

A Work Project, presented as part of the requirements for the Award of a
Master's Degree in Management from the Nova School of Business and Economics.

LEVERAGING EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES IN THE FASHION INDUSTRY TO
ENHANCE THE PERCEPTION OF GEN Z – A CASE STUDY OF DIESEL

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Abstract

This Work Project assesses how emerging technologies can alter Gen Z's perception of fashion brands in the premium and luxury sectors. It examines the three brands, Diesel, Louis Vuitton, and The Attico, each with distinct challenges, and evaluates how technologies can enhance their appeal to Gen Z. A mixed methodology, blending quantitative analysis with qualitative interviews, elucidates Gen Z's current perceptions and includes industry expert opinions and Gen Z interview feedback for strategy validation. Research findings suggest that luxury and premium fashion brands can improve their positioning and perception of Gen Z by strategically using technologies within their current objectives.

Keywords

Gen Z, Fashion Industry, Luxury Industry, Premium Brands, Emerging Technologies, AR and VR, Generative AI, 3D Printing, Marketing

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1. Introduction

As the importance of Generation Z (Gen Z) for brands rises, so do the assumptions trying to pin down the unique characteristics of this generation. They are claimed to be the “most sustainable” and the “most digitally savvy” (Maguire 2023). As fashion brands have always chased the youth (Sherman and Lee 2022), Gen Z’s consumption behavior is highly complex, making it increasingly difficult for brands to unlock their valuable spending power (Schneider and Lee 2022). Despite the challenge, Gen Z accounts for 25% of the world’s population, and their overall spending power is estimated to expand three times faster than previous generations (Kuzminov 2023). Ultimately, in an ever-changing landscape, every player in the industry faces the critical question: How can brands embrace innovation to keep up with Gen Z’s demands and desires and positively influence their perception of the brand?

In recent years, the success and dominance of e-commerce and social media have shown that technology has drastically changed the fashion industry and will continue to do so, as current trends in the industry saw a significant rise in investment in fashion technologies in 2021, with the top 50 investments increasing in value by 66% from 2019 (McKinsey 2022). The digital transformation has altered the role of the consumer from being a passive observer to gaining a voice to express their needs and preferences (Deloitte 2018). The shift sets standards for brands to meet by providing a seamless and consistent shopping experience across various channels and platforms. Experimenting with new emerging technologies is crucial for brands to create unique and memorable experiences that allow more profound interaction with consumers on multiple dimensions and simultaneously provide a competitive edge in a highly competitive industry (McKinsey & Company 2019). In an era of conglomerates and a highly concentrated market, the fashion industry is continuously dominated by the established luxury

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groups LVMH, Kering, and Richemont. The ongoing trend of mergers and acquisitions to further diversify portfolios and increase market power ultimately poses a threat to less established and independent labels (Sherman 2022). The high level of competition is further intensified by the emergence of premium brands, blurring the boundaries between accessible fashion and luxury fashion, and thus paving the way for further entrants and competitors.

For fashion brands to better understand how they spend precious resources and apply new technologies, a better understanding of the perception of Gen-Z is required. Therefore, the following research question was developed:

RQ: How can premium and luxury fashion brands leverage emerging technologies to overcome their unique challenges, based on Gen Z's brand perception?

The social relevance of this study lies in its potential to contribute to the ongoing debate on the application and acceptance of new technologies and the efforts of brands to attract the highly sought-after Gen Z as customers. The established brands Louis Vuitton and Diesel can significantly impact the fashion industry and set an example for other companies, but also The Attico for new independent brands. In addition, the study explores the perceptions and values of Gen Z and helps to understand consumer behavior in the twenty-first century and the decision-making process of a new consumer group. Understanding these young consumers will help brands develop more effective strategies to meet those needs.

The scientific relevance of this work is that it contributes to the existing knowledge about new technologies in the fashion industry and their acceptance by Gen Z by specifically analyzing brands in different phases, positioning, and problems. Furthermore, previous studies have focused on the general fashion industry and neglected the diversity of individual players. Diesel, Louis Vuitton, and The Attico are used as examples, as the diverse positions of the

brands offer the possibility to generalize the results to different sectors of the industry. By analyzing the critical characteristics of Gen Z consumers, this study provides a new perspective on the impact of social and cultural factors on consumer behavior and opens new avenues for future research in this area. The approach of this Work Project is illustrated in the methodology.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Luxury Industry

The Luxury Fashion Industry is a rapidly growing sector with a market value of €345 billion in 2022. Despite uncertain economic conditions, it is expected to grow between 5-12% to reach €360 to €380 billion in 2023 (Bain & Company 2023). Luxury fashion sales are predicted to increase by 3-8% in Europe, 5-10% in the US, and 9-14% in China in 2023 (The Business of Fashion; McKinsey & Company 2023). As a result, the market of personal luxury goods is expected to double in the decade from 2020 to 2030 (€265 billion to €530-570 billion), as projected by Bain & Company (2023). The luxury goods market has a significant market concentration, with five companies responsible for more than 40% of total sales in 2021 (Sherman 2022). Roughly 23% of the total sales in 2021 (€64bn of €283bn) can be attributed to the leading French luxury group *LVMH*, while its French competitor *Kering* retains a 6% share (€18bn of €283bn), followed by the Swiss-based group *Richemont*, which is responsible for 5% of total sales (€13bn of €283bn). Furthermore, a study by Deloitte in 2022 found that the top 10 luxury companies, including the aforementioned companies, account for 81% of the year-on-year growth in sales and 85% of the combined net profits of the top 100 companies in 2021 (Faccioli and Martin 2022). With growing merger and acquisition activity in 2021 and 2022, luxury goods companies are looking for opportunities to expand their brands, increase control over supply chains and distribution channels, and improve their digital capabilities. This

trend will continue to solidify these current market dynamics, making it increasingly difficult for smaller and independent companies to remain profitable (Sherman 2022).

Definition of “Luxury”

Defining "luxury" is a multifaceted task influenced by various factors, including the situation, geographic location, temporal context, and the individual's perspective (Cabigiosu 2020). Furthermore, *luxury* is a dynamic concept that constantly evolves over time. The origination of the term could be the Latin word "luxus" suggesting an abundance or excess in lifestyle beyond actual needs (Sombart 1967) and "luxuria" indicating opulence and a lascivious lifestyle (Lipovetsky and Roux 2003). Additionally, it can also tie to the French "loxos", meaning deviation from the norm (Mattia 2013). This notion is echoed by Kapferer and Bastien (2012), who associate luxury with "luxation", implying a significant deviation from usual practices, often involving high-value experiences, objects, and services with symbolic importance, commanding prices far exceeding the average, not based on production costs.

Premium vs. Luxury

The terms *luxury* and *premium* are often used interchangeably, leading to confusion. Premium brands may imitate luxury codes, creating a blurred distinction between the two concepts. This ambiguity is further reinforced when premium brands are perceived as more innovative. Additionally, the overlapping price range between premium and luxury products complicates this differentiation (Kapferer and Bastien 2012). The most recent development of “*Democratization of Luxury*” further contributes to the blurring of the boundaries. Fostered by the rapid growth of the luxury industry, this phenomenon refers to the trend of luxury goods becoming more accessible to a broader range of consumers, challenging traditional definitions

based on the scarcity and physical rarity of a luxury good and creating the tension of maintaining exclusivity whilst attempting to reach a more comprehensive market (Shukla, et al. 2022).

The differentiation between premium and luxury brands is grounded in distinct attributes. Premium brands aim to create the best product in their category, focusing on customer needs, quality, and innovation, while luxury brands emphasize heritage, prestige, and exclusivity, often being defined by the creator's vision. The correlation between price and function is evident in premium brands as they charge a price premium for higher quality products. They are more accessible and aim to set industry standards through exceptional quality (Sung 2018, Miller 2023). In contrast, price alone is not enough to identify luxury products, as it is often a reflection of the brand's image and prestige (Kapferer and Bastien 2012). Luxury brands embody multi-layered attributes beyond economic value such as innovation, creativity, heritage, selective distribution, storytelling and rarity, both in terms of the product's material and craftsmanship, as well as the exclusivity of the customer base (Kapferer 1997, Fabris 2003, Corbellini and Stefania 2015).

In summary, the differentiation between luxury and premium brands lies in their core attributes and market approach. Premium brands focus on superior quality, customer needs, and innovation, with a price that reflects product functionality. Luxury brands, on the other hand, are characterized by their heritage, prestige, and exclusivity, with pricing often based on brand image and prestige rather than functionality.

2.2. Gen Z in the Luxury and Premium Fashion Industry

Generation Z, commonly referred to as “Gen Z” is currently the second youngest generation – preceded by millennials and followed by Generation Alpha. Akin to previous generations, Gen Z has been shaping and transforming many aspects of life, the broader population,

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and consumption in general (Francis and Hoefel 2018). In the luxury and premium fashion industry, Gen Z has supported the growth and further expansion of the market (D'Arpizio, Levato and Prete, et al. 2020). Already, Gen Z accounts for 25% of the world's population (Sherman and Lee 2022) and Bain & Company suggest that the overall spending pattern of Gen Z and the following Generation Alpha is estimated to expand three times faster than those of the previous generations by 2030 (D'Arpizio, Levato und Prete, et al. 2023). By 2035 Gen Z's spending is expected to make up 40% of the global market for personal luxury (The Business of Fashion 2021).

Gen Z Definition and Characteristics

More generally, a generation is defined in the literature as “the entire body of individuals born and living at about the same time” (Seemiller and Grace 2019). Gen Z can be roughly specified as people who were born between 1997 and 2012, placing them between 11 and 26 years old, at the time of writing (Wilson 2021). Important cultural and societal issues, as well as political, socioeconomic, and technological events, shape the overall characteristics of each generation and the impact it has on its surroundings (Seemiller and Grace 2019). The unique characteristics of Gen Z include being the first generation where technology is integrated and present in almost all aspects of life, which is typically why this generation is thus often referred to as “iGen” or “Digital Natives” (Francis and Hoefel 2018). Additionally, Gen Z is known for its “*idealism*” in its pursuit of social justice and equality by promoting diversity and inclusivity (McKinsey & Company 2023). Self-expression and individuality are also widely celebrated among this generation, seeking out unique and personalized experiences and customization

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(Francis and Hoefel 2018). Gen Z has also witnessed several economic challenges, most recently the COVID-19 pandemic, and therefore tends to be financially cautious and less stable than previous generations (Schneider and Lee 2022).

Gen Z Characteristics in the Fashion Industry

The typical characteristics of Gen Z mentioned above are mirrored in its consumption behavior in the fashion industry, including the luxury and premium segment. Gen Z's impact is predicted to be disruptive and focused on revolution, which poses a unique challenge for brands to capture the very promising spending power and demands for change in many aspects. The tech-savviness of this generation also demands new business models and innovative consumer engagement (The Business of Fashion; McKinsey & Company 2023). Therefore, those fashion brands that embrace emerging technologies can differentiate themselves and create unique experiences that resonate with Gen Z (The Business of Fashion 2022). According to The Business of Fashion Insight Report, Gucci is the only luxury brand to feature in the top 10 favourite fashion brands among Gen Z, securing the second spot (Schneider and Lee 2022). Gucci has been at the forefront of utilising emerging technologies to appeal to younger demographics. Through initiatives like their early entry into the virtual gaming world and their general omnichannel approach, the brand was able to attribute 50% of its sales to Millennials and Gen Z (G & Co 2023). As 98% of luxury consumers are present online, luxury brands must integrate a strong digital approach (G & Co 2023). Growing up in a digital age with easily accessible information, Gen Z demands diversity, inclusivity and values that need to be reflected in the products, marketing, and advertising of a brand (Bakhtiari 2022). Closely tied to this is the need for representation and self-expression. Gen Z views fashion as a means of self-enhancement,

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social recognition, and identity construction (Francis and Hoefel 2018). Being more environmentally conscious than previous generations, Gen Z is placing greater emphasis on the impact that brands have on the climate crisis and is advocating for a more sustainable fashion industry (Schneider and Lee 2022). Although being more critical of sustainability matters, the paradox of Gen Z increasingly supporting fast-fashion players like Shein, due to their trend-chasing habits, proves the complexity for brands attempting to please this generation (McKinsey & Company 2023). Fast fashion can be defined as a business model that is built on the quick production and consumption of fashion at an affordable price point, which is highly criticized for its negative environmental and social impact (Niinimäki, et al. 2020). At the same time, however, there is an emerging trend of Gen Z wanting to support smaller more underrepresented designers. Even though they are less financially stable than previous generations, a large percentage of Gen Z's disposable income is spent on fashion. Although the spending on luxury fashion is limited, a majority of this generation aspires to purchase more luxury clothing as they gain purchasing power (Schneider and Lee 2022).

To conclude, with a growing purchasing power Gen Z is expected to continue to transform the luxury fashion industry over the next years. The tech-savviness and demands for diversity, inclusion, and representation, as well as sustainability, are all characteristics that brands need to adapt to in order to secure their future. Luxury brands like Gucci have already successfully embraced and captured Gen Z, by leveraging more digital approaches and providing more engaging consumer experiences. As a result, it is strongly suggested that emerging technologies provide a valuable opportunity for premium and luxury fashion brands to gain access to younger demographics, and to attract as well as align their values and preferences to them.

2.3. Emerging Technologies in the Luxury & Premium Fashion Industry

Emerging technologies are defined as a broad range of technologies that have the potential to trigger significant technological, cultural, or economic change. Typically, these technologies are referred to as "emerging" because, whilst they have been developed, they are either i) not yet widely used or ii) are sufficiently expensive that they are too infrequently to bring about meaningful socioeconomic transformation. Some emerging technologies are previously invented technologies which are now more affordable or widely available. For instance, television, computers, and cell phones were invented decades before they became widespread enough to have a significant cultural impact (Kte'pi 2023).

The spectrum of emerging technologies is broad and diverse, encompassing a range of ground-breaking innovations that promise to fundamentally change a wide variety of industries. This thesis focuses on Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR), Generative AI and 3D Printing, as these exhibit significant innovation and growth potential, especially in the premium and luxury fashion industry. In particular, AR and VR have the potential to reshape the industry. It is predicted that the AR and VR market in retail will increase by 67% and reach around 2.4 billion dollars by 2027 (Alsop 2023). In addition, generative AI will be examined in more detail as part of this thesis due to its considerable, still largely untapped potential in the fashion sector. A McKinsey report shows that 75% of fashion executives see generative AI as key to the future, but only a minority have already integrated this technology into creative design and product development processes (The Business of Fashion; McKinsey & Company 2023). The discrepancy between interest and application indicates significant opportunities for innovation. Lastly, 3D Printing has the potential to revolutionize the fashion industry. For instance, the market value of 3D Printing is estimated to reach USD 34.5 billion by 2028 and is

expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 18.1% from 2023 to 2028 (Markets and Markets 2023). The conclusion to focus on these technologies in this paper is based on the recognition that the potential of these technologies is still largely untapped and represents fertile ground for groundbreaking applications and transformative advances in the luxury fashion industry.

2.3.1. Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality

Augmented Reality and Virtual Reality are immersive technologies that redefine our interaction with both digital and physical realms (Shirmohammadi and Shen 2008). AR involves overlaying digital information onto the real world, enhancing our perception, and providing an enriched experience. It is often made accessible using devices like smartphones, smart glasses, or AR headsets, enabling users to interact with both the physical and digital aspects of their environment simultaneously (Johnson 2023). On the other hand, VR immerses users in a completely virtual environment, isolating them from the physical world and allowing for immersive, simulated experiences. It creates a fully immersive digital environment that users can explore and interact with through specialized VR headsets. These headsets transport users to a simulated reality, completely separating them from their physical surroundings and providing an immersive experience that can range from educational simulations to entertainment content (Johnson 2023).

Augmented and Virtual Reality in Luxury and Premium Fashion Industry

AR and VR is also finding application in the fashion industry. The transformative technology offers numerous opportunities to improve various aspects of the fashion industry, from design and production to retail and personalized customer experience.

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Enhancing the design process is one of the key use cases. AR and VR enable to create and test designs in a virtual environment. This reduces the need for physical prototypes, accelerates the design process, and significantly cuts sampling costs, allowing for more experimentation and creativity (Shivangi 2022). Additionally, AR and VR enable a personalized customer experience. This involves digital enhancements that enrich the real-world shopping experience, such as virtual try-ons, allowing customers to try products virtually before purchasing (Toppan n.d.). Likewise, the technology facilitates collaboration with customers to create unique and customized items, by providing a virtual demo version of a product, enabling customers to see how the final product will look in real life. This reduces wasteful expenditures in the production of sample items and improves customer experience and brand perception (Mathur 2022). AR and VR also find application in marketing and can be used to create virtual fashion shows and showrooms, enhancing engagement and brand visibility. It also enables a unique marketing experience and creates a connection with tech-savvy consumers (Empevia 2021).

2.3.2. Generative AI

In addition to Augmented and Virtual Reality, Generative AI also plays an important role in the fashion industry. In the broader context of artificial intelligence, Generative AI refers to a class of technologies and algorithms that exhibit an extraordinary capability: the autonomous generation of novel content, data, or information. This capability spans a wide range of domains, including text, images, audio, code, and simulations without requiring direct human input or explicit programming instructions (McKinsey & Company 2023). Generative AI systems essentially rely on machine learning techniques as their foundation. These techniques enable these systems to recognize and internalize patterns from existing data, which then serve as the basis for producing diverse and creative results. This innovation has profound implications

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for multiple industries by improving content creation, problem-solving, and driving innovation. Generative AI represents a significant advancement in the field of Artificial Intelligence and differs from traditional AI models that are primarily concerned with identifying and categorizing data that already exists. Instead, generative AI drives us forward by generating entirely new and original content. This transformative technology is embodied in models such as GPT-3.5 and DALL-E, which are advanced deep-learning models that can handle complex tasks simultaneously (McKinsey & Company 2023). The potential applications of generative AI are vast and promise to revolutionize industries by streamlining content creation, optimizing operational efficiency, and improving the overall customer experience. The ability to work with unstructured data such as raw text, images, and video enables the creation of a range of innovative media formats, including scripted narratives, intricate 3D designs, and lifelike virtual models. This offers the fashion industry an unprecedented wealth of possibilities in the world of artificial intelligence (McKinsey & Company 2023).

Generative AI in the Luxury and Premium Fashion Industry

As a powerful force, generative AI is capable of fundamentally transforming the entire value chain of the luxury and premium fashion industry, from the design process to the prediction of trends (Bain 2023, Harreis, et al. 2023). The enhancement of design concepts and design generation are important use cases for Generative AI in the fashion industry. The technology is also used in the creation of visual content and marketing images. This enriches idea generation as well as design possibilities, whilst shortening the timeline for content creation (Harreis, et al. 2023). Similarly, the use of Generative AI in the creation of sales descriptions and marketing content can also increase efficiency in this regard. In terms of product customization, generative AI can be used to tailor products to the individual topography and preferences of consumers,

enhancing product fit and fostering a stronger connection between a brand and its customers (Shoplazza Contributor 2023). Generative AI can also be used for personalized styling recommendations and virtual customer care, which also increases loyalty and the overall customer experience (Harreis, et al. 2023). Even in terms of trendspotting and marketing precisions the technology finds application. By analyzing unstructured data to predict trends, targeted and flexible marketing strategies can be developed for the luxury and premium fashion industry. This allows more personalized marketing activities (Harreis, et al. 2023). Furthermore, Generative AI can be used to optimize the store layout with the help of AI-driven data analysis and also to improve the overall in-store experience (Shoplazza Contributor 2023).

2.3.3. 3D Printing Technology

3D Printing technology refers to a manufacturing process that utilizes adhesive materials, such as powder metal or plastic, to create objects through layer-by-layer printing based on digital models. It is often termed rapid prototyping technology due to its ability to produce objects quickly (Cheng 2022). Originally applied in mold manufacturing and industrial design, 3D Printing has evolved to encompass the production of various items, and now finds applications in diverse industries, from aerospace engineering to jewelry and footwear. The technology's significant feature is the production of customized goods in response to market demand, facilitating a new economic growth point in the modern service industry. It enables quick adaptation to market needs and the establishment of a production mode characterized by remote customization, local production, and innovative changes in the production and operation process (Zhang 2022, Cheng 2022).

3D Printing in Luxury and Premium Fashion Industry

The merging of 3D Printing technology with the luxury and premium fashion industry is changing the way high-end clothing and accessories are designed, produced, and experienced (Morand 2016). This combination offers new opportunities for creativity, sustainability and personalized luxury that are changing the face of fashion (McCormick, et al. 2019). Enhancing the design process is one of the key use cases of 3D Printing within the fashion industry. As the technology can be utilized for the creation of intricate shapes and textures, which are not possible with traditional methods, creative boundaries in design can be expanded and innovation in design and craftsmanship can be fostered (Vanderploeg, Lee und Mamp 2017). Furthermore, 3D Printing enables and streamlines the creation of unique and personalized fashion items, contributing to an overall enhanced customer engagement. By implementing in-store 3D Printing studios, the production process transparency can be improved (Chakraborty and Biswas 2020). 3D Printing technology also contributes to increasing efficiency, facilitating faster prototyping (Morand 2016) and demand-driven production. This contributes to the acceleration of the overall creative process and the improved sustainable use of resource, attracting environmentally conscious customers while underlining the brand's commitment to innovation (Morand 2016).

In conclusion, the integration of Augmented and Virtual Reality, Generative AI, and 3D Printing in the luxury and premium fashion industry represents a paradigm shift that holds transformative potential across various dimensions. AR and VR serve as a dynamic bridge between the physical and digital worlds, offering real-time insights and simulations for enhanced design processes, supply chains, and personalized customer experiences. Generative AI, with its autonomous content generation capabilities, revolutionizes design concepts, marketing strategies, and customer interactions, helping drive innovation throughout the industry. Lastly, 3D

Printing has emerged as a game-changer, enhancing design possibilities, streamlining production processes, and fostering sustainability. Together, these technologies usher in a new era of creativity, efficiency, and customer-centricity, redefining the luxury and premium fashion landscape and positioning it at the forefront of technological advancement and sustainable practices.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Approach

Given the relevance of the study and after a careful review of the literature, a few questions remain to guide the rest of the Work Project. The overarching research question is:

RQ: *How can premium and luxury fashion brands leverage emerging technologies to overcome their unique challenges, based on Gen Z's brand perception?*

Due to its complexity, the overarching research question was divided into three sub-questions, each to be answered with one specific brand within a fictional consulting project.

RQ1: *How can emerging technologies help forgotten premium brands enhancing Gen Z's perception? – A case study of Diesel.*

RQ2: *How can emerging technologies help heritage luxury brands sustain their current success while enhancing Gen Z's perception? – A Case Study of Louis Vuitton.*

RQ3: *How can emerging technologies help new luxury brands to establish themselves while enhancing Gen Z's perception and awareness? – A Case Study of The Attico.*

In the scope of this overarching research question, three fashion brands in different stages and challenges were identified, and a fictitious consulting project was carried out for

each. The use of consultancy projects in research offers several advantages. It provides a practical application for theoretical concepts and demonstrates how strategies might work in real-life scenarios. They are inherently solution-orientated and fit well with research that aims to address specific problems through innovative technologies. This approach enables data collection and analysis that provides immediate insights into the strategies' effectiveness. In addition, consultancy projects provide adaptability to meet the three brands' unique challenges and market positions. Finally, this method is a practical test of theory and contributes valuable insights for academic knowledge and industry practice. Each consultancy project follows a six steps approach:

1. Project Initiation and Scope Definition: Understanding the brand's business, market, and challenges, setting objectives aligned with the research question, and defining the project's scope.

2. Data Collection and Analysis: Analyzing Gen Z's initial brand perceptions through a quantitative survey and identifying key challenges. The survey was conducted with Generation Z individuals born between 1997 and 2012. Due to limited accessibility, the random sampling method was chosen, and data collection was limited to readily available respondents. The detailed design of the survey can be found in Chapter 3.2.

3. Strategy Development: Development of proposed solutions within the framework of the technologies identified in the literature review and evaluation of the options with expert insights through semi-structured interviews and secondary research. The goal is to assess each technology application's feasibility, risks, and benefits for each brand. The detailed design of the expert interviews can be found in Chapter 3.3.

4. Implementation: Develop a detailed plan for the identified solutions.

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5. Assessment: Validate the solutions with consumers who have a personal interest in the luxury and fashion industry and might possess academic or professional backgrounds in this field through semi-structured interviews to enhance the quality of feedback. The detailed design of the consumer interviews can be found in Chapter 3.3.

6. Project Closure: Summarizing key findings and recommendations, reflecting on the research process, learnings, and their contributions to the research questions.

Following this, a comparative analysis is carried out to summarize the findings and to draw more a comprehensive conclusion about the overarching research questions.

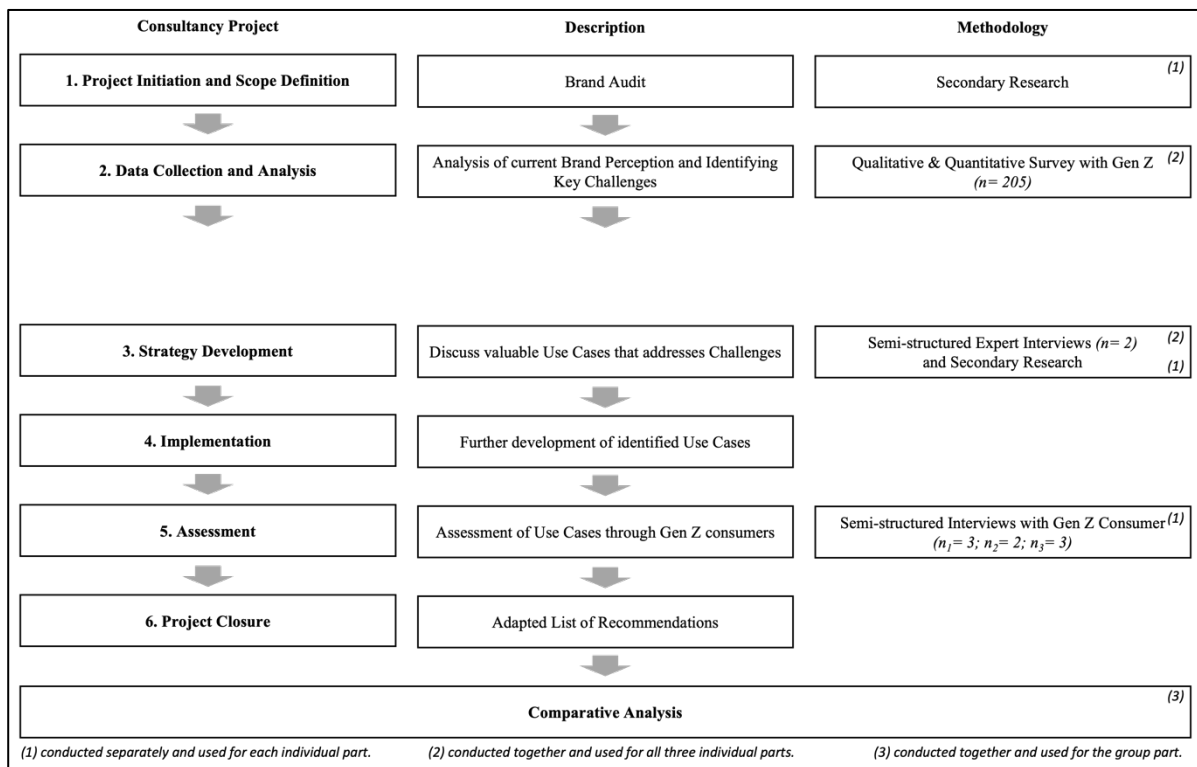


Figure 1: Methodology Approach

3.2. Survey

3.2.1. Survey Design

The survey was created with the online tool Qualtrics and was available for 14 days. The link was distributed to multiple WhatsApp groups, shared on social media platforms, as

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well as forwarded to LinkedIn profiles. In the survey, the participants were asked to provide their email addresses to be able to generate leads to contact for the consumer interviews at a later stage. The structure of the survey was created to assess Gen Z's initial perception and brand equity of the three chosen brands. The survey was divided into three parts, one for each brand, consisting of questions surrounding brand awareness, associations, attributes, feelings, quality, and loyalty. The survey's initial questions asked for the participants' age, only allowing those who fit into the category of Gen Z (18–26-year-olds) to continue, ultimately ensuring the relevance of the findings on the research topics.

3.2.2. Survey Results

A total of **206** answers were gathered (N=**206**), of which 135 (65.53%) were represented by the target group of 18-26-year-olds. Out of the participants, 81(60.71%) were female, 53 (39.29%) were male and 1 (0.74%) answered with others. In correlation to the frequency of luxury goods consumption, 21(15.56%) consume products regularly, 99 (73.33%) sometimes and 14 (10.37%) never. A detailed analysis of the participant's perception of each of the brands will be examined in the individual parts.

3.3. Interviews

3.3.1. Interview Design

In the course of this Work Project, two types of qualitative interviews were conducted, Expert Interviews (Appendix B) and Consumer Interviews. As the latter was individually structured and conducted, the detailed consumer interview guide as well as the transcripts can be found in Appendix D for Diesel, in Appendix E for Louis Vuitton and in Appendix F for The Attico.

Expert Interviews

The two Expert Interviews were structured to gain in-depth insights into the interplay between technology and brand challenges from industry experts and were employed utilizing virtual Microsoft Team meetings. Each of the meetings lasted between 45 minutes to 1 hour. The two interviewees were individuals with a professional background in luxury and technological industries. One of them is an adjunct university professor, teaching classes in the realm of fashion entrepreneurship and luxury to Master students, and the other expert is currently employed by LVMH. The following steps outline the scripted interview process: Firstly, the three brands along with their key challenges were introduced to ensure familiarity. Secondly, with the support of a decision matrix, the three technologies and their use cases were discussed and with the help of the Experts decided whether they addressed any of the brand's challenges. Thirdly, Experts are asked to share potential limitations and risks, as well as identify other brands that serve as benchmarks or success stories in employing similar technologies.

Consumer Interviews

The Consumer interviews were conducted using a mixed-method approach, utilizing face-to-face interviews, as well as virtual Microsoft Team meetings with a total of 9 participants, 3 for each of the brands. Each of the interviews lasted 30 minutes to 1 hour. The participants were individuals within the Gen Z age category, from different genders, nationalities, and professional backgrounds. To ensure a good quality of responses the Gen Z representatives were chosen based on their personal or professional knowledge of the fashion industry. The three strategies of each of the brands were presented and tested with the consumer to understand their perspective and ultimately validate the strategy. Firstly, each brand and its key challenges were introduced to ensure familiarity. Secondly, the proposed strategy to overcome their unique

challenges, informed by Expert interviews and secondary research, was presented. Lastly, Consumer feedback was gathered to assess the perceived effectiveness and appeal of the proposed strategy.

3.3.2. Interview Results

Decision Matrix Findings

The results from the decision matrix completed during expert interviews offer insights into which technology and use case combinations are most effective for each brand, considering their unique challenges. These insights were used together with benchmark companies and further secondary research to transform the identified use cases into practical strategies. The detailed findings can be found in the Chapter “Strategy Development” of the individual parts (Chapter 4.1.3, Chapter 4.2.3, and Chapter 4.3.3).

Validated Strategy with Consumer Feedback

Feedback from consumer interviews plays a crucial role in validating and refining the proposed strategy. It ensures that the strategy is not only theoretically sound but also aligns with consumer expectations and preferences. The detailed findings can be found in the Chapter “Assessment” of the individual parts (Chapter 4.1.5, Chapter 4.2.5, and Chapter 4.3.5).

4. Consultancy Project

4.1. Brand 1 – Diesel

This section will test the usability and effectiveness of new technologies applied to the Italian premium brand Diesel which has lacked relevancy in recent years.

4.1.1. Project Initiation and Scope Definition

Brand Introduction

The brand Diesel was created in 1978 by the Italian Renzo Rosso, owner of the OTB group. The OTB group includes other luxury brands like Maison Margiela, Marni and Jil Sander and ultimately serves as an Italian alternative to the French fashion conglomerates LVMH and Kering (Sherman 2022). As a pioneer in the denim and casual fashion movement in the late 90s, Diesel grew into a multi-billion-dollar lifestyle giant (Kansara 2014). During the mid-2000s, however, the brand faced challenges, resulting in a bankruptcy filing for its US subsidiary in 2019 (Sherman 2022). In 2020 Glenn Marten was hired as the new creative director to revamp the brand's product offering and reputation. With regards to positioning the brand within the premium or luxury segment (see Chapter 2.1.), Diesel will be considered a premium brand. While the brand incorporates elements of the luxury dimension, its pricing, accessibility, and targeting strategy are more aligned with the premium segment.

History

Born from the concept of “alternative energy” amidst the global climate crisis, Diesel entered the market in 1978 with the “intention of creating the world's most innovative denim” (Diesel 2023). By the end of the 80s, the pioneer in denim served as a reference for jeans and

workwear. From 1991 onwards, Diesel launched its first advertising campaigns with an innovative, yet provocative and controversial nature, meant to challenge the status quo whilst engaging the youth (Allwood 2016). Shortly after, Diesel opened its first Flagship stores in New York, Rome, and London. Since its success, founder Renzo Rosso established the “Only The Brave” OTB holding company in 2002 to acquire other luxury brands. Diesel started to face challenges throughout the 2000s, which led to the US branch bankruptcy filing (Reuters 2019). Recently, however, Diesel was able to create momentum again by hiring its current creative director.

Challenges

Since the premium denim boom in the late 90s / early 2000s, Diesel has been a pioneer and front-runner in the denim category. However, as time passed, the denim market evolved, and the category quickly turned into a commodity. Almost every direct-to-consumer and independent luxury label is now offering its denim range (Binkley 2020). The shift in the industry has exposed the brand to increasing competition, with Diesel finding itself competing with fast, and mass-market brands, as well as the luxury segment, entering a very challenging time in its brand history (Fernandez 2020). Additionally, Diesel founder Rosso himself had shifted his attention away from the brand Diesel and more towards building his Italian OTB group through several acquisitions of other luxury brands from 2002 onwards (Fernandez 2020). With the brand in the hands of other executives, the brand failed to capture several trend shifts such as the transition from “used” and bold looks to more timeless and subtle denim pieces, which gained popularity in the 2010s (Binkley 2019). With an unclear strategy and blurry brand identity, Diesel’s prices were lowered drastically, and retail outlets expanded aggressively to appeal more to the mass market.

Recent Financial Performance

The several challenges the brand was facing ultimately led to stagnation and the desire to modernize its approach whilst remaining true to its heritage (Fernandez 2020). To reverse the tide, Diesel has been in a turnaround phase since 2014. Unfortunately, the financial performance of Diesel is not being disclosed individually, but in recent performance, the OTB group has reported a net sale increase in 2022 by 12%, which is said to be mainly driven by Jil Sander, Marni, and Maison Margiela (Shoaib 2023). Even though Diesels' growth has reportedly slowed down, it remains the group's main brand and under the new creative direction since 2020 and a repositioning strategy is expected to contribute to the overall goal of reaching 2.7 billion by 2025 (La Conceria 2023).

Glenn Martens Era

Returning from the relevancy warning, Diesel revitalized its brand by appointing Glenn Martens as creative director in late 2020 (The Business of Fashion 2023). Martens, known for his work with Jean Paul Gautier and Y/Project, balances Diesel's collections with a blend of heritage and innovation, emphasizing sustainability and shifting the brand's focus to appeal to a younger audience (Kelly 2023). The Diesel Library, a genderless line featuring sustainable materials and QR codes for transparency, now represents 40% of Diesel's denim (Friedman 2022). The brand also recycles materials into "rehab denim" and collaborates with Tunisian suppliers on cotton recycling, reflecting a commitment to the fashion industry's circular goals (Shoaib 2022). Martens' efforts have resulted in an increased social media buzz as his designs are resonating with a younger and more fashion-conscious demographic (Sherman 2022), evident in 70% of the attendees of the Diesel 2023 fashion show in Milan being 18-25 years old. This idea is driven by Martens' mission of "democratic luxury" (Madsen 2022). Additionally,

Diesel has seen a 40% increase in e-commerce since 2020 (Binkley 2020), embracing digital trends with initiatives like NFTs and virtual showrooms (Binkley 2020, Saunders 2022).

4.1.2. Data Collection and Analysis

107 participants were considered to belong to the age bracket of Gen Z and shared their perception towards the brand Diesel. There were no significant distinctions in the responses between men and women among the participants. Thus, the analysis treats all responses equally. In the first part of the survey, there was no introduction or further information about the brand to avoid biases. Halfway through, however, the participants are presented with a mood board, giving an impression of Diesel’s most recent Instagram campaigns. The mood board served as a tool to analyze whether Diesel's most recent repositioning efforts have impacted the participant's perception of the brand.

Analysis Area	Respondents Insights	Implication
High Brand Familiarity & Feelings of Indifference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brand Awareness: 47/106 (44.3%) have heard about it and 43/106 (40.6%) are strongly familiar with it Emotions towards the brand: 67/107 (62.6%) lean towards indifference 	Diesel overall has a very healthy brand awareness among Gen Z. However, even though the participants are aware of it, the results indicate a lack of brand engagement and positive brand perception.
Indifference about Sustainability practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perception of Diesel trying to be sustainable or environmentally friendly: 75/108 (69.4%) feel indifferent and 19/108 (17.6%) somewhat disagree 	The general feeling of indifference is also mirrored in whether Diesel is perceived to be sustainable. Communicating those practices, however, is vital to fulfilling Gen Z’s needs and demands.
Lack of Self-Expression & Brand Associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of Self-Expression: Again, 52/108 (48.1%) feel indifferent and 27/108 (25%) somewhat disagree that Diesel allows them to express themselves Brand Associations: 30/108 (27.8%) used the adjective “outdated” and 21/108 (19.4%) “flashy”. 32/108 (29.6%) perceive it as “trendsetting” and 24/108 (22.2%) as “high quality” 	Gen Z’s desire for self-expression is a valuable component for brands to foster deeper and more personal relationships with this target group. In Diesel’s case, the majority feels indifferent or negative about the brand encouraging self-expression. Regarding brand associations, the survey indicates mixed emotions among the participants.
Perceived History, Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> History Perception: 72/108 (67.7%) are unaware of Diesel’s heritage 	The survey indicates that there is a general lack of awareness regarding Diesel’s heritage and identity, which is crucial to communicate in the

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quality Perception: 50/107 (46.7%) feel indifferent and 42/107 (39.3%) believe Diesel delivers high-quality products 	repositioning efforts to foster deeper relationships with Gen Z. The quality of the products being perceived as positive could be explained by Diesel’s positioning as a premium brand and price point.
Targeting Gen Z	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perception of Diesel targeting Gen Z: Half of the participants 51/108 (47.2%) are unaware of Diesel’s targeting intentions, but the other 47/108 (43.5%) feel slightly positive to very positive about it 	The findings concerning Diesel’s Gen Z targeting strategy reveal mixed emotions among the participants. One half feels indifferent, and the other half believes or even strongly believes that Diesel is making efforts to target Gen Z. This can be an indicator that the brand’s repositioning efforts since 2020 have reached some, but not all yet.

Table 1: Diesel Perception Survey Analysis

Diesel Mood Board

To give the respondents an idea of Diesel’s current branding and products, images from their Instagram profiles have been taken to create a visual. Out of the 30 Respondents who have previously characterized the brand as “outdated”, 20 / 30 (67%) associate positive emotions such as “creative and innovative”, “empowering”, or “confident” with the brand after seeing the visuals.

Identification of Key Challenges

In summary, the analysis of the survey indicated mixed perceptions among the participants, which highlights three core challenges that Diesel is currently facing. *Challenge 1* prevailed to be the general feeling of indifference towards the brand, confirming the lack of relevancy in recent years. Before showing the respondents the mood board, a significant portion stated that they were aware of the brand but did not feel any emotion or connection towards it. The respondents do not feel like Diesel allows them to express themselves, nor does it align with their values. Overall, the historical peak of Diesel predates the years of Gen Z resulting in a generational gap in brand recognition and relevance. *Challenge 2* highlights that even though the brand has been trying to come back to and strengthen its core identity since 2020, the results

indicate that the initiatives have not fully reached the average Gen Z consumer yet. To characterize the brand, the term “outdated” was used frequently paired with the general feeling of indifference towards Diesel, reinforcing the struggles the brand has had in recent years. Out of the respondents who used the term to describe the brand, 2/3 associated positive emotions towards it after being presented with Diesel's most recent Instagram campaigns in the form of a mood board. Interestingly, the question of whether Diesel targets Gen Z has been perceived rather positively by a third of the respondents. The results of the second challenge suggest that while Diesel's repositioning efforts and the strategy of targeting a younger demographic are in progress, some respondents have vaguely heard of it, but it is not yet resonating with the average Gen Z consumer. *Challenge 3* concerns the perception of Diesel's sustainability efforts. Almost all respondents feel indifferent about it, and some even negatively when asked if Diesel is trying to be sustainable. An overview of the challenges can be found in Appendix G.

4.1.3. Strategy Development

The key challenges that have been identified through primary and secondary research will be addressed in the form of a fictional consulting project. The previously identified technologies (Chapter 2.3.) and their use cases in the fashion industry were discussed and their relevancy for addressing the proposed challenges that Diesel is facing was evaluated. To gain deeper insights, interviews with two experts were conducted to complete a decision matrix (see Appendix H), highlighting each technology's application. In the following analysis, the expert's insights will be further evaluated and supported with secondary research to decide which use case to include in the implementation- and recommendation strategy for the brand.

The first *Use Case 1.1 Personalized Customer Experience* of VR / AR technology, involves VR profiles for virtual try-ons, a feature that Diesel has launched with their Meta-Avatars collection in collaboration with DressX in September 2023 (Hirschmiller 2023). Both industry experts agree that AR / VR can enhance Diesel's relevance (Challenge 1) and support sustainability (Challenge 3) among Gen Z. Expert 2 notes the excitement these technologies generate, potentially deepening Gen Z engagement through storytelling that offers escapism and reducing overconsumption, while Expert 1 sees benefits in personalized experiences. With Gen Z's interest in self-expression in virtual spaces, as indicated by 84% in a Vogue Business study who said their digital avatars influence their real-world style, digital fashion is a growing trend (McDowell 2023). The fashion brand Maje, for example, introduced the "Maje Dressing Room" for avatars to explore customization (Maje 2023). Following up on their announcement, the brand is facing a lot of criticism in the comment section due to the avatars and clothes not looking realistic and representing unsustainable body types (Instagram 2023). Even though the Experts did not mention any specific limitation when it comes to digital fashion in the form of avatars, in general, while digital fashion via avatars is still in an experimental phase without widespread market traction, differentiation will be key for future success (Nanda 2021). Diesel's current use of avatars in the virtual world will be presented to Gen Z consumers in the next step to address its relevancy.

Closely aligned, *Use Case 1.2 Creation of Customized Luxury Items* allows the customer to personalize specific items in the VR / AR space. Due to customization also being addressed and tested in Use Case 3.2 of 3D Printing, it will not be considered further.

The third *Use Case 1.3 Immersive Marketing Campaigns* has been evaluated as not fitting to the brand Diesel by Expert 1. Such initiatives are perceived as not aligned with Diesel's other marketing activities and will therefore not be considered further.

Overall, according to the experts, the use of VR / AR technology with *Use Case 1.1 Personalized Customer Experience* can support Diesel's Challenge 1 to overcome the lack of relevancy, as well as promote environmental practices in Challenge 3. Diesel's current VR / AR initiatives will therefore be tested.

Generative AI and its customer-facing use cases pose a unique opportunity for brands to facilitate hyper-personalization. Diesel prioritizing this as a core competency would allow for a more targeted marketing and e-commerce customer experience (Bain 2023). In general, Expert 1 believes that due to Diesel being an industrial premium brand that is more targeting the mass market compared to Louis Vuitton and The Attico, there is more room to experiment with generative AI, without hurting the brand image.

The first *Use Case 2.1 Creating Content and Marketing Imagery* was approved by both experts for Diesel, believing that this technology can help the brand enhance its recognition and boost relevancy, therefore addressing Challenge 1. One of Diesel's competitors Levi's, however, has recently introduced a diversity feature where AI-generated models presenting the clothes on the websites on all kinds of body types. With this implementation, the brand has faced a lot of backlash from the public, accusing the company of displacing human labor to save costs (Bain 2023). Expert 2 has also identified this issue as a limitation of the technology for Diesel. To avoid similar risks, *Use Case 2.1* will not be considered further.

Similarly, *Use Case 2.2 Tailored Product Recommendations* is identified by Expert 2 as a valuable market gap that can support boosting relevancy and address Challenge 1 among

Gen Z. Diesel adopting Spotify's recent introduction of auto-generated and personalized playlists, based on the consumer personal preference (Collins 2023), but with jeans. This can be implemented by using 3D scans of the body to get the exact measurements. In the denim space particularly, consumers struggle with inconsistencies in sizes. By providing a "Perfect Jeans Playlist" consumer create a profile with their exact measurements and will get recommendations that are perfectly tailored to their size and preferences. A Business of Fashion study has indicated that determining the right size and fit of clothes purchased online is the main obstacle in e-commerce and limiting the number of returns will ultimately have a less negative impact on the environment (The Business of Fashion; McKinsey & Company 2023). Expert 2 supports this and believes that enabling more customizations will lead to more conscious consumerism and therefore address Diesel's Challenge 3. Any technology, however, also carries its risks. With Generative AI, replicating existing biases within our society can become an issue that demands caution. By taking a 3D body scan and generating a customer avatar, Diesel needs to ensure that the AI tool represents each individual accurately and without biases, by continuously providing feedback to the systems (Bain 2023). Nevertheless, this idea will be explored further in the implementation and recommendation part and will be tested on consumers.

Use Case 2.3 Trendspotting and Marketing Precision within Diesel's production has been approved by both experts, but due to its lack of a customer-facing component will not be considered further.

To summarize the usefulness of generative AI in the context of the challenges Diesel is facing, according to industry experts, *Use Case 2.2 Tailored Product Recommendations* has a sustainability benefit and addresses Challenge 3. Additionally, hyper-personalization can help

Diesel overcome Challenge 1. Therefore, the second use case will be considered for implementation and recommendation.

The first *Use Case 3.1 Personalization and Collaboration of 3D Printing*, enables customer customization for specific items and *Use Case 3.2 Promoting Sustainability* adds to this idea by highlighting the use of sustainable materials for the 3D prints. Both use cases will be examined as one initiative, as the consumer-facing components complement each other. Both perspectives of the experts on this technology and its use cases reflect consensus. Expert 1 highlights that 3D Printing could be leveraged as part of an experiential marketing campaign, positioning Diesel at the intersection of technology and sustainability, as on-demand 3D Printing for certain items contributes to sustainable fashion practices. Moreover, like other technologies, 3D Printing allows hyper-personalization and therefore enhances the customer experience. Expert 2 focuses on the benefits of 3D Printing in terms of customer loyalty and brand awareness, through customer engagement. A study done by Business of Fashion and McKinsey highlights that 60% of customers across Europe still enjoy shopping in stores and that the estimated time spent in stores can increase by up to 4 times with installations allowing the customer to engage with technology (The Business of Fashion; McKinsey & Company 2023). However, if Diesel introduces this initiative in store, Expert 2 mentioned the limitation of associating 3D Printing with the use of unsustainable materials like plastic and emphasizes the importance of transparency, particularly with Gen Z consumers who are conscious about sustainability and ethical production practices. Thus, Diesel needs to communicate openly about the materials used. Therefore, a campaign allowing customers to use 3D Printing technologies in selected Diesel stores will be tested among Gen Z consumers.

Overall, both use cases within the 3D Printing technology have been approved by the Experts and will be considered for further implementation. Expert 1 highlights the benefit of the experiential aspect that can increase relevancy and therefore address Challenge 1, while Expert 2 stresses the importance of transparency and the consideration of materials that are being used in the process to emphasize the sustainability component addressing Challenge 3 and to also increase relevancy through customization.

In both Expert interviews, it became apparent that none of the Use Cases that were selected for this study address Diesel's Challenge 2 of bridging the communication gap of their recent efforts to reach the average Gen Z consumer. Due to the scope of the project, Challenge 2 will therefore not be considered in the implementation and assessment.

4.1.4. Implementation

Based on the analysis above, four of the use cases from the three technologies have been selected for further implementation. The visual outline of each of the strategies can be found in Appendix D.1, while the metrics for evaluating their success and potential adjustments are detailed in Appendix I. In the next step, each of them will be developed for Diesel and tested in semi-structured interviews with three consumers representing Gen Z.

Strategy 1 – Diesel's Existing Avatar Collection

For *Use case 1.1 Personalized Customer Experience* Diesel launched its first avatar collection in collaboration with DressX in September 2023. The first five looks from the physical collection are available in the Meta Avatars Store on Instagram, Facebook, Messenger and Meta Quest VR for virtual try-ons to provide a more personalized and enhanced customer experience (Hirschmiller 2023).

Strategy 2 – AI-Generated “Jeans Playlist”

For *Use Case 2.2 Tailored Product Recommendations* the “Perfect Jeans Playlist” will be created. An AI-generated customer profile with precise body measurements, adding hyper-personalization to the customer experience. Beyond weight and height, it will detail the body shape, by partnering with a company that provides a 3D body scanning app, such as the TG3D Studio (TG3D 2023). The profile will also tailor style suggestions by analyzing consumer behavior, past purchases, searches, location, and profile data.

Strategy 3 – 3D Printing Experience

In a marketing campaign and for a limited amount of time, Diesel can offer an in-store and live 3D Printing attraction for their retail customers covering *Use Cases 3.1 Personalization and Collaboration* and *3.2 Promoting Sustainability*. The customer can choose an item to personalize. The 3D printer will use sustainable material in the process and will communicate the details transparently to the consumer.

4.1.5. Assessment

Diesel’s current avatar collection, *Use Case 1.1 Personalized Customer Experience*, was received with mixed emotions, curiosity, and skepticism from the Gen Z representatives. All three consumers have not yet engaged with virtual reality within the realm of creating a digital identity that resembles the physical one and as of now do not perceive this initiative as value-adding. Consumer 2 is particularly hesitant about experimenting with virtual items and prefers to just have the traditional physical approach to fashion. Consumers 1 and 3 on the other hand show interest in trying these features out in the future. Particularly Consumer 1 imagines that virtual try-ons can encourage the consumer to experiment with Diesel’s more extravagant clothing items, that one would not try on in-store or order online. Interestingly, even though all

three Consumers have not tried it themselves, two of them suggest that such technology is relevant for their younger siblings, suggesting that such an initiative can improve the perception of the younger half of the general Gen Z demographic, ultimately tackling Challenge 1 to a certain degree. Regarding sustainability, Consumers 1 and 2 expressed concerns about the environmental cost of digital technology drawing a lot of resources and energy, whereas Consumer 3 sees a potential for more conscious consumerism due to virtual try-ons leading to more conscious purchases. Thus Challenge 3 was only addressed to a certain extent.

When presenting the “Perfect AI Jeans Playlist” initiative for Strategy 2 to the three Consumers, it was perceived positively. All three Gen Z representatives define the struggle of finding well-fitted jeans as a universal issue and highlight that AI-driven personalization is a solution that can make this process much easier, appreciating the convenience that this technology could offer and would ultimately make Diesel more attractive. Additionally, all three Consumers have mentioned that they would like to see the features of personalized style recommendations, not only suggesting the perfect jeans but also a complete outfit. Furthermore, Consumer 2 would like to add a swipe-through interface that suggests different looks based on the occasions, indicating a preference for a more interactive and seamless shopping experience. All three Consumers agree that *Use Case 2.2 Tailored Product Recommendations* can enhance the relevance among Gen Z, addressing Challenge 1. Concerning Challenge 3, Consumers 1 and 3 see an added value when it comes to reducing the number of returns due to wrong sizing and less shipping and packaging waste. Consumer 2 believes that this initiative could lead to more conscious consumerism for pieces that will fit and last longer. Ultimately all three Consumers perceive this initiative as being more sustainable. Overall, the Gen Z representatives confirm that Strategy 2 is addressing both challenges mentioned by the Experts.

Across all three responses, the in-store experience of 3D Printing for Strategy 3 is seen as a valuable addition to the shopping experience. The consumers appreciate the idea of having a Diesel item that is unique to them, increasing its value and its longevity. Consumers 1 and 3 immediately stated they preferred the installation to be in-store to create a memorable experience of seeing the process first-hand. Consumer 2 generally prefers e-commerce over retail shopping, but due to a restricted return policy for customized items, they see the benefit of trying the pieces on beforehand. Furthermore, Consumer 3 shared skepticism regarding the benefits of an online campaign. Each of the consumers touches on topics of sustainability differently. Consumer 1 believes that producing customized items on demand is more sustainable than mass production. In contrast, Consumer 2 highlights the longevity factor of personalized items. Lastly, Consumer 3 supports the use of sustainable materials in the process of 3D Printing. Potential limitations identified by Consumer 1 include the misuse of the technology by creating designs that could harm the brand's reputation. For this reason, it is suggested that Diesel implements certain customization guidelines to control the outputs. In summary, the assessment of Strategy 3 addressing both Challenges 1 and 3 was confirmed by the consumers.

4.1.6. Project Closure

To conclude the consulting project for Diesel, the essential insights gathered from secondary research, industry Experts, as well as Gen Z Representatives confirm that the use of emerging fashion technologies can enhance the brand perception of the target group and therefore answer the research question RQ3. The three challenges unique to Diesel that were identified in a quantitative survey (Chapter 4.1.2. Data Collection and Analysis) are essential when addressing the research question and overcoming those is important for the success of the brand. To develop strategies to address those, insights from industry Experts, secondary research and

competitor analysis were conducted to select particular use cases from emerging fashion technologies that are relevant to the challenges (Chapter 4.1.3. Strategy Development). The strategies were then tested among Gen Z Representatives to assess their relevance (Chapter 4.1.5. Assessment). The results indicate that Virtual and Augmented Reality (Strategy 1) in the form of an avatar collection, which Diesel has launched recently, is not perceived as adding any value to enhance the perceptions of Gen Z, neither increasing relevancy (Challenge 1) nor being regarded as more sustainable (Challenge 3). Based on this analysis and to overcome these particular challenges, it is thus advised to invest the resources in the other two strategies. The use of Generative AI (Strategy 2) by introducing “The Perfect Jeans Playlist” was identified by the Expert as a market gap, which was confirmed by Gen Z to address the universal issue of finding well-fitted jeans, making the brand highly attractive (Challenge 1) and due to fewer returns, also sustainable (Challenge 3). Lastly, 3D Printing Technology is perceived as enhancing Gen Z’s experience in the Diesel store and creating unique memories. The customization component aligns nicely with Gen Z’s desire for self-expression and individualism, ultimately enhancing brand relevancy (Challenge 1), whilst at the same time using and promoting sustainable materials (Challenge 3). Overall, all three strategies can support Diesel in increasing its visibility and ultimately improve relevancy among Gen Z to some extent. Similar to the promotion of sustainable practices, Generative AI and 3D Printing can convey these values to the consumers, by providing unique opportunities and experiences that resonate with the consumer.

5. Comparative Analysis

This chapter contains a comprehensive and joint evaluation and understanding of the three projects in a more general context. The aim is to compare the individual parts' findings, recognize similarities and differences, and ultimately answer the Research Question of which technologies are relevant for what brands at what stages.

Cross-Project Findings and Learnings

The fashion industry is highly diverse and dynamic, including various stakeholders and players. However, they all face the same challenge of effectively addressing their future customer group, Generation Z, to secure sustainable growth and future success. Industry experts say emerging technologies offer opportunities to make brands more attractive to Gen Z, a generation with unique values, demands, and expectations of the brands they consume (see Chapter 2.2.) (McDowell 2023). Due to the high complexity of the fashion industry, three brands were selected for this Work Project, each of which being at a different stage of market establishment and positioning to ensure diversity. *Diesel* is an established and widely recognized premium brand but has not yet been relevant to Gen Z. *Louis Vuitton*, as a flagship luxury brand, is performing extremely well financially, but according to Gen Z, lacks innovation and has therefore been replaced by its Italian competitor Gucci when it comes to appealing to Gen Z. *The Attico* is an up-and-coming independent brand that is on its way to positioning itself in the luxury segment. Without brand heritage and broad brand recognition, this young brand faces completely different challenges than the established brands Diesel and Louis Vuitton.

As a premium brand, **Diesel** operates in a different segment from Louis Vuitton and The Attico. While the brand has enjoyed great success at the beginning of its establishment, it has faced challenges, including defining a clear strategy and maintaining its relevance in the face

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of rising competition. Having its historical peak before the years of Gen Z, Diesel is now facing the challenge of bridging the generational gap to enhance the revitalized brand recognition and relevance amongst the younger demographic. Despite its repositioning efforts in recent years, Diesel's efforts have not yet significantly impacted the average Gen Z consumer. Its rich heritage and uniquely innovative identity, however, provide an opportunity to embed those values in the minds of consumers. Due to the brand's industrial and controversial premium positioning, Diesel can leverage and experiment with upcoming fashion technologies and new marketing approaches with a lower risk of hurting the brand compared to more prestigious brands like Louis Vuitton and ultimately find new ways to resonate with Gen Z.

Currently excelling in the luxury fashion market, **Louis Vuitton**, a renowned and established brand, faces the industry-wide challenges of adapting to shifting consumer demographics and ongoing digital transformation. Despite its strong financial performance and prominent market position, Louis Vuitton must address a significant hurdle: enhancing its appeal to the increasingly influential Gen Z demographic. This younger generation, poised to command substantial purchasing power in the near future, currently perceives the brand as less relevant compared to competitors like Gucci, which is seen as more innovative. To sustain and enhance its success, Louis Vuitton must develop a unique value proposition that resonates with Gen Z consumers. By leveraging its rich heritage and creative identity, Louis Vuitton has the opportunity to reinvent its brand image strategically. This involves maintaining its tradition of luxury and exclusivity and innovating in product design, marketing, and brand storytelling to cultivate a stronger connection with younger audiences. The key lies in balancing its esteemed legacy with contemporary appeals, ensuring the brand remains exclusive and relevant in a rap-

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idly evolving luxury fashion landscape. Louis Vuitton's challenge is integrating traditional luxury values with modern marketing strategies and technological advancements, thereby securing its leadership position in the face of changing consumer preferences and industry dynamics.

As an emerging luxury brand, **The Attico** faces the challenge of creating its brand identity and gaining recognition in a market dominated by established luxury groups such as LVMH, Kering, and Richemont. This dynamic of the luxury industry is particularly challenging for smaller independent brands. It is further complicated by the current trend of ongoing mergers and acquisitions, entrenching existing market structures and the power of the conglomerates above. The Attico needs to create a unique value proposition to carve out a niche in the luxury market. Furthermore, the brand must position itself strategically to gain visibility and acceptance in the luxury fashion industry. This involves a unique and appealing product design and effective marketing and brand storytelling to attract the interest of potential customers and reach a wider audience. The challenge of market establishment in the highly competitive luxury segment is to master the balance between achieving luxury status, traditionally characterized by rarity and exclusivity, while leveraging marketing efforts that ensure growth beyond the luxury industry experts. As the brand is still in the process of establishing itself, The Attico also has the opportunity to experiment more with new technologies despite this challenge. With leaner and shorter processes, decision-making paths, and flatter hierarchies, it may be easier to react agilely to changing customer expectations and test new strategies and technologies.

Comparison at Company Level

Diesel, Louis Vuitton, and Attico, while operating in different segments of the luxury and premium fashion market, have certain challenges and opportunities to navigate the modern fashion landscape, yet they differ in their approach and brand positioning.

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All three brands display **similarities**. On the one hand, similarities can be identified regarding the need to adapt to demographic change. All brands recognize the need to appeal to Generation Z, which is crucial to their future growth. To accomplish this, they need to understand and adapt to the preferences and values of this younger generation. On the other hand, each brand is facing the challenge of digital transformation, which involves integrating new technologies into their marketing, design and sales strategies. Finally, the brand identity is a crucial component of a new strategy for all three brands. Diesel wants to revitalize its brand identity, Louis Vuitton wants to reinvent it and The Attico wants to build and spread it, all three with the aim of remaining relevant and attractive in a highly competitive market. In addition to the similarities, significant **differences** can be identified. Firstly, in terms of brand positioning and heritage. Louis Vuitton, with its traditional brand image, differs from Diesel's industrial and somewhat controversial positioning. As an emerging brand, the company is still in the process of finding its identity in a market dominated by giants such as LVMH. Secondly, significant differences exist in terms of market challenges. Diesel continues to bridge a generational gap and revitalize its brand, while Louis Vuitton faces the challenge of reconciling its prestigious heritage with modern appeal. In contrast, The Attico is focused on establishing a unique market presence amidst industry giants and ongoing market consolidation. Ultimately, the brands also differ in terms of innovation approach and risk. Diesel's positioning means it can afford to take more risks in experimenting with fashion technologies and marketing approaches than Louis Vuitton, which must strike a careful balance between innovation and maintaining its luxury status. The Attico is a newer and smaller company that is more flexible and can experiment with new technologies and strategies. In conclusion, while Diesel, Louis Vuitton, and The Attico share challenges such as adapting to demographic changes and digital transformation, they differ significantly in brand positioning, market challenges, and approaches to innovation.

Comparison regarding Applicability of Technologies

The implementation of AR/VR, Generative AI and 3D Printing in the luxury fashion industry reveals clear differences in their applicability and effectiveness for the brands Diesel, Louis Vuitton, and The Attico, particularly in addressing their unique challenges and market positions. *Table 5* provides a comprehensive overview of how the emerging technologies were evaluated by industry experts and consumers at the use case level.

Technology	Use Case	Diesel		Louis Vuitton		The Attico	
		Experts	Consumer	Experts	Consumer	Experts	Consumer
1. AR and VR	1.1 Personalized Customer Experiences	X		X	X	X	X
	1.2 Creation of Customized Luxury Items	X		X		X	
	1.3 Immersive Marketing Campaigns	O		X		X	X
2. Generative AI	2.1 Creating Content & Marketing Imagery	X		O		O	X
	2.2 Tailored Product Recommendations, Support	X	X	O			
	2.3 Trendspotting & Marketing Precision	X		O		O	
3. 3D Printing	3.1 Personalization & Collaboration	X	X	X	X		
	3.2 Promoting Sustainability	X	X	O			

Table 2: Comparative Overview ("X" indicating that Use Case was either recommended by all Experts or approved by all Consumers, "O" indicating that Use Case was recommended by one Expert)

The effectiveness of **AR/VR** in the luxury fashion sector varies notably among brands like Louis Vuitton, Diesel, and The Attico, influenced significantly by their market status. Louis Vuitton, as a successful and established brand, effectively utilizes AR/VR technologies like smart mirrors to enhance customer experience and align with modern consumer expectations, particularly from Gen Z. The Attico, an emerging brand, can find value in AR/VR through virtual try-ons and immersive marketing campaigns, helping to build brand recognition and customer connection in the absence of physical stores. However, Diesel, currently a struggling

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brand, does not see similar benefits from AR/VR, indicating a mismatch between the technology and the brand's current market position and customer engagement needs. This suggests that the suitability and impact of AR/VR is contingent not just on the technology itself, but on the brand's status and its specific market positioning.

Generative AI's impact varies across Diesel, The Attico, and Louis Vuitton, reflecting their unique market positions. For Diesel, struggling to reconnect with consumers, AI-driven personalization addresses key challenges, enhancing relevance and sustainability, especially with Gen Z. The Attico, as an emerging brand, could benefit from AI in marketing for broader reach and personalized content, balancing the need to maintain a luxury appeal. However, for Louis Vuitton, an established brand, AI's role in customer experience enhancement has not markedly increased relevance or loyalty among Gen Z, indicating that its success depends on aligning with the brand's existing strengths and heritage. This indicates that the effectiveness of Generative AI is closely tied to each brand's specific stage of development and market presence.

The adoption of **3D Printing** can enhance customer engagement and addresses sustainability, proving beneficial in its turnaround efforts. Louis Vuitton, as a successful and established brand, can effectively use 3D printing to attract Gen Z consumers, offering personalized experiences that underscore its innovative edge. However, for The Attico, an emerging brand focused on building its identity, this technology seems less relevant at its current stage. This disparity highlights that the effectiveness of 3D Printing is closely tied to a brand's market status and strategic needs. While it can serve as a rejuvenation tool for Diesel and a means of enhancing luxury experience for Louis Vuitton, its suitability for The Attico could be limited due to different level of brand awareness. This suggests that the impact of 3D Printing in the luxury market varies significantly based on whether a brand is struggling, thriving, or emerging.

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To summarize, it can be assumed that the effectiveness of emerging technologies such as AR/VR, generative AI and 3D printing in the luxury fashion industry varies greatly among brands such as Louis Vuitton, Diesel and The Attico and depends largely on the market status and strategic goals of the individual brands. While established brands like Louis Vuitton could leverage these technologies to enhance luxury experiences and appeal to Gen Z, emerging brands like The Attico could use them for brand building and market entry. Conversely, for struggling brands like Diesel, the impact of these technologies is primarily focused on re-engagement and sustainability. This shows that the introduction and impact of these technologies are not one size fits all, but need to be tailored to each brand's unique position and objectives in the fashion market.

6. Conclusion

6.1. Summary of Findings

This research focused on how premium and luxury fashion labels can leverage emerging technologies to tackle their distinctive challenges, particularly how Gen Z perceives these brands. The study involved an analysis of three different brands each at a unique point in their market development to understand the impact of cutting-edge technologies like AR and VR, Generative AI, and 3D Printing within the luxury fashion sector.

As a struggling premium brand, Diesel is grappling with a lack of appeal amongst Generation Z consumers. This research found that Diesel could boost its appeal with Gen Z by adopting emerging technologies, primarily through groundbreaking marketing strategies and implementing Generative AI and 3D Printing (*RQ1*). Conversely, despite being a successful brand, Louis Vuitton encounters challenges in attracting Gen Z consumers. According to the

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research results, utilizing AR and VR and offering personalized experiences through 3D Printing enhances the brand's relevance for this demographic (*RQ2*). For The Attico, an ascending luxury brand, establishing a foothold in a market ruled by large conglomerates is crucial. The research findings suggest that using AR and VR to build a personal bond and familiarize the brand with the intended target group and using Generative AI to reach this target group authentically can increase the brand's visibility among Gen Z (*RQ3*).

The findings indicate that premium and luxury fashion brands can significantly refine their positioning and perception of Gen Z by strategically deploying emerging technologies, and thus, these findings demonstrate critical managerial implications for brands in the fashion industry. However, it is also evident from the study that the application of these new technologies needs to be customized to address each brand's specific challenges. The effectiveness of these technologies varies depending on the brand's market position, brand identity and strategic objectives. Established brands like Louis Vuitton should intertwine their storied heritage with modern technologies to maintain and bolster their standing. For brands like Diesel, aiming to rejuvenate their brand image, these technologies offer opportunities for repositioning and increasing relevance among Generation Z. Emerging brands such as The Attico can harness these technologies to establish their brand identity and penetrate a competitive market rapidly. This research underscores the importance of differentiated application of technologies in the dynamic realm of the fashion industry, particularly for engaging and attracting Gen Z.

6.2. Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

It should be noted that certain limitations have emerged in the context of this Work Project, which inform recommendations for future research directions. Acknowledging these limitations is central to contextualizing the research findings.

Sample Profile Limitations

The study's approach to defining Gen Z, focusing on individuals born between 1997 and 2012, represents a fundamental limitation due to varying definitions in the literature. This lack of consensus in defining Gen Z may impact the results, since if a different resource had been selected and thus a different age range considered, the results of our survey and our research might have been different. Therefore, future research should aim to establish a more universally accepted definition of Generation Z. Additionally, the survey, focusing only on age and gender, limits a diversity of perspectives. Important variables such as nationality, place of residence, education and income level were neglected. Including these additional demographic characteristics in future studies could provide deeper insights. Furthermore, the inherent subjectivity of survey responses, in terms of personal style and personal preferences or biases regarding the brands, is a limitation despite efforts to design a biased survey. Future studies could benefit from the use of mixed methods to compensate for the subjective nature of survey responses.

Time Constraints Limitations

The constrained timeframe of this research project limited its depth and comprehensiveness. Selecting only three emerging technologies - AR/VR, Generative AI, and 3D Printing - restricted the study's scope. Future research should include further emerging technologies that offer relevant use cases to the fashion industry. The limited time also meant that only some of the use cases for these technologies were investigated. In addition, use cases that are particularly difficult to test with consumers, such as trend prediction with generative AI, could not be evaluated due to limited time and resources. The timeframe also constrained the study's sample size, the number of industry experts, and consumer interviews. Extending the time for future studies could provide more substantial data and varied expert and consumer insights. In conclusion,

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although Louis Vuitton and Diesel are financially better placed than The Attico, no financial plan has been implemented to realize these strategies. Future research should consider this in light of the resources available to each brand.

General Limitations

Resource constraints significantly impacted the depth of this work. This included limited access to company sources and industry experts, which may have led to a narrower exploration than initially planned. Future studies should endeavor to develop more exclusive insights and a broader range of resources, for instance through collaboration with the investigated brands. Furthermore, language barriers could present a challenge as most survey and interview participants were non-native English speakers. This might have led to misunderstandings or misinterpretations, impacting data accuracy. Employing multilingual surveys and translators in future research could mitigate this issue. As there is little academic literature on the intersection of technology, the fashion industry and Gen Z, frequent reference was made throughout the Work Project to articles and reports from respected and leading fashion industry magazines such as Vogue Business or The Business of Fashion. This indicates a clear need for academia to shed more light on this industry sector and facilitate further academic publications.

In summary, while this study provides valuable insights, these limitations must be considered when interpreting and generalizing the research findings. Future research in this area should address these limitations to gain a more comprehensive understanding of Gen Z perceptions and usability of emerging technologies in the fashion industry.

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8. Appendix

Appendix A – “Most” Relevant Emerging Technologies

Technology	Use Cases	Description	Benefits
1. Virtual and Augmented Reality	1.1 Design Process Enhancement*	Create virtual replicas of luxury clothing and accessories, enabling designers to experiment with styles, materials, and colors in a digital environment (Shivangi 2022).	Reduces the need for physical prototypes, accelerates the design process, and significantly cuts sampling costs, allowing for more experimentation and creativity (Empevia 2021).
	1.2 Personalized Customer Experiences	Facilitating personalized shopping experiences and virtual try-ons to enhance customer engagement and accuracy in product recommendations (Toppan n.d.).	Optimizes the production process, ensures smoother operations, and enables proactive decision-making to address potential bottlenecks in the luxury fashion supply chain. Improves customer satisfaction, fosters brand loyalty, reduces uncertainty about fit, and elevates the overall luxury shopping experience through tailored interactions (Empevia 2021).
	1.3 Creation of Customized Luxury Items	Working with customers to create unique, bespoke luxury items. For example, virtual design workshops where designers collaborate with customers, fostering a sense of inclusivity	Enhances customer engagement, fosters a sense of exclusivity and loyalty, and elevates the perceived value of personalized luxury products (Empevia 2021).

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		and community in the creation process (Mathur 2022).	
	1.4 Immersive Marketing Campaigns	Craft augmented reality and virtual reality experiences for virtual fashion shows and showrooms to deepen engagement, amplify visibility, and foster authenticity (Empevia 2021).	Enhances the brand's storytelling, provides a unique and immersive marketing experience, and connects with tech-savvy Gen Z consumers (Empevia 2021).
2. Generative AI	2.1 Enhancing Design Concepts and Generation*	Utilize Generative AI to generate design ideas, convert sketches into 3D models, create limited-edition luxury items based on customer preferences, ensuring exclusivity and aligning with the desire for unique fashion pieces and enhance the overall creative output in luxury fashion design (Harreis, et al. 2023) (Bain 2023).	Enriches ideation, broadens design possibilities, and improves overall design creativity, allowing for more innovative and unique collections, drives anticipation and excitement and encourages repeat purchases.
	2.2 Creating Visual Content and Marketing Imagery	Employ Generative AI to automatically generate high-quality visual content for marketing, social media, and e-commerce purposes, such as sales description (Harreis, et al. 2023).	Offers creative freedom, shortens content creation timelines, and reduces logistical challenges, ensuring a consistent and visually appealing brand image (Taylor 2023).
	2.3 Customizing Products for Consumers*	Leverage Generative AI to tailor products to the individual topography and preferences of consumers (Shoplazza Contributor 2023)	Personalizes the shopping experience, enhances product fit and satisfaction, and fosters a stronger connection between the brand and its customers (Ajao 2023).
	2.4 Tailored Product Recommendations, Support	Utilize Generative AI for conversational shopping and customer service, e.g. virtual stylists who provide personalized fashion recommendations based on individual style preferences and current trends (Harreis, et al. 2023).	Tailored product suggestions, enhances the overall customer support experience, improves customer engagement and establishes the brand as a trusted style advisor (Ajao 2023).
	2.5 Trendspotting and Marketing Precision	Employ Generative AI to analyze unstructured data for trendspotting, enabling targeted and flexible marketing strategies in the luxury fashion industry (Shoplazza Contributor 2023)	Expedites content creation, personalizes marketing efforts, enhances digital shopping experiences, and improves overall customer service (Shoplazza Contributor 2023).

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	2.6 Store Operations Optimization*	Optimize store layouts using generative AI-driven data analysis, incorporating real-time video monitoring for operational efficiency and personalized customer service (Shoplazza Contributor 2023).	Improves the in-store shopping experience, equips sales associates with consumer insights, and enhances overall operational efficiency (Shoplazza Contributor 2023).
3. 3D Printing	3.1 Creative Design Exploration*	Utilize 3D Printing for the creation of intricate shapes and textures not possible with traditional methods, expanding creative boundaries in luxury fashion design (Vanderploeg, Lee und Mamp 2017).	Expands creative possibilities, enhances collection uniqueness, and fosters innovation in design and craftsmanship (Pasricha and Greeninger 2018).
	3.2 Personalization and Collaboration	Streamline the creation of unique fashion pieces using 3D Printing, encouraging collaboration with customers. Consider implementing in-store 3D Printing studios for personalized elements, allowing customers to witness the production of customized luxury items. (Chakraborty and Biswas 2020)	Boosts brand loyalty, drives exclusive revenue, and enhances consumer engagement by providing unique, personalized products. Adds transparency to production processes, reinforcing the brand's commitment to craftsmanship. (Sun und Zhao 2017)
	3.3 Prototyping and Refining Designs*	Employ 3D Printing for rapid prototyping and refining of designs, reducing the risk associated with traditional prototyping methods and speeding up the overall creative process (Morand 2016).	Speeds up the design process, reduces waste, and improves design accuracy, ensuring a more efficient and sustainable luxury fashion production (Sun und Zhao 2017).
	3.4 Promoting Sustainability	Utilize 3D Printing for on-demand production and efficient material usage, contributing to sustainable practices in luxury fashion. Showcasing the brand's commitment to innovation and eco-friendly practices. (Morand 2016)	Enables efficient use of materials, minimizes waste, enhances the overall sustainability positioning of the luxury fashion brand and attracts environmentally conscious consumers (Pasricha and Greeninger 2018).

Table 3: Identified Technologies and Their Use Cases

**Note: As these use cases are not directly related to the overall research question and do not have a direct impact on the Gen Z customer segment or contribute to addressing the identified challenges, they will not be further considered in this paper.*

Appendix B – Expert Interviews

Appendix B.1 – Expert Interview Guide

Formalities: *"Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. Before we begin, may I ask if it's okay to record this conversation for analysis and reference purposes? Do we have your permission to record this interview? During our discussion, we may discuss details such as your name, job description, the company or university you're affiliated with, and other professional information. Are you comfortable with us using this information for this project, while ensuring confidentiality and compliance with data protection laws?"*

I. Introduction and Background Information:

1. Please introduce yourself briefly, highlighting your professional background in luxury and technological industries.

II. Research Introduction

- Introduce Research Objective
- Introduce three Technologies: AR and VR, Generative AI, 3D Printing
- Briefly introduce the three brands, focusing on their history, current market position, and unique selling points.
- Discuss the key challenges identified through secondary and primary research

III. Detailed Evaluation of Technology:

"In the next step, we would like to fill out the following decision matrix with the help of your expertise. The aim is to decide which technology and which of its use cases could be interesting and feasible for which brand"

- Ask those questions for each Use Case and each Brand

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2. How, if at all, do you see the application of this Use Case enhancing any of the challenges of Brand X?
- Ask those questions for each Technology:
 3. Are there any concerns or drawbacks you can identify in implementing Technology X? (*legal, ethical, financial, or technological issues*)
 4. How can a smooth integration of this technology be ensured without disrupting the customer experience?
 5. In your view, are there any other luxury fashion brands successfully implementing this technology? If so, what can we learn from their experiences?

IV. Thank You and Next Steps

„Thank you for your valuable insights and feedback. Your expertise is greatly appreciated. If you are willing, we may reach out for further discussions or guidance as we proceed with our strategy. Would that be acceptable to you?

Appendix B.2 – Expert Interview Transcript - Inês Risques, Adjunct Professor at NOVA, Coordinator of the Luxury Stream

Interviewer

Could you please introduce yourself briefly, highlighting your professional background in luxury and also in the technological industries?

Interviewee

Sure. So, my name is Ines Risques. I am an invited professor at NOVA School of Business and Economics. I am also in charge together with another professor of the Luxury Stream Management, which is a specialization in luxury within the Master's in Management program. And I also teach or I'm in charge of a luxury seminar where I teach a class on fashion entrepreneurship. In that class, I focus a lot on new business models and a part of it is also the technologies that enable. I'm also doing a PhD on the topic of artificial intelligence applied to business and strategy. And I also have kind of a niche fashion brand that I manage as well. So that's kind of my link to luxury, to fashion and technology. Thank you very much.

Interviewer

OK, perfect. So, I will talk you through the first technology, which is AR and VR. And the way I'm going to do it is just I'm going to quickly highlight the use case again. And then we can discuss each of the brands and if it's helpful for each of the challenges in any way. The first one is the personalized customer experiences, which means using AR and VR for customers facilitating personalized shopping experiences and virtual clients to enhance customer engagement and accuracy in product recommendations. If you see the three challenges that Diesel is facing, do you think any of those three are being addressed with this technology?

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Interviewee

OK. Well, Diesel's problem is much bigger than that. It's not easy to just answer your question. I think for a brand like Diesel, leveraging online and on improving the customer experience online, it's something that it's okay. It's possible. So yes, I think the digital twin and this personalization of the digital experience would solve some of the problems, yes.

Interviewer

Okay, and talking about the same technology, do you see any fit with the issues Louis Vuitton is facing?

Interviewee

For Louis Vuitton, I think the application should be much more, how can I say, segmented or catered? I think for Louis Vuitton, this type of technology of personalized experience or virtual try-ons should be done, but I don't know if that's something that you are considering in your approach to the technology. They should do it in-store, not online. I think for a brand like Louis Vuitton, this should be done, yes, a virtual trial on probably the smart mirrors and this personal experience can be improved at the store so that it becomes much more interesting for a young client to go to a store and experience technology. This is something that you can search for at Chanel. Farfetch was developing this type of technology for the stores in China. I think it can be something interesting that for Louis Vuitton to use at the store. It would be a little bit of a different approach as the one I think you're kind of taking originally. In terms of the immersive marketing campaigns with virtual fashion shows, I think this could be interesting for Louis Vuitton to engage the younger generations who are not high-potential clients but are clients interested to keep or to engage. They could do virtual fashion shows for these consumers who are not going personally to the fashion shows. I think this could be interesting. And because

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fashion shows in the context of Louis Vuitton are more important than any of the other brands that you're studying. I think this particular part of the digital twin could be interesting for Louis Vuitton in a virtual way. In terms of The Attico, I think it's the same as Diesel. I think they can be innovative online, so they can do experiments with their websites and give recommendations to their clients.

Interviewer

Okay. Thank you very much. What do you think about the second point, the creation of customized luxury items? Do you see fit with any of the three brands?

Interviewee

Possibly. Although, again, I think because the brands are different, it's very difficult to apply them in the same way. For a brand like Louis Vuitton, of course, personalization of products is something that they do. This co-creation could be done in Diesel the same thing, and I think at The Attico as well. So, yes, I think for all of them. Yes.

Interviewer

OK, and what about the immersive marketing campaigns? You've mentioned that it would be a nice way for Louis Vuitton to engage with the customers. Do you see it also fitting to Diesel and The Attico or should they maybe try something else?

Interviewee

Yeah, I don't see such a fit because well at least for virtual fashion shows or showrooms. Showrooms perhaps for The Attico. Showrooms may apply better to The Attico because it is a niche brand that is more unknown. They could do virtual showrooms. But for Diesel, I find it a little bit more difficult because there is no link to the activities, to the marketing activities that they actually do.

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Interviewer

OK. Thank you. That's very interesting. And to sum up this part, we want to ask if you have any concerns or drawbacks you can identify with implementing AR and VR. For example, that could be legal, ethical, financial, also technological issues.

Interviewee

Well, I think there's always the issue of privacy. But I'm not an expert there. But of course, every time that you're dealing with gathering data, using that data from customers, from clients, from users, even if it is to personalize, you would need their consent and probably their proactive engagement in that activity. I think that is a big thing to explore.

Interviewer

Yeah. Okay and with your expertise how can the smooth integration of this technology be ensured without disrupting the customer experience? Without disrupting the customer experience?

Interviewee

Well, it needs to be integrated with whatever the brands are doing online. The problem is if the brands are not doing a good job online, it's not going to be this that will solve the problems that you have identified. You see? It's just not applying a new technology to kind of a broken online store or to a broken communication strategy that is going to fix the experience magically. I think there is something probably to be done before you implement this. You see what I mean? But I mean, if they have, probably Louis Vuitton, if they have a great online store or if they have great virtual images that they can use very high-quality content that they can share. I think it's very easy to implement that. Perhaps for Diesel, which is a little bit more mass or it's an industrial premium brand, not a luxury brand, of course, it's going to be much more difficult,

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but it can be more creative, perhaps. For The Attico, I think the brand probably has space to kind of still define that and implement things they haven't yet. But yes, I think it really depends on how the online experience is right now at each of these brands.

Interviewer

That makes a lot of sense. And when you think about this technology, in your view, are there any other luxury fashion brands that have successfully implemented this technology? If so, what can we learn from the experience? Is there any brand that comes to your mind when you think of these technologies?

Interviewee

You should look into Stitch Fix. Stitch Fix is not a brand, but it's a platform for personalized recommendations. It's exactly this. When you go, their goal is that way or DS. So Stitch Fix and DS, both are fashion platforms that try to completely personalize the online experience and the product recommendations. In terms of co-creation or customization, they do this differently, at least Stitch Fix, which is they find gaps in the market. Products that the customer needs, but there are no brands offering. They started producing those products, people with long arms or weird body shapes. So more than just personalizing or co-creating is really finding markets or product gaps that are not being addressed. You should look at the DS and Stitch Fix. And Chanel at the store, in-store technology.

Interviewer

OK, perfect. Thank you so much. We will now move on to the second technology we've identified. Moving on to the Generative AI and the first use case. It's about the creation of visual content and marketing imagery. Do you see the application of this use case enhancing any of the challenges of these brands?

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Interviewee

For this one is tricky. I think that we have it all now because it's just not a fit for the type of personalization that a luxury brand needs to give. And probably for The Attico, the same, because it's a niche brand, but it is still, there is a personal connection that cannot be kind faked with automation of chats or visual content. There's a lot of creativity, original creativity that comes. If you create something, if you generate something with artificial intelligence, basically you are kind of giving away your differentiating points. Diesel, perhaps. I don't think Diesel would be penalized for being probably more efficient, and probably having better customer service. To improve services and to improve communication, chats, sales descriptions, and visual content. So probably Diesel would be in a part of the market where this is not hurtful. So only to Diesel, I would say it applies.

Interviewer

The next use case is streamlining and copywriting content. You already said that this does not fit the two brands Louis Vuitton and The Attico. Could you maybe for the use case before the marketing imagery, would you say that creating marketing content also does not fit Louis Vuitton and The Attico?

Interviewee

I don't think it fits their model. No. Of course, I'm sure in the future there will be ways that it will be done. But the big part of luxury brands is their originality. They're creating things that haven't been thought of. When you use everything that has been done before to create something that is not really done by you, you lose a lot of what makes you a luxury brand. So yeah, I don't think it would fit. There is a lot about human content in luxury brands. And that's why for Diesel, which is an industrial premium brand, most of these technologies can be applied and

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help them not to solve the underlying problem, but to make them more efficient, to make them more up to date. The Attico, which is an aspiring luxury brand, I think it would lose this human component of luxury.

Interviewer

Thank you. For the third use case, the tailored product recommendations and support, for which of the three brands would you say the application is useful

Interviewee

Yeah, okay, it's the same answer.

Interviewer

Okay. The last one for the Generative AI is the trendspotting and marketing precision. How would you analyze this use case for the three brands?

Interviewee

For trendspotting, again, I think it would be interesting for Diesel. For Louis Vuitton and The Attico, it's not about trendspotting, it's about creating trends. It should be completely the opposite. It should not be used. Of course, it can be used as information, but not strategically to address the problems that they have. It's again for the same reasons. I think Clara, if she did the course, knows that luxury brands follow a very different business model. And when you automate, when you imitate, you lose what makes you a luxury brand. I think, again, for Diesel, it would be appropriate. For Louis Vuitton and The Attico, no.

Interviewer

Okay, thank you very much. Are there any concerns you can identify when implementing generative AI?

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Interviewee

Well, here the copyrights that I think you mentioned, of course, this will be an issue. Who owns this content? Who owns the even the creation of trends, the imitation of trends? Is it an imitation? Is it something new? This will be very tricky to give ownership to the original creators that are being used as a base for the generation of new information. This is the very, very tricky part, especially the creation of it, especially of the visual content, marketing, and trendspotting. Now, of course, in sales descriptions and chats, I think it's perfect. But when it's something creative that you're using in your own collections or in your campaigns, the brand, even if Diesel uses it, Diesel can be using something from Levi's 10 years ago and not even being aware of it. It creates a problem.

Interviewer

And how can a smooth integration of this technology be assured without disrupting the customer experience?

Interviewee

I think in this case it's just who is creating the content, not exactly how it is being communicated or reached to the client. I don't think it has a lot of implications on that.

Interviewer

And lastly, in your view, are there any other luxury fashion brands successfully implementing this technology?

Interviewee

Who is a good case for chats? Because mostly it's not in fashion brands. No, I'm not aware.

Interviewer

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Okay, thank you very much. All right, so then we will move on to the last technology, so 3D printing technologies. Do you see any application of this use case being useful and effective among those three brands?

Interviewee

I think it's not done with craftsmanship. It would almost be just an experience or a marketing campaign, something like that. But I think with Diesel, for sure, again, I think Diesel can use all of this to address sustainability, because they also produce in much bigger quantities, to do, but you're talking just on bespoke products, right, and personalization.

Interviewer

I would then move on to sustainability. Can this technology be used to promote sustainability?

Interviewee

Yes, so I think these addresses, and especially demand planning, I think it's very, very good. And I think it's something that fashion, in general, really suffers from. I think if 3D printing and more bespoke products are able to be produced at a low price or at a lower price than something very personal like luxury brands do, I think it addresses one of the biggest sustainability problems of fashion brands, especially for those who produce more. in the scale of sustainability and usage of resources, because they do mostly jeans as well. So, the same as Levi's who implemented a big sustainability practice. So, yes, I think this can be very, very good for Diesel. Again, I think The Attico can experiment because they're starting so they can innovate and understand new ways of producing bespoke products without still losing a luxury status that they still don't have. It's a matter of understanding how to use this to create a new luxury status a new craftsmanship So I think for The Attico especially because they're a smaller on-demand

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planning brand and pricing using this type of technology can be very interesting for them because they're a small brand and to make a better use of all their stock of the production and to do it as most bespoke at lower costs possibly is very good for them. But this is probably not in terms of solving the problem. So maybe it's not going to solve the awareness problem of the ethical, you see. But it might solve the sustainability concerns with Diesel, for instance.

Interviewer

Okay. And with implementing this 3D printing technology, do you see any concerns and drawbacks, be it legal, ethical, financial, technological?

Interviewee

No, here I don't see any problems, at least within my knowledge. Of course, operationally, I don't know.

Interviewer

And in your view, are there any other luxury brands or fashion brands that already implemented 3D printing successfully?

Interviewee

I know there are, but I cannot tell you examples. I don't know the names. But I'm sure it's being done.

Interviewer

Maybe one question, now moving beyond the use cases we presented to you, seeing those three brands, what would if you have to say one sentence, what would they need to implement to solve that challenge?

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Interviewee

I think it's all about their own brand identity and seeing which technologies best fits what they are, bearing in mind that they're not all the same. I guess if there is one sentence that can put them all under the same umbrella, I think it's that. It's understanding the brand identity so that you can connect that brand identity to the problems you identified and see which technologies make sense in the context of the identity of each brand.

Interviewer

And is there any technology we didn't cover so far that comes into your mind that we maybe also need to look at?

Interviewee

No, I think you have a good start. I think you have a good start. I think in 3D printing, I think there's a lot of demand planning that can be looked at. And I know Levi's was doing a lot with implementing artificial intelligence and being smarter in the way they produce. With pricing, it's not such, I don't know if it's such an applicable example, but with pricing, there is a platform called StockX that sells shoes and they define the price by demand and supply. It's not defined by the retailer, it's defined by the kind of who is looking for what, which makes much more sense than the current pricing being done in the market. I think you're looking at the technologies that are applicable to fashion. So yes, I think it's just the problems of the brands that are different.

Interviewer

All right. Thank you very much. We're really happy about your insights and the feedback you gave us. I think that's very valuable for us and for our further Work Project.

Group Part

Interviewer

Thank you very much. If you're willing, maybe is it OK if we reach out for further discussion and maybe questions?

Interviewee

Sure, of course! I hope to talk to you soon. Bye!

Interviewer

It was really helpful. Thank you very much for taking the time.

Note: This interview was conducted in English and transcribed with Cockatoo. Despite some review, there may be logical or grammatical errors due to the transcription.

Appendix B.3 – Expert Interview Transcript – LVMH Employee in Marketing and Activations

Interviewer

Could you please introduce yourself briefly, highlighting your professional background in luxury and also in the technological industries?

Interviewee

I currently work in marketing at LVMH. I do event planning, marketing and activations specifically for Hennessy. I did my bachelor's degree in the creative industry back then and also worked with marketing and everything related to fashion brands and music labels.

Interviewer

We have identified three use cases for digital twin technology that might be interesting. The first one is the Personalized Customer Experience. And that is to Build Digital Twin Profiles for Customers, facilitating personalized shopping experience and virtual try-ons to enhance customer engagement and accuracy in product recommendations. Can we talk about Diesel first? Do you see any of the three challenges that could fit?

Interviewee

I would say that these twin technologies are definitely a sustainable way of consuming fashion. If you say I'm going to try on 10,000 products and take them home and maybe buy them in the end because I'm too lazy to take them home again, then that's unnecessary consumerism. With this training technology, if you were to try on a well-designed product on yourself, as far as that goes, I would say that it would definitely be a sustainable initiative in that case. And I think also simply for the value communication, what's behind it. I think that whenever there's a bit of

Group Part

excitement, something new, it touches the consumer a bit more. What is also very important for Gen Z consumers is that there is transparency and authenticity. If you say you can try it on in any way, you can say, for example, I've created an avatar here or created a copy of myself and try it on in a scenario where I'm out in the forest or in a scenario where I'm in Paris. You can also incorporate it more or less through the technology somewhere, which in my opinion would be very innovative and also tell a bit of a storyline around it and also somehow have an authenticity for the consumer and on top of that is of course also exciting and something new and definitely creates awareness and also communicates a certain value, I think. So you could say that the first use case addresses all three challenges. Exactly, so you have a lack of relevance, then you have a communication gap. I would definitely say relevance is important and sustainability. With the communication gap, I don't know exactly whether I would classify it there because I think it's more something that you apply. You can communicate it through marketing and say, here we've just built a new technology, but I think it would be more about relevance and sustainability practices.

Interviewer

Okay, perfect, great, thank you. Then we can also work with the same use case at Louis Vuitton.

Interviewee

Yes, we actually have exactly the same thing with sustainability. Once again, of course, the sustainable aspect. You have less consumerism. Although I would say that a brand like Louis Vuitton is inherently more sustainable anyway, because it's a luxury brand and because it's a product that has a kind of long-term value. So not now, for example, my Diesel may also be categorized in this way, but I think Diesel is consumed more in this way than Louis Vuitton, simply because of the price range. The question is, of course, whether it is sustainable in this

Group Part

way, because the step to buy it is already a totally bigger step due to the price range. That's why I would actually say that, among other things, it clearly falls into sustainability, but perhaps more into brand loyalty, that you just say or in Word of Mouth, that you say, look, Louis Vuitton has, I have Digital Twin Technology, can I now buy a product here in my, can you also use it in Metaverse? I don't even know.

Interviewer

Yes, you can use it in Metaverse,

Interviewee

Like Gucci has done, for example. They have, what's it called, in any case in a Web3 of all these worlds, they've set up the workers and you can try everything on there. And that went down really well in all the PR magazines. Like in the exhibition, people could try it on. Again in different scenarios. So with a big brand like Louis Vuitton, I think that's another factor that definitely has a word of mouth effect, but it also improves loyalty. Ultimately, if you want to get into the metaverse, you have to buy an NFT, for example, you have to buy some shares so that you can be part of this immersive world of Louis Vuitton or Gucci. That's why digital twinning is definitely a good way to build that up. And then yes, Limited Self-Expression Innovation, I think that's self-explanatory, but definitely innovative. Of course, the question is how you can build that up so that it doesn't differ from other big top-tier brands like Gucci. Because a lot has happened there. Gucci, for example, has also created a gallery. Can you also do a gallery now or do you want to build Metaverse? Would you like to say you have Candyland? Well, there are quite a few options for how you can do it. You can put yourself anywhere with the product you have through Digital Twin. It's definitely innovative too. You can also present yourself in a normal way that you can't in the real world. For many consumers, it's also

Group Part

a form of escapism; we're fleeing from the real world. This is definitely possible with a digital twin.

Interviewer

Thank you. And what about the last brand, The Attico?

Interviewee

I need to have another quick look. It's all a bit similar, so it's exactly the same again with Environmental Practices. But I think that with a new brand like this and the fact that it's probably priced higher, I don't know, what's the price category?

Interviewer

It's relatively high, something like a coat for 900 to 1500 euros. So already higher than Diesel, cheaper than Louis Vuitton.

Interviewee

Yes, then it's definitely important to justify it first of all. Why is it so high? Why is that? Maybe with the digital twin you can then say, hey, we can put ourselves back into a metaverse and say, we're now here in the production site of The Attico or whatever and here you can see how sustainable it is. So you've stacked one with the other and can then try on the products. That's all possible. I also simply believe that when you see me trying on the product on my avatar or trying on this new blouse, I realize that it fits me well and is also of high quality. For example, you can write down which boxes are made of which material. You can really open up all worlds and that definitely gives you a bit of a justification as to why this product is more expensive than if you were to simply pick it up in a store without any kind of description, without any kind of self-presentation, perhaps even how it would look on you. I definitely believe that the

Group Part

price is also important, of course the environment, which is what we've just said, and brand awareness is of course, I think it all goes hand in hand, because it's also a trend at the moment. In other words, if you sell well, market well, do PR, write to good magazines, then it's definitely at the top of the agenda.

Interviewer

Yes, great. Perfect. Very good. Thank you very much. Then we've ticked off the first point. Now the second is a bit of co-creation with the customer in the form of Digital Twin, that you create unique customized luxury items with this technology together with the customers. Back to Diesel, do you see any fit with the challenges?

Interviewee

So I would say definitely for sustainability for all three, because then you don't have unnecessary production of products that might not even be relevant for the specific target audience. For example, with Gen Z. Of course, the old money aesthetic is back in at the moment, but you can't put any old products out there without a new twist. You save yourself money by saying that we don't have to do trend research, we have the consumer in front of us. Together with us, they create a luxury product or a customized luxury product. So it's definitely sustainable. I think it would be very, very high brand loyalty for Louis Vuitton. Firstly because Gen Z loves to be part of an exclusive community. And it's all about being a hypebeast, for example. Gen Z is a typical hypebeast consumer. In other words, they want to be in a community where they have products that not everyone necessarily has and that are perhaps of higher quality and cheaper. And if you create a product with a brand like Louis Vuitton that only you have and that no one else has, then you have definitely gained a high level of loyalty from the consumer. And also this artificial scarcity model, where you say that you somehow create a product that is so rare

Group Part

that no one else has it, which in my opinion would definitely resonate 100% with Gen Z. Then with The Attico, definitely brand awareness. I know very few brands that do that. And I think I would also give a newcomer brand that would create this more freedom, because there are probably fewer, what do you call it, hardened structures in such a brand, as there are now at Louis Vuitton. So I think there is more freedom there. You can also work with younger designers, for example. Not everything comes from one head. With us, for example, everything comes from Louis Vuitton, from the bigwig. Everything has to be coordinated until it reaches the bottom at some point. And with such a small brand, I think it could definitely be cool. And then also through cool campaigns where people say, here, you can create an avatar. You can create your own product with the avatar in the metaverse together with us. And with the materials, which are high quality and sustainable. So I think that would definitely be cool with The Attico. And I think this relevance is definitely also, as I said, relevant for Gen Z if it's authentic and if it's something new and exclusive. And I think this exclusivity factor is definitely very important for everyone here.

Interviewer

Perfect, very good. And thank you. And the last one would be immersive marketing campaigns, using augmented reality to create a virtual reality experience, for example virtual fashion shows or showrooms, to increase custom engagement, so to speak.

Interviewee

Exactly, I think we've already discussed that a bit before. I think for me, not necessarily for all brands, I wouldn't necessarily say that it helps with sustainability. I don't think that's perhaps the main point of this activation, I would say, of this kind of innovation. I think it might even be more of a consumerism thing in a way when you see something like that online, when you

Group Part

see a bunch of new products online. I believe that it definitely creates relevance and awareness for Diesel or for everyone. And definitely loyalty again. So I think that's very important for Louis Vuitton. And again with Gen Z, what you're saying, with twinning, that you can perhaps copy the products, for example, from these fashion shows that you've seen online. And then you might be invited exclusively to these fashion shows and can then copy these products exclusively into the digital world. So I could imagine that this could definitely open up loyalty and then relevance and awareness for Diesel and The Attico.

Interviewer

Okay, perfect, thank you. Then we're done with that. In general, do you still have any concerns or risks that you see with the implementation of these technologies, it could somehow be legal, ethical, financial or problems like that?

Interviewee

Unfortunately, I don't know enough about legal issues, but I imagined that if at some point you can duplicate every product that exists online in a way that it might somehow lose its exclusivity and patents or rights, if at some point it becomes a mainstream technology, I could perhaps imagine that. Or that it could just aspire to hyper-consumerism, because at some point you might be addicted to trying everything online again somehow - we are also a very consumer-friendly generation.

Interviewer

Very good. And if you have the whole study, can you think of a brand that you know is already using this technology? You already mentioned Gucci.

Interviewee

Group Part

Yes, but I'm not sure if they used digital twins exactly. Maybe I don't know enough about it, but I think that maybe it just goes hand in hand with a lot of metaverse methods that are taking place here, which many brands are currently doing or many artists are doing. But exactly, I don't know much about it per se, for example.

Interviewer

I have another question about collaborating with consumers or small designers, for example. You said that The Attico, for example, could actually create a bit more brand awareness. Do you perhaps also see a risk that, for example, a brand identity for a brand that is perhaps not yet so strongly established could quickly become blurred if you go straight into collaborations and give the consumer a bit of power? Because the idea is that luxury brands tend to set the trends and not follow them. Do you perhaps see a risk there?

Interviewee

I think so. So I think if you give too much freedom, then perhaps the identity of the brand will be lost. But perhaps there are also options, such as a brand having different designers. You can work with different designers who go in this and that direction and say that you have to be open about it, but there are already, let's say, frameworks set by the designer as to what is possible or perhaps some prototype products. So, I think you can't just give consumers freedom in the digital world, because at some point it expands to such an extent that you no longer have any control over it. I think there are no limits. Especially if you have a brand, you have a brand identity and a mission. You have to stay true to that. But I think there's definitely room for maneuver on how to implement that in a cool way.

Interviewer

Group Part

Okay, thank you very much. The next technology would be generative AI and the first use case here would be Creating Visual Content in Marketing Imagery. So, it's simply about using generative AI to produce visual content for marketing, social media, etc. How do you see this working for these three brands? How can or can the challenges be rehearsed with it?

Interviewee

Okay, so I think in general, in my opinion, this generative AI is a bit scary and dangerous. For example, in my master's thesis I created a sneaker with Journey, just with a simple prompt and it looked like a Nike sneaker. That's easy copy and paste, I think you have to be very careful how you approach it and always make sure that you have a patent or something like that. I definitely think for Communication Gap and relevance at Diesel, you can create visual designs or create communication that is simply extraordinary. And I think that applies to all brands in this case, you save money because you don't need as many designers, of course. You also don't need as many copywriters, which of course isn't good for the brands either, but you can move forward quickly, you're faster behind the trends. I don't think I would relate this to sustainability in any way, shape or form, in terms of paper consumption, if you say that more people are switching to digital than to billboards or something like that. And I think what's really cool, I don't know if you're familiar with it, for example in Times Square, there are 3D billboards and they also work with AI and all kinds of things and can create immersive fashion shows, for example. And I believe that for all brands, including Louis Vuitton or The Attico, for example, when it comes to creating brand awareness, where a KPI is, the main thing is brand awareness and not conversion at the beginning. And then you say, okay, we just have to get the attention from somewhere. And then I think an AI campaign is cool if you somehow have an idea that no normal designer could implement quickly, for example, that is also a bit immersive.

Group Part

Interviewer

Thank you very much. Now you've basically already covered use case 2, i.e. streamlining, copywriting and content production. Do you have any other tasks, especially streamlining?

Interviewee

I think at The Attico, if you have a young brand and you have AI, you automatically build a professional image for this quality perception in the part. You don't have a lot of budgets, you can work well with AI, you can create a good design, create a good visual board. For example, you can also use AI to animate your products as a pre-launch, streamline them, anything along those lines. And what perhaps also goes hand in hand with sustainability here is that when you create prototypes with AI, for example, which is perhaps easier, you can order more with small badges. So, you say, here's the prototype, how do you like it? Then you can go back to digital twinning and say, try it on here in the metaverse. And then you have so and so many orders and you can arrange that. I don't know if you know Sporty & Rich? They do, they don't have AI now, but they also do something quite sustainable, for example. They say, okay, they take up to 100 orders and then they say, then we order. So, then we make our big order of 100 shirts, for example, and then the consumers have to wait again until it's ordered again. So, it's not fast fashion, but I think it's actually quite cool for prototyping through AI, maybe for slow fashion and high quality.

Interviewer

The third use case revolves around tailored product recommendations and support. This is particularly about using Generative AI to improve general customer service, but also to give customers personalized recommendations based on trends or what the company can do in general. How would you rate that?

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Interviewee

That could be really cool. I could well imagine that for Diesel. You all know Spotify and there are always these tailored playlists. We know that the problem with jeans is that once you've found the right pair, sometimes you can't find any more because the sizes don't fit. And that if, for example, you have a tailored jeans list or playlist with Diesel, with AI, where you know that this is my size, I have specified it once. These are the perfectly fitted jeans that would fit well. The latest ones then come in and they are also adjusted to your sizes. I could imagine that that would be cool for relevance, because it's simply a market gap for me too, a little bit with jeans, because it's just difficult. Definitely also environmental practices, so that you don't just have consumption and consumption, but you know what suits you. I would also count all brands. And especially with Louis Vuitton with brand loyalty, if you have tailored products, I can also imagine if you know, okay, look, I bought this product once, there are the recommendations. But it's often the case that you have similar products to your last purchase. But exactly, I think with Diesel, I would find it cool to have a tailored list of jeans based on your preferences and shopping behavior.

Interviewer

Okay, great. And the last use case would now be trend spotting.

Interviewee

I think technology is extremely important, but I also notice it in my work. It's actually more and more about discovering the latest trends and knowing what the consumer wants. Especially with such a dynamic consumer segment like Gen Z, you always need to know what colors are in, what styles are in. Six months ago, it was brown and pink, now all of a sudden, it's light blue and yellow. How does that come about and what is the next step? You can't just think, what's

Group Part

next month? You have to think about what trends are coming next year or in the next two years. AI is definitely a good help for all brands, for everyone here in this case. And especially for established brands like Louis Vuitton, I think, simply because they are still so outdated in many respects. And of course, new designers like Pharrell or Virgil Abloh have rejuvenated everything. But if you want to address this target audience, then you also have to use AI, I believe, to make it easier to understand and get to know this audience and understand market behavior and shopping behavior. That's why I definitely believe that all points can actually be ticked off here, because this trend spotting and trend research is also totally important in terms of sustainability. For example, women also really like leather products and if you want to be sustainable, then you need an alternative product. And then there's apple skin, for example, and which alternative products are actually respected, which are well received and authentic. I think that's the be-all and end-all, I would say, to appeal to Gen Z.

Interviewer

If you do now or can you think of any competitors if or when you think of implementing this technology for one of these companies?

Interviewee

I just think hire freeze and budget cut if you say we have to invest in AI now and we have less manpower for copywriting. Copywriting is almost eliminated with chat GPT. I think that's the risk and otherwise I just think that AI and maybe data protection, if you just say, okay, you go totally into the consumers and observe what they like. And I think otherwise, regardless of that, it's very beneficial and especially for this trend studying and trend research, because it's very complex. And I think if you have a machine learning or AI bot that can see through that, then I don't think that's a bad thing.

Group Part

Interviewer

And finally, can you think of any luxury fashion brands that already use this in some way?

Interviewee

I think almost everyone is using it, slowly, I have a feeling. So, AI content, I know that with AI, for example, you can also get a lot of NFTs. They also sell these NFTs online for 200,000 euros or 300,000 euros for a sneaker. That's all generated with AI. So, I think it's also just cool to get into this metaverse world, which is also relevant in order to be innovative.

Interviewer

Great, thank you. I have another quick question. You said that generative AI for content production can actually be used very well by all brands to simply be a bit more creative, to somehow design campaigns that simply have a wow effect. This comes from the last Expert interview. She had focused a bit more on this more traditional definition of luxury, that human craftsmanship is super, super important. Maybe less so for a brand like Diesel, but for Louis Vuitton or The Attico, for example, which want to position themselves more in this luxury sector, do you see a danger that this human touch will become less important and that consumers might not find it so great, even though it is innovative in itself?

Interviewee

I would say no, because I think one is marketing and the other is production. And I believe that if you somehow retain production in marketing and say that you can also use AI or use generative AI to draw attention to production. You can also give consumers the opportunity to immerse themselves in the world of production without having to fly to Paris, or probably the production is not in Paris, but somewhere where production takes place, to see how it works.

Group Part

For example, I don't know if you know the Shoe Surgeon, he's a designer who takes a lot of luxury products and studio products and puts them together and then there's a very limited selection of products because they're handcrafted. And he always mentions this in his marketing and shows the process. And I just think that if the luxury brands are afraid that something like this is no longer clear, then it has to be emphasized and it can be with marketing, because in my opinion AI then no longer plays a role, because I think that luxury brands lose a bit of their rarity. It's no longer like owning a diamond like it used to be. It's more like you just have a fast fashion product. So, I think that's more the essence of luxury brand communication and marketing in general, which I think is a bit lacking. And I believe that AI could perhaps also be a means of simply emphasizing how it really is.

Interviewer

Thank you very much. Then we would come to the last technology, 3D printing. The first use case, similar to the others, is personalization and collaboration with consumers, so that you can design one-of-a-kind fashion items, whether in-store or online. Do you see a good application for the three brands?

Interviewee

I would definitely say that it creates loyalty or awareness for everyone. Simply because, as I said, if you can build a personalized 3D product in a store where everyone maybe buys a Bottega bag and then you buy a Bottega bag that is personalized or somehow has a logo of yours on it and whatever. Then it's exclusive again in a way. There's also a reason why people, for example, like to have their things personalized, buy a badge to put it on somewhere, so that it's simply their own product. And I would also say that's definitely a big reason why this would definitely stimulate loyalty and awareness. In terms of quality perception, I don't know exactly whether

Group Part

that would help with The Attico, because I think it shows a bit that you have a design, and it can be produced here quickly in 15 minutes with a 3D printer. I think you'd have to think a bit more about why it's so expensive now, then maybe that aspect would be gone a bit. And I would also lose a bit of the sustainability aspect. I think 3D always comes across a bit like it's a plastic production. And I don't think that would necessarily be sustainable for me in a way, especially because you can produce and consume it so quickly. Sure, it's a cost, but I wouldn't say it's 100% sustainable for me at first glance. Sure, you can produce on the multi-handed approach, but I think 3D production is more likely to be a lot at once because it's so fast.

Interviewer

Then in the last use case of 3D printing that we have identified is, as you have just said, promoting sustainability. I think we're now moving a bit more in the direction of perhaps using this on-demand production or being able to incorporate more sustainable or recycled materials into this 3D printer. Yes, you probably see that in the third challenge for everyone, but how do you see it being used?

Interviewee

So I think if you produce it, the question is also whether you produce it on site on quick demand or whether you say you're generally switching to 3D printers in production, then, as I said, I think transparency is the be-all and end-all, because especially if you want to correspond to Gen Z, I think that's also extremely important for these consumers and also to know which products it's made from. So, if you say you're doing 3D printing, you still have to say what materials are used and whether it's even possible. And you also need to perhaps, which is also often seen, is simply a list of materials, is this 100% cashmere here, 100% in the wool here, for example, just to record that when something like this happens, because I think otherwise it very quickly falls

Group Part

back into the image of fast fashion and fast production. And it's not like you imagine someone, a designer, who then sits at a table and assembles a shoe for you, for example. You just imagine that you've typed it into your computer, there's not much heart and soul behind it and it's just printed out. That's why I believe that if it's to be sustainable and this authenticity and transparency is to be created, it definitely has to be listed or somehow a kind of Metaverse, where we have a shoe lock, where it says next to it which materials are included. I think there is a risk that this will be seen as such very quickly.

Interviewer

Do you know a luxury or fashion brand that has already implemented 3D printing?

Interviewee

Not luxury brands at all, maybe I just don't know. But I don't think I knew, maybe you know some, I didn't know whether it's recognized at all or whether it's seen as such high quality. No, I don't actually know them. I just know that it happens. But not in the luxury sector.

Interviewer

Okay, great. I think that really helped us a lot. Could ask if we could come back to you again?

Interviewee

Yes, with pleasure.

Note: This interview was conducted in German and transcribed and translated with Cockatoo.

Despite some review, there may be logical or grammatical errors due to the transcription.

Appendix D – Diesel: Consumer Interviews

Appendix D.1 – Diesel: Consumer Interview Guide

I. Introduction and Background Information:

1. What is your name, and how old are you?
2. Please emphasize your background, interests, or experiences in the fashion industry.

II. Strategy Overview and Brand Introduction:

Perception of Diesel:

3. Have you heard about the brand Diesel before?
4. Have you purchased anything from them? Please elaborate.

Strategy Presentation: *"We have collaborated with industry experts to develop several strategies to address these challenges. Let me outline each strategy, and I'd appreciate your initial impressions and thoughts."*

Strategy 1:

VR / AR - Existing Avatar Collection of Diesel to facilitate virtual try-ons and product accuracy.



Figure 2: Diesel Avatars

Diesel Library:



Figure 3: Diesel Library

Seasonal Collection Example:

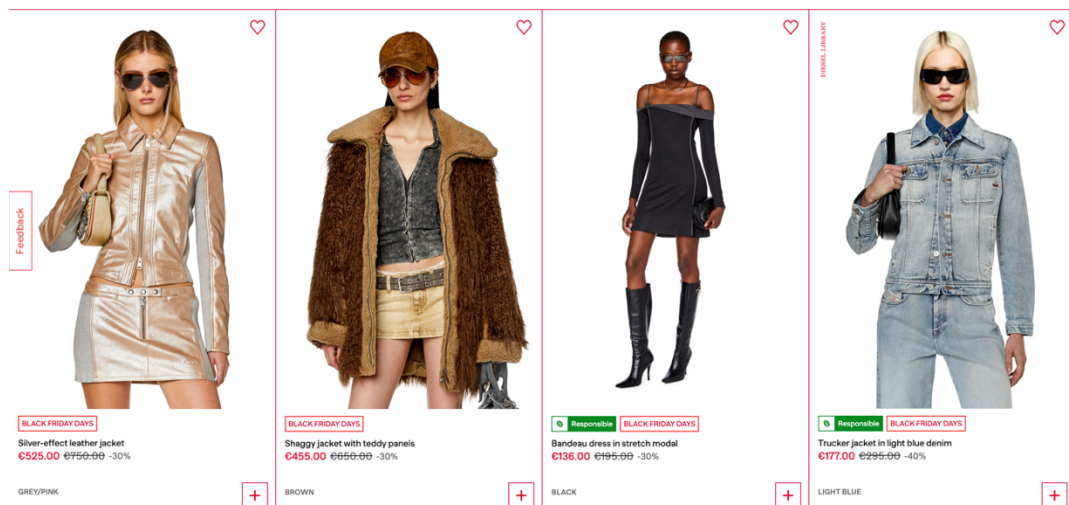


Figure 4: Diesel Seasonal Collection Example

5. What is your initial reaction to Diesel using Avatars for virtual try-ons?
6. What kind of pieces would you like to be featured? – the core collection of the Diesel library or the more seasonal extravagant looks?
7. Would this increase the likelihood of you purchasing the products?
8. Do you perceive such initiatives as being more sustainable?

9. What effect do you believe this will have on consumerism?
10. Do you think this will enhance Gen Z's perception of the brand and make it more relevant for this demographic?
11. Do you see any risks or drawbacks to implementing such technologies? Is it aligned with its brand identity?

Strategy 2:

Generative AI: The Perfect AI Jeans Playlist – AI-generated customer profile of the perfect size and fit preferences for denim products that ensures consistency in sizing and provides recommendations based on current trends.

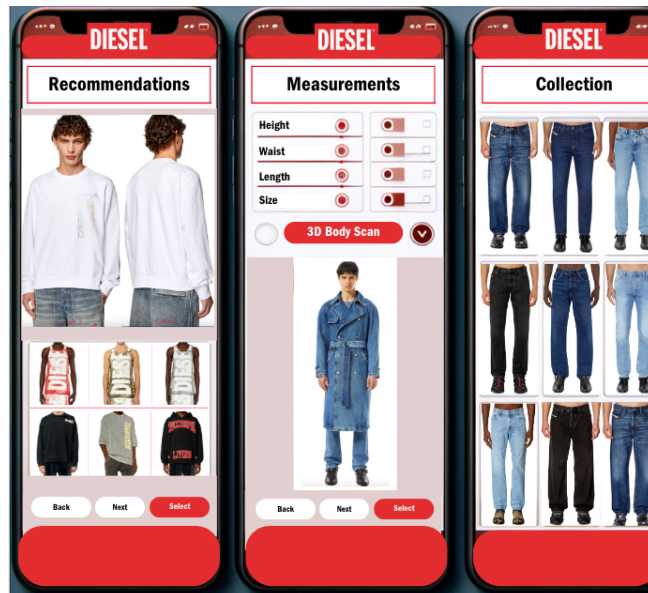


Figure 5: Diesel's "The Perfect AI Jeans Playlist"

12. What is your initial reaction to Diesel's "The Perfect AI Jeans Playlist"?
13. Would you be interested in this technology, and would you try it out yourself?
14. What features need to be included?
15. Do you believe there will be added value to the customer with this initiative?
16. Do you perceive such initiatives as being more sustainable?

17. What effect do you believe this will have on consumerism?
18. Do you think this will enhance Gen Z's perception of the brand and make it more relevant for this demographic?
19. Do you see any risks or drawbacks to implementing such technologies? Is it aligned with its brand identity?

Strategy 3:

3D Printing: 3D printing technology to customize your Diesel garment.



Figure 6: Diesel in Store 3D Printing

20. What is your initial reaction to Diesel using customization for specific products?
21. Would you be interested in customizing a piece for yourself?
22. Do you prefer this technology to exist in-store or online?
23. Do you believe there will be added value to the customer with this initiative?
24. Do you perceive such initiatives as being more sustainable?
25. What effect do you believe this will have on consumerism?

26. Do you think this will enhance Gen Z's perception of the brand and make it more relevant for this demographic?

IV. Conclusion, Thank You, and Next Steps:

"Thank you for your valuable insights and feedback. Your expertise is valuable to me, and we deeply appreciate your time and thoughts. Would you be open to further discussions or guidance as I refine my strategies? Your continued involvement would be greatly beneficial."

Appendix D.2 – Diesel: Consumer Interview Transcript – Consumer 1 (Female, 24)

Interviewer

What is your background, interests or experiences in the fashion industry?

Interviewee

I'm very interested in clothing, I follow a lot of trends, whether it's on social media or magazines, but also with my peers and my environment. For example, I don't have a problem with talking to people if I like something. I've talked to people I don't know at all, randomly. That means I'm interested personally, but also in my professional life, as far as I can say, I have used all my internships on luxury and lifestyle themes. I had more hotels and travel agencies, for example. But there was also a Nubis acquisition. Exactly. And from Value Retail, that's a, yes, they call themselves designer outlets or shopping destinations, 11 worldwide. Nations, and they had the agency as a newbie while I was there. I was allowed to help and then I had my second internship for six months at Tiffany & Co. in PR and Marketing and I was able to really look into a luxury segment and then my last internship at Value Retail, so at these designer outlets for Wertheim Village and Ingolstadt Village, where among other things, Diesel also has a store.

Interviewer

Very good. Then you can also share insights from there. I have introduced Diesel to you. Okay, then we come to the first strategy, and it's generally about VR / AR Technology. The first one is to create an avatar. They launched the avatar collection in September, not so long ago. And with your avatar, you can do virtual try-ons, etc. And the first question is, what is your initial reaction when it comes to this whole avatar world?

Interviewee

So I've never made an avatar myself, now for such a shopping experience, but I know, for example, can you imagine it like a Snapchat emoji? So, do you know how you look like or how should I imagine it then?

Interviewer

In a virtual world, you can create your digital version, so that she may look similar to you. Brands offer you to dress up with your avatar and their clothes. And then you have more touch-points with the brand.

Interviewee

And I buy the clothes for the avatar, but they are then physically sent to me? Or is it just about my avatar?

Interviewer

You can do both, you can try them on with your avatar. But you can also buy them in the store or in the online shop.

Interviewee

Okay, so I think that I'm digital native, but it still feels strange, I have to say. If I imagine that I buy something that I have worn on my avatar. It's still a bit strange, but I think that with time, the more it's seen as normal, the more you get used to it. And if there's an opportunity, I've never been in contact with it before, but the more I think about it, the more I can imagine it. I don't have a big barrier to ordering online, because I think I can send it back. I would probably be tempted to try it out. I don't know if I would order it, but still it wouldn't completely opposed to it. The barrier wouldn't be as big as if I tried it on my avatar and then buy it in the store

without actually trying it. Because when you order it, it's much easier to return things. And you're not ashamed of it, especially when you return something. Especially in stores that are smaller, not Zara or H&M, where people don't know you anyway. But if it's a small store and it's the same saleswoman, it's a bit weird.

Interviewer

I understand. Okay, so you're not completely opposed to the avatar world. If you are interested in exploring it, would you rather want the Diesel library with its more basic items or the more extravagant seasonal collections? If you could choose one of the two for the avatar world, which one would you rather take?

Interviewee

I think the more extravagant ones. Because with the basic, you can already estimate whether it looks good on you or not. I think you're more experimental. You try other things. And especially when you're physically out and about, you tend to grab things that are safe. I think that's a tool that allows you to try out a lot more quickly and get a much wider variation than in the store because whether you press a button or move around two or three times is of course a completely different cost somehow.

Interviewer

Do you think that the relevance among Gen Z of Diesel is being improved with that?

Interviewee

Yes.

Interviewer

Would you say that such an initiative is more sustainable in general?

Interviewee

Because it is not produced, that would be the only reason for me why it could be more sustainable. But on the other brands... I don't know how it is with electricity or server cooling and so on. Because that comes with it. But in itself, at first, I would say yes. Because labor conditions and... Well, I hope that with such a brand the labor conditions are better than with a cheaper brand, but also with shipping and so on. So, I think that this in itself is more sustainable for the environment and probably more sustainable for the brand, for the profit in itself, because they have to create it once and then it's over.

Interviewer

Okay, so you would say that generally the Gen Z perception could be improved by such initiatives.

Interviewee

Yes.

Interviewer

Do you have any worries or risks, drawbacks that come to your mind with such initiatives?

Interviewee

It could be that if something happens, you are dependent on it. That means if there is a scandal or crazy things happen that you couldn't see before, you can of course also reflect on the brand image. Otherwise, maybe you could also discourage people who have nothing to do with it or turn away from it. I think that's a good example of Tiffany's. They had a collaboration with Kendrick Lamar and made him a crown. And it looked more like a laurel wreath. And it was the connection to Jesus and that was a bit, so totally disturbed because that's just gave very bad

brand image to have someone crowned and he just looked like Jesus on the cross, so it was just a lot of things. There were so many things that people said, which was super negative. It has to be very emotional and with all possible possibilities that could arise. Balanced. We made a trophy for League of Legends. It's in two directions. I can imagine that the core customer shouldn't be frightened by that.

Interviewer

But would you say that the brand identity of these, which are also very controversial, industrial, which are also very loud, would you say that it aligns more with such initiatives than Tiffany, for example?

Interviewee

Yes, definitely. They offer more platforms than Tiffany, whereby Tiffany offers more than Cartier for that, but still, they offer a lot more play space for that. The designs are a bit extra and not straight. You can dress super simple, but you can also really go full throttle and be really loud, as you said. So, there is no straight line that you have to follow.

Interviewer

Yes, very cool. Thank you very much. Then there is the next use case of Generative AI. You know that Spotify has personalized playlists. How would you feel about this initiative with jeans? Because from store to store the sizes are different, it sits weird, the leg length, hip width, etc. that's the problem that many people, especially when they shop online, send back a lot or order several sizes, etc. How would you describe an initiative like the Perfect AI Jeans Playlist of these values where you specify all your measurements, where you explain your style, and AI takes all this information and would only show you perfectly fitting jeans and also style recommendations on how to style them. How would you find such an initiative?

Interviewee

That would be a dream. If I would find pants that would really fit directly and not have to order 10 pieces. That would be amazing. It's such a pain to find pants that fit you. Especially because the figure is so different. I think pants are difficult for every body type. No matter if you're big, small, thin. It doesn't matter. Everyone has this struggle and I think that would make so many lives easier. So, I think that's really good.

Interviewer

So would you like to try it out yourself? What kind of features do you think should be added?

Interviewee

Yes definitely! Maybe you could even add your patches, because you know it fits. You can say, I would like to have my initials on the trousers, or I want to have different colors of seams. I can imagine that you can do that very well. Not that you know it fits and you don't have to send it back. You already said style recommendations?

Interviewer

Yes. But style recommendations are relevant for you as well, right?

Interviewee

Like how you still top it off. I think it's always cool when you see it like that and what they combined with it. For example, I have a full denim outfit, like Clara. I would have seen that in a store. I think I would have never seen it combined. But because I saw it on the internet, also when I was wearing clothes from someone, I thought I absolutely need it. I think style recommendations are a trigger. And maybe not just one thing, but that you see several outfits, how you can combine them. Or that you see what I already have at home, what I could do. which

also plays into the sustainability aspect or maybe from previous purchases. I would combine it like that. So, yes.

Interviewer

Okay, very cool. Perfect. And would you generally describe such an initiative as sustainable?

Interviewee

Yes, definitely. Because, for example, if you order 10 pants and 2 fit you, you still have to send 8 back. And if you know you want jeans, then it can be that you don't like the washing, but you won't like the fit anymore. So, there is a return shipping and so on, which is definitely more sustainable. Also, what I find important is, maybe you can do it through AI, I don't know, I had ordered something recently and wanted to cancel it before it was sent, because I thought, you don't need it anyway. And then it was no longer possible to send it, because it was already in the process, and it was only sent three days later. And these are things that are sent and returned unnecessarily. But that's a completely different topic than I just talked about. But in the long run it's definitely a lot more. And maybe you can also, because you have your customer base, at least from your existing customers, you know the sizes and what is proposed. You have a lot more insights, also how much you need. And also, if there is an outfit sale, like Black Friday, then you could say, we have five more, so an email newsletter, we have five more of those in stock, in your size, is your wardrobe not full yet? you can talk to people more tailored and address them through marketing. So, e-mail, newsletters or ads on social media or something.

Interviewer

Okay, perfect. And do you see any risks or problems that could happen?

Interviewee

Yes, that it doesn't work in the end. So, it has to be well developed.

Interviewer

Now we come to the last technology, 3D printing. There are two options. One is to make a campaign initiative in the store, where you can personalize your favorite piece on site. Or the same function in the online store. There you can choose from different motifs or something else. The materials are also listed there. And what is the customization point? If you take something like this positively, how do you see it in-store?

Interviewee

I think I would rather do it in-store, because I think it's an experience. And especially when it's an action like that, I think it triggers me to say, okay, I'll buy it. Because now I have the opportunity to see it, I've never seen a 3D printer before, how it works, and I think it just staggers your in-store experience. Online I find it rather unspectacular, because you don't notice it, but when it happens on site, it's a great highlight. In October there was a blue campaign where all denim and blue things had a special promotion. They also had a denim lab where Diesel offered customization. So, everything you bought, you could customize it with a laser technique. A lot of people have accepted it. And it's super cool. A lot of Insta-Stories were made, which of course increases the relevance. And you still have something to tell. So, you have a little bit of content besides the collection, which can definitely help you. And how would you assess the sustainability of such a project? Because the 3D printer is really only created for one person, it is much more sustainable than if something else, like five patches of the same are made and only one is used. Accordingly, I think it is definitely more sustainable, alternative to any other customization.

Interviewer

And do you see any risks with such an action?

Interviewee

Independent of the technology, but otherwise the only thing I think is that if someone personalizes it in such a strange way that it could somehow damage the brand image, could be harmful. Whether it's something negative that is being put on or maybe also... But yes, I always have to think about New Balance, that for example in Germany neo-Nazis or something like that, who wore these shoes because it says an N for Nazi on it. Which I would never associate with, but still that some weird groups use it to express themselves, which wouldn't be so good. But otherwise, not at all.

Interviewer

So in the best case, you could keep this control if you already have certain things in mind and don't leave the consumer complete freedom.

Interviewee

I think that as soon as someone can be creative and creates their own piece in our generation, that is super appealing. Maybe you can use terms and conditions, that are not negative, or hate speech, or I don't know, that you make limitations, without limiting the creativity of us.

Interviewer

Okay, very good. That concludes the interview.

Note: This interview was conducted in German and transcribed and translated with Cockatoo. Despite some review, there may be logical or grammatical errors due to the transcription.

Appendix D.3 – Diesel: Consumer Interview Transcript – Consumer 2 (Female, 25)

Interviewer

Do you have any personal interests or experiences in the fashion industry?

Interviewee

I would say that I have a lot of personal interests in the fashion industry. I really enjoy getting involved in it. It's a bit like a hobby and a pleasure time that you can spend well besides studying. I think that's the only creative influence I have in my life.

Interviewer

Very nice. Okay. Then we can start. We have three technologies that we test on the respective brands. The first one is Diesel's current VR / AR strategy. Diesel has already dropped an avatar collection in September. What are your initial thoughts on this?

Interviewee

To be honest, I've never really thought about it. And I didn't even get into this virtual reality world. And I honestly don't see myself buying expensive things online, that exist in a virtual reality world. I don't really have the time or interest in something like that.

Interviewer

If you were interested in an avatar collection, would you be more interested in the basics, in the library, or in the extravagant seasonal looks?

Interviewee

Probably more at the extravagant looks.

Interviewer

Okay. And that means you wouldn't try the virtual collection?

Interviewee

No, it would have no impact. Well, I prefer to look at the classic pieces in stores or online, as I already mentioned I just want the shopping process to be straightforward, maybe I am old-school in that sense.

Interviewer

Would you see the initiative as more sustainable?

Interviewee

Difficult, because all this online world also draws a lot of resources and electricity. So, I don't know if I would necessarily find it more sustainable, but fashion is super-fast-paced and that's not sustainable.

Interviewer

Do you think that this strategy enhances Gen Z's perception of the brand?

Interviewee

It would not for me, but I guess maybe it is more relevant for the younger half of Gen Z. I do see other brands launching initiatives like that, so it must be popular.

Interviewer

Then we come to our next part. A Perfect AI Jeans Playlist. That means an AI-generated customer profile. It is sometimes super difficult with the sizing and fits. It's different from brand to brand. How do you find them? If this is an AI-generated playlist with your measurements

and everything you like, your personal style preferences, sizing, etc., what you have in your profile, and you are only shown jeans based on that, or also product recommendations that belong to it. How would you find something like that?

Interviewee

Really good. I think H&M is doing a really good job with the size and the technology of their pre-order. I think it's super practical. I don't think there's anything more depressing than buying trousers. You always have this moment where you buy a 36, you buy and 38 and it doesn't fit. It's a Zara effect. I would highly appreciate it.

Interviewer

So you would try something like that if it was possible?

Interviewee

Yes.

Interviewer

And what other features could help you?

Interviewee

I think it would be practical if someone could calculate for the pants what size you would have to order. Then also comparable models, then maybe also what you could combine, but also, for example, with, I don't know, tops, complete outfits based on that? Just suggestions. Maybe like a Tinder profile, something you can swipe through. Where you can get to the product directly and don't have to search for it yourself. But yeah. Maybe different styles, like a day and night look.

Interviewer

Would you say that this strategy is focusing on sustainability?

Interviewee

I order two or three sizes, because I'm not sure if it fits. And that would be forbidden if it was done in a reasonable and reliable way. So, it would be more conscious consumerism and less is more what really fits. Yes, 100%.

Interviewer

So, you would say that in general this idea would improve the brand perception of Gen Z?

Interviewee

Yes.

Interviewer

Do you see any limitations or risks?

Interviewee

No, not really.

Interviewer

Okay, the last strategy is a marketing campaign using 3D printing for customization. You could have an installation in the store where you can personalize a piece on-site or offer it online. And there you can combine both, customization and also that you say, okay, the materials we use are sustainable in general, so you have these two aspects.

Interviewer

Would you like to use something like that?

Interviewee

Now just to personalize?

Interviewer

Yes, with 3D printers. Do you think such an action is more successful in the store or online?

Interviewee

I thought about it with Loro Piana. You can get these shoes made online and put them together. I played with it online and was in the store because I wanted to try the size. Because if you personalize things, you can't give them back. And then they offered me to do it in-store. And it works with them because there are three people in the store, I would tend to do it at home if there were long waiting times in store. But I could at least try the product I wanted to have in store. Because that's already available and you could take it with you right away. So, if it's well organized, I would prefer it to be in-store.

Interviewer

Do you think that such an initiative is more sustainable?

Interviewee

Yes, because you have a product you can't pass on to others. And I also believe that you would think about it longer and ultimately take a more conscious decision.

Interviewer

And would you say that this could enhance Gen Z's perception of the brand?

Interviewee

Yes, because Gen Z is basically already a generation that is based on the idea that there is more sustainability, and they are also expected brands to be more sustainable.

Interviewer

Thank you, this concludes the interview. I have to say, thanks for your insights. Is it okay if we use this information as part of the Master Thesis?

Interviewee

Of course!

Interviewer

Great! Okay, thank you for your involvement.

Note: This interview was conducted in German and transcribed and translated with Cockatoo.

Despite some review, there may be logical or grammatical errors due to the transcription.

Appendix D.4 – Diesel: Consumer Interview Transcript – Consumer 3 (Male, 24)

Interviewer

Could you please share your background interests or experiences in the fashion industry or luxury industry.

Interviewee

No work experience in the industry, but I've always enjoyed fashion and keeping up to date with trends and everything around fashion.

Interviewer

Okay, perfect, thank you. So, we have collaborated with industry experts to develop several strategies to address the challenges that I've mentioned previously, and I will go ahead and outline each of the strategies I appreciate your initial impressions and thoughts. So, there are three main emerging fashion technologies that we're focusing on. The first one is the digital twin technology. And basically, in Diesel's context, it would be to create, I mean they're doing it already. Digital Avatars, which they've launched in September this year. And that they do that to facilitate virtual try-ons. They've launched a 10-piece collection that also, which you can also buy in-store. So, it's based on their objects. And this is, so the first question would be, what is your initial reaction to Diesel creating this for the avatars for the digital appearance?

Interviewee

Yeah, I think it can be cool. I mean, the virtual try-on thing, I haven't used it myself, but I think it's really cool to try and make it modern and accessible because everything we do is on our phones or on our laptops and iPads. You can see everything in a straightforward fashion. It does look like it's like more trendy silhouettes and not just skinny jeans. And it's got kind of more

modern fashion behind it. But yeah, I probably would not do it myself, but I imagine my younger siblings would.

Interviewer

And do you think would you prefer to see the Avatar collection on because they have the basic the library, which is the I think 50 to 80 core pieces that will always be in stock. have the most seasonal collections that are changing every quarter. Would you be more interested in seeing the collection on the avatars or the Diesel Library?

Interviewee

Probably the seasonal, because you dress for whatever season you're in. And because obviously the Diesel Library will always be there. But I think it's good to have the seasonal collection, because you'll be buying what you're wearing now, and you can see it on a real person.

Interviewer

You've said that you haven't tried it yet with the avatars. Would you be willing to try it in the future?

Interviewee

Maybe. I mean, it's so cool that technology could do that. And it gives you an idea of how it will look when you buy it. But yeah, I don't know whether other brands have done it. But it does sound like a cool idea.

Interviewer

Okay. And in general, do you also think that providing clothes in the digital space is more sustainable?

Interviewee

Oh, I don't know. I'm not sure. Do these still have physical stores?

Interviewer

They want to be omnichannel where they have both the digital and the physical presence.

Interviewee

Yeah, I think because everything's available on your phone or your iPad or everything, I do think because it's the ease of purchasing things online, it does make me I think you probably I know definitely I have bought more. So, I don't know whether it is more sustainable to have everything online, because then you don't have to make the trip to go into a store, you don't have to do it. So, you can end up sort of unnecessarily spending. But it also depends like what sort of manufacturing, whether it's like they're doing it all for fast fashion, or they're doing it in kind of a slower fashion collection. Because I think if they do it by collection, and it's not just like a Zara and they have everything all the time and they mass produce everything but if they do it kind of slow fashion so it's more collections then I think it potentially be more sustainable.

Interviewer

Okay and do you think that I think we've covered this already but maybe just one final feedback to this, do you think that this initiative will enhance Gen Z's perception of the brand?

Interviewee

It could. I think it will bring it into a more modern light, like everything, whether it's a new technology initiative or something to do with AI or virtual, I think anything just makes it seem kind of more relatable for sort of our Gen Z era and more approachable. So, it brings it out of kind of like the 70s and 80s whenever they were at their height into kind of what we are now.

Interviewer

OK, perfect. And in general, to wrap up the virtual reality part, do you see any risks or drawbacks in implementing such technologies? Just ensuring that it would like that it would work properly, the virtual try ons and creating a digital twin, you don't offend anybody or like you get walked by the clothing. But it'd be good to try it out, like I haven't tried it out with other stores. But yeah, just hopefully it all works.

Interviewer

So there's a general feeling that this technology might not be 100% ready in what the brands have claimed to do. For example, with Snapchat, these try on filters, they don't really look as accurate. So, I don't find it helpful. Do you mean in that context?

Interviewee

Yeah, so it's whether they actually work like how you think it's going to work.

Interviewer

Okay, then moving on to the second strategy, the generative AI idea would be to have, do you know how Spotify or Netflix have very specific recommendations or like the Spotify playlist based on one song you choose, it just generates more songs that fit in that criteria. What do you think of a perfect AI genes playlist? This means an AI-generated customer profile of the perfect size and fit preference for denim products ensuring consistency and sizing and providing recommendations based on current trends. What is your initial reaction to the perfect AI jeans playlist?

Interviewee

I do think that's a really cool idea. As someone who struggles to buy jeans from Zara because I have a bigger bum but then I have a smaller waist, it's something that I really struggle with. So, if the AI can learn, let's say, one piece of what these diesel jeans, you love them, they fit really well, and they can learn from that and then suggest another item or a skirt or a pair of trousers, then I think it's a really good idea. Because in the end, it's only suggestions. It's not like it's telling you this is what you have to wear. They're just learning about your buying habit and what you've recently bought, whether you've returned pieces. But I do think that's a really cool idea. And so, you would be interested in this technology.

Interviewer

Would you try it out yourself?

Interviewee

Yeah, I would, I think. Yeah.

Interviewer

And what other features would you believe need to be included? You already said that it would be nice to also have skirts and other types of trousers included. Is there anything else you would like to see in that feature?

Interviewee

Maybe if you say you bought a pair of jeans or trousers, they'd say like, hey, this top would go really well with it, or this jumper would go well with it. Like trying to make an outfit, because you know, like if you go on to Zara or whatever when you go on the app and it comes up with your trousers like pair this with like comes up with suggestions of making an outfit or similar

hey because you bought this pair of jeans you'd love this pair of trousers like basically learning about what you like and what you don't like.

Interviewer

Thank you. Do you think there would be added value to the customer?

Interviewee

Yes, definitely. I also think it's more personalized. So, all these little touches will mean more to the consumer because the brand is doing something to kind of draw them in and keep them there.

Interviewer

And do you perceive such initiatives to being more sustainable?

Interviewee

I think so, because if it can learn that, say, you order a pair of jeans one day and then you try them on, you either keep them or return them, you do a review, it will know that that's like your size, that's what works for you. And it will mean that when you next go to buy something, you know, you're not just sort of, I mean, in our own deciding between sizes, you're not going to be like, I'll order two pairs of jeans because I don't know which one fits. I do think it's a really good idea for using technology to learn about people's buying habits and what they actually like, and then recommending based on that. And it would mean that you'd sort of, I think I'd buy fewer pieces because I'd know that that fit me or know that it didn't fit me, and I could just try something different.

Interviewer

And do you think this will overall enhance Gen Z's perception of the brand and make it more relevant for this demographic?

Interviewee

Yeah, definitely I think more personalized touches, making it more relevant is really going to help the sort of brand's perception in kind of our Gen Z world.

Interviewer

Perfect. Do you see any limitations with this particular jeans playlist?

Interviewee

It depends whether it's really intelligent and it wouldn't suggest, say, if you bought a pair of like dark blue jeans, it's like learns about kind of what you like, what you don't like. I do think you have to kind of be open to using technology, you have to have the mindset that it's a piece of technology that could be right, it could be wrong, because everyone's perceptions like you like stuff that I don't like, I like stuff that you don't like. It's you're never going to get a perfect solution.

Interviewee

Yeah. So, what do you think?

Interviewer

Because now you've mentioned that going back to the features, would you think it makes sense at the beginning to maybe fill out a personalized questionnaire where you can express your personal style for it to then be more accurate in the recommendations?

Interviewee

Yeah definitely, so if you go on to, I can't remember what brand it is, but I've done that before, whether it's Lululemon, but they go like what type of exercise do you like to do, do you like to wear leggings? Do you like to wear shorts? What kind of sports bra do you like? Like all these little things. And then it suggests based on it, which I think is a really good kind of tactic for drawing people in and retaining people because you like all the brands kind of wants to understand what I like, what I don't like.

Interviewer

OK, perfect. Then let's move on to the last one, which is 3D printing. To use 3D printing technology on your Diesel product and that could be either installed in the e-commerce and like online stores or it could be in the physical store where you see the machine, you see the options that you have, you pick a specific item and then you're allowed to personalize it yourself, the machine does it then in there and then you take it home with you. What's your initial thought on that?

Interviewee

I think that's really cool. I think it's a really cool idea. I think it'd probably have more impact when you're in the store because you can see it happening. I think if it's online, obviously, you don't have that in-person reaction, the in-person look at it. But I think definitely it's a new, cool initiative. I know Levi's, they do embroider in store, and they have kind of like a workshop area where they embroider stuff onto the denim jackets or jeans, But I do think that's a really cool idea

Interviewer

So, you would prefer the in-store option?

Interviewee

I think the in-store would have a bigger impact and the online one I think so with the specifically with the 3d printing because if it pops up on like your online shopping, you probably just scroll past the video, but if you're in person it's got kind of a bigger impact.

Interviewer

And would you be interested in customizing these for yourself?

Interviewee

Yeah, definitely.

Interviewer

And do you believe there will be added value to the customer with this initiative?

Interviewee

I think so, because then it gives you the option to, whilst most people, well quite a lot of people will buy the same style, but then you can make it yours. It means that you'll probably keep the piece for longer so it's not just going to be like a wear and then chuck piece, you'd want to keep it because it's personalized for you.

Interviewer

So, you would in that sense perceive this initiative as more sustainable, also bearing in mind that for example the materials that could be used could be recyclable materials or any kind of materials that is more sustainable than others?

Interviewee

Yeah.

Interviewer

Do you have any limitations for this technology?

Interviewee

I just don't know how well it would be perceived online, not in a bad way, but whether people would really get the full benefit from it. But I think in stores, definitely it'd be really cool to see, and it's like where they like Uniqlo they do the embroidering of the handbags in there and I do think they're really cool kind of nice add-ons for the customer experience.

Interviewer

Okay perfect thank you for your valuable insight and feedback your expertise.

Interviewee

Pleasure.

Note: This interview was conducted in English and transcribed with Cockatoo. Despite some review, there may be logical or grammatical errors due to the transcription.

Appendix G – Diesel: Identified Key Challenges

Challenge Category	Challenge Description	Specific Issues
1. Lack of Relevancy	The brand's historical peak in popularity predates the years of Gen Z, resulting in a generational gap in brand recognition and relevance.	Value Communication: The value proposition of offerings must be enhanced to justify and influence purchasing decisions by reinforcing the identity, uniqueness, and creative advancement that resonate with Gen Z and help them to express themselves.
2. Communication Gap	Recent repositioning efforts to resonate with a younger demographic have not reached the average consumer yet.	Communication Strategies: Enhance its communication strategies to effectively engage with Gen Z where they are most receptive and bridging the gap between Diesel's historical brand image and a refreshed version that Gen Z can connect with.
3. Environmental and Ethical Practices	Feeling of indifference or skepticism towards the brand's environmental and ethical practices.	Sustainability Initiatives: Strengthen Diesel's dedication to eco-friendly initiatives by ensuring practices are clear and communicated transparently as a core of the brand's ethos.

Table 4: Diesel Identified Key Challenges

Appendix H – Diesel: Use Case Decision Matrix

Technology	Use Case	Targeted Challenge(s)	Expert Approved	Decision
1. AR and VR	1.1 Personalized Customer Experiences	1 + 3	Experts: 1 Yes 2 Yes	Test with consumers
	1.2 Creation of Customized Luxury Items	3	Experts: 1 Yes 2 Yes	Don't test with consumers
	1.3 Immersive Marketing Campaigns	1	Experts: 1 No 2 Yes	Don't test with consumers
2. Generative AI	2.1 Creating Content and Marketing Imagery	1	Experts: 1 Yes 2 Yes	Don't test with consumers
	2.2 Tailored Product Recommendations, Support	1+ 3	Experts: 1 Yes 2 Yes	Test with consumers
	2.3 Trendspotting and Marketing Precision	1+ 3	Experts: 1 Yes 2 Yes	Don't test with consumers
3. 3D Printing	3.1 Personalization and Collaboration	1	Experts: 1 Yes 2 Yes	Test with consumers
	3.2 Promoting Sustainability	3	Experts: 1 Yes 2 Yes	Test with consumers

Table 5: Diesel Use Case Decision Matrix

Appendix I – Diesel: Success Measurement Metrics

Strategy	Metrics	Description
1. Diesel’s Existing Avatar Collection	Traffic Analytics	Measures user engagement in the Meta Avatar store through visitor counts and time spent.
	Conversion Rate	Evaluates the number of try-ons leading to physical purchases.
	Customer Feedback	Collect user experience and satisfaction data to identify areas of improvement.
	Social Media Mentions	Monitors public engagement and perception of the brand.
2. AI-Generated “Jeans Playlist”	Traffic Analytics	Measures the number of profiles that are being created and time spent on the platform.
	Customer Profile Accuracy	Analyzes the return rate of products.
	Customer Feedback	Investigate the accuracy and satisfaction of the purchases that are made through the platform.
	Social Media Mentions	Monitors public engagement and perception of the brand.
	Behavioral Analytics	Evaluating the behavioral changes of the exploration of product lines.
3. 3D Printing Experience	Traffic Analytics	Measures customer engagement with the technology.
	Conversion Rate	Analyzes the number of customized items being sold compared to standard items.
	Customer Feedback	Collects user experience and satisfaction data to identify areas of improvement with in-store tablets and follow-up emails.

Table 6: Diesel Success Measurement Metrics

9. Glossary

Term	Definition
Artificial Intelligence (AI)	Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to the capability of computers to perform tasks typically associated with human cognition, such as learning and problem-solving. It encompasses a range of technologies and methods, including machine learning, natural language processing, and neural networks (Zawacki-Richter, et al. 2019).
Collection	A fashion collection comprises various garments, often in multiple colors and fabrics, designed for mix-and-match. Brands typically release collections seasonally, traditionally spring/summer and fall/winter, with some creating up to four collections annually, including 'pre-spring', 'pre-fall', and or 'resort/cruise' seasons. The naming conventions for these collections vary widely (Blaazer 2022)
Haute Couture	Haute Couture, a term with strict criteria, refers to high-end, custom-made fashion. Originating from 19th-century dress-maker Charles Frederick Worth, it requires members to create bespoke garments with multiple fittings, employing significant atelier staff. Members must present a biannual collection of at least 50 unique day and evening designs (The Business of Fashion n.d.).
Kimono	Kimonos are traditional Japanese T-shaped robes with wide sleeves and full length, wrapping at the front, integral to Japan's national dress (The Business of Fashion n.d.).
Machine Learning	Machine Learning is defined as a subfield of artificial intelligence that enables computers to learn without being explicitly programmed. It is crucial in most AI advancements and involves using data to train computers to find patterns or make predictions, gradually improving through experience (Brown 2021)
Mass-Fashion	Mass Fashion involves producing ready-to-wear clothes in large quantities and standard sizes for a broad customer base, using inexpensive materials to create affordable fashion. Designers in this market often replicate trends established by high-end brands, using cost-effective materials and production methods for cheaper sales (Fashion Marketing Lesson 2011).

Group Part

Peigner	A long, sheer garment often worn by women over a negligee in private settings. Its name derives from the French word 'peigner', referring to women combing their hair while dressed in such delicate fabrics (The Business of Fashion n.d.).
Prêt-à-Porter / Ready-to-Wear	Prêt-à-porter, or "ready-to-wear," refers to clothing made in standard sizes rather than tailored to fit an individual (Cambridge Dictionary n.d.)
Sell-Through-Rate	The sell-through rate indicates the percentage of inventory sold in a month compared to the inventory shipped by the supplier (Klipfolio 2023).
Stockist	A stockist is a retailer that specializes in selling a specific type of goods (Cambridge Dictionary n.d.).
