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The role of B2B and B2C communications in enabling access based fashion business models

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Industry Trends

- In fashion, consumers and brands must work together to extend the product lifecycle by focusing on **access as opposed to ownership-based models** (Arrigo, 2021).

- Consumers are adapting their consumption practices in favour of circularity (Business of Fashion and McKinsey and Company, 2022).

- Mintel suggests that while one in 10 consumers have rented fashion items in the last year, there is scope for expansion (Mintel 2021). Over a third (34%) of young people, who are more accustomed to the sharing economy, are suggested to be interested in renting fashion items (Mintel 2020).

- Many businesses have therefore shifted from the 'pipeline' structure to the 'platform' structure where complex relationships emerge; producers, consumers, and the rental platform itself enter a variable set of relationships (Parker et al, 2016).

The KTP Project

Market Audit (micro, macro, internal)

Consumer Research to underpin Marketing Strategy

Development of Marketing Strategy

Segmentation and Targeting of New Partners

International Market Selection for Growth

Brand Development and Positioning

Marketing Communications Planning and Implementation

Consumer Research: Key findings

The main consumer barriers to fashion rental are:

- more likely to hire from a brand/rental platform,

- Relationship between the rental company and rentee,

- hygiene factor and associated transparency,

The main marketing barriers to fashion rental, from a 3rd party logistics provider perspective, are:

- partner relationship type between cleaning facilities and fashion brands, &

- complexity of marketing activities e.g., variations of needs and wants, partner approvals and different processes per partner.
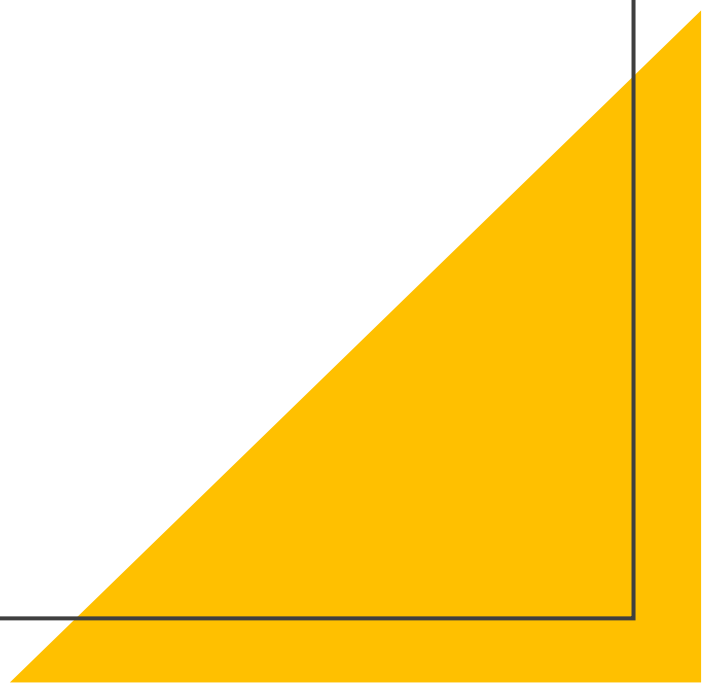
Questions considered when developing strategy

- How should a combination of B2B and B2C communications be developed to best engage consumers in these models beyond the niche markets that are currently favourable?

- How can B2B and B2C communications best be utilised to encourage fashion brands and retailers to adopt a product- as- a service model?

- Given growing demands from consumers surrounding transparency, how can B2B and B2C communications be used by fashion rental and resale fulfilment specialists to better inform consumers regarding the sustainability of their processes?

- How should the use of B2B and B2C communications be adapted by fashion brands and retailers within these new 'access' models to align with the relationship expectations of consumers?

Action Research: Development of Branding and Marketing Communications Strategy

- Having identified the primary barriers to change and pinpointing what hinders adoption of fashion rental we were able to devise and implement a new branding and communication strategy for ACS. This strategy was designed to overcome the aforementioned barriers and focused on both B2B and B2C communications.

- Throughout this process it was clear that a consumer-brand power dynamic emerged.

Fashion Brand Retailer

White Label Technology

3rd Party Logistics Provider

Existing Fashion Rental
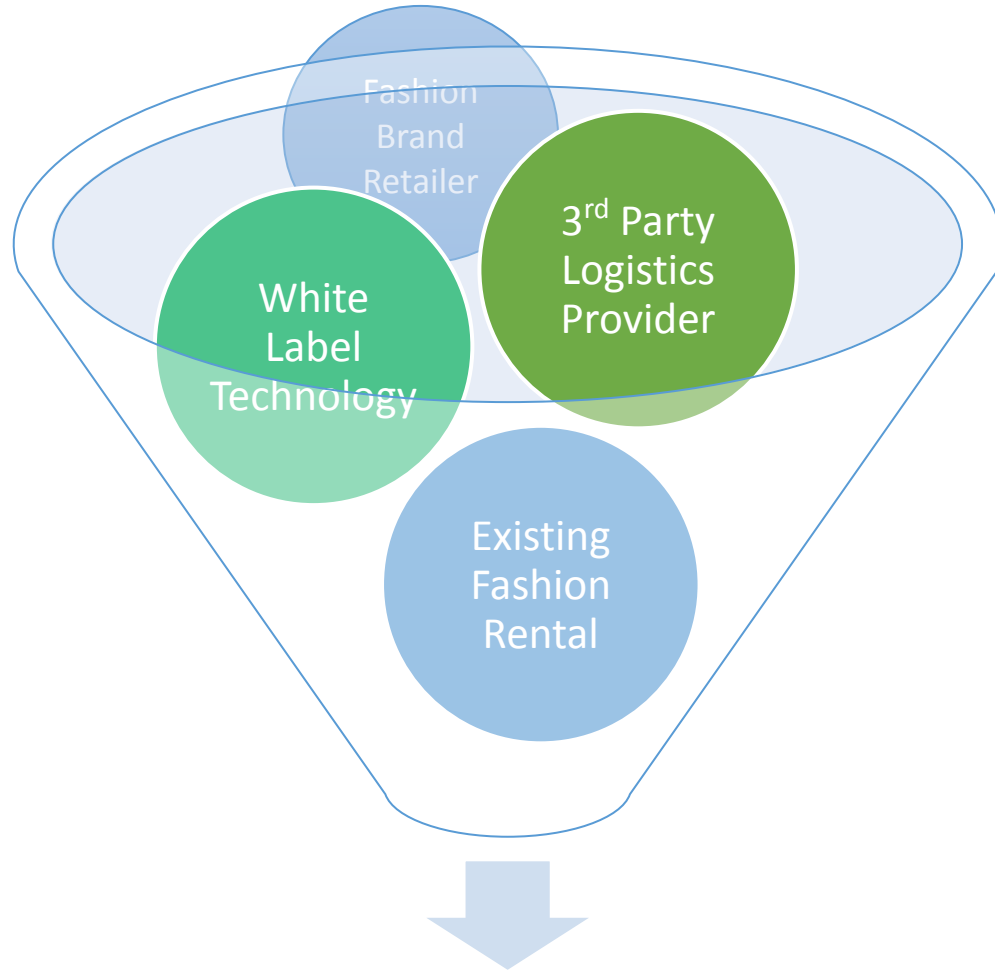
Mar Comms

How these challenges were overcome and potential next steps to evaluate success :

- Sharing of consumer research findings to inform partners.

- Fully understand the partner relationship and associated requirements per partner.

- Support marketing collateral including technical input, ease of understanding process, and adaptability dependent on partner needs.

- Having defined processes relating to partner management activities.