



Investigating Marketing Strategies

Case Study Glossier

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<p>Abstract:</p> <p>This thesis aims to explore digital marketing strategies of a beauty brand Glossier, to gain a clear understanding of their marketing activity and connect that to gaining brand trust. Therefore, the research question is as stated: “What digital marketing strategies can make your customers trust your brand more?” The thesis was written in a form of a case study, and the material for the research was collected through conducting a secondary literature review. The material of interest were online articles on Glossier marketing strategies, and interviews with the founder – Emily Weiss. The case study was limited only to Glossier and the digital marketing strategies they used to build brand trust. As a result, having reviewed 13 articles, written within the last 5 years, (published no later than 2015) The author was able to generate a pattern of digital marketing strategies repeatedly mentioned and discussed. They are: Creating a unique brand identity, Involving customers in product creation, Social listening and customer engagement, Customer experience management for building brand loyalty and finally, Instagram marketing. It was found from the research conducted, that Glossier is a customer-centric brand, that has a unique marketing strategy, through which they engage with their customers regularly, involving them in product creation, making them brand ambassadors, asking for their opinion and social listening through several social media channels, mainly, but not limited to Instagram. As a result, they have built strong relationships with their customers, who trust Glossier to create quality products.</p>	
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1 INTRODUCTION

There is a phenomenon digital marketing being on the rise in the 21st century – the brands that haven’t kept up with the fast pace of development in this segment of brand development have mostly become irrelevant. In the digital age, the best way to engage with your customer base is through digital marketing, and the beauty industry is no exception.

Recent estimations show that the beauty industry (personal care and hygiene products, cosmetics etc.) is worth about \$97.3 billion. This growth supposed to be facilitated by the ‘selfie’ generation, since consumers are nowadays looking to visual social media platforms like Instagram for inspiration. With the digital age trends, beauty brands are abstaining from traditional advertising and switching to digital marketing to attract the attention of customers (Gilliand, 2018).

What’s exciting about digital marketing is that nowadays, brands and customers have direct communication, which allows the brands to get feedback from the customers and enables the customers to ask brands questions. This thesis will explore the ways in which Glossier has used this direct access to its customer base to its advantage, in product creation and following up on the product performance, as well as creating a platform where customers are accepted regardless of their age, skin problems and overall appearance. Instead of creating products and then basing their marketing strategy on an aim to sell them, Glossier interviewed thousands of women to find out what products they want and need. This resulted in customers feeling heard and seen, they felt like they contributed to the creation of this certain product that they bought. This made them one of the most talked-about brands in the beauty industry, enhancing natural beauty with products that allegedly suit everyone. Little research examines this particular brand’s approach to digital marketing and its usage of Instagram to build brand trust, as well as the involvement

of customers into product creation. Thus, additional research, examining Glossier's unique digital marketing strategies is needed.

1.1 Brand background

Glossier was born out of “In the Gloss” – a blog that Emily Weiss, the founder, started back in 2010. Glossier is described as a ‘content-first’ company, having the content manifesting itself mainly on social media. Glossier’s Instagram channel, is at the heart of their content strategy. So much, that it’s integrated on their main website. In her interview with Financial Times, Emily stated that she came up with of the idea for the brand because of the engagement of Into the Gloss. Glossier has a wide range of beauty products – makeup and skincare. They are known for being simple, but effective, with good-quality formulas that are believed to be worth their higher-end prices.

According to Gilliland (2018), Glossier is able to generate a huge amount of online engagement for a brand with less than 30 products. Their posts range from sneak peeks of new releases to influencer content, however, Glossier dedicates a big portion of its content and activity to User Generated Content – re-posting photos and posts made by customers and turning customer feedback into content for its social media channels.

1.2 Problem statement and research question

Glossier implements unique digital marketing strategies – they have formed a unique relationship with their customers through social media, maintaining direct contact and involving their customer base in the creation and marketing of their products. Therefore it is interesting to explore their approach to digital marketing and building brand trust in new ways.

The main research question is:

What digital marketing strategies can make customers trust your brand more?

1.3 Aim and limitations

The aim of this thesis is to explain how the digital marketing strategies that Glossier implemented have influenced their brand perception. This information can be found by conducting an extensive literature review, using articles on Glossier and interviews with Emily Weiss available online and academic literature on brand building and digital marketing.

This research was limited only to Glossier and the digital marketing strategies they used to build brand trust.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the theoretical framework section, the author explores aspects of digital marketing, and social media marketing strategies as concepts, and in the beauty industry. This section will lay the ground knowledge for the case study as a whole.

2.1 Digital marketing

As Kotler (2012) defined marketing as: “An administrative and social process through which individuals and groups obtain what they need and desire by the generation, offering and exchange of valuable products with their equals”. Barone (2019) states, that digital marketing is the use of platforms like social media and search engines and other platforms on the internet, to attract customers. Numerous marketing experts consider digital marketing to be a completely new segment calling for to reconsidering customer approaches and understanding how customers act on digital platforms versus traditional marketing.

Narayana (2019) also wrote that the internet, new communication technologies and social media are major change catalysts in marketing. Unlike with traditional marketing the company cannot control what is being said about its brand. It is the consumers and their peer-to-peer communication that is influencing brands images and perceptions. No company is able to deceive customers anymore, since it will only result with being exposed on the Internet. Kotler (2016, p.14) also explained that marketers need to

embrace the shift to a more inclusive social business landscape. Social media eliminates geographic and demographic barriers, enabling people to connect and communicate.

2.2 The beauty industry

Today, consumers around the world spend billions a year on fragrances, cosmetics, and toiletries. The beauty industry's shift from humble moral nuisance to a global brand-driven powerhouse is one of the more interesting stories in modern business history. The origins of beauty products lie primarily in local knowledge of the scents and healing properties of plants, flowers, and herbs, uses of which were bound by ancient religious and cultural beliefs. Yet somehow this delicate flora became the foundation of a global industry made strong by a century of virtually uninterrupted growth that not even economic downfalls and world wars have been able to stop. (Jones, 2010, p.1)

The beauty industry includes makeup, perfume, skin and hair care product sales. According to Yau (2020), today's beauty industry landscape is much different than it was 10 years ago. The growth of B2C beauty brands, enabled by social media channels, email marketing and shop\marketplace apps, has let those brands bypass the big beauty corporations, that have been around for decades. Biron (2020) also wrote that the beauty industry is now growing faster than ever before: in the last few years, many cosmetic companies and beauty brands have started abstaining from traditional advertising completely, in favor of digital marketing.

2.3 Branding

Thomas (2018) wrote that branding is the marketing method of a brand that consists of developing a name, a logo design, a brand message, defining a product and a strategy of differentiating it from other products on the market. According to Kahn (2013, p.18), every brand, strong or weak, has a set of associations stored in a customer's long-term memory. Stronger brands have better-developed structures of customer knowledge than weaker ones.

Kotler (2016, p.109) stated that marketers need to adapt to the new reality and build brands that behave like humans. Brands that are approachable and likable, but also vulnerable. They should become authentic and honest, admit their flaws, and stop trying

to seem perfect. To be driven by core values, human-centric brands treat customers as friends, becoming an integral part of their lifestyle. Human-centric marketing is the key to building brand attraction in the digital era as brands that managed to humanize themselves will be more differentiated. The process starts by unlocking customers' deepest anxieties and desires. Kahn (2013, p.31) also affirmed that people often talk about a brand as a modern patent – which suggests that there is something unique about it that cannot be replicated. Creating a unique position is one of the most crucial tasks in building a strong global brand. Disruptive positioning provides clear differentiation between those brands and competition.

2.4 Customer loyalty and CEM

Srivastava and Rai (2018 p.207) referred to customer loyalty as the “holy grail” of marketing and implying that it has long been regarded as a business question of immense importance. The seemingly intangible, yet commercial merits of customer loyalty have placed it at a significant strategic position in almost every organization that faces a business environment characterized by hyper-competitive pressures due to supply substantially surpassing demand, loosening of customer bonds and a higher probability of corporate failures.

According to Shaw and Hamilton (2016), customer loyalty is the result of physical attribute-based satisfaction, which includes the product or services and perceived value of an experience, created by the brand and consistently positive, repeated emotional experiences. Kotler (2016, p.59) affirmed that just one moment of unexpected delight from a brand is all it takes to transform a customer into the brand's loyal advocate. To be able to do so, companies should map the customer path to purchase, understand customer touchpoints across the path, and intervene in select touchpoints that matter. They should focus their efforts – intensifying communications, strengthening channel presence, and improving customer interface – to improve those critical touchpoints as well as to introduce strong differentiation. Kahn (2013, p.24) wrote that customer relationship management strategies that result in continuous, relevant, and personalized communications between the brand and the customer improve customer retention and profitability, build loyalty and increase the share of wallet. Shen and Bissel (2013, p. 629)

state that the ultimate goal of creating and developing branding strategies is to enhance customers' brand loyalty.

Customer loyalty also leads to internal customer satisfaction and thus enables employees to have a more reliable work environment. In this way, the motivation of employees increases their belief in their business improves. As loyal customers often tend to share with a business their positive and negative experiences, such a company becomes able to position their future production processes more accurately. (Uyar, 2018, p.144–145)

Loyalty, in its most basic sense, leads to customer retention, repurchase, and a long-term commitment. Customer loyalty is the total of a customer's satisfaction and their emotional attachment to the company or the brand. Both of these components are largely determined by the way a company sees its customers and the sincerity with which it serves them. While delivering satisfactory service is vital to retain customers, creating an emotional attachment with them is equally important to lower the risk of defection, negative word of mouth, reducing customer stay, and losing customer relationships. A high degree of customer satisfaction, coupled with the customer's emotional attachment, form an enduring association between the company and its customers, which transforms into a loyal relationship characterised by preference, patronage and premium, as Srivastava and Rai (2018 p.66) explained in their article on mechanics of engendering customer loyalty.

Morgan (2020) described customer experience management (CEM) as a practice of ensuring that the voice of the customer is crucial in the company strategy, and that the customer is considered and discussed at boardroom level, not only by the customer-facing departments and staff; a move toward becoming customer-centric. According to Homburg, Jozić & Kuehnl, (2017) even though research continues to debate the future of the marketing concept, practitioners have taken the lead, calling customer experience management (CEM) one of the most promising marketing approaches in consumer industries. Patterson (2020) stated that consumers want customized products and being able to contribute to the brand-related dialogues adds value to them through personally-tailored experiences.

2.5 Creating value beyond product

Jorgenson (2015) wrote that any business begins with value creation. It is the purpose of the business institution: to create and value in an efficient way that will generate profit. Spacey (2017) stated that value creation is any activity that creates outputs that are more valuable than its inputs - this is the ground work of efficiency and productivity. Hillstrom (2020), also wrote that value creation is the main goal of any business entity. Creating value for a customer base helps selling products and/or services, creating value for shareholders at the same time, in the form of increases in stock price, ensures the future availability of investment capital to fund operations. According to Hughes (2013), nowadays, the value of products and services is based on creativity — the innovative ways that are possible because of new materials, technologies, and processes. Value creation in the past was a function of economies of industrial-scale: mass production and the high efficiency of repetitive tasks. In the future, value creation will be based on economies of creativity. The high value of bringing a new product or service improvement to market; mass customization; the ability to find a solution to an arisen customer problem; or, the new and improved ways of selling and delivering of products and services to customers.

However, Patterson (2020) explained that having the best product in your market segment is not enough to keep a brand alive: The personalized interactions with people representing the brand is what consumers keep coming back for. A brand's vitality can solely depend on its ability to create this sense of intimacy at scale. Brands, which will facilitate conversations with consumers, make sure that customers feel their impact on a brand's narrative as a whole. Those who can make shopping an experience will create profitable friendships. She noted that one can create value beyond products using social and digital channels to create dialogue. This will evidently uncover how to empower customers to express themselves and feel heard by the brand community, besides better catering to their needs by interacting with them.

2.6 Social media marketing

Kaplan (2015) defined social media as a group of applications based on the internet, that are built on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and allow User Generated Content to be created and exchanged.. Habibi, M. R., Laroche, M. & Richard, M. (2014) opined that social media can offer a sufficient interaction context for a brand's

followers. It can also enable them to build and develop relationships with the various brand elements. Social media allows fast and easy communication with other customers and marketers, that way they share their thoughts on a certain product and/or brand. Therefore, these relationships will create brand trust. According to Christine (2019), social media is more than just creating and maintaining engagement or following trends with hashtags. It is now facilitating brand loyalty and product focus. Within their networks, consumers have now taken over a bigger chunk of conversations about brands online. As a result, they began trusting each other's opinions and reviews more than ads. The beauty sector has understood this new reality a long time ago. They are ahead of the curve across different social media platforms, especially when it comes to social media marketing implementations. Harper (2020) has made a point that as social media becomes more and more present in daily life, it's crucial for marketers to understand how millennial users interact across social media platforms and to customize tailored messages that work with the default rules of each of those platforms.

2.7 Brand trust

Kahn (2013, p.21,23) wrote that in addition to reacting emotionally to brands, consumers typically need to trust a brand to buy one of its products. Relationships with brands go well beyond purchase or repurchase transactions. From the customer's point of view, the pre-consumption, and post-consumption occasions matter as well. Relationships with brands, just like personal relationships, are built over time through a series of positive experiences. Here, more is not necessarily better, but what counts as meaningful interactions. According to Crosby and Zak (2015, p.22), the important role of trust in building strong customer relationships has been widely discussed in marketing since the early 1990s. There are many working definitions of trust, but most revolve around the confident expectation of honest dealings, reliability, promise-keeping, and not being taken advantage of when vulnerable. Paper-and-pencil measures of trust indicate an emotional connection to the other party, but trust also can have a rational component.

Kahn (2013, p.5) explained that brands need to build trust and reliability while generating strong loyalty. In today's connected world, customers find out about products not only from the companies that produce them but from other customers as well. Thus, brands

need to create strong emotional customer-focused bonds that motivate consumers to build relationships with them and to form social communities around them. Profitability comes from premium or value-pricing strategies, long-term relationships with the customer, and cross-selling. Crosby and Zak (2015, p.23) also concluded that the key principle in building brand trust for marketers is to create well-constructed, compelling narratives that emphasize people's struggles that the brand or company was able to help resolve.

2.8 Digital marketing strategies of beauty brands

2.8.1 Digitalization of the beauty industry

Saladich, (2019), affirmed that the beauty industry has shown to be leading retail innovation. This innovation comes from the perspective of digital marketing, not only from the scientific side of product creation and manufacturing. Beauty brands have generated strategies to attract and retain customers in the fast-paced digital environment. Belayole (2019), explained that beauty brands have also taken the lead with using Augmented Reality (AR) for marketing purposes and with it disrupting traditional marketing models and objectives. A growing number of brands and retailers in the beauty sector are taking the advantage of the power of data and technology to offer consumers a level of product personalization never seen before. They can now manufacture products according to consumers' skin types and individual needs. Saladich, (2019) also opined that some brands are embracing AR with their customers, when talking about the digitalisation of the beauty industry. The aim here is to mimic the process of trying on makeup using technological advancements. Smashbox was the pioneer of using eye-tracking technology. When the consumer was 'trying on' makeup, they were able identify eye movement patterns that would determine whether or not the consumer was enjoying the product. Since the implementation of the eye-tracking technology, their conversions have increased in 27%.

According to Beauloye (2019), another thing the beauty industry is embracing is the Internet of Things. They have definitely taken that inspiration from the digitally native millennials. Shiseido released an IoT skincare system that tracks mood, weather, environment, and biological changes to come up with specific serums and moisturizers that suit the present condition of the skin. Skincare company Proven uses machine

learning algorithms to create products that match crowdsourced learnings from its database of AI-distilled testimonials to what an individual customer shares about their needs. After filling out a short questionnaire on Proven's website (questions about things like their age, ethnicity, skin type, and their skincare priorities), customers receive custom products they can buy.

Patterson (2020) wrote about apps like L'Oréal's MakeupGenius App - virtual product testing with facial and object recognition enabled. She also explained the MAC Cosmetics The Call List campaign: MAC senior artist John Stapleton taught hundreds of MAC Pro subscribers a masterclass on makeup artistry for aging skin on live. Participants followed a link MAC sent them to their email, signed up for the masterclass, and when the event started, they received a video call to join the live translation. Users could tap buttons on the screen to virtually raise their hands if they had a question and took screenshots of the live to share on their social media. Being able to ask questions personally from their senior artist allowed for an illusion of being close to MAC.

2.8.2 Influencer marketing

Christine (2019) explained: the beauty industry was one of the first to see the real potential of influencer marketing. It was noticeable how the trends shifted and how consumers stopped shopping for beauty products the way they once did. With this, traditional advertising techniques lost their effectiveness. Today's consumer seeks authenticity and inclusivity. Influencers have exactly what brands need - a well-curated of follower base trusts their opinion like that of a close friend. To generate more sales, beauty brands have been collaborating with influencers to reach their target audience. Saladich (2019) also affirmed that influencers are playing the key part within the beauty industry now more than in any other segment of retail. Seeing the item they potentially wanted being connected to 'real people', can lead to a decision to purchase from the customers.

Christine (2019) wrote that as an effect of the exposure to so much branded content, consumers have grown apathetic towards ads. However, if the content is created by another consumer, who they like as a person, and whom they have been following on social media for a while, they are more likely to interact with it. UGC is all about consumers exchanging their authentic opinions, views, or feelings about a specific brand or the products that brand sells, which is so much more valuable to a potential future

buyer. In the beauty segment of the internet, makeup reviews and tutorials are the predominant types of UGC.

The following examples explained by Gilliland (2018) will showcase digital marketing strategies of other widely known beauty brands:

1. Benefit's 'Browmobile' competition

Even though enhancing the look of one's eyebrows is just one step in a make-up routine – eyebrow products take up a big part of the make up industry. According to NPD, back in 2016, even before having released their full range of products, Benefit Cosmetics took up a 50% share of the £20 million eyebrow product market.

The primary reason behind this domination of the brow product market shares is Benefit Cosmetics' marketing activity, which featured the 'Browmobile' campaign (2017). Combining digital marketing with experiential elements, it consisted of an online competition giving their customers a chance to win a service from the "browmobile" car, packed with Benefit's products and a few eyebrow modelling professionals. (figure 1.) The winners would be able to get a gift box of the brand's products, along with a personalized brow tutorial and treatments.

As a result of the campaign's success, the competition page had generated roughly 61,000 unique visitors. This also ensured a lot of social media engagement.



Figure 1. Twitter.com, @betefitcosmeticsuk mentions, 2017

2. Lancôme's '40 shades'

Lancôme created a series of four videos featuring 40 inspirational women including director Gurinder Chadha and Olympic cyclist Laura Kenny, as a way to celebrate the final launch of new shades for its best-selling foundation, which now includes 40 colors. (figure 2.) The campaign was able to tap into the diversity of its target audience very cleverly and celebrate it, which received very positive responses.

According to The Brooklyn Brothers (2017), the campaign launched across Lancôme's social channels, their PR list and a microsite specifically built for the campaign. Each of the 40 women also posted the campaign bits on their personal social media profiles with campaign hashtag; #myshademypower, to maximize engagement and start word-of-mouth media. Additionally, in order to support the videos and further promote product discussions by customers, Lancôme created a set of digital banners, featuring global ambassadors – Oscar-winning actress Lupita Nyong'o, and Victoria's Secret model, Taylor Hill.

DISCOVER THE PERSONAL STORIES OF OUR 40 WOMEN



LAURA'S STORY

Olympic cyclist Laura Kenny (Shade 010) won the hearts of the British public at the London 2012 Olympic games, where at the age of 20 she won the first of her FOUR olympic gold medals.

Hear what makes her feel powerful.

[SHOP THE FOUNDATION](#)

GURINDER'S STORY

The first Asian woman to make a feature film in Britain, Gurinder Chadha (Shade 038) is director, writer, and producer. Her work includes Bend It Like Beckham, Bride and Prejudice, and Viceroy's House. Hear her story in her own words.

[SHOP THE FOUNDATION](#)



Figure 2. Lancôme 40 shades campaign page. <https://www.lancome.co.uk/find-your-shade-find-your-power/>.

3. Fenty Beauty digital launch

Fenty Beauty has seriously disrupted the beauty industry, since no other brand has had a bigger impact in the last couple of years. Rihanna's launched her company back in 2017 with a 100% digital campaign. Fenty based their core values on the 'beauty for all' concept, setting the tone for its inclusive, and diverse marketing by launching its foundation in 40 different shades.

Centered around Instagram, featuring influencer content, the launch combined reviews and opinions of beauty professionals, influencers, models, Rihanna's fans – Fenty's unique Instagram strategy attracted 1.4m followers within only four days. (figure 3.)



Figure 3. Instagram @fentybeauty profile

3 METHODOLOGY

The aim of this section is to set out the methodological approach, undertaken to tell the story of Glossier and discover the digital marketing strategies implemented by the brand. This section will be guided by the research aim and the chosen methodological approach. This section will also explain how the data for the research method indicated below was collected in order to conduct the said study.

3.1 Research method - Case study

According to Heale, Twycross, (2018), a case study is a research methodology, usually used in social and life sciences. There is no single concrete definition of case study

research. Although, simply put: “A case study can be defined as an intensive study about a person, a group of people or a unit, which is aimed to generalize over several units”.

Conducting an explanatory case study seemed like the most suitable approach to conducting this research, since there was a specific brand in question, and the phenomenon of its success, achieved by using specific digital marketing techniques, that the author wanted to explore. An explanatory approach was taken due to the author having no control over the occurrence of the events in research, but rather striving to explain the “why” and the “how” regarding the case brand. This case study was conducted after a careful review of literature on qualitative research and case studies, to help with the structure and guide the author in the right direction. Articles written by journalists and authors knowledgeable about the beauty industry were collected to gain insight into digital marketing strategies implemented by several well-known beauty brands. The author then reviewed the articles about Glossier, transcribed interviews with Emily Weiss, published by respected big magazines, and drew conclusions from the literature review as a whole. This allowed to see how what the case brand has done is unique in terms of marketing and building brand trust.

In this case study, the limitations were an excessive amount of data, even though most of it was peer-reviewed articles. Organizing this data and thinking through the integration strategies, not steering away from the aim of the research has been an undeniable challenge.

3.2 Data collection and analysis

The chosen data collection qualitative methodology is a case study, including a literature review. According to Onwuegbuzie and Frels (2016), as a data collection tool, the literature review involves activities such as identifying, recording, understanding, meaning-making and transmitting the information. The literature review process is actualized through data collection.

The main methods for collecting data that the author has used were keywords, to optimize database search in Arcada Finna, Google Scholar, and Google search. The main criteria for data source choice were academic credibility, relevance, magazine reputation, and how old the data was (only sources no older than 10 years were used). The author has

also picked out data from transcribed interviews with the founder of Glossier, Emily Weiss, for the sake of keeping the accuracy of the information.

4 CASE STUDY

This explanatory case study studied digital marketing strategies that the case brand Glossier has implemented to build brand trust and strong customer relationships. Additionally, the author has conducted a literature review to gain insight into the phenomenon of the said brands unique social media presence. Case brand's usage of digital marketing, as a form of creation of a unique brand identity, their usage of social media channels to connect with their customers and involve them into product creation was examined described with the results of secondary research findings.

4.1 Brand introduction

Glossier is a beauty brand founded in 2010 by Emily Weiss, which started as a beauty blog. In her interview with Financial Times, Emily stated that she thought of the idea for the brand because of the engagement her blog had. Glossier has a wide range of beauty products – makeup and skincare. They are known for being simple, but effective, with good-quality formulas that are believed to be worth their higher-end prices. This paper will investigate the unique digital marketing strategies that the brand in question has implemented via literature review, having compared numerous resources of information.

Over the years, Glossier became known for an unusual approach to product innovation – they would interview women asking for what they are looking for in certain beauty products. Scent or no scent? Is it tacky? Is it smooth? Sticky? Long-lasting or moisturizing, does it make your skin glow or is it matte? Based on these answers, Glossier was able to create products that women wanted and made them feel heard and engaged in the process. A lot of the orders that Glossier is getting are from women who feel like they've contributed to the making of the products they're buying and will be using. Glossier has made it their mission to make people feel good and excited about the purchasing experience, to be a part of something.

According to Danzinger (2018) with close to three million followers, Glossier has been named a top beauty brand by Allure, Teen Vogue, Glamour, Nylon, Women's Wear Daily and Cosmopolitan. Glossier has also received a WWD Beauty Inc. Digital Innovator of the Year award in 2015, was named to LinkedIn Top Startups of 2018 list, recognized by Fast Company as one of its Most Innovative Companies of 2017 and called out as one of Inc.'s Company of the Year 2017.

According to Nicholson (2019), Glossier's aesthetic is soft and radiant, they aim for their products to make the customers's skin look dewy and healthy, all the products that impose color like tints, blush, lip products etc. are light and sheer, which makes the makeup look seamless and natural. This correlates with the brand message of embracing natural beauty with little intervention.

“How beauty can start conversations, how beauty can break down walls, and how beauty is something that every single person everywhere in the world deals with. It's really foundational to who you are and how you relate.” – Emily Weiss, 2019

4.2 Glossier brand creation

Elisson (2019) called the story of Glossier's creation one of the most compelling business stories in recent years. The 34-year-old entrepreneur Emily Weiss started a beauty blog, Into the Gloss, simultaneously working as a fashion assistant at US Vogue in 2010. Four years later, she launched Glossier, a beauty company focusing on millennial-friendly products that showcased natural, healthy skin on a diverse range of faces. One of its best-selling Boy Brow sticks (£14) sold every 32 seconds worldwide last year. In 2018, the company surpassed \$100m in annual revenues, acquired a million new customers, and now employs more than 200 people across three offices. This year Glossier raised \$100m in Series D funding led by Sequoia Capital, taking the company's total funding to \$186m and giving it a \$1.2bn valuation. About 50,000 visitors pass through its New York store each month, and the brand has 2.8 m Instagram followers. Before founding Glossier, Weiss had zero business training.

Nicholson (2019) wrote that Weiss started “Into the Gloss”, the blog that served as an inspiration for Glossier, when she was working as an assistant to Elissa Santisi, the then style director at US Vogue. On Into the Gloss, Weiss had a column in the blog, where asked women about their beauty routines. She used the insights from hundreds of interviews to build up an idea of what women might want from a brand that sells beauty products. Makeup sales have then flatlined in the US, while skincare sales have risen. Glossier, took the right place at the right time, with its early and pioneering focus on skincare and its positive affirmations, embracing natural beauty; there is a school of thought, that, instead of investing in makeup to cover up skin imperfections, one should invest in skincare, so that by having good skin and a healthy appetite naturally, the makeup use would be brought down to a minimum.

Emily Weiss was named “one of her generation’s great disruptors” by Times Magazine. When she gave a speech, she spoke on how the beauty industry had “historically made people, mostly women, feel they aren’t enough”, and spoke brightly of today’s “courageous, resilient, unflappable” teenage girls. “To girls everywhere, may you know how much power you have to change the world,” she said, finishing her speech to great applause. (Elisson, 2019)

Emily Weiss gave an interview to Financial Times in 2019, where she explained the thought behind Glossier :

“One of the insights that led to the creation of Glossier was actually my experience listening to women as I was interviewing them for the blog years ago telling me how much they loved their Lancôme mascara or how much they really loved their XYZ moisturizer. But reading between the lines, I didn’t hear them saying that they loved these brands. I heard them say that they loved the products. Back in 2013, when I was first thinking about Glossier, I thought: “Man, I wish there was a beauty brand whose sweatshirt you wanted to wear.” It really speaks to this notion of winning hearts. A company like Glossier creates this, “I want to wear this brand’s sweatshirt”, kind of mindset. So — to your point — how many brands’ sweatshirts are you going to wear? How many brands are actually representing the values that you align with? And I do think that our success to date has been about that value alignment.

I think in 2019 brands are increasingly like people. What are your values? What do you stand for? What are you speaking up on? What are you staying quiet about? Glossier came out with a very simple proposition and very direct and utilitarian products. It said, “hey, everybody, we’re interested in you and your story and your opinions and your routines, and these are just tools in your toolbox to activate a quite passive beauty community.” The fact that there are now millions of people, both in the US and around the world, beating to this drum says something about the shift in the democratization of beauty.”

Lammertink (2019) noted that from the very beginning Glossier has positioned itself as a customer-centric brand, as well as direct-to-customer, seeing as they own their entire sales funnel. Glossier continues to have incredible power because of this. They abstained from channel partners, resellers, and selling through department stores altogether. Unlike the bigger and older beauty brands, who have been relying on their partnerships with big retailers, Glossier only sells their products through channels that they own and have full control over.

4.3 Literature review

Since Glossier is a relatively young beauty brand, and the case study focused on digital marketing, most of the material for the literature review are web articles. These particular articles were chosen because of their relevancy to the research, as they talk about the marketing of the brand in question, explore their digital marketing strategies, explain the motivation behind them and give a great understanding of the “why” and the “how” of Glossier’s strategies. They have also been picked out because of their relevancy, based on the year they were written (no older than 5 years).

Name	Source	Author	Year	Relevant findings
“Inside Glossier, The Beauty Startup That Reached Cult Status By Selling Less.”	Buzzfeed News	Tiku, N.	2016	- Glossier’s innovation was using the internet’s full capacity at every step: using the social media tools to turn blog readers into followers and followers into brand ambassadors, unpaid product promoters, something

				like a loyal community, that buys their products at the same time.
“Glossier Founder Emily Weiss: ‘Beauty Has Very Little To Do With Looks’.”	The Guardian	Nicholson, R.	2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understanding people and especially women is the key to Emily Weiss’s vision. - “Glossier came up with its products by asking women what they wanted, rather than telling women what they needed.”
“The Glossier Marketing Machine: How Emily Weiss Built A \$100 Million Business.”	Jumper Media	Hart, K.	2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Glossier got customers to connect with the brand by association with other everyday objects. - They used slack to listen to their top customers. - Glossier is authentic in all aspects of the brand <p>Instagram insights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They used their products as their content. - Encouraged customers to use branded hashtags for a chance at getting featured on their Instagram profile - Leveraged UGC of celebrities as well as regular people.
“Glossier’s Emily Weiss: ‘We’re Creating The Estée Lauder Of The Future’.”	Financial Times	Ellison, J.	2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Full transcribed interview with Emily Weiss on Glossier’s strategies for growth.
“Top 5 Digital marketing trends in the beauty industry.”	Verb Brands	Saladich, C.	2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Glossier’s product management strategy involves tracking customer data across several social media

				<p>platforms in order to turn its readers into followers and then customers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building a sense of community with their target audience helped achieve higher levels of loyalty, and therefore improved conversion rates.
<p>“This Beauty Startup Has Become So Popular That It Has 10,000 People On A Waitlist For Lipstick.”</p>	<p>Business Insider</p>	<p>Bruner, R.</p>	<p>2016</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Glossier was described as "two-way conversation,". - the Glossier product team depends on the user community, which guides them in the product creation process. - Glossier's marketing has been motivated by UGC.
<p>“5 Reasons That Glossier Is So Successful.”</p>	<p>Forbes</p>	<p>Danziger, P.</p>	<p>2018</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Glossier’s strategy is customer-centric. - Their main driver of growth is their engaging content. - A huge asset is their close relationship with their customers, e.g. direct customer conversations. - Glossier puts the specific consumer problem first, thus simplifying the sales and marketing process by satisfying those current needs one by one. That is how they co-create their products with customers.
<p>“Glossier Marketing Decoded: How To Instagram Like</p>	<p>Skedsocial</p>	<p>Boogaard, K.</p>	<p>2018</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Glossier marketing is all about authenticity. - They take engagement to a new level

Glossier, Social Media Strategy.”				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They make the most out of hashtags - A value they’ve carried over into their social media strategy is being highly personal
“Glossier’s Digital Marketing Strategies Are Disrupting The Beauty Industry.”	Cercone Brown Company	Brown, C.	2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An active digital strategy and presence are crucial for beauty brands, especially for connecting with millennial target audience. Glossier has found the perfect formula for creating brand trust with their customers.
“Treating Regular People Like Influencers Is The Key To Glossier’s Success.”	Vox	Del Valle, G.	2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Everything about Glossier is specifically made to be photographed and posted on social media. - Many Glossier customers play a role in marketing the brand.
“Glossier - How To Build A Makeup Empire.”	Octoly	Anonymous	2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Glossier’s marketing strategy is based on social networks, influencer marketing and customer data, which all result in a unique experience for its clients.
“Why Glossier Embodies The Future Of Shopping And B2C Marketing.”	Medium	Lammertink, I.	2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1\3 of the company is tech. Glossier has mastered social listening at scale, engagement at scale, and they build smart media algorithms. - They understand that today’s generation wants their opinion to be considered, seen

				and involved in the products they buy.
“Owning Customer Relationships: Glossier Case Study.”	TransparencyDigital	Anonymous		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Glossier is disrupting the beauty industry by basing its entire marketing strategy around customer relationship management and brand trust. - Glossier’s customers have been made to feel like they are co-creators of the brand. - Glossier’s slack channel allows them to use their customer feedback for research and product development purposes.

4.4 Glossier’s digital marketing strategies

“While we now consider Into The Gloss as our biggest social platform and part of our core community, we treat our readers and our Glossier customers as two very different entities. However, we know there’s an opportunity to use data to better understand how we can create an optimized reader and customer experience across platforms.”

- Bryan Mahoney, Glossier’s Chief Technology Officer.

Glossier is a great example of a digital beauty brand that disconnected itself from traditional big beauty retailers by embracing unique digital marketing strategies for millennial-aged consumers. (Brown, 2020) Glossier’s successful innovation was utilizing the internet at every step: using the social media management to turn Into the Gloss blog readers into followers and then into brand ambassadors, unpaid product marketers, something like a loyal community, that buys your products at the same time, wrote Tiku (2016). 70% of Glossier’s growth has been facilitated by owned, earned, or organic media

(Lammertink 2019). According to Nicholson (2019), the key to Emily Weiss's vision is the customers and really understanding them on a personal level, which has disrupted the traditional industry sales model and has set a new standard for value creation beyond products. She often talks about the "democratization" of beauty, about how Glossier came up with its products by asking women what they wanted, rather than telling them what they needed. She built brand awareness using word-of-mouth on social media, having people genuinely like what Glossier is about, resulting in sharing that excitement. It gave her supportive, organic following, and a huge community that is loyal to the brand. Glossier focus a lot of resources on understating their customers, their desires, fears, insecurities, and aspirations. Del Valle (2019) stated that Glossier treats customers as both a customer base to be marketed to and the people who do the marketing. And Lammertink (2019) wrote that one of the reasons for Glossier's success is that they understand their target audience, who are millennials. They understand that today's generation wants their opinion to be considered, seen, and involved in the products they buy.

Hart (2019) explained that Glossier's branding also touches on the look of the women who buy their products achieve with them. While diverse in ages (they target millennials, but feature women of all ages), race, and body types, the look is centered around glowing skin and sheer pastel tones—captured and represented on Instagram in the down-to-earth tone they've mastered. Moreover, Glossier's brand message is utterly positive—it celebrates uniqueness, diversity, and being your authentic self.

Brown (2020) An active digital strategy and presence are crucial for beauty brands, especially for connecting with the millennial target audience. Glossier has found the perfect formula for creating brand trust with their customers. These aspects all put together with a strong social media presence and CEM can make an unstoppable brand.

4.4.1 Creating unique brand identity

According to Del Valle (2019), anything Glossier puts out is designed to be photographed and posted online, for example the pink bubble-wrap pouches or the New York and Los Angeles showrooms. The LA showroom has a "canyon" section that is designed to be photographed; and both locations feature mirrors with stickers with positive affirmations, that are perfect for pictures. It's making everything associated with the brand cohesive, and pleasant to create digital content with.

Hart (2019) opined that Glossier is successful primarily because of two things: their branding strategy and social media presence. “Brand is really, really important. It’s kind of everything,” Weiss says. This reflected in the Glossier’s use of its claimed signature washed-out pink. (figure 4.) The color has become directly associated with Glossier and their followers\customers use the hashtag [#glossierpink](#) when they see that color anywhere else. Many people like featuring and tagging Glossier because the products look very aesthetically pleasing. Lammertink (2019) wrote that when one buys products in their store, it comes wrapped in a pink bubble-wrap pouch, mentioned above. No logo even needed, the signature Glossier packaging can be identified by anyone who knows the brand. Like a secret they are let in on, also a part of customer experience. Hart (2019) also noted that the pink bubble-wrap bag became so popular that at some point that Glossier offered them as a separate product. (figure 5.)

Glossier has also released a small limited edition clothing merchandise, called Glossi-Wear (figure 6.), including several clothing pieces with the brand logo. Encouraging customers to not only purchase the product but wear the clothing, promoting the brand further.



Figure 4. [#glossierpink](#) Instagram search results



Figure 5. @glossier Instagram account



Figure 6. www. glossier.com

4.4.2 Involving customers in product creation.

Danzinger (2018) wrote that unlike beauty brands that develop products first, and then figure out the selling process, Glossier identifies the customer need first, after which they manufacture a specific product, which makes the sales and marketing process much more simple. In this way, Glossier co-creates its products with customers. Collecting customer data and feedback is one thing, innovating products based on that feedback is something entirely different (Anonymous, 2020). President and CFO of Glossier, Henry Davis, explained that Glossier involves customers in product creation by asking them what they want in certain beauty products. According to Danzinger (2018) that is how they came out with the Glossier Milky Jelly cleanser: they put out a question asking how their customers washed their face, and the people shared that the routine involved two steps and two different products: makeup remover and face wash. Glossier went ahead and simplified the cleansing by combining both steps, giving one product two functions, something

that a traditional beauty brand would avoid doing, as it would take away the potential sales of two separate products.

Hart (2019) noted that Glossier was launched at the peak of the social media usage around the world and used its social media accounts to listen to what its customers wanted, which gave them an advantage over larger beauty brands, who relied on old traditional advertising methods. Bruner (2016) described Glossier as a "two-way conversation," because the Glossier product team depends on the user community for insight into their needs, which guides them in the product creation process. Glossier even invited about 100 of its top customers to be part of a group Slack channel, where they exchange over 1,100 messages every week, Weiss shared back in 2019.

4.4.3 Social listening and customer engagement

“We don’t build the hype, we build the product, we built the product based on listening.”
– Emily Weiss 2019 for The Guardian

In the same interview for The Guardian, Weiss told Jo Ellison that Glossier takes an Apple-like approach to their product creation. They are not interested in the “fast fashion” beauty product strategy, but instead, they focus on creating high-quality products that are going to live with the customer. She also explained that she doesn’t like to use the word “crowdsourcing”, but that listening and continuing to listen at scale is something Glossier is laser-focused on. Weiss also implied that it is something that any smart brand/company is going to have to do increasingly.

Saladich (2019) noted that Glossier’s product management strategy involves tracking behavioral customer and audience data across several platforms in order to better position its readers to become customers, and vice-versa. Their blog and commenters have also become a vital source of information for product creation. They compiled comments and queries to make sure any new products were developed with this feedback in mind. Lamertink (2019) also noted that 1/3 of Glossier is tech. They’re leverage technology tools to practice social listening at scale, engage at scale, and build smart data discovery algorithms.



Figure 7. @glossier Twitter Account

4.4.4 Customer experience management for building brand loyalty

Danzinger (2018) wrote that Glossier is driven by a fierce and loyal dedication to serving its customers', tailoring the products and the approach to their wants and needs. It all comes from its close and intimate customer relationships.

“What does it take to be the future beauty company? I say it’s putting the customer experience front and center. People often ask me, are you a beauty company? Are you a tech company? Are you a start-up? The answer is yes, yes and yes. But, most importantly, we are an experience company. We create digital experiences, we create physical product experiences, and we create offline experiences.”

– Emily Weiss 2019 for The Guardian

When it comes to the actual buying experience, according to Brown (2020) once a customer has figured out what product they want to buy and have it in their cart, the online check-out experience is fast and easy, almost seamless. People have gotten used to doing everything online, and Glossier, as a digitally native brand, is able to provide the experience that suits its customers.

Apart from product development and quality control teams, Glossier has what they call their *Customer Experience Team (gTeam)*. The gTeam is collecting feedback from their from the customer community around-the-clock, using their social media following and taking responsibility for creating the best, close and honest customer experience. Glossier has made making sure their customers' voices are heard their top priority - this laid the ground for a structure that keeps the customer front and center at all times. (Anonymous, 2020)

4.4.5 Instagram marketing

“We’re using the channel (Instagram) to actually involve the customer in ways she’s never been allowed or invited to become involved [in order] to build an incredibly inclusive movement like a better, more modern brand, which is going to become default.”

- Emily Weiss for BuzzFeedNews, 2016

“Instagram, for us, has been an incredible tool to show a lot of user-generated content,” Weiss told Swisher. “What we’re interested most in is creating this really democratized conversation. What we do a lot of on our channel on Instagram is really celebrate people’s stories. We try to find people who use Boy Brow or [another] Glossier product, but what we really want to do is evangelize that person’s whole routine and all of her discoveries, whether that’s a L’Oréal product or a MAC product.”

Hart (2019) stated that anyone involving Instagram in their marketing strategy knows that if you want your account to gain an organic following, branding is essential. Glossier may not have a correlating, cohesive Instagram feed, but their posts show they’ve got a perfect understanding of what branding is. Glossier has applied some specific strategies to make their profile of the best on Instagram. Boogaard (2018) also noted that the brand sometimes overflows into two other related Instagram accounts: the account for Weiss’ still-popular lifestyle blog, Into the Gloss, and her own personal Instagram account. Hart (2019) explained that Glossier uses their products as their content: In an interview with Eric Liaw at the StrictlyVC event, Weiss said that she sees Glossier as a content company: she thinks of her products as content. The reason for this is that many customers who buy the products, end up photographing them or themselves using them and the result of using

them, then share them on social media. Boogaard (2018) wrote that before any products were even launched on the brand's website, Glossier's Instagram account had gained 13,000 Instagram followers. The brand also posted over 125 Instagram photos prior to the product launch to lay the groundwork for its unique brand identity and aesthetic, as well as create some excitement about the upcoming product launches.

Additionally, Glossier has their own hashtag strategy. Hashtags make it easy for fans to share and find content and also help people differentiate it. According to Hart (2019) Glossier encourages customers to use branded hashtags for a chance at getting featured. The fans realised the Glossier team looks through the posts they tag them in, because they comment and even choose models for the product shoots from the tagged photos. Many users tag #glossier because the products look very aesthetically pleasing, which goes back to a unique brand identity. Boogaard (2018) also wrote that over the years, Glossier has had numerous different hashtags associated with their brand (i.e. #glossier, #itgtopshelfie, #nofilterjustglossier, #boybrow, #cloudpaint, and more). Hashtags enable the brand to use user-generated content on their own Instagram account—that way they always have new posts, while also remaining authentic and further engaging their audience.

Glossier's marketing has been motivated by User Generated Content, which Weiss said does "more than we ever could," as users post on Instagram and hashtag their beauty habits (Bruner, 2016). Glossier leverages UGC of celebrities as well as regular people in the coveted 18-to-35 age bracket. Unofficial brand ambassadors include model Karlie Kloss, who posted a photo wearing Glossier merchandise that gained 27,000 likes, and actress Sofia Coppola who is referred to be an inspiration to the brand. Glossier gets thousands of tagged photos a day, which the team then reviews and looks for "real girl" models (Hart, 2019).

Boogaard (2018) noted that Glossier's social media presence never seems elite or un-touchable—it's raw, real, and down-to-earth. There are shots of bathrooms and showers, natural-looking selfies of diverse subjects, even dog photos. They use a friendly tone of voice in all of their captions and are careful not to become overly-promotional. Their grid seems approachable and relatable—as if you're looking at an Instagram account of a friend, rather than a brand. Hart (2019) wrote that Glossier Instagram page gives followers a sense of community, without it being too official or exclusive, which is pleasant to scroll through, a sort of another customer experience.

“The beauty of Glossier lies in the fact that it’s for everyone.” – Hart, 2019.

Lammertink (2019) explained that Glossier understands that customer engagement is crucial – they have been nurturing this direct connection they have with their customers from the beginning. They are directly reachable through social media platforms, answering to comments and sharing UGC (Figure 8.). Hart (2019) also wrote transparency is also a part of an authentic customer experience in the digital world, and if users post their honest feedback freely, future customers are more likely to trust the brand. UGC ensures that transparency for Glossier.

Hart (2019) noted that Glossier shoots photos on an iPhone rather than a DSLR camera, unlike most major beauty brands. The casual phone camera approach to content creation makes it feel more natural, and relatable, according to Annie Kreighbaum, executive editor of Into the Gloss. Glossier’s photos, look real and raw, in comparison with the photoshopped images are standard in the beauty community. They also sometimes present new products using Boomerang and video, instead of using traditional product shots, so all content has a down-to-earth and approachable feel.

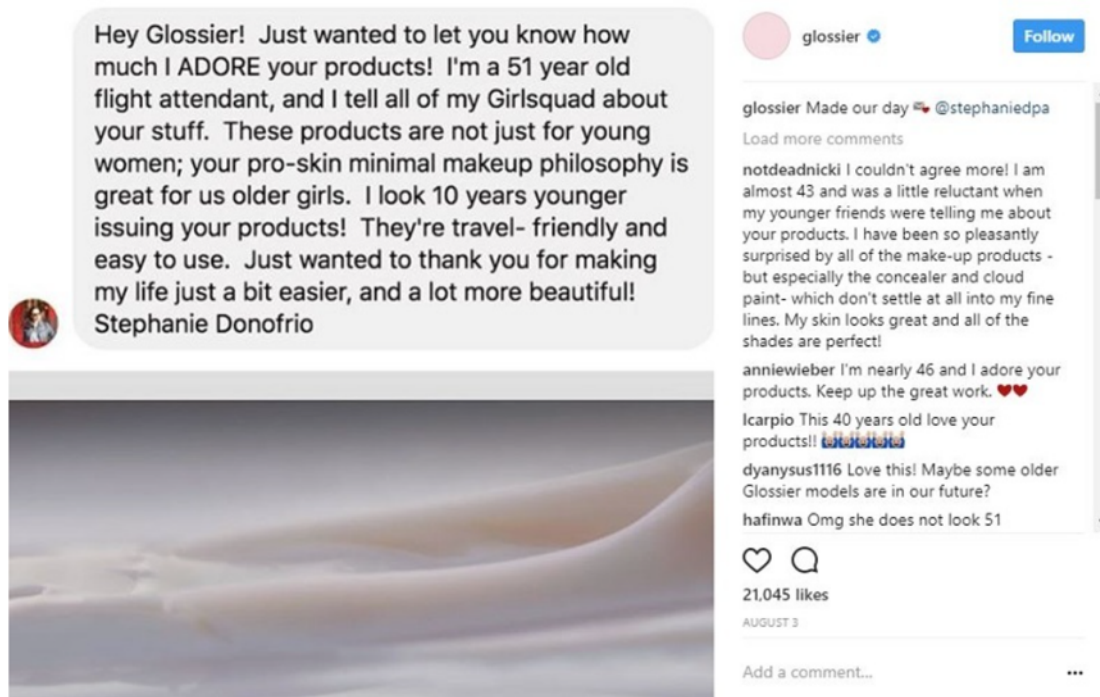


Figure 8. @glossier Instagram account

5 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The author has decided to stop after reviewing 13 articles when the content of the said articles began repeating, therefore she concluded that she was able to find most of the available unique information at that point in time. As a result of the conducted literature review, the author was able to generate a pattern of digital marketing strategies repeatedly mentioned and discussed. They are: Creating unique brand identity, Involving customers in product creation, Social listening and customer engagement, Customer experience management for building brand loyalty, and Instagram marketing.

The main limitation of this research is having a large number of literature resources available on the internet, both search engines and the Arcada library. Having that much information can make it difficult to find the right books or articles, having to question their reliability. The author had to rely on her own judgment, to distinguish the valid sources and their contents from invalid ones. The issue with that is the possibility of losing some important insight into the topics in the numerous articles or not having access to the most recent trends in the digital marketing because they haven't been written about or evaluated because in the digital age no area of business is ever stagnant, new tendencies and trends arise every day, it can be challenging to keep track of them.

5.1 Branding

Kahn 2013 (p 18.) made a statement that strong brands have better-developed customer knowledge structures than weak ones. When a person familiar with Glossier thinks of the brand, they get very clear imagery in their mind. Glossier has managed to make their branding strategy invisible, yet extremely powerful. They have created a truly unique brand identity – they have claimed the washed-out pink color as part their own branded image, and research shows that whenever their customers see the color elsewhere, they associate it directly with Glossier, take a picture and create more digital content, further promoting the brand. The existing hashtag #glossierpink serves as evidence for that.

Glossier logo font is also very distinctive and clear, added they have simplified it by using just the capital "G" on products. The letter looks suggestive and appealing, and again,

creates a direct connection with the brand image. This clarity extends to everything Glossier puts their name onto, it runs through their social media channels, as well as their website. It's cohesive and clean, there is no conflict or inconsistency. The image that they have sustained for themselves correlates with the soft-pink color coordination. As Kahn (2013 p.18) wrote, creating a unique position is one of the most crucial tasks in building a strong global brand.

They make sure the brand message comes across loud and clear – they are for diversity, supporting all people of all races and genders, encouraging them to embrace their natural beauty and come as they are.

5.2 Involving customers in product creation

Because Glossier was created as a result of the engagement of Into The Gloss (Emily Weiss's blog). Therefore, before the brand even launched, it already had an audience. Prior to making any products, Glossier quite literally asked women what products they wanted and what qualities should those products possess. This took the struggle of creating demand and selling strategy out of the equation. Moreover, it laid down the groundwork for building strong customer relationships, because what better way to go about customer engagement, than letting them know that their opinion matters. One more outcome, that plummeted the sales numbers, was the fact that women felt like they contributed to the creation of the products they were buying, tailor-made for them. This mental connection to the product created a strong bond between the Glossier and the customer. They feel like they are co-creators of the brand. Involving customers into product creation makes customers feel like their opinions matter and are valued by the brand. It makes them feel heard. It also creates a feeling of having contributed to something as exciting as the creation of a beauty product, therefore buying it gives satisfaction and a sense of pride for adding something from yourself to that product. It also gives the customers exactly what they have asked for, which, surprisingly, not a lot of brands do. As Patterson (2020) wrote, empower them to express themselves and feel heard by the brand community. How easy is it to sell to customers who are telling you how to improve the products themselves?

5.3 Social listening and customer engagement

Kotler (2016 p.111) defined social listening as the proactive process of monitoring what is being said about a brand on the internet, particularly on social media and online communities. It often involves social media monitoring software to filter massive amounts of unstructured data from social conversations into usable customer intelligence information. And as Patterson (2020) noted one can create value beyond products using social and digital channels to create dialogue. This will in return show how to better satisfy the needs of your customers via simple interaction.

The research confirmed that Glossier takes social listening seriously and considers it to be one of their greatest assets in their marketing strategy. Their team constantly monitors several social media channels, including but not limited to: Instagram, Twitter, Slack; That way they track the behavioral customer and audience data for further improving the products, the content, and the brand image as a whole.

Mahoney (Glossier's CTO) also realized that the Into the Gloss readers are 40% more likely to buy Glossier's products than people who just visit their website, which helped him work out a strategy of turning the blog readers into customers, by better connecting with them. Customer loyalty and engagement directly depends on how personalized and customized the marketing message is. Evidently, what helped achieve higher levels of loyalty was building a sense of community with Glossier's target audience. Which in the end resulted in improved conversion rates, stated Saladich (2019).

One must understand the importance of personalized interactions of customers with people representing the brand, this is the factor that they keep coming back for; having the best product in a certain segment of the market on its own will not keep a brand alive. Creating a sense of intimacy at scale will ensure the vitality of the brand. A way that brands can ensure customers feel their impact on a brand's narrative is to facilitate conversations with them (Patterson, 2020). Loyal customers often tend to share with a business their positive and negative experiences, such a company becomes able to position their future production processes more accurately, according to Uyar, (2018, p. 144 – 145). Glossier listens to this and engages in these conversations, facilitating brand trust.

5.4 CEM for building brand loyalty

Kahn (2013, p.24) wrote that customer relationship management strategies that result in continuous, relevant, and personalized communications between the brand and the customer. Relationships with brands go well beyond purchase or repurchase transactions.

Schwabel (2015), referenced the Forbes statistics which show that up to 62% of millennial respondents admitted that they are loyal to brands that engage with them on a personal level through, for example, social media.

Emily Weiss has mentioned customer experience management several times in the interviews (mention which ones) reviewed by the author. She describes her strategy as customer-centric and says: “Most importantly, we are an experience company. We create digital experiences, we create physical product experiences, and we create offline experiences.” That being said, Glossier strives to create experiences that stay with customers – their core values are staying inclusive, welcoming diverse customers, embracing women of all ages, with all skin types, making women feel beautiful naturally, etc.

Kahn (2013, p.23) wrote that relationships with brands, just like personal relationships, are built over time through a series of positive experiences.

When it comes to digital experiences Glossier is famous for having strong digital, and especially, social media presence. The digital experiences that a customer can have with glossier are being featured on their social media with a content repost, being asked for their opinion on the performance of their products, their beauty routine, favorite Glossier products, and so on. Shaw and Hamilton (2016) stated that a series of positive emotional experiences result in successful customer loyalty building. Kotler (2016, p.59) made a point that just one moment of unexpected delight from a brand is all it takes to transform a customer into the brand’s loyal advocate (getting featured, reposted, answered to.) intensifying communications, strengthening channel presence, and improving customer interface.

These experiences can also be something like being exposed to positive content showcasing women of all age groups, ethnicity, skin types (Glossier even posts people with imperfect skin, making everyone feel accepted as they are), featuring customers regardless of them having a large following or being a model or social influencer. Additionally, Glossier’s website is very minimalistic, aesthetically pleasing, and easy to navigate. The

purchasing of the products online can be completed in a few short steps, the payments are guaranteed to be safe and the shipping times are calculated at checkout but can be found for each country.

The physical product and offline experiences that a glossier customer can have are the purchasing in-stores, which have been reported to be pleasant as well, having the famous soft-pink Glossier color scheme, that looks right in pictures, minimalistic interior and helpful staff. The products are physically pleasant, the attention to detail can be noted, since the design looks cohesive, including all packaging. It can be conducted that Glossier's team has put a lot of thought into making the physical product experiences pleasant for their customers. Brown (2020) explained that Glossier's digital community's engagement is facilitated by these offline and in-store experiences, that's how they retain customers. The stores can be about more than selling products, because customers who come to Glossier's stores and pop-ups tend to have had an interaction with the brand's content and are familiar with Glossier. Instead, they design their spaces to improve the buying experience. This, in return, encourages customers to create content for social media – UGC. Glossier is good at “making shopping experiential”. (Patterson 2020). Brands need to create strong emotional customer-focused bonds that motivate consumers to build relationships with them and to form social communities around them, according to Kahn (2013, p.21).

Weiss told Tiku (2016) that Glossier's goal is “to make women proud of where they're at every day.” Having collected insight from so many information sources like comments and Slack groups, Glossier has been able to create a new niche of semi-affordable consumer goods in the beauty segment of the market, because they feel luxurious and personalized as they are customized to buyers' individual needs. Weiss refers to an experience that caters to the beauty customer “redefining luxury”. In other words, Glossier views CEM as not only singular purchasing experiences, as a customer journey map, but also what experience women have with the brand as a whole - how they feel about themselves, using the products they bought, how they feel looking through Glossier's social media posts, how they feel being asked for their opinions on beauty. This is one of the things that ended up differentiating Glossier from numerous other beauty brands.

5.5 Social media marketing

Instagram was picked out of the social media platforms Glossier uses because of its importance in their digital marketing. It has been referred to by the CTO as the primary platform Glossier uses for customer engagement. Mainly because this is where glossier gets most of its UGC, by reposting some of the customer conversations, pictures of products in use, even casual pictures of pets, which enables a down-to-earth and approachable brand perception. Anonymous (2020) opined that sharing UGC is only natural when a brand is so close to its customers. Glossier's influencers are real, regular people. They are the fans who engage on Instagram and are present at the pop-up events. Their Instagram accounts might not have hundreds of thousands of followers, but they ensure the brand is talked about. To top it off, from their social accounts, people led towards a personalized page on Glossier where they can buy their top-favorite products. According to Christine (2019), social media is now the best tool for building brand loyalty, it's no longer just facilitating engagement and following trends. As stated in the theoretical framework, referencing Harper (2020) – Nowadays, social media has become dominantly present in daily life, it's crucial for marketers to understand how millennial users communicate across different social media channels and to work on creating customized messages that work with the default rules of each of those channels.

Hart, (2019) stated that brands have to connect with their audiences through their strategy of posting on social media,. She also stated that Instagram is the best platform for creating that connection, because it has shown the highest engagement rates.

5.6 Glossier's brand trust

In terms of brand trust, the author made a conscious decision to focus on digital marketing strategies, not involving customer service in stores, product quality, packaging quality, etc. The visual appeal of Glossier stores was mentioned only because they were specifically designed to be photographed and posted about on social media, to be used as UGC or to enable the customers to further promote the brand digitally.

Kahn (2013, p.21,23) wrote that in addition to reacting emotionally to brands, consumers typically need to trust a brand to buy one of its products. Kotler (2016, p.109) advised professionals to build brands that behave like humans; brands that are approachable and likable, but also vulnerable. To be driven by core values, human-centric brands treat

customers as friends, becoming an integral part of their lifestyle. Human-centric marketing is the key to building brand attraction in the digital era as brands that managed to humanize themselves will be more differentiated. Crosby and Zak (2015, p.23) also concluded that the key principle in building brand trust for marketers is to create well-constructed, compelling narratives that emphasize people's struggles that the brand was able to help resolve or ease.

Therefore, Glossier was able to facilitate brand trust is the fact that they understood their customers' deepest anxieties and desires. Before, women were afraid to share beauty secrets in fear of being judged. This stigma roots from deep societal issues of female oppression, that transfers into beauty – women have been previously ashamed to admit to what they were doing to increase their attractiveness, since talking about beauty “inside information” was a sort of a taboo in society, to a certain extent. Glossier shared that inside information on the beauty routines of famous influential women in modern society, which felt almost intimate to their customers.

Hart (2019) wrote that YouTube vloggers and the “Insta-famous” made the beauty industry as transparent as it is now. Before these trends, beauty brands failed to showcase real experiences of real women and instead, focused on the illusion of perfection. “There's this desire to connect with other women,” Weiss told Business Insider (2019). By creating conversations with celebrities, line as Kim Kardashian and Karlie Kloss, even her fellow beauty brand founders like Bobbie Brown, and sharing them with Glossier's customer base she enabled women to a glimpse of their ways to go about beauty and see what products they were using. After that, she simply used the knowledge she collected to kickstart the product manufacturing process, keeping the connection with her community to craft the products women actually wanted, concluded Bruner (2016). Weiss herself noted that even magazines could not afford to share the kind of personal information. Featuring high-profile women, that her customers looked up to in The Top Shelf column if her blog made women feel as if they were sharing beauty tips and gossip with their friends. They humanized the beauty aspect, making it feel inclusive and easy, unlike before - it's easy to forget that sharing beauty secrets was unacceptable before social media and it wasn't so long ago. Women experienced the fear of judgment for sharing what products they used if there were many, and especially uncovering the time, the energy, and the amount of money it took them to look good. (Hart, 2019)

Glossier's customers trust the brand because it's approachable, honest, and because of how Glossier makes their customers feel. Harper (2020) noted that 77% of teens today prefer ads that show real people in real situations and 61 percent want diverse families in advertising. They want to see people like them in the creative messaging of the brands they buy from – people who not only look like them, but share their beliefs.

In 2016, Emily Weiss stated that Glossier's goal is to help women feel more comfortable with their natural beauty, instead of using makeup as a "mask."

Glossier's brand trust is achieved through carefully thought-through strategies, that involve listening and communicating with their customer base across several social media channels; having a unique brand identity – striving for authenticity, positioning themselves as acceptive of all with their core values and brand message and encouraging their customers to do the same; they have a way of creating products that involves the customers into the process, making them co-creators of the brand. People tend to believe in their own creations, so what better way to make customers trust the brand and the product, than make them a part of it?

5.7 Findings

This research study aimed to answer one question:

What digital marketing strategies can make your customers trust your brand more?

As a result of the conducted case study, the author was able to come up with the following:

- Creating a unique brand identity, in other words, creating a strong differentiation between the brand in question and competitors. That can be achieved through obtaining a distinctive logo, brand color palette, and making all brand attributes correlate with each other.
- Involving customers in product creation, to ensure the customers actually need the product, aiming to solve their problems and satisfy their needs, moreover to facilitate a sentimental connection between the product and the customer, and lastly making the customers felt heard and their opinion considered.
- Social listening for tracking customer data and being informed of any arising issues, comments, discussions about the brand, its image, or the products. Customer engagement

through social media platforms for building strong customer bonds, that are extremely valuable when branding and marketing products.

- Customer experience management for building brand loyalty, e.g., turning all interactions with the brand online and offline into meaningful experiences, ones that stay with customers, working the “marketing magic” long after the interaction with the brand and/or purchase.
- Instagram marketing. Nowadays, Instagram is a widely-used social platform, dominantly used by millennials, where each user is a content creator in their own way. This allows for usage of User Generated Content, as well as close customer interaction which facilitates brand trust, a positive experience of being featured by a brand, and ensures the fact that the brand feels welcoming and approachable.

5.8 Recommendations for further research

Due to new tendencies arising constantly in the digital world and beauty industry, that influence consumer behavior and reasons for developing trust towards brands, this research can be continuous and never really end.

The next researcher could look closely into other social platforms, for example Twitter. Glossier and other beauty brands use Twitter a lot for having conversations with customers. Due to its requirement to a certain amount of characters per tweet, the answers to questions a brand can ask will be short and straight to the point. There is no room for formalities, which makes the brand interactions very casual. One could explore the influence of this phenomenon on the forming of brand trust.

All in all, the possibilities for research in digital marketing are truly endless, and brand trust influences are shifting constantly with the events occurring in the world; having to do with societal changes, politics, environmental issues, and psychological research advancements.

6 CONCLUSION

These days, consumers are more critical and demand more authenticity from brands. Many won't buy from a brand if they don't agree with its core values. Since everything is so exposed, as a result of complete transparency facilitated by social media and the fact that consumers communicate with each other quickly and efficiently, sharing their experiences with brands. Having a carefully thought-through marketing strategy that works for the brand is indeed crucial nowadays. However, the strategy can't be just a façade. When it comes to the beauty industry, most beauty brands target millennials, and millennials become loyal to brands that are genuine and truthful. These core values have to translate support for the ethnic minorities, the LGBTQ+ community, be body and/or skin positive, in other words, celebrate diversity in all forms and be approachable.

Having conducted this case study, it can be concluded that Glossier's team is aware of these tendencies and in some ways, has even been a creator of such trends in the beauty community. They make sure their brand image is clearly understood, is positive, inspiring, and unique. They value their customer relationships and keep their clients in high regard, supporting those relationships with inclusivity and constant engagement across several social media channels. Their digital content only supports their positive brand image, maintaining a down-to-earth tone, which looks effortless, seeing as they use UGC as their main asset. This ensures that customers feel heard, easing the process of content creation for Glossier at the same time. Glossier's customers trust them because the brand listens to them, respects them as equals, and asks what their problem is, instead of presenting unsolicited solutions.

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