SUSTAINABLE ADVERTISING REPRESENTED IN A CREATIVE BRIEF FOR DR. MARTENS

by

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Sustainable advertising is relevant, because it persuades consumers to participate in smarter purchasing decisions that conserve the environment. Dr. Martens has the potential as a culturally relevant brand to market itself as a sustainable alternative fashion product for any consumer. Culture shifts every day, and brands attempt to keep up with leading ideas and trends. Many brands are focusing more on maintaining "green" practices, whether in the entirety of their business model or through small campaign strategies that cater to brief, environmentally-friendly trends among consumers. Over-consumption is a leading issue for sustainability, and many so-called "sustainable" brands are not marketing their products as long-lasting. In terms of clothing brands, there is a spectrum of sustainability effort in the industry that demonstrates either how honest or how fabricated advertising can be, and social media within campaigns further demonstrates the complexity of sustainable advertising. Brands such as Patagonia and Converse are great examples of sustainable brands that take that mission into their marketing. On the other hand, brands such as H&M utilize smaller marketing strategies to cater to the same consumers in only parts of their

business model. This research provides an analysis on the brand Dr. Martens and their metrics for sustainable advertising in fashion. Once sustainable business and successful sustainable advertising is explained, the study analyzes Dr. Martens business strategies, ethical values, and consumer communication to determine the sustainability of the brand itself and its potential to promote modest consumption in a hedonic consumer environment through the use of social media strategy and cultural relevancy.

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List of Accompanying Materials

1. Creative Brief for Dr. Martens

Historical Context

During WWII, Dr. Klaus Maertens, a German M.D., teamed up with Dr. Herbert Funk, an engineer, to create a shoe designed for Munich women with sore feet, using a salvaged cobbler's last and a needle.[1] Maertens wore the shoes himself after a skiing accident, intending for the style of the shoe to promote rehabilitation and overall comfort.[2] The shoe was designed with a heat-sealing sole that created pockets of air for cushioned footfalls. By 1959, the two decided their successful business should advertise internationally in print magazines.[3]

Privately-held, family-owned shoe manufacturer R. Griggs Group Limited caught wind of the shoe and bought patent rights in 1959. With a few tweaks in the model, the first pair of original boots were produced in April of 1960, and the company named them "1460's." after the date. For many years, this original boot was Grigg's primary model. By the end of the year 1960, Griggs sales in shoes had nearly topped £250,000.[4]

The shoe was intended for postmen and factory workers as a reliable work-wear boot. The company was selling pairs of shoes specifically to the British working classes in the 1960s, until they unexpectedly gained popularity in younger age demographics in the 1970s.

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[1] "Dr. Martens: A History of Rebellious Self-Expression," *Dr. Martens,* Accessed October 2017. http://www.drmartens.com/us/history.
[2] Mariko Fujinaka, "Dr. Martens Airwair USA, LLC: Red Campaign," Encyclopedia of Major Marketing Campaigns. *WARC*. 2000.
[3] *Dr. Martens.*
[4] "R. Griggs Group Limited History," *International Directory of Company Histories*, Vol. 23. St. James Press, 1998.

Guitarist Pete Townshend of the band The Who wore a pair of Dr. Marten's 1460s on stage. The guitarist wore the shoes because they were durable enough for the band's aggressive, distortion-filled stage activities.[5] The boots, also coined as 'DM's' or 'Doc's,' were quickly tied to underground groups such as skinhead, punk and 'newwave' movements. The shoes were then a symbol of youthful rebellion, embodying an angsty fashion statement for British youth subcultures in the 1970s. Brand popularity did not stop there.

By the end of the 1980s, a new music trend came about that sparked Dr. Martens popularity across a more broad audience. "Grunge" music was closely tied to young adults and rebellious teenagers that saw a theme in the skinhead fashion trends. Dr. Martens' global popularity increased as young audiences in the United States were more interested in the brand style.[6]

Griggs relied on word-of-mouth marketing tactics for product popularity, but decided the brand must grow further. The company created a new marketing subsidiary, AirWair Ltd., and expanded the shoe line in hopes of targeting not only young adult music fanatics, but people of all ages. By 1990, the company had over 500 new shoe models with several colors and patterned styles.[7]

Today, Dr. Martens is a classic style shoe that people of all ages agree are here to stay. The brand transitioned from word-of-mouth marketing in the twentieth century to social, cultural and experiential strategies that tie back to its roots in music and

[5] William Baue, "Dr. Martens Airwair USA LLC: Beliefs campaign," Encyclopedia of Major Marketing Campaigns, *WARC*. 2007.
[6] "R. Griggs Group Limited History," *International Directory of Company Histories*, Vol. 23. St. James Press, 1998.
[7] James Press.

British youth culture. In their advertising, we see potential to position the authentic brand as a blank canvas for any style. As the brand evolved with changing cultural trends, Dr. Martens has the ability to promote sustainability as a popular issue that they care about.

Sustainability Explained

Sustainability holds all types of meaning. There are sustainable business models that combine economics and socially acceptable business practices, however for this research, sustainability is analyzed through an environmentally-friendly lens. In recent years, sustainable consumption has become a global conversation and priority. The EPA defines sustainability as a simple principle, that everything we need for our survival and well-being depends, directly or indirectly, on our natural environment. From this point of view, sustainability aims to maintain a constant relationship for humans and nature to coexist harmoniously for future generations.[8] Some companies recognize this shift in consumer behavior. Many major brands are marketing themselves as "sustainable." Retail brands such as Patagonia, H&M, and Stella McCartney place sustainable standards at the forefront of their marketing messages.[9] Not only are these brands emphasizing sustainable practices as important, but also financially profitable in marketing to consumers who are aware of the current environmental problem.

There are several levels to sustainable strategies. Brands are able to position themselves as sustainable to consumers based on the intrinsic characteristics of the brand or brand's product, how the product is made, or the way in which their business practices effect the environment.[10] A brand is also able to position itself depending on its cultural relevancy to its audience. However, while sustainable brands market their products as environmentally-friendly, a key issue in sustainable efforts is over-

[8] "Why Is Sustainability Important?" *EPA* online, Last modified October 18, 2016. https://www.epa.gov/sustainability/learn-about-sustainability#what.
[9] Jacquelyn Ottman, *The New Rules of Green Marketing,* Aizlewood's Mill, Nursery Street, Sheffield S3 8GG, UK: Greenleaf Publishing, 2011. Page 31.
[10] Jacquelyn Ottman, Page 32.

consumption among consumers, the pinched nerve for any company that intends to make a profit from their products. It is therefore additionally important to analyze the promotion of over-consumption in brand advertising as a driving force in environmental decline. It is difficult to demote brand advertising as the catalyst to over consumption because in order for brands to turn profit, they must sell products. In this research, it is evident that advertising can persuade a specific consumer to not only consume less for a valid issue, but cater their spending towards a brand that markets its devotion to the problem, thus turning profit for that brand alone. There are two major components to a sustainable brand that must resonate with an audience in order to effectively position that brand as such, environmental efforts and cultural relevancy. Dr. Martens is an example of potential sustainable positioning in the retail market within these components. The brand Dr. Martens has decades of relevancy with an audience that relies on music, culture, and fashion. First, analyzing Dr. Martens' cultural relevancy illuminates the brand's current audience loyalty.

The Cultural Component

Culture takes on many definitions and therefore brands like Dr. Martens have the ability to connect to their audiences from all angles. The cultural component of a brand aims to value communities and manifest identity within them to maintain traditions.[11] Culture is expressed in music, fashion, art and history. When brands evolve with their consumers, they study the changing trends in what their audiences are passionate about thus relating on a deeper level than simply selling a product. Brands market their messages in several ways. Culture changes quickly and social media, experiential advertising and influencers are important components in shifting topic hotspots to retain a brand's relevancy.

To reiterate, social media advertising includes Twitter, Instagram, Facebook and other blogging cites. With social media, brands create dialogue amongst their audiences in order to protect this cultural identity. It drives communication, and brands are relocating their efforts in advertising to these platforms in combination with traditional advertising, such as banners, newspaper, radio and broadcast television to connect with consumers. Brands are also able to promote themselves through the experiential strategies: pop-up shops and events such as music festivals. Buying consumers' attention is expensive, and brands must strategize where they are placing content and how they are connecting to hot topics. Dr. Martens evolution in cultural relevancy retains its identity as an authentic brand, a brand that has been through every transition with its audience.

[11] "When Sustainability Means More than 'green,' *McKinsey & Company,* July 2009.

When Dr. Martens work boots were originally worn for utilitarian reasons, British youth culture in the 1970s was rebellious and controversial, frequently defying politics and social norms. This 'punk' culture was expressed in style, music, and media for most teens and early twenties. It was a culture which young adults attempted to not only retain individuality, but express creativity and alternative style from almost anything mainstream.[12] The youth culture flourished into several subcultures of glam, punk, and early goth. By the 1980s, several punk bands began wearing 'Docs' during performances and these subcultures integrated 'Docs' into their style and creative expression.[13]

The brand was and remains closely tied to music which retains its timeless stature in pop-culture. Popularity in the United States grew in the 1980s, with teens purchasing Dr. Martens boots because of the shoe's cult status and legendary past in Britain.[14] Today, celebrity musicians like Madonna and Miley Cyrus represent Dr. Martens' shoes on stage increasing the popularity on a global degree. What was once a celebrity style amongst merely rock and punk trends became a cultural component to all types of musical influencers. Artists and public figures who wear these shoes pose as influencers for the brand. There is an always-growing list of artists who wear Dr. Martens: Red Hot Chili Peppers, The Cranberries, Kula Shaker, The Sex Pistols, and

[12] Matthew Worley, "Punk, Politics And Youth Culture," *Reading History,* Accessed January 2018. https://unireadinghistory.com/punk-politics-and-youth-culture/.
[13] "Dr. Martens: A History of Rebellious Self-Expression," *Dr. Martens,* Accessed October 2017. http://www.drmartens.com/us/history.
[14] Mariko Fujinaka, "Dr. Martens Airwair USA, LLC: Red Campaign," Encyclopedia of Major Marketing Campaigns. *WARC*. 2000.

Hanson.[15] The brand was always closely tied to music and individual identity, and their campaigns consistently sustained cultural influence among this young audience.

In May of 1997, AirWair Ltd., a United States distributer of the British shoe company, teamed with creative agency Pyro in Dallas, Texas to create a campaign emphasizing Dr. Martens antiestablishment, youth-culture image. The agency created four unconventional images without product placement. The images appeared in magazines such as *Rolling Stones* and *Spin,* and in-store as posters. The messages on the posters again expressed individuality and antiestablishment saying, "The world is full of generic, mass-produced, homogenized products. Don't become one." In *Adweek*, creative director of Pyro Todd Tilford explained the strategy in leaving out Dr. Martens products in these posters. "What the client liked about our work is that we try to blur the line between advertising and 'brand art,'" Tilford explained.[16] Along with the campaign, Dr. Martens distributed music compilations which they gave away as CD's. They then established their own record label releasing a compilation titled "Generation to Generation", with music from different periods associated with vastly individual Dr. Martens consumers.[17]

Dr. Martens uses experiential advertising at music events to serve their consumers outside stores. Dr. Martens still sponsors several events to identify with music fanatics, an experiential tactic that flows with the brand. The legendary

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[15] "Building A Fashionable Brand Image: A Dr. Martens Case Study," England: *Business Case Studies,* Page 2, Accessed January 2018. https://businesscasestudies.co.uk/dr-martens/building-a-fashionable-brand-image/fashion-marketing.html.
[16] Steve Krajewski, "Unseen 'Doc Martens' Reappear in U.S. Ads," *Adweek,* October 6, 1997. http://www.adweek.com/brand-marketing/unseen-doc-martens-reappear-us-ads-24910/.
[17] illiam Baue, "Dr. Martens Airwair USA LLC: Beliefs campaign," Encyclopedia of Major Marketing Campaigns, *WARC*. 2007.

Glastonbury festival in England sells out of tickets before bands are announced for a lineup. In 1998, Dr. Martens secured tickets for a 'register to win' competition with 200 Dr. Martens stockists taking part in the promotion. At England's Reading Festival, Dr. Martens had their own stage to showcase upcoming talent and unsigned artists, a promotion that emphasized youth culture and individuality.[18] With their twenty-first century fanbase, the diverse styles sold along with the brand's supportive approach to music in order to broaden their consumer audience. The brand emphasizes this strength in every aspect of their marketing, particularly social media.

Today, Dr. Martens marketing strategies with social media envelope cultural gratification to the utmost degree, regardless of who is wearing their shoes. What was once a shoe for the rebellious teen expanded into a brand for everyone. Since their sales decline in 2003, Dr. Martens took this cultural influence into every aspect of their marketing and made the brand a fit for everyone. With the help of global designers, the brand revitalized it's classic '1460' boot into customized patterns and styles. Social media and video spots showcase their shoe's ability to flatter any identity, and their target consumer expanded from young adults to people of all ages.

Their Instagram is constantly advertising how people can stand out in their products.[19] On Instagram Dr. Martens says in their profile description, "For five decades Dr. Martens have been worn by workers, for whom they were designed, but

[18] "Building A Fashionable Brand Image: A Dr. Martens Case Study," England: *Business Case Studies,* Page 3, Accessed January 2018. https://businesscasestudies.co.uk/dr-martens/building-a-fashionable-brand-image/fashion-marketing.html.
[19] "Dr. Martens: A History of Rebellious Self-Expression," *Dr. Martens,* Accessed October 2017. http://www.drmartens.com/us/history.

also by rebels and non-conformists of all stripes."[20] Their posts include photos of children wearing their shoes with captions such as, "Small on stature. Big on attitude."[21] Their product versatility is used as a strategy to promote the shoe's ability to flatter any person. Today, Dr. Martens uses social media along with their traditional advertisements to promote their relevancy.

If a brand is deep rooted in something that consumers resonate with, whether music, politics, or a well-rounded message, people follow suit with revitalizing the product. Today, the shoe is a blank canvas for any person. What was once a shoe for the nonconformists became a shoe open to the wearer's interpretation. Dr. Martens revitalized the brand in 2003 to create a fit for everyone, and the brand was strong enough to take flight in this shift. Therefore, Dr. Martens' cultural component that was engrained in Britain weighs out any variable in their business model because it routinely drives popularity, and their use of social media is a constant reminder of their message. Many brands carry these strategies in digital, experiential and influencer-based marketing. Converse is a direct competitor to Dr. Martens formatting a similar message that targets a wide range of consumers.

Converse competes with Dr. Martens through promoting individuality by wearing their shoes. Converse shoe company has been making sneakers for over a century. What were once athletic shoes worn on basketball players became a street style fashion statement for everyone. The two brands emphasize their evolution from utilitarian products to ever-shifting authentic shoes. The distinct similarities in their

[20] Drmartensofficial, 2018, Instagram, https://www.instagram.com/drmartensofficial/?hl=en.
[21] Drmartensofficial, 15 April, Instagram, https://www.instagram.com/p/Bhl4FURjqtG/?hl=en&taken-by=drmartensofficial.

strategy promote changing cultural trends, and the two brands compete to identify with anyone. Converse informs consumers, "What you wear defines sport, street, and creative culture, and we've been redefining it with you all along. When you wear Converse products, you create a culture of authentic street style simply by being yourself."[22] Two very different style brands have the same message, and their ability to advertise to a wide array of people intersects their identities.

Nike company bought Converse back in 2003, and bridged the gap in style and culture to relate to any consumer. Converse shoes, like Dr. Martens, are seen on many celebrities, models, musicians and actors. In 2017, Converse released their largest campaign with Anomaly Agency in New York titled "Forever Converse", highlighting their tight connection to pop-culture and rising talent. Similar to Dr. Martens, the brand used music and film influencers to promote their shoes in video spots where artists talk about culture in different areas of the United States. In one video spot, musician Vince Staples discussed growing up in Long Beach, California and how living in Los Angeles shaped his life and career. The main video campaign promotes creative youth culture in its entirety, similar to Dr. Martens' several youth-centric campaigns.

Converse also brought niche artists into the campaign who are less famous in their industries. Chief marketing officer Julien Cahn hoped to carry through Converse's identity as an icon by promoting people who are not simply household names. For "Forever Chuck," Cahn said, "We had dimensions and layers in the cast. Some of those more obscure characters, that are maybe less pop culture relevant, are so anchored and

[22] "Our Story," *Converse,* Accessed April 2018, http://www.converse.com/uk/en/our-story/about-us.html.

important to their community."[23] His strategy promotes not only individuality, but the under dogs.

Converse also uses experiential strategies in their brand promotion. Unlike Dr. Martens' music festival promotions, Converse teamed with Anomaly Agency to create portrait studio vehicles that parked in select cities in the United States. People could have their photo taken and printed on wheat paper posters, and the images were installed in three New York City Brooklyn and Manhattan neighborhoods (i.e. East Village, Lower East Side, Williamsburg, Harlem, etc.) and three Los Angeles neighborhoods (i.e. Silver Lake, Melrose, Fairfax).[24] Converse sneakers were displayed around the vehicles to promote the brand. The experience encouraged consumers to post images on social media about Converse and create a conversation around the brand, similar to Dr. Martens' festival engagement. The two brands found cultural hot spots and extended their name into those areas.

Owned by Nike, Converse has an advantage in the United States. Converse has always made individuality their mission and Nike extended that message with the resources they were capable of obtaining. Through Nike, Converse obtains connections with large names in the fashion industry and frequently creates new styles collaborating with these popular stylists. Special edition shoes with labels such as Comme des Garçons and Missoni intersect regular consumers with high-end consumers. The brand

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[23] Julien Rath, "'The Shoe Does A Lot Of Marketing On Its Own' – How Converse Uses Niche Stars To Grow Its Cultural Presence," *Business Insider,* 1 May, 2017, http://www.businessinsider.com/julien-cahn-how-converse-chuck-taylor-is-using-niche-stars-to-grow-its-cultural-presence-2017-4.
[24] Alt Terrain, "Converse Footwear Experiential Street Event Marketing Activation - New York City & Los Angeles," Filmed 5 February 2017, Youtube video, 1:25. Posted February 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7BZdg3MVn9w.

is grounded in its message nonetheless. Converse chief marketing officer Julien Cahn said, “Those moments and projects that we create we allow the image to get elevated and seen through a different lens by our customers but also by people who are loyal Chuck customers.”[25] With the intersection between high-end labels and an authentic, everyday shoe brand, Converse consistently portrays both influencers and regular consumers in its audience. The brand’s Instagram unlike Dr. Martens frequently posts photos of artists, stars, and new characters. Their posts typically contain a simple link to the profiles of people in their Instagram advertisements with no further message.

Dr. Marten’s social media remains up to date on music trends. The brand frequently uses hashtags, words in social media posts that link to other posts with the same hashtag in order to create a conversation online. With the hashtag #WORNDIFFERENT, the brand sponsors musicians like Gianna Gi with posts saying, “Click the link in our bio to discover more about this young creative and how she expresses herself through movement.”[26] Integrating hashtags that link posts back to consumers keeps the brand relevant among their audience. The brand thus identifies with all ages and identities. For Converse, their social media uses less words than Dr. Martens to promote a similar message. Converse’s Instagram shares frequent photos of artists with links to their individual Instagram profiles. Rather than telling consumers that their shoes are authentic like Dr. Martens, Converse promotes their message mostly in their influencer video spots and uses their media as a reminder for consumers to stay

[25] Julien Rath, “'The Shoe Does A Lot Of Marketing On Its Own' – How Converse Uses Niche Stars To Grow Its Cultural Presence,” *Business Insider,* 1 May, 2017, http://www.businessinsider.com/julien-cahn-how-converse-chuck-taylor-is-using-niche-stars-to-grow-its-cultural-presence-2017-4.
[26] Drmartensofficial, 9 April 2018, Instagram, https://www.instagram.com/p/BhV-hW8jtyn/?hl=en&taken-by=drmartensofficial.

connected. Unlike merely showing that influencers wear their product like Dr. Martens, Converse integrates these individuals into their campaigns for the stories that relate to their message.

The identity of a brand promotes brand awareness and both Dr. Martens and Converse are widely known for their history as authentic companies. Not only does Converse have a strong identity similar to Dr. Martens' cultural suit, but thanks to Nike, Converse also has a leg up in connection to environmentally-conscious consumers. Working with a cultural message, they have a sustainable mission that shifts brand awareness into brand loyalty. Looking into Converse's sustainability mission as well as other environmentally conscious brands, Dr. Martens has potential when we analyze how sustainability has been promoted by competitors.

The Environmental Component

The environmental component essentially protects the Earth, limiting our resource intake for generations to come.[27] Today, the rules associated with consumers' intent to purchase 'sustainable' products have changed. Consumers are not only looking to buy products that work well and have a seemingly environmentally-friendly base line, but most consumers understand that the life-cycle associated with creating and using products is important too.[28] Some brands are sustainable through every part of their business model and others advocate for the purpose in smaller ways. Sustainable brands, however, have the ability to advocate for this message in their advertising. For Dr. Martens, a company that manufacturers durable shoes to last a lifetime, sustainable advertising can persuade loyal consumers to purchase these shoes in a world of vanishing resources.

Today, sustainable brands such as Patagonia run true with an adherence to long-lasting apparel products. "We have a mission statement that we've had for 25 years: build the best product, cause no unnecessary harm, and use business to implement solutions to the environmental crisis," explains Vincent Stanley, director of philosophy at Patagonia. In 2015, Patagonia launched a "Worn Wear" tour, and sent a staffed van to outdoor stores and sporting events. The employees repaired people's worn Patagonia

[27] "When Sustainability Means More than 'green,' *McKinsey & Company,* July 2009, Accessed March 20, 2018. https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/when-sustainability-means-more-than-green.
[28] Jacquelyn Ottman, *The New Rules of Green Marketing,* Aizlewood's Mill, Nursery Street, Sheffield S3 8GG, UK: Greenleaf Publishing, 2011.

products in order to decrease the amount of attire thrown to the side.[29] Patagonia is an outdoor fashion brand and their durable products fit the name. Dr. Martens also manufactures products that last a lifetime, but they focus on their cultural identity more and deny sustainability as a relevant insight. Patagonia does a great job promoting sustainable advertising in their campaigns, not only shocking consumers with creative messages, but always coming home to environmental responsibility which resonates with their loyal audience.

In 2011, Patagonia released a campaign in The New York Times that urged consumers to buy their used products rather than new ones. The New York Times advertisement and Public Relations campaign titled "Don't Buy This Jacket" encouraged people to purchase only what they need considering the effect of consumerism on the environment. The advertisement persuaded consumers to sign up to Patagonia's "Common Threads Initiative", a systematic plan that helps people reuse, repair, or recycle their Patagonia products. The brand was honest about its consumer insight. Whether a product is "organic" or "recycled", everything we wear emits greenhouse gases, draws freshwater to build, and takes resources from the environment that we can never give back. Patagonia relinquished over-consumption and extended their environmental message.[30]

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[29] Chuck Kapelke, "Purpose-driven Companies: Making A Difference," ANA Magazine, *WARC.* January 2016. file://localhost/Users/sweresh/Library/Application%20Support/Zotero/Profiles/xp9tyyaa.default/zotero/storage/4FK5QPZX/107065.html.

[30] Josie Allchin, Case Study: Patagonia's 'Don't Buy This Jacket' Campaign," *Marketing Week,* 23 January 2013, https://www.marketingweek.com/2013/01/23/case-study-patagonias-dont-buy-this-jacket-campaign/.

The marketing associated with the sustainability of a brand is analyzed. Dr. Martens' shoes are durable, and that is enforced. But the potential for that trait to take a spotlight in the brand's message does not exist. In 1993, London Underground International, Dr. Martens largest United States distributor, hired the advertising agency Cole & Weber to launch a campaign that would introduce the shoes to a larger audience. The $3.5 million print campaign sought to increase brand awareness amongst baby boomers and working class consumers who appreciated durability in stylistic shoes. For *Adweek*, creative director for the agency Jim Carey said, "This shoe has a huge tradition in England as a comfortable, utilitarian shoe … We wanted to give it a history, so that once it stops being a fad, it would still have a life."[31] The print advertisements featured the craftsmanship and durability of the shoes rather than the usual 'grunge' culture. Thus, the brand has potential to emphasize the benefits of a long-lasting product in a culture where fast-fashion products are usually pursued, but they do not cater that durability to an insight that could be useful - sustainable fashion products.

Dr. Martens does adhere to sustainable practices. The brand is a part of the Leather Working Group, and in 2015 ninety-six per cent of the brand's upper leather was from Leather Working Group medal status tanneries. These tanneries use Brazilian hides that are consistently traced back to registered farms that do not contribute to Amazon deforestation.[32] Dr. Martens prides themselves in this membership, but fails to

[31] Robert Klara, "How Dr. Martens Army Boots Conquered the Fashion World," *Adweek,* 5 May 2015, http://www.adweek.com/brand-marketing/how-dr-martens-became-boot-conquered-world-164456/.
[32] "Our Rated Members," *Leather Working Group,* Accessed February 2018. https://www.leatherworkinggroup.com/who-we-are/about-us.

broadcast their efforts across their marketing strategy, a potential lead in advertising the brand as sustainable.

Converse not only competes in cultural relevancy, but their parent company Nike holds sustainability at the forefront of their message. Both Nike and Converse are a part of the Sustainable Apparel Coalition which measures environmental impacts on an industrial scale for large fashion companies. Converse uses a low proportion of eco-friendly materials like organic cotton and recycled polyester. Additionally, their parent company Nike set a goal to reduce operational emissions by fifty percent by 2025 using renewable energy.[33] This runs true in Nike's marketing where consumers have access to information about the brand's efforts on their website. Nike holds an entire page dedicated to their employees' stories of dreaming for a greener world. In a letter from the brand's CEO Mark Parker, he says, "Our purpose is to use the power of sport to move the world forward. We believe in a fair, sustainable future – one where everyone thrives on a healthy planet and a level playing field."[34] However, there is little evidence in Converse's advertising whether sustainability is a strong dream for the brand, an advantage left to the side by Converse and their parent company, Nike.

Whether the brand is sustainable in all facets or not, how they market to their audiences envelops their sense of transparency with their consumer-base and the message that they carry through with their name. We see that Dr. Martens' products, management and overall production are relatively sustainable. Their transparency is

[33] Isobella Wolfe, "How Ethical Is Converse?" *Good On You,* 11 September, 2017, https://goodonyou.eco/how-ethical-is-converse/.
[34] "Purpose Moves Us," *Nike,* 2018, https://sustainability.nike.com/.

limited when they are asked for details about the level of important sustainability holds in the company.[35] Therefore, the brand is potentially criticized due to unanswered questions regarding sustainable materials. It is important to look at each variable in brand sustainability efforts in order to analyze where Dr. Martens succeeds and also falters in its attempts to establish a sustainable strategy from the view of its audiences. Then it is possible to utilize its cultural relevancy and reposition the brand as a sustainable alternative to fast-fashion shoes.

[35] "Dr. Marten's Shoes," *Ethical Consumer Research Association,* Last modified 2016, http://www.ethicalconsumer.org/scoredetails.aspx?ProductId=923944.

Dr. Martens Potential Competitors

The element of sustainability exists with the brand, but it is not advertised. Looking at the elements of a sustainable brand, Dr. Martens ties deeply to culture, excels in profit, but fails to communicate itself as environmentally friendly. Through research, Converse competes with Dr. Martens in their current message and authenticity. From an environmental lens, Patagonia and Converse both compete with Dr. Martens in publicizing their sustainability efforts. With the use of social media, Dr. Martens has the potential to reposition as a sustainable brand through marketing durability in their products as a cultural trend - sustainable consumption.

Dr. Martens thus has two large competitors that cater to extremes in both cultural relevancy and sustainability. Converse has similar marketing tactics, cultural ties and frequent influencers. Converse shoes are also a blank canvas for any consumer like Dr. Martens. In terms of sustainability, Patagonia produces shoes and products that are built to last, and Patagonia holds this quality in their marketing executions such as recycling and repairing products. Dr. Martens must develop an insight that combines the two. As a brand, it already has both strengths, but fails to advertise the two in one overall message.

Their newly diverse audience in recent years gives them an upper hand in communicating across all identities the importance of sustainability in the fashion market. Emphasizing their vast audience, we can relocate their advertising to beliefs their audiences currently have about sustainability while maintaining the brand's trendy, cultural influence. In order to advertise the brand as sustainable, Dr. Martens must emphasize the long-lasting footwear they sell as well as the dangers fast-fashion

products pose on sustainability. The insight: promote modest consumption to an impressionable audience in order to relocate purchases to Dr. Martens alone. It should be explained how marketing efforts within social media better suit this audience, and therefore communicate a new message to the people who already rely on this brand as a fashion statement.

Enforcing Social Media

Whether a brand's emotional impact on their audience is large or small, social media enables brands to engage with their audience past an initial message.

There are three types of media that brands must be mindful of when deciding where to kick start their campaign. Paid media is any paid activity that drives consumers to owned media properties, which consists of YouTube videos and television commercials that brands create to showcase their creative messages. Owned media includes communications that a brand creates and controls via its own platform, whether it be a brand's Instagram account or Twitter account which they use to post and connect with their consumers, a very important factor in brand loyalty and recognition. Lastly, earned media is free publicity, or this organic conversation, generated by fans and customers in response to content they like, that well-done campaign strategies easily achieve and maintain through thorough research about their target audience's values and interests.[36] With organic conversation, it is inferred that brands are able to persuade consumers by developing the ecosystem around their product's reputation with more than paid advertising.

Brands have to fight harder than ever before for consumers' attention, and maintaining lasting impact on consumers' perceptions is a greater struggle. In an article for *Forbes,* surveys show that 25% of millennials ages 25-34 are on Instagram every day, and 34% of younger millennials ages 18-24 are using the platform daily. In the article, Lauren Friedman states, "In 2017, consumers of every age will demand more

[36] Ian Dodson, *The Art of Digital Marketing,* 156.

seamless customer experiences, but millennials will be willing to interact with technology to obtain it."[37] Content within every outlet of a campaign strategy must be relevant to its consumers in order to gain not only their attention, but their advocacy towards the brand and its message. Dr. Martens does a great job at connecting with its consumers through music, fashion and a unified message of individuality.

In October of 2017, Dr. Martens launched the "Worn Different" campaign in the United Kingdom. The campaign emulated the individuality and diversity of its consumer audience who wear the brand's new AW17 collection. The campaign included a series of photos featuring twenty-seven unique individuals all wearing the new shoe model.[38] Additionally, Dr. Martens took to Twitter with the hashtag #WORNDIFFERENT where customers would post photos of them wearing the new model in their own way with Twitter posts, "Thanks @drmartens. We've worn your boots since we were 15."[39] The hashtag works as a link to other posts with the same word, extending the campaign message and in 2017, Dr. Martens experienced an increase in revenue of twenty-five per cent overall in the United Kingdom.[40]

Many campaign strategies attempt to shock or entertain consumers in order to have their brand name in the pool of consumer communication, but that does not necessarily increase their product revenue from these audiences. For example, in 2015, the brand Budweiser aired a video advertisement during the Super Bowl about a lost

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[37] Lauren Friedman, "Four Millennial Social Media Trends," *Forbes,* 2017.
[38] Sam Cole, "Dr. Martens Celebrates Diversity with the Launch of the AW17 'Worn Different' Campaign," *Complex.* October 9, 2017.
[39] Boston Manor, April 21, 2018, 2:50 PM, https://twitter.com/BSTNMNR/status/987795630516031488.
[40] "Dr. Martens FY 2017 Results," *Permira,* Last modified October 23, 2017. https://www.permira.com/media/1308/dr-martens-fy-2017-results-23-october-2017.pdf.

puppy that got rescued and came home to their owner. The story was heartwarming and the advertisement went viral on social media with over thirty-one million shares. However, Budweiser did not see an increase in beer sales after the advertisement was popular.[41] In the social context of beer, or drinking beer, the story did not change people's internal decisions regarding the product. The problem was the difference between attention to the campaign and engagement in the brand itself, which is where social media influences consumer retention with a personal insight.

A well-done strategy must avoid the entertainment trap where consumers are shocked or amused but lack connection, like Budweiser's recent campaign. The consumer's connection to the brand or product should transpire past that initial attention to the video. Consumers react and engage with advertisements well through three areas a strategy must emphasize; The strategy must have a sense of novelty where it does not fit the normal pattern of expectation. It has to have a factor that is out of the ordinary that the brain can pay attention to. The message must also generate emotion, but more importantly consider things that people care about, relating to personal values, like Dr. Martens does when they promote individuality. Lastly and most importantly reiterated, it should be relevant to the consumer. Unlike Budweiser's puppy advertisement and its popularity on social media, it was not relevant at the decision in buying a type of beer, it was simply entertaining and did not change people's opinion about the brand.[42]

Dr. Martens holds true to this success in their current message. The brand is up to date across Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube posting frequently about new styles,

[41] Anne Rayner, "Webinar," *WARC,* 2017.
[42] Anne Rayner, "Webinar," *WARC,* 2017.

new music, and fashion trends while always connecting back to individuality and freedom of expression. This message holds strong across many types of people and therefore sustains brand popularity, later analyzed in detail. In order to relocate their message, the insight must go deeper.

Relevancy to a target audience initiates conversation amongst consumers. Success must combine reach and scale with values that indicate personal relevance to an audience.[43] Brands must create an ecosystem outside the company itself in order to connect with consumers and develop organic conversations amongst people outside their direct message. Brands need organic social conversation, or unpaid advertising in which consumers communicate online and offline about the brand, in order to maintain popular reputation. If a campaign is able to connect to consumers through relevant, paid social media, the brand is able to engage with their audience rather than simply entertain them. The research brands require to develop their strategy is based on what drives their target consumers' personal engagement.

A multi-outlet strategy combines social media advertising with traditional advertising. A combined campaign implements a message into the audience members' mind because they are seeing it in different formats at different times. In an article about this combination, Ivan Guzenko states, "Sometimes, the most engagement comes from building awareness and consumer relationships through "soft" ads, such as hashtags, giveaways, and social media engagement."[44] However, it is important to recognize that the two, both traditional television advertising and social media must work together

[43] Anne Rayner and Kyle Findlay, "Why Going Viral Is Not Enough," *WARC,* 2017.
[44] Ivan Guzenko, "Why Combined Campaigns Benefit Our Marketing," 2017.

rather than separate. Dr. Martens does this well, but their message has greater potential. Analyzing two important components of successful audience appeal, we can imagine that the authentic brand is able to integrate sustainable consumption into their brand identity and current message.

Now it's understood what is to be emphasized and where, but not yet to whom. Dr. Martens has an ambiguous audience, which works well in terms of their current message aiming to relate to the intrinsic characteristics consumers hold dear. However, in order to persuade these audiences that the brand's new message is relevant to their own lives, it is important to understand the basic types of consumers within sustainable purchasing decisions and who Dr. Martens intends to target.

Targeting Conscious Consumers in Dr. Martens' Audience

Almost everyone is for "sustainability" today in some shape or form, and there are five types of a sustainably conscious consumer in the United States that help to identify the scale of awareness. Once it is understood that certain consumers place "green" decisions higher than others, Dr. Martens can relocate its marketing towards a common consumer.

Typically, women ages thirty to forty-nine with children are the most environmentally-conscious consumer because they do most of the shopping and make most of the brand-purchasing decisions.[45] However, United States consumers can be broken down into these five groups. "LOHAS", or Lifestyles of Healthy and Sustainable, are the most conscious in the marketplace, making 19% of the United States population. They are the least sensitive to price in order to find the most sustainable options.[46] These individuals might cater to Patagonia because although expensive, the brand has a deeply rooted dream of a healthy planet. "Naturalites" are every one in six United States consumer. They are driven by buzzwords such as "organic" that reflect some form of environmental effort. "Drifters" are the largest segment in the United States, about 25% of the consumer population. "Drifters" are driven by trends, one of which sustainable branding, but they fail to perform independent research about brands on their own time.[47] "Conventionals" are about 25% of the population as well. They are more likely driven to "green" or sustainable

[45] Jacquelyn Ottman, *The New Rules of Green Marketing,* Aizlewood's Mill, Nursery Street, Sheffield S3 8GG, UK: Greenleaf Publishing, 2011, Page 23.
[46] Jacquelyn Ottman, 25.
[47] Jacquelyn Ottman, 26.

practices for money-saving reasons, like recycling products to save. Lastly, the "Unconcerneds" make up 17% of the United States population. They do no research about environmental efforts and have little care for sustainability standards in the brands they are purchasing from.[48] This audience might purchase Converse solely because they are a culturally relevant brand. For an effective strategy, Dr. Martens must target one segment in these American consumer groups that fits their level of sustainability.

Dr. Martens is able to target the "Drifter" population, because this group is large in numbers, and their "green" mentality is consistent with how sustainable Dr. Martens is as a brand. This group is driven by trends, one of which today is practicing smarter purchasing decisions. For a consumer that sees sustainable measures in a company and admires them without researching any of the efforts themselves, this consumer group might already purchase Dr. Martens but see a new and improved message that caters to the environment and become a loyal audience. For a consumer base that enjoys participating in hot topics, and a company that already owns high brand awareness, Dr. Martens can combine cultural authenticity with modest consumption in an entirely new brand message.

[48] Jacquelyn Ottman, *The New Rules of Green Marketing,* Aizlewood's Mill, Nursery Street, Sheffield S3 8GG, UK: Greenleaf Publishing, 2011, Page 28.

Promoting Modest Consumption for the Green Consumer

Dr. Martens shoes are made to last. Their loyal consumers understand that they are purchasing a durable pair of shoes, but they are not buying them for the sake of saving resources. These people purchase Dr. Martens boots because they relate to intrinsic characters that attempt to satisfy a personal gain. Many brands like Dr. Martens markets to serve these values, but intrinsic values lead people to buy more products. Over-consumption is at the forefront of environmental decline and loss of resources. Many brands like Dr. Martens market to consumers promoting hedonism and over-consumption habits.[49] Hedonistic consumption is what we as consumers should be wary about.

Hedonistic consumption attempts to satisfy social and psychological needs with material things.[50] Hedonic products are products and services that provide emotional value as well as utilitarian value, unlike products that are mainly instrumental and functional. Hedonic products thus relate to intrinsic needs in a consumer such as the style of the product and appearance in relation to a consumer's preference.[51] For example, a consumer might anticipate a feeling of self-gratification when they purchase a new pair of shoes, but they will purchase a computer printer because they are aware that they need a printer. Advertising strategies affect these anticipated emotions by persuading consumers to buy culturally relevant or 'fashionable' products, which Converse and Dr. Martens currently execute. Dr. Martens' cultural component is strong

[49] Dennis Soron, "Sustainability, Self-Identity and the Sociology of Consumption," *Sustainable Development* 18 (3): 172–81, 2010.
[50] Dennis Soron, 173.
[51] Wayne D. Hoyer, Nicola E. Stokburger-Sauer, "The Role of Aesthetic Taste In Consumer Behavior," *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science (40) 1,* Page 167, 2012.

because it emphasizes individuality and a feeling of self in its consumers through wearing the brand's shoes, but their insight has the potential to reach a larger goal.

Retail brands in particular market fast-fashion products to consumers as a means to gaining a positive self-image. Today, consumption choices are decisions not only about how to act but who to be with retail products like Dr. Martens at the forefront of self-expression. Essentially, people do not purchase hedonic products such as these for simply rational reasons.[52]

An entire extra planet would be needed in order to sustain our current global consumption habits, with the United States at the top of the highest consuming countries in the world.[53] If the United States carries sixty per cent of Dr. Martens' profits, this demographic enflames the issue unless they target sustainability in their advertising strategy.

Many brands have tried bringing awareness to sustainable practices, but not much has persuaded consumer action in regards to over-consumption.[54] Slowing consumer consumption rates before it strips the planet of important resources is deemed impossible due to the nature of how and why people buy extremities such as clothes and other hedonic products.[55] There is an identity-oriented nature of consumption that typically represses warnings regarding the dangers of over-consumption on sustaining our environment, a nature that Dr. Martens inadvertently fuels in their brand identity.

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[52] Leslie Fine, "Altruism and Hedonism: A Review and Discussion of Recent Findings in the Marketing and Consumer Behavior Literature," *Business Horizons* 53 (3): Ch. 5, 2010. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2009.12.005.
[53] Dennis Soron, "Sustainability, Self-Identity and the Sociology of Consumption." *Sustainable Development* 18 (3): 172, 2010.
[54] Dennis Soron, 172.
[55] Dennis Soron, 173.

Environmental researcher Alan Durning argues, consumption has today become 'our primary means of self-definition', leading us to attempt 'to satisfy with material things what are essentially social, psychological, and spiritual needs'.[56] The problem that arises from studying the sociology of consumerism is its clash with extreme environmentalism. The stress on relinquishing consumption taints environmental sustainability practices because it positions the audience as mindless and privileged, when in reality they strongly intersect.[57] Patagonia as a competitor does a great job relinquishing this negative assumption by persuading their audience to buy their products because they are serving a common goal.

Identifying consumerism as the ability to define a person's individuality strips the environmental implications from these patterns of need and want for trivial products, but it clearly does not have to.[58] If the brand can market its shoes as not only long-lasting products but also a purchase emulating cultural expression in various audiences in the United States, then there is a window to advertise as sustainable. Due to Dr. Martens' ambiguous consumer demographic, the brand has the potential to target consumers who are already talking about sustainability efforts.

[56] Alan Durning, *How Much Is Enough? The Consumer Society And The Future Of The Earth,* W. W. Norton & Company, page 23, 1992.
[57] Dennis Soron, "Sustainability, Self-Identity and the Sociology of Consumption." *Sustainable Development* 18 (3): 2010, Page 175.
[58] Dennis Soron, 176.

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