

Social Media and Fashion Brands

A Capstone Internship submitted to Southern Utah University in fulfillment of the requirement
for the degree of

Master of Professional Communication

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Madison McFarland

Capstone Internship Committee:

Ellen Treanor, Executive Director of Brand Strategy, Chair

Matt Barton, PhD

Art Challis, PhD

We certify that we have read this internship thesis and that, in our opinion, it is satisfactory in scope and quality as an internship for the degree of Master of Professional Communication.

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My Experience at BLND PR

As an intern at BLND PR (pronounced blend), I had many new and exciting opportunities both professionally and as a young adult living in a fun beach town. I chose to move to Hermosa Beach in LA County for the summer to become an intern at BLND PR, a very small firm ran by two girls with multiple clients, many of them being lifestyle brands. On the first day, I was joined by 4 other girls who were also interning for school credit, and I quickly became friends with each of them. Each of us were assigned clients that we would do social media and PR for throughout the summer. I was assigned Kandy Kiss, a private label clothing distributor that sells to Macy's, Forever21, Hot Topic, Wet Seal and other stores designed for young women nationwide. I looked forward to the opportunity to improve this brand, as I've always been interested in fashion, and it was also one of BLND's largest clients.

My weekly duties included scheduling 2 weeks of content on social media platforms Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and a blog. I posted on social media everyday for the 3-month duration of my internship. Creating these posts included acquiring photos of the clothing and writing the captions or posts. Unfortunately, when I began my position at BLND PR, there was hardly any content for me to post on these platforms. With such a great lack of photos and information to create content, I decided to coordinate a photoshoot. I had the client send us as many clothing pieces as possible, and chose outfits for each of the other intern girls to wear the day of our shoot. I took the photos, posed the "models", chose spots to take shots, brought props, created flatlays of the clothing, and executed all of the necessary elements for a successful photoshoot. Not only did this photoshoot provide me with plenty of photos to work with on social media, but it also demonstrated my initiative and willingness to solve problems.

Daily social media posts were scheduled using social media management tool, SproutSocial. This tool proved to be highly beneficial when planning and scheduling social media on multiple platforms. Posts were scheduled out for two weeks on each platform and were carefully crafted according to trending hashtags, popular topics, and the best performing posts from the previous weeks.

I also wrote biweekly articles for Kandy Kiss' blog called Fashion Files. Blogging was a great way to create original content and to provide links to the blog on all social media platforms. The blog was a way for Kandy Kiss to demonstrate industry knowledge by engaging conversations with fashion influencers, keep readers updated on fashion news, and share Kandy Kiss fashion inspiration whether it was outfit ideas, or favorite trending pieces. Blogs are beneficial for social media campaigns because they are the "backbone" for all other social media platforms. I used the blog content to increase traffic to the Kandy Kiss website and to help further brand awareness.

This internship was a very valuable experience for me. Working at BLND PR allowed me to work with a national brand, experience interning at an agency, get real hands on involvement, improve my blogging skills, and learn more about how to make a brand successful in an age where social media is a leading marketing tool in a media-driven marketplace. I will value this opportunity that I had as I move into the advertising industry.

Social Media and Fashion Brands

Social media has created a communication explosion (Williams, Crittenden, Keo, & McCarty, 2012). "Social media provide the way people share ideas, content, thoughts, and relationships online. Social media differ from so-called mainstream media in that anyone can create, comment on, and add to social media content" wrote Scott (2013, p. 123). An

organization may be deemed completely irrelevant if they do not have a presence on major social media platforms. Baird and Parasnis (2011) wrote, “With the worldwide explosion of social media usage, businesses are feeling extreme pressure to engage where their customers are paying attention. Today, this hub of customer activity is increasingly virtual, located inside a social media or social networking site” (p. 30). As organizations recognize that social media plans are pertinent to their success in this media-driven age, many organizations are turning to PR specialists to communicate their messages on social media platforms. Dartmouth Center for Marketing Research discovered that in 2015 only 9 companies on the Fortune 500 list did not use social media to promote their businesses, meaning 98% of these successful companies do use social media as part of their marketing strategies (Barnes, Lescault, & Holmes, 2015).

The trends of social media are continually changing just as fashion trends do. Jennifer Beese (2016) from SproutSocial blogged about the ever changing landscape of social media saying, “New platforms, software, and consumer preferences brought about a host of changes and opportunities. As a result, social media has evolved and will continue to do so.”

The combination of fashion and social media becomes an interesting battlefield for consumer attention. Fashion is a powerful source in popular culture today, generating 250 billion dollars in revenue each year in the United States (Statistic Brain, 2015). As fashion brands seek to entertain and interact with consumers, many PR professionals are challenged to create content that does not get lost in the midst of millions of other posts. By effectively using social media, fashion brands may become influencers in their fashion industry markets, while strengthening their brand identity and relationships with online consumers.

In order to increase understanding of how social media can effectively be used for a fashion company, a social media plan for private label clothing distributor, Kandy Kiss, was

created, implemented, and analyzed. This capstone helped determine what social media platforms and social media messages are most influential in the fashion industry. Discovering what information consumers enjoy and interact with the most will not only be beneficial for the client, but to better understand the influence and reach that social media has to consumers. Social media has changed the fashion industry, and this capstone internship was completed to discover best practices in social media marketing for fashion in a competitive online media-driven marketplace.

Literature Review

Emerging in the 1990s, online social media networks began with blogging sites such as Blogger and Epinions, where individuals would share their reviews of products with other consumers (Edosomwan et al., 2011). From 2000 to 2005, social media networks were booming, with Friendster, MySpace, LinkedIn, Facebook Harvard, Dogster, and YouTube all being launched during this time (Edosomwan et al., 2011). “Social media employ mobile and web-based technologies to create highly interactive platforms via which individuals and communities share, cocreate, discuss, and modify user-generated content” (Keitzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy, & Silvestre, 2011, p. 241). Social media networks are being used by individuals to create and share content that entertains and/or informs other social media users. Social media enables individuals and brands alike to become influencers, making it especially important for PR professionals to integrate strategic social media plans into their work (Solis & Breakenridge, 2009).

Public Relations Reinvented by Social Media

Social media is so prevalent in today’s communication processes that virtually every organization is expected to have a presence on the major social media platforms. Social media is

characterized by individuals' ability to publish, critique, create, share, and rank online content with other users (Papasolomou & Melanthiou, 2012). Organizations recognize the strong influence of social media and are creating social media plans that allow consumers to interact and share the organizations' content (Papasolomou & Melanthiou, 2012).

The popularity of social media is skyrocketing, with 728 million daily Facebook users, 500 million tweets sent per day, and 3.5 billion likes daily on Instagram (Facebook, 2015; Twitter, 2015; Instagram, 2015). Many organizations are turning to public relations firms to create and manage their social media strategies. Because the role of public relations is to build and maintain relationships with consumers, PR strategies become extremely important in social media management. Bronn (2008) wrote, "Obviously, a major reason that relationships caught on so successfully in marketing is that customers and their satisfaction and loyalty have direct, and sometimes immediate, effects on a company's performance" (p. 34). Companies who are engaging consumers on social media are seeing more online sales than those companies who are not utilizing social media (Hope, 2016).

Social media has great persuasive power, because it enables companies to talk to their consumers and enables consumers to talk to each other (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Creating positive relationships with consumers via social media is required in order to remain relevant in today's society. "Online conversation and the discovery, creation, and sharing of content is the foundation for Web 2.0, Social Media, and New PR" wrote Solis and Breakenridge (2009, p. 37). Organizations can initiate and participate in a great variety of conversations ranging from detailed blogs, to 140-character messages in live Twitter chats (Kietzmann et al., 2011). Social media is a powerful tool that can be used to strengthen the public relations efforts of any brand (Solis & Breakenridge, 2009).

Social Media and the Fashion Industry

Social media has enabled individuals to interact with one another at any time they please. Fashion brands are aware of the power social media holds, and are taking advantage by encouraging consumers to share their favorite products with friends via social media. As social media users share reviews and information about products and services, they are participating in interpersonal communication called word of mouth, which is one of the most influential sources of information for consumers (Mohr, 2013). Ann Taylor CEO, Kay Krill said, “Online and social media are playing an increasing role and complementing our direct mail outreach, advertising, and PR efforts. We’ve learned a lot by dialoguing with our customers this way” (Mohr, 2013). Engaging in online conversations with consumers using social media can be highly beneficial for any fashion brand. PR News Editor, Brian Greene (2015) wrote:

To call social media revolutionary would be a drastic understatement. Only a little more than a decade since the first Facebook account, social networks have become so ingrained in daily life that imagining a world without them is about as difficult as imagining world before the light bulb or automobile. Networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and others have transformed the way we communicate, both in our personal lives and at work. In the field of public relations, widespread adoption of social media kicked off a renaissance of sorts, providing new ways for brands and organizations to engage directly with their audiences (p. 5).

Kandy Kiss is a private label clothing company that sells products to the stores Wet Seal, Target, Macy’s, Forever21, JCPenney’s, Hot Topic, and Kohl’s. Their current social media presence is not strong compared to their competitors such as H&M, Windsor Store, and other young adult brands. While Kandy Kiss does not currently compete with large brands, it has the

potential to become a very strong and influential brand on social media. By discovering target markets and appealing to consumer taste, Kandy Kiss may become a powerhouse in social media marketing. The social media's Rule of Thirds will be used to vary social content, and to attract more active followers.

Social Media's Rule of Thirds

Social media's Rule of Thirds will be applied to the social media plan created for Kandy Kiss. The Rule of Thirds created by Hootsuite suggests that brands do not focus solely on promoting their own products or services, but incorporate other information to keep consumers interested. One third of information posted on social media should be content that promotes your business, and generates profit. One third of social media posts should share the ideas or stories of leaders in your company's industry or businesses with similar values. One third of social content should be based on building your personal brand and actively engaging with your consumers (Milbrath, 2014).

By incorporating the Rule of Thirds when creating content for social media, a brand is better able to reach larger audiences, create their personal brand identity, and demonstrate their credibility in their industry. Varying content using the Rule of Thirds will keep consumers interested, while enhancing the brand personality (Milbrath, 2014).

Social Customer Relationship Management and Social Media

As companies realize the high value that social media holds in communicating and reaching consumers, they must develop social media plans that will satisfy the consumers' social media expectations. IBM conducted a study in 2010 to determine how Customer Relationship Management (CRM) has evolved because of the emergence of social media. CRM Researchers, Baird and Parasnis (2011), asked 1,000 social media consumers what they value on social media

and compared consumers' motivations to engage with brands on social media to businesses' expectancies of why consumers engage with their brands. The results of this study demonstrated that consumers and companies have very distinctive motivations for engaging the other party on social media. Consumers expressed that they want to engage with brands that they believe to be trustworthy, and feel that the interaction is for their benefit. Baird and Parasnis (2011) wrote, "Nearly 70 percent of executives say their companies will be perceived 'out of touch' if they don't engage, and over half believe their competition is successfully reaching customers through social media" (p. 32). Companies can effectively reach consumers via social media by providing tangible value for consumers' time and endorsement. Incentive for consumers to engage with brands could include discounts, coupons, problem-solving or providing customer service information, and providing entertainment (Gunelius, 2010). Using listening tools can help companies develop strategic social media plans that implement consumer values. Baird and Parasnis (2011) suggest that companies embrace a new strategy of CRM- Social CRM "which recognizes that instead of managing customers, the role of the business is to facilitate collaborative experiences and dialogue that customers value" (p. 30). The social media plan for Kandy Kiss was created based on what consumers' reported most important to them when engaging with brands on social media (included in Appendix B).

Measuring Effectiveness of Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing is one of the most efficient ways to reach consumers, especially millennials (Williams, Crittenden, Keo, & McCarty, 2012). As marketers create and implement social media campaigns, measuring the effectiveness of social media messages is crucial. Instead of focusing on ROI from social media campaigns (which can hardly be determined), Hoffman and Fodor suggest that managers consider "consumer motivations to use social media and then

measure the social media investments customers make as they engage with the marketers' brands" (2010, p. 42). Because an exact ROI measurement for social media hasn't been discovered, key performance indicators (KPIs) can be used to determine the effectiveness and sales impact of a social media campaign (Gelles, 2013).

Key performance indicators are the specific criteria measured to discover the success of a social media campaign (Paine, 2011). The primary characteristics of successful marketing are noticeability and reach (Gelles, 2013). Noticeability refers to the likeability of social media content. Individuals are much more likely to notice and remember a company's content if it appeals to them. Reach refers to the amount of people who are exposed to a company's content. Using listening tools and understanding the target demographics allows organizations to discover what platforms their consumers use and enjoy the most (Gelles, 2013).

Justification and Research Questions

The vast growth of social media has changed how consumers receive and interact with marketing communications (Williams et al., 2012). With an average of 70 million photos posted daily on Instagram (Instagram, 2015), it is crucial that fashion brands have a strong presence on social media and are able to outshine their competitors. Utilizing social media for public relations and marketing purposes is a very cost effective strategy, that must be implemented for brand success in today's market (Weng & Menczer, 2015).

Kandy Kiss' target audience is young adults ages 15-30. Williams et al. described millennial generation as 'digital natives' who are "technology savvy and the most visually sophisticated of any generation" (2012, p. 127). According to *Business Insider* writer, Cooper Smith (2014), "Over 90% of the 150 million people on Instagram are under the age of 35, which makes it an attractive platform for many apparel, entertainment, and media brands focused on the

18- to 34-year-old age bracket". Creating a strong brand identity on social media is vital to the success of Kandy Kiss.

RQ1: How can social media be utilized to increase brand awareness for Kandy Kiss measured by key performance indicators?

RQ2: What content do consumers want/interact with the most as a fashion brand?

Process

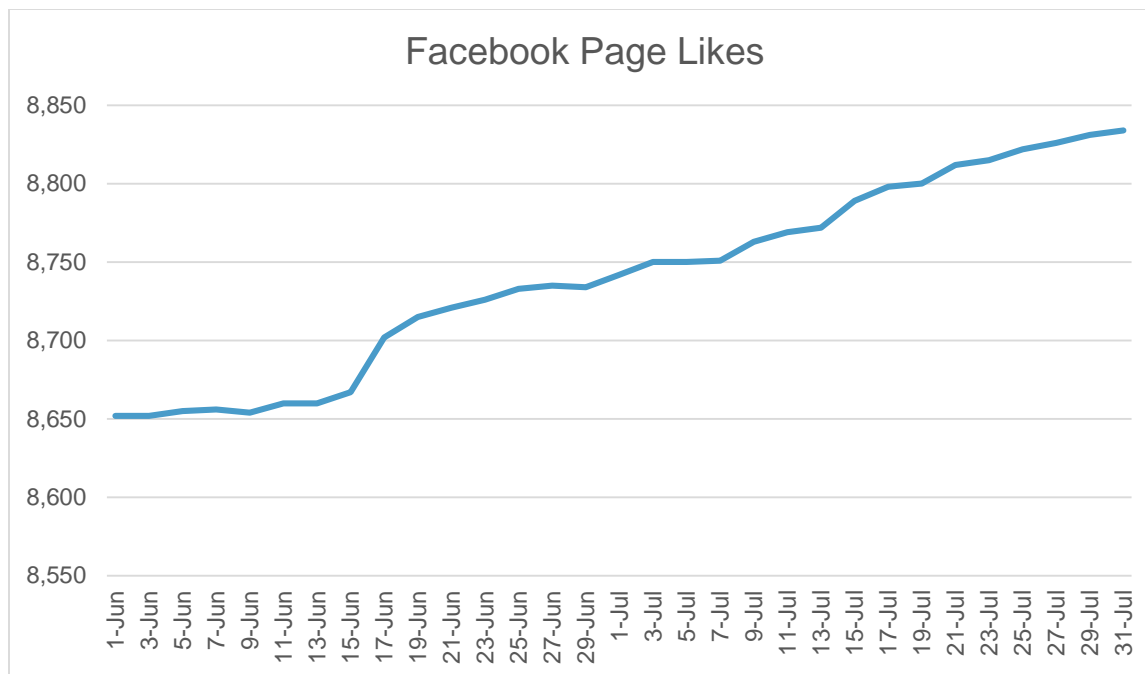
To discover the most effective messages on social media, this capstone internship was executed using Kandy Kiss, a private clothing label, as the social media client. A detailed social media plan was created for Kandy Kiss based on the literature researched. Posts were created for Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and a Blog based on Social Customer Relationship Management and the Social Media Rule of Thirds.

Posts were scheduled using SproutSocial, a social media management website. Posts on Fashion Files (Kandy Kiss' Blog), Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram were analyzed based on key performance indicators (KPIs) to determine their effectiveness. Because ROI is nearly impossible to calculate for social media, KPIs were used to measure the success of each post on various social media sites. Every other day KPIs were recorded from June 1st to July 31st. Based on the user engagement on each platform, posts were tailored to appeal to consumers.

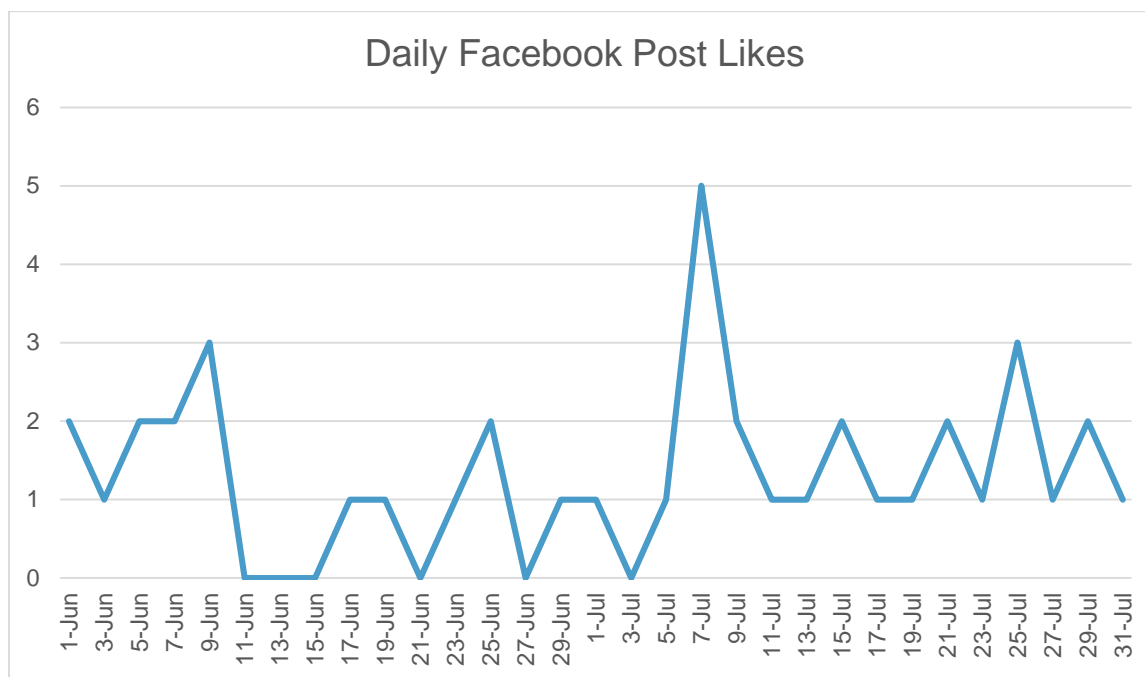
Results

Facebook

Kandy Kiss had a Facebook page prior to this capstone internship. The Kandy Kiss of California Facebook page had 8,652 likes and 0 likes on each post at the beginning of this study. The KPIs that were measured for Kandy Kiss' Facebook were page likes and daily post likes. Facebook statistics were recorded every other day from June 1st to July 31st.



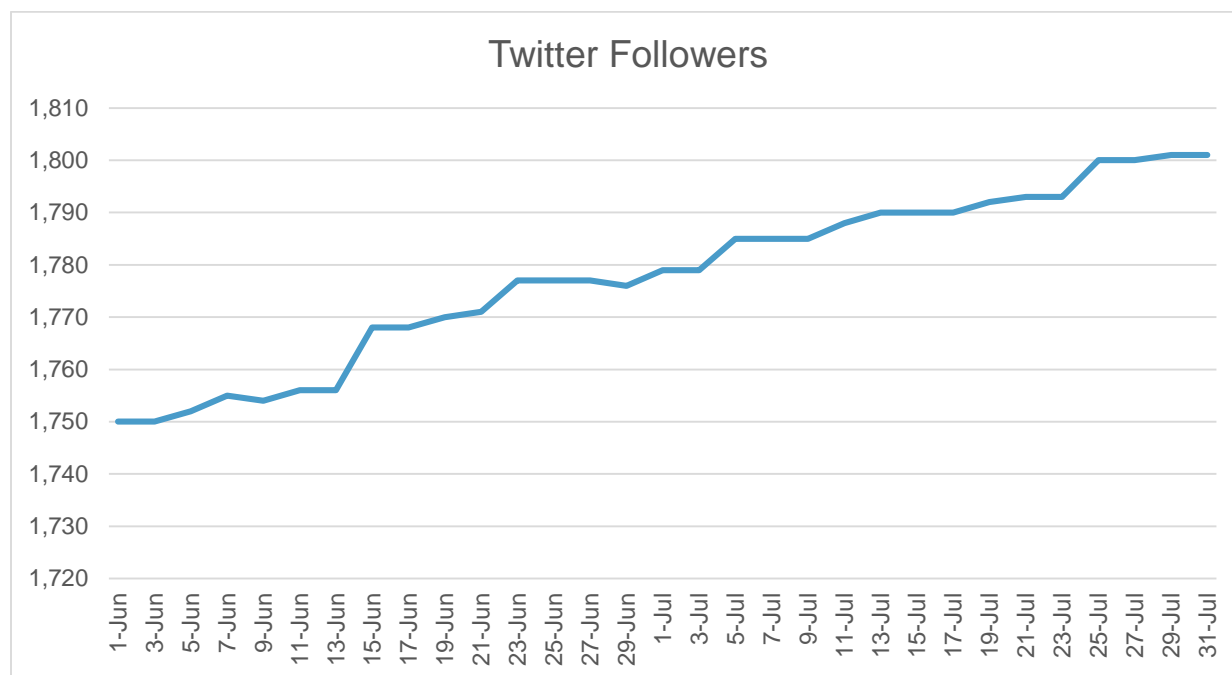
At the end of the 8 weeks, Kandy Kiss' Facebook page had 8,834 likes. While this was not a significant increase over the course of 8 weeks, slow and steady progress was being made on Facebook page likes. Although progress was made with Facebook page likes, the individual Facebook post likes did not increase significantly.



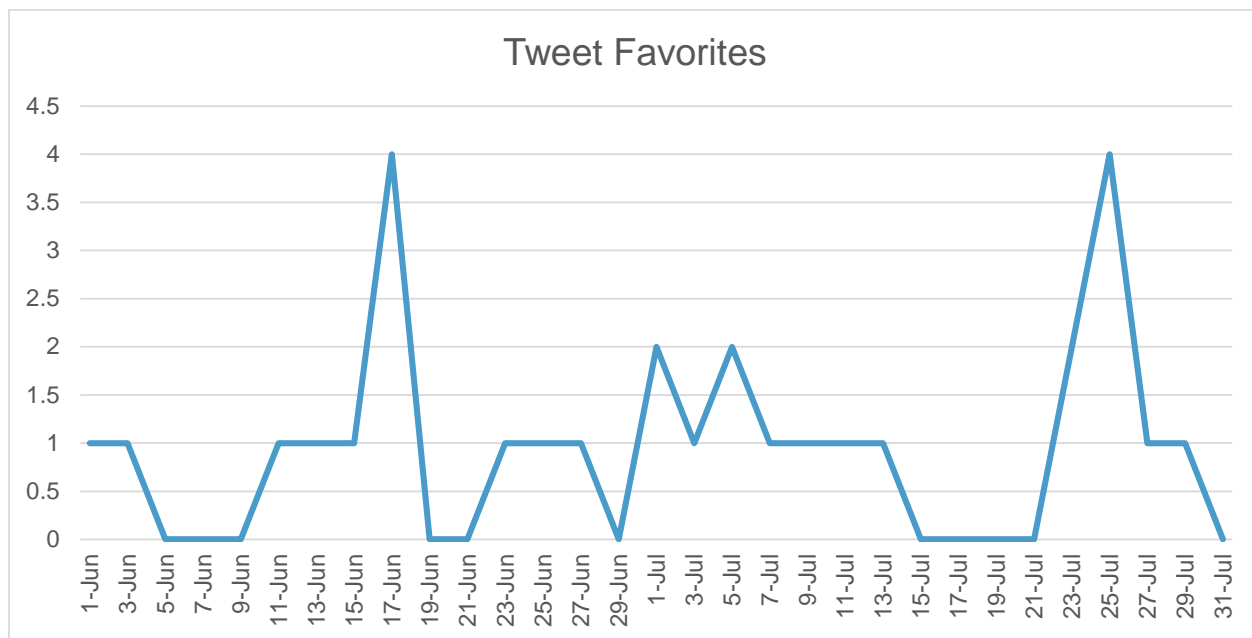
Facebook posts received very little engagement from users. The post that received the most likes included an image of a well-known fashion blogger, Julia Hengel. This research suggests that individuals are more probable to like posts that involve a fashion blogger or topic that are familiar to them. Social Media Week contributor, Lily Bradic (2015), explained how celebrities influence sales writing, when brands establishing a relationship and connection to popular names in entertainment, sports, fashion, and other verticals, there is the potential to boost sales drastically, especially when the consumer believes the product or service actually used by the celebrity him or herself.” In the future, Facebook posts should include more fashion bloggers and topics that consumers recognize and enjoy seeing.

Twitter

Kandy Kiss had a Twitter account prior to this study. At the beginning of this study, Kandy Kiss’ Twitter account had 1,750 followers, had tweeted 2,268 posts, and on average received no retweets or favorites from followers.



50 Twitter followers were gained in the 8-week period. Unfortunately, this had very little effect on user engagement. More KPIs such as demographics of these users should be used to discover what kind of content they enjoy viewing.

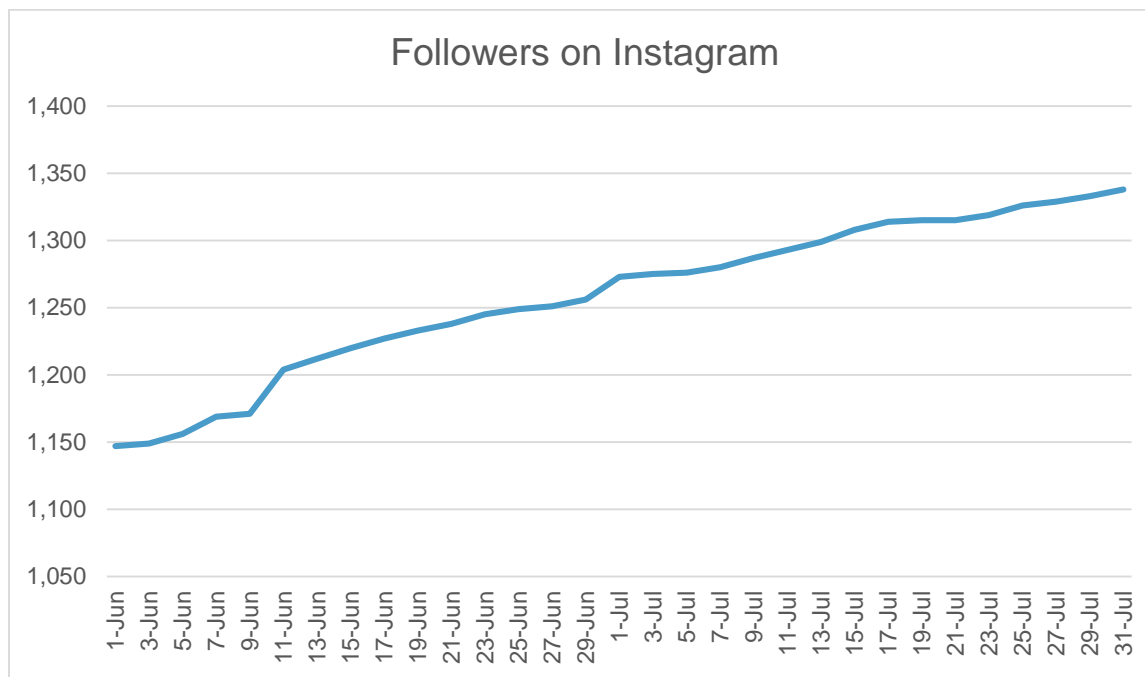


Tweets received an average of one favorite per tweet. There was very low user engagement on Twitter. The two spikes shown on the graph indicate when Kandy Kiss engaged in live Twitter Chats. Twitter Chats are an arranged conversation by major industry influencers such as E! Online and StyleCaster. Using Twitter Chats was a great way to get involved in fashion conversations and introduce users to the Kandy Kiss brand. In the future, Kandy Kiss will use listening tools and analytics to create content for Twitter that users would like to retweet and favorite.

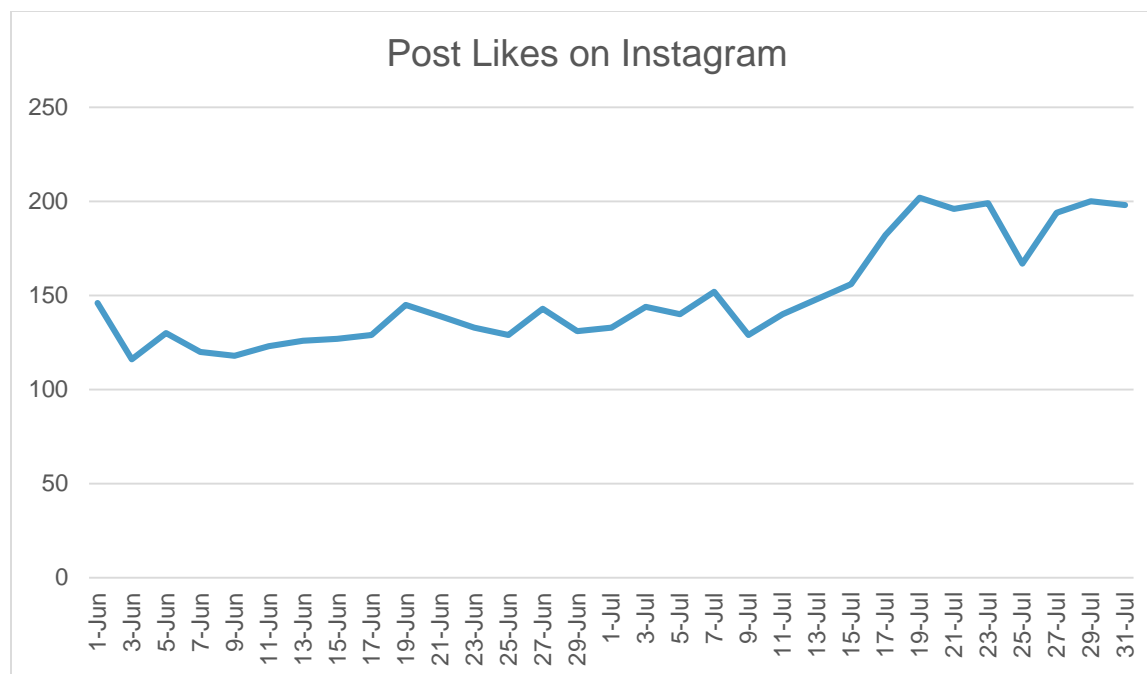
Instagram

Prior to this study, Kandy Kiss had an Instagram account with 530 posts and 1,137 followers. Because Kandy Kiss' target demographic is ages 15-30, and Instagram is highly popular among this age group, Instagram was especially important in the social media plan.

Each week, posts were created and scheduled for everyday on SproutSocial using high quality images and trending hashtags. Kandy Kiss engaged conversations with fashion influencers to gain more followers and demonstrate industry knowledge.



Kandy Kiss' Instagram had 2,455 followers by the end of the 8-week study. With the 115% follower increase, user engagement (comments and likes) grew slowly but steadily. This indicated that Kandy Kiss was reaching social media users that were genuinely interested in fashion and Kandy Kiss posts.



Likes on Instagram increased toward the end of the 8-week project. Consumers seemed to be enjoying the content posted on Instagram. Instagram may be among the most important social media platforms for Kandy Kiss, as it is a favorite for the 15-30 age demographic. Kristin Montalbano (2015) described Instagram as a dominant choice of social media for millennials writing:

More than half of teens and people in their early 20s are on Instagram, according to a study from BI Intelligence. Among those teens, Instagram has edged out Facebook and Twitter as the most important social network. In addition, what was a predominantly female-skewing platform has evolved to an even split between the sexes (p. 133).

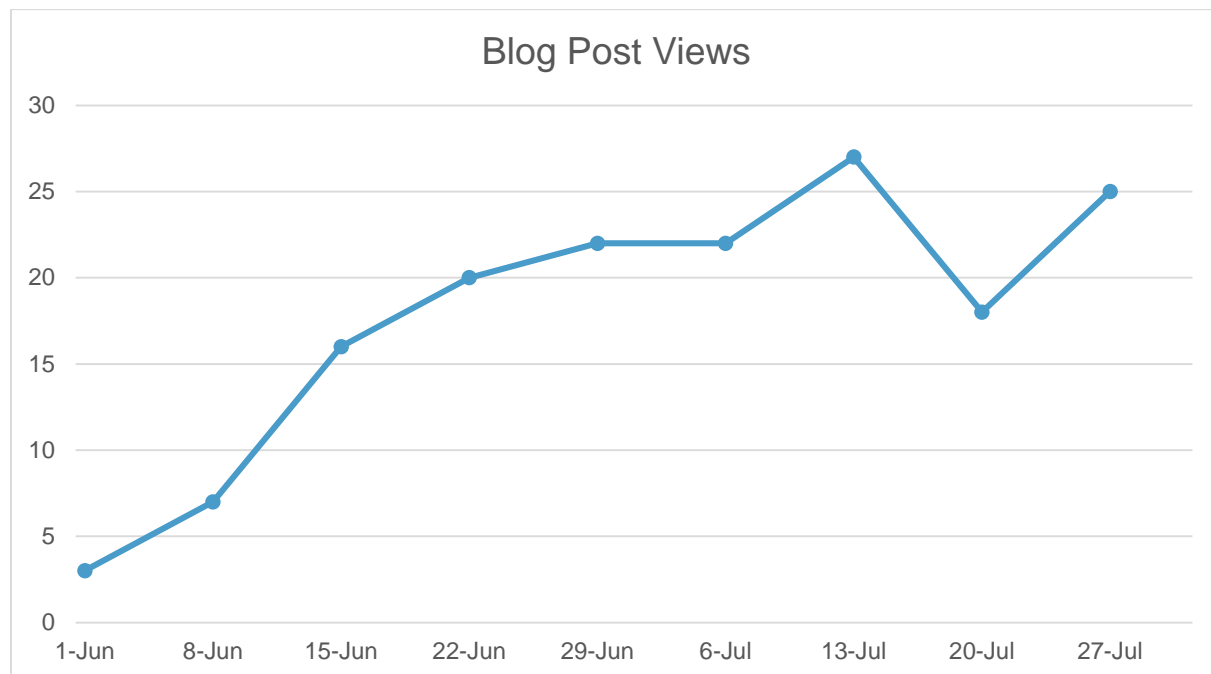
An Instagram post that demonstrated that millennials were engaging with Kandy Kiss was when gay marriage was legalized in the U.S. Kandy Kiss posted, “Equality is always in fashion #lovewins #loveislove #equality” to support gay marriage, and in turn saw a spike in user engagement and Instagram followers. Using trending hashtags was important in this social media campaign. By following the Social Media Rule of Thirds, Kandy Kiss was able to demonstrate

their industry knowledge, build their personal brand, and generate clothing sales. Consumers were highly responsive when posts included well-known fashion bloggers or stylists.

Fashion Files Blog

Kandy Kiss' blog called the Fashion Files was created prior to this capstone. The blog was created using WordPress, and can be accessed on the Kandy Kiss website. At the beginning of this study, there were 20 published blog posts that received a maximum of 5 views per post. Blogs were written and posted once a week on Mondays, about trending fashion topics and featured favorite fashion bloggers.

The only KPI that was measured were blog views, because the posts received no comments. In the future, it is suggested that Kandy Kiss uses additional KPIs such as audience demographics, blog comments, and Search Engine Optimization analysis to discover what content is the most beneficial.



As the results show, blog posts received more views over time. To increase blog views, blog posts were shared on multiple social media sites to encourage new and current consumers to

engage with Kandy Kiss content. Posts were also written based on trending topics and blog titles were strategically crafted in order to increase Search Engine Optimization. The blog post that received the most views included a fashion blogger, who also shared the link on her social media to promote blog views. Kandy Kiss can continue to increase blog views by using video and high quality images, as well as strategic tags to encourage more consumer traffic.

Discussion

The results of this study demonstrate the challenges and victories associated with using social media to promote a fashion brand. Social media is an effective tool for promoting brand awareness and engaging new and existing consumers. While huge increases in followers and engagement did not happen on every platform, slow and steady progress was made on each of them. Promoting a fashion brand involves careful and strategic planning. The results demonstrated that knowing trending topics was extremely crucial to successfully reaching and engaging consumers. Listening tools are highly recommended for Kandy Kiss and any fashion brand, to stay updated on fashion trends, hot topics, and current conversations that consumers are having.

It was especially challenging to promote sales of Kandy Kiss clothing, because they are a private label distributor. It was nearly impossible to know what sales or promotions were happening at the various retailers. In the future, Kandy Kiss should make connections with the social media managers at the retail stores such as Target, Forever21, Macey's, and WetSeal. "Companies with higher levels of engagement on Instagram are tending to grow their online sales faster than their less clued-up rivals, turning the traditional fashion hierarchy on its head," wrote BBC News reporter, Katie Hope (2016). Creating relationships with the retail stores that

Kandy Kiss clothing is sold in would enable Kandy Kiss to help promote their clothing, and in turn generate sales for the retail stores.

Using SproutSocial to schedule posts each week for all the social media platforms proved to be highly beneficial. The social media management program made it easy to schedule posts, and discover when the best times were to engage consumers. It is suggested that Kandy Kiss uses more analytic tools in the future, to gain more information about audiences and to more effectively reach their target markets.

Suggestions

As I worked with Kandy Kiss, I found areas that I thought were lacking in the social media campaign. Platforms such as Pinterest and Polyvore were not being used for Kandy Kiss when I began my internship. I suggested to my managers that they implemented these platforms in the social media campaign because both platforms are highly involved in social media. Pinterest is a platform that is visual-based, with an emphasis on high quality images and links to blogs or websites where clothing and other merchandise can be purchased. Polyvore is also a social media site that I suggested, as it is strictly used for fashion purposes. On Polyvore, users can create and discover outfit ideas and get information about where to purchase items that they like from the site. These two suggestions were turned down by my managers at the time, but have since been implemented into Kandy Kiss' social media campaigns. I also believe that it would be beneficial for Kandy Kiss to create partnerships with fashion influencers and have them promote Kandy Kiss clothing via their personal social profiles. These partnerships could be created by Kandy Kiss sending clothing to well-known bloggers and fashion influencers, and allowing them to keep the clothes in turn for images, shoutouts, and promotion on social media platforms.

Conclusion

By performing this capstone internship, it is evident that social media is a very powerful tool in communicating with consumers. Fashion brands such as Kandy Kiss can benefit greatly from incorporating social media into their marketing plans. Not only does social media enable a fashion company to generate sales, but they can also discover what consumers really want and modify their products.

Fashion brands can better create social media plans when they understand the principles outlined by Social Customer Relationship Management. The graphic included in Appendix B portrays the values of social media consumers when interacting with a brand (Baird and Parasnis, 2011). Consumers first and for most want discounts and the ability to make a purchase seamlessly by viewing a company's social media site. Companies will benefit greatly when they create content for the consumer rather than for the company needs.

Because social media and fashion are evolving continually, it is suggested that social media specialists stay informed on all trends, and create social media plans accordingly. The greatest finding in this capstone internship is that people care about trending topics and are more likely to engage with content that is familiar to them.

Utilizing social media as a marketing tool should be a top priority for all organizations, and especially fashion brands. Millennials expect to be able to find a company on social media. By creating content specifically made for consumers, social media can enable brands to reach more consumers, create quality relationships with new and current customers, and improve their brand by listening to what consumers really want.

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Appendix A



Kandy Kiss' Social Media Statistics

Starting Statistics:

Instagram

530 posts
1,137 followers

Facebook

8,652 likes

Twitter

2,268 tweets
1,750 followers

Blog

20 posts
Average: 5 views per post

Pinterest

No Presence

Ending Statistics:

2,455 followers

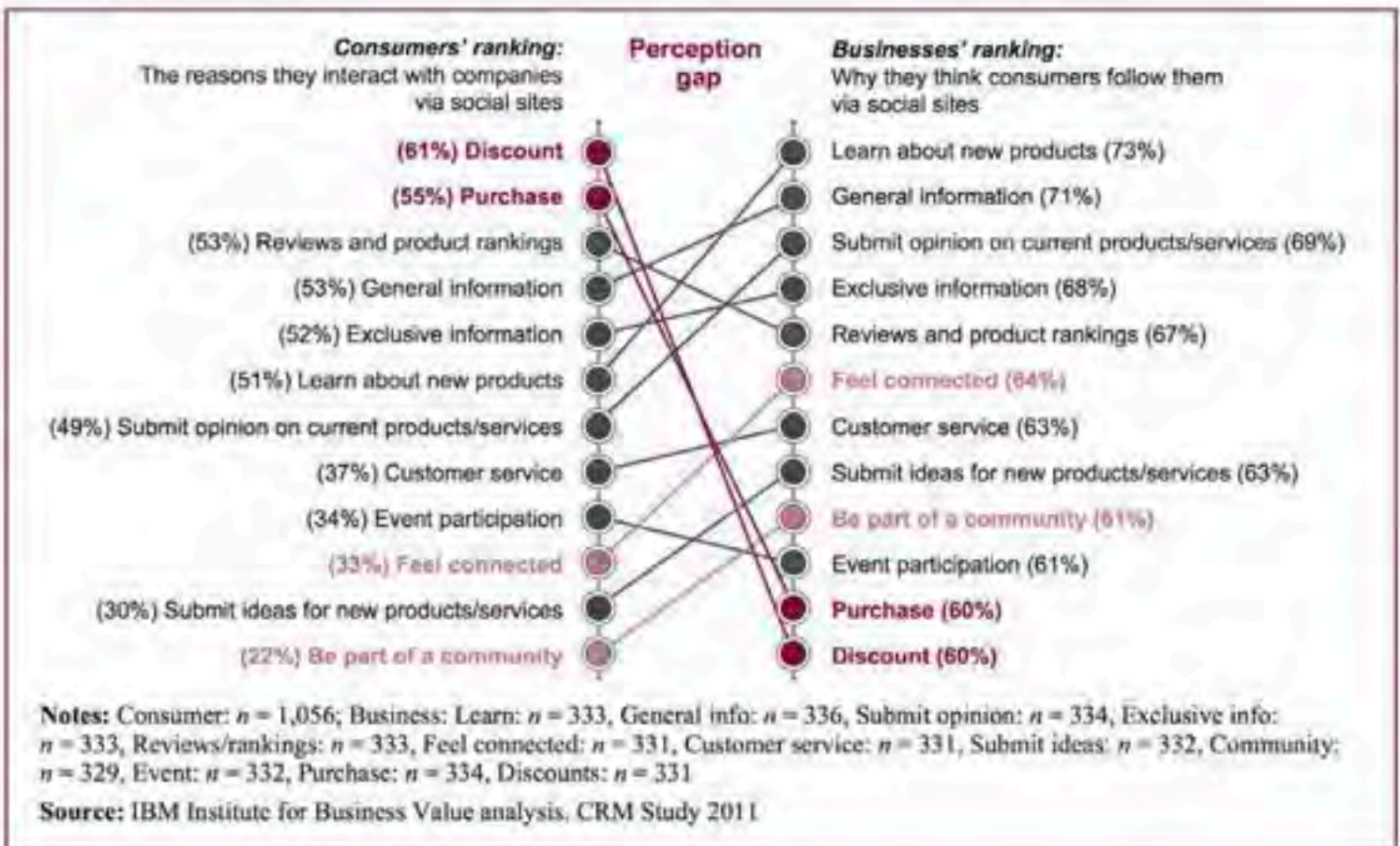
8,834 likes

1,800 followers

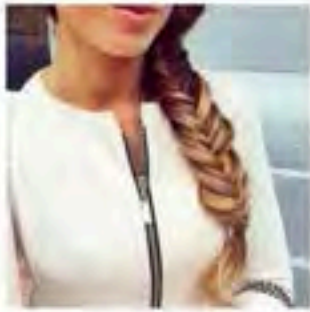
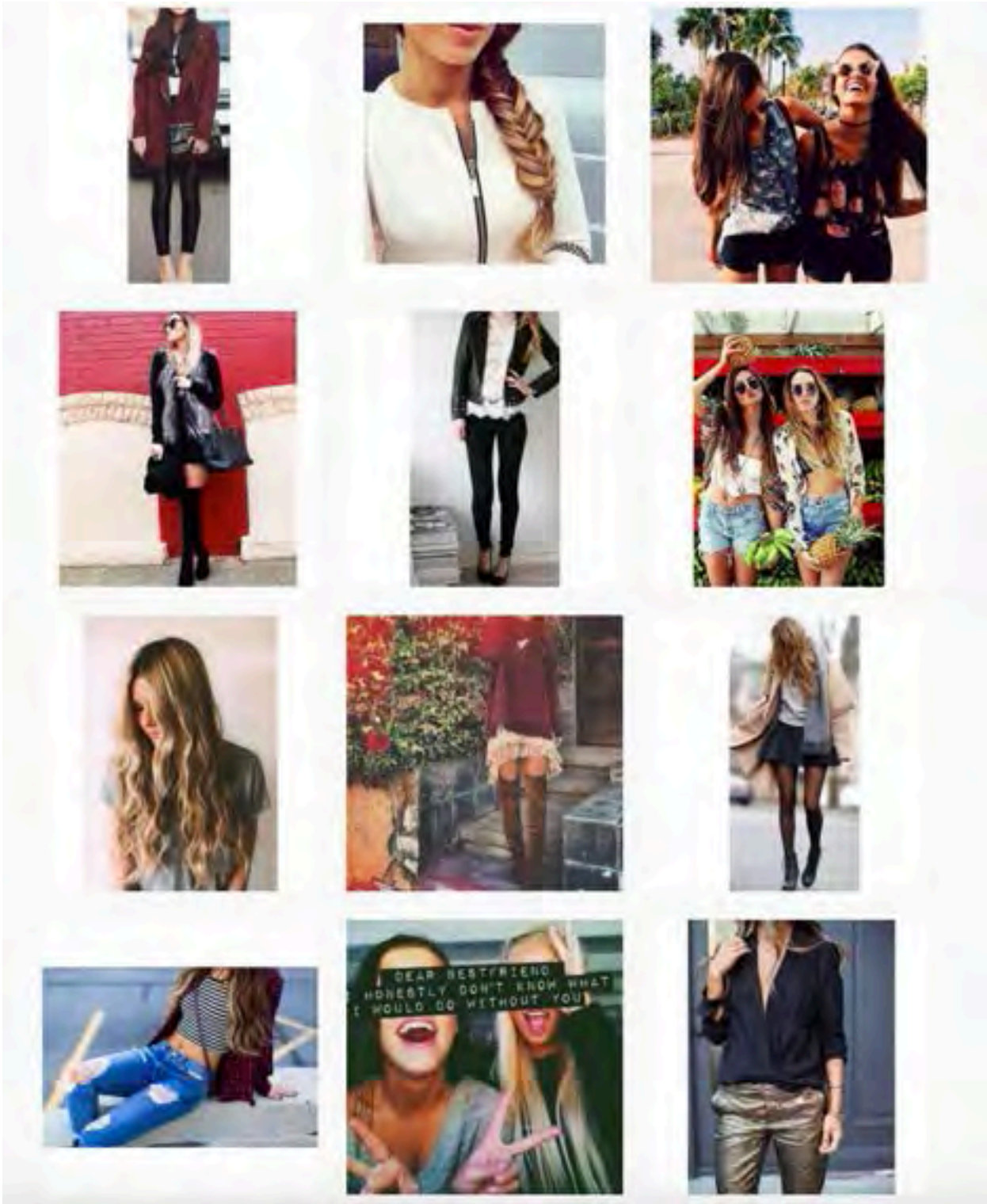
Average: 20 views per post

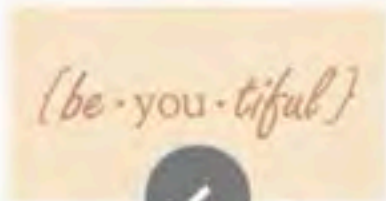
Suggested to be included

Appendix B

Exhibit 2 Companies have some misperceptions regarding why consumers interact with them via social sites

Instagram Posts Before





Be(YOU)tiful

**PLAYING
IT SAFE IS
DANGEROUS.**

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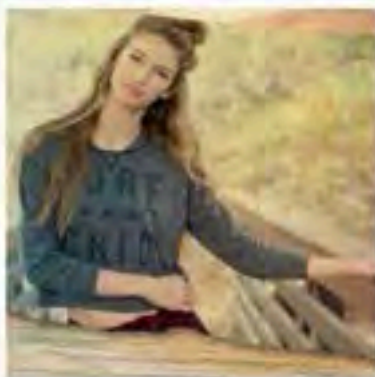
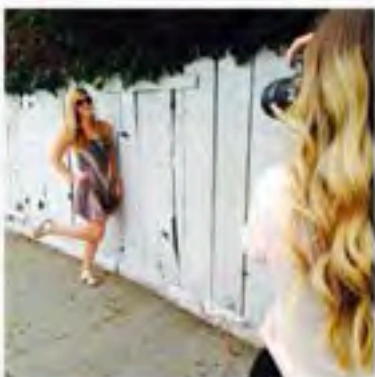


*Kindness
IS ALWAYS
Fashionable*
MELIA R. BARR

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Instagram Posts After



"if loving fashion
is a crime...
we plead guilty!"

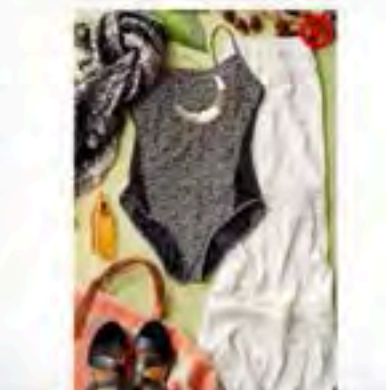
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Style is a way to say who you are without having to speak.
-Patricia Zia-

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Twitter Post Examples



3 Lessons Learned from Julie Sarinana

May 21, 2015 / 0 Comments / in Fashion / by fashion team

Loose Tops, Tight Bottoms

Julie Sarinana can be spotted wearing a flowy top and a tight skirt or pair of shorts or jeans at any given time. Julie wears shirts both tucked in and left out. Choose a loose top to pair with your skinny jeans next time you go out!



Sneakers are Chic

Anyone who follows Sincerely, Jules on Instagram knows that she is a big fan of fashionable sneakers. Her photoshoots often reveal her wearing New Balance 420s, Chuck Taylors, and Nike Hightops. Pairing sneakers with a cute dress or chic outfit is a simple way to up your street style, not to mention add comfort!



All Stripes Everything

Julie is sincerely in love with stripes. Her outfits usually include a striped top, and occasionally a striped bottom. Wearing stripes can provide a cute addition to your outfit. Just remember, only one striped piece per outfit!



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fashion Spotlight on Kayleigh Adam

Kayleighs Closet

Can you tell us a bit about yourself and your background?

I'm a senior at the University of Oklahoma studying public relations. I grew up in Houston, Texas with a love for fashion and New York City. After my sophomore year, I interned at Marc Fisher Footwear LLC in New York and this year I'm interning at Cosmopolitan and Seventeen Magazine! I love all things bright- especially pink- and I'm super girly!



If you could sneak into anyone's closet whose would you peek at?

Blake Lively! Maybe more so Serena Van Der Woodsen, but she always looks effortlessly chic no matter what.

What style rule do you always follow?

Staying true to yourself but up to date on trends!

What is your favorite quote?

"Sometimes we need to stop analysing the past, stop planning the future, stop figuring out precisely how we feel, stop deciding exactly what we want, and just see what happens" Carrie Bradshaw

What inspired your blog?

I actually started it as a resume booster and hated it in the beginning. It was more of a DIY kind of thing, but now I use it as a creative outlet to keep up to date on fashion trends when I'm not necessarily studying it at school everyday.

Three things that are always in your purse?

EOS Chapstick, metro card, iPhone charger

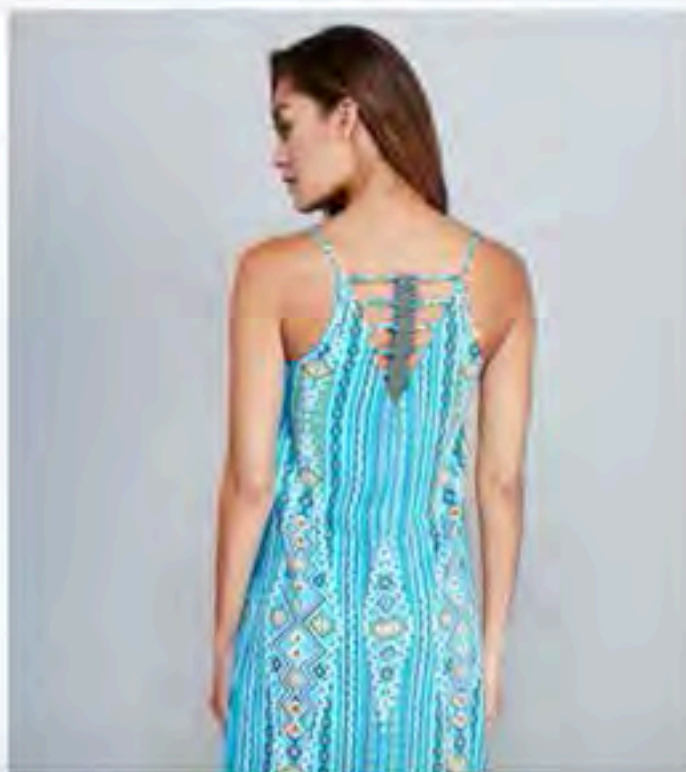
Slip into Summertime!

June 1, 2015 / 0 Comments / in Fashion / by fashion team

This summer's trends are all about Boho styles, and we have the perfect slip dress to add to your summer wardrobe! This vibrant blue dress is a must-have not only for its cute tribal-inspired print, but also because its relaxed fit makes it perfect for an all day adventure!



Did we mention that this adorable dress also has an embroidered lattice v-back? We love the details! This dress is perfect for a day of shopping, an outdoor concert, or a fun summer date night! Get yours at Wet Seal! Available online and in stores! <http://bit.ly/1j8dGT>



kandy kiss

fashion Spotlight on.

Mary Lauren Gunn

Headed Somewhere

Can you tell us a bit about yourself and your background?

My name is Mary Lauren Gunn; tiny gold jewelry enthusiast and plant lover/killer. I live in a tiny little house in North San Diego with my husband and little babe Ezra. Most days we are at the beach or working on our little house and chasing big dreams.

My background is in economics, I worked as an accountant for a few years before I chose to quit to be able to stay home with Ezra.

Making that decision has forced my husband and I to become "hustlers" of sorts. My husband has a little surf company he runs on the side of his every day accounting job and I have about a billion and one things I am working on at one time. (Exciting stuff to come! 🤪) It is crazy most of the time, definitely harder than my 9-5. But we make it work and we are very happy.



If you could sneak into anyone's closet whose would you peek at?

My whole life I have looked up to my three older sisters. There are 8 years between me and the one closest to me. As a little girl, you can imagine how cool your teenage sisters look and their wardrobes just seemed amazing. I would peek in on their closets, trying on their doc martens and stuzzi t-shirts. Today, things haven't changed much. They're still my role models in just about every aspect of life. So if I could sneak into anyone's closet, it would probably be my sister Lindsay's closet. I don't think there would be too much "sneaking" per say, she'd probably just let me in, but if I could take over any closet, it would be hers. It is pretty amazing, adorned with all the most amazing designers, dresses, vests, coats and a mountain of shoes I would absolutely kill for. Yep, that's who's closet I envy most.

What style rule do you always follow?

Be comfortable. Before Ezra was born I worked as an accountant, spending my days in a nice office and I wore stilettos to work DAILY. Looking back, I can't believe I did that! I got pretty dang good at charging around in those heels, but man, after 9 hour days, my back was killing me!

Now that I have a little toddler to chase after, stilettos are sooo one million miles away. I still love dressing up and feeling like I "tried" for myself some days. But the main style rule I follow is you have to be comfortable. I'm loving the culottes, shift dresses and clogs trends right now. So simple, not much fuss and comfortable!

There is another kind of comfort you should follow too. Yes, your clothes should FEEL comfortable, but you also should be confident and comfortable in your own wardrobe. Dress for you, be you.

What is your favorite quote?

"Be yourself. Everyone else is already taken." – Oscar Wilde



4 Ways to Style a Classic White Tee

July 6, 2015 / 0 Comments / in Fashion / by fashion team

Arguably one of the most essential pieces to have in your wardrobe is the classic white tee. Not only does it never go out of style, it can be dressed up and dressed down. Today we are talking about different ways to style your perfect classic white tee!

Wear White to Yoga

Who says your favorite white tee can't be worn to workout? Not us! Wear your white tee to your yoga class for a nice change in your workout attire. It's also perfect to match with a colorful pair of yoga pants! This tee is available now at Target!



Pair Your White Tee with Leather

The bold contrast of white and black will definitely make a statement outfit. Pairing your white tee with black leather (or pleather) pants or a jacket will give your look an extra cool feel.



Tuck your Tee into a Skirt

Pairing your white tee with a skirt is always a good look. We think that Victoria's Secret angel, Candice, nailed the look perfectly! Whether you choose to tuck your tee all the way in or just the front, the classic white tee is a must have.



Go Bright with White

White tees are the perfect match for your bright and patterned bottoms. Whether you choose a bold color or an exciting print, wearing a simple white tee allows for both pieces to be accentuated!



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fashion Spotlight on

Kathleen Harper

Kat's Fashion Fix

Can you tell us a bit about yourself and your background?

My name is Kathleen and I'm a 22 year-old fashion blogger from Chicago. I'm currently a senior journalism major with a minor in philosophy at Elon University, which is located in North Carolina. Although I'm presently living in the South, I'm a city girl through and through. I love Chicago and I've also lived in Los Angeles and New York City for a short period of time. Obviously fashion is a huge passion of mine and in LA and NY I was lucky enough to get internships in the industry. In fact, this past summer I worked for *The Daily Front Row*, the official magazine of New York Fashion Week, and it was a blast. I got to attend movie premieres, red carpet events, interview movie stars, and even go to a ball - how cool is that? In May I'm moving back to The Big Apple to pursue a career in fashion journalism - wish me luck!

If you could sneak into anyone's closet whose would you peek at?

I would absolutely love to take a tour of Blair Eadie's closet, the blogger behind my favorite blog, Atlantic-Pacific. If I ever even got to meet her I would definitely have a fan-girl moment! I love Blair because her style is pretty much everything I want mine to be. She's classic yet fresh, colorful, polished, sophisticated, but also exciting. Her clothing choices speak to me and I don't think I've ever seen her repeat an item - she's just fabulous!

What style rule do you always follow?

I struggle with this question because I honestly don't think I follow any rules - that's the glorious thing about fashion! Fashion has no rules or boundaries, my motto is: if you like it, wear it! Life is too short to follow a rulebook and the fashion industry agrees. Following fashion rules is archaic in my mind. I grew up with my mom telling me not to wear navy and black together, no white after Labor Day, match your shoes to your purse, pattern mixing is a no-no, etc. But as I've gotten older I've completely disregarded every single fashion rule I've ever come across. Rules don't make sense in fashion because style is all about freedom, self-expression, risk-taking, and creativity. Everyone has their own unique way of showing off who they are and that's beautiful!



What inspired your blog?

I started my beloved fashion blog, Kat's Fashion Fix, in 2012 as a way to express my creative side and to inspire others. I've always had a passion for fashion and I've loved putting together outfits since elementary school but I never thought of it as anything more than a hobby until college. After my first year of college I realized that I could turn my love of fashion into a career and I got really excited by that idea. Having a blog is a great way to get involved in the industry on your own. I knew it would make me stand out to future employers and once I started blogging I couldn't get enough. I love the whole community and it's such a fabulous way for me to explore other people's styles as well as develop my own.



Three things that are always in your purse?

I always have at least one (...or five) lipglosses/lipsticks in my purse along with a mini moleskin notebook, which is the journalist in me because you never know when you'll have to jot something down! The last thing I never leave home without is a snack - I'm not even kidding. I'm obsessed with these organic coconut and dark chocolate granola bars and I always have one in my purse - either that or an applesauce squeeze pack. A girl's gotta eat and hunger can strike at any moment!

Where do you find inspiration for blog posts?

I immerse myself in the fashion industry as much as I can by reading fashion magazines and following hundreds of blogs, which is where I get most of my inspiration. But I also turn to Pinterest and Instagram quite often as well. Instagram has quickly become my favorite way to check out what other people are wearing and I follow tons of fashion bloggers on there. My fellow bloggers are truly my number one inspiration because they're genuine and they show off real clothes that real people can wear. Fashion magazines are fun but I view them more as art. The clothing and models are beautiful to look at but they just aren't realistic, especially not for everyday life.

Get Rachel Bilson's Look for Less

June 8, 2015 / 0 Comments / In Fashion / by fashion team

Actress, Rachel Bilson, is known for her laid-back yet fashion forward street style. She has fashion sense that we totally admire here at Kandy Kiss! When we came across this photo of Bilson, we immediately turned to our collection to get the look!

We love the way she paired this lace maxi skirt with a simple white tank top! Get her look for less with our Kandy Kiss lace maxi skirt now in stores and online at Target!

<http://bit.ly/1KXRGtz>



Outfit Ideas for Your 4th of July Celebration

July 1, 2015 / 0 Comments / In Fashion / by fashion team

4th of July is one of the best holidays of the year! Not only are there fun festivities and fireworks shows, but there are also so many fun ways to dress up to celebrate the holiday! Here are some outfit ideas based on whatever your weekend plans may be!

Beach Day Celebration Outfit

If you decide to beach it on Independence Day, don't forget the essentials! Of course a patriotic swimsuit will do, but remember the sunscreen and your sunnies!



4th of July Barbecue Outfit

If you plan to join friends for a barbecue or outdoor party, our Wet Seal romper is a perfect choice! With all of our nation's colors in this romper, it is a cute and subtle way to show your patriotism!



Outfit for Watching the Fireworks

Watching a firework show is definitely a highlight of July 4th celebrations. Make sure you bring a blanket and a camera to capture the explosions in the sky!



Style Mistakes You May Be Making

June 15, 2015 / 0 Comments / in Fashion / by fashion team

Wearing Too Many Trends at Once

It is an easy trap to fall into, wearing too many trends at once. We all get excited about the latest trends, and certainly want to try them out! Try wearing just one trend that looks good on you! You always have tomorrow to try the next trend. An easy fix would be to wear a romper that leaves you with only one choice..which one to wear! Get this one at Wet Seal!



Wearing Trends that Don't Flatter You

While trends are great, they are certainly not one size fits all. We may all love the high waisted short trend, but they may not flatter every one of us. Opt for a trend that makes you feel your best, and makes the trend even better because you are wearing it!



Buying the Same Size at Every Store

Different stores have different styles. It is as simple as that. Don't be afraid of trying on a different size if the dress at Forever 21 just isn't fitting you like your other favorite brands do! Often times we get so locked into "our size" that we miss the opportunity to look our absolute best in a must-have outfit! Choose clothing that flatters your body and don't get fixed on what size that is!



Over Accessorizing Your Outfit

Wearing too many accessories can weigh down your outfit, and certainly steal the spotlight from the cute outfit you put together. Stick with only one statement piece and let it shine! We love the way this Wet Seal maxi dress is paired with a cute hat and simple jewelry!



Outfit Ideas for Your Summer Outings!

July 6, 2015 / 0 Comments / In Fashion / by fashion team

Summer is the perfect time to make fun plans for outings! Whether you are heading to a concert or the beach, here are a few outfit ideas for your summer festivities!

Music Festival Outfit

Are you heading out to a music festival this summer? Here are a few of the essentials for your fun weekend! Get our Heart Backstage Fringe Top at Hot Topic and show your favorite artist what a dedicated fan you are!



Beach Day Outfit

Summer means endless beach days. We compiled everything you need to have a perfect day at the beach! Get our Paisley Print Tasseled Romper now at Wet Seal!



Girls Day Out

Planning a fun day out with your closest girlfriends? Whether you are going out shopping or simply getting drinks, these are some of the must haves for girls day out. We love how our Moon Graphic High-Slit Tank from Forever 21 is styled here!



Outdoor Summer Party

Summer is the perfect time to get together with old and new friends alike! For your outdoor summer party, pair this cute slip with your favorite wedges for a great look! This slip is available at Wet Seal now!



Trending: Two Piece Dresses

July 13, 2015 / 0 Comments / In Fashion / by fashion team

Want to know what is hot this summer? Two piece dresses. This popular trend happening now is a fun way to mix up your wardrobe and try something other than the usual cut off shorts and tank top! Here are a few two piece dresses that we are in love with!

This cute tropical two piece from our line speaks to our summer desires! The bright colors of this dress will definitely pop against your summer tan.



We love this two piece dress from ASOS! The nontypical cut out on this top makes it both sleek and edgy!



This neoprene dress is a flirty way to get on board with the two piece trend. Get it at Nasty Gal!

