



INTERNACIONAL FASHION FAIRS

ELISÂNGELA LINDEMANN¹, ANA CRISTINA BROEGA².

¹University of Minho, elis.zizi@gmail.com

²University of Minho, cbroega@det.uminho.pt

Abstract: *This paper analyzes the concepts related to Fashion Brands in a global context, studying the existing concepts on International Trade, seeks to identify how these brands are structured and how do they trade their products, trying to identify strategies used by some brands in Fashion shows, and so establish an ideal structure to be adopted in participating in international fashion fairs.*

Keywords: *international trade fairs, fashion brand, globalization and the world market.*

1. Introduction

The importance of the fashion in the world, whether in the field of academic knowledge, either from industrial and economic activity is increasing. The fashion fairs around the world are constantly growing and the brands that support a more dynamic economy that attracts a growing number of investors. There are many unanswered questions about the issue of internationalization of fashion brands, but this research is only intended to address some of these concepts, contact some of the brands that participate in European international fairs on a regular basis and seek to understand what are the biggest challenges facing on each participation, the primary objectives and outcomes achieved in fashion fairs.

1.1 The Global Context

The current man lives with a speed of change unprecedented in history. The development of technology and science, made possible the fulfillment of old dreams, how to navigate through space, cloning living beings and the interconnection of the world total, both in economic and social aspects, every day millions of people speak in the languages deemed most universal, in detriment of their native language. Every corner of the world is consumed products and services designed and developed in other economies. Globalization according to Bassi (1997, p. 29) is a process of global integration that occurs in the areas of communications, economics, finance and business. For its size and speed, this phenomenon will profoundly affect individuals, businesses and nations, because it changes the fundamentals upon which organized the world economy over the past fifty years.

The progressive reduction of trade barriers between states, through bilateral agreements and between blocks of states, which generated preferential trade areas and economic unions, induced a structural change, profound and irreversible, in the world economy. The states and companies have become interdependent and the respective development processes need to be framed in the overall competitive performance. Economic globalization and the globalization of the world market resulted, inevitably, the complexity of progressive internationalization processes which generated not only new threats and new business opportunities according to Hortinha and Viana (1997).

The effects of globalization on the labor market are evident, with the creation of the modality of outsourcing jobs to countries where labor is cheaper to perform, services that do not need high qualifications, with production distributed among several countries, either for the creation of a single product, where each company creates a part, whether to create the same product in several countries to reduce costs and gain competitive advantages in access to regional markets.

Globalization is not a stable process or static. Countries that are now major customers or suppliers can be quickly replaced by others who present with better opportunities for profits and business expansion. So for a country not be at a disadvantage, should have a balance between the total values of import and export. If the difference is too high, it means they are buying products and services from other countries in quantities much higher than it sells to the exterior, and may cause damage to its economy.

1.2 The World Market of Fashion

The economic context of fashion is no longer a local or national matter. Fashion is a global enterprise and an international language cross frontiers and ethnic classes. International fashion conglomerates have financial power to buy raw materials and transport them to the producers with the lowest cost and risk. The confections no longer have heavily centralized production lines; the activity of confection is now spread over several locations where the technical costs of manpower and storage are smaller, the supply is abundant and the legislation is less rigorous than in many countries of origin. The fashion conglomerates buy all around the world brands and companies that fit in your business portfolio. Clothing and national costumes increasingly lose space, western clothes are omnipresent and only a few remained impenetrable markets. Labels and "logos" of large corporations are recognized style icons from London to Lisbon, from San Francisco to Singapore, according to Jones (2005, p. 36).

According to the same author, there was a time when it was extremely unusual to work abroad, while today we see chain stores in France, Spain and U.S., such as Kookai, Zara and The Gap, in the shopping streets around the world. It is no longer possible to deduce from a brand's name the origin of its design or manufacturer. Some see this unbridled globalization and the need for companies to generate profits for shareholders as the beginning of the collapse of the unique qualities that differentiate a product or confection from one country to another.

To Olins (2003, p. 104), certain brands not attract only a certain type of customers, due to the characteristics and attitudes of the brand, follow them as they move from one sector to another of business, but also, and a crucial way, attracts high-quality suppliers, partners and employees. It is the attitude and behavior of the brand, aided and supported by their visual manifestations, which are its most important assets. Many large companies are beginning, albeit tentatively, to move in this direction, but only those which have an enlarged view seem to be able to break the conventions that traditionally constrain.

1.2.1 The Global Marketing Strategies

Globalization has increasingly characterized the product of fashion, the cultural variety that identifies the global village, and more and more countries participate in its production. Anywhere in the world find themselves products of global diffusion, produced for brands adopting global marketing strategies, such as Levis, Benetton, Lacoste, Diesel, etc., All with a global message, meaning direct investment professionals competent and specialized in the language of "global village".

The communication worked on advertising campaigns for fashion brands focused on issues of human consciousness, global issues have been a smart way to communicate beyond "this" being a fashion brand is also concerned about global issues.

Known for its controversial advertising history, the United Colors of Benetton's strategy is to involve the buyer in the "world Benetton," and was a leader with regard to the creation of advertising of character provocative and intelligent criticism. It was one of the first brands to sell their collections in small boutiques in 1970s, boosting the creation of multi-brand stores. With this strategy, Benetton managed to lose the image of the producer of articles manufactured on a large scale by acquiring their products a unique and cozy atmosphere, which until then had only the clothing of the great designers. But Benetton took advantage primarily the role of the current issues. As producing more classic clothing and basic garments, Benetton has never had the intention to create new trends. However, defended the concept of promotion of simple and functional clothing for everyone. The slogan "United Colors", the slogan of the major

campaigns of Benetton, transmitted a message simple and direct. The photographs of children with many different skin tones should appeal to an open and tolerant society, wanting to present himself as the representative of a world in harmony and without conflict. When you purchase a piece of Benetton thus suggested the advertising, the purchaser became a part of this world (Lehnert, 2000, p. 97).

More recently, the Italian brand of Jeanswear, Diesel, also promoted a provocative advertising campaign with the slogan "Global Warming Ready", suggesting that the brand is ready to global warming. The campaign showed the Mount Rushmore (mountain of granite sculptures with faces of former U.S. presidents, located in South Dakota, USA), and known buildings from New York under water because of the supposed rise in sea levels due to climate overall (Figure 1), among other monuments worldwide under the consequences of global warming.

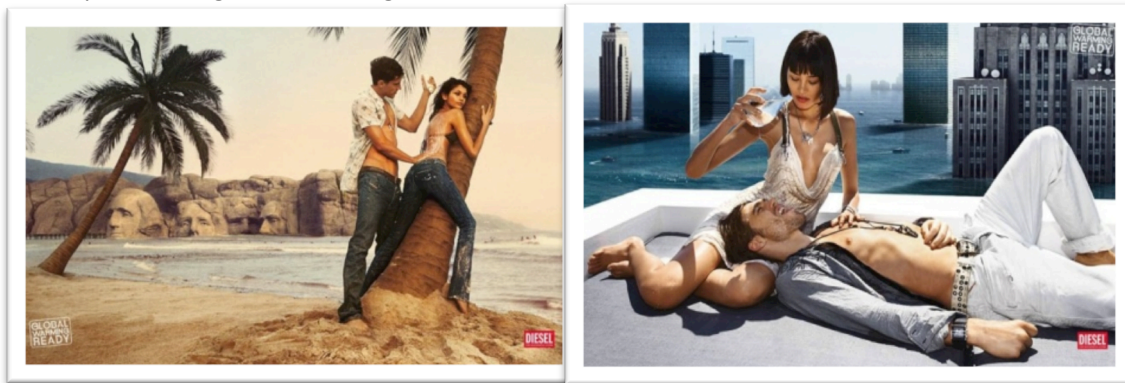


Figure 1: Diesel advertising campaign "Global Warming Ready." South Dakota and New York.

1.3 The Internacional Fashion Fairs

Every time more fashion brands are betting on international fairs to expand to other markets in countries where they are not yet present. Most of the information about a particular market can be obtained by taking advantage of the celebration of these contests.

The contact with other exhibitors and products on display, identifies the existing supply, market trends and competition (Figure 2). They can also collect statistics or information and on the functioning of the market.



Figure 2: Exhibitors from the area of *Fashion Now* in the Fair Bread & Butter.

There are general fairs and other sector-specific being these designated by monographic rooms or specialized. The general trade fairs are held mainly in developing countries and are events that attract buyers from many different sectors.

The participation in these fairs can be very productive, as is the opportunity to get to know potential distributors, agents or representatives, who are often interested in marketing new products. The sectoral fairs, are held more often in developed countries and in general are addressed to professionals.

In the fashion area we can still split fairs between the fairs of image and fairs of sales. In a fair of image there is usually a much greater financial investment, as the priority objective of the marks is to pass the image of your brand and make themselves known in the market concerned. Now in a fair of sales it is understood that the purpose of making known the brand image is still present, but the main goal is to sell.

2. Methodology

The methodology approached in this investigation incorporated two phases: an exploratory and another descriptive. The exploratory phase included the gathering of secondary data, i.e. information existed on the subject, with the purpose of familiarization and understanding. The descriptive phase which is held in the collection and analysis of primary data obtained through interviews, as well as its foundation for the formulation of conclusions.

The exploratory research also included a visit to some of the main fashion fairs in Europe to collect information on site by observation.

The second step is an investigation based on a qualitative technique, based on small samples, using unstructured questionnaires. This method considers opinions, attitudes and feelings rather than numerical data. Personal interviews were conducted with intention to get as much information on the subject, from the expression on the part of the interviewees of their ideas and opinions. The disadvantage of this method is that the sample is not representative used in quantitative terms, while obtaining depth answers.

2.1 Data Gathering Instrument

There are practical principles in preparing a questionnaire for Marketing Research. The rules, though basic, are not rigid and are related to the construction of clear and objective questions, including the submission of questions very well articulated and logical arrangement of these in order to follow a sequence of issues from the simplest to most complex.

The assembly and development of the questionnaire were aimed at checking some issues that have emerged or along the exploratory phase, or during the field research (visit to the fair Bread & Butter Berlin). These questions relate to the whole process performed by the brands for participation in the fairs, from planning, preparation of the stand, the material to be distributed during the fair, to the activities performed after the fairs, including contact with clients who attended the event and until final balances on each participation.

Thus, the questionnaire was applied to a representative sample of the target selected (three Portuguese fashion brands who participated in the Summer 2010 edition of Bread and Butter Berlin) because from eight Portuguese clothing brands which during the fair were willing to participate this research, only three actually answered the interview, one from the segment of shoes and two Jeanswear.

As one Trade Show for Selected Brands, Bread and Butter GmbH understands the concept of an innovative trade event for the culture of contemporary clothing. The current international trade fair provides one platform for communication and creative marketing for selected brands, brands and designers from the progressive segment that is unmatched worldwide. Under the motto "fun and profit," Bread and Butter combines inspiration and business. The exhibiting brands are presented in full accordance with its philosophy and its own individual brand culture and emotional setting.

With approximately 650 exhibitors from different sectors of Denim, Sportswear, Street Fashion, Function Wear and Casual Dressed Up, the BREAD & BUTTER represents the segment of contemporary and Urban Street Wear. With its portfolio of exclusive brands and recognition of European and world industries of textiles, which grew and established itself over the last ten years, this exhibition provides a meeting place for unique and extremely popular with buyers, retailers and media representatives from textile industry of fashion clothing.

Professional visitors from over 100 countries use the BREAD & BUTTER for complete information and how to "kick off" for a new round of collections. The portfolio of brands divided into eight areas, as well as the location of the fair at a historic airport which set new standards and form a unique contemporary scene in the area of textile fairs.

3. Results and Discussions

Based on the information, the results of the interviews and literature reviews, a script of best practices to be adopted by fashion brands wishing to participate in international Fashion fairs has been prepared, and given from here below.

The main objective of these brands by participating in this fair (B&B), is to increase its reputation in the world market in the first place, which in return provides an increase of their customer base and market sales. And also they are always looking to pass the image of the mark in a solid and efficient way.

All trademarks shown to have great concern about the assignment of location of the stand where the brand will be present, generally seeking a more central location in the corridors where passage is required. Most of the brands that are interviewed have continuous work in relation to fashion fairs, in other words after ending of an event, preparation of the next one soon begins.

3.1 Professionals involved in the event

The organization of the participation of a brand in an international fashion fair involves many professionals from different areas, from within the company, or even subcontractors for a period of predetermined time. Professionals will be needed for tasks vary widely, ranging from design and development of the stand up to the assistance to guests in the days of the event. These professionals may already be company employees or outsiders. For a good organization of the event, it is advisable to have:

- A person from the sales department responsible for market of the concerned fair.
- One person from the management of the inventory of shops, who know the products and know what is to come into the store.
- A person from logistics that will do all the sales tracking and can guarantee the exact date of delivery of ordered product in the fairs.
- A person from the image department for everything that has to do with image and marketing pieces.
- A person from visual merchandising for all the architecture of the stand.
- A person from the communication department.
- And a person from trading department who will be responsible for all negotiations.

Throughout the event, each person in their area is responsible for specific functions.

3.2 The Stand

The design of the stand assumes an increasing importance. If few years ago the stands were perceived as service counters, where these spaces currently are seeking to combine the creativity with the effectiveness of new technologies, not to mention that it is a very effective means of promoting their brand identity for visitors to the event. A stand modern, functional and appropriate to the brand concept is fundamental to the success of the exhibition (Rasquilha, 2009, p. 248).

Most fashion brands that regularly participate in major international exhibitions, develops its own stand and replace it at least annually, the ever-adapting to the theme of new collections, without of course losing the institutional image of the brand. Usually it is a stand with a totally new concept for fairs in January, which will last for only one more, the July issue, which still updates are made in the image of the stand, but that does not require therefore such high investment as develop a new stand from scratch. It is always important to make it "fresh" so that the customer has the feeling that is new, that something is different, because as in fashion, trends change every season, it is important to show that the brand follows these changes and remain always in the latest market trends.

The fact that all fairs have different plants, implies that the space available to the trade mark may be different in different fairs, the construction of a stand should take this into account, making it a very

modular and flexible enough so it can be used in more than a fair. If the same stand can be used in other fairs to be held in the short term, it makes sense to be reusable, with an update of available information.

Inside the stand there are a number of aspects: the institutional area, trading area and product area, depending on the type of stand, they may or may not coexist in the same space. In the case shown below they do not coexist (they are separate).

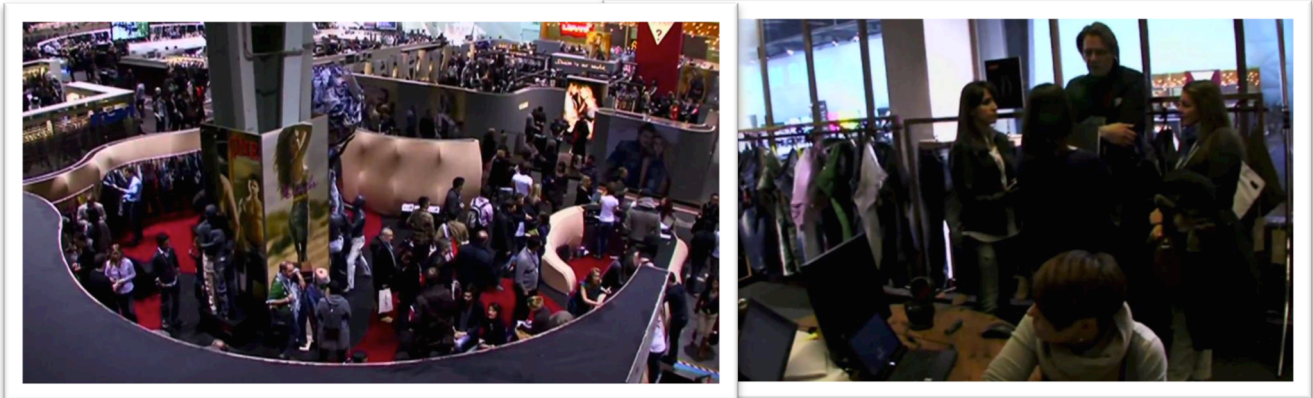


Figure 3: The institutional area in the stand at the sight of visitors and the area of trading on the second floor only to buyers.

The stand has to be versatile, allowing many fronts and dimensions. The same stand should not appear more than three times - which would give the idea of stagnation. We must innovate not by material but by how it is exposed (for example, the level of sound, light and image), which is made possible by today's multimedia tools. The fair is presented as the place by excellence for making demonstrations, which may range from fashion shows to the presentations of the collection individually for each client (usually made by the seller). Customers ask questions on the site, which allows companies to have a notion of what the public thinks of the product (Rasquilha, 2009, p. 249).

The greatest enemy of the exhibitors is the fatigue of the visitor. Within the same pavilion the stands most prominent are the central block corners or near the entrance - the first stand is much upon the visitor. The most important factor is attracting the wanted visitors. In a large fair, it is essential that the client mark in the agenda a visit to your stand - which implies a marketing job well done pre-show (Rasquilha, 2009, p. 249).

It is very important to make a "test" assembling of the stand, before sending it to the place of the exhibition, placing in it all the items that will be present at the fair, the entire collection and how they will be exposed, on hangers, mannequins or other supports to see what will be the look of the stand after all assembled, decorated and prepared to the exhibits, thus avoiding any unforeseen on site and day of event.

3.3 During the stay at the fair

It is much more important to boost the presence with structured activities and appealing than having a large area where it is made a mere display of products and services. There should have people who know how to make the qualification of contacts and filtering the guests. It should have a counter with a developer to do the screening and refer visitors or information/catalogs, or referring them to a reserved service area, which shall be a commercial developer. In addition to developing ways to assess potential clients (such as collecting business cards or raffle prizes), these "hosts" (receptionists) must have good presentation and if necessary use special uniforms, or even items of clothing produced by the brand exhibiting. It is essential that they have the mastery of foreign languages, especially English, which is universally spoken language in the business world. The company is a reflection of the image that they can transmit from their employees to customers, so any brand that wishes to attain prestige abroad should possess or contract skilled and competent personnel.

Also should have "uniformed hosts" walking throughout the fair to distribute bags and gifts for runners, this is an asset because it increases the chances of brand's visibility and turns out to be a great means of

communication, especially if you have a big, stylish and sturdy bag, in which visitors can put all the material collected during the fair, so visitors will own the brand advertising. Organize cocktails with clients and the media on the stand. Promote festivals and events in parallel with the fair, at night in the hottest places of the city, offering a fellowship among its customers and its employees may also be an extra dissemination of the brand.

Animation of the stand with live demonstrations of their products (e.g. periodic scheduled fashion shows and widely disseminated by the fair, or have models to wear the brand clothing at the stand, or having live music, hiring DJ's, etc. .. There are brands even offer service of hairstyling and tattoos (real) to visitors on their stands.

Try to always have interesting and useful gifts to visitors, not to think of gifts just to the fair, but to the final consumer, something that can be used forever, many people will seek the stand of the brand especially because of the gifts and use them will be doing publicity to the brand in the fair, thereby bringing more and more curious visitors to your search.

Take advantage of all the services offered by the fair, some fairs organized multi fashion shows, it is important to attend to increase brand visibility at the event.

During the fair try to make photographic records by the halls of the entire event, for later be able to determine what is called spot the brand, i.e. how it is displayed in different corners of the event by its image in bags or giveaways.

3.4 After the event

It is important to note that the results of the fairs are not all immediate, since for some brands, many of the contacts made during the fair are from potential franchisees, which is a long process, well studied and analyzed, which can take time if materialize. Therefore the results of a participating brand an international fair is not a value that is easy to account for, as well as the sales figures, one must take into consideration the disclosure that the brand had during the event. It's good to always keep in mind that the market in different countries has different behaviors, so you must set the objectives for each fair according to the market in which it is situated.

The fair is a very important tool for the customer to see the brand and know that the brand has strength to be able to be always present at such events, the clients can have a first contact with the collection, choose what they like, give opinions and later make their purchase through vendors in each country, visiting these customers, or even the own customers can visit the showroom of the brand in the country where they are, and even make purchases online on the site of the brand if the brand provide this service to their customers.

Establish contact with all potential customers, agents and distributors who visited the stand of the brand is key to the success of participation in a major event because many of the contacts made directly at the fairs are reestablished and transformed into business until 6 months after the event.

After accounting for the business carried out in the event and update the database of contacts, must begin immediately to prepare for the participation in the next edition of the event.

3.4.1 Evaluation cost / benefit of the participation

Some of the costs of participation in the fair are perfectly quantifiable, cost of transportation, cost of the stand, hired "hostesses" or interpreters, the price of travel, accommodation, subsistence allowance for staff displaced, etc..

In contrast, there are others that are more difficult to define:

- Cost of overtime which eventually must be paid to displaced persons or those which were to replace the displaced persons of their normal occupation;

- Cost of loss of normal domestic activity of displaced persons;
- Possible additional administrative costs that can be passed on to other departments, etc.

On the other hand, it is not enough to see the immediate profit from the sale of products on display, but essentially perspective gained by creating market and to achieving customers from that time to acquire the company's products, always working in a sustainable way the markets where the fair is located. In large markets such as Bread & Butter, for example, there are brands who account total sales, where about 60% are to known customers and 40% of total sales are made to new customers, who met the brand during the event.

Other indirect benefits include the creation of a company's image, contacts, familiarity with the practices and products of competitors and deepen knowledge and relationship with the own customers contributed to their loyalty.

For all of this is difficult to analyze the cost/benefit of participation, which includes all these factors and also the support that might obtain from government agencies (Delgado, 2006).

In general, international fashion fairs are a great opportunity to welcome new customers; it is always a moment of mutual discovery, where you can exchange ideas and have a moment of direct contact, because they are mostly foreign clients this contact is rarely possible on other occasions.

3.4.2 Final balance of the participation

It is essential to prepare a report, as detailed as possible in order to evaluate the results of participation in the fair. As a rule this should include three parts:

- **Data on the participation of exhibition:** Stand and assembly, transportation, decoration, various services, and expenditures at this stage.
- **Incidences regarding the exhibition:** Data provided by the direction of the fair (area of the room, number of visitors and their classification of professional activity, etc..), Press clippings to disclose any news about the exhibition, photographs of the stand, a list of requests received and expenses during the fair.
- **Final Phase:** Packing and Shipping, opinion about the show and its services (surveillance, fire, communications, banks, interpreters, receptionists, etc.), expenses incurred, collection of all receipts of expenditures.

Prepared report, which should have access all the company's commercial department, it should be immediately respond to inquiries received or contact made (Delgado, 2006).

In addition to the report of the participation, there shall be developed a more general, in order to assess the framework for action in the international marketing previously defined. The data collected will be important for the development of the plan for the next edition or adjustment to the existing agreement with the results.

4. Conclusions

The interviewed brands have the same goals when they participate in an international fashion show, all seeking to expand their network of contacts, both in terms of agents, distributors or direct customers, also seek to make its most widely known brand in the world market, hoping always highlighted themselves from their competitors. Brands consider international fairs as an important meeting point with their current and potential customers where they can learn about new trends and new collections before the next purchase for their outlets.

The location of the stand within the pavilion of the event is another very important factor to be considered when preparing for an international event, you should always try to stay close to major crossing corridors, ports of entry or exit, close to restaurants or bathrooms are also considered reasonably good locations.

The analysis of responses in the interviews about the process of preparation and participation in international fairs and fashion with the aid of literature searches performed in this study, it was possible to arrive at a proposed methodology for the participation of a brand in an international trade fairs aimed at fashion market, based on this we are preparing a book that can be a useful working tool for companies that have not yet clearly defined their methodologies and educational materials for teaching the process of preparing for an international exhibition.

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