Sell it!
different

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Abstact

Sell it! different

Consumption logics are changing in every sectors and so also retail conditions. Consequently we assist to the appearing of new consumers with new values, new motivations and new behaviours. One of the most interesting changes is the advent of multichannel strategies for retail. So what can companies do to face this changes and be updated and appealing for its clients? Mainly if we talk about SMEs, that are not able to involve big talents to develop business strategies, which are the main upgrade people expect from them? They have to deal with the new consumers, very demanding and careful that, with the help of Internet, are more and more able to select. If this companies want to be competitive they have at least to speak their same languages developing a proper multichannel strategy. With this project I wanted to analize this complex environment and the world of multichannel strategies trying to identify which are the main features that needs to be developed to be competitive in the italian fashion business framing five different strategies for SMEs. Starting from the analysis of some study cases, I identyfied five models of integration of online and offline channels that then I try to turn in five different strategies and practical approach with my kit ‘Sell it! Different’.

Le logiche di consumo e conseguentemente le condizioni del retail stanno cambiando in ogni settore di mercato. Come conseguenza il consumatore subisce cambiamenti, muta nei valori, nelle motivazioni e nei comportamenti essendo esso stesso espressione della società. Uno dei cambiamenti più interessanti e dirompenti è l’avvento della multicanalità come strategia di retail. In questo panorama come possono agire le aziende per continuare ad attrarre clienti? In particolare considerando il panorama delle PMI italiane nel settore della moda, che non hanno la possibilità di collaborare con grandi talenti e consulenti preparati per elaborare strategie multicanale innovative che è ciò che il mercato richiede loro? Queste realtà devono confrontarsi con nuovi consumatori, molto esigenti e attenti che, grazie all’avvento di Internet sono ora sempre più abili nel selezionare i prodotti. Se queste aziende voglioni provare ad esser competitive, devono almeno parlare la loro stessa lingua sviluppando un’ efficace strategia multicanale. Con questo progetto ho voluto analizzare questo complesso ecosistema e la realtà delle strategie multicanale per identificare le principali caratteristiche che rendono competitiva una strategia di questo tipo elaborando cinque strategie per le PMI. Partendo dall’analisi di alcuni casi studio, ho creato 5 modelli di integrazione dei canali online e offline che, nel kit Sell it! different, sono diventati pratici strumenti per realizzare una strategia su misura.

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Preface

Research question

To reach my goal of understanding the main features of an effetive cross channel strategy, I first set up the frame and started analyzing this in depth to understand in which environment I am going to work. Because, as the study 'The changing face of retail' done by Deloitte in 2011 said, 'the retail industry is confronted with unprecedented change'. I focused myself on Italian fashion retail environment and I tried to sum up the main features of this changes and how these could influence my target. In particular I started analyzing new purchaising models and trends, the changes that are happening in technological enviroment that are modyfing faces of offline and online stores and how business models are evolving according to the intensified competition. After this analysis I focused myself on people because actually a retailer works for his clients so it is necessary to understand their new behaviours and needs to develop a winning new strategy. Then, trying to look in fashion international landscape to understand what is happening in multichannel development, I came out with five models of channels integration that could be useful not only for Big companies that have lots of resources and competencies, but also for SMEs. The intent of my toolkit Sell it!different is to help these companies in understanding which is the best strategy for them and tracing the path to develop it in an effective way. This project could be very useful for SMEs because usually they don't have the opportunity to drive a study on consumers or on the changing environment, that are fundamental for designing a winning multichannell strategy, and a designer could do it for them because of his ability to have a user center approach in chosing and then developing the best strategy for them, leveraging on their strenght and developing just what is within their grasp, increasing their power of reaching customers and their image.

Chapter n .1

Changes in fas hion retail

_fig.1

The new purchasing models

Changes in fashion retail

In this first chapter I tried to underline the main changes that are affecting Italian fashion retail environment starting from new purchasing models. The financial crisis we are living really modified the way in which people perceive money because consumer spending levels is weak and it will probably last. This, combined with other rising awareness, especially the environmental and social ones, plays an important role in consumer's choices and actually is the root of this borning new purchasing models even if, as we could see later, most of them contemplate the recovery of past habits we have lost. As I will explain better in the second chapter, consumer is an entity continuously changing, and it is no more possible to identify clearly finite frames in which to cluster it and parallel purchasing model are becoming more and more fragmented and shifting from massification to differentiation. Still there are some practices that are taking place in fashion retail that we need to understand before developing a retail strategy because these hide changes in perception of some fundamental concepts like quality, price sensitivity and waste. In particular I selected four main purchasing models evolved around this concepts that I learned reading the works of some of the most important Italian scholars in sociology of consumption. These models are downgrading and downshifting, from ownership to access and bargain hunt.

Downgrading and dowshifting

As you will probably know, fashion market in Italy, but in general all around the world, is being modified by the advent of *fast fashion* companies. The fast fashion phenomenon was born in '90 and it is based on 'economy of scarcity' that means that products stay on the shelves for a very short period to make people think 'If I don't buy it now I won't probably find it the next time'. One of the first company that developed the concept was Benetton creating a very basic collection but available in a lot of bright colors. Today fast fashion companies propose *trends of the season* with items very similar to those seen on the catwalks but for affordable prices. More over they adopted a different definition of collection because they don't have just a collection for season but something like 10 collection per year. This not only changes very often their assortment but also changes the habits of consumers. According to a Confesercenti Swg's study, during the crisis the number of people buying fast fashion products is tripled, from 14% to 44% and 50% of people is saying that they approve the quality of those products. The most famous brands representing this phenomenon are growing an average of 10% a year (Inditex, that owns brands as Stradivarius, Zara and Massimo Dutti has grown 12%, H&M 10% in 2012).
Even if the entire fashion market in Italy is decreasing, according to smi data about 2012, of -4% per years, there is another segment that is growing and it is the luxury (+4% in 2013 according to Confcommercio data). These data are describing the new paradox of consume distribution that could be exemplified with the image of an hourglass. Behind this kind of distribution there is a change in perception of quality. In fact this concept could be described no more as a universal concept because it becomes very personal and circumstantial. Now on we have to deal with *perceived quality* because it is in fact what a consumer evaluates, a mix of objective (held at the color by a waterproof rimmel, held at the wash by a jumpsuit) and subjective features (softness of a wool coat, fit of a dress). I explained this because it is the cause of the two models I am presenting: downgrading and downshifting, both well explained by G. Fabris in 'La società post-crescita'.
Downgrading is the model adopted by those people that prefer to qualify than to increase their consumption so they are apt to buy less but items on a higher quality level. The purpose is not to show off but to have something durable and excellent in terms of culture, research, self-care, sustainability and mix of tangible and intangible values. This kind of attention bring to luxury products as the main choice because we are used to think that the higher price is justified by something more than a product and this product will last unchanged for years avoiding waste, unsustainable behaviors and further expenses. As we are going to better explain in the second chapter, consumers are becoming very accurate in selecting those kind of products because not only very rich people is characterized by this state of mind. This means carefulness not only in the moment of choice but mainly in the continuation of the relation. On the other hand, *downshifting* describe a multitude of practices intended to save money. These includes going to different shops from usual because the prices are lower, and in this scenario we can insert fast fashion shops, or the practice of searching for the same product sold with a lower price for example in the outlets or by online discounters and, finally, the practice of choosing low cost for sectors in which the quality or the brand is not considered as fundamental. Lets explain it more in details. The general idea behind this

_fig.2 Set up of entrance in ZARA main shop in Milan during march 2012

practice is to spend less money so what people try to do is turn to new selling channels like outlet, temporary stores and company's outlets. Moreover are becoming popular all these online shops that propose branded products with discounts thanks to multitude or because are products from previous collections like Privalia, Saldi privati and Amazon that is going to launch also the fashion section in its website. Another approach is that one for fast fashion. In this case the philosophy is low cost-high value that is buying products with an acceptable quality level, actual and trendy, for very competitive prices. This is what characterized company like Zara. They just follow the philosophy I explained about collections and trends but they created an image however very polished for example in the choice of locations. In fact in every city they try to be in particular and maybe historical place and to have designed displays, mainly in big events. For example here we have the Milan shop in Corso Vittorio Emanuele II that was a theatre and that always hosts various installations near to artistic ones. Then the company also decided not to invest in advertisement to save money and to keep high quality of design and materials with low prices.

To summarize, this first purchasing model could be described with the world less: in the first case the intent is to buy less so to have less but high quality products that last, in the second case is just to spend less buying for a discounted price or low cost products that allows to be trendy and to have a lot of different options without spending to much.

_fig.3 ZARA is the biggest fashion retailer in the world: from Business Week we know that they produce 450 milion of clothes per year and that in 2013 they opened 110 new shops worldwide. Even if they are a fast fashion company, they change the usual concept of low cost fashion choosing historical and eminent locations and taking care of visual merchandising as well as a big fashion company.

From ownership to access

This purchasing model takes the distance from commodity fetishism, from status symbol and from private ownership. It means the passage from ownership intended as property and title on goods, to the access of all those activities that the product make possible, even if with the guarantee of temporary availability. The most important example that could be frame into this model is the rent. Maura Franchi, an Italian sociologist, described the phenomenon saying that ‘Rental is becoming a life style: it answer to the budding need in a society crowded of goods and it states the desire to delegate management activities to others’. Expressed first by just some product sectors, now it is a phenomenon involving every kind of products: at the beginning was the purchasing of washing machine for the all flat building, or the car sharing, and now is the rental of sport equipment and clothes. Internet is the big channel trough which this behavior is growing because it emphasizes the big value of sharing and peer to peer activities. The traditional idea of consumption as just a way to own and collect objects is crushing and with it the idea of the consumer as an isolated person for a scenario in which consumption is a way to create relations and communities of people that shares interests, opinions and objects (brand communities, social networks). It is also a way to keep the distance from behaviors of stockpile and individualism toward a qualification of choices: replacement now happens just when there are real innovations, not mere marketing operations. This is the answer of a compulsive trend to just stock object and the awareness of their uselessness. Our wardrobes are full of clothes we bought and then we just forget and of other that we take because advertisement and shops attract us but that don’t fit our shapes or it is impossible to match with the other items. Changes is fashion doesn’t help because as we all know fashion companies are working for making us spending on new clothes every season. For example an habits that is really diffused is the wardrobe sharing between sisters or mother and daughters, maybe just for some items, when the sizes allows this. As we all know, recently the vintage became a proper fashion trend so it is common to reuse clothes of your mother or grandmother despite of buying something new, this is a way to save money and not to waste something that is again beautiful and trendy. Anyway this model maybe fits better other products sectors or just a small part of fashion sector, like accessories, sport equipment and jewelry, but I really believe that this kind of approach will be really dominant in the next years because a lot of things are changing and also hesitations are disappearing. Let’s think about the big phenomenon of secondhand that exploded online with website like ebay or subito.it. According to Osservatorio sui consumi made by Findomestic, one Italian on two buy regularly already used objects. Moreover are appearing secondhand clothes shops also in Italy, and vintage trend helps a lot in this. So I am quite sure that in few years will become a popular trend also to share a collection of bags, shoes and dresses with friends for example. Anyway what is behind this kind of approach is what we have mostly to take into consideration that is about the will of people to live consumption as a moment of relation and sharing and a way to create communities (for example is common to see people online that shares opinion about collections, brand and product quality and about new shops). Moreover the rising ethical sensitivity related to the waste and stock of unused goods.

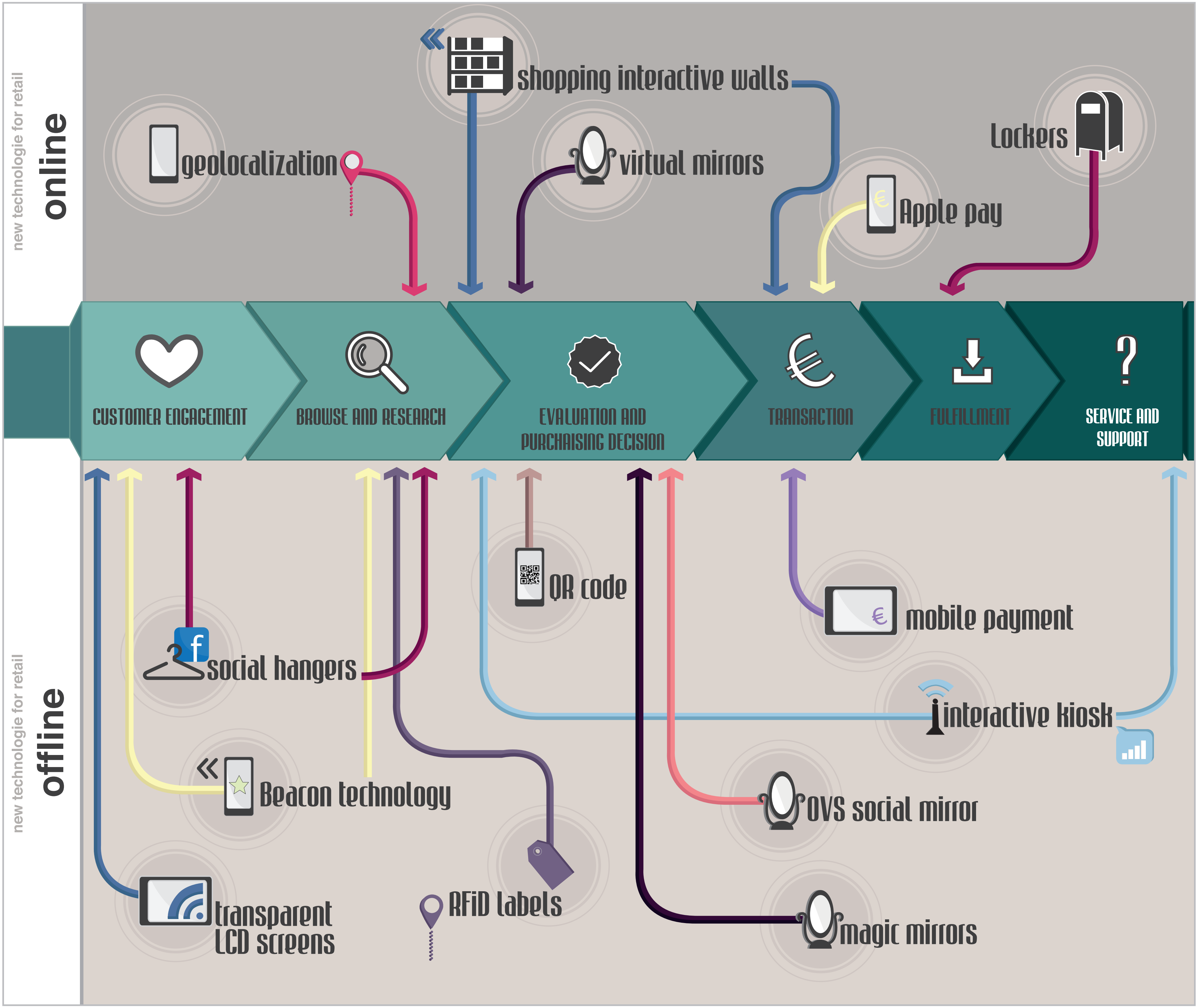
The bargain hunt

The last purchasing model is the more related to the price sensitivity. From financial crisis on infact a lot of phenomenon related to discounts and sales became popular and for some companies even the only way to have revenues. In the past people didn't want to wait the seasonal sale to buy clothes because it was more important to have immediately, at the beginning of the season, the new trendy clothes to show, but, nowadays, people are more inclined to wait to save some money. At the base there is also a new awareness that money could be used for other activities that help you to live in a more peaceful way. For example a big competitor of fashion sector is becoming the spare time activities sector because more and more people prefer spending money for a travel instead of a designer coat or a bag. Now they actually have the possibility to combine all this aspect and this is the reason for the success of some website like Groupon, Saldi privati and Privalia. To meet this need also company are changing their behavior. In fact now are appearing special promotions even out of sale periods. This habit is also at the base of a lot of web site that for example recover the ancient purchasing model of auction in which the customers decide which is the right price for a product. All this events contribute to the increase of price sensitivity, that before crisis was very low because Italians were very ruled by brand and, in fact, some big multinational corporations keep prices higher in our country. Now, with the buying power lower and the skepticism in the future and in brands policy, people become more careful and informed. So we are dealing with a more demanding customer that wants to be able to decide where to spend his money and for what, so it is necessary to offer always something more.

The introduction of new technologies in retail

Changes in fashion retail

The second aspect I took into consideration was the advent of new technologies in retail. Every year a lot of companies are releasing new softwares, sensors and technologies addressed to the reatil world. In this chapter I am explaining how the competition is becoming more and more intense, because brick and mortar shops have now to compete also with online commerce. This is a strenous fight because consumers are always connected and the schedules are changing so the shopping activity is something that really well fit the proposal made by e-shops. But as I strongly believe brick and mortar stores have something more to offer, that famous experience. Technology could be a great help in creating experience, relation with the brand and to solve all the little problems a client could face in a store. In turn, is causing retailers to become much more sophisticated in how they predict demand,manage and move inventory, and integrate their physical, virtual, and mobile selling channels."The rules are being rewritten," says Mike Webster, senior vice president and general manager of Oracle Retail. Here on I will present you some of these new technologies that has been used in retail world, mainly in offline shops because they really need more help. I will be focused on the phases of customer journey: in the fourth chapter I will explain this phases better but, even if the rational and consequential order is now disappearing from retail logic, I tried to identify which are the crucial moments in a shopping experience, both online and offline, to underline how technology helps and finally how they can help in integrting channels.


new technologie for retail
online
shopping interactive walls
geolocalization
virtual mirrors
Lockers
Apple pay
CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT
BROWSE AND RESEARCH
EVALUATION AND PURCHAISING DECISION
TRANSACTION
FULFILLMENT
SERVICE AND SUPPORT
new technologie for retail
offline
QR code
mobile payment
social hangers
interactive kiosk
Beacon technology
OVS social mirror
RFiD labels
transparent LCD screens
magic mirrors

Technology for online commerce

_Geolocalization: is the identification of the real world geographic location of an object, such a mobile phone or Internet-connected computer terminal. It is closely related to the use of positioning systems but may be distinguished from it by a greater emphasis on determining a meaningful location (a street address) rather than just a set of geographic coordinates.
We are now used to know this technology because all the devices that we commonly use like smartphone and tablets have it. It uses radio frequency (RF) location methods, for example Time Difference Of Arrival (TDOA) for precision. When a GPS signal is unavailable, geolocation applications can use information from cell towers to triangulate the approximate position, a method that is not as accurate as GPS but has greatly improved in recent years. Internet and computer geolocation can be performed by associating a geographic location with the Internet Protocol (IP) address, MAC address, RFID, hardware embedded article/production number, embedded software number (such as UUID, Exif/IPTC/XMP or modern steganography), invoice, Wi-Fi positioning system, or device GPS coordinates, or others.The applications that this kind of technology allows are all those we know because of the big changes it has brought in application development and social network implementation. It is very important to take into consideration this when a developer or a company start working on mobile channel because people in some case loves to share their position and to know what is happening around them. The use of geolocalization for example is incredibly useful to communicate the position of its own shops where you can find for example the product you are looking in the website or to calculate how much you have to pay to receive a particular pack where you are. In this way it helps directly online commerce and maybe even more mobile commerce expecially in browse and research phase. But of course it is already very useful for online communication because the habit to tag yourself is the place where you are is becoming a huge trend, mainly if related to pictures application like Instagram, and this combined with the pleasure to take and post a picture in the moment in which you are living a great experience could become a real advertisment for successful company that introduces somenthing new appreciated by people.

_Shopping interactive walls: this is a real innovation that is going to change our habits. Actually this technology doesn't appear in Italy yet, but all around the world this is having a big success thanks to the ease of use and the practicality to do your shopping on a big device while you are waiting your metro. The sector of application now are more related to food and healthy but I bet that this could be extended to other, because imaging if you receive an invitation for a party last moment and you don't have the right dress. In this way you can buy it (or in the future maybe just rent it) and receive at home or in your office in just few hours. The first that introduced this technology was Tesco's South Korean network of shops, called Home Plus. Their aim was to expand their online sales rather than spending a lot of money opening new shops. As South Korea has more than 10 million smartphone users in a population of less than 50 million, it made sense to look at mobile shopping as much as websites for desktops.
Just like everybody else, South Koreans are busy at home and tired after a long day at work so offering the opportunity to shop while doing something else has a lot of value. Tesco settled on commuters waiting for their train: they have

_fig.4 This is one of the examples of Tesco shopping walls in South Korea developed starting from 2009. As you can see this is exactly organized as a supermarket shelves because the client need to have the visual contact with the product, to recognize the packaging and the brand he prefers. Now it saw a big evolution and diffusion and it is used also for other market sectors.

time on their hands and the must have jobs, so they're likely to have money but little time.
Rather than expect them to search through menus labelled with tiny text that says such unattractive things as 'fish' or 'homeware', they plastered the glass walls of subway stations with pictures of their products, laid out just as they'd be in a traditional shop. The 'shelves' featured QR codes which could be scanned by the traveller's mobile phone, building up a shopping basket in the few minutes before the train arrives. If your train comes before your basket is complete, you can carry on shopping without the pictures and codes if you wish. Other similar devices were built using touch screen and integrating mobile payment and saw a big diffusion for example in airport or big train stations. Anyway this is a good way for meet customers needs in mainly in browse and research phase and implementing online selling even if this is probably the clearer example of the blurring line between online and offline shops.

_Virtual mirror: here we open one of the most controversial issue about shopping online. Mainly dealing with fashion, companies often meet reticence from people dealing with buying a product online without having the opportunity to try it on because this is the most import part in the evaluation process. A lot of them is trying to solve the problem giving the opportunity to return for free those products that don't fit well or to change for free the size but many others are trying to develop new ways to virtually try products directly online not to have the bother to return or change the purchase. To do that they are using mainly augmented reality and 3d modelling techniques. One example, that I am also going to explain ahead in my work, is the Ray Ban virtual mirror, a simple application that using your webcam project the image of the chosen glasses on your face image. But even more challenging is the idea to have an entire mannequin reproducing your exact measures. This is what Fitle promises to do: it is a software developed by some young designer and now launched on kickstarter that, thanks to smartphone camera allows to create a 99% precise 3d model of our body and to use it to try products from every online shop. According to them it will be possible just taking four pictures, from different fixed angles, and charging them in the software that will be able in 30 seconds to develop your 3d model. The application will also allow to organize your own wardrobe with already owned clothes in order to evaluate also possible matching before to buy somenthing new. It will really be an interesting switching from those 3d virtual mannequins proposed by some online shops toward the real experience of trial.

_ Apple pay: this sofware could be perfectly inserted in the group of mobile payment though to keep the process secure and easy. It was launched mainly with the advent of Iphone 6 but potentially it could be extended to other devices. It works very simply: you scan your credit cards and every time just touching your Iphone, that is able to recognize your fingerprint, you can pay online or in physical shops thank to NFC technology. Now we are going to see just how this is going to change online commerce. Nowadays already exist some similar concept like Paypal that already have all your credit card data and just ask you some credentials to start the payment. It actually already happens with Itunes and Apple store in the Apple world because they ask you to combine your credit card to your Apple ID that is required to access all this applications. Also these systems actually changed a lot our way to shop online and helped also in the process of convincing people to leave their credit card data online. But what is changing moreover with this Apple pay is that they are trying to stremline the process giving you the possibility to match with your account more than one credit cards, to chose which of them to use showing you the pictures and not just the code and even not to remember all the credential matched with the single card. And even not to inser the password because you can give your agreement just touching your device. I am sure that a lot of development will be designed for the payment procedures and this is just a first step.

_ Lockers: this is another example of intervention with the aim to meet customers' needs and streamline procedures. It was an idea developed by Inpost, for what is concerned to italian market, but that was already diffused all around the world. It just consists in a set of lockers owned by the delivery company that are spread all around the city. I will take them into condiseration even ahead explaining one of integrations models because they are very useful not to pay shipping fee and not to be conditioned by shipping schedules. The customer just buy online a product and decide in which locker to go and pick the pack in any moment they prefer without paying anything more and just inserting a code received in the moment of payment.

Technology for offline commerce

_Social hangers: the name are explaining very well the intent that is to work with social networks. This is a very rife habits in stores. The idea was by a C&A store in Brazil that developed exactly some hangers with a small screen intended to show how many likes the dress receive on Facebook. This is both a way to attract people toward something that maybe they don't even have considered, but also a way to give shopping advice underling what is more trendy and valued by the community. The project suggest a lot of similar development like social mannequins or display that can easily attract people from shopping windows but as we can see ahead the use of social network to integrate shopping expeience is now very spread.

_Beacon technology: it is a type of a low-cost, micro-location-based technology that use Bluetooth low energy (BLE 4.0) for communicating with beacon enabled devices. It is already very used and for a lot of different pourposes. For example a UK retailer House of Fraser announced that it will introduce beacon-equipped mannequins in its store to provide customers with a more engaging retail experience. When a customer with an enabled smartphone app is within a 50 metres of the mannequin, the beacon sends a signal providing them with useful information: details about the clothes and accessories the mannequin is wearing, the price, where the items can be found within the store and links to purchase the items directly from the retailer's website. This is a smart way to engage the customers and to invite them entering the shop. Other retailers trialled the technology to push discounts and offers. This technology not only has enormous potential to enhance the shopping experience,

making it quicker and easier for customers to browse and research the information and products they are looking for, or providing special offers or discounts to loyal shoppers, it can also provide retailers with invaluable data about their customers' shopping habits as well as the activity of their staff, allowing them to make improvements to the store layout by identifying store flow, maintaining service standards and operations that will benefit both customer and retailer. The technology also has the potential to let a retailer know when its most profitable online customers are present so staff can recognise and treat them accordingly. But in order for the implementation to be a success, retailers need customers who want to use them. The main barrier to the potential success of beacon technology is the fact that customers have to voluntarily download and install a smartphone app for it to work, third party or the brand's own. Although there is potential for beacon apps that cover an entire street or mall, most retailer apps are likely to be unique, meaning that they will be in competition with other high street names. While customers may be happy to download an app for a couple of retailers, they might not want to download an app for every shop they visit.
To overcome this, retailers need to educate customers about the benefits this technology offers and demonstrate the unique benefits they wouldn't get otherwise. I think that for example leveraging on the opportunity to receive discounts and special treatment is an interesting way to convince people and keeping their loyalty.

_ Transparent LCD screens: these are tools with high transparency rate, which enables a person to look right through the panel like glass, and it consumes 90% less electricity compared with a conventional LCD panel using back light unit. It's because a transparent LCD panel utilizes ambient light such as sun light, which consequently reduces the dependency on electricity for generating power. There are also some version that integrated multitouch display that allows to develop interactive application and to merge your customer in a very immersive experience. They give to retailer the possibility to make advertising more dynamic because they can be applied to show windows and used in showcase events. This tool is like a smart window, for example you can have a product displayed and in front of it a transparent screen showing the catwalk. They could be even controlled by beacon technology or simply with photocells allowing the video to start just when someone is passing by and attracting his attention. This could be really a big opportunity in engaging customers activity also because moreover people are attracted by new technologies and by stores that are using them to create more involving experience.

_RFiD labels: Radio-frequency identification (RFID) is the wireless use of electromagnetic fields to transfer data, for the purposes of automatically identifying and tracking tags attached to objects. Unlike a barcode, the tag does not necessarily need to be within line of sight of the reader, and may be embedded in the tracked object. RFID tags are used in many industries. An RFID tag attached to an automobile during production can be used to track its progress through the assembly line. Livestock and pets may have tags injected, allowing positive identification of the animal. Since RFID tags can be attached to cash, clothing, possessions, or even implanted within people, the possibility of reading personally-linked information without consent has raised serious privacy concerns. But it also gives a lot of possibility for retail development. This technology, integrated into labels is being adopted for item level tagging in retail stores. This provides electronic article surveillance and a self checkout process for consumers. Automatic identification with RFID can be used for inventory systems as for example Macy's does to organize and manage multichannel integration as I will explain better in the third chapter. The technology, allowing to track products, could be used to better organize the stock and for example giving the opportunity to a client that doesn't find his right size in store to understand where he can buy it, if it is available and maybe to order it, to receive it at home or in the store to have anyway the opportunity to try it on. It is really something valuable for organization of a network of stores and I think that this tracking system could become very useful also for further developments.

_Interactive kiosks: this category includes a lot of solutions thought for offline shops that allows a lot of different activities. The aim is to create a unique and memorable retail experience using a handheld tablet or large-screen format, a kiosk lets your customers engage with brand and product information in a new and exciting way. With just a touch, users can access the specific information they're interested in, then take action by supplying their contact information or printing a document. With the right interface design, there's virtually nothing a kiosk can't do— from providing directions and wayfinding, to showing product info and videos, to collecting user data. For this reason they are useful in implementing both customer engagment activities and browse and research process. But actually some application are even able to give good solution for payment and fulfillment. For example is it possible not only to have a complete catalogue of store assortment, but also (thank to RFiD labels) to understand where a particular product is displayed, how much does it cost and which

_fig.5 This is one of the MarkandSpencer point of sales in Nederland with big touch screens helping in trial procudure and a big iphone helping in ordering throug online store the size you can't find in the shop.

sizes are available. Moreover there could be the oppurtunity, after having chosen a product to pay it directly at the kiosk to avoid the line at the normal cashier and maybe to plan the shipment to his own place. This devices actually allows a lot of other opportunities like creating immersive applications for the user to discover more in depth the brand like showing videos about the company, the production process or catwalks and advertisement. Or again creating games and sort of survey trough which people can interact and leave opinions. In this sense this could be also used as post selling service in case of returns or complaints. But even in the occasion of picking in the shop an online order. All this applications could be very useful for the retailer to add new services and increase its image and we can already see around us a lot of this kiosk playing different roles and activities. So it is just a matter of choice from which are the features on you want to bet.

_QR codes: QR code (abbreviated from Quick Response Code) is the trademark for a type of two-dimensional barcode. A barcode is a machine-readable optical label that contains information about the item to which it is attached. A QR code consists of black modules (square dots) arranged in a square grid on a white background, which can be read by an imaging device (such as a camera) and processed using Reed–Solomon error correction until the image can be appropriately interpreted. The required data are then extracted from patterns present in both horizontal and vertical components of the image. Applications include product tracking, item identification, time tracking, document management, general marketing, and much more. The QR code system was invented in 1994 by Denso Wave, for japanese automotive company. Its purpose was to track vehicles during manufacture; it was designed to allow high-speed component scanning. QR codes now are used in a much broader context, including both commercial tracking applications and convenience-oriented applications aimed at mobile devices users. QR codes can be generated and printed visiting one of several paid and free QR code generating sites or apps. This practically allows with a simple scan to open up something new on your device, a link to a page with exclusive contents. We are all used to see them around especially in advertisment or in museum to access additional contents. In retail they are very useful, as we saw before for example for developing new way of shopping like that one related to shopping wall or to give to people the possibility to browse between the information of a particular products in the web site or even to obtain discounts and promotions. For example Euronics, the big chain of eletronics, announced the intention to develop some new shops Euronics 3.0 in which to give free wifi access to the user and where to add to shelves QR codes with additional information to the products, technical books and instructions. The only weak point is that the user need to have a specific application on his device but this is a growing phenomenon so every body will use them.

_Magic mirrors and social mirrors: this catagory includes all this devices that are thought to improve the trial experience with smart and additional contents. As we said for the same concept applied to online, in relation to fashion sector, trial is a crucial part of the experience so the retailers have the occasion here to make it memorable. Prada, in its New York epicenter designed by Rem Koolhaas in 2001, with the collaboration of IDEO, created the invisible technology that allows staff members to choreograph the in-store sales experience and to customers to live it with a new approach. In the different solutions there was a so called magic mirror that thanks to webcam and augmented reality was able to project on the customer some clothes so he can decided to buy them without trying or can have a first idea on what could fit better. On this idea worked also a lot of other companies including also additional activities: for example the new dressing rooms in OVS flaship store in via Dante in Milan allows to take pictures of you wearing a new outfit and to post it on social networs (working with the so trendy social contents of dresses) and to ask directly from a screen to sale assistants to bring you another size. Probably we will have even other evolution like the showing of catwalk or of shopping advice directly on mirrors in dressing room and I think this could really increase shopping experience and helping customers in evaluation and purchaising decision.

_Mobile payment: with this espression we include all those activities that allows payment through mobile phone. Mobile payment allows to pay even with a remote controll using mobile phone IP to which is embded a credit card thanks to dedicated POS and devices or using proper application for example to pay public service or transportation. As we saw for Apple pay this sector is having a big development and also in offline commerce is becoming a must. Moreover sales assistant are often now equipped with portable devices to follow in a more free way the customer, to chack availability and make him pay without going to cashier. This make also possible to order for a home shipment in an easy way.

Technology for channels integration

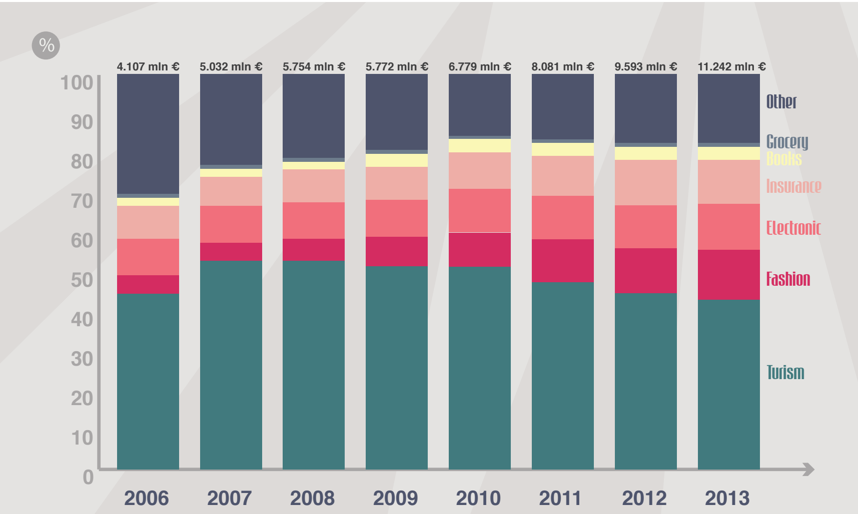
As said by Sridhar Ramaswamy, Google's SVP of Ads and Commerce, customers are no more distinguishing between online and offline commerce, it is just shopping so it is important that the company offer them a semless experience trough different channels. We are interested in cross channel strategies and in the integration of online and offline channels so now I am going to analyze the previous technologies trying to understand which of them are able to help company in realizing this connections. A lot of them actually are used to emphasize the blurring line between the two worlds because it helps in creating a more complete and involving experience for the customers. For example *geolocalization*, as we said, is mainly used as wayfinder and in brand's application to guide people to the nearest shop helping the switching from a channel to another. *Shopping walls*, instead, are devices usable in the offline, recreating a brick-and-mortar shop, that are able to show you online e-shop and to make you buy your dinner through your smartphone. Another technology is the *lockers* system actually helping a lot in the switch from online to offline in the moment of delivery helping to solve problems of schedules and shipping fee. Then we have all those devices present in the stores that allows the client to be connected on social network or on company's website such as *transparent LCD screens* and mainly *kiosk* that could be also used to order from online store items not available in the store or to pick a pack from an online purchase. Those are very useful in different phases of customers journey according to the software and applications they are equipped with. Finally there are some technology not directly related to this connection but that are used by some software to do it. I am thinking for example about *RFiD techology* that, incorporated in labels, allows for example to sales assistant to order for a client a product not available in the shop from online store. This create a connection between the two channels and help a lot in stock organization. Also *QR code* actually works in a similar way because used in store or in printed advertising, could be a connection to brand web site and e-shop or to other online contents so it become a bridge between the two channels helping in creating a seamless experience for the client. Then there is *Beacon technology* that is actually a bridge between company and client in sense that trough this the shop can send message to the client for example with links for access Facebook page or online catalogue or for receive promotions to spend in the online shop. Finally there are those devices with the clear intent to make the client of brick-and-mortar shop to interact with social network and brand online community such as *social hangers* and *social mirrors*.

Intensified competition: the impact of online commerce

Changes in fashion retail

Another big issue, after the decrease of spending power, is that the fashion retail market is actually overcrowded. This aspect was market mainly by the opening of the first e-shop by Pizza Hut in 1999, a new way of participating in the market. After this a lot of other companies, looking also to the diffusion of the internet and then of mobile devices, decided to open up their brand to this new world and a lot of online based companies started to pop up. Why companies are so interested in opening up online shops and why this could really be a big opportunity to grow? In this chapter I am going to show the actual situation of online commerce, which are the users and finally the potential of the channel and the different benefits it could bring to different kind of fashion companies.
E-commerce in Italy is one of the only growing sector with 12 millions of users per year and a sales volume of 9.621 millions of euros in 2012. Fashion sector in 2013 is just the 12% of this market that is dominated by spare time and travels. The sales volume of online fashion so is about 1.049 millions of euros with a growth rate of +20%. As we can see from the graph, fashion, despite of a starting reticence, is now the fast growing sector regarding online commerce and the forecasts are even more promising. As these data from osservatori.net and Confcommercio suggest, this could be a real interesting solution to develop to contrast the brick and mortar shops' crisis (according to Confesercenti in 2013 more than 37.000 stores closed). In 2013 online retail was just 2,6% of total retail sales in Italy but it was 2,2% in 2012

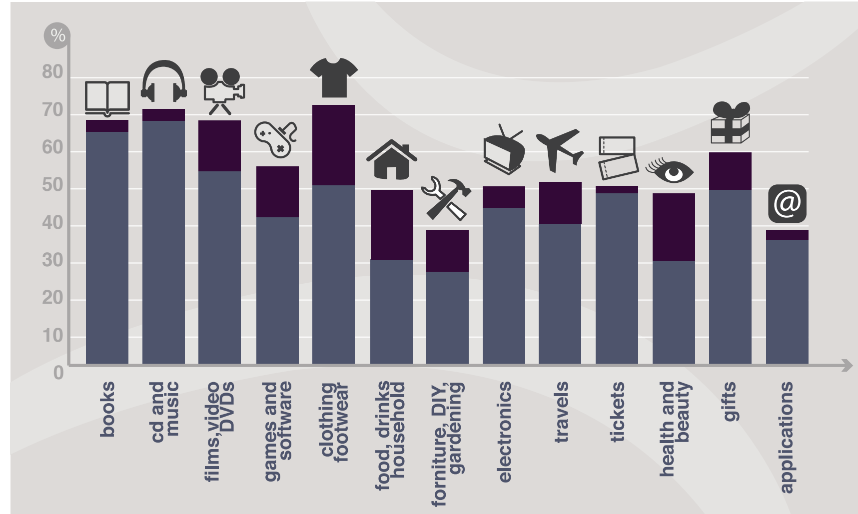
_ The graph below explains how the amount of sales from online commerce in Italy is divided between different sectors across the last eigth years. It is easy to see how fashion is the only sector always growing. In the next page we can see the growth of online sales in different market sectors. The data are just related to 2012. As you can see fashion is the sector with the growth more evident (20%) followed by household products (18%) and health and beauty (16%). In the next page the graph shows how the spending capacity of e-commerce customers is composed.



so it is taking place very quickly. Moreover it is a good way to open up the opportunity of exporting your own business. In fact in 2012 fashion was up to 29% of the total amount of export made thanks to online with only tourism better than this, around 59%.

As we said online commerce in Italy is about 9.621 millions of euros per years with a growth rate of +20% in 2012. If we compare these data with other countries we can say that our growth sale is the largest, infact in 2012 England online market had a growth of +11%, France and Germany of +12% and USA +14%. But these are still the biggest online markets in the world with amount of 60 billions of euros for England (6 times our), 39 billions for Germany (4 times) and 2 billions of France (2 times). This fact demonstrates that our market is very undeveloped and with very big growth rates still. Our main problem actually is that italian population is mainly composed by middle-aged people that have some cultural and social limitations. Those are also entrepreneurs, not only consumers, that don't understand online potential. Infact only the 61% of people that in Italy usually surf the web, had made a purchase at least once, and only 27% of them are regular clients.

Also mobile commerce is fast growing: there are 48 millions of mobile users in our country and 44% of them use mobile devices to surf the web and make online purchases. In fact the Osservatorio ecommerce B2C Netcom of School of Management of Politecnico di Milano, stated that in 2012 online sales by mobile are grown from 26 millions of euros to 81 millions (+210%). This is again in an early stage but big italian fashion companies declared that in 2012 they realized 20% of online sales through mobile



devices and some of them in fact developed before an application than an e-store, like Armani. Nowadays in Italy computers sales were been surpassed by smartphones sales and people do a mobile purchase each 17 seconds. Considering also that mobile is the first tool used to way finding, I think this could be the field in which companies need to invest more even just to add features to in store experience because as we all know we always have our Iphone in our hands.

Fashion online market is anyway a complex system, it represent a big opportunity for new companies to try to develop their business, but also a way for big brands to increase sales, to appear on foreign markets and for brands and websites that bet on bargain. Online market seems in fact to be the new frontier for big fashion brands. Starting from 2009 they developed they own e-shop. The firsts were Salvatore Ferragamo and Roberto Cavalli and in the wake of their success, in the same year appeared also those one of Armani, that as we said in the previous year already had launched an application, and Valentino. For these brands online is also a big resource thanks to multibrands retailers as Yoox and because of the many flash sales clubs operating in Italy. I think that is important to talk about Yoox, an italian online based company listed in the stock exchange, that, founded by Federico Marchetti in 2000, in 2011 sold for 291,2 millions of euros (+35,9% compared with 2010) drawn by monobrands like Ermenegildo Zegna, Giorgio Armani, D&G and Trussardi for which they manage online company's store. Other giants of online fashion commerce in Italy are fast fashion companies such as H&M and Zara but also the flash sales clubs that, leveraging on bargain

_ The graph next explains how the amount of online fashion customers' expenses is distributed between 0 and +1000 euros. Moreover it underlines how the average annual expenses on online commerce is higher than offline commerce. Data are about 2012

hunt trend, offer to subscribers highly discounted designers products, for sale just for a limited period of time (from 5 days to 3 weeks). The biggest are Vente Privè that in 2011 had a sales volume of more than 1 billions euros and Privalia with 320 millions. As we said online commerce is also a big opportunity for rising business because as we will explain in the next chapter, the new market set up and the rising costs of opening a commercial activity, are bringing them to this level such as an opportunity to test their products and eventually then to evaluate to expand. It is mainly true for these craft activities created by young designers that also realize their products. This is the case of Scarlet Virgo, a small company that creates leather accessories for young and stylish contemporary citizens and founded by two young designers. They started in a small garage and selling their products in local markets, some small shops in Milan and through online sellers like Lovli but now, thanks to rising requests through Facebook they are going to launch their online shop. This case is also peculiar to demonstrate how important is online communication mainly through social network that we will analyze in depth in the third chapter.
But what about online consumers? Last year was released a study, the E-commerce Comsumer Behaviour Report of 2012 made by ContactLab, that tries to portrait the italian online customer. It emerges that the online fashion addicted is female (58%). The 67% of them buy 6 items each 3 months and some of them up to 20. In the total amount of ecommerce users (12,3 millions, just the 40% of internet users) just one on three has bought on online commerce more than 5 times. The online customer so is a woman between 25 and 44 years old (with 50% younger than 35), that is living in south of Italy or in the islands (42%) and has a spending power quite high if you consider that half of them spent more than 500 euros in 2012. In details, as you can see in the graph, there is an online average annual expense (around 850 euros) that is higher than the Italian's average consumer (650 euros). Considering the habits of our customers we can say that, according to the study of Netcomm Human Highway, the most purchased garments are T-shirts (20,3%) followed by Jeans (7,5%), jackets (5,8%) and trousers (5,5%). About the hour in which they prefer to make their shopping there is not a clear preference, but 25% of them do shopping after lunch, and 21% of these do it in the afternoon, 19% after work when they arrive at home and 26% after dinner. Considering instead their desires we know that the distinctive aspects that brings them to shop online is for the 41% the convenience (value for money), for 23% bargains, for 15% web site reliability, for another 15% the difficulty to found some products offline and for 11% the brand of the products. These are the results of a survey done on a group of 570 online consumers and inserted in the same study, that are also saying that for the 90% of them is very important to have the opportunity to chose the most favorite payment method that is for 34% pre-payee card, for 26% Paypal, for 17% credit card and for the other 17% counterfoil. A research made by UPS and comScore on a pull of more than 1000 people, is also saying that 75% of them never abandoned chart since they have finished their choice, of them 75% is used to add new items to reach the amount for free shipping and all of them are asking for a clear communication from the beginning about shipping costs as well as return policy. About shipping, to save money 51% will pick items in a store and 35% believe that it is possible to improve the procedures to receive packs in a convenient place. About returns instead 59% said that is fundamental to have the opportunity to return goods in a shop to have a personal contact with company people and 78% of people interviewed asserted that they buy just if it is possible to return without expend and 50% believe that it is possible to work on return procedures to make them more easy and convenient. There is also a set of questions about tracking system that for 97% of them is a necessary service. Then 59% of them want to receive e-mails with notifications and the others would prefer not to be bored but to have the possibility to access the service through company website.
Actually these considerations emphasize the fact that everybody think opening an online shop is more convenient but it is important not to trivialize the question because, as we can discover in the next chapter, there are a lot of matters to take into consideration such as delivery service, fulfillment and post selling service.
To summarize online commerce could be a good opportunity for different kind of brand in fashion sector that allows reaching different goals but it is not so simple to define and develop an effective strategy coherent with own resources to enhance brand image without failures. This is why I actually decided to develop this project.

New business models

Changes in fashion retail

The financial crisis and the advent of online commerce changed a lot the retail environment in fashion industry in terms of emerging of new business models. The days when traditional business models held a sufficient competitive advantage and successfully drove year-on-year growth are long gone. But what is next? What has to be done to embrace complexity and turn current market dynamics into a sustainable competitive edge? Latest Kurt Salmon research reveals that the majority of fashion brands and retailers have not yet found a satisfying answer. This also is true for several major players that had set the best practice standards for the fashion industry for a long time but mostly for small and medium company to survive with their resources. We have already talked about Yoox, the biggest online fashion retailer in Italy that is completely online based. This was a big model for other rising company but it doesn't always succeed.

The year-on-year growth is no more a guarantee and for this reason it is difficult for a small fashion company to open a brick-and-mortar shop because of rising costs (rent, taxes, advertisement, stock management, sales persons, etc.). The online store offers on the other hand the opportunity to reduce costs. But it is important to understand that all the business logics behind a brick-and-mortar shop have to be considered also in an online retail context. Actually everybody think opening an online shop is more convenient but, as Amazon states, "selling online is not a matter of selling but of delivering". Infact, it implies to develop an efficient logistics model to avoid delays that brings negative perception but also negative reviews and comments on social networks and forums. So it is important to define own resources and chose the best fulfillment model according to that. It also implies, as brick and mortar store, important choices about stock and assortment. The theme of assortment become more and more crucial if we deal with multichannel strategies that combines online and offline channels, even if a big advantage of having an online shop is the opportunity to have an "unlimited" assortment, not conditioned by a physical exposition space of a store. Anyway, as it is easy to understand, it is necessary to have a place where to stock all the products in order not to extend too much delivery time. Then it is of course also a matter of post selling services that as to be coherent with brand values and able not to ruin your image. The other main issues to be considered in business logic are communication, store atmosphere, services, loyalty programs and sales persons. If we deal with an online shop we don't have to take into consideration sales persons but anyway we have to develop the right communication, because online world is so wide that without the right communication nobody is going to find your store, it is like having a big store in a hidden road. Moreover it is important to deal with the atmosphere because, as we are going to explain also in the next chapters, emotions are a big factor to be considered when you deal with people choice so you have to develop a pleasant ambience, not only a functional shop with good products. Then there is the theme of service that is crucial for an online based company because the risk is that consumers will perceived them just as something abstract. So it is in their interest to develop an effective strategy for post selling service and for returns and payments. For answer to all this issue companies are developing new and innovative business models strictly based on their need and resources that are more often in progress and dynamic, strictly connected to the result of sales. For example a lot of companies were born as online based companies but then, after a successful start, decided to open also brick-and-mortar stores where to have a more direct contact with their clients developing some cross channel strategies to connect online and offline channels and assuring them a seamless experience. On the contrary, especially if we deal with small companies or young designers that want to develop their own line, it is common to see example of small laboratories in which they design and realize a little series of their products and sell them directly to the customers. In this case they decide to have first a brick and mortar store where to expose few pieces, realized in a limited number of sizes, according to production schedule and demand, without being bounded by season and collection and having a big control on stock. Other companies are investing on the big trend of sharing and second hand, for example in kid clothes and accessories sector it is very evident. A lot of new companies are developing the idea not just to design and sell kid clothes but then to recollect them in order to sell to other families. Growing children, in fact, are big expenses but imagine if you can buy clothes for a 6 months child and then when he reaches 9 months you just go in the store and giving back clothes you bought in good conditions, you receive a discount on your new purchase. This is becoming true thanks to some farsighted companies. Another interesting example is about co-creation. There are now a lot of companies that, instead of investing too much in a single driver communication, started to establish a proper dialogue with customers, thanks to social media and Internet, and a process of co-creation modifying the concept of industrial production and bringing it close to the tailor made idea related to craftsmanship.

Other companies instead are more focused on innovation and in particular on proposition of ethical sensitivity about social and environment. A lot of them are for example starting researching and developing new ecological materials, such as fabrics and polymer able to reduce energy consumption in production and in waste process. Or, again, they are concentrating their effort in creating materials or products from recycled materials. This is a big phenomenon for example if you consider technical fabric and accessories. Finally it is important to consider those companies that are investing on delivering a lifestyle. This mission implies a big expense in terms of relations and network creation but also in terms of building a complete experience considering more aspects of consumer's daily life as possible and answering in a proper way, with a valuable solution, coherent with brand values. This could imply to open a new store that becomes a place where doing a lot of activities, including a restaurant or a barber for example. Or again could be the enlargement of offer in terms of products, including food, accessories, electronic devices, health and beauty products that are not produced by the company usually, but that helps in creating the brand world where the customer could find all he needs.

All this changes created a very heterogeneous environment where competitors are always searching for a new strategy to win and for a company on one side this is opening up a lot of new possibilities and on the other it is changing the rules. So, in my opinion it is always necessary to be updated about market rules, competitor's strategies and changes but what is really fundamental is to find the best strategy to enlight its own strengths and to obtain customers' loyalty stimulating then with always new hints.

Chapter n . 2

New kind of c onsumers in fashion industry

_fig.6

Actual consumption

New consumers

Consumer is the expression of history and of his society. This means that he is continuously different from the past being a subject in evolution because he is merged in the big change's flux both social, technological and economics that we tried to explain in the first chapter. For this reason he generates not linear purchasing models, a steadily mutable patchwork. In our new society consumer is no more expression of industrial society, of production: he is no more a prey of factories but he is becoming the hunter and in some cases the partner with whom the companies have to interact and co-create value with a logic of fusion, no more of persuasion.
The consumption in this way becomes a language through which we communicate constantly with our self and with the others, through our choices because it includes all those process of selection, purchase and disposal of a product. In this sense it is possible to trace consumption process in every society but it is with the advent of industrial revolution that it became a relevant phenomenon and that scholars started to question about it. In actual societies consumption phenomenon

have become what is more characterizing of an individual, shifting from work and then production. This because goods are more than they appears: they express relations, existing links with society and give voice to identity and culture. The main features of this new paradigm of consumption are complexity and turbulence because the consumer had become less predictable and more changing.

Consumption is also a big paradox and this is particularly true for fashion sector, because inside the word itself are included not only the accomplishment of a desire, but also the idea of exhausting to which, across time, a lot of scholars matched the negative meaning of surplus and waste. In recent years the west part of the world is living a wellness without record even if there is a diffuse sense of dissatisfaction caused by the frustration of choice between too many alternatives. This combined with the financial crisis are increasing the expectations of consumers and changing his values, motivations and behaviors. Before to analyze them I would try to trace a portrait of this new consumer because it is necessary to reconsider his profile such as all the general premises about needs, meanings and motivations because there are such a variety of significances that could not be reduced to simplifications and schemes. The role of consumer is becoming more and more next to *prosumer*, among consumer and producer, that is a new social subject with an active role in co-creation, co-production and co-development of value. This is possible thanks to the knowledge that before was codified and now is spread, sperimental and fluid: the socially distributed know-how. Moreover the consumer is no more isolated and tiny, thanks to Internet he is organized in communities with other consumers and them all together could create value for the entire society. Talking about that, Giampaolo Fabris in his book 'La società

_fig.7

post-crescita' creates four acronyms playing with the Italian word for consumer. Each of them isolated a part of the word that become a word itself and are useful to underline a specific feature of the new consumer. They are not describing four different kinds of people, just features of the new consumer that could exist in the same person. The first is *consumato-re* that, isolating the Italian word for king (re), expresses the idea of sovereign consumer. In this sense he is autonomous, not subjected to production, expert, with all the knowledge to be able to evaluate, and selective, demanding in terms of quality, performance and sustainability. Across to this line was born the phenomenon of complaint, very facilitated by the internet revolution and social networks: the consumer fells compelled to give his own opinion about product and to express weaknesses of a product or a service and the companies more and more ask for them even if in practice, most of the times they don't react properly.

The second category is *consum-attore* that means consum-actor and express his feature to be a king but an enlightened, that doesn't have just rights but also duties. The consum-actor is the real protagonist of society and his power comes from the rising competencies that he masters and from his ethical sensitivity. He doesn't receive proposals from offering in a passive way but he sends signals. He is a critical consumer that considers not only tangible meanings of a product, he also assesses social and environmental responsibilities of a company. But he doesn't just ask to factories to act like this, he is engaged in first person (6 millions of Italians are active in volunteer activities). In this way he rewards companies that proposes sustainable products, even if those are more expensive, and punishes the others with online comments that will be diffused by word of mouth. They are the spokesmen of the new hedonism, the right to pleasure that is no more intended as the pleasure of the single but more like the wellbeing of the community in opposition to waste and surplus.

The third way to describe the new consumer is *consum-autore,* consum-authors in English, to whom also Francesco Morace with Future Concept Lab dedicated a book titled 'Consum-Authors. The generations as creative enterprises'. Both the authors are focused on the idea of co-creation and customization and are describing this kind of consumer also as eclectic. In fact, with Internet, the trend of customization is becoming more and more important thanks to the diffusion of knowledge and interaction with initiatives bottom down that are creating a community of consumers creators of value. The consum-author is a consumer that takes items produced to create something new, he is not passive but creative. In fashion this behavior is easy to be identified in the multipurpose wardrobes of every one of us. It describes our habit to own items that since few years ago were rigidly opposed (brand suit, unbranded suit, sportive items and second hand cloth). This is a big opportunity for the companies and some of them are understanding this big strength hidden in consumers behaviors and habits such as Ikea that opened a blog in which they collects evidence on how people use and modify their products giving them further input on how to do it. This attitude questions the awe towards the brand, the massification and conformism but it is also a big resource for the company to understand people desire and develop important hints for innovation. Consumption, to become creative, needs to be merged in daily life, to solve people's problems and create new values. The companies need to develop strategic intelligence to read these hints and humility to learn from consumers.

The last category is *con-sumautore*, that putting

_fig.8

the accent of the Italian word for 'with', underline the rising trend to intend consumption as a collective activity that as to be lived and shared with the other in the community. As we already described in the previous chapter talking about 'from ownership to access' purchasing model, there is a big phenomenon of overcoming the ancient ownership concept for a shared wellbeing and the reduction of waste.
All this aspects characterize a changing and fragmented customers' environment in which for an entrepreneur it is fundamental to understand new values that effect new purchase motivations, needs and desires that drive people choices and new behaviors and interactions that I will explore more in details in the next paragraphs.

New values

New consumers

IIn this changing environment people choices are now driven by different values and it is important to understand them in order to be aligned and offer to people conformed answers. The first new value is the *new hedonism*. Italy is a particular country because just in this 20 years started the celebration of personal pleasure and care, before there was a sum of cultural and religious currents working against it, condemning this value. Now this is changing again because of the rising ethical sensitivity about environment and social. The new concept is in fact about the well being of the society and the environment as the real well being because moreover the consumer feels itself as a part of the community. An expression of this value is the interest of Italian people (82%) in knowing better the company from which they are buying, in finding this information somewhere, for example through internet.
Another changing aspect is the relation with the time and it is expressed in the *slowdown* and in the new conception of *lasting*. The first value is for example that one celebrated by slow food that implies a new perception of the time and the different use of it. We are all living frenetic life in which everything is scheduled. Well this rising sensitivity considers the activity of our life in order to the importance of them for our wellness and suggests dedicating more time to them. Exactly as for the food it suggest to respect time of nature, living in a more relaxed way and to consider as a value those products that ask for a long time of working because this means quality and often lasting. This is the other value we are considering and that we had already met in the first chapter introducing downgrading model.

Moreover people are condemning waste and this entire practice to continuously change the wardrobe according to season and collections. So, since they are living a moment of saturation of the market and a consequent satiety, as we will explain in depth in the next paragraph, they incline to extend the lasting of products being in contrast with the shorten of product's life cycle by companies to increase sales. Instead of changing continuously items buying more qualitative ones. According to this there is also the statement of the new value of *measure* that is what stated by purchasing models of downgrading and downshifting that is spending less having less needs. In the next paragraph infact we are going to discover that nowadays in our society shopping is no more driven by needs but by desires and emotions. This is also strictly related and caused by *price sensitivity* that we introduced in the first chapter that is the trend highly intensified by lower spending power and contraction of faith in the future, and brings people to have a higher consideration on price to spend better shifting from value for money to value for me. From here was born also the new concept of quality that is became *perceived quality* because it is a mix of objective and subjective parameters that are:

_ *polisensualismo*: quality needs to speak to all the senses and to involve them in perceiving and evaluating the product

_ *emotions*: the ability of a products to rise emotions and involve people, even if it is a very basic and simple product

_ *cultural currency*: the product is asked to reflect Zeitgeist and to be adaptable to socio-cultural climate because parameters of quality change very often according to values and behavior of the consumer

_ *experience generation*: the products and companies need to be able to generate memorable and significant experiences

_ *holism*: what is evaluated is the whole product service system that is the entire set of ways in which the product express itself. In this sense not only the product brings values but also the packaging, distribution channels, merchandising, communications and of course the image. In fact advertising becomes a part of quality of the product so it is necessary that it is perceived as qualitative and not just that it inform or attract people attention (it has at least to be at the same level of the advertised product)

_ *innovation content*: the product needs to be original, to have something distinctive among competitors and it has to be aligned with people expectations. The consumers became very careful about announces of innovative products because actually they are now proceeding for substitutions that means they are waiting for the broken of the product they already have to buy another one because there are no more a lot of disruptive innovations that brings completely new concept of products they don't already have.

The last value is a consequence of all this aspect that is the research for *authenticity*. After '80 that was a very florid period for every market sector, now it is always more important to simplify our relation with goods being in a condition of hyper choice. From here were born essential aesthetics, predominant in fashion like minimalism, and the research of objects easy to use (this is mainly true in technology field) and related to the more ancient concept of production like artisanal products, farmer markets, biological food and fabrics. It is a kind of back to the roots that ask for transparency and also brings the concept of sustainability, as an intention to detox after a long period of surplus and blind faith towards brands.

New purchase motivations

New consumers

As we said consumer is the expression of the society. We have overcome the period dominated by *needs* and now it is the *leadership of desires* that is driving consumption. As Lipovetsky said “it was born a new modernity and it overlaps desire culture”. What we intended with need is something that enter in a quiescent moment when we have satisfy them. On the contrary the desires are characterized by a continuously in progress state of fulfillment. Giovanni Siri, an important Italian psychologist, said “the desire was born from lack, from the absence of something that it is not possible to clearly identify. Desire search for its subject but is not able to define it. It is possible to appease needs, it is impossible with desires”. Leveraging on desire was useful to drive consumers in the actual situation. Now it is necessary to leverage on *caprices* to keep demand in step with rising volume of offering. Caprice is insincere and childish. We are living in a society where needs, desires and caprices coexist actually in the same person and they have a different level of leadership according to the spending power of the subject. The need is about the answer instead the desire on the question and, since consumption answer to need’s question, it appeases it for a while. With desires it doesn’t work because consumption is just an instrument to reach other goals (self-esteem, affection, identification). In this sense the good is not able to satisfy us so the desire reborn and multiply itself. But the stand of consumptions was unavoidable and companies developed a lot of strategies to create and then to satisfy new desires in a 360° competition. So it was established a supremacy of emotions in consumption choices. Before we lived in a misogynist society in which emotions were just a matter of women and they affected their weakness. With the emancipation and the decrease of differences between the two sexes, we started to accept emotions as a part of human being and companies started to use them in communication. Now they are fundamental and we don’t censor them no more but some years ago they were considered as a luxury and consumption choice, instead needed to be driven by clarity and rationality, especially when they were important on economic profile. Emotions are sudden and they change our balance and our mind causing what we call impulsive purchasing. Brands are now requested to speak to the right hemisphere of our brain, to our heart, creating an exclusive and strongly characterized identity able to generate emotional experience. From here was born all the branch of experiential marketing.

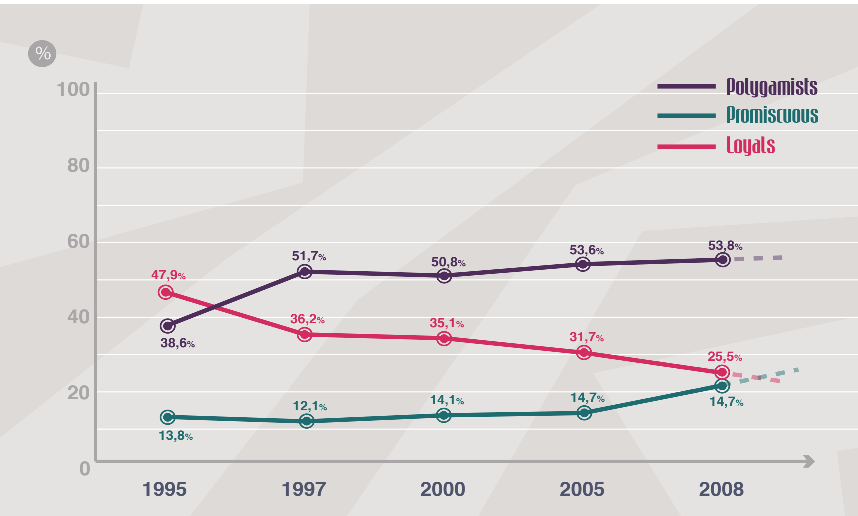
Moreover it is not possible to deny that there is an identity factor related to consumption even if it is transferring from *status symbol to style symbol* (way of being more than way of appearing and objects to live than objects to exhibit). This is another way trough which the new value of measure is appearing. Consumption became also a way to express commitment and responsibility towards society and environment. For example were born some collective groups of purchase orientated to obtain low prices and to stimulate localism and conscious consumption. To interpret consumers choices were elaborated *life styles*, a series of clusters that define consumption choices that are what defines our life style. Since it gives coherence to our choices in every different sector, it makes a lot of our behaviors predictable. An example is the mature consumer for whom the consumption is an ethical act modifying his habits and consumption according to new values and awareness about environment and

society. New motivations are taking place, we are leaving all the theories related to status symbol, including emulation and ostentation mechanisms always considered at the base of consumption, historically developed around product, then model and finally around brand. In our hyper fragmented society, organized according to life styles the concept of prestige changed: it is no more related to social prestige but to comfort, to the idea of being surrounded by objects that improve quality of life. So the new purchase motivations are:
_ having a social recognition of his own ability in choosing
_ communicating how you really are, not better than the other, just yourself, with and authentic and coherent behavior with your own identity.
Those are important considerations for a fashion company because this is a sector in which probably the leadership of desire and emotions are particularly strong and even more the shifting from status symbol to life style. A lot of brands are already active in this sector trying to propose a composite offering of very different products in different sector trying to give the possibility to their customer to live completely the brand experience and according to the brand lifestyle. The Armani building is a huge example, it is in via Manzoni in Milan offering, besides woman, man and kids fashion collection, also a restaurant, a cocktail bar, a florist, a patisserie and even an hotel.

New behaviours

New consumers

According to the new values and to new purchase motivations, also consumer behaviors changed. Understanding this is necessary to answer in a proper way and to try to advance. The first behavior I want to present is the *selective recovery of the past* that is the recovery of those product that survive to historical selection and that are again actual and beautiful. Those are all perceived as cornerstone, are reassuring from a psychological point of view so they come back again in catalogues, are pieces from traditional brands. This is probably due to the fact that it is always more difficult to identify real innovation so it is better to buy the best among what we already know. This is also a problem of faith in new products perceived as misleading and of whom we often don't know very much about production, material sources and so on. Most of them also become cult products; they are invested by communicative and cultural components so the consumer is used to cover them with affection. This because nowadays purchase is based on style symbol, goods capacity to express culture, taste and style, and no more on status symbol. These products are also objects for *collecting*. It is a very diffused custom that is able to identify our personality and our taste, it is a hobby and a lot of us as his own. It constitutes a big multiplier for consumption and it celebrated the overcoming of need as engine of consumption. The concept of consumption as a way through which to state own personality and tastes is the rising habit to buy *custom made products*. This phenomenon is made possible by the development of productive technologies that, thanks to mass customization allows to produce a big number



of products and to customize them just in the final step. It is also facilitated by new connection between people that allows creating a direct contact with company. All the behaviors explained up to here are the expression of demanding customers that ask always for more, new service, high level of innovation and content of intangible value. This kind of consumer is very well informed and updated and he is also very critical against companies of whom he wants to know about production techniques, materials composition and work conditions. For this reason he is always searching for something better and he is no more subjected to the brand. In fact he is mainly *unfaithful* (20,6%) or polygamous (53,8%), he has a restricted range of 3 or 4 brands that has passed his exam and that have the right value for money, the right ethics and so on. In the graph it is possible to understand how quickly it changed during the last years but also that for a company it is necessary to develop strategies of fidelization related to a direct contact with the customers being also inspired by creatives and rebels that uses products in an unconventional way. This infidelity is due to both exogenous and endogenous factors. The first ones are hyper connectivity, hyper choice and promotions that are able to really affect a lot people behaviors and the second ones are the fact to be more demanding, autonomous and proactive.
Considering changes in consumers' behaviors is not possible not to mention the big impact of internet: the consumer is changed in terms of possibility and in terms of intentions. They are always *connected* as we said in the first chapter talking about intensified competition and e-commerce data. Now the consumer can and wants to interact directly

_The graph next represent data explained in the book "La società post-crescita" by Fabris.They try to explain how the consumers become more and more skeptics, less subdued by the brand and always searching for a better solution. In particular it shows how the amount of loyal customers (clients of one or two brand for a specific product) is decreasing on behalf of polygamous customers (more than two brands) and promiscuous customers (used to change very often). This is an important question for companies that can no more rely on a big amount of loyal customers but have to create a relation with them in which co-creating new and spreaded values.

with the brand but also to diffuse his opinions and collect information. In this trace we can insert the *Info commerce*, the trend to collect information online before going to shop. In this sense consumers could be cluster in two groups: the convenience shopper and recreational shopper. The first one is used to plan in advance his purchase because he is very sensitive to price and waste. The other one is not necessarily related to purchase, he is mainly searching for an interesting place, an original shop with a pleasant atmosphere and a big assortment of qualitative products searching for an experience. Wandering and browsing are typical of this kind of consumers. The intense connection was the catalyst of others behaviors such as the creation of *consumption community* and the birth of *consumerism*. Both of them are characterized by the idea to share opinions about products, stores and brand online with other people thinking that your own experience could help them. The awareness that products need to be qualitative and reliable, and that companies need to be transparent and to communicate their procedures, brings the consumer to rise the expectations and to communicate every time something is getting wrong. From here were born all the reviews and complaints community about brands and services and also all the tribe organized around a brand or a product. As we explained in the introduction the consumer now feels the right to have a particular treatment but also he feels the duty to share his experience to help others consumers or to help company in improving the product itself. This is very useful and we saw a lot of community like this. For a company receiving the approval from one of this community is a big help to improve image and perception.

Chapter n . 3

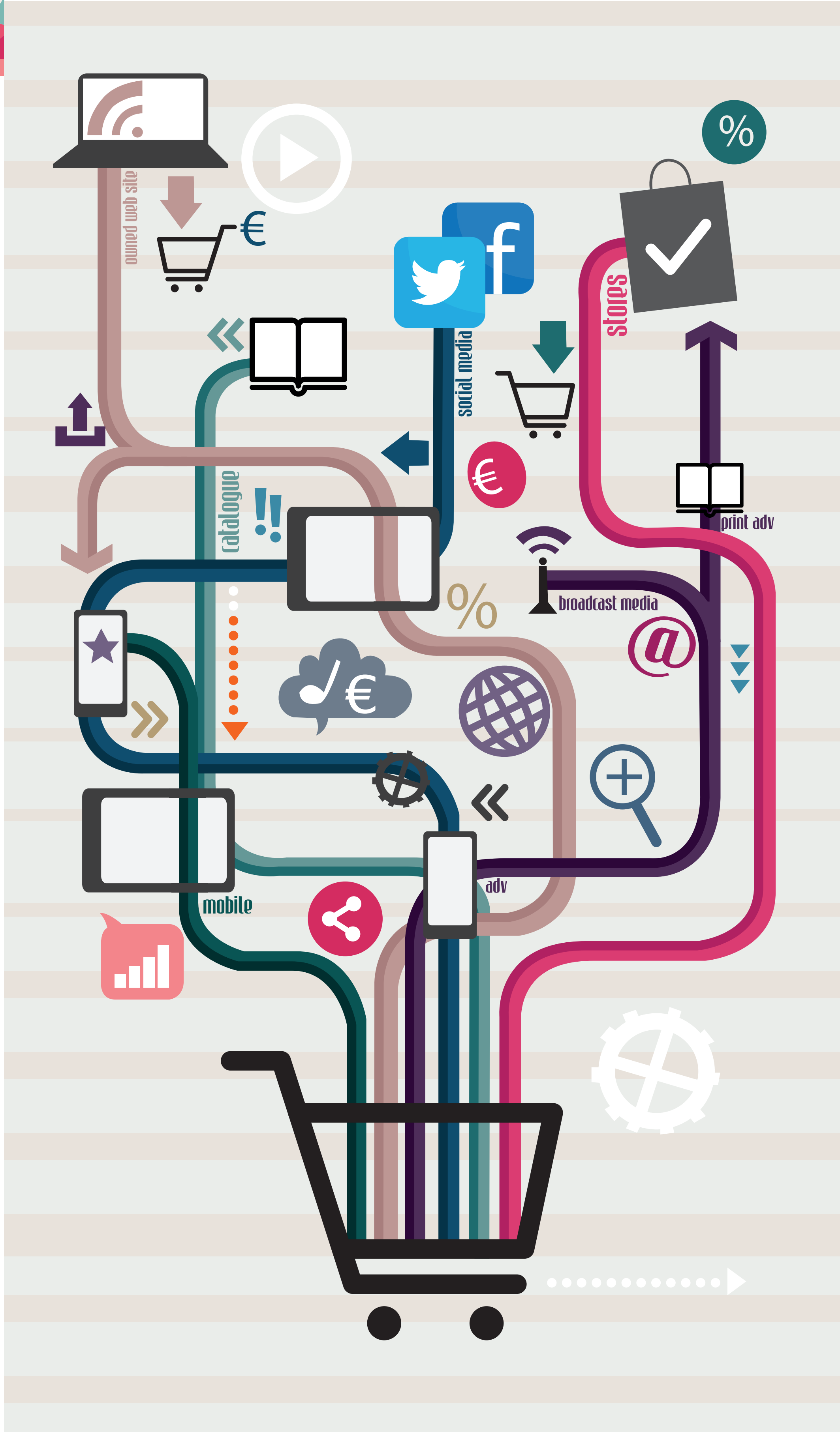
What is a mul tichannel strategy?

A Multi-channel strategy is the practice of using multiple channels to reach customers. In addition to allowing businesses to reach customers through different mediums, a multi-channel strategy also makes it easy for customers to complete desired operation on whatever medium they are most comfortable with. Multi-channel marketing lets the user decide, giving them a choice. In a sense, in this way, user experience is not designed in details because users move as they way using one media or another. In today's modern marketing era, there are many channels a business can take advantage of in order to reach potential customers. These channels include physical store that can assume very different form and purpose (temporary shop, flag ship store, corner shop, pop up store, etc.), website, mobile app or mobile site, newsletter via email or text message, catalog, call center, etc. This concept is not actually new because already in '80 exists some companies that through catalog or tv programs allows you to buy their product calling a call center. What is actually new is the growing numbers of this media available and the familiarity that people have with them and with new technologies.

Why having a multichannel strategy matters

What is a multichannel strategy

This huge assortment of marketing channels means that your potential customers could be anywhere – and you need to be where they are because, as we saw, the process of customer onboarding is very irrational and emotional so you have to stimulate it continuously. As the number of potential marketing channels grows even further (and development of new technologies and of new consumer habits seem to demonstrate it), designing multi-channel marketing campaigns will continue to be key for attract people. As we saw before, even in fashion industry conditions are changing very quickly and the completion is now very intense the market is full of new products and companies with apparent new values. Furthermore the number of people using media different from traditional ones is rising up so if a fashion company wants to survive and try to emerge, it has to develop a multichannel strategy, giving people the possibility to do shopping online either offline according to their need because, as we saw, they are no more distinguishing between online or offline shopping, it is just shopping. As Darwin said, “are not the strongest of the species that survive, not the most intelligent, but those who adapt best to change’ and this is particularly true for fashion companies. In fact one of the most



important features of fashion industry is the attitude to changes because the DNA of each company is to change their products at least twice a years, trying to create new trends and to answer to possible future desires of people. Their purpose is to design what people might want, not just what they want at the moment, as Munari teaches, because in this way they invite people changing their wardrobe and so, collection after collection, selling products. Furthermore fashion is defined as a hybrid sector, not only design and production of material objects and not only of immaterial ones but a perfect combination of this two parts, a mix of meanings and containers. So as purely creative industry, even hybrid sectors have some features that make them complex from a production/organization point of view. The production process is more complex because the value is built in the upstream and in the downstream phases of the process. In this way competencies that company have to use become a lot. And they can't just buy one of this, indifferently from the moment in the process in which this is placed, because it has to be coherent and integrated in the process, tailor-made. In this way we have a lot of different combination of output because, even if some stage could not be changed, the different application of the same inputs, could bring very different outputs as a result. And this particular combination could work in a specific context but maybe it will not work in another. To explain this we can think about fast fashion phenomenon that is just a unexpected combination of to already existing models, delayed production of effective products and the choice of central and eminent locations to place one brand store. This combination creates a new business model based: low cost products with frequent rotation and retailing of high-level products. Summarizing, fashion industry is the result of a sum of unexpected combinations of well-known input that create unpredictable outputs. While in other sectors distribution model is related to production model, in theory in fashion we have unlimited combinations of them. Low cost products should be in theory distributed in very big and low cost spaces trying to reduce total investment and to reach big volumes and, on the other hands high level companies should bet on quality and exclusivity, with restrained volumes and added values but, in practice we can see that more successful retail campaigns are those that overturn this logics: fast fashion city centered shops and factory outlet of big fashion label. In this context developing a multichannel strategy could be a way to recombine in another different way this factor to create your own identity. It is just another factor to make your brand different from the others. This because companies have not only to bet on products but on a lot of other factors to engage customers and to do that they have firstly to speak the same language and be present in their daily life. But being everywhere to reach more costumers and in every moment they need, is not the only advantage that fashion companies could have and this could be not only for big companies with large resourches and brilliant businesss men. Infact this could have also a big impact on your brand perception firstly because of the innovation charge linked to your company that is something very important for nowadays customers, but also because if you are everywhere you will become more recognizable and you can obtain this with small actions of channels integration. In this ways is even easier to answer in a proper way to your customers needs. The base is the research because to succeed and satisfy customers it is important to develop a customer centric strategy.

_fig.9 In 2012 'The body shop', the natural cosmetics brand, launched an app through which receiving promotion and save the list of your favourites to be checked while you are in the store.

Cross channel and Omni channel: concept developments

What is a multichannel strategy

Developing a multichannel strategy is often not enough because it just means to be present on different media. As we said before, especially for a fashion brand, that is producing not only tangible objects but mainly intangible values, to be coherent is very important to attract people, creating a relation and obtain their loyalty. ¬Cross channel strategy and omni channel strategy are just some developments of multichannel strategy. We can say that a brand has developed a cross channel strategy when not only the user can experience the brand through different media, but he could use a combination of them in the process of the same purchase. The typical example is: I go to the shop, try on a dress but they don't have my size and the salesperson suggest me to go on the web site and to buy it there.
Having a wide range of channels available and well connected meets needs of customers because it allows them to:
_ *Save money* thank to online promotions; the possibility to collect products in store and not to pay shipping; etc.
_ *Reduce risks* with options that anyway allows you to try on a product physically; reserve a product from online and buying it in the shop; etc.
_ *Reduce efforts* ordering with website or mobile from a catalogue and receiving it at home;
_ *Save time* because in each moment of the day they can chose a product and buy it without changing their habits and their path;
_ *Obtain more informations* with more channels available they can have more information on a particular products while in the shop looking at it;
In this sense cross channel is the evolution of multichannel because we have not only different channel running separately, but there are some points in which the customer, according to his needs and desires, could switch from one channel to another one to conclude the same operation. And these switching points could be designed by the company or not, the customer could be forced to change the channel or he can decides when and where to switch. This is why I think that cross channel is a more complete approach because it allows the company to leave its own mark and creating a unique and remarkable experience. For example luxury sector are very related to physical shops not only for the sale of products but mainly for the intangibles, like brand values, communication of quality, style and design related to their product together with the relation and the assistance of the client. In this conditions, new media could not be considered like an alternative or a replacement but they have to be developed as a complementary service in terms of new selling opportunity (web and mobile commerce) and in terms of a engagement and evaluation in a way more sophisticated, involving and complete. The evolution of the consumer that is always more connected, informed and demanding oblige fashion companies to be updated and present when

and where the consumer want. To succeed this kind of model needs to be client-centric so it is important to collect not only quantitative data but mainly qualitative ones. Infact, nowadays the biggest difficulties fashion companies face in realizing this kind of strategy are related to organization. Since it is not good enough to be present on different channel to make your clients happy, it is important to evaluate which activities are more important for your clients and combining them with your strengths develop a tailor-made strategy.

Omni channel is even more complex because is concentrated more on a seamless approach to the consumer experience through all available shopping channels, i.e. mobile internet devices, computers, brick-and-mortar, television, radio, direct mail, catalog and so on. Retailers are meeting the new customer demands by deploying specialized supply chain strategy software. To use all channels simultaneously, and retailers using an omni channel approach will track customers across all channels, not just one or two. In the brick-and-mortar channel, digitally-savvy consumers are entering stores already well-informed about a product's features and prices, and expect store employees to know more than they do. In this kind of environment all shopping channels work from the same database of products, prices, promotions, etc. Instead of perceiving a variety of touch-points as part of the same brand, omni channel retailers let consumers experience the brand, not a channel within a brand. Merchandise and promotions are not channel specific, but rather consistent across all retail channels. The brick-and-mortar stores become an extension of the supply chain in which purchases may be made in the store, but probably are researched through other "channels" of communication.

It is important here to understand that there are at least a lot of dimensions to omni channel retailing but, mostly, we are interested in what a brand want to do when it is going to manage directly the retail process through mono brand channel so we are not dealing here whit all these strategies and opportunity related with online dealers different from the brand.

This kind of approach implies that the customer is accounted through the company and that this account is the same in every media and allows him to have a seamless experience and to be recognized. One example of an effective omni channel retailer is Macy's, the American department stores chain. They include omni channel in their company mission willing to cut down stock out and make stock visible. This is due to the observation of costumers that are every time connected and pass from store to e-shop to mobile continuously and buy through the media that is more convenient at the moment. Macy's is omni channel in the sense that stores, e-shops and mobile apps work together in the interest of the client: to be more efficient they address the client of the shop to the e-shop and vice versa, and they use mobile to connect them. They invested a lot on new technologies to obtain a detailed and real time visibility of every stock. In particular they use RFID technology with labels that make the product traceable. Moreover they give to salespersons iPads to show to the clients products that are sold out in the shop but maybe are available online, and to work as flying register.

A move to omni channel retailing can create a more knowledgeable consumer, so store employees need to be more knowledgeable about merchandise carried and production processes. There's a lot of talk today about omni channel, but a series of underlying factors are driving this experiential change for consumers. As a result, retailers and brands have to reformulate their supply chain strategies to match this paradigm shift in consumers

_fig.10

demand. According to IDC Retail Insights, omni channel shopping "requires providing an immersive and superior customer experience regardless of channel". Omni-channel retailers carry merchandise that is customer-centric and is not specific to any channel. Supply chain visibility is necessary to enable omni channel sales, exactly as it is in Macy's. Real-time data are necessary when moving towards an omni channel approach, as socially connected consumers move from one channel to another, expecting their stopping point to be "bookmarked", then allowing them to return through a different retail channel to finish the browsing or purchase process where they had originally left off. A consistent and convenient brand exposure from an omni channel retailer will create better top of mind awareness from consumers. This kind of shift has a main big problem: it requires heavy investments of both time, and money. Communications between the IT department, marketing department, and sales staff will need to be as smooth as possible with little confusion about goals and strategies. A clear and thorough understanding of the customer, or target market, is required to be able to make appropriate decisions about channel integration and usability. Because brick-and-mortar sales influenced by online search are four times higher than total ecommerce sales, omni channel retailers need to be informative, personable, always connected and allow channel transparency.

To summarize we can say that both cross channel and omni channel could be very effective strategies but they are strictly related with the purposes of the company, resources and target they want to reach.

Multichannel communication through social media

What is a multichannel strategy

In this chapter I want to deal with two issues about communication: the importance of communication if you have an online shop because people needs to know where they can find it and what does it sell and mostly the importance of multichannel communication even if your company has not the plan to develop in some way an online channel.

As I already explained the new consumer is always more connected and demanding. In particular in the process of selection is true that also communication plays an important role in defending brand image because a bad advertisement is now immediately linked to a bad product. Moreover traditional advertisement is giving way to online blogs and forums because people had always believed in word of mouth more than in advertisement and nowadays with the Net they can exchange their opinions with people all over the world. There are a lot of researches about it asserting that after the stimulus the customer is used to search for information about the product, read reviews and ask to the network for opinions before going to buy it. It is especially true for some product sectors but more and more people are very careful about spending money and about quality so it is typical to search for such confirmations. In this process customers consult a lot of sources because the Net is full of information. Here comes the company because its role is to be present in those place were people are used to search for information and a researches (Nielsen, 2009) are saying that people consider more reliable (43%) using first specific information tracked down in reviews web sites or comparators, then (41%) listening to other consumers' opinions on forums, blogs and social network and at the end (16%) reading authoritative sources like newspapers, magazines and company websites. Understanding this is really important to reach the customers because more than having a powerful and complete website, they appreciate the presence on social media. In this sense it is illustrative the case of blogs that are followed by millions of people and are written just by fashion enthusiast. They are a collection of user-generated contents, so a big resource for company, and are the proof that nowadays every person that has something to say is listened by the community and could even become an authority. Entering in this kind of mechanism, although, is not easy because people are demanding with companies. Infact it is not enough to open a Facebook page or to create a twitter account to rise interest and address people on your own web site, what they want is to really interact with you to understand brand value, share them, giving their opinion on your products and your politics in a real bilateral conversation. This is a big opportunity for the company to establish a relation with consumers that are now demanding for it. Moreover what they expect from a company is to create and share new contents, different from those one they can already find in official website, giving the space for them to express their opinion and ask questions maybe having also free conversation. Following this a lot of companies created not only Facebook pages but out-and-out blogs linked to their website. For example Pampers created a web page in which mums can contact directly a pediatrician to have advice, where are posted information about children world and needs. This was a very successful case because it demonstrates how a company could rise in popularity with word of mouth just giving a simple additional service online. Another successful example of how to create a web based project in which users could identify them selves is C'n'C Costume National website. Actually this is a blog not very related to the brand products but to the brand, and clients, values. It is a display for artists, events and interesting happenings that is aligned with the brand lifestyle, street trends, music and arts are the main characters of the blog that is really appreciated by people. Mainly they love that the brand just stimulates some conversations about happenings or issues and give them a free place where to meet each other and share opinions. This with the help of social media like Facebook and Twitter. As a result they create a big community around them and also the conditions to study their target from very near collecting not only quantitative data (how many people visit the website, which contents are more shared, etc.) but also more interesting qualitative ones. This activities create a lot of word of mouth around the brand and actively contribute to give visibility to the product and to rise the confidence in institutional website and possible e-shop. In case the company doesn't have any other online activities (website, e-shop) this is the easiest way to reach customers, involve them in your brand world and to reassure them about your activity because demanding customer is always more skeptic about those brands that have not a presence online and are also a bit annoyed not to be able to collect information about them.

As I mentioned before this is particularly important for those brands that have an online shop because not using online communication to link online shop is like not using advertisement to promote a shop in a hidden road: nobody will discover it. In this case you have to work not only on opinion of people but mainly in your promotion and on the other hand on the process of links that for example connects your e-shop to Google and make you appear in researches.

Doing this in a proper way is not so easy because, even if it could not require a lot of financial resources because most of the social network give you the opportunity to open up a page for free, you need to invest in human resources to have someone taking care of the page, creating contents and answering to people. Because there are too many examples of Facebook pages or forums created to meet customers that are abandoned and when someone write will not receive answer for weeks. It is a commitment and it will give big results so if you decide to develop an online communication plan for your company, and I have tried to demonstrate how important it is, do it seriously and without promising something you are not able to realize. This is true for every kind of strategy I propose in this work but I really think that multichannel communication is necessary so from here on I will take for granted that the companies already have a sort of online communication because this is really the first step.

Chapter n . 4

Case studies: examples of successful integration of online and offline channels

_fig.11

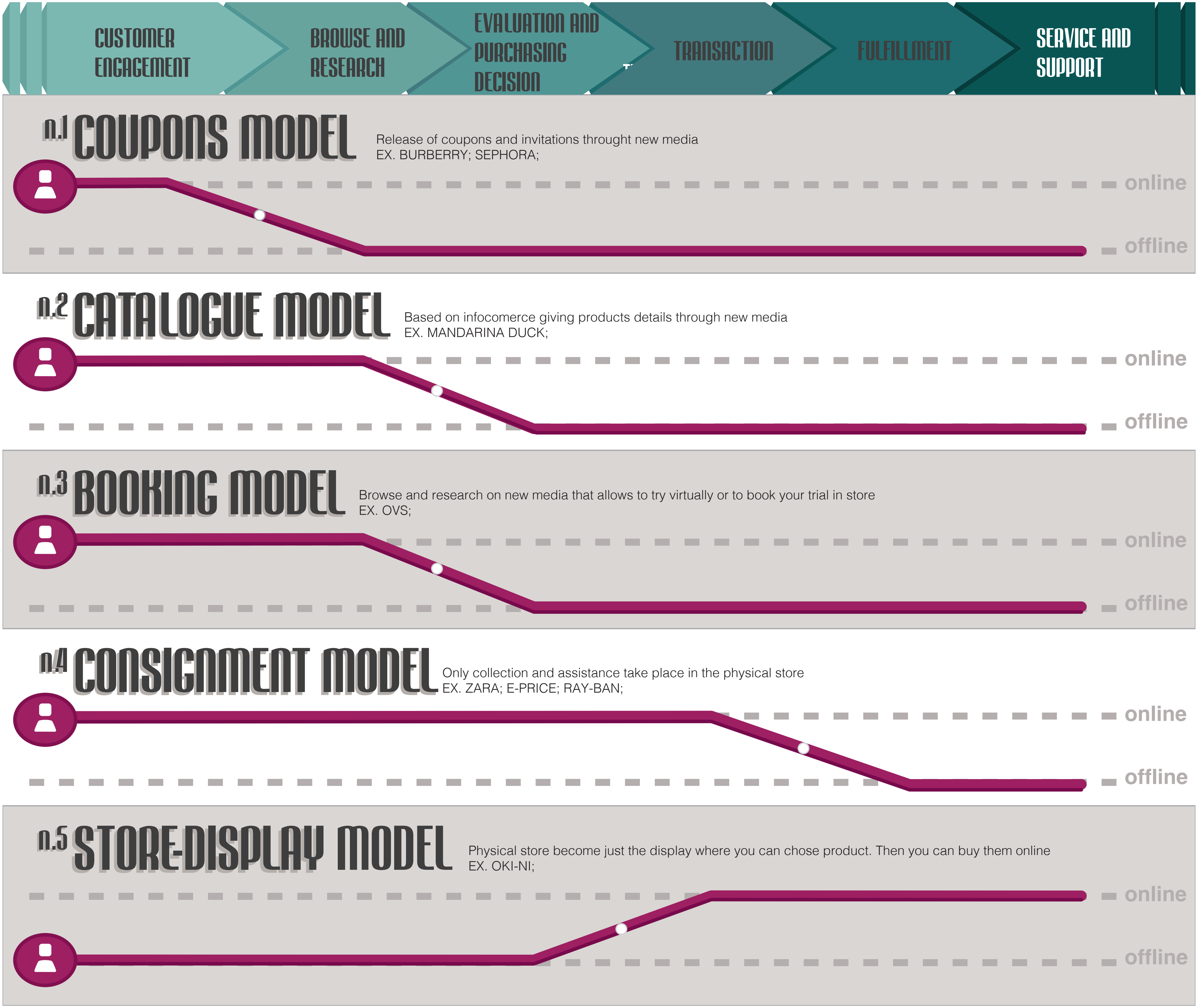
Introduction to case studies analysis

Effective integration of online and offline

Considering the evolving phenomena of cross channel strategy and its relationship with the environment, I focused myself just on fashion sector, to understand if it is possible to identify some guidelines about effective criteria to integrate online and offline channels. As I already explained a bit in the previous chapter, mainly I identified three kind of approach that are different according to the level of design in user experience and that could be just prerogative of big companies with big resources. The first approach is a kind of totally uncontrolled multichannel (or cross channel). This kind of approach is very diffused and identify those projects in which there are more than one channel developed (for example e-shop and traditional shop) but even if there are some contact points (in this case we are talking about cross channel) they are not designed, users are completely free to switch from one channel to another one. This is very positive because gives to the users the power and the freedom of interact with the brand in the way they are more comfortable but with this kind of approach the company is not doing any kind of choice, is losing the opportunity to create something remarkable, to make people live a brand experience. In this way also the company is not able to reach some purpose like engaging a specific kind of target or state one of its particular value but, simply, it is trying to open up new market maybe trying to involve more people. The same wake point is recognizable in the second approach that is typical of those companies that develop an uncontrolled omni-channel strategy. As I explained before, an omni-channel strategy is characterized by the presence of the company on every kind of media and the possibility, for the user, to switch from one to another in every moment or even to use two or more of them in the same moment. Taking apart just for a moment all the criticalities of developing such a complex system, what is evident also here is that most of the times the customer have the power to control the interaction. This could be positive, such as the fact that it demonstrate that the company is very up to date, or that they are taking into consideration that the switch from a channel to another has to be very coherent and seamless, but, again, maybe it is possible to do something that leave a sign and a message strictly related to this company, that say why it is different from the others. The last approach is exactly the opposite, it consider a cross channel in which there are contacts and switching points between different channels but those are decided by the company itself or at least suggested. In this case company designed the user experience in details taking into consideration the needs of the customers but also other factors. Most of the times people are not obliged to do an operation exactly in one way, there is anyway a bit of freedom, but they have few options, not unlimited, and in some way the company address the user through the path they have designed. This allows to the company to be different from others, to emphasize their strength and to reach the customer they are more familiar with or that kind of they are searching for. This is true in particular in fashion market where every brand has its own style and is designed for a particular kind of target. Also the relation with the brand, the loyalty, is strictly related with the value proposition, with the values that the company has and celebrates. What I am trying to propose is that, according to some factors like target, purpose, economical and people resources, companies should develop not only a multichannel strategy, but to make it effective, they have to leave their signs involving people in a designed customer experience that is able to underline their strengths. People buy clothes and accessory not only because they need them but most of the time it is related to emotional factors and irrational stirring so it is now always more difficult to engage consumers. Anyway it is possible to identify a model through which every customer pass by after the onboarding. My analysis is articulated around this process that is not rational nor consequent, but it describes the phases of a purchase and according to this I identified five different way of integration of channels taking firstly into consideration where is the switching point from a channel to another and which is the customer journey designed by the company. In the chapter then I borrowed from Donald Norman the three levels of design, visceral, behavioral and rational, theorized in 'Emotional Design', to understand on which level the strategy leverages in each phase. I found this theory very useful and valuable because it is based on the idea that people evaluate a product or a service using different levels: first emotional and irrational one (visceral), then that one related to usability and functionality (behavioral) and finally the more logic one (rational). Going through the models it is easy to understand that each one of them is thought to answer to different customers' needs and to emphasize different companies' strengths. From my point of view every kind of purchasing, even nowadays when most of them are driven by emotions and irrationality, could be represented with the customer journey map. In particular I identified six fundamental phases I

_fig.12 My cases mainly are about big company and brand of fashion but at the end what I want to demonstrate is that with small adjustments these approach could be applied even to small retailers. This is an interesting activity by a small patisery in Miami trying to develop a multichannel communication through social media to increase its name.

already presented in the first chapter: customer engagement, browse and research, evaluation and purchasing decision, transaction, fulfillment and finally service and support that include all those process that take place after the selling. The customer engagement, is about all those activities like advertisement, promotional events, newsletters and communication in general that are organized by the company to attract new customers or to maintain the loyal ones communicating them the launch of new products or trying to stimulate their shopping with promotions and events. Here the company decides how to present itself and the strength of the link that wants to build with the customers. When the engagement is established, the customer starts the second phase, that one in which collects all the information about products to decide if and what to buy. The third phase is about the evaluation that is crucial because we are talking about fashion. As you can easily understand trying on a dress or a pair of shoes is something very important for a lot of people before buying so the company needs to consider this phase very carefully and if it is not possible to try on directly the products because we are dealing with online channel, they have to consider it and find a solution. The evaluation is also about price and quality because as we said the new customers are very demanding about that. When the decision is taken we come to the last part of the process where we pass trough the transaction, the fulfillment and the post service. All these phases, that are very easily solve in offline shops, become something more awkward if we deal with online channel or an integration of online and offline and it is important to develop solutions consistent with customer's expectation not to damage the whole process.
The cases I analyzed were useful to define the models each of them infact is based on an interesting aspect of the cases' strategies.


CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT
BROWSE AND RESEARCH
EVALUATION AND PURCHASING DECISION
TRANSACTION
FULFILLMENT
SERVICE AND SUPPORT
n.1 COUPONS MODEL
Release of coupons and invitations throught new media
EX. BURBERRY; SEPHORA;
online
offline
n.2 CATALOGUE MODEL
Based on infocomerce giving products details through new media
EX. MANDARINA DUCK;
online
offline
n.3 BOOKING MODEL
Browse and research on new media that allows to try virtually or to book your trial in store
EX. OVS;
online
offline
n.4 CONSIGNMENT MODEL
Only collection and assistance take place in the physical store
EX. ZARA; E-PRICE; RAY-BAN;
online
offline
n.5 STORE-DISPLAY MODEL
Physical store become just the display where you can chose product. Then you can buy them online
EX. OKI-NI;
online
offline

First integration model: Coupon model

Burberry and Sephora cases

The first model of integration between online and offline came from the observation of two cases that are different in term of product sector but that share the same approach: giving the possibility to online community members to join particular promotions or event that take place in the shops. The first brand is Burberry, a luxury brand that was born in 1856 in England and that is famous for its trench designed by the founder but that nowadays trade a lot of different products, starting from fashion to parfumes and jewerly. Our interest is in a particular tradition that they estabilished in some of their shop, one of those is the famous Burberry building in Regent street London. Infact the subscribers of a particular section of the company website could be selected to join some special event organized in the store. Those events are presentations of new collections or new limited editions that special guests have the opportunity to see and buy exclusively before the official launch. This is a great opportunity because those are often limited pieces so people can access in advance the product, feel the quality and taste the innovations. It is interesting to see that the guests are not only the loyal customer that are used to spend a lot in the store, but also people that just join a website. This is actually a way to open up the brand world to new possible clients communicating the exclusive feeling related to the brand and to the products, presenting the excellence of their collections often condensed in the limited edition. So leveraging on emotions they try to involve fashion enthusiast in their world making them feel important and part of a luxury and exclusive event.
The other brand I studied has actually a different approach and leverages on different customer's desires but with the same tools. Sephora is a

_ fig.13 Burberry building in Regent Street, London.

_fig.14 A Sephora make up artist working with a new collection of metal eye shadows.

French brand and chain of cosmetics stores that, featuring more than 100 brands, along with its own private label, offers beauty products including makeup, skincare, body, fragrance, color, and haircare. It is owned by the holding LVMH but provides not only luxury products, also fancy and new brands for teenagers. They have more than 1700 stores in 30 countries and they are very active with their online shops. In Italy I identified a curios behavior they have with people that suscribed their newsletter: it doesn't matter if you are or not one of their loyal customers because with your subscription you can just receive their card and a lot of coupons via email or by post that allows you to have particular discounts in the stores. Every coupon is different, sometimes you can have a discount on everything like 10%, and some other times it is just related to a particular product like foundation creams or parfumes or again related to a particular brand. What is interesting is that they suggest you to spend your coupon in the stores because there you can count on a lot of shopping assistants that are expert in make up and can give you the best advice in relation to your skin, colours and shapes. Also in this case they work on the online customer engagement giving you a special opportunity to buy products but here they leverage not only on the emotion related to the feeling of being exclusive but also on the bargain hunt and on the quality perception related to the expert advice, so more on the rational level.

The first model I developed consists in generation of coupons and invitations for online community members that can be used in offline stores. As for the companies analyzed, this kind of strategy is perfect for companies that don't have the possibility to develop a proper online store but still want to be present online to attract more clients. Or even for those companies that have a strong network of stores with a lot of competencies and expert people such as Sephora and that want to attract people in the stores leveraging on emotions and price, hoping that they can buy something more than they have planned. Again, as we said, it could be useful to develop such a strategy to better show the innovation and quality related to new products or new concepts and it is perfect for those company that are used to launch frequently limited editions with big events. As every model it has also some weak points, but according to company strenghts, then we will explain how to match the right strategy with the right company. I just want to say that this strategy will not answer to the needs of those people that wants to do shopping in unconventional moments of the day because anyway they have to spend their coupon in a physical shop and this is again a weak point for those people that are not familiar or close to a shop. Or even there is the risk that the discounted products will end so it is important to develop a good coupon generation strategy before to start. Coupon generation infact is the key activity to develop this kind of strategy.

COUPONS MODEL

Release of coupons and invitations throught new media

*Switching point

Switching point is after the receiving of invitation or coupon with whom the customer is invited to come to the physical store. Only the engagement happens online. Big attention to new generation and connected people that collects information and news online.

Key element

Coupons leveraging on exclusivity feeling and price sensitivity (Reflective level)
CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

resourches

+ sales persons' expertise
+ network of stores
+ few for website development
+ quality
+ event planning

limits

– shopping during opening time
– transfer required
– no online shop

opportunities

+ attraction of people in the store
+ shopping advice
+ make people feel the products
+ direct relation

strengths

+ leverage on emotion
+ bargain hunt
+ thought-provoking

Second integration model: Catalogue model

Mandarina Duck case

The second model of integration of online and offline channels is different from the previous because the switching point is a bit more ahead in the customer journey, it is before evaluation phase. Infact the focus of this second strategy is the research phase. Mandarina Duck is an italian brand, born in 1977 and has as main values innovation, and the will to act as a first mover. Their products are luggages, work bag and accessories in general and when they faced the opportunity to create an online shop they at the beginning took a decision: create just a info web site, not a proper e-shop. This because they had already understand the phenomenon of Infocommerce: people are used to search for product and price informations online to better plan their shopping both online and offline. They decided to create such a complete and detailed online interactive catalogue (the key element of this model) to allows people to collect all the informations they need from the horse's mouth so they can trust the brand and increase their consideration of it. It was in 2005, then they developed also the e-shop and with it they allows other accessory's brand to sell their products creating also an outlet, but what is relevant for me is the initial approach: since they were not able to develop a proper online shop they decided just to give to people more information they can about their products in order to help them in their decision, listening to their need to compare prices and products features and to rise their brand value. Then they also gave informations about store locations. This could be used in the same ways by companies with low resources that want to be present online to attract paople in their shops leveraging on rational level of accurate contemporary consumers.

CATALOGUE MODEL

Based on Infocommerce giving products details through new media

*Switching point

Switching point is after the collection of informations about products and prices. It consider the creation of a online interactive and complete catalogue that answer to the new demanding consumer that wants to be sure of quality and price before shopping. An important part is also saying which shops are selling the collection or even the product I chose.

Key element

Interactive and detailed catalogue leveraging on reflective consumpion (Reflective and behavioural levels)

BROWSE AND RESEARCH

resourches

+ network of stores
+ development of catalogue
+ deep and precise explanation

limits

– shopping during opening time
– transfer required
– no online shop
– what I chose could be not in the shop I go

opportunities

+ attraction of people in the store
+ help in price comparison
+ trial in store
+ direct relation and interaction

strengths

+ reliable informations
+ transparency
+ help in gift research
+ help in shop research

Third integration model: Booking model

OVS case

The third model of integration of online and offline channels is just a step ahead the previous one: after the research you have the opportunity to book the products you chose and to try it in the store. This model came through the observation of a brand that are very active in usage of online channel and new media and that is experimenting a lot with new technologies for retail. The case is the new app related to the new shop in via Dante in Milan by OVS. OVS is the first apparel retailer in the market of woman, man and kids (according to Mintel, 2013) and try to develop always trebdy products, characterized by the italian style, at the best price possible. This year they opened their new flagship store in via Dante where, working with google enterprises to develop the more updated technologies in retail, they created a smart shop. Here you can find smart dressing rooms, that allows you to post on social networks your outfits and to call directly the sale assistant to have another size, interactive kiosk to browse the collection and new arrivals, and a new app. This is what I mainly find interesting and inspiring. Thank to the application you can browse the catalogue, have your own wardrobe of desires and you can see what is available in the via Dante shop. There is also a function that allows you to order a product and, if when you arrive in the shop and you try it on you are satisfied, to buy and pay it directly in the store. Actually I think that this is appliable or in a very small context like this, just a shop, or in a very big and well organized network. In fact this kind of approach is answering the need of people to try on clothes before buying them because, even if online shop of fashion is fast-growing, it is already something very important expecially in Italy.

Here we can see this kind of approach applied to a fast fashion company but I think that this could work also in a context more related to small production, quality and artisanal products. From this case I elaborated the third model. This model describe a cross channel strategy that don't imply to create a proper eshop but offer something more then the simple catalogue: the opportunity to book your trial in store. This because we identify the importance of the trial for the evaluation mainly for some kind of products related to fashion. I know that this could mean to increase a bit the costs, because you have to very well organize your stock and to take of from exposition a product without having the certain to sell it, but it is a strong way to answer to people needs and this could increase the brand value. Moreover this is not actually a very spread approach because, unlike some of the other models that are already very diffused, are very few the examples of brand that are running along this road. It needs a lot of organization in terms of logistic and stock management but it could be also though just for some special collection or limited edition that maybe, because of the higher price, people prefer to try on and to touch before to buy. As I already explained the new customer is becoming more and more demanding and wants to be sure that the product he is buying is worth that price so, leveraging on the rational and behavioural level of customers, this model answer to the needs of trial fundamental for evaluation phase. The key element infact is the organization of the trial and of the booking.

BOOKING MODEL

Browse and research on new media that allows to book trial in store

*Switching point

In this case we have two options: switching point could be after the virtual trial or after the booking of a real one. In both cases the attention is on the research but also on the need of a proper trial and evaluation that is assisted by technology or they give you the certainty to find the product you chose and to try it physcally before to buy.

Key element

Trial moment because of characterization of products (Reflective level)
EVALUATION AND PURCHASING DECISION

resourches

+ well organized stock
+ network of stores
+ investment on new technologies
+ quality

limits

– shopping during opening time
– transfer required
– availability in store

opportunities

+ attraction of people in the store
+ make people feel the quality
+ direct relation
+ interaction

strengths

+ freedom in choice
+ attention to clients needs
+ usage of new technologies

Fourth integration model: Consignment model

Zara, Ray-Ban and E-price cases

The fourth model of integration is quite diffuse among different companies and product sector but is still very effective and nears to consumer needs. As cases I analyzed two companies that use this kind of approach in a very effective way for different reasons. The first one is Zara. I already mention this company talking about purchasing model because they are really a power in fast fashion. Now what I want to enlight is their usage of web site, mobile application and huge network of stores to meet the desires of online shopper. In fact they built their own company e-shop and an application related that gives you the possibility to order and buy from the entire collection and from a section called special price and to receive you pack in the store near your house or office. In this way you are not going to pay any shipping fee and you choose where to collect all your shopping. To meet new generation and smart phone community they decided to develop the same concept in an app that is everyweek updated with new products and is very rich of pictures and details about materials and trends. In fact every month they also create a lookbook in order to help their clients to choose the more trendy clothes and outfits. The delivery in the shop takes 3 or 5 days thanks to the efficiency of the logistic. They are able not to make you pay because they just add your pack to the normal delivery service to the shop that every week brings new merchandise to the stores. Moreover, in this way they have the advantage to attract people in the store that probably will have new products than that ones he discovered online at the moment of the purchaising, so he could be attract by other goods. This model is called 'assistance' because with this strategy the company gives also

_ *fig.15 An Italian In post Locker used by e-price to deliver the packs. The usage is very simple because digiting the code received by mail, the locker that contain the pack will open and you can pick your purchase.*

the possibility to the customers to do a certain return, because they can do it for free in the store and they don't need to buy something else but they have just their money back. The other case I took into consideration is a bit more particular because it involves an online company that don't have physical shops. The company e-price, an online seller of a wide range of product sector (fashion included) that owns also other brand like Saldiprivati that sells mainly discounted products, in collaboration with TNT and Inpost, created a new way for customers to pay and pick up their order offline. They developed a network of small shops in which you can have a direct contact with a sale person and pay and collect your order (called Pick&Pay), still during shop time but also a system of lockers all around the cities where in every moment of the day you can collect your pack just digting a code they released at the moment of the order. This is a very innovative and interesting way to solve the problem of the shipment because there are no shipping fee and you don't have time limitations. Instead with the Pick&Pay points they developed a physical contact with constumers even if they are an online company that is useful also for the returns management. This lockers are also used by other online company like Amazon and I think they really meet people needs of not modify their daily schedule just to receive a pack. The last case I analyze is Ray Ban, a brand of sunglasses and eyeglasses founded in 1937 by American aviation company Bausch & Lomb.The brand is best known for their Wayfarer and Aviator styles of sunglasses. In 1999, Bausch & Lomb sold the brand to the Italian Luxottica Group. What attracts me of their strategy is the application Ray Ban virtual mirror. This is a software that you can download from company website and, thanks to the use of webcam and augmented reality, it allows you to try on all the new glasses collection. Moreover it links you to the online shop where you can directly buy them. This is a very interesting case because you can find this brand's products in a lot of shops also online and with a lot of discount but with eyeglasses and sunglasses is very important to try them on to understand if they really fit your face. This is a winning case in relation to the kind of product but thanks to new tecnology it can be though also for other sectors because a lot of company are already using virtual dressing room but using 3d models of other people. It is something really different to try it on your right image. I identify this case as a fourth model plus because the fourth model doesn't take into consideration trial but, thanks to new technologies it is now possible to add this features to a normal online store. In the next scheme it is possible to understand how this model is able to answer to people needs of saving money in relation to delivery leveraging the rational level of demanding contemporary customers.

CONSIGNMENT MODEL

Only collection and assistance take place in the physical store

*Switching point

Switching point is after the payment. This could be consider as a real e-shop. The only difference is in the fulfillment that happens in the store. This meet the customers in their desire not to have shiiping costs and to have a physical place where to go for returns and post selling assistance.

Key element

Consignment procedure that could be organized thanks to new technologies (Behavioural level)
FULFILLMENT

resourches

+ network of stores
+ effective delivery service
+ post selling effective service
+ creation of a proper e-shop

limits

– fulfillment during opening time
– transfer required

opportunities

+ attraction of people in the store
+ shopping advice
+ rising brand value
+ dispose of investories
+ having more selling channels

strengths

+ secure return
+ direct relation
+ proper online shop
+ check of the pack
+ meet people needs

Fifth integration model: Store-display model

Oki-ni case

The last model is the more disruptive one. It came from a brand called OKI-NI that is english and was born in 2001. It is founded by a group of young designers with the idea just to sell their products online. This products are unique and particular because they destroied the idea of collection but every month they add to their website few nwe products. Every product is realized in collaboration with a big fashion brand and it is in limited edition. Some of the brands with whom they collaborates are Adidas, Aquascutuum, Diesel, Envisu, Freitag, Motorola, Pringle of Scotland, 25 and 6876. They also starts with three showrooms that are unique because are set up like museums and there people can just see and touch products but they can't buy because every product is in limited edition and they don't have stocks in the stores. Their strength is the emotion to have a unique and trendy product in limited edition so that people is willing to pay even more than normal and just to see the product but not to try it on. At the beginning the offer was about man and woman apparel, accessories, shoes, technology and jewerly but often to this goods they add special projects realized with famous artists.
In their approach the store become just a display, from here the name, where to collect informations and browse. In this sense this is exactly the opposite of the second integration model that is more diffused and that gives informations online to the customers making them buy products in the stores. This company has the opportunity to apply such a disruptive strategy because of the uniqueness of the brand, of the concept and of the products for which people is available also to act in an unconventional way. I really believe that this strategy wonderfully fits

with the whole concept of products and company because it emphasizes even more the exclusivity and the uniqueness of the products. Even for the communication they don't follow traditional path because they just have a newsletter but then they rely on fashion blogs and word of mouth between experts. This alllows them to sell their products not just in the cities where they have their showrooms but all around Europe and also in USA and Canada. This because of the important fashion trend of customization and personalization that search for unique and particular pieces with whom to communicate the own style and taste.
I find that this case is really amazing in terms of think out of the box but I really believe that this could be applied easily also to other context, even less exclusive but with some tricks. In my opinion leveraging on the desire of having exclusive products (visceral level) is a big strength so it could be applied for example to special editions or particular products in the store. It means that the company could even not have a proper online shop with the entire collection but they can just sell online a limited edition or even, estabilishing co-brand collaborations, use other brands websites to sell their products. In this way the company could even not have other phases or activity online, apart from online communication that, as we already explained is necessary to attract people and give the sense of being updated and willing to meet customers needs and desires in a bilateral relation.
In the next chapter I will start the development of Sell it!different toolkit that is made by a general part of design principles that are true for every company that want to develop a cross channel strategy and a second part made by practical advice and tools to identify the right models to be developed first and then all the criticalities related to the selected model and the different possibilities to combine in the best way possible company's strengths and customers' needs and desires.

_fig. 16 This is the inside of the oki-ni showroom in Saville Row in London. It is organized as an art gallery to emphasize even more the exclusivity of the products.

STORE-DISPLAY MODEL

Physical store becomes just the display where you can chose products. Then you can buy them online

*Switching point

Here the situation is overturned: engagement, research and evalution happens offline. Switching point before the purchaise because in the stores there are only products for trial and they don't have a stock but you need to order online on brand website. It could be adopted as a permanet strategy or just for limited edition or special collection.

@ Key element

Coordination between items exposed in the offline store and online shop assortment, collection turning, items numbers... (Behavioural level)
BROWSE AND RESEARCH

resourches

+ even a small network of stores
+ effective delivery service
+ creation of a proper e-shop
+ special collection
+ appropriate communication and set up

limits

– visit the store during opening time
– no offline purchaise
– distance from traditional clients

opportunities

+ attraction of people in the store
+ shopping advice
+ direct relation
+ continuous innovation

strengths

+ leverage on desire
+ exclusivity
+ make people feel the products

Chapter n . 5

Sell it! differ ent: a toolkit for SME

_fig.17

What is Sell it! different

Sell it! different: a toolkit for SMEs

Sell it! different is a toolkit thought to guide designers in the process of creating a cross channel strategy for SMEs. As the title suggest the aim of cross channel strategies proposed is to enhance the features of a company and to make it stand out from the crowd celebrating its differences in a different way because we are used to think that multichannel strategies are prerogatives just of Big companies. We are not celebrating the realization of a multichannel strategy in it self, we want to do maybe less things but very well done and to give the control of the process to the company, to make it able to communicate itself in the right way. The idea is that also small and medium companies that don't have the possibility to involve big talents and that don't have big resources need to develop a cross channel strategy to be competitive. In doing that they need the help of a designer able to analyze company, environment and purpose to identify which is the best strategy to succeed. He is able to look at those companies from a user center perspective and in this way to realize for them somenthing that really enhance their strenghts with the five models though to simplify strategies and integrate channels.
The toolkit is composed by the models, the classification tool that inserting the parameters of the company elborates the best model to be developed and finally the guide with all the phases and crucial points that has to be developed and design for each strategy. So the toolkit's target are italian SMEs operating in fashion industry, and it could fit which kind of models can fit the two most common *business models* of fashion SM sector. The first, the manufacturer, we can

say that this is more common between small and medium fashion company and in this category there are very different kind of companies, all those companies that directly design and produce, or make produce fashion products, so not only clothes but also accessories, shoes, jewelry and so on. For this reason we can say that all the different channels integration models could fit according to other parameters we will discover later. This is because there are really too many different realities. The other business model is that one of distributors. These are companies that buy products from others and just sell them. They mainly have more than one brands and even products type. As an example we can bring all the different outlets not directly controlled by a manufacturer or even shops chain like Vergelio in Milan. This is a company that owns 12 shops in Milan with also other signs (Marilena and Vierre) selling many shoes brands. This kind of business is more complex to manage because in this category there are shops with fixed brands (every season they always present the collection of those selected brands) or others that according to the market and to agreements they are able to establish, have always different brands and products, such as outlets. There are also companies that are in between of two business model, the manufacturer and distributor, because for example they have a shop in which they sell their own collection but also products of other brands to supply a more complete offer, a full lifestyle. Also for this kind of business I can say that it is possible to chose between all the five cross channel models, even if there are some of them that are more complicated to be realized because in some case the not fixed assortment doesn't allow to create a catalogue that is necessary for the model number 2 and 3. I just wanted to do this distinction between two different business model to have a complete view on the target of the project. For the a key aspect is the integration because mainly they are offline based companies that want to develop an online channel and integrating them could be the best way not to waste resources. There are also some companies that are online based and since they are expanding, they want to develop an offline channel to easily reach also other kind of customers but this are more isolated cases and in fact also models were elaborated for that and maybe the last two are those more apt for this mission if the company already have an online shop. Sell it! different helps designers exactly in this phase because it is based on a accurate analysis of fashion environment, it identified 5 effective models of offline and online integration and it explains which are all those factors to be considered to match the company with the right model. Choosing just five models infact is already a skimming between all the possible solutions. The most important step is the decision of the model, the matching of features of the companies and the right strategy. To univocally do it, I elaborated a classification tool to classify companies that inserting some parameters is able to say which is the most effective model, or models, for the selected company. As I already said, the idea at the base of the project is that, especially dealing with small and medium companies, it is not really important to develop a complete multichannel strategy because often it is not suitable with resources and brand identity of the company. And if it is not possible to do it in a proper way it is better to develop a cross channel strategy in which everything is well developed and perfectly working in order to bring a positive addition to company strategy, not creating something with gaps that is going to damage brand image. More over it is very important to meet people expectations so to create a seamless experience between offline and online

channels leveraging on their desires but mostly on company strengths related to each channels. In the following paragraph I will go deeper in this aspects, explaining first what consumers wants from a multichannel experience, so those design principles that should be applied in every kind of cross channel strategy, and then all the aspects that should be analyzed in order to choose the model that best fits the company under analysis. I will also propose some example of existing companies explaining how I will act if I am asked to develop a multichannel strategy for them and in one case I also prototype it in a way, interviewing directly the owner of the company and asking her opinion about the model I chose for her company. At the end, for each model, I create a sort of instructions, a list of those activities that, when the decision is taken, should be developed and designed to realize in a proper way the chosen strategy with the focus on the key activity characterizing the model.
According to my research I think that this kind of project could be very useful for SMEs, for being competitive and updated and also for a designer because it really simplify his work allowing him to skip some steps being focused to obtain the best result possible.

What consumers want from a multichannel strategy

Sell it! different: a toolkit for SME

The emergence of online shopping is forcing companies to reconsider the business practice and technologies they use to manage customer experience. Independently from the purpose and channels taken into consideration to develop a cross channel strategy, there are some features that are important to take into consideration for any kind of multichannel project because the 89% of customers began doing business with a competitor following a poor customer experience. But it is really hard for companies to develop an effective cross channel strategy. First of all because cross channel strategies need to be built on transparency and consistency because these two aspects seem to be the primary causes of internal channel conflicts. Customers hate conflicts between channels and if it is not possible to have them, it is important that they are strongly motivated. Mainly conflicts are generated by: overlay complex products that need a lot of informations; validation processes from multiple departments; inability to access customers info across the silos. Companies themselves, 40% of organizations, cite ‘complexity' as the greater barrier to improving multichannel customer experience.
Transparency will help to solve channel conflicts and could avoid frustration neither for customers nor for staff. Since, most of the customers use at least two channels it is anyway important to design services for the full customer lifecycle, rather than for individual channel or phases, so it is very common to have

some little incongruity or differences that could also become peculiarity, but it is important that they are clearly communicated. Another big problem in developing and managing a multichannel strategy is matching prices and products founds because people hate to find different prices online and in the shop or not to find in the shop a product they discover online. This often creates frictions with salespersons and damages reputation of the brand. As we saw before, customers are always more used to search online for products before going in stores or are used to match prices between different sellers, also because of online re-sellers that have discounted prices like Saldiprivati, Privalia, ect. To compete with them and not frustrating customers, it is always important to communicate them variations of prices from online and offline and giving them an additional experience in store that could pay. Another additional service that could help fighting discount website is the shop locator that, when a user identify a product would like to try and maybe buy in a shop, could explain which shops have this available and for which price. Or it has to be communicated, for example that this product is available just online (it happens for example for last sizes, special edition made for online market or company that has not warehouses). These could be choices made by company, and I am encouraging them, provided that they are motivated or at least clearly communicated to customers. For example it is not preconceived true that all channel must have the same pricing policy because there is a strong relationship between age, socio-professional category and the tendency of using a specific media to buy. Differentiating offering business can target different users: for example through an app a brand could take advantage of young people using social network offering discount in exchange for advertisement. For all these reasons and critical situation is really important to have a strong design activity before launching a cross channel activity because to be effective it requires a lot of courage in taking strong decisions and to outline company profile. And probably it will become a process, something that is continuously changing according to parameters and to customers' needs. So be brave in take your decisions but try to listen and understand customers through social medias, blogs or other channels, because it could always improve your strategy maybe improving just little part of the process.

Transparency is one of those requirements that I identify as essential. But this is not the only one. In this chapter I am going to give some other design principles also based on customers suggestions, and then to introduce, according to some criteria, some design guidelines organized in 5 models.

The other design principles identified by people as crucial for a usable cross channel experience are: consistency, continuity, availability and context specific. This is the result of a long research made by Nielsen Norman Group and published on February 2014, to understand what companies should point out to engage customers. Let's analyze them one by one.

Consistency is a very important issue talking about branding and corporate image. During their relation with a brand, people are exposed to visual design, functionality, interactions and tone of voice while they are moving from a channel to another. It is important to develop all of this aspect in a very consistent way to help users in building good expectations for future interaction. 'A young man around 30 said 'your brand is as good as my last experience with you' so if you are crave', everything you have done is well designed and developed, you earn trust. In few words, is better not to develop and aspect if you are not sure to have the capabilities and resources to do it at the same level of all your

other services. Because in this way you are not going to behalf people expectations. Another important aspect is continuity of the experience. Infact if we talk about a cross channel experience we take for granted that our costumer is going to use more than one channel so it is important to design for the entire journey and not just for one specific interaction. Furthermore people often don't complete an activity just in one sitting or through a single channel, sometimes they are interrupted by external causes or they move from a digital channel to a physical one or vice versa, or again they fall into some obstacles. It happens that we have to put tasks on hold for a lot of reasons. When then they want to continue the process, it is important that they can restart from the point in which it was interrupted and not to restart all the process again. And it is mainly true when people switch from a channel to another, for example there are a lot of services available both through web site and mobile app. Thanks to credentials they should allow people to continue the same operation when they are passing from one to another. Could be interesting, moreover, to apply the same principle also in the connection between digital and physical shops making the customer immediately recognizable by the shop through his online account, exploiting, for example in shop kiosks and in this way identifying his preferences and his loyalty based on his previous purchasing. This could also be a solution for those situations in which there is a problem of *availability*.
This is another critical point underlined by people interviewed. For a customer is frustrating to reach a dead end during any kind of operation within a channel because they expect to be able to complete a desired task in the channel of their choice. Unfortunately, as we said before, most of the time it is not possible to develop every step in the best way so it is important to determine the common tasks that need an omni channel support and the other that could be developed in the company more comfortable channel. Prioritization is important to ensure that users have experience appropriate for the channel. Infact you have to consider that there are two main reason why all common tasks may not be supported in the same way on every channel: firstly is important to understand that each channel has strengths and weaknesses so the experience has to be optimized for the channel to avoid that it will be degraded; then allowing users to complete any task on any channel is a lot of work for the company, expensive from the point of view of the support but also challenging to get internal buy-in and cooperation. Here again we come to the point that the best solution is designing the user experience according to company's capability and purpose, maybe developing the key tasks on every channels and transitioning users to another channel for a better experience when this task is not suitably develop in the channel he is using. The quality of the project is of course in finding a smart way to make people smoothly switch to another channel without making him feel frustrated and taking care of his need to continue the experience.
The last parameter that users interviewed underlined as fundamental for a good cross channel experience was the need to be *context specific*. Working with different channel infact is fundamental to emphasize and leverage on each channel unique strengths to create a usable and helpful context-specific experience. Users like the experience to incorporate helpful and usable context-specific elements that are those make them decide to use a channel instead of another one. Doing this is not so easy. It is important to understand: user's top tasks in relation to each channel; users' typical setting or environment when they complete typical tasks; common

channel used to complete each typical task and why; strength of those channels. Creating this kind of situation, context-specific experiences, requires time and resources so understanding all this factors is necessary to knowing typical tasks users perform within each channel and using this as a starting point for the project of the user experience. Just to give an example of correct usage of power of a specific channel, think about geolocalization and mobile app. Increasingly this connection is strong because it allows having specific information about the place where user is and this is extremely related to the channel. For example a lot of brand now use the geolocalization to indicate the nearest shop where you can find a chosen product. On the other hand, an effective way to create cross-references between different channel if it is not possible to end an operation just in one channel but it is necessary to send the user to another channel is, for example, giving on a web or mobile platform of a supermarket the exact place inside the shop where you can find a desired product (saying aisle and shelves with a map).
Coming to conclusions, we can say that also this research seams to support the idea that developing a cross channel strategy needs to put the client at the center of your approach but that the most important part is the final experience that has to be communicative and strictly related to the company, to its resources, capabilities and values.

Strategy tool: how to understand which model is for you

Sell it! different: a toolkit for SMEs

Now we come to the most complicated aspect of the question: after the analysis of the company we have to decide which is the best solution for them. In this paragraph I just want to create a path that the designer needs to follow in order to understand clearly company features but mainly to correctly interpret. Even if the models I presented are not so complicated, it is fundamental to do the right choice of cross channel model to empower company image following his natural path. In doing this kind of activity it is very important, since the beginning, to fully investigate all the aspects of the company, not only from president's point of view but trying to understand also how it is perceived by people, clients or not. In particular there are some key aspects that make you decide for a strategy despite of another one and here I am going to explain which and why. The process is organized starting from a wider point of view on environment in which company operates to a more detailed consideration about products and all those aspects directly controlled by the company, exactly in the same way I organized my research.
Before I have just to specify that you could be asked to develop a *new cross channel strategy* or also to *integrate* an existing one. In both cases there are positive and negative aspects. In the first case the positive aspect is that you are going to build something new so you can really realize your idea in the best way possible. On the other hand however, you need to realize something from scratch and it

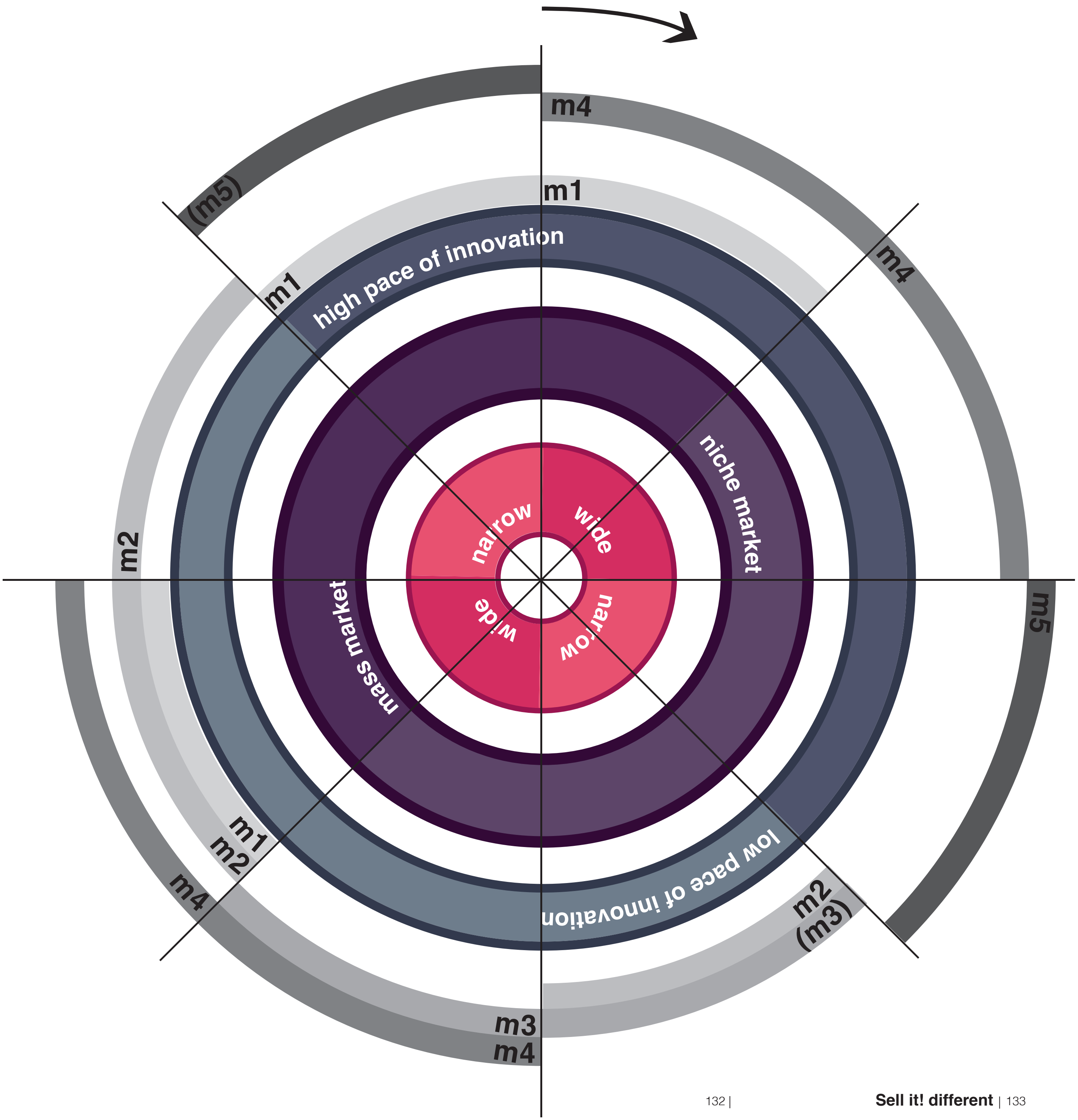
means that you need more resources from the company rather than, for example, working on an existing web site and just develop a plan of channel integration. Infact, on the other side, if you have to work with a company that already have more than one channel developed you can add something but mainly your task is to create an effective integration between existing channels and this could be difficult because maybe it doesn't allows you to develop the strategy exactly as you will. This is something you have to consider at the beginning of every kind of multichannel project as a preliminary analysis.There are other two factor you have to understand since the beginning, the dimension and so the resources of the company and if they have internal competencies of web design. The dimension of the company is important because there is an issue of *resources* necessary to develop a cross channel strategy. In the next chapter it will be clearly explained with the example of my prototype but I just want to say that in our economical situation investing in multichannel development is necessary but not so easy. Since the five models are different also in terms of resources necessary to be developed, we can say that the model 1 and the model 2 are more feasible for small companies and model 3, 4 and 5 four a medium (with small company we imply those with less than 50 employs and with medium those with less than 500). That is because the first model, the coupon model, just implies the release of coupons that could be done with newsletter and even without a proper web site, just with the support of a Facebook page for example. The second model instead ask for the realization of a web site, but it could be very simple and, since it is necessary just to develop a catalogue, it could be revised just twice a year with new products. Instead integration model 3, 4 and 5 are more complex because model 3 asks not only for the development of a proper web site, but also for an efficient organization of the stock because when the client browse the web site, it is necessary to give him a real time situation of availability. For doing this it is probably necessary to develop a system in which software take into account product movements or a person that monitor everyday this aspect. Model 4 need an involvement not only in the e-shop realization but also in shipment and consignment procedure. Finally model 5 needs a big involvement both online and offline. This means money but also human resources.

Thus far the matter is valuable for those companies that are offline based, for which developing an online channel could be something more. It is very different for those one that are online based or that have already inside the company the competencies to develop an online channel and a proper web site because in this case everything is easier. Taking for example the case of a small company that has a web designer inside its staff, it is easy for them to realize any model, from the point of view of resources. On the contrary, for a company that has to externalize this task it is an expense and probably not every company can do it. So for a designer it is necessary to clearly understand the situation in these terms to practically realize what it is feasible to do and develop.

After this preliminary analysis we can use the strategy tool to understand which is the best strategy for the SME we are working with. This tool ask you to insert some parametres and returns you the number of the model to develop (or the models that, accroding to other discriminant factors, could be chosen). The parametres were chosen to frame the company from a wider point of view to a more specific one, starting from the environment in which it is inserted to the product portfolio that is a parameter directly controlled by the company. The first parameter is about

the environment in which the company operates and in particular the *pace of innovation*. With this parameter we are measuring how frequently the company is used to innovate products not only in terms of colors and materials but in terms of style and model. Companies with this feature are more apt for model number 5, 4 or 1 that are based on dynamicity in assortment. On the other side a company characterized by a low pace of innovation will be probably more apt for model number 2 and 3 that are difficult to be organized if the changes are too frequent because they always need to update the catalogue.
The second parameter to evaluate the company is the *market* in which it operates, if it is mass market or a niche market. This give us information about the volume of products but also about the way in which the company operates because actually companies working in mass market have not a proper target, they refer to everybody, on the contrary niche products are more characterized and peculiar because they are thought for a particular client. In general we can say that a company with a mass market is more apt to model 1, 2, and 4 because they are able to help in the process of diffusion of information and product communication. Moreover the volumes helps for organizing the e-shop. For a niche market instead we can actually adapt every kind of model even if model number 1 and 3 are very useful because they leverage on sales persons expertise and also model number 5 because it is able to increase the value of products exhibiting them. Actually we will see that model number 1 and model number 4, coupons model and consignment model, are very suitable and versatile because they can be organized in very different ways according to company's features and needs. The others are a bit more specific and they are organized around some activities (catalogue, the trial and exhibition) that need more organization and ask for particular requirement also in terms of kind of product.
All these aspects are actually those one that make a company to chose for a *distribution strategy* that is an aspect also important to be crossed with the chosen model because not every distribution models fits with our integration models in terms of management. But this is a separate discussion because in the moment in which a company decides to change its multichannel strategy could be interested also in changing distribution strategy to reach new goals.
Finally to well organize the channel integration I think that could be a good discriminating factor also the *product portfolio*, and, in particular if the company has a wide or narrow product portfolio. This parameter is actually the more practical one because it gives information about the management of the model and how many pieces will be available. We can generally say that a wide product portfolio is fundamental for an online shop expecially if it will be a second selling channel or if we are going to generate coupons mainly based on product, and not on general discounts, because it gives us the opportunity to change frequently the object of our coupons. On the contrary a narrow product portfolio is more useful for organize the model number 5 because if we want to keep the idea to create an instore exhibition it should be reserved to few pieces, even if it would look like a normal shop. For the other model actually this factor is not so important, because you can organize a catalogue also around few pieces, but dealing with the model number 3 we have to specify that this could be adapted better to a wide product portfolio, becuase in this way it is not to risky to save some items for booked trials, but it could be adapted also to a narrow product porfolio for example if it is possible to buy on demand (dealing for example with bridal

m1 coupon model
m2 catalogue model
m3 booking model
m4 consignment model
m5 store-display model



dresses or similar items).

Now on you will discover how inserting the parameters in the classification tool you can obtain the model, or the models, that better fit your company. Then in the next paragraph I am going to explain which is the path to follow to develop the different models and then I will apply this process to two existing companies with different parameters in order to make a bit more clear how to proceed and which aspects are more important in the strategy choice and in the development. I had the occasion to interview the owner of one of the companies I am going to analyze in the next paragraph and it was for me a very useful prototype to understand how each case is one and only because of lots of factors and purposes involved.

The tool organized according the parameters I explained is also available in a tangible form in order to make it usage easier. With the tangible version it is easier also to understand how combining in different way the three different parameters it generates a multichannel strategy model (or more) to be developed. This is really a great resource because it really help in strategy choice with an univoque result. For explaining how the combinations where done actually I have to create this graph showing all the possible combinations in just one picture in order to make a bit more simple its understanding. I will start from the arrow and proceding clockwise I will motivate all the combinations.

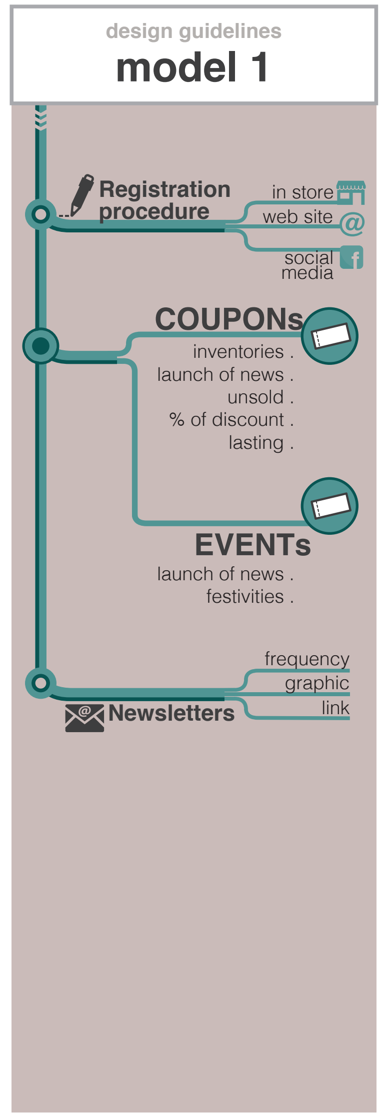
The first combination is between *high pace of innovation* for the environment parameter, *mass market* and *wide product-portfolio* and the combination is with model number 4, *consignment model*, or model number 1, *coupons model.* Analizing the factors we can say that we have products that changes and are renewed very often, we are operating in mass market, so we have big volumes and the products is thought for everybody, and the product-portfolio is wide, so

we have a lot of different model. For this kind of situation I think that the best solution is a proper online shop, one of the model number 4, with the in-store consignment. The wide assortment infact allows to have two selling channels and the fact to operate in the mass market solves a lot of problems about trial. Since it could be not affordable for every company to develop this strategy I also proposed the solution of a coupon model that could be easier developed with less resources but that asks for a in-store sales expertise.
The next combination is between parameters *high pace of innovation*, *niche market* and *wide product-portfolio* with model number 4, the *consignment model*. In this case we can apply quite the same thoughts of before, the only difference is that we are in a niche market. Model number four is apt for an high pace of innovation because it allows to have often new products on the online shop and in this way to attract always new customers or to recall clients. We can easily apply it to a nieche market because, if the company has the resources to do it, they can actually increase the brand image. Finally, the wide range of products allows to have stock for two selling channels so it could really works.
The next combination is between *high pace of innovation*, *niche market* and *narrow product-portfolio* with model number 5, the *store-display model*. In my opinion the combination of this factor is the only one very suitable for model number five that is actually the most disruptive I elaborated. It asks for a narrow range of products because the shop has to be organized as an ehxibition because in the case the selling activity happens just online. For this reason it could be used also in occasion of limited editions or special collections. Moreover it is useful just for products with an high recall power so artistic pieces or products with particular features and it is more near to the niche market. Finally it is necessary that the product innovation happens with a certain frequency, because otherwise the exhibition would remain the same too long.
The next combination is between *low pace of innovation*, *niche market* and *narrow product-portfolio* with model number 2, the *catalogue model* and with model number 3, the *booking model*. This combination is really perfect for catalogue model because the innovation of the products doesn't happen too often and because the product portfolio is narrow. In this way the catalogue could be easily managed and it can be created at the beginning of the collection and it is not necessary to change it very frequently. It helps a lot in practical operations, above all if the company have to externalize the practise. Moreover the niche products ask for a more detailed explanation and in this sense the catalogue could be a useful tool. The model number 3, the booking model, could be apt only if the product-portfolio is narrow but it is possible to buy on demand. In this way it could be organized with some tester that are ther just for chosing model and size and then the client could order the product in the right version. Model number 3 also provide an online catalogue so, in this sense it is just a possible evolution of model number two for those product categories for which the trial is a fundamental step.
The next combination is between *low pace of innovation*, *niche market* and *wide product-portfolio* with model number 3, the *booking model* and with model number 4, the *consignment model*. In this case we can consider what we said before about the model number three but in this case we have a wide product portfolio so it is easyer to organize the trial because it is not necessary to have testers but could be used just some items of the shop. As we said before the model number 3 is not able to cover al the product categories so in case in which

the product is not very necessary to be try on could be succesfully developed also the model number 4 that well combine with niche market and wide range of products. The only obstacle could be the fact that the innovation of the product doesn't happens very often so the onine shop could not have frequent new arrivals.
The next combination is between ***low pace of innovation***, ***mass market*** and ***wide product-portfolio*** with model number 1, the ***coupons model***, with model number 2, the ***catalogue model*** and with model number 4, the ***consignment model***. In this case we can organize easily a catalogue because, even if there are a wide range of products, there are not frequent innovation so it is easy to realize and organize the catalogue just at the beginning of the new collection. The model number 1 could be interesting in this sense to recall clients. Infact if the products don't change very often they are not incline to go very often in the shop but this could be a good expedient to stimulate their purchasing expoiting also the wide assortment. Finally also the model number 4 could fit because the product portfolio ensure the stock for serving two selling channels.
The next combination is between ***low pace of innovation***, ***mass market*** and ***narrow product-portfolio*** with model number 2, the ***catalogue model***. This is actually the other best combination to realize a catalogue model because the narrow product portfolio allows to better realize data sheets of products and the low pace of innovation don't imply to continuosly update the catalogue. In the other case we apply this model to the niche market but considering the actual consumer we know that they are used to be informed about every products they are going to buy so could be useful also for a company operating in mass market to develop a catlogue in order to easily diffuse information and to reach more people.
The last combination is between ***high pace of innovation***, ***mass market*** and ***narrow product-portfolio*** with model number 1, the ***coupon model*** and, in some particular conditions, with model number 5, the ***store-display model***. Coupons could add some values to a company like those described by the parametres because they have a product that is renewed very often even if they have a narrow range of products. In this sense coupons could be a recall for discovering new collections and, since they leverage on bargain hunt, it is a strong expedient and an interesting way to communicate. The model number 5 is also apt because of pace of innovation and narrow product portfolio but the mass market could be an obstacle, for the company itself, because probably the power and exclusivity of the product are not to high to convince people just to discover products in the store and to buy them online or through an application. In this sense I said that this could be applied in particular condition, for example in occasion of limited editions, special collection or exclusive partnership with other designers.
Once the model is chosen it is important to develop it folowing some key activities. For this reason I created some guided path for the next phases of the process in order also to show all the different factors on which the designer could work to develop a tailored strategy.

Five strategies development

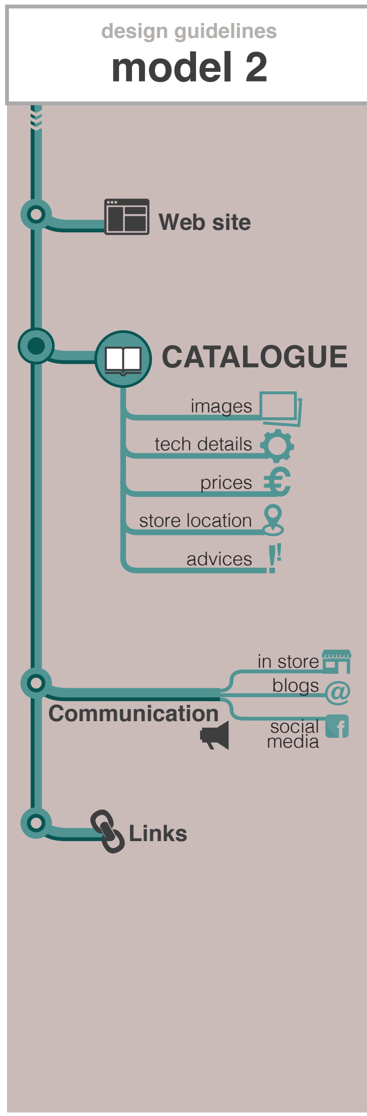
Sell it! different: a toolkit for SME

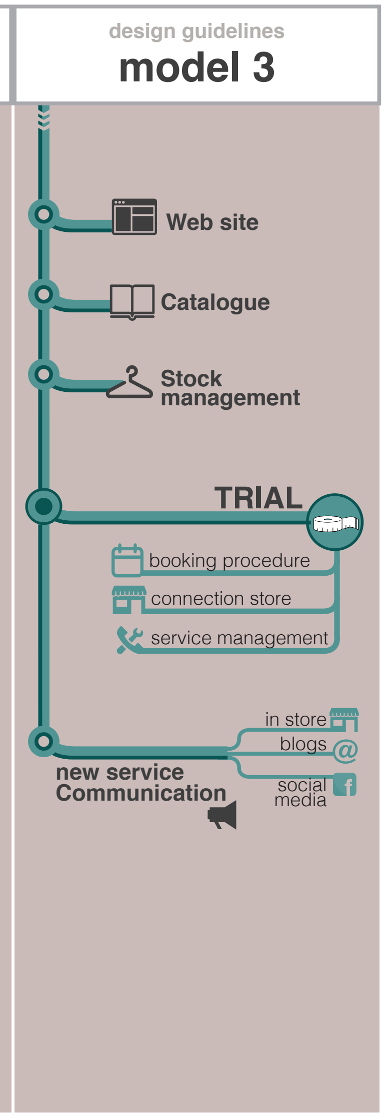


In this last paragraph I just need to go over again all five cross channel models to explain which are the main phases needs to be developed in order to reach the goal. In every model, as already underlined in analysis phase, there is a key element, a crucial moment in customer journey that needs to be developed with a particular attention. It is the characterizing element of the strategy, the problem it tries to solve or the need it tries to meet.
Starting from model number 1, the *coupons model*, we don't have a lot of phases because, as we already said, this is one of the simplest strategies that entrusts most of the phases to physical shops leveraging on sales persons' expertise. It is based on the idea to engage customers through the generation of coupons and invitations for special events. This is infact the core of the strategy and also the key element. In designing this kind of strategy the starting point is the decision for a registration procedure: company needs to have a mainling list to which send coupons so it is important to decide if we want to collect names in store, maybe also with the help of new technology like kiosk or other devices, or if we want to send people to our web site or social media contact to leave there their address without going in a physical shop. This could be a way to involve also customers that have never visit the shop. Then there is the crucial phase that is divided in two parts: coupons and events' invitations. On one side company have the role to decide which kind of coupons to elaborate, if it is thought to sell unsold products, or to launch new ones, or again to discount everything to attract new potential customers,

or if the idea is to give an additional discount to people that buy somenthing for full price. This is about company, this is a strategy inside the strategy and it could be changed according to period or to sales and it could be very useful for the company to have this flexibility. On the other side also events is a variable completely controlled by company but it implies a bit more effort in organization. It could be for a launch of new collection or just for a festivity. As we said the brand M'gibi we analized in previous paragraphs is used to organize events for example for celebrate christmas or other occasions and in this way to gather clients and to show them the new collection. This is also a bigger investment in terms of money because it is not enough to send invitations through newsletter but it means to offer some food, for example, or to organize a sort of entertainment. Of course, once the company decides to organize an event or to release a coupon, it is necessary to design a newsletter. In general it is a good practise to have a frequent newsletter, not only with this kind of promotions, but also about new arrivals or shopping advice, to feed the relationship with the clients. Anyway it implies effort in graphic design, images and text creation.

The second cross channel strategy, the *catalogue model*, is a big more articulated then the previous one. It means the creation of an online interactive catalogue with the aim to inform customers about in store collection. To realize this kind of strategy it is first necessary to create a brand web site if the company doesn't already have one. To do that the designer could take advantage of his own competencies, of company's internal competencies or could involve a web designer. This is also a big opportunity for the company to develop a new communication tool. Then they have to develop the catalogue. As I already said, I don't advise to realize just a browsable copy but instead an

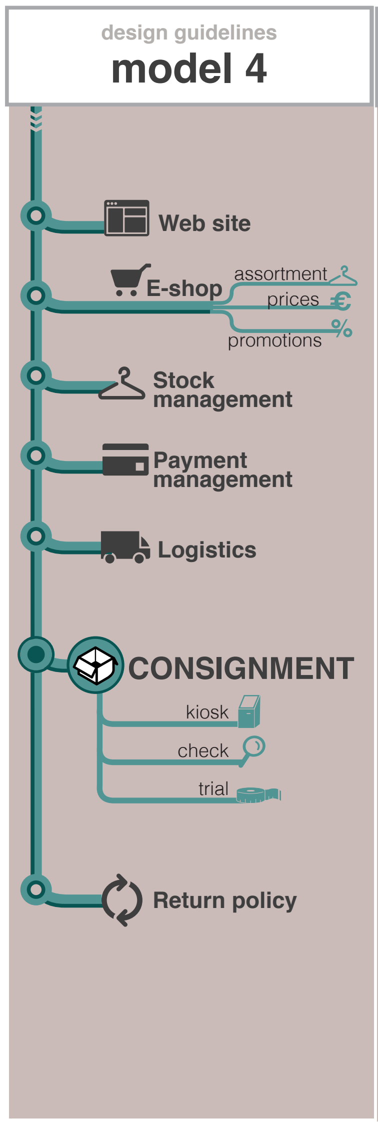


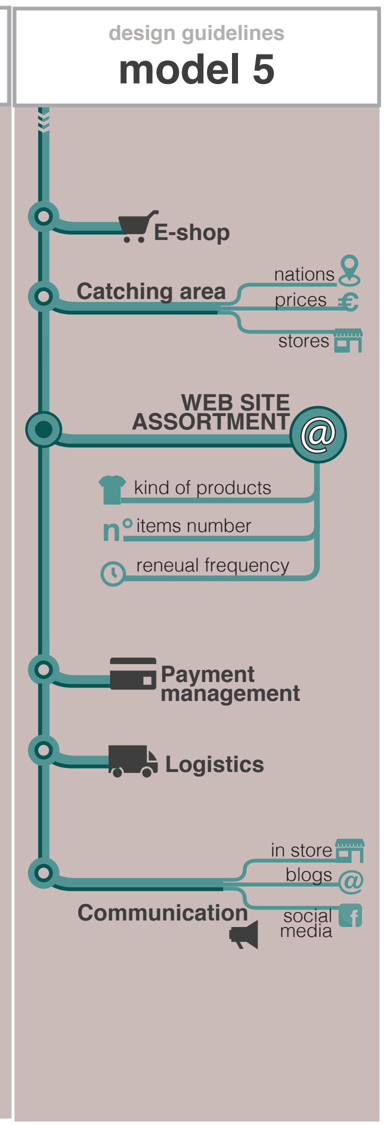


interactive page where people could have a general view on products and selecting one of them discovering more details about dimensions, materials and particular features of the product. As I already explain this could fit very well those companies that realize technical products or items with requirements about weight, materials, dimensions and so on. The customer also needs to understand where ha can find the product and probably the price. This is a controversial issue so I think that every company need to decide according to his values considering that the contemporary demanding customer is very sensitive about this aspect. Finally you need to develop a proper communication plan to inform people about the new service and to make it appear on online research.

The third online and offline integration model, the *booking model*, as before, is just a step ahead the previous one. In fact as first steps you need to develop a web site and a catalogue but, since in this strategy the focus is on trial, it is important to manage some aspect in order to make possible to book an in store trial of a particular product. Once the client has selected the chosen product he should have the possibility to check in which store it is available and to freeze his purchase in order to try the product in store and eventually to buy it there. This is not a very simple process to realize because it needs a really well organized stock and, especially if we deal with a company with more than one points of sale. In realizing this kind of coordination between different assortment and probably different stocks, it could be useful the use of new tracking technologies like RFid labes I presented in chapter 1.3. What it is important to decide is: how the customer is going to interact with the platform; how it is communicated where he is going to find the product and if it is possible to transfer it to another store; if the service is on payment or for free and when he can try the

product (is it scheduled or he can come when he want in a limited period of time, as a week?). Then it is important to decide how practically the client obtain his right to trial and what he receive as receipt (a code number, he just leave his name or he receive a qr code by email?). At the end the company needs to develop a proper communication plan to advertise the new service through different media, expecially if they created a new website on purpose. It will work perfectly for example for wedding dress market where actually already happens that the trial is booked but with this ploy the bridal could know in advace which models she can try in this particular shop.
The last two models are the most complicated because they expect for the realization of a proper e-shop. The fourth model, the *consignment model*, is thought to solve the annoying problems related to shipment: fee and schedules. It is again a model of online and offline channels integration so it consider to realize the consignment in a brick-and-mortar shop for free. It is already done by a lot of company and it seems to be very appreciated by people because times are not too long, they can decide in which shop to collect their purchase and when. They have just to take into consideration shops opening hours. In general, so it is true also for the next model, realizing an e-shop, expecially if meant to be connected with a physical one, is not so simple. You need to develop a lot of aspects: you have to decide the assortment, if it is related to products in physical shop or not, how many items you want to sell and prices. More over you need to understand if you want to keep the same prices as in the store or if you want to release promotions. Then you have to organize the stock and logistics to be prepared to answer to online orders and to manage the payment phase. This means also some investment of resources in terms of money and people incharged to manage all the process. Once the e-shop is proper developed, you have to take into consideration consignment moment, how does it work? The client arrive with his receipts and, entering just a number or scanning this with a device, he receive his pack? Or there is a dedicated kiosk in the store just for collecting online purchases? Or again you have to talk with a sales person that goes to the cashier to chack what you are saying, interrupting the process and making you wait? Thanks to new technologies there are even more solution nowadays and this is the crucial element of the model so it has to be developed in details. For example it could be also that at the moment of the consignment the client could decide to try on the product and to return it directly without costs. There are a lot of variable to be considered and if a company wants to deliver this service it has to work perfectly not to demage brand image. Finally, another crucial aspect of online purchasing, there is the return policy. Going to physical it could be done in the store but then you have to decide about times, procedures and ways of reimbursement.
The last model, the *store-display model*, is the most disruptive one because it subvert the common concept of brick-and-mortar store. In fact in this kind of model the offline becomes just a way to exhibit product, a display, instead the online the proper selling channel. As before, to develop this kind of model it is necessary to develop a proper online shop but here, more over, you have to deal with shipment, and probably in more than one country, so it has to be planned. Actually here what is more important is the phase of product communication, so store ambience and website catalogue, the assortment (numbers and collections) and the product itself that as to be very characterized and unique to justify this innovative model. It works perfectly for limited editions and for





artistic pieces. In this sense the limited amount of items doesn't allows to have all sizes and models available in a physical store but cuold be better managed through an online platform. This kind of strategy could be also adopted just for a particular collection, not for the entire one and for a company that already have an online shop. The fact that this is a more unusual way of selling products, implies a big investment on communication that need to involve also magazines and blogs to increase attention on uniqueness and peculiarity of products to bring people buying them just seeing them through a shopping window.

Toolkit applications

Strategies for MSGM and M'GiBi

Here we come to practical examples of toolkit application. I selected two fashion companies different according to the parametres I enlighted in the previous chapter but that shares some features: they are mainly manufacturer, they are novelties and small companies and they share almost the same price level.
They are MSGM and M'GiBi.

MSGM was born in 2009, thanks to the partnership with Paoloni Group, from an idea of Massimo Giorgetti. His expertise firstly developed within commercial environment (floor salesman, salesman) and then in designing ones (creative consultant for capsule projects). These may not be the best times for the fashion system but sometimes willpower overcomes economic trend. What he puts in MSGM is entrepreneurship, passion for fashion and most of all his interest for indie music (his favourite groups are MGMT and The Strokes) contemporary art and all the new generation's creative expressions taking hold the web. The idea which lies beneath is to mix and match the great tradition with a sense of detachment and revolution of the new millennium (his inspirations come from Yves Saint Laurent, Coco Chanel and Walter Albini amongst the other). In addition to this MSGM and Massimo Giorgetti are celebrated as one of the best revelation of the year 2010 by "Who's on next" contest sponsored by Vogue Italia. Strong ability in captivating trends and a young and motivated team are the winning cards of MSGM whose first moves began in a particular moment in history.
It's a simple mix of continuous new inputs alongside with the state of being contemporary.

_fig.18 The advertising campaign FW 2012/13 well expresses the mood of the company: young men and women want to be different and contemporary with high design taste.

As a skilled DJ Massimo Giorgetti is able to mix and match his passion and the artistic and aesthetic expressions of artists connected to web world. The outcome: a Kaleidoscope world made of colours, shapes and lines capable of inexorably catching the public interest and attention and acknowledging MSGM as one the most intriguing brand of the moment.
By choosing MSGM clothes people know they express themselves at the best of their freedom, with a touch of a personal creativity altogether.
Since its first collection, the Spring Summer 2010, MSGM strikes the press, the buyers and the public with a great success. The brand entrust the selling process to distributors such as the best Italian and international boutiques. Today and in such a short time MSGM collections are distributed in over 280 stores in Italy and abroad. Their distribution strategy also entrust a lot the online channel, 20 percent of MGSM's sales are done online: they own an online shop directly accessible from their brand web site and they are also present on other portals like Yoox, MyTheresa, Luisa Via Roma and The Corner. MSGM is still a small brand. 2013 has proven to be a major turning point for the label, marking both its first appearance at a fashion week and the launch of its first store, both of which occurred in September in Milan. Since 2009, MSGM has grown its points of sale by approximately 50 percent per year. The brand's turnover reflects its growing distribution. According to Giorgetti, MSGM, which is jointly owned by the founder and the Italian fashion group Paoloni, ended 2012 with revenue of approximately €10 million. "Nowadays MSGM is becoming the leader of the Italian contemporary market," said Silvano Vangi, head womenswear buyer at Luisa Via Roma. "They create items with affordable prices and high visual impact. MSGM has had double-digit growth from season to season," he added. For summer 2014, MSGM is unveiling its first shoe and bag collection because, as the designer said, for other bigger brands it is nowadays the only means of revenues. The growing brand also is very active in the field of design collaboration: they developed a collection of t-shirts and sweatshirts in partnership with Toilet paper, the indipendent contemporary art magazine founded by the artist Cattelan and the photographer Ferraresi, characterized by pop color and prints, according to the style both of magazine and fashion brand. This year the designer was also asked to reinterpret a backpack for Eastpack that will be sold starting from December online for a champain against AIDS. The target of the brand are contemporary and ironic women and a men that want to be unique and to express their personality through fashion. It is a democratic collection that wants to reach young and creative people maintaning an high design taste. Also collections are though in a contemporary way: every season are released just 500 new pieces in reverse of traditional fashion collections made by 1000-1500 pieces.
I decided to analyse this brand because it is a challenge in traditional fashion industry and it could be a good inspiration for other young designers. It is a young and democratic brand that wants to enter the traditional ecosystem of high fashion. More over the product is contemporary in taste and features and it meets the needs of new customers with a provocative spirit. Lets try to follow the path proposed in the next chapter to do our analysis and a cross channel strategy proposal.
As starting point we have to say that the brand already have a multichannel

_fig.19 The new advertising campaign for FW 2014/15 is provocatory and young, as the brand that is becoming very popular between youngers because of the offering of sweatshirts and pop and colorful prints.

strategy, even if it is not a cross channel and there is no integration between online and offline channels. They already developed an online store because they actually strongly believe in online channel and they already have, in fact, the web design competencies inside the company. They are present on the main social network (Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram and Tumblr) with always updated news about trends, press review and star looks creating debates around the brand and products. As we said they opened their first mono brand store in Milan last year and they are now developing an espansion strategy in other countries. Even about resources we can do some evaluation strarting from this because it is a fast growing brand that is going to keep his dimention, not to become and high couture maison, so they will be probably interested in developing a cross channel strategy to be even more innovative and complete. Finally, about competencies we can assume that they have an internal web designer or they already have an established collaboration with an agency since they actually started selling their collections not only through distributors but also through their online store. Passing to the classification with the tool we can say that they are a typical example of manufacturer business model and they have an high pace of innovation since they are a young and small company that model during Milan Fashion Week and because of the tone and intent of their collections. They provide a new collection each season, as big fashion companies, and they also create small capsule collection in partnership with other brands. Considering the market maybe it is right to say that they move in niche market because, even if they define themselves as democratic they don't reach the volumes of mass market. Finally, about the product-portfolio, as we said they bet on small collections of 500 pieces so we have a limited assortment lets say, if

compared to others, not very wide. Considering this factors, using the tool, we obtain the model number 5. Moreover frequent collaborations with other brands and artistic sector and the target, contemporary and creative young people that will not probably have problems with online commerce, such as trial and shipment, lead me to say that probably the best integration model for MSGM is the store display model, model number 5.
The design content of the collections, the big appealing for young people and the limited editions thay create could be perfect for this kind of idea. More over they are going to open new shops and in this perspective they can reinforce their connection with contemporary art creating small art galleries in which to espose their collections relegating selling activity to online store. In this way, if the activity will be extended to foreign countries, they need to develop a plan for shipment but I don't think it will be a big problem since they are already distributing abroad through other shops. Finally they will probably work on their assortment, because, since it is limited, they will probably have few products in store at a time changing frequently to stimulate clients with always new inputs. In terms of image the brand will probably earn a lot because it will reinforce the innovation charge related to the brand and its relation with arts. Moreover thy can be places where to organize particular event in occasion of city events and show like Design weeks or Fashion weeks.

The other brand I wanted to analyze is *M'GiBi*, one of the two brands developed by Mariagrazia Beni, a fashion designer based in Bergamo. Mariagrazia draws and creates her models with great passion and step by step, with a vast survey focused both on the selection of fabrics, taking part in textile exhibition and meeting many textile manufacturers, and on the models, with researches and journeys in leading countries, taking inspiration from daily life.
Mariagrazia follows the whole work process in each studio, arriving to the wearability test and then to the end product. She own M'Gibi, a ready to wear line sold exclusively in the two owned shops in Bergamo, and Sophiestique, that is distributed in the same shops and in Europe, in Israel and in Japan through other distributors.
Mariagrazia has always been in the fashion industry as a consultant for both textile and clothing companies. In parallel to the counselling she opened and owned in partnership for many years a clothing store in Bergamo's downtown.
In September 2012 she left the company to start a path that lets her be able to dedicate all the necessary time to her line became a great reality. The company structure is really leanwith a team of collaborators into the company and collaborations with third party with whom it creates complicity that grows during the years, in order to choose the haberdasher specialized on the type of garment (coat, t-shirt or shirt) that allow, produce and delivery clothes of high quality totally made in Italy. The company, from the business model point of view is an hybrid because it is clearly a manufacturer but it is also a distributor because in the owned shops they have their own brand but also others regarding those market sectors they don't cover like accessories, bags, shoes and jewelry. This is actually a condition very common between SMEs in fashion industry, a lot of fashion designers own a distributor company, one or more shops, where they sell their own products but also some of other brands, because they are small and often they produce few items or few models. The brand M'GiBi is particularly interesting because of the expertise of Mariagrazia. The products are always new in the shop because she wants every season to create a lot of small collection to renew often the shop assortment and to offer always

news to her clients. Her attention is mainly in the quality of the materials and manufacturing and in the style: every products is designed in details and the taste is very contemporary, minimal and comfortable: loose dresses, structured coats and jumpsuits are her trademark. She said to talk to every kind of women but actually her clients are young women with an high consciusness of materials' quality, of made in Italy and of innovative ideas. They are bored by institutional fashion searching for a fresh point of view.
The company is very young but actually she is an expert in fashion sector so I planned to meet her and in some way to prototype my work.
I started doing my analysis and proposing it to her asking also about her relation with multichannel strategies and web.
The company is very dynamic in terms of collections, we can say that it has an high pace of innovation because they actually change often their proposal, she told me she don't want to have all the collection ready at the beginning of the season because in this way the clients will get bored of it in few weeks but she likes the idea to continuosly work on it and to have every week few new pieces to exhibit. Also for the characterization of the pieces, she is used to realize just few items of every piece, expect for more basic products, because she prefer not to have inventories and because she have always new ideas. About the market, as we said, we can say that the brand M'GiBi is operationg in a niche market more focused on knitwear and outwear so it is more omogeneous than segmented, lets say. Finally about product-portfolio, talking with her I learn that she is used to have a lot of models of the same item, like 10 types of coats each season, but not to produce a lot of pieces each item because of the peculiarity of them. So we can say that the brand has a wide assortment but small in numbers. Combining these factors with the tool we obtain that suitable model is

_fig.20 A picture of the catalogue Mariagrazia Beni realized for promoting her brand M'GiBi in the season SS 2014.

_fig. 21-22 Some picture of the new store in Bergamo with the exposition of new collection M'GiBi FW 2014/15. The jumpsuits and knitwear are integrated with products of other brands as accessories to propose a complete life style.

model number 4. With the preliminary analysis I discover that actually they already have a web site but actually they don't have the resources to maintain it, to update it with the new pictures and product data sheets. Mariagrazia said me that she knows the potential of the web and that having a online store could be very useful for her to diffuse her brand also out of Bergamo limits and to sell more but actually they don't have the competencies required for the development and management of the web site so she would externalize it and she can't invest in it. This, she continued, is a common problem for SMEs in fashion industry, because of the unceirtanty and because of the expenses of having a physical store. In this months she open a new store, always in Bergamo but in a more central and commercial position and she said that this really changed the business. People passing by and turists are now attracted by her shop and the brand popularity is rising. Because of the failure of the web site, she decided to open a Facebook page, that a her daughter's friend manage and through which she actually develop a kind of coupons model: she organize some special in store events for recalling clients and offering them some discount coupons. She told me these are very interesting moments for her, to show new products and to attract new clients. These are also moments in which she is able to sell some inventories or unsold products of the recent collection. All the events are communicated through the Facebook page and with a newletter that she use just for this scope, not to inform about new products. For my proposal, according to tool's results, I said to her that she could develop a bit more the model number 1 or she should develop more the online presence with a catalogue, model number 2 or with a proper online shop. She was enthusiast about the project and she said that a lot of enterpreneur in fashion SMEs are of her generation so they will need an help and consultancy in developing a multichannel strategy but she is still very reticent about the development of a website. She anyway support the idea that mainly SMEs entepreneurs are old and not so self confident with internet development and use so that my project could be a real help for them. Anyway, after our conversation she said that she really wants to promote her brand online so she will probably develop just an online catalogue in order to show which products she proposes and to establish a more direct contact with her clients. In case she would not communicate products' prices however, because she realizes thta often they are big deterrent for clients just to enter the store, so even if she knows that people are used to browse the Web collecting informations before shopping, she will be more to communicate technical details about materials and manifacturing than about the price because in store people will discover them and the reason why of them touching the product and feeling the quality. About the idea of online store, instead, she is confused because she actually don't have so many pieces to ensure the work of another selling channel and moreover it will implies a lot of work in terms of management and post service. She strongly believes in brick and mortar store, mainly in her, because she think that the fact that she is present in the store is a big strenght because she is at the same time the designer and a sales person, so she is able to give the best advice to her clients also in terms of materials and manufacturing.

This meeting was very helpful for me to understand on field the reality of

SMEs and to collect important information about relationship with online channel. The number of young people between enterpreneur is rising and also consciousness about the importance of developing a multichannel strategy but there are a lot of factors that create reticence. Finally I propose to her to organize in a bit more structured way her newsletters and to eventually develop an online channel because, even if events and coupons are very succesfull for her business promotion, could be important to open up new possibilities for her business going out of her city limits and creating curiosity around her. Also for her other brands and probably also for a hoped brand growth.

Conclusions

I really believe in my project 'Sell it!different' because actually it is a toolkit that wants to propose a method for operating in fashion industry to help valuable company to keep pace of innovation not only in products but in selling and strategic activities. We are living a particual economical moment and I really believe economy and our actual idea of consumption will change drastically from here on, and it is important to understand that and to conform your own company to changes looking always ahead even if your company is not big and powerfull. In this sense I believe that the saying 'less is more' will be the real dictat, so a small but valuable company needs to focus on detail and on peculiarities that make its brand unique and leverage on it developing few project but well done, in order to increase always his image. This was actually the aim of this project and this is why I strongly believe this toolkit can be applied easily in the real world. My little prototype was very useful in understanding this because I met a real tiny company that creates excellent products, as there are many in our country and should be our pride. This companies needs helps to be updated in this critical moment and I believe this is the role of a designer, trying to solve people and companies' problems but also to celebrate valuable behaviors and enterprises. Could be interesting to apply the same approach to other product sectors because these small reality are very diffused in every italian product sectors.

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fig.17, pag. 114/115 [http://barbaracampbellaccessories.blogspot.it/2013/09/inthestudio-w-designer-artist-barbara.html]
fig.18, pag. 146/147 [http://www.thesectorialist.com/]
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fig. 20, pag. 153 [image personally provided by the fashion designer Mariagrazia Beni during our interview]
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All the images and the graphs not in the list are personally designed and realized by the author.