaining a positive brand experience online.

Focus groups	Participants	Date of focus groups
FG 1	P1 - P8	10-10-22
FG 2	P9 – P14	11-10-22

Table 1: focus group discussions

Empirical Findings

Case studies

Pinrose and Molton Brown are two brands that operate in the perfume industry and have been able to make the most of the potential of digital marketing strategies to achieve the same goal: offer unique and engaging experiences to the consumer and at the same time, increase their economic value in the long term.

Pinrose

Pinrose is a rapidly expanding fragrance brand that was co-founded in 2014 by Erika Shumate and Christine Luby with the aim of finding a way to market fragrances based on a substantial emotional basis that allowed women to “be themselves” (Pinrose: Mending the Fragrance Disconnect, 2018). As Shumate said during an interview for *Sweetie High*, she studied the psychology of smell and synesthesia - a neurological condition where colors, shapes, textures, sounds, and other sensory preferences are interconnected – and her knowledge on the topic led to the creation of the most playful company in the luxury fragrance market (Pinrose, 2022).

In fact, Erika’s background and the consultation of leading olfactory scientists allowed the co-founders to develop the unique Scent Profile Quiz, which matches personal sensory preferences to one of the Pinrose thirteen multifaceted perfumes from over 1,048,000 combinations (Pinrose, 2022). Below, in figures 2 and 3 example questions from this quiz can be seen.



Figure 2 : Pinrose Scent Quiz. (2022). Available online: <https://pinrose.com/pages/quiz> [Accessed 12 October 2022]



Figure 3 : Pinrose Scent Quiz. (2022). Available online: <https://pinrose.com/pages/quiz> [Accessed 12 October 2022]

Developing this quiz was possible by using the science of smell and the collection of data from women on their sensory preferences (Shira, 2019). This online quiz personalises and simplifies the process of finding the right scent (Moore, 2016).

As Kellie Ell (2019) claims, to sell fragrances online all the senses are required and that's how the digital native fragrance brand Pinrose is making the most of its products. In fact, Pinrose overcomes the obstacle of selling online a perfume, mainly focused on the sense of smell, stimulating other senses during the purchasing experience, including sight and sound (Ell, 2019). In fact, under each fragrance’s description there are Pinterest boards and playlists, giving the consumer an idea of what the scent “sounds” like. “We wanted to create the world of the fragrance,” said Erika Shumate. For instance, with regards to their perfumes, Sun Saint’s images are in shades of yellow, evoking a tropic, beachy vibe, while Pillowtalk Poet’s page is full of blue tones and soothing sounds (Pinrose, 2022).

In addition, Pinrose’s colorful website is meant to make shoppers “feel at ease” and feel like they are “buying from a friend”, said Shumate during the forum for WWD in 2019. Moreover, she aimed to create a platform that would make perfume lovers less afraid of trying new things (Ell, 2019).

This statement highlights the playfulness of buying a perfume and experimenting new

scents. In fact, Erika revealed to inc.com. that Pinrose wants to free its customers “from the department store scent-buying experience and encourage them to play and learn about scent in a way that is warm, inviting and, hopefully, exciting” (Pinrose, 2022).

One of the cornerstones that can be found on the Pinrose website is that both the perfume and the process of finding the perfume are seen as personal. Pinrose doesn’t want to respond to trends, but to offer perfumes with personality, and bring shopper’s preferences into play.

Molton Brown

Molton Brown was founded in South Molton Street, London in 1971 by the pioneering co-founders Caroline Burstein and Michael Collis (Brown, 2022a). Molton Brown, a luxury British fragrance brand mainly known for Eaux de Parfum and Toilette, is an icon of unique British style (Brown, 2022b). London has always been the protagonist in Molton Brown’s brand identity since it inspires the brand with its diverse, progressive, and open-minded attitude (Brown, 2022a). It is also about how the brand empowers the consumer by making distinctive fragrances and products of quality made in England (Brown, 2022b). Caroline Burstein and Michael Collis had a natural mindset that focused on the individual and a trendsetting notion for the time (Brown, 2022a). Starting as a hair salon, in 2019 Molton Brown launched its luxury fragrance line (Brown, 2022a). The company's president, Mark Johnson, revealed that he wants people to think of the brand first as a fragrance brand. "The reality of it is that we have always been perfumers", he added (Wetherille, 2019).

Along with the products themselves, Molton Brown launched a fragrance finder,

available both online and in stores, that helps customers find the fragrance that most closely matches their personality (Wetherille, 2019).

In fact, Molton Brown has significantly increased its focus on digital channels. (Marketing in the Age of Sensory Deprivation, 2016). Beatrice Descorps, Global Vice-President of Malton Group, claimed that the brand now sees itself as a content publisher as much as a product developer (Marketing in the Age of Sensory Deprivation, 2016). She also highlighted that the site evolved from being very transactional to being focused not only to provide a seamless customer experience but to also ensure that the human experience is right (Marketing in the Age of Sensory Deprivation, 2016).

In practical terms, the brand introduced 24/7 online customer service that is manned by real people as opposed to a chatbot. The changes have extended to teaching the online delivery team how to tie the Molton Brown knot on its signature brown bags. It is an investment that reflects an attention to detail: packaging that signifies luxury and indulgence is often neglected in online delivery, but that is a fundamental part of the customer experience. (Marketing in the Age of Sensory Deprivation, 2016).

The challenge of selling scents in the online space is also tackled by listing ingredients and provenance of the products and showing immersive pictures of the different elements. (Marketing in the Age of Sensory Deprivation, 2016).

Descorps argue that brands must take a renewed focus on sensory experiences and authenticity. Hence, it means that Molton Brown has to start from the fragrances, the emotion, and the real creativity. (Marketing in the Age of Sensory Deprivation, 2016).

With regard to creativity, Descorps reveals her love for perfume advertising because it is linked to creativity and to the power to impress something on an audience. Yet, for Descorps, technology in isolation is not enough: 'It starts with the creator. If we move away from creative freedom, we lose' (Marketing in the Age of Sensory Deprivation, 2016).

Much of Molton Brown's marketing is created in-house. Starting from the belief that what interests consumers is the behind-the-scenes, the provenance, and the journey, Molton Brown focuses not only on the origins of its products but on the stories behind them. Rather than rely on data, Molton Brown has a very clear personality type in mind when scents are being developed. 'We brief the perfumer with adjectives around her personality: is she passionate or powerful?' Descorps explains (Marketing in the Age of Sensory Deprivation, 2016). This underlines the importance that Molton Brown assigns to authentic storytelling in providing a unique customer experience.

Caroline Burstein said "When you look at any brand that has sustained 50 years, they have always stayed true to themselves, true to their core values. And I would love to see, and can foresee, Molton Brown being here in another 50 years and beyond." (Brown, 2022a). This statement is the perfect example of how much importance is given to heritage to create a strong bond of connection, trust, and affection with the customer.

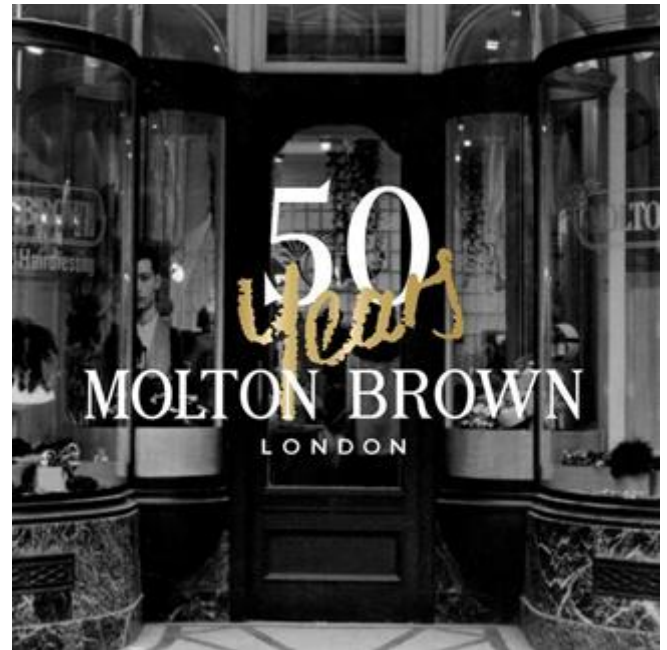


Figure 4: Molton Brown. (2022). Available online: <https://www.moltonbrown.co.uk/store/stories/molton-brown-history> [Accessed 14 October 2022]

Focus groups

Please note that the focus group questions and transcriptions can be found in the Appendix B and C.

Furthermore, additional findings of the focus group not essential to this research such as the process of buying a fragrance, purchase drivers of fragrances and process of buying a fragrance online can be found under Appendix A.

Digital Communication

In focus group 1 it seemed that there was an overall preference to communicate with the brand online, rather than in-store. Most participants in focus group 1 mentioned they dislike being approached by salespeople and prefer finding information about a certain brand through the brand's website or social media such as Tik Tok, Instagram or YouTube aligned with what was previously found in the literature

review. However, in focus group 2 most participant interact with the brand and fragrance for the first time at the airport and then go online to find more information.

A new finding under communication was that reviews and ratings were repeated multiple times by the participants and seemed to be one of the most important aspects within a brand experience online. Ratings and reviews on the brand's website are not always trusted, and independent forums or google ratings were preferred.

Another discovery was that a visual of the perfume bottle was also important to use in communication and engaged potential consumers in both focus groups. In the participant's eyes the shape and design of the bottle could make one feel a certain way and personify the fragrance "I associate the design of the bottle to the person I want to be when I wear the perfume" so for example Chanel number 5 "you think like of a person that's sophisticated somehow because the bottle is like minimalistic and simple, there is not a lot going on". Overall, four participants shared the same opinion.

Finally another discovery was that reviews and ratings given by other customers seemed to impact the participants' feelings toward a brand online.

During the focus group the participants were shown a fragrance only sold online and asked how they felt about it when reading the description. Most participants showed mistrust and had an overall negative feeling about the fragrance. However, following this, when showed several positive reviews about the fragrance on the brand's website, at least three participants changed their original opinion. One participant mentioned "[the review] makes me more curious about this [perfume]. But I still can't imagine like, what the perfume would smell like".

Several participants mentioned that they do not trust reviews on a brand's website as they could be fake. If on the brand's website, they only trust negative reviews. High google ratings, forums and positive social media comments were also mentioned to positively engage the participants.

Content wise, videos and pictures were preferred over just text as describing fragrances through text is very subjective and there are certain linguistic limitations. one participant mentioned:

"I know what my perfumes smell like but I wouldn't be able to describe them very well or say what's in them. I would be blank if it says a certain description on there"

Product trial

Aligned with what was found in the literature review, smelling and trying on a fragrance (product trial) was indeed identified as the most important aspects about buying a fragrance for both focus groups. Most participants mentioned that they go online to buy a fragrance because it is a faster, easier, more calm and convenient experience. The only limitation of not going online was that they would not be able to smell the fragrance in this process. However, one participant mentioned:

"if [the brand] offered to send you a small trial perfume before then I think then I'd buy perfume online"

Two participants disagreed, arguing that the whole in-store experience is what one pays for as well, especially for luxury fragrances as it is part of the final product:

"I mean, if I go buy a perfume in a normal department store, I would not have the same experience as if I go to an Hermès, and have like, this whole luxury experience."

On the other hand, a majority of participants admitted that with the possibility of ordering samples to their homes they would even prefer going online to buy and engage with a fragrance and its brand as the store is not always easily accessible. One participant also mentioned that samples would help reduce the linguistic barrier of describing a fragrance.

“this smells of cinnamon roll, I wouldn't have a clue what that's gonna be like, but if you already have the samples and you already have some guidance of okay, maybe it smells like”

Most participants in both focus groups mentioned they are used to getting samples for free, except for niche perfumes where perfume is more expensive.

Storytelling

Aligned with what was found in the literature review storytelling did evoke a positive feeling for the focus group participants. One participant directly reacted saying “family stories are nice”. Most participant focused on the fact that especially family stories can humanize a brand, which is new information adding to the literature review. Family stories feel more personal “it feels like it makes the brand more personal” and relatable “I don't know I kind of like that there is a history behind and you can relate to that in a way”

Three different participants also admitted they felt more love and sympathy for the brand given a family story.

“I have more of a love for the brand and everything coming in, like drawing from the heritage that they had this feels like there's more appreciation to what they do and a lot that goes into it”

Overall, drawing from this, especially a family story can provide a more personal experience to a potential consumer and

engage a consumer on a deeper emotional level. This adds to what had been found in the literature review chapter.

Personalization

Adding to the literature findings, personalization was found to be a major driver of a memorable brand experience online.

Several participants agreed that they like more personal experiences, especially for fragrances as “perfume is quite a personal thing [so] I want something personal to reach my personal essence”.

For example it was mentioned that taking such quizzes resulted in a more personal product such as a custom-made shampoo bottle.

Brand Reputation

In addition to the literature review findings, brand reputation was found to lead to a positive brand experience online. Indeed, most participants in both focus groups mentioned they would rarely buy a new fragrance online, but if they knew the brand or the fragrance itself in a positive way, it makes them feel better to interact with the brand online. One participant also mentioned:

“Brand reputation, because if you don't know what it smells like, but you're looking at like you said Dolce Gabbana or Hugo boss, Paco Rabanne, depending on what I associate the brand with. I would I guess go on that.”

In other words, a brand's strong and positive brand reputation can substitute for the lack of sensory stimuli and positively engage the customer online.

Summary: Ideal fragrance brand experience online

At the end of the focus group discussion, the moderator asked how an ideal online fragrance experience would look like for the participants. One participant mentioned that it would be nice to start the journey with being taught some basics about perfume scents, so that consumers can take these online quizzes with different scent categories (woody, floral, citrusy...) - a faster way to choose fragrances online. Another participant also mentioned it would be nice to have a refund policy at the end of the experience to reduce risk. The same participant also added:

“Sometimes they have the option that you get the trial first and then if you decide to buy the big one, you get the money that you paid for the trial deducted from the price of the big one”

One participant summarized it well:

“when going to the store, the whole experience is more important. And if you like that, then that's probably the reason why you go to the store. But if you really just want the product, and you don't need the experience and you just want to make a decision without the sales people approaching you then you buy it online.”

Analytical chapter

From the literature review storytelling, product trial, hedonic values and digital communication were found to be the main drivers of a brand experience online in the fragrance industry (Moon & Han, 2019); (Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantonello, 2009); (Altschwager, Conduit & Goodman, 2013).

The focus group discussions and case studies support that product trial, storytelling and digital communication are drivers of a brand experience online. However, this research also led to new findings. Brand reputation was mentioned

by the participants in the focus groups discussion to positively impact their experience with a brand, especially in the absence of product trial. Furthermore, personalization in the form of for example quizzes was also mentioned in both the case studies and focus group discussions to have a positive impact on brand experience. Since a fragrance is a very personal product, customers are looking for personalized brand experiences. Therefore, the researchers found it important to add these two drivers to the theoretical framework - building on what was previously found in the literature review.

Moreover, each identified driver seems to be engaging the consumer on an emotional level, making them positively feel a certain way. As previously stated, fragrances are hedonic products, so consumers are looking for emotional benefits in their brand experience. Therefore, hedonic values directly lead to a memorable and positive brand experience and should be placed as an outcome of product trial, storytelling, digital communication, brand reputation and personalization.

Summarizing the findings of the literature review, the focus group discussions and the case studies, a theoretical framework was developed which can be seen in figure 5.

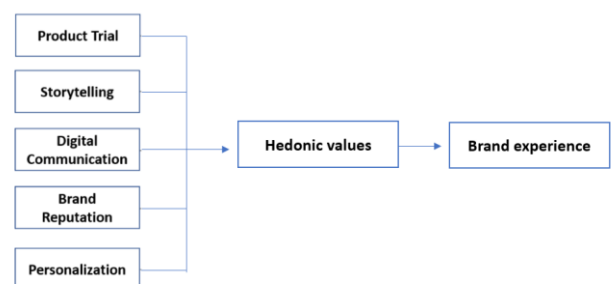


Figure 5: Antecedents of a memorable brand experience online in the fragrance industry

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to analyze how digitalization can improve brand experience in the fragrance industry. A literature review was developed first, serving as a foundation to further in-depth primary and secondary research. Two focus groups were held and two case studies were analyzed to identify important drivers of an online memorable and positive brand experience in the fragrance industry. Through the literature review, four main drivers of brand experience were found: product trial, storytelling, digital communication and hedonic values. After conducting the focus group discussions and case studies, product trial, storytelling and digital communication were confirmed as drivers of brand experience online. However, hedonic values was found to be more of an outcome of these drivers and the main antecedent of a memorable and positive brand experience online. In addition, two other drivers were identified from the findings of the focus groups discussions and the case studies: brand reputation and personalization. As a result of this research a new framework was created including all the main drivers of a memorable and positive brand experience online in the fragrance industry.

The main research question was answered by the literature review, the case studies and the focus group discussions. One of the main drivers identified through this research was digital communication, either direct or indirect, enabling customers to interact with the brand, product or customers online. These interaction lead customer engagement which in turn leads to a response on the behavioural and cognitive level and evokes brand experience (Beig & Khan, 2018). Consumers value when a perfume brand is active on social media and the brand's website by fosters online communities, showing positive ratings and reviews, offering reliable and constant

customer service, and positively talked about in forums, or online magazines. Overall consumers prefer to be engaged through images and videos over just text as it stimulates more of their senses. Product trial has been identified as one of the most important drivers of a positive brand experience in the fragrance industry. Product trial can be offered by brands online by giving the customers the option to order a discovery set/ sample set to their homes, for an at-home-discovery. Product trial stimulates consumers with all five senses - taste, sight, hearing, smell and touch and leads to a memorable and positive brand experience (Kim & Morris, 2007). Another driver is storytelling which is important online, given there is no real physical human contact. Storytelling humanizes a brand. Within storytelling family stories and a brand's heritage are important to communicate as these aspects make the brand more relatable leading to a more memorable and positive brand experience. Since perfume is a hedonic and personal product, differentiation through personalization of the experience can evoke stronger engagement and a more memorable brand experience. Quizzes based on personality traits can be used to help customers select a fragrance online. Also, a strong brand reputation was found to lead to a positive brand experience online. If customers know a perfume brand in a positive way, it makes them more comfortable to positively engage with the brand online.

Overall, specifically the case studies showed that fragrance brands can try to overstimulate other senses online such as sight and sound to substitute for the lack of smell stimuli. For example brands can also use sight and sound associations to show a customer how a fragrance could "sound" like or feel like.

The sub-research question was answered by the focus group findings and the case studies by showing how existing fragrance brands use digitalization in their online brand experiences.

Important digital touchpoints with high traffic used by companies are the brand's website and social media channels such as TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram. A brand's website is supposed to make consumers feel at ease. Videos and images such as fragrance commercials are preferred over text.

Companies like Melton Brown integrate quizzes and fragrance finders based on the consumer's personality traits to facilitate the customer journey online (Wetherille, 2019). Instead of focusing on functional aspects such as a fragrance's notes Pinrose uses Pinterest boards and playlists to describe their fragrances online (Pinrose, 2022). Molton Brown describes its fragrances based on human personality traits such as "powerful" or "passionate". This helps face the linguistic challenge online, as a majority of people are unable to express and identify notes and scents of fragrances.

To humanize the brand, companies are not only using storytelling but also customer service manned by real people rather than chatbots. A brand's heritage is used to create strong bonds, trust and affection with customers.

Luxury fragrance brands also make sure to offer attention to packaging which is a fundamental part of a memorable brand experience as it is one of the first physical contacts with a customer.

Finally, online, pictures of the perfume bottle also engages customers and its design can show them how a perfume could feel like. Product trial online is done a lot through sampling. Consumers can order samples online, from the comfort of their own home. To incite customers to buy

samples, companies have a special promotion where they offer to deduct the price of the samples from the customer's next purchase of a big fragrance bottle.

Overall, fragrance brands try to personify a fragrance online instead of describing it through its notes or olfactive pyramid. They also try to create a trustworthy environment through the website's design and ease of use. Finally, they try to humanize their brands to make customers relate to the brand better.

Discussion

Managerial and theoretical implications

This study adds to the field of brand experience online in the fragrance industry, by supporting previous studies from Moon & Han (2019); Brakus, Schmitt & Zarantonello (2009) and Altschwager, Conduit & Goodman (2013) and further developing the theoretical model, making it more specific to the fragrance industry and digitalization.

The findings of this study have shown that developing a positive and memorable brand experience in the fragrance industry is important, as the process of buying a fragrance is rather long and very multisensorial compared to other industries where buying a product is more transactional. On the other hand, with digitalisation customers also look for faster and easier experiences online. So, managers should aim at combining both needs for a memorable brand experience.

In the fragrance industry customers seek to be engaged on a more emotional level since fragrances are more of a hedonic product. Brand managers should therefore take this into account when designing a brand experience online. Rather than including functional aspects such as the perfume's

notes and scent category on a website, managers should use associations using sounds and visuals to evoke emotions.

Managers should always offer samples on e-commerce so customers have the option to order and try the fragrance. Stores are not always easily reachable so the option to order samples makes the brand experience easier and faster. When developing promotional activities, managers should also keep in mind that customers are used to getting samples for free.

Overall, managers in the fragrance industry can use digitalization to their advantage. Combing all these drivers into a multi-channel marketing strategy online can help shorten the brand experience while still engaging customers on a deep emotional level and make it more personal to each individual customer.

Limitations & Further research

This study is specific to the digital fragrance industry and cannot be applied to other industries.

The first limitation comes from the fact that this study only covers two cases, and to be able to generalize the findings more cases have to be studied.

Moreover, another limitation is that this study is Western biased, with regards to the brands analysed in the case studies and the focus group participants. Therefore, the results may be influenced by Western norms and standards, and the theoretical framework may thus not be applicable to non-western countries. Therefore, a suggestion for future research is to conduct the same study with brands and focus group participants from other countries to test the validity of the framework.

Future research could also include studying if there are additional drivers of a memorable brand experience online in the

fragrance industry that this study did not find due to low reliability. This could be done through a more in-depth qualitative research with interviews and more focus group discussions. In addition, the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable (brand experience) could be tested quantitatively through a customer survey for more credible, valid and reliable results.

Finally, future research could also conduct focus group discussions with people of different age groups to test differences in brand experience preferences online in the fragrance industry amongst age groups.

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Appendices

Appendix A – additional findings from the focus group discussion

Process of buying a fragrance

During both focus groups, the researchers found out that the process of buying a fragrance is rather long.

Most participants mentioned that they try a perfume more than once. One participant also said:

“It’s a whole process of buying it”

And another one mentioned:

“when buying a fragrance you think about it a lot rather than when you just buy a t-shirt, then it’s click, buy and finished”

This is an important discovery within a brand’s experience with which digitalization might help.

Benefits of an online experience – buying fragrances online

Through the focus group the researchers found out that there are different reasons for consumers to buy a fragrance online versus in a store. Consumers value different experiences in both settings. Most participants mentioned that they would go online to buy a fragrance because it is “cheaper”. Especially in focus group 2 this answer was common. In focus group 1 online experiences were preferred due to them being more “calm” and “less overwhelming” as there is less pressure from potential salespeople approaching someone. One participant also mentioned there is less of a sensual overload online, as in-store all the different scents can result in an overload. Most importantly, the experience online is easier, faster and more convenient. Some participants in both focus groups, seeming more knowledgeable

about perfumes than most of the participants also mentioned that online there are better search tools, and that one can search specific scent categories which make the process of choosing a fragrance easier. Participants also mentioned, they can find more in-depth information about the brand online, through the brand’s website or through ratings and reviews. Furthermore, another participant mentioned that purchasing a fragrance online evokes a feeling of excitement as “it’s sometimes nice to wait for the perfume to arrive when ordering it”. Someone also mentioned the unpackaging process is fun when ordering online.

Understanding these benefits are important for fragrance brands to successfully address customer’s needs and wants in an online brand experience.

Examples of online fragrance brand experiences

When asked about enjoyable past experiences online one participant mentioned online quizzes where customers can choose between different scent categories (ex. citrusy, woody and floral).

Other participants replied saying they experienced some similar quizzes with other products such as shampoos, conditioners and skincare. The quizzes included very personal questions such as “how old you are [and] what you like”.

Overall, however, most participants were not as knowledgeable about perfumes, which proved to be a limitation for taking such online quizzes which also asks about perfume’s notes, but some participants evoked a willingness to gain more knowledge to be able to take these quizzes.

Most participants did not really have past experiences online, as they often only go

online to order a perfume they already know and use.

One participant mentioned that sometimes videos also helped her to understand what the perfume could smell or feel like:

“associations and pictures can help to make you feel what a fragrance smells, for example the ocean, I think that would help to get a better understanding, so I got a vibe of the perfume”.

More specific examples were given such as videos including visuals and sounds of “rain on the pavement” or “breezy ocean” which could be used to evoke a feeling of what the perfume could smell like. These videos could “[represent] what wearing that perfume should make you feel like”.

Purchase drivers of Fragrances

To get a better grasp of how an ideal brand experience online would like for potential consumers, the researchers also had to ask questions about potential purchase drivers of a fragrance. The answers showed that a majority of the focus group 1 participants buy and wear perfumes because it makes them feel a certain way, such as comforting, happy or proud. One participant mentioned:

“when you put [the fragrance] on, it's like some sort of comfort because you feel like as usual and yet somehow a little bit better.”

Three other participants of focus group 1 also mentioned that they wear perfume as it feels like part of their identity and helps identify others. As one participant mentioned “it's like a part of the outfit”. Furthermore, participants repeatedly mentioned that they do not only wear the smell itself but what the whole brand represents. One participant summarized this thought well:

“I am not buying only the perfume. I'm buying the whole story, like everything about the brand, how the brand was created, the story of Coco Chanel so I like the status and when I put on my perfume I feel like proud and happy. I like what it represents.”

On the other hand, only one participant in focus group 2 admitted to wear perfume because it feels good. The rest only wear perfume out of habit or routine. Two participants in focus group 2 also mentioned they like wearing different perfumes for different occasions.

Overall, from this question it can be concluded that especially for women, fragrances are bought and worn mostly due to the hedonic values. This is important within the topic of brand experience as consumers will also look for stimulus that trigger them on a more affective and emotional level rather than just functional.

Process of buying a fragrance online

Most participants of focus group 1 said they find out about a new fragrance through social media, especially TikTok and that they trust the reviews there the most. Some also mentioned Instagram and YouTube. In both focus groups one participant mentioned finding out about new fragrances through magazines such as ELLE or Glamour and another participant mentioned forums.

A majority of participants of both focus groups mentioned they first like to watch the commercial and if they are engaged positively, they will then read more about the brand and the fragrance by visiting the brand's website.

One participants said:

“I think at first I like to watch the commercial then you know a bit about the perfume and then I will read about it to get

more specific information such as notes that you find in the perfume”

Some participants mentioned they look at the brand’s website for information about the notes of the scent, the brand itself such as its values and ethics.

“I look at the brands website first. And then I google the perfume and then I check out all of the stuff that is in there”

On the other hand, in focus group 2 most of the participants never find out about new fragrances online and never go the brand’s website to find out more information. However, they do interact with fragrance brands online such as on social media to watch commercials.

In the end, when convinced about the perfume, most participants of both focus groups mentioned they usually buy a fragrance from an online retailer as it is cheaper. On the other hand, a minority of participant preferred ordering the fragrance from the fragrance brand’s website because “you get a lot nicer packaging” and “maybe the trials are then from the same brand [...] because then you can see what else they have if you'd like that one.”

Appendix B – Focus Group 1 & 2 transcription

Focus group 2 (Men)

Moderator

So now I am going to explain you how this will work. I'm the moderator. I'm going to be asking some questions. And then I won't be discussing with you. So I'm just asking the questions. You guys can just go on and talk about it. Feel free to also reply to each other and mention if you agree or disagree with something.

Now I'll brief you about the topic. So basically, we're researching on digitalization of the perfume industry. So how your experience with the brand is when buying perfumes online.

Okay, so the first question is very broad. Very easy. Just a warm up. Why do you buy and wear perfume ?

Unknown Speaker 5

Smell good.

Unknown Speaker 1

I feel like it's also been like, Oh, I've always had a perfume. So like, it's kind of a habit. Like, I guess when I was younger, my parents bought it for me. And since then, like when it's finished, I buy another one. It's a habit, one thing I do every morning.

Unknown Speaker 2

I think it's maybe like a ritual or like a routine. Like, maybe feels nice. Like you take a shower and then you feel fresh. And then you have like your perfume routine or something. And then you go out and it's great day.

Unknown Speaker 3

it's also very pleasant for the people around you.

Unknown Speaker 5

I also think I like to have a specific scent. If I could say that I changed once I change the perfume I change but like I bought a perform yesterday.

Unknown Speaker 6

agree with what they said

Unknown Speaker 4

me too, and I think that it's habit also because I used to use like fragrances a lot when I was younger, let's say. Now, I don't

know, maybe laziness. I didn't bring them but I'm not yet using them. It's a habit but I can also live without them.

Moderator

Okay, now it's really interesting. And you said mentioned something about feeling of freshness?

Unknown Speaker 2

when you're done like when you just have a nice day at home and don't even shower like it makes you feel fresh. That's what I meant. But yeah, I mean, it's not like

you mean after like differences between the different fragrances?

Moderator

Yeah, do you feel different depending on maybe what fragrance you're wearing?

Unknown Speaker 2

Probably.

Unknown Speaker 3

I use different ones for different occasions.

Unknown Speaker 5

I use Zara once daily and then when I go out I use a stronger one or a better one a more expensive one they're perceived as better. I don't know if they really are but yeah,

Unknown Speaker 6

For me it's more spontaneous.

Unknown Speaker 3

you mentioned to me earlier routine I think like at someone else like oh I'm thinking this then I feel like wearing this today became sort of a routine where you just wear the same fragrance every time before depending on the situation in that sense. So for me it also became sort of a habits in that

sense. I was like okay, I'm going to do sports that I use that one.

Unknown Speaker 1

I never think I'm that present like in my mind thinking about using perfume to do that decision.

Moderator

So then the next question is a bit more specific. So why would you buy perfume online?

Unknown Speaker 5

I will never

Unknown Speaker 3

depends if you have a favourite perfume, then you can buy it online as it's cheap.

Unknown Speaker 6

If you know already then I would. But if I've never smelled it before I wouldn't.

Unknown Speaker 1

Same. I think the only chance is if you had it before. But I also feel like it's not very clear the name of the perfume on the bottle so I wouldn't know exactly which one is the packaging always differs from I don't know how it looks buying it alone but I just know the brand I don't know the name and they quite often have a lot of different perfumes for a brand so I feel like that would be more difficult.

Moderator

Why do you prefer buying a new fragrance in store?

Unknown Speaker 1

Because then you can smell it. And be sure of which product you actually buy. Buying it online is connected with more risk.

Moderator

Okay, so risk of not knowing if you like the smell for example.

Unknown Speaker 1

yes

Unknown Speaker 3

I tend to do this once a year like bored at the airport or something halfway through your flight you just go smell perfume at the airport and remember them for later to you ordered them online where they are cheaper in some way when they're on sale or something.

Unknown Speaker 2

yeah, I can relate to this. Like actually if you know the brand before and then you look online if there is a cheaper. It's not that I usually order online but I would definitely do this.

Unknown Speaker 5

For me it's not that usual to order online but I would definitely do this for like consider this option. For me personally, I think I'm very unlikely to buy online simply because every time I finish a perfume I want to try another one. So I have to go to the store to try and smell it.

Moderator

so to sum it up, you would never buy perfume without having smelled it before.

Unknown speaker 3

No that's for sure. Unless it's famous maybe it's well known.

There are magazines in which you can find the the topic of 2022 Autumn, so you try it and you buy it.

Unknown speaker 1

Yes, because it's like, I know a celebrity or it's popular or it's like I guess ranked I don't

know if they even do that but rank perfumes from the best

Moderator

how comfortable do you feel about buying perfume online? You mentioned something about not trusting it?

Unknown speaker 1

not trusting my own memory kind of, but since like, I wouldn't be really sure which, like which one I want, then it's easier, I guess it reassures myself buying it in a store usually in the tax free when I'm traveling.

Unknown speaker 6

I think it's more when I buy it's more of like an impulse buy I see something I'm going to try it. I never like think I'm gonna go online now and buy this. It's always I'm in an airport.

Moderator

How do you go about when buying a perfume?

Unknown Speaker 6

For me it never really happens to be online just buying, like this is what I want I'm gonna get this. It's more of an impulse.

Unknown Speaker 3

I've done it before online. I've bought some perfume online before. It's usually a last minute sale. The price went down a lot I might as well try it. For the price I pay, it's worth taking the risk of getting something that doesn't smell as good. But I'm not actively looking for a specific perfumes online as far as I've done in the past.

Moderator

Okay, does anybody else want to share something about that like how you go about when buying perfumes?

Unknown Speaker 1

Usually if I have like extra I don't know 30 minutes and then I go to tax free I try maybe five to 10 Different and then I choose my favourite one.

Unknown Speaker 6

also a lot of time I feel there are gifts as well they're always given for Christmas are always guaranteed to get something

Unknown Speaker 2

that's true. Like the gifts that you get for Christmas or something they will probably be bought online I guess. Yeah, I don't know.

Unknown Speaker 3

I bought perfume as gifts more than I bought perfume for myself actually. But then I went for me like as it sounds, we got two sharps and then we spent the rest of it. So I usually buy the specific ones I like I buy them myself and depending on if I read like online checking for the prices. But then also I get a lot of them for presents or by friends or family even sometimes it's all over the place.

Moderator

How do you feel about samples?

Unknown Speaker 5

I use them mostly when I travel.

Unknown Speaker 1

I don't think I ever got a sample

Unknown Speaker 3

I'm thinking back I don't think I've got one either.

Unknown Speaker 1

Yeah. When I was younger, I see like my mother has 1000 But yeah, me I have never seen my father and me or any of my men friends having samples.

Unknown Speaker 5

I got samples.

Unknown Speaker 4

When you go buy something they give you samples.

Unknown Speaker 2

I have a lot of samples as well.

Unknown Speaker 2

but yeah, I think it's right what what he's said like, if you are on the go somewhere if you travel. Then you can put it in your pocket and use it afterwards.

Unknown Speaker 6

Yeah, I always prefer them to be like smaller. Because when you are traveling it's easier.

Moderator

How do you feel about ordering samples to your home?

Unknown Speaker 5

Are we paying for these sample?

Unknown Speaker 3

It's very much price dependent. But I think I would like it Could be a fun gift like you can try some stuff. I think that will be more fun gift than just one bottle. but it's very much price oriented at that point depending on the price, I would or would not do that.

Unknown speaker 1

I also think like that could for sure be thinking more business wise, if they send you like five samples. And then like if you choose one of them that's connected to a

deal, I don't know, whatever say pushed I want to do, but that would work better, I think. But I guess it would, depending on it could be quite costly to do it.

Unknown Speaker 3

But then again, I also think that if you have like make them five samples and five, like different that obviously very different ones. You can also send someone in the right there say like I like these ones. And I don't like these ones where you get like, filter a bit more on this kind of scent you like and they that also makes you more comfortable in buying new things online. Because you already have like a certain direction in which you want to go because right now, if you say Oh, this smells of cinnamon roll, I wouldn't have a clue what that's gonna be like, but if you already have the samples and you already have some guidance of okay, maybe smells like this a bit then I like it or I don't.

Unknown speaker 1

If you get like you have an account and that kind of feels exactly a taste or smell profile. Yeah, that could be like business.

Unknown Speaker 3

I know what my perfumes smell like but I wouldn't be able to describe them very well or say what's in them. So that since I would be blank, if it says a certain description on there. So how would you guys like you're also feeling like you have a limited knowledge. I think I'd be so bad at describing Yeah.

Unknown Speaker 2

like some wines in they will say it's like fruity aroma and then there's no fully aroma, like so I'm not the biggest fan of like doing things too scientifically. You should probably just try it and maybe it's good. Maybe it's not good. Like, I think he's like

you're right when you were saying like, you look at the description and even if afterwards you could maybe say it's actually it but could also be totally different for you and your perception of the smell.

Unknown Speaker 4

Are the commercials really related to the perfume? I usually see just nice boys.

Unknown Speaker 3

Sometimes I only realize halfway through the commercialism that it's about the perfume. I'm just looking at some half naked men.

Unknown Speaker 1

You don't really think much about taste when they do advertisements I only know one brand that does that, it's Hugo Boss commercial I can think of with the sailing guy with Chris Hemsworth. You never really think of the taste or smell.

Moderator

So then what kind of content entertains you the most online?

Unknown Speaker 4

Youtube videos for me

Unknown Speaker 6

Yeah, videos.

Unknown Speaker 3

Youtube videos and streaming platforms.

Unknown Speaker 5

I just scrolled through social media and answer messages. Like instagram

Unknown Speaker 1

More Instagram, if the choice is like video, text or picture, I think video for sure for me.

Moderator

So then my next question would be, where do you buy perfumes most often online?

Unknown Speaker 3

yeah, I bought. It's like the Dutch Amazon kind of thing. So I buy them on there usually. And then if they don't have it, I usually go to one of the other retailers but like one of the International ones. I not often order something from the specific perfume brands.

Unknown Speaker 6

If I'd were to buy it online, it would be whatever it the quickest delivery for me. For example amazon. Then I already know, I'm gonna get it in a few days. So that'd be my go to.

Unknown Speaker 2

for me, it was like, when I was ordering online, it was like, I just checked what the cheapest option is. And like in Germany, at least, it's often like a perfume shop.

Moderator

Do you guys ever go to the brand's website to look for more information?

Unknown Speaker 4

industries or related, you know, they don't do pregnancy. So I think it doesn't make sense to go to I don't know, don't check up on a website to see about perfumes because they just franchise I think all the stuff.

Unknown Speaker 3

So it also comes back to the same problem again, where they describe it in the description doesn't really mean anything. Specifically if if something sounds like it's not like mahogany, I don't know what to focus on.

Unknown Speaker 2

So I think the information level is usually be relatively low on the website. Probably like a lot of like nice looking people like half naked and a lot of information about the actual fragrance. I guess like I've never went on the websites, maybe they can tell you like it's a hundred percent natural. There are some niche products very expensive that do that.

Unknown Speaker 3

Is a 100% natural important for you?

Unknown Speaker 4

Because I didn't even care for like fragrances I'm like, Yeah, because I had a guest lecture last year and it was about it and I think 500 euros for 100 millimeters. he explained that since you put it on your ski nit should be natural.

Moderator

What aspects do you like about purchasing a fragrance online?

Unknown Speaker 2

Speed of delivery, price

Unknown Speaker 5

Yeah

Unknown Speaker 6

If the bottle looks cool

Unknown Speaker 4

I agree just the appearance of it

Unknown Speaker 1

It's easy, simple, I feel like when buying a fragrance you think about it a lot rather than when you just buy a t-shirt, then it's click, buy and finished. This is a bit more of a thinking process.

Unknown Speaker 2

I think also like the whole branding thing, like so packaging, but of course, like also the advertisement like it gets stuck in your head. And like, even if it's subconscious, on a subconscious level, you will have like some, I don't know biased opinion on some some brands. So I think if they have like really good ads on TV you will have like a decent bit biased opinion on these fragrances. Like for me also like delivery and unpacking I'm like really happy when I get some free samples. Or something. Like it's stupid, because even, it's not that important. It's probably worth like, I don't know, three euros or something. But still, I'm really happy when I when I get this.

Moderator

how would you select a fragrance if it's not by its smell?

Unknown Speaker 3

The packaging and design of the bottle

Unknown Speaker 2

It looks cool and far more likely to smell it. And if I can't smell it, because it's an online purchase, then it comes very much to the price versus if there's a tiny cool little robot that would want to buy it's like on the sale within the price range that I would find worth it for like the appearance of bottle and like the risk of not having a smell good then that would for me it would be for a parents and then looking at the price range sort of matches what I would think we would be worth or what if this man told them what to do? Cool.

Unknown Speaker 2

like for me, it's like, if they're on sale and they're fairly cheap, I would just I'm willing to take the risk for it that maybe sometimes if they're on sale and they're still in the store I'd actually go to the store and smell it and

see if I like it but then you come back to the smelling first before you buy it.

Unknown Speaker 1

I will say like brand reputation because if you don't know what it smells like, but you're looking at like you said Dolce Gabbana or Hugo boss Paco Royale I depending what my what I associate the brand with. I would I guess go on that. Some brands are more elegant, some are more sportive, some are low end some are more high end.

Unknown Speaker 0:58

I'm I'm looking for a fragrance that is more elegant than I would use the brand's reputation to kind of filter out and select my fragrance

Unknown Speaker 1:26

if you see an advertisement with George Clooney in front of the fireplace it's maybe not the one you will go for, probably you will go for another fragrance with like more like young people in the advertisement but yeah, and this will probably get stuck in your head so you will probably remember some details of like some brands and like some images they want to create around this fragrance.

Unknown Speaker 2:09

want to sell a certain lifestyle I guess so like at some point you will like think that probably if you buy I don't know like the cost fragrance it will like smell different than like I don't know do like some other brands. And I think like you have this in your head like on a subconscious level.

Unknown Speaker 2:30

Some fragrances might be very connected with old paper or like your parents or your grandparents. So that kind of goes out

Unknown Speaker 2:39

oh yeah, that's also thing I think you'd like your parents or something like biodiesel I would never buy these

Unknown Speaker 2:47

Okay, so now we're going to show you a case from Glossier, what do you think about it?

Unknown Speaker 3:45

that's very vague smells a bit different on everywhere

Unknown Speaker 3:56

does look shiny

Unknown Speaker 4:19

I think it's a scam

Unknown Speaker 4:24

I would say like if I were to scroll over on the on the consumer side or like on the retail side for procurement, I would see the boss that says I will already not go into for an investigation because I will be like it doesn't appeal to me in any sense.

Unknown Speaker 4:37

It looks a bit almost looks like plastic.

Unknown Speaker 4:41

An old shampoo bottle if you take the label off.

Unknown Speaker 4:49

That bottle is quite bad what I kind of can understand, but that's mainly because I work a lot within the wine industry is how they describe the smell. So like the different steps with it. So that's kind of how you describe wine and wine tasting. So when you blend wine, for example, with winemakers, then you also go through these kinds of steps with smell but set that up.

Like, I guess there's not a lot of people that I've worked with in the wine industry then. This is unfortunately, not me a very good sight. What I mean, like, product page,

Unknown Speaker 5:25

what are you missing on there that you would like to improve?

Unknown Speaker 5:30

Yes, gives a feeling like feeling of being quite cheap, like, all the way down. Yeah. Good to know. Smells great. Come on. It had to come up with a bit more than like something more clever than that. And like you said, that bought out looks like old shampoo bottle. Or even worse. Yes, the first sentence gets you you won't read all of that, like, smells a bit different on everyone. That is? Yeah. It doesn't tell you anything.

Unknown Speaker 6:06

I'm curious. If it was like 20 euros, maybe you would have thought about it? Because it's

Unknown Speaker 6:47

but then they can also have different smells a bit different. Everyone says as much to me as like a citrusy smell from whatever so that because it doesn't say anything to me.

Unknown Speaker 6:58

How they describe how it smells, it sounds almost unprofessional because you expect like a description of the smell. And then it just says it smells different on everybody

Unknown Speaker 7:08

I agree and the scents are confusing, they say it smells like pink pepper, sparkling spicy

Unknown Speaker 7:32

Yeah, and it sounds like smells different on everybody.

Unknown Speaker 7:39

But then it's cool that it smells different on everybody if it was backed up with a scientific discovery proving everyone's skin is different. Then it would be like okay, this might be interesting. From the scientific perspective, I would be more interested in to look into it, but

Unknown Speaker 7:54

I feel like that would worsen the chance of buying it online because then this is really really like a lottery. If it's good or bad. Like even though it might be sheep like Now at least I tried to not buy so many things being more I guess eco friendly and shipments like I wouldn't want to buy something even though it was two euros if I would just throw it away because smashin

Unknown Speaker 8:21

just to go back to your point so why because you said you might actually buy it maybe you said you might be intrigued and why what was it

Unknown Speaker 8:32

it makes no sense that the value is mass different on different people. You want to prove them wrong get your money back I'm not okay. He said that I would maybe I wouldn't buy it because as him I just buy a few things and that's quite I had to be 100% sure that I won something by less was maybe pay more but yeah, these okay, it's interesting I think about it but then goes to the page.

Unknown Speaker 9:11

Oh good. And then if you read these reviews, some of them like Does that change anything about what you said?

Unknown Speaker 9:18

I never use

Unknown Speaker 9:20

the actual website their website

Unknown Speaker 9:23

I wouldn't read that yeah, that can be a scam Yeah, I'm very much here a scam and it's always lifestyle. No one will promote a shitty review on

Unknown Speaker 9:32

their own. But I also feel like how much you really have to like the brand and like the smell to actually post something this long because even if I love something, the effort of actually putting up a review is seems a bit too much for me usually but then I'm also very lazy.

Unknown Speaker 9:47

I guess if they would feel authentic, the reviews, but

Unknown Speaker 9:54

six are the

Unknown Speaker 9:55

most but then like one or the other. Get this one this perfume is absolutely a breast implants into your skin what lens in like

Unknown Speaker 10:08

I think if this is someone who does this for a living then I would understand that but if it's just some concern like skeleton

Unknown Speaker 10:16

so

Unknown Speaker 10:19

it doesn't feel authentic but

Unknown Speaker 10:21

the one that I'm there with that was more realistic because it was like it said someone's like oh a friend of mine recommended more realistically the other ones

Unknown Speaker 10:29

can we like food? Yeah. Is there any way we can see

Unknown Speaker 10:38

if I had a website I would filter out the options they had about reviews. I was filtered out one last page. I haven't. But they're all

Unknown Speaker 10:48

smell so there should be some a few bad reviews Yeah.

Unknown Speaker 10:53

So this is one but

Unknown Speaker 10:54

they love the smell.

Unknown Speaker 10:56

I think the best smells not because someone will we came to the conclusion as well. It's like you don't really how much you're going to guess

Unknown Speaker 11:03

so roll that doesn't change anything about your opinion

Unknown Speaker 11:06

makes it worse actually. No, but like, it seems like

Unknown Speaker 11:12

it is and if this so okay, you don't really trust these reviews. But if you would know if you would have known that this perfume had

like a major thing on Tik Tok? Would you trust it more than

Unknown Speaker 11:27

theirs? Like, is this the name of the site Jeremy fragrance I always seem like an odd listener, which is very funny. And like, boy, I usually like treatment or something. And all he does is talk about what smell he would trust him them or I didn't often walk sit on his jokes on

Unknown Speaker 11:50

think is more promotions, although you never know what's the brand deal then. And then again, fragrance is very personal. But then on the other hand, I do the same with food. Like if I go for a food place and I also look at them like this, the amount of stars that it has and based on that as well. So in that sense is a bit hypocritical to not do

Unknown Speaker 12:05

what I do it with food but like you but like you said before as well it's very subjective. So this is very difficult and difficult to trust in this case. And also I feel like people have sometimes they say smells good when they actually smell shit. Yes, smell is very like when it comes to food.

Unknown Speaker 12:26

Exactly. But then food is also very, like somewhat different for everyone but I think food is something we can relate to more because we we know more a lot more about I know a lot more about food and like the specific for that one to go for and then all about fragrances so I think that's also a bit of a lack of knowledge. I

Unknown Speaker 12:42

also think like if you check restaurant reviews, like you look on Google and like I think there's like less How do you say like paid comments on like Google Maps for

restaurant and like on some online shops, the shops, they ship everything for free to like some inferences and then they say okay, do some pictures, put up comments on the website and stuff. And then they they quickly have a more like 100 positive reviews five star reviews.

Unknown Speaker 13:10

Not sure about that. About like TripAdvisor and Google, I know that you've come by now of

Unknown Speaker 13:15

course of course of course. But I mean, like maybe if you take the average, like like the average number of columns, you

Unknown Speaker 13:23

have some website for example Michelin, you find

Unknown Speaker 13:32

or maybe it was not, yes, say when we should move on. But yes, a quick question here. Have you guys ever written? Like, are you just I never do

Unknown Speaker 13:49

I have, like an Amazon likes every now and again. I get notification saying how would you rate this product?

Unknown Speaker 13:57

Have you ever written

Unknown Speaker 13:58

I probably have on his job, like on the job and

Unknown Speaker 14:02

I find it I always do it if you hate a place. If you go to the restaurants absolutely shit. Yeah, I will always give a lot it

Unknown Speaker 14:08

has to be extremely bad for me to even take the time to do. And that's I guess I think it like most of my friends I guess make the same. Therefore, like I have a hard time trusting this because there's no one that I know that would actually write and review. So either is some nutcase or it's just like a robot.

Unknown Speaker 14:28

Then I believe that five zero stars as well as always like the both the most extreme ones at the end, the majority in the middle and they're all there.

Unknown Speaker 14:36

I feel like you always honestly, what's the worst thing about this? And it's not too bad. And

Unknown Speaker 14:44

that's the thing if you look look at like, all the bad comments and like one thing comes up multiple times and it's likely that there's like really a problem with the product or like the restaurant or whatever's right.

Unknown Speaker 14:55

So you trust negative reviews more than you Yeah,

Unknown Speaker 15:01

yeah, more than like five stars five star reviews. Yeah, definitely.

Unknown Speaker 15:05

Okay. I have one question. So, how would you feel if you would purchase a fragrance online if there was some kind of questionnaire to like, or quiz to like, help you find a fragment of your choice? You probably never did that. But would you like

Unknown Speaker 15:27

really quickly as well as looking like I was because it was Christmas rolling around. I

was didn't know what to get. And then it was like some phrases online they were on sale because Christmas seasons rolling around, I don't know what any smell is, I'm going to try to do one of those quizzes ready like, roughly explain to you like what is your day to day look like? What do you like, which smells you like, and certain brands would pop off, like where certain smells would pop up. But the issue was that they were all very much for me it was so you can easily tell that everything that came out of that was like some of the links back to the company itself just paying for the advertisements. So if you have a neutral one in which I actually get like, sort of a pattern saying like oh, you might be interested in discussing this then but like not promoted I would be interested in that. But because it's so hard to promote it to go to a specific brand maybe I don't necessarily trust it that much.

Unknown Speaker 16:17

I think they could highly work like we talked about before if you would include like creating a fragrant fragrance profile but then you would have to send out samples to kind of okay this I like and okay, this was this and then you kind of click into like answers in the profile. And then after that I would be more I guess I would buy online but without that like yes doing a quiz I wouldn't trust in I think

Unknown Speaker 16:47

it could be like a screening because there are 1000s of fragrances so you screen them but then you have always to taste

Unknown Speaker 16:56

it could give me like a general idea. Yeah,

Unknown Speaker 16:58

but then I want to try and then

Unknown Speaker 17:03

what would the questions be like personality like questions on your personality? Or like more something like on smoke like on the actual smoke?

Unknown Speaker 17:12

You tell me what would you prefer?

Unknown Speaker 17:14

I don't even know. I guess it would be like favorite smells but like okay, so everyone's gonna say oh, you cat grass.

Unknown Speaker 17:25

What else thing has something to do with the amount of exercise that you do because perfumes have different amounts of alcohol and the more alcohol there's and the longer they're in smells supposed to last and the stronger it smells. So if you do for example if you go exercising then you say for example I exercise like every other day and I need something for that then you might get also a higher percentage of alcohol in it because smell supposed to last longer

Unknown Speaker 17:49

racism. You will for sure, like your way one smell after you shower, right? No, no,

Unknown Speaker 17:55

that's the thing it takes away that but it is till that point like till the time on how highly active your furniture day they might get different. That's the only thing I can think of. I'm just filling in the blanks here. Because otherwise, I wouldn't have

Unknown Speaker 18:08

a clue. I wonder how much of a difference they're like Yes, take myself for example might be too personal. We're like, I train almost every day so shower at least once a day or twice. So for me it would be like Well, of course I hoped it would last doing 12 hours during the day at least. But not

more than that because that doesn't really make it and it's a good reason for me because I would shower morning or afternoon wherever I try.

Unknown Speaker 18:39

Okay, we're almost done. So I have two more questions and then we can wrap it up. So for the next question, I'm just going to tell you a little story and then I'm going to ask you something about it. So once upon a time in 1901 A man called genealogies of good day like to think that like human and flowers a lot see started his own perfumers and thoughts of friends and a very like one of the most beautiful villages there. His family originally was into Pontiac productions since 1922. And also produce cognac for you know, famous Kingston, France or amongst them produce well. i Yeah, so you can see him so he uses this donation skills to make 100% natural perfumes and today, four generations later this woman has great granddaughter took over and still uses the same ancestral methods to distill perfume and there you have a few pictures of like how the perfumes you are used to look like. So how did this story make you feel? And would you consider buying a perfume from that brand?

Unknown Speaker 19:45

Oh, most girls

Unknown Speaker 19:49

like don't think about the price.

Unknown Speaker 19:52

So I don't, I wouldn't think about price by do link it to being, like smelled nice. smore for all people like viewing this hearing that story, like, I don't like it was being very fresh. Like, I don't know, if you say the word bright for energy, I feel like this is

something that my grandfather would maybe use.

Unknown Speaker 20:17

So the story does give you insight, though about the type of smell

Unknown Speaker 20:22

a bit. I don't know how if I would have seen the pictures.

Unknown Speaker 20:29

It was like 45 year old and some of

Unknown Speaker 20:31

you also said like, the recipe hasn't changed or hasn't changed.

Unknown Speaker 20:38

Sorry. Well, it's modernized to like,

Unknown Speaker 20:41

to kind of the same way it's,

Unknown Speaker 20:44

it's graded in the same way.

Unknown Speaker 20:46

Yeah, it's just about the methods how it's created. So it's not it's not like old. But yeah, it's interesting. Your point, I don't know if you have anything to expand on that. Like that. From the story you kind of felt or gave you a vibe of how the perfume could smell like, did anybody

Unknown Speaker 21:06

alcohols make the bottle looks killed?

Unknown Speaker 21:12

The boss who looks cool, and story sounds nice. So it is because I always have this is something if it's protect price away, I would love to give this to someone as a gift. I would think of someone who's older than

me a lot quicker than buying the forefront of mine.

Unknown Speaker 21:24

I've heard this story and I just seen this bottle it would like intrigued me and I click on OK. Okay,

Unknown Speaker 21:31

yeah, give to someone like my father.

Unknown Speaker 21:35

But I do like to start with a story. Sometimes it can decide addition to its more classic wave why? Why would a story because I think it tells something about the product in the sense where it's like, obviously, everything by the end of the day, it's just marketing and trying to sell your products. But sometimes the story just sparked some interest in us like I can relate to this or I liked the story or unwilling to somewhat support this case is that brands or her specifically, rather than supporting the next become like the or something. So it's more for niche markets and is to make friends. So smaller ones are lesser known ones, if it's a good story of might be more likely to buy that one and go for the big brands.

Unknown Speaker 22:29

But also things like other business areas, like the story about, like heritage and like how long the brand existed as maybe more important than like in the fragrance business. Because like, if you if he was making cognac, or like he was I think from the story, I don't know, this would be maybe relevant, like because it's like, good that existed for a long time. And like, you doesn't have to change the recipe this much. But I feel like with fragrances like time chain like time changes, like also like people have different lifestyles like other

smells and stuff. So it's maybe not that important that it existed for like 300 years.

Unknown Speaker 23:09

Yeah. And if the star would be more appealing to you, would that change anything? How would you feel it then maybe if the story is about, I don't know, like a perfume powder that you just pounded a perfumery, like last year in New York City and it's like, it's a different story with would that change anything about how you feel?

Unknown Speaker 23:29

Oh, so like, if it's a story that like Yeah, I think somebody said when you can relate to the story and definitely can have an impact. Okay.

Unknown Speaker 23:41

I wouldn't change it because it's a niche product. So maybe targets people more in the cognac way. So we just keep going I can start with more.

Unknown Speaker 23:54

Yeah, sounds really.

Unknown Speaker 23:58

So if you want to sell different products, you shouldn't go for everyone.

Unknown Speaker 24:08

Yeah, Okay, nice. And now that's the last question. So how does a fine like buying experience online look like for you? If it would be fragmented? Yeah, like an engaging one. So we talked about maybe like the quizzes that you would get to that but you need some kind of samples. Is there anything else that you would add to that or like engaging something that would help you like to the perfume online

Unknown Speaker 24:37

screening that since I don't know if that would actually be something for me but like creating some kind of picture show Okay, dude like this, this this? These products include that so are like, we think this would be suitable for you because of those samples. Because you like

Unknown Speaker 24:59

it If something like the way Google treats I don't hear from Goodreads that's a book websites where they they do something like that where you can like it's like okay so you've sampled in this okay you like this or you can rate them and it comes for more specifics so the more information you put into it, the more specific the outcome is obviously, because you can also see like you can very quickly see like, how many people liked this product how many different like it's probably like because it's from real people it's a very honest review and you can also share stuff with your friends so for example a friend and you have same sort of pattern or something like that you can share that stuff with each other and then it's also at the same time Oh, you like this isn't this there's a new smell being released tomorrow that might also be something for you so you get like more news and more it makes it somewhat engaging as you're actively trying to do some stuff with it.

Unknown Speaker 25:50

And I haven't seen that important employers online before but if you could play in like Avid all the fragrances or perfumes you had before Yeah, cuz then you can okay these ones I liked and then I add them to my profile or my search and then like the search like you get the result which listening to them

Unknown Speaker 26:11

and also because it deals with like streaming services to like all you like this sort of movie they must like this but I feel like this guy spokesman this guy's phrases are so specific instance where I think movies are anomalies are usually the same kind of area I think that if the more information relates to more specific it gets so the more satisfied she will be with the outcome as well as you said like I like this this and this in the past then you might like this one this one's been really so you might like this one to be more personal more it feels personal it feels like you're actually shopping for yourself and not on some retailer media size.

Unknown Speaker 26:48

There is a pregnancies website where they don't you click on perform and you can see similar products and there are like four or five times so there is something similar I don't remember the name but it's one of the most famous

Unknown Speaker 27:12

knights anything else you want to add? You said everything

Unknown Speaker 27:16

like a well designed website would be great as well. Because if it's like a really bad design, like not a great shopping

Unknown Speaker 27:24

yeah it needs to be like easy to order say overcomplicated and I'm just not interested

Unknown Speaker 27:30

I guess focus on how the bottle look in the case of writing the description if you don't have a lot to say yes try to because in that case if I'm making a yes kind of put down words yes that is short and long

Unknown Speaker 27:49

maybe not too bad surprises with like the delivery fees at the end at the checkout if they like see like 10 to newer salad tomatoes at the end it's not that great

Unknown Speaker 28:05

for me that I'm I don't think I will ever buy perfume online perfumes need to be good retailers like I will always go either to Zara or to Sephora to buy so be at good retailers if you fail to do

Unknown Speaker 28:24

anything else you care that

Unknown Speaker 28:26

you don't you find the shop maybe too smelly or that there are many choices to manage and so you can think about it

Unknown Speaker 28:35

but that's the goal of in the perfume industry their goal must be the brand awareness to be top of mind so when you see all that one's okay, I remember this one so go try this one at least that's how I see it and then oh I remember also these well let me try it and then you will choose between because you will not try everything

Unknown Speaker 28:54

same online a lot of choices and you feel a bit overwhelmed or the choice

Unknown Speaker 29:00

maybe you have more time

Unknown Speaker 29:03

I agree

Unknown Speaker 29:05

smells lots I don't agree on that. It's a lot of too many choices. And also for me when it's

not cool with and I travelled quite a bit so Denmark I have a couple of times a year when hopefully I have 30 minutes and Like usually I never spend more than 1015 Maximum 20 minutes on making a purchase decision

Unknown Speaker 29:32

and the maybe the seller of the shop make you know influence you on the choice of perfume and doesn't bother you though I don't like to

Unknown Speaker 29:45

talk to me now.

Unknown Speaker 29:48

She's also think websites influence you as well. Like the ranking of like the order of like different pregnancies will not be like objective and then will probably be like some brands will pay a bit more to the like, page and stuff. So I think at the end like nothing is re

Focus group 1 (Women)

Moderator

Okay, perfect. So let me start off so we kind of introduced each other right. So I'll give you a quick introduction of what today's talk is about. This discussion is about digitalization of the perfume industry, and I your experience online perfumes.

We have a nice little first warm up question, which is super easy, and you can just give us your insights. Also, anytime a question is unclear, just let me know, I can specify it. But the first one is:

why do you actually buy and wear perfume?

Unknown Speaker 0:52

Okay. Well, I like buying perfume because it's like the little extra that you put on, I

smell really nice. And like it gives you a different feeling if you feel like you smell good, but I also really like it because I know for myself that I like it when other people smell good. So like, for expressing yourself.

Unknown Speaker 1:20

Something else about identity, I would say. Yeah, of course, you would like to smell good. But I mean, if I buy perfume like, I think it's like my smell as well. So it's all about identity

Unknown Speaker 1:34

for me, Yeah, I agree. I think it's like a part of the outfit

Unknown Speaker 1:42

I also think it's some sort of comfort zone because you identify so much with the smell. And so I feel like when you put it on, it's like some sort of comfort because you feel like as usual and yet somehow a little bit better.

Unknown Speaker 1:56

And also, if I smell someone I can understand something about he from the perfume, for example.

Unknown Speaker 2:17

Specific perfume is so connected in your head to a specific person.

Moderator

Okay, nice. So super, super interesting insights. So the next question is a bit more specific, since it's about digitalization. So why would you buy perfumes online?

Unknown Speaker 2:57

I used to try the perfumes in stores. And then they're fun, but most of the time it's cheaper online. And also you get these little small trial bottles. So that's my reason.

Unknown Speaker 3:10

Well, to be honest, I never buy perfume online. I don't know. It's like, I like to go to a shop to be able to buy it. But if it's cheaper, and I see like the perfume I'm using all the time, I would probably still order it. Yeah,

Unknown Speaker 3:31

I feel like it would be a little too risky to just buy online without having a trading store. So definitely go and try it first. Or at least if you know it already, then then you're good. Like I wouldn't just risk buying it online.

Moderator

So for you, it is important to smell it?

Unknown speakers

yes

Unknown Speaker 3:47

by these testers, or these testers sets and if I if I liked them, I could buy the whole bottle but until I haven't smelled it, I don't want to buy it.

Unknown Speaker 3:57

Not only to try it but also to try more than once Yeah, for example, like a couple of days and I think about it and then I decide if I like it or not, but not just I try for example in the shop. I have to try once or twice and then maybe after

Unknown Speaker

It's a whole process of buying it

Unknown Speaker 4:17

because like on the skin that can like turn so yeah, you have to be careful. And I always asked advice. Like I asked like I don't know my parents if they like it or my boyfriend because yeah, sometimes you think it's

good, but then other people like I don't know about that.

Unknown Speaker 4:35

Maybe they tell you always just draw

Unknown Speaker 4:40

like if they think it fits me and my personality, identity things like does it fit me? Too sweet isn't true. So to

Moderator

To sum this question, you definitely prefer the experience offline, so in the store because the smell is so important for you guys. but let's say you couldn't smell it ? Would you still want to buy it online or is the smell really the feature that makes you like a perfume?

Unknown Speaker 5:15

Yeah if I didn't have never smelled that before because

Unknown Speaker 5:22

I was really close to buying one online the other day because I sometimes get so overwhelmed by all the smells in the store and I kind of know which notes I like, so I like it musky with vanilla and often you have an option of sending it back. On the other side shipping it back and worth is not really sustainable. But just to say I was really close to doing it but then I didn't do it because I'm a really indecisive person anyway.

Unknown Speaker 6:01

so it's easier for you to go online because maybe you have less choice or it's easier to make a choice

Unknown Speaker 6:06

I think it's easier because then online I can instantly read up on the rating of other people and find out more about the brand because in the store you can't necessarily do that easily I mean you know a brand maybe but then you want to know what their values and ethics are and then maybe you can read up on the brand and I compare other ones and compare the prices.

Unknown Speaker 6:33

and you can also search specifically for smells Yeah, that's really that's what I like about the online stores.

Unknown Speaker 6:40

And there are these quizzes sometimes they're like this Yeah, I just knew the price range.

Moderator

Maybe you can extend on that because my next question would be How would you describe your past experiences with purchasing perfumes? So, you said something about like it's easier so can you expand on that

Unknown Speaker 6:58

if you are knowledgeable about perfumes you know you always have to choose between different sorts of smells categories. So for example floral, citrus or woody. And then you can search specifically online if you'd like for example a citrus perfume but for the winter I like musky perfume. So I can search specifically for that sort of perfume and then you can also search for older pafa or Yeah, so you can use so you know which of the notes lasts longer because they have the top notes, the middle and the heart notes. And for example the bottom note lasts the longest so you can look into that.

Unknown Speaker 7:59

Okay, I feel like you know a lot about perfume already. and I think that makes your experience easier online because do you girls know about all those for example? And how were your past experiences buying a perfume online? Have you bought perfumes online yet?

Unknown Speaker 8:19

I haven't I just like to scroll around with the ones that I kind of already know like the brands like that I usually go with I just call around and see like if they have like sale some kind of whatever but I haven't really ever looked at the thing is I have like 1000 So I kind of want to get them down before

Unknown Speaker 8:45

I mean for me it was always pretty easy because I have one perfume and I always buy this specific one so I never switch between perfumes so yeah, for me it's pretty easy because I always go online and order this specific perfume so yeah but I think that's very special for me because usually have multiple ones

Unknown Speaker 9:06

but I very rarely switch as well when I do I go to the store because I would have never worked at something online I think I think I did once and then never used to because it just smelled so bad I never did it again.

Unknown Speaker 9:19

Yeah, for me it's the same but when I ordered like my perfume it was nice that you could also see like the recommendations from others like Oh, other users liked also this and but then I again went to the store and tried them like to smell them because I was curious maybe this could fit hours or something. But usually it's like a stick to the one yeah

Unknown Speaker 9:42

no, it makes sense. So it looks like just to sum this one up it looks like if you already a very loyal to one perfume more brand. You would buy that one online, but if you would switch to a new one you prefer to go to the store. Okay, that makes sense. Let me see mean, is there anything more to add to that chapter? Nothing? No other thoughts?

Unknown Speaker 10:07

I remember when I was looking for a new perfume and I've been like Googling and like looking at perfumes and different sites, then my Tiktok page changed over to perfumes. And then you often had these made like really strong picture video collages, like if you want to smell like but then they have a lot of pictures and videos. So you got like a vibe on the perfume. And I think that was really helpful. It's like, oh, and like, Okay, this is maybe like too dark and strong. This is like, flowery. This picture of the ocean can equal to too strong and dark.

Moderator

So that's maybe how you would find out about a new fragrance online?

Unknown Speaker 10:46

Or maybe if like there's a retailer online if you don't have the scent they could try to give you associations and pictures to make you feel what it smells like, not just like citrusy, but like a picture of for example the ocean, I think that would help to get a better understanding I think that would help to like get a better understanding.

Unknown Speaker 11:03

Yeah, that's the like, that's the commercials. Like, that's, that's what they should do. They end up being just random things. But that's like they're supposed to be representing what wearing that perfume

should make you feel like. I mean, I wouldn't feel like Zenday, just running on.

Unknown Speaker 11:24

Rain on the pavement, you know, like, yeah, that feeling of a smell. Those associations might help.

Unknown Speaker 11:30

That's really interesting. Do girls have anything to add to Nunez comment?

Unknown Speaker 11:34

But maybe I think what would be good also, as I know some websites to it, but not like for perfume. It's like if you're like looking for skincare or something that there is like this questionnaire, we have to say like, what like how old you are what you like, and maybe like some questionnaire like this could help, like narrow it down, like what you're looking for. And then like you could have like, I don't know, a different list of perfumes that you could try, or that would suit like what you're looking for. I think this

Unknown Speaker 12:07

gets a little surprise and to go. I hope it's work. So yeah.

Unknown Speaker 12:12

Yeah. I mean, they do that, I think for coffee or something like that. So

Unknown Speaker 12:17

yeah, well, they also have like, they do it for shampoo and conditioners and stuff like that they you have to like fill up the questions and be like, oh, I want this, like I have like oily hair or whatever it is. And then you can order your bottle like specialized shampoo online. I mean, you can decide like the smell you want and everything and then just create it for you. As an overview, it would be a little harder. But I mean, that kind of would be the thing.

Unknown Speaker 12:45

Yeah, looks like you're looking for very personalized experiences, right? Something that's very targeted to yourself right to some that one up like what Nina's had for me, and then you the shampoos

Unknown Speaker 12:56

there, because I think that the perfume is quite a personal thing. It's already so if I don't know, I want to something personal to reach my personal essence.

Unknown Speaker 13:08

I have I am friends. And before I go into clubs, or dinners or wherever we are at each other's place, and they just be like, Oh, do you have some perfume? Or I've ever done that I don't want to wear somebody else's. Like I was it's the one that I use. I don't want to wear it. So like I wouldn't just randomly go and grab a bottle and just like spray on me.

Unknown Speaker 13:26

Yeah, that's because I don't I could go to a friend's place and use her perfume. Because for me, I don't sense I don't know much about it. It's not that personalized to me. I would love to have like an identity remember? I would have to like you know, get invested in like, knowing the bottom notes and all that but I haven't yet I would love to. So for that reason, like this party marketing, I would love it. But I don't know what sense I would like

Unknown Speaker 13:57

You don't know enough about it. Yeah, that's very interesting.

Unknown Speaker 14:00

Therefore generalized marketing works better on me.

Moderator

And you also said at the beginning that you wouldn't like buying new fragrances online. So you still have that? That opinion?

Unknown Speaker 14:17

I would like to know what others thought I would also like, question, ask my family and like get to know their opinion because I wouldn't know what's about good on me. I think okay,

Unknown Speaker 14:29

what would maybe like a service because there's always a salesperson in the store, right? Do you use them a lot like you don't trust them? I feel like they would just want you to buy one. Yeah,

Unknown Speaker 14:49

for me, it depends

Unknown Speaker 14:50

what store Yeah. Well, it depends

Unknown Speaker 14:53

like, like a department store. I would never because they're not specialized in perfume. That like for example where I come from, I know there's one place like just for perfume, and the guy is an expert. He's, he like, he's going to find your scent that fits your like identity perfectly and he will give you like a little bottle too, so that you can try it like during the week, and then he will like he wants you to be convinced before buying the product and that I think it's amazing because he's really an expert. But otherwise other people I would not trust them as well.

Unknown Speaker 15:28

So I like the idea of clinical trials. Because then you don't need to because I know when I'm about to buy one like I'm going to the store like everyday just like the smell it and then you never don't think is that really the

note is influenced by all the other smells he is elected to have to say.

Unknown Speaker 15:47

I always asked in case like I'm not sure

Moderator

did you ever ordered a sample kits online? Or do you usually go to the store and just get the samples

Unknown Speaker 16:01

I usually buy from like a big perfume retailer with several different brands. And whenever you order online, it comes on like the box and there's like a list four little sample bottles. So I have like 500 in my bathroom at home. So just try them out. It's just like, yeah, so I feel like they can't understand that thing. So like they just sell them out. And like even when I go to like perfumes or any kind of Italy we have them that I sell like skincare and perfumes like they sell all together, and you can buy something else. They're gonna give you the little sample bottles. They're just gonna like they basically just give them out.

Moderator

But yeah, so you're used to getting them for free, right? Yes. So you would never buy any?

Unknown Speaker 16:49

some, but because I really internees perfumes and they don't send them out. So I bought a lot of like, I have a lot of these try the news, but they're really they're not expensive. And if we just like to try perfume for a little bit, it's perfect. Because most of them niche perfumes and there Perfume is really expensive. So just buy is fine.

Unknown Speaker 17:13

Okay, makes sense. So the next question would be, maybe you touched upon it a bit already. But in general, what kind of content entertains you the most online? Do you so for example, do you like reading stuff? Or do you like watching stuff more? What do you feel like is the most fun?

Unknown Speaker 17:36

I really love commercials about perfume, I really like them. Because I find them super interesting. And I think that the commercial about perfume is one of the most difficult one to do. Because you have to represent something that you can not see you can have anything, you can just smell it. And I think it's the most beautiful. Sorry, the most difficult the most difficult one. So I always love to see how people try to represent a smell. And I don't know it's interesting. So when I know I'm watching something than the commercial beers, and it's one of our perfume I'm really interested in how they decided to I don't know commercialize it so I'm really interested

Unknown Speaker 18:24

same for me I think at first like to watch the commercial then you know a bit about the perfume and then I will read about it to get more specific information such as notes that you find in the perfume maybe they will I think maybe an association of both

Unknown Speaker 18:48

if you like reading is going more in depth, like oh yeah this commercial caught my attention I'm going to read about it or if it doesn't then not the other thing is also like for example like she like knows or again about the notes or whatever I don't like if I get like a perfume that I like and then I try and look that up then I know what I'm going to be looking for next time just when I go to the store and be like oh yeah I like Amber whatever yeah so read me about it like

makes it easier also for like the next time probably was you already have something that you know you like we just go deeper into like research about the thing.

Unknown Speaker 19:26

I think I wouldn't like to do so much research on the perfume and like it was fun when you said like Zeanday and her horse I knew exactly what kind of perfume it was. So this is more what sticks to my mind. And then again I would like go more to start would be because then I'm curious to know what's the kind of the smell about like, like because I have already the picture of the commercial in my head and then I am curious about it but I think I wouldn't like after I saw the video I wouldn't be Google Like Oh How does it smell so I think I would also prefer again that personal that experience in the store after I saw somebody on the internet

Unknown Speaker 20:13

more than the reading, the design of the bottle also catches my interest for example Chanel number five I have in my head exactly how the design of the bottle looks like. So also the design helped me a lot to understand what kind of, not smell because I cannot understand it, but what kind of person I don't know, I associate the design of the bottle to the person I want to be when I wear the perfume for example. So also Yeah, that is the design, commercials, all the visual things help me instead of the reading

Unknown Speaker 21:01

Yeah, once I was in a store and I think it was a good girl by Karina ray or something like that. They had like the big heel like with like the sparkly and things I was like I like that bottle I want to have that bottle in my house. I tried it it does not smell good. It does not smell good trust me. I would

never buy it but yeah, I was like oh yeah that bottle would fit nicely with my setting or whatever just go and grab it and like no, but But yeah, like that's yeah, the bottle is also I think because I feel like Chanel Number Five if you think about it I feel like you're gonna use our sample just because I feel like everyone knows it. But if you think about it you think like a person that's sophisticated somehow because like the bottle is like minimalistic and simple, there is not a lot going on. Yeah, it's really simple it's like really minimal like there's just like the number on top like there's not like a lot going on.

Unknown Speaker 21:51

perfectly yeah

Unknown Speaker 21:54

yeah

Unknown Speaker 22:01

I don't like the like he'll like I want been perfect but I hated like that I want that minimalist thing so for me the bottle plays a role as well but like I think the other direction.

Unknown Speaker 22:19

Yeah, well my favorite one is Moschino fresh the one with this free thing. So I mean, yeah, yeah, I definitely I tried to go for the aesthetic with it

Moderator

Okay, then I'll move on to the next question. If you buy perfumes online, where do you most often buy them? So some of you never bought a perfume online but some of you did. Right? So where do you usually go? Do you go to the brand's website you go to retailer Do you were to social media do you buy through Instagram?

Unknown Speaker 22:57

Definitely, I look at the brands website first. And then I google the perfume and then I check out all of the stuff that is in there and I really don't care about retailer doesn't mean it shouldn't be super sketchy but some retailers find this the one that is cheapest and then I just ordered from them

Unknown Speaker 23:19

Yeah, I gave away the few presents like birthday and Christmas gifts because they then tell me what they want and I know and I think I bought most of them like Sephora stuff because they have special sales and stuff going on or like you can use a code that you got from another Absolutely. Usually just go for the cheapest one and I should know it. Like you said not a sketchy one.

Unknown Speaker 23:47

So if you don't know some so just to summarize like you two points. If you don't know a brand, you would go to the website and first have a look at the website. And but if it's for example for somebody else you could you just go through retailer, you don't really care. Did I sum it up right or not?

Unknown Speaker 24:06

No, I would say I would always look at the brand's website and then after I would always buy at the retailer because it's always cheaper.

Unknown Speaker 24:17

Do you guys have anything to add to that?

Unknown Speaker 24:19

I mean, for me, it's like also in Germany we have like websites with student discounts things where it's a website and they offer special student discount to special retailers. And for me it's like a huge selling point that I always check the student discount website first and then go to the retailer and then put

in the discount because for me it makes the most sense. But for example I wouldn't never checking the website of the brand actually, but also because I know what kind of perfume I want to buy so

Unknown Speaker 24:47

and if you wouldn't know would you check it then?

Unknown Speaker 24:50

I don't know I think then I would do it actually in person and I wouldn't check the brand website because I'm don't know if it would actually help me or convince me to buy something But maybe maybe I should try it out because I never tried it honestly. So

Unknown Speaker 25:04

maybe, actually, if you go to the brands website, you get an lot nicer packaging if you order it. That's the only thing why I would buy it on the brand's website because of fancy packaging. It looks like a present.

Unknown Speaker 25:24

and maybe the trials are then from the same brand. Yeah, that'd be cool. Because then you can see what else they have if you'd like that one.

Unknown Speaker 25:34

Wait say that again.

Unknown Speaker 25:35

Like if you buy from a brand's website, then the trial things that you will get from the same brand because they want to grow with the other products as well, I guess. So if you already know that you like one of those, it might be interesting to try out other stuff, there's

Unknown Speaker 25:51

For example the cream and then for example the shampoo from the same brand, if you for example, you like the cream, you probably like also the perfume. So

Unknown Speaker 26:03

for example, I have never bought perfumes for someone else. So I just buy it for myself. So I don't have to have a nice package or something. Because I know I just want the cheapest version of what I can get. So yeah, this is the reason why I don't go to the normal websites of them just to the retailer.

Unknown Speaker 26:22

And if if we would not talk about like price, but more about if you look for information and stuff, so most of you said you would go to a physical person, but if you would not be able to go to the store maybe doesn't exist in your city, where would you look for information online about perfume

Unknown Speaker 26:41

magazines, like ELLE or Glamour something like that, because I know they do a lot of review on perfumes, and I think it's very specific, they like white about it. So I will try to find something like that

Unknown Speaker 26:56

I do prefer the forums. So like there are a lot of people who are like, I think there's one website which has a blue background, I don't remember the name, but they're really really good and you can just look up any perfume that you want and then they have like 1000s of comments of people who have this perfume and then they have a rating system for all kinds of smells that are in there and like how long it lasts and I don't know it's always rating from one to 10 so you can get a really good insight on how others think about it what type of occasion

you can wear to and stuff that's really interesting I can look how it's called

Unknown Speaker 27:41

How would you girls do you have anything to add to that or do you not really look for information or

Unknown Speaker 27:50

I've never really had to I mean when I was looking like like I have I have like a membership and like one of those tours it's not like multi brands where retailers and like when I looked through their to see like what they have on sale like if they haven't been feeling that I like or whatever I then like goes like description and see what they have like but I have never done like research like starting from nothing and like having to find one otherwise I would I think that looking for personal experience like magazines and stuff like that before

Moderator

how would you usually find out about a new perfume?

Unknown Speaker 28:27

I probably would be through Instagram because like I follow my favorite like like Gucci Valentino or whatever and if they have a new one they're gonna like advertising a lot or or like do a lot of like commercials and they will come up like an Instagram like when you start scrolling to do like the stories or tik tok whatever sometimes like advertisement comes up to I will probably find out like through social media.

Unknown Speaker 28:58

Yeah, also social media. Indirectly it comes up although I am not looking for it, but it just appears

Unknown Speaker 29:19

Yeah, I think for me, it's the same. Also, maybe YouTube advertising because like, I remember the one time where I actually wanted to try a new perfume was when the opium advertising came up and you're on YouTube. And I really, really loved it. And I was so convinced. I mean, I watched even like the full three minutes, not skip after like 10 seconds. So yeah, it really convinced me in a way.

Moderator

Okay, so I'll move on to the next question. Is there anything that you like when you purchase a perfume online, which you don't have, when you buy it in a store?

Unknown Speaker 1:14

like the other sensual overload that you have. And that pressure from the sellers sometimes annoy me, it's noisy, it's smelly. So I think if I order online I can reduce that. and also the stress, like you often need to go somewhere else after like, it's if you don't have the time with someone with you, they don't want to stay with you and smell perfumes for two hours. So like to make the decision, then you can like you can just sit down, like look it up and then order compare prices and

Unknown Speaker 1:51

In store you really get a headache if you're if you're like oh shoot. And also, it's sometimes nice to wait for the perfume to arrive when ordering it, you go to the post station and you get more excited than when you just buy it from the store I guess so.

Unknown Speaker 2:19

Yeah, and the reviews I like the truth it's with the retailers and I don't know much about it, but I'd like to just read quickly that it's not terrible.

Unknown Speaker 2:28

A lot of you mentioned reviews so that's something really important to you guys,

All speakers:

Yes

Unknown speaker:

then we'll move on to the next one. And then you can actually look at this screen so we're going to show you a perfume from Glossier I don't know if anybody knows the brand

Unknown Speaker 2:52

Yeah, that's viral because it's like apparently all girlfriends are trying it out and then the boyfriends tell them oh my god this is the best perfume I've ever smelled

Moderator

so so this perfume when it was launched it was only sold online and based on the description would you buy this perfume? Why or why not?

Unknown Speaker 4:35

I would not because I think this is so open to everybody

Unknown Speaker 4:40

Yeah, they try to make it fit for everyone when, they switch too much like woody, spicy, fresh. There's too much going on. I wouldn't know exactly what just like that can be everything and nothing like that. There's too much.

Unknown Speaker 4:57

There's too much like in a sense like I mean, there is Floral things, there was spicy things there was pepper creamy. It's not, it's just a mess for me, it would be too much. And I mean too much like sense is also very confusing.

Unknown Speaker 5:17

the peppers threw me off a bit. Because they're like, Iris; floral and Woody. That all seems to work for me. But the pepper...

Unknown Speaker 5:28

And that means different because I'm somehow intrigued by the pepper because I never smelled it in this kind of sense. So I'm a little bit curious. Probably I wouldn't order, because I'm sticking with my perfume. But still no, I think it's very, I think it's very interesting. I'm kind of curious. But I would want to smell it first. Yeah,

Unknown Speaker 5:49

I would like to smell it like on different people. Because it's true that perfume is different on different people because of the skin. Yeah, I would not buy it. Yeah, I also hate

Unknown Speaker 6:19

yeah, I would never buy a perfume that looks like nailpolish. When I first saw it, I was like, why am I looking at nail polish? I was like, that's confusing. No. Yeah.

Moderator

so if you see all these positive reviews, does that change anything about what you said?

Unknown Speaker 6:53

I think it makes me more curious about this. But I still can't imagine like, what the perfume would smell like, even though they say oh, it's so good. But that's because I'm so different. You had a picture. I think it doesn't help me that much.

Unknown Speaker 7:17

I am kind of intrigued now. I mean, because you don't want like a smell that's like, super basic either. So like, if it's specific, and like the description is like.

Unknown Speaker 7:47

if I may, the first review starts from comparing it to Bath and Bodyworks perfume. That's not really like a tangible, like, if that's not I mean, everyone can like an actual performer after you go from a bath and body bottle like

Unknown Speaker 8:05

Also, I don't trust reviews on the actual website of a brand because I don't think they're actually from people who bought that. I just think that they're like marketing interns who just write it

Unknown Speaker 8:17

I trust the negative reviews. Like I look for the negative ones.

Unknown Speaker 8:42

But like for me reviews, like for clothes, it would be like relevance because of the quality of the clothes. For example, for perfume it's so personal and like I would like a perfume that someone else maybe hates. And I mean it's so different and the opinions like differ a lot. So I would not look for reviews for perfume to be honest.

Moderator

Okay, so just to sum up, though, for the last point, some of you were intrigued when you saw the reviews, like I saw a couple of you were you kind of like you did think okay, maybe like it makes me curious. Right. Okay. So we'll move on to the next question. So I'm going to tell you a story.

once upon a time in 1901, a man called Julien Joseph Godet liked two things in life women and flowers, so he started his own perfume house in the south of France in one of France's most beautiful villages. His family was originally into cognac production since 1522, and also produced cognac for Napoleon and kings in France.

He used his distillation skills to make 100% natural perfumes. Today, four generations later Sonia Godet his great great grand daughter took over and still uses the same ancestral methods to distil perfumes.

So how did this story make you feel? And would you consider looking more into the perfumes now, or looking more into the brand, or maybe even consider buying something, something from that brand?

Unknown Speaker 11:12

family stories are nice.

Unknown Speaker 11:15

And it's like, I always loved the idea of having like, a perfume that's like less. I don't know, it's more niche. Yeah, like more like, it's less broadcasts or like, I don't know, I did try like it like some of the perfumes that you see on TV. I don't think they're that good. I would rather just go and like find my own, rather than just use the one that everyone has. Like, I feel like finding like a like family brand, or like something that's a little like, not a big like Gucci or whatever. It's It's nicer. I actually have been able to find it once. And I have it but like, yeah, it's harder. It's harder, but I mean, I feel like it would be more special.

Unknown Speaker 12:05

So cool. People asked like, oh, you smell so good. Let's say, oh, it's like a small family on vineyards of France. Okay, like,

Unknown Speaker 12:13

And you said something you like family stories? Why?

Unknown Speaker 12:19

I don't know. It just, it feels like it makes the brand more personal rather than just being okay. I don't know. Like, even like, for example, when my favorite maison is Valentino. And when he retired and God

Patolli took over. I was like, okay, yeah, he still makes nice clothing, but then you look at what he did in first place. And I feel like being able to continue to do to that line is like, more special if it goes through family, or like, I feel like if it goes through family, you actually have like, the chance to like, have been able to talk to the person and I said, What was the concept behind the when it started? Like being able to, like, get that through? Like to just follow that. Rather than just like switching up people? I feel like it just makes it more special and more like, Yeah, more like, yeah, I don't really know how to explain it. But like, if you hear a story, it's like a family you really they're like family production or some kind of wherever they're given at home. Like if I have to go and buy something at the store, if I can find it by like a farmer of some kind that produces it first, I would rather go there. Just because you know, it's nicer to just like I don't know, if you think about support, but then when it comes like a big maison of some kind, then it kind of like you kind of lose that. But like even if you think Versace Donatella is trying to like, just continue division of her brother. What is that if you pick a few, like if they would have picked someone that wasn't in the family, I feel like they would not have cared about that that much.

Unknown Speaker 13:54

I have more of a love for the brand and everything coming in, like drawing from the heritage that they had this feels like there's more appreciation to what they do and a lot that goes into it

Unknown Speaker 14:16

what about you girls? How did that story makes you feel?

Unknown Speaker 14:21

I can just agree to what both of you said because I also like that you have like the family history with it. I really think it makes it way more personal. And then I also like to kind of emphasis a large part because I really liked it because it shows that you have somehow dedication to the brand and that you really love it. And I think that as a customer it makes me feel very good with the brand because I know that there's a lot of affection towards it. Yeah.

Moderator

Does it make you relate more to the brand?

Unknown Speaker 14:57

maybe humanize it in a way I'm not necessarily relate to more but I think it creates somehow sympathy from the customer towards the brand that you somehow like it more because it's so personal and you see the traditions and history that goes in there

Unknown Speaker 15:18

okay nothing to add to this one right okay

Moderator

so if I would tell you that the brand of the story I just told you about was Dior, which is a brand we probably all know about does that impact how you feel about it? Does knowing the brand impact about how you feel about the experience with the brand?

Unknown Speaker 15:55

for me Yes, like for example Chanel they also really emphasize the whole history of their product like their background like how it was created by Coco Chanel, etc. And I don't know I kind of like that like that there is a history behind and you can relate to that in a way so for me it will make sense to use that for perfume in particular because I don't know it's again about identity so for me it's like all related

Unknown Speaker 16:26

I think it makes me feel better about it. But for me the most important thing is still the smell of the perfume

Unknown Speaker 16:36

Yeah, I don't I don't like it to be honest. That the fact that it's Dior I mean it drops in my perception because I like more niche perfumes and if it is from Dior it's like not what I'm looking for. And first it was like oh yeah that sounds interesting is the kind of a small business but now that I know it's like a big fashion house I'm not that interested anymore.

Unknown Speaker 17:05

that you talked about the family brand and in my head I was like oh yeah don't do it. Don't do it for the money they are like this really big corporation now that like it's just a different category of brand I would say in my head like the family owned business and the big businesses which is maybe not true but that's the way that I associate it.

Unknown Speaker 17:35

i really like Chanel number five. And when I find this perfume, I don't know it's like a status or something. But I don't know I am not buying only the perfume I'm buying like the whole story like everything about the brand, how the brand was created, the story of Coco Chanel so I like the status and when I put on my perfume I feel like proud and happy. I like what it represents.

Moderator

Do you feel like the occasion for example Christmas or a birthday, impacts if you would buy a perfume online or in the store?

Unknown Speaker 19:17

I think if I don't need to buy it for myself and the person wants something specific like if they tell me they want Chanel

number Five for Christmas. I never need to go to the store and smell it then I might as well just order it online and then also because I mean price; perfumes are expensive so some of them you know before Christmas they will probably have special offers coming up

This might be different for perfume maybe for everyday life and like if I'm going to wedding like maybe that was like, like not the buying it but wearing it that could influence purchasing.

Unknown Speaker 20:00

Like, if you actually go and buy it yourself, like you have to get out of the house and go, like find it and buy whatever makes it like a much more effort. Like it makes them more like, oh, I care for this person, like I'm actually going to get out of my house or whatever. But I always feel like it's pointless if I already know they want that specific thing. And I think like find it online or some kind of whatever is just like more. Yeah. So I would probably agree with that. Like I would like I think that if you actually like go, like it makes it more special especially for christmas, like having to go like to the store makes it more special, but at the same time, it's more like you asked for this. Do I just stop by when I'm strolling around by myself? Or do I just order at this point? Especially because I feel the price part covers mostly why you would buy online just because yeah, it's probably easier to find like a sale of some kind especially because like if you want to buy Dior whatever it's 150 euros like if you can save a little bit that might not be a bad idea. But I mean Yeah.

Unknown Speaker 21:18

So if you have to buy a perfume for another person, you may be an option could be buy it online, so not for you but for another person.

Unknown Speaker 21:29

I mean even for myself like it wouldn't matter like if I know exactly what I want already I would buy online if I can find like a sale or something. I mean I wouldn't differentiate

Unknown Speaker 21:38

price is a factor that you really care about

Unknown Speaker 21:43

I feel like I would it wouldn't change if it is for me or for someone else. Like I wouldn't mind like it that would not be a reason to like be like oh no whatever but like if I don't know exactly what the other person wants and I have to find it and maybe I'm like I have like a group of people wherever I would definitely go to a store rather than

Unknown Speaker 22:06

like what I do like what they are doing in the store is sometimes a rapid for you to have a nice packaging and everything and I do like that sometimes.

Unknown Speaker 22:17

Also what we were saying before the advantages to buy at all I was just like thinking about all the advantages to buy in the shop actually because then you go out to from the shop and use mail from the bathroom because of course you've tried again and I don't know you have your physically you're bringing out your perfume I don't know with a nice packages for example some trying for example I don't know and that instead if you buy it at all, okay you buy you finish your purchase and

Unknown Speaker 22:51

you're less engaged with your centre

Unknown Speaker 22:54

experience as well like going to shop it's part of the experience of buying something for you or for someone then like online it's difficult to have this experience like around the perfume around the smells and like I think your senses are less engaged in law

Moderator

if you would have you know the samples at home would that change? do you think you could you could get engaged maybe better to what you find in the store?

Unknown Speaker 23:32

I wouldn't because being physically in the store is like something I don't know and then you have like this whole interaction with like the salesperson and they both wrap like the thing and you buy it I don't know it's a whole process that you will find at home even if you have to perfumes because I think it's not only about the smell the smell is part of it. But it's more like the entire like the entire I don't know process.

Unknown Speaker 24:08

I think for me it would be if they like offered to send you a small trial perfume before then I think then I'd buy perfume online because I just get so overwhelmed in the store. And I don't like to be approached by salespeople, so like, then they ask questions and I cannot even answer them.

I like to look at the pictures and text online and I could pick maybe two or three of those options and order samples. And then there's maybe a collection of multiple ones I can think of all the ones that they have. I can choose two or three there. Something that I'll pick at them. I would prefer that to be honest

Unknown Speaker 25:13

I would agree with you because I don't think they even rap it here in Sweden, if you go to the store, like, it's hard.

Unknown Speaker 25:40

But maybe also, it depends on the store again, because like, I mean, if I go buy a perfume in a normal department store, I would not have the same experience as if I go to an Hermès, and have like, this whole luxury experience. Like, that is gonna be so like, kind of nice to have sometimes.

Unknown Speaker 26:01

It's different depending on where you live, because here in Lund, like, we don't have those stores. Yeah, even in Stockholm they wouldn't.

Unknown Speaker 26:07

I would personally feel a bit out of place in these luxury stores, because then they will again, ask me questions. Like, I don't know, I just need my time to smell it like and think about it. And then I feel really weird when they invest time in me, and then I leave without buying something. So I would know that I would feel pressured to buy something if they take the time to.

Unknown Speaker 26:39

Yeah, the thing is, I would much rather prefer go into the source especially because like, I love it's like make a day out of a you go, you take a walk and then have you eaten by with you. And it can become funny whenever I go. I get really influenced by how the person is with me, it's like, if I find someone that's like rude or like, makes me understand that, like, they want me to buy something or make me feel forced to do it, then I don't like it. And I think it ruins the experience whereas, If you just sit at home and just buy it. I would rather go out. You also got another factor that like influences the choice was like, then you have the other person do they make you like, did they pressure you? What, what's what's going on with that? Because like, I've been a retail like, assistant. So like, I know that like that

was my job. Like, of course I had time and patience like show things and whatever. But not everyone gets that. And it has happened to me at times to find someone that's like rude or like, pressures you and then you're just like, No, I don't feel like it anymore, and just go home. So yeah, there's this risk factor when you go to the store.

Moderator

And at home you don't have that risk?

Unknown Speaker 28:06

No at home you don't have that. But at the same time, you kind of have to like weigh pros and cons because at home, you don't get to try the perfume outside your house, when going to the store you get a chance to take a stroll. I would buy it online, just because like if it's something that I really, really need, like, I don't want to wait. Especially because I come from a small city. So like, I would also have like, drive to the other city, find the store, go buy it, like they might not have it, which is also something that happens. So I mean, if you want to make sure that it gets there on time, like if you actually need it, you just buy it online, now they have those shippings where instead of five days it takes two. So I mean, it's it would be easier, like as far as like risk wise, but then you lose the experience of like going out and taking a stroll and like having coffee with it and you just sit in your cafe would you like little packaging? Like the little bottle next to you?

Unknown Speaker 29:10

Yeah, that sums it up pretty perfectly because when going to the store, the whole experience is more important. And if you like that, then that's probably the reason why you go to the store. But if you really just want the product, and you don't need the experience and you just want to make a

decision without the salespeople approaching you then you buy it online.

Moderator

So to sum everything up. How does a fun and nice perfume experience online look for you? So you guys said we're not really looking for a big experience online, right. It's more about convenience and it's fast?

Unknown Speaker 0:12

Having different categories that you can choose from, explaining more about the notes and everything. I think that's really if you don't know so much about perfume.

Unknown Speaker

I prefer that as well.

Unknown Speaker

That they take you through the journey and like give you like I said these associations and pictures and things that really helps to get comfortable.

Moderator

Okay, but the educate you but give you some knowledge, some background?

All speakers:

yes

Unknown Speaker 0:43

probably the trials and maybe it's nice to have a refund policy that might help reduce the risk. Like, if I really hate it, I can send it back. Like sometimes they have the option that you get the trial first and then if you decide to buy the big one, you get the

money that you paid for the trial deducted from the price of the big one. So all of these kinds of things that I feel okay. They tried to reduce the risk by like giving guidance or allowed me to get it back.

Unknown Speaker 1:13

Okay. Anything you want to add?

No? Good. Okay. Well, that's it. Thank you so much!

Appendix C – Focus Group Questions

May we record this focus group discussion recorded? We ensure that your identity will stay confidential.

Quick introduction – Introduce ourselves and make participants introduce themselves

Brief : Thank you for taking part in this discussion with us today. The topic of today's discussion will be about how a fragrance brand can create a memorable brand experience for you online.

Questions:

Warm-up question: Why do you buy and wear perfume?

1. Why would you buy perfume online?
2. How comfortable do you feel about buying a perfume online?
3. How would you describe your past experiences with purchasing perfumes online? Were there any outstanding experiences?
4. In general what kind of content entertains you the most online?
5. Where do you most often buy perfumes online? And why?
6. How do you go about when buying a perfume online
7. What aspects do you like about experiencing a fragrance online?
8. How would you select a fragrance, if not by it's smell?
9. Show Glossier case <https://www.glossier.com/products/glossier-you>
This perfume is only sold online, based on the description, would you buy this perfume? Why? Why not?
10. When you see this review about the Glossier perfume, how does that make you feel?

Molly
08/01/2022
Illinois

★★☆☆☆

Love the smell but doesn't last

Age Range 17-24

This perfume smells really great. It's light but almost too light. My boyfriend said is smelled like "the best smell of nothing." Honestly doesn't last longer than an hour. I'll try the solid one but I won't buy another bottle.

Bottom Line No - I would not recommend this to a friend

Was this review helpful to you? ↑ 123 ↓ 25

11. Let me tell you a story: *once upon a time in 1901, a man called Julien Joseph Godet liked two things in life women and flowers, so he started his own perfume house in the south of France in one of France's most beautiful villages. His family was originally into cognac production since 1522, and also produced cognac for Napoleon and kings in France. He used his distillation skills to make 100% natural perfumes. Today, four generations later Sonia Godet his great great grand daughter took over and still uses the same ancestral methods to distil perfumes.*

How did this story make you feel? Was it negaging? Would you consider buying a perfume from this brand, why?

12. How does an egaging and memroable perfume experience online look like for you?

Is there anything that I haven't asked that you would like to add about your brand experience online when buying perfumes?