Case Study: Burberry
Katia Mayumi Kushano
Beulah Heights University

Abstract

Contemporary organizations face new challenges with the advancement of globalization, new

technologies and new competitors. Leaders need to demonstrate the ability to innovate and align

the business with the new requisites. In the case study *Burberry*, the reader learns about the

importance of aligning the business with new technological trends in order to stay competitive

and attractive to a new consumer demand through new social media strategies. Another lesson

from the case study refers to the ability of being proactive. After an economic downturn,

Burberry gained the leading status as a tech-savvy brand because it knew how to respond to

trends that were relevant to the company in a timely fashion. Despite the recognition that being

innovative and proactive help a brand to return to market leadership, it is important that

organizations constantly train and educate their workforce with the skills necessary as learning

culture also helps an organization to sustain a change.
Keywords: Burberry, social media, strategies, change

Case Study: Burberry

This paper aims to discuss the case study *Burberry* (Hodges & Gill, 2015 pp.123-125) by

examining different aspects of social media strategies that the company utilized. Hodges and Gill

(2015) tell the reader that Burberry felt the pressure of the economic downturn years ago and

needed to do something to improve the revenue growth. The company recognized the

significance of digital media at that time. The reader also learns that Burberry wanted to follow

what important brands such as Nike, Apple and Google were doing in terms of social media

strategies; the company decided to develop a campaign that was innovative and attractive to

younger consumers. One of the aspects of the campaign consisted of the launch of a website

where customers could share photos of themselves wearing their Burberry coats serving as

models for the brand. This paper begins by discussing Burberry's social media strategy and the

brand's return to market leadership. Additionally, the paper discusses whether or not the strategy

was the right one for the company and what the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats

of the company are. Then, the paper provides considerations on how the brand might sustain the

impact of their social media strategy. Finally, this author discusses future recommendations.

Benefits of Burberry's social media strategy, the Brand's Return to Market

Leadership

Hodges and Gill (2015) state that "innovation will create new opportunities and generate

value, by successfully exploiting new and improved technologies, techniques and services" (p.

121); Burberry exploited new strategies and services in order to attract more customers. The

company launched a website where customers could share photos in different platforms and sort photos by trench type, color, popularity, among other items. According to Kujur and Singh (2017), social media marketing is not a replacement of the traditional marketing but is an additional marketing channel that could be associated with other strategic elements as a part of a marketing mix which can have a positive impact on brand awareness. The authors explain that an important aspect of online social media is the extent to which it enables brands and consumers to connect, communicate, and engage. In the case study *Burberry,* the reader learns how important the campaign was for engagement, connection and communication as customers shared their submissions on different social media platforms. One of the lessons the reader learns from the case study *Burberry* is that leaders need to be aware of technology trends; Burberry gained the leading status as a tech-savvy brand because it knew how to respond to trends that were relevant to the company. The social media strategy was very important to Burberry's return to market leadership as the CEO of the company succeeded in keeping up with digital change in order to stay competitive. Hodges and Gill (2015) argue that it is important to understand the impact technological drivers for change have and how product development and life cycles are shortened because of that impact. *In Burberry*, the reader learns that despite Burberry's success, there are those who doubt the sustainability of the strategy and state that the strategy might be a deviation from the company's core business. Burberry Group plc SWOT Analysis (2017) reports that the company's structured operating model is one of the biggest strengths as it allows the organization to serve diverse range of customers. Additionally, the company reports three major opportunities: 1) growth in global personal luxury goods market; 2) positive trends in the global travel retail market and 3) growing preference to shop online. There are also three major threats for Burberry: 1) intense competition; 2) growing counterfeit goods market and 3) exchange rate

fluctuations. The biggest weakness of Burberry is the lack of scale: the group's limited scale

compared to major competitors affects its expansion plans.

How Burberry might Sustain the Impact of their Social Media Strategy and Final

Considerations

Hodges and Gill (2015) argue that innovation and technology are good change

facilitators. One of the ways Burberry might sustain the impact of their social media strategy is

by being proactive and respond to technological drivers accordingly in order to enhance

customer experience. Their social media strategy created brand awareness as customers were

uploading photos of themselves wearing the brand's products in different social platforms. There

are three drivers to consider when working with a new strategy or changes. One of them refers to

the understanding of consumer demands. Levy and colleagues (as cited in Hodges & Gill, 2015)

state that consumers are becoming more diverse and sophisticated and products and service have

to meet that demand. Birkinshaw and Duke (as cited in Hodges & Gill, 2015), point for enablers

to sustain innovation: 1) time out; 2) expansive roles; 3) competitions and 4) open forums. The

first enabler, time out, refers to the ability companies have to allow employees to work outside

their formal role. This activity allows creative thinking and therefore new ideas. Expansive roles

refer to less specific job descriptions and they help people to make connections. The use of

competitions invites employees' innovative ideas and open forums help leaders and employees to

establish a relationship based on trust. Hodges and Gill (2015) states that "these enablers are

critical to the creation of a supportive culture, one that reinforces the importance of innovation,

experimentation and risk-taking" (p. 141). In conclusion, this paper aimed to discuss the case

study *Burberry* (Hodges & Gill, 2015 pp.123-125) by examining what strategies the company

adopted and why they were important after the economic downturn. This author believes that

Burberry was good at recognizing the importance of paying attention to technological drivers for

change. Additionally, the company was proactive and kept customer experience as one of the core competencies. One of the strategies of the company is the e-commerce leadership: the company is experimenting with virtual reality, augmented reality and the latest developments in social-commerce to ensure that they stay ahead of evolving shopping behaviors and respond quickly to trends (Burberry.com, 2017). Besides responding quickly to trends, it is important that a company constantly train and educate their workforce with the skills necessary as learning culture also helps an organization to sustain a change (Yukl, 2013). Finally, this author recommends future studies on how leaders can sustain change in organizations that are present in different parts of the world by investigating if technological trends, for instance, happen simultaneously across the globe or there are some constraints on different cultures that might not receive a certain innovation well.

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