



Innovative Skills for an Old Vocation

Innovative Skills for Marketing

WP 04



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Editor: Andreas Saniter

Authors: TUIASI- Aura Mihai, Arina Seul, Mariana Costea, Raluca Lupu
CONDUR by alexandru- Jeni Madalina Florea, Mihaela Mihalache

Co- Authors: ISOV-Team

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1 Introduction

This manual is a joint product of all partners from the Erasmus+ project "Innovative Skills for an Old Vocation" (ISOV, 2024-1-DE02-KA220-VET-000254492, <https://isov-project.eu/>). As all sectors, the sector of industrial footwear production faces the mega-trends of globalisation, digitalisation and sustainability. Main aims of the project are the development, pedagogical structuring and piloting of courses for apprentices, students and/or employees in industrial footwear production in Germany, Portugal and Romania, based on scientifically developed impact analyses on which of the dimensions of the trends influence which of the 18 Spheres of Activity (SoA) of the sector. The courses and the manuals refer to 12 chosen concrete SoA in which the participants are working, are supposed to work, or want to work.

Basic materials for the courses are the manuals. As the estimated impact of the dimensions respective sub-dimensions of the trends differ between partner countries and as the equipment of training providers with modern technology is differing, as well, the manuals follow a modular structure:

Chapter 2 drafts the traditional marketing measures.

Chapters 3-5 illustrate the expected impact of the various (sub-)dimensions of the 3 trends in the near future (up to 5 years) on the work-processes of the chosen SoA.

This approach has the huge advantage that, for example, if the sub-dimension "additive manufacturing" is estimated to have high impact on a certain SoA and a training provider has no 3-d printer, he can, with respect to this sub-dimension, rely on the "old" manual referring to subtractive manufacturing – but still impart the impact of other subdimensions, where the equipment is available.

Finally, chapter 6 offers a case study of apparent good practice, demonstrating not only what, but also exemplarily how to teach.

Or, to put it different, this manual should not be read as a "receipt", where all condiments should be added or imparted in a fixed row and a defined quantity – but as a "toolbox", aiming at inspiring trainers to impart not only "state of the art" knowledge, skills and competences (KSC) – but to prepare their apprentices, students or participants in continuous vocational education and training (CVET) for upcoming work-processes.

2 Marketing in the Footwear Industry

Marketing is the activity of identifying and satisfying consumer needs, developing and providing products or services to fulfil those needs, and communicating the value of the products or services to the marketplace in order to achieve a profit for the organisation through those activities (Kotler, 2015¹).

Marketing has continued to evolve as business markets, technology, and consumers' expectations have changed over time. The evolution of the strategies used by footwear companies is shown in Fig. 1.

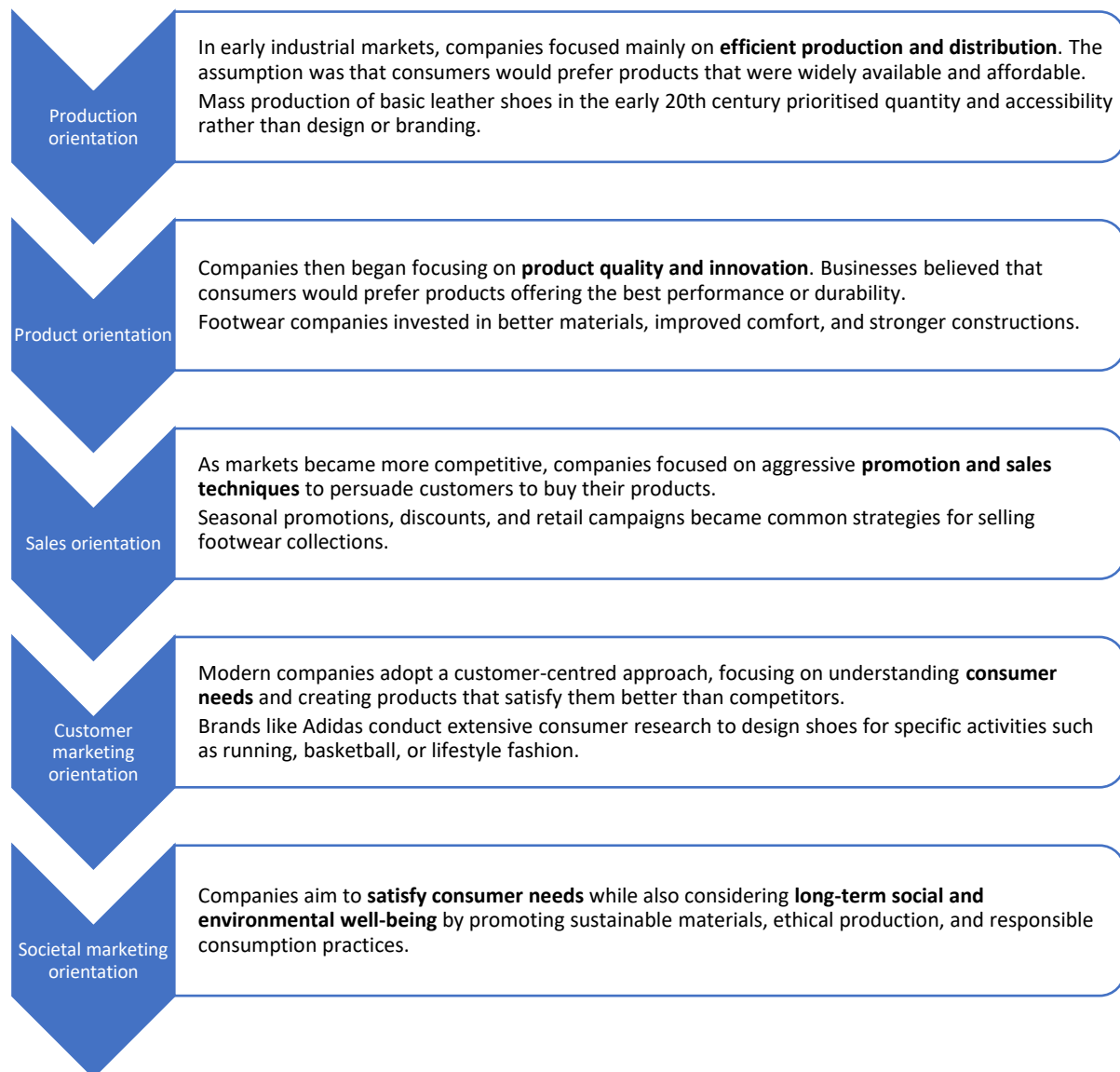


Fig. 1: Evolution of strategies implemented by footwear companies

¹ Kotler, P., Burton, S., Deans, K., Brown, L., & Armstrong, G. (2015). Marketing. Pearson Higher Education AU. Retrieved from: <https://books.google.ro/books?id=8TjiBAAQBAJ>

As defined by the American Marketing Association², Marketing is an activity to create, communicate, and exchange offerings that provide value to customers, partners, and society. The key stages of the marketing process are shown in Fig. 2.

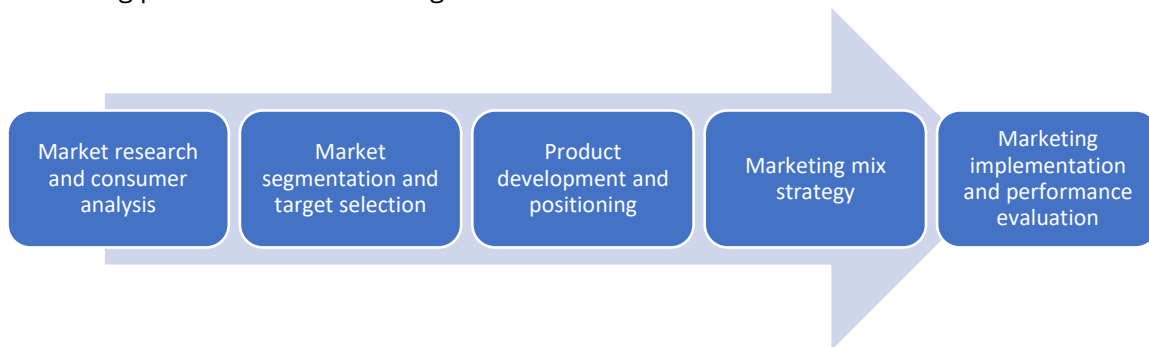


Fig. 2: Main stages in the marketing process

Marketing is very important in footwear because consumers purchase shoes for more than just their functional use; they also consider the style, image, comfort and brand associated with them.

2.1 Market research and consumer analysis

The first stage in marketing is understanding the market environment and consumer needs. Companies collect and analyse information about **consumer preferences**, **competitors**, and **market trends** (Fig. 3).

Market research involves the systematic collection and analysis of information about the market environment, consumer behaviour, competitors, and emerging trends. By conducting market research, footwear companies can better understand consumer needs and expectations, identify market opportunities, and reduce the risks associated with launching new products. In a highly competitive and trend-driven industry such as footwear, reliable market information is essential for making **informed decisions** regarding product development, pricing strategies, and promotional activities

To successfully develop a marketing strategy, a company must first take the necessary steps to understand its market environment and consumer needs. In doing so, the company must collect and analyse information on **consumer preferences and behaviour**, its **competitors**, and **footwear market trends** (Fig. 3).

Researching the market includes both the systematic collection and analysis of data related to the above-mentioned market environment, consumers, competitors, and market trends. By doing so, a Footwear Company will be able to gain an understanding of consumers needs, identify market opportunities, and reduce the risk associated with launching new products in the highly competitive and trend-driven Footwear Industry. Reliable information from market research is critical for making informed decisions about product development, pricing strategies, and promotional activities (Zahran, 2025)³.

² American Marketing Association. (n.d.). American Marketing Association. Retrieved from: <https://www.ama.org/>

³ Zahran, A. M. (2025). The impact of marketing strategies on the success of the fast fashion industry: A systematic review. JUMDER: Jurnal Bisnis Digital dan Ekonomi Kreatif, 1(3), 1–15. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1234/jumder.v1i3.25> Retrieved from: <https://journal.dinamikapublika.id/index.php/JUMDER/article/view/25>



Fig. 3: Key aspects considered in market research for the footwear industry

Consumer analysis is a central component of market research. Footwear companies seek to understand how consumers choose and use footwear products, as well as the factors that influence purchasing decisions.

Several elements are typically analysed, including **consumer lifestyles, fashion trends, comfort requirements, performance expectations, and price sensitivity**. For example, some consumers prioritise functional characteristics such as durability, ergonomic design, or sports performance, while others focus more on aesthetic aspects, brand image, or alignment with fashion trends.

Consumer behaviour plays a central role in marketing decisions. Footwear purchases are influenced by several factors (Fig. 4).

Functional needs	Aesthetic preferences	Emotional and symbolic value	Social influence
Consumers often look for comfort, durability, and performance, especially for sports or professional footwear.	Style, colour, and fashion trends strongly influence purchasing decisions.	Shoes can represent identity, status, or belonging to a community.	Recommendations from friends, influencers, or online reviews can significantly impact purchasing decisions.

Fig. 4: Factors influencing customers' purchase behaviour

Additionally, market research on the footwear industry focuses on consumer **demographics**, such as **age, gender, income level, and occupation**, that impact a consumer's preference for and use of various types of footwear. For example, while younger people prefer trendy sneakers and limited-production products, older generations tend to be more concerned with finding shoes that provide comfort and support for their feet. Different professionals working in particular environments also require different types of shoes.

Observing industry **competition** and conducting competitive benchmarking go hand in hand with consumer research. This includes studying product innovations, pricing strategies, marketing campaigns, and distribution channels used by competing brands.

Technological developments, sustainability concerns, and digital marketing practices are also important factors influencing market dynamics. By integrating insights from consumer behaviour, market trends, and competitive analysis, companies can design footwear products and marketing strategies that better respond to evolving market demands.

2.2 Market segmentation and targeting

Once market information is collected, companies divide the market into **segments of consumers with similar characteristics, needs, or purchasing behaviours** (Okazaki et al., 2007⁴).

Segmentation is an integral component of a company's understanding of customer preferences in the footwear industry, enabling the creation of footwear that meets customers' specifications for comfort, style, performance, and price. Given that footwear has both functional and fashion qualities, segmentation is critical to identifying opportunities to develop new products and position brands.

Fig. 5 shows the criteria that are commonly used to segment the footwear market (Martin, 2011⁵).

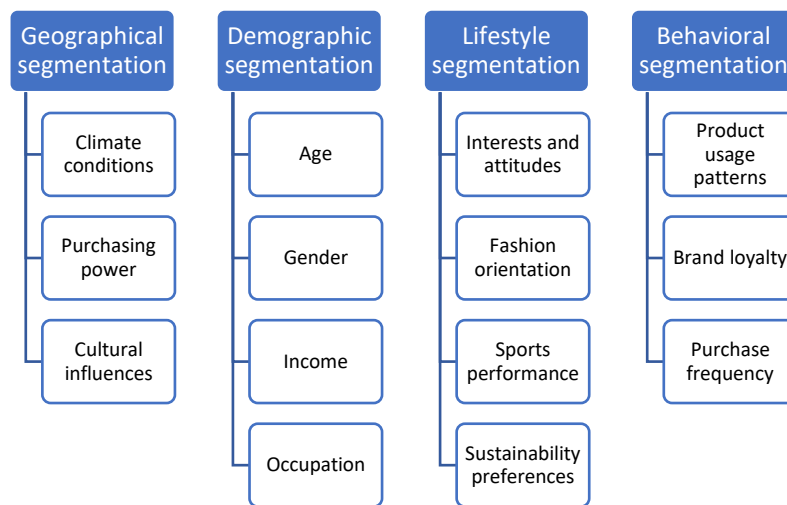


Fig. 5: Footwear market segmentation

Geographic segmentation considers differences across regions or countries due to factors such as climate, cultural influences, and purchasing power. An example of how geographic segmentation affects the shoe market is the weather. A consumer who lives in a cold climate will likely prefer an insulated boot, while a consumer who lives in a warm climate will prefer a lightweight, breathable shoe.

Demographic segmentation focuses on differences among consumers based on characteristics such as age, gender, and occupation. Footwear companies often design specific collections for men, women, children, or professional users who require specialised footwear, such as safety shoes or medical footwear.

Psychographic, or lifestyle segmentation, focuses on the interests, attitudes and lifestyles of consumers. In this context, footwear may be associated with sports performance, fashion expression, comfort, or sustainability. For example, some consumers prioritise high-performance athletic shoes, while others are more interested in fashionable sneakers or environmentally friendly products.

⁴ Okazaki S, Mueller B, Ko E, Kim E, Taylor CR, Hoon Kim K, Jeong Kang I (2007), Cross-national market segmentation in the fashion industry: A study of European, Korean, and US consumers. *International Marketing Review*, Vol. 24 No. 5 pp. 629–651, Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.1108/02651330710828022>

⁵ Martin, G. (2011). The importance of marketing segmentation. *American Journal of Business Education*, 4(6), 15–18. Retrieved from: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1056632.pdf>

Behavioural segmentation is popular to analyse consumer behaviour. There are multiple behavioural characteristics that can be measured: how much they have spent on shoes over time and whether they are loyal to that brand. A consumer who frequently participates in sports will buy shoes more often than someone who does not. Also, these people seek technologically advanced products.

After segmenting the market, companies must choose which segments to target with their products and marketing strategies. **Targeting** means that, after identifying potential segments, the company will choose one or more segments it can serve well with its products and marketing strategy.

In the footwear sector, companies may adopt different targeting strategies (Fig. 6).

Some companies focus on **niche markets**, such as specialised sports footwear or orthopaedic shoes, while others address **broader markets** with diverse product ranges. Large global brands often target **multiple segments** simultaneously by offering differentiated product lines designed for various consumer groups.

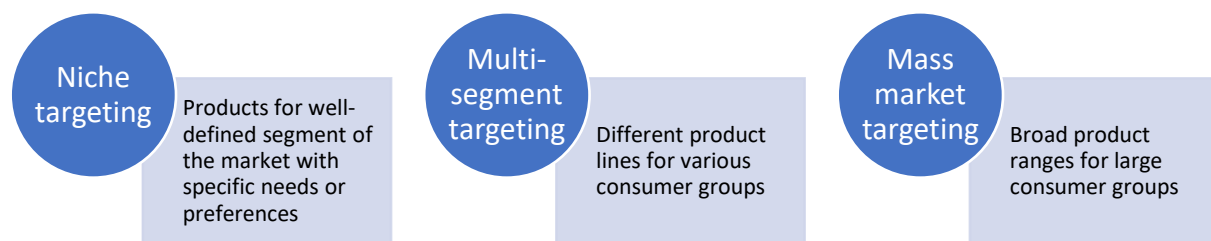


Fig. 6: Targeting strategies in the footwear sector

Successful targeting requires companies to evaluate factors such as **market size, growth potential, competitive intensity, and compatibility with the company's capabilities**.

2.3 Product development and positioning

After companies conduct extensive market research in their target markets, product development focuses on creating footwear that addresses these market needs and consumer requirements.

The product development stage of footwear marketing involves translating consumer needs and market research into a footwear product that provides both function and form for the end user. The shoes developed during the product development process will integrate insights from **market research, consumer needs analysis, technological innovation, and trend analysis**.

During the product development phase of a company's footwear line, several considerations arise for the product development department. Some attributes include overall **design, material selection, end-user comfort, durability, performance, and sustainability**. Footwear will also need to adhere to fashion trends while remaining functional for the end consumer's needs.

Footwear product development is usually a collaborative team effort among departments such as design, engineering, marketing, and production. Design focuses on the product's aesthetics, while engineering and/or technical staff provide expertise in material, structure, and manufacturing. Marketing teams assist the footwear companies in meeting their customers' expectations, targeting the desired market segments, and developing a competitive position in the market. More companies are working to improve the speed and efficiency of product development by enhancing their digital design and prototyping tools and advancing their sustainability efforts.

Innovation is a key product-development component. In the footwear industry, innovation can involve the use of new materials, the development of improved ergonomic features, enhanced performance technologies, and environmentally friendly products. For example, new and improved sports shoes often utilise high-performance cushioning systems, lightweight materials, and biomechanical design to enhance athletic performance. Similarly, footwear with fashion orientation tends to focus on fashion, trade dress, and seasonal trends. Sustainability has become a primary driver of innovation due to the increased use of recycled materials, biodegradable parts, and circular design approaches.

Closely associated with product development is the **product's branding or positioning; this refers to how consumers perceive the product (relative to its competitors)**. In general terms, positioning focuses on creating a clear, unique representation of the product in the minds of **prospective customers**. Within the footwear category, positioning may occur based on any number of characteristics (Fig. 7). These include **performance, comfort, design, price level, innovation, and sustainability** (Parsana, 2025⁶).

Performance Performance-oriented footwear is designed to improve athletic ability or support specific physical activities. For example, running shoes may include advanced cushioning systems, lightweight materials, and biomechanical design features that enhance speed, stability, or shock absorption. This type of positioning is common in sports footwear, where consumers prioritize technical characteristics that improve performance.	Comfort Comfort positioning focuses on ergonomic design, flexibility, breathability, and foot support. Many consumers, especially those who wear footwear for long periods or have specific foot conditions, value products that reduce fatigue and provide better support. Brands targeting this segment often emphasise features such as soft insoles, anatomical shapes, or lightweight constructions.	Aesthetics In fashion-oriented segments, the visual appearance of the footwear plays a major role in consumer choice. Elements such as colour combinations, materials, shape, and brand image contribute to creating a distinctive style. Fashion footwear brands often launch seasonal collections that reflect current fashion trends and cultural influences.
Price level Some companies position their footwear as premium or luxury products, emphasising exclusivity, high-quality materials, and distinctive design. Other brands focus on affordable footwear, targeting consumers who prioritise value for money. Price positioning influences how consumers perceive the brand and its products.	Innovation Innovation may involve new materials, advanced manufacturing technologies, or digital customisation options.	Sustainability Sustainability positioning highlights environmentally friendly materials, responsible production processes, and reduced environmental impact. As consumers become more aware of environmental issues, many footwear brands integrate sustainability into their product development and communication strategies.

Fig. 7: Key product positioning approaches in footwear marketing

Some shoe companies market their shoes as performance athletic shoes, some promote them as high fashion, some emphasise their low prices, and others focus on sustainable production.

Effective positioning occurs when product characteristics, brand communication, and consumer expectations are aligned. Companies will need to clearly **communicate** the unique features of their footwear products through elements such as **branding, advertising, packaging**, and the retail

⁶ Parsana, D. (2025). Strategic brand positioning for emerging fashion brands in Finland. Retrieved from: <https://www.theseus.fi/handle/10024/906525>

experience. If product development and positioning align with consumer needs and market trends, a company can strengthen its competitive advantage and build a brand that is known for many years in the footwear market.

2.4 Marketing mix strategy

After defining the product and positioning, companies develop the **marketing mix**, also called the **4P mix**, which comprises four main elements: **product**, **price**, **place**, and **promotion** (Xia, 2023⁷; Wang, 2024⁸).

 Product	 Price
Products are tangible items or services available to consumers to satisfy their needs. In footwear, product decisions involve aspects such as: • design and aesthetics; • comfort and ergonomics; • materials used; • durability; • brand identity. For example, Crocs created a product by combining lightweight materials, ergonomic design, and distinctive aesthetics.	Price is the value assigned to goods or services by the seller and is influenced by consumer perceptions of value. Pricing strategies in the footwear industry may include: • premium pricing for luxury brands; • competitive pricing for mass markets; • discount strategies for seasonal collections. For instance, Christian Louboutin uses premium pricing to reinforce its luxury image.

⁷ Xia, Y. (2023). The 4Ps of marketing and applications in various brands. *Journal of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences*, 16, 165–170. Retrieved from: <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/0063/9e03801397b6d20ee1c059da83663e8ce065.pdf>

⁸ Wang, Z. (2024). Research on the marketing strategies of mainstream fast fashion and luxury clothing brands based on the 4P model: A case study of Zara and Prada. In *SHS Web of Conferences*, Vol. 207, p. 02002. Retrieved from: https://www.shs-conferences.org/articles/shsconf/abs/2024/27/shsconf_icdeba2024_02002/shsconf_icdeba2024_02002.html

Place (Distribution) 	Promotion 
Place refers to the ways of distribution utilised by a company to make its goods or services available to the consumer. In the footwear industry, distribution may include: • physical retail stores; • brand flagship stores; • e-commerce platforms; • marketplaces. Many brands now combine offline and online channels to create an omnichannel experience.	Promotions are advertising tools used to provide information, persuade, and/or remind consumers about a brand and its products. Common promotional tools include: • advertising; • social media campaigns; • influencer collaborations; • sponsorships; • in-store promotions. A classic promotional example would be Nike's widely recognised "Just Do It" tagline, which has been motivational for athletes and has built a long-lasting brand identity for the company. Similarly, Crocs are reaching its target youth audience through a strong online marketing strategy and collaborations with influencers.

The final stage involves **launching the product and monitoring market performance**. Companies will use multiple indicators to measure the effectiveness of their marketing efforts, including (Koval, 2016⁹):

- sales volume;
- market share;
- customer satisfaction;
- brand awareness;
- digital engagement.

Based on these results, companies may adjust their marketing strategies, pricing, or communication campaigns.

⁹ Koval, Z. O. (2016). Evaluation indicators of the marketing strategies efficiency of value-based enterprises. Economics, Entrepreneurship, Management, 3(1), 35–40. Retrieved from: <https://science.lpnu.ua/sites/default/files/journal-paper/2017/jun/3230/85.pdf>

3 Globalisation in Footwear Marketing

Globalisation has significantly transformed the footwear industry. Brands no longer compete only within national markets but operate in **complex global networks involving production, distribution, and consumption across multiple regions**. As a result, marketing strategies must adapt to diverse consumer preferences, economic conditions, and regulatory frameworks.

For footwear companies, globalisation creates both **opportunities and challenges**. On one hand, brands can access larger markets and expand internationally. On the other hand, they must manage **cultural differences, global competition, and increasing expectations regarding transparency and responsibility**.

3.1 Global markets and changing consumers

Globalisation has led to a significant expansion of footwear markets and a diversification of consumer segments worldwide. Varying consumer location creates unique functional requirements for the footwear market in each area. In addition, climate, culture, lifestyle, and infrastructure affect consumer behaviour, thus requiring **different marketing strategies** based on where footwear brands operate around the world. Digital communication is growing immensely as global trade continues to grow. Therefore, footwear brands must now be more aware of regional differences to develop marketing strategies that work for specific countries or regions.

Adidas provides a good example of how to create and promote footwear collections **tailored to regional markets**. In addition to offering specific products, the company regularly comes out with models that are exclusive to a particular market or region or that are offered in a limited number of pieces, thereby meeting the needs of local communities as well as being responsive to the demand for a variety of products by consumers in those areas.



Fig. 8: Adidas "City Series" sneakers inspired by different cities and regional cultures. Source: <https://hypebeast.com/tags/adidas-originals-city-series>

The **advancement of consumer standards** is another main change occurring today (Nema et al., 2025¹⁰). Consumers from all over the world demand footwear designed for lifestyle use that provides comfort, style, and durability, and incorporates elements of green design. Because of the development and access to shared information through digital media and the world wide web, combined with the increased use of social media, the rapid development and distribution of fashion and lifestyle trends from region to region on a global scale create a significant challenge for all footwear manufacturers as they are now required to address the expectations of their consumers on an increasingly regular basis.

¹⁰ Nema, P., & Sharma, M. C. (2025). Analysis of Consumer Buying Behavior towards Branded Footwear. International Journal of Innovations in Science, Engineering And Management, 73-79. <https://ijisem.com/journal/index.php/ijisem/article/view/288>

Globalisation has also contributed to the emergence of **new markets within the footwear value chain**. Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America are becoming increasingly relevant players in both footwear manufacturing and consumption (Serma, 2023¹¹). As the middle-class population in these markets has grown, demand for international brands and modern retail formats has also increased.

As a result, many companies in Europe are now looking to differentiate their products from global players by promoting them on the basis of **quality, craftsmanship, design heritage, and sustainability**. To compete effectively in the global marketplace, footwear brands in Europe are increasingly leveraging **digital engagement technologies** and **omnichannel retail** to create **personalised experiences** for their customers. Combining innovative product techniques with a strong brand reputation and responsible production practices should ultimately help European footwear manufacturers improve their brand position in this increasingly competitive, global, and connected marketplace.

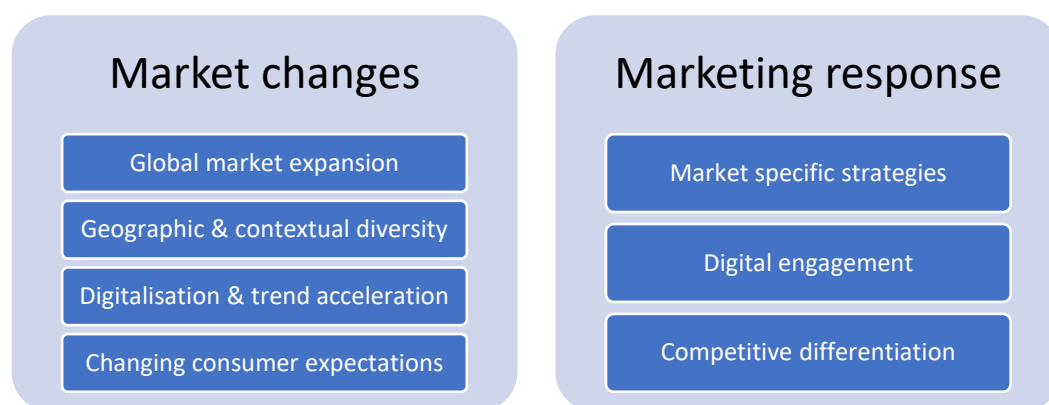


Fig. 9: Market changes and marketing response

3.2 Economic and socio-cultural influences on marketing

Marketing approaches in global markets are influenced by **economic and cultural factors**. Figure 10 illustrates how economic and socio-cultural factors influence marketing approaches in global footwear markets, shaping **consumer preferences, brand positioning, and communication strategies**.

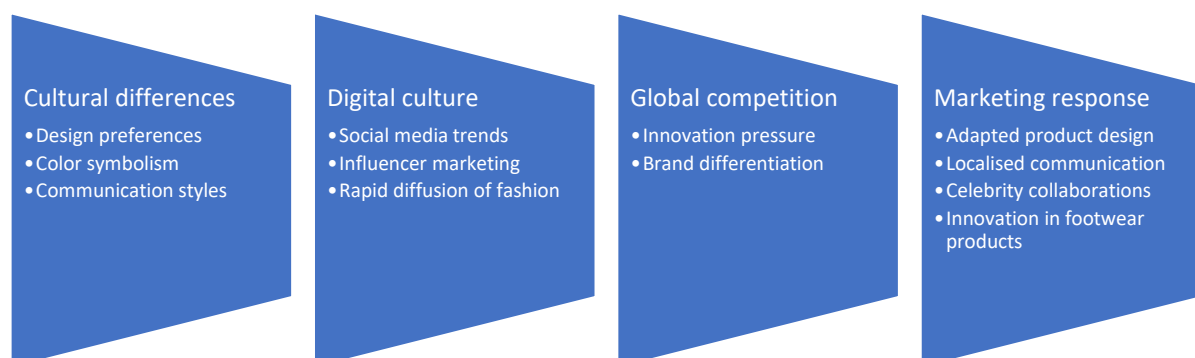


Fig. 10: Economic and socio-cultural factors shaping global footwear marketing strategies

¹¹ Serma (2023), World footwear market: Global trends in production, consumption and trade. Serma News & Reports. Retrieved from: <https://serma.net/news/reports/world-footwear-market>

Footwear design, colour choices, and advertising messages may vary depending on local cultural norms (Sahem, 2023¹²). For example, minimalist design and neutral colours are often preferred in some European markets, while more expressive styles may appeal to consumers in other regions.

Globalisation has also accelerated the **international diffusion of fashion trends**. Through digital media and global marketing campaigns, footwear styles can quickly spread across countries, influencing consumer preferences worldwide. Social media platforms and online communities play a major role in shaping global footwear trends.

In addition, globalisation has **intensified competition** within the footwear industry. Companies must continuously innovate to maintain competitiveness in global markets. This includes developing new product concepts, adopting innovative materials, and building **strong brand identities**.

The Air Jordan line of shoes by Nike, created in partnership with Basketball Superstar Michael Jordan, is an excellent example of how cultural heritage, sports, and celebrity influence intersect with marketing. The partnership transformed athletic footwear into a global cultural existence and illustrated how sports heritage and celebrity influence could be used to enhance a marketing strategy.

A strong counterexample to traditional endorsement models is the partnership between Adidas and Kanye West through the Yeezy brand (Savarese, 2023¹³). Initially, the collaboration became one of the most successful celebrity-driven marketing strategies in the fashion and sportswear industry. Adidas leveraged Kanye West's **cultural influence** to transform Yeezy sneakers into highly **desirable lifestyle products**, generating billions in revenue and strengthening the brand's relevance among younger consumers and sneaker culture enthusiasts (Reuters, 2022¹⁴). Consumers increasingly associated Adidas with **innovation, exclusivity, and cultural relevance**.

However, the partnership also revealed the risks of relying heavily on a volatile celebrity figure. In 2022, Kanye West made a series of antisemitic and controversial public statements, creating major reputational pressure on Adidas. The company terminated the collaboration in October 2022, leading to significant financial and image-related consequences. Adidas was left with approximately €1.2 billion worth of unsold Yeezy inventory and faced declining investor confidence and reputational damage due to its long association with the celebrity (McHugh, 2023¹⁵).

To manage the crisis, Adidas adopted a controlled liquidation strategy, releasing the remaining Yeezy stock in limited batches while donating part of the proceeds to anti-hate organisations (Associated Press, 2024¹⁶). At the same time, the company shifted its strategy toward heritage

¹² Sahem, M. S. (2023). Cross-cultural marketing communication: A comparative analysis of strategies in global campaigns. *International Journal of Engineering and Management Research*, 13(6), 172-181. Retrieved from: https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Mohammed-Samiuddin-Sahem/publication/377324131_Cross-Cultural_Marketing_Communication_A_Comparative_Analysis_of_Strategies_in_Global_Campaigns/links/65a376a6af617b0d8741dde7/Cross-Cultural-Marketing-Communication-A-Comparative-Analysis-of-Strategies-in-Global-Campaigns.pdf

¹³ Savarese, F. (2023). The impact of fashion collaboration break-up on customer perception of product equity and brand equity: The case of Adidas-Yeezy and Kanye West (Master's thesis, Luiss Guido Carli University). LuissThesis Repository. Retrieved from: https://tesi.luiss.it/37407/1/746301_SAVARESE_FEDERICA.pdf

¹⁴ Reuters. (2022). Adidas ends Kanye West partnership over antisemitism, hate speech. Retrieved from: <https://www.reuters.com/business/adidas-plans-end-kanye-west-partnership-after-controversies-bloomberg-news-2022-10-25/>

¹⁵ McHugh, D. (2023). \$1.2 billion of unsold Yeezy shoes stuck in limbo after Adidas split with Ye. PBS NewsHour. Retrieved from: <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/economy/1-2-billion-of-unsold-yeezy-shoes-stuck-in-limbo-after-adidas-split-with-ye?>

¹⁶ Associated Press. (2024). Yeezy shoe sales lead Adidas to \$150 million in donations to anti-hate groups. Retrieved from: <https://www.latimes.com/business/story/2024-03-13/yeezy-shoe-sales-lead-adidas-to-150-million-in-donations-to-anti-hate-groups?>

product lines such as the Adidas Samba and Gazelle, successfully rebuilding market interest through retro-inspired footwear (Valinsky, 2024¹⁷). By 2025, Adidas had recovered financially, reporting record revenues and operating profits while becoming fully independent of Yeezy-related income (Adidas AG, 2025¹⁸).

Unlike the long-term stability of the Nike–Michael Jordan partnership, the Adidas–Kanye West case demonstrates the vulnerabilities of personality-dependent branding strategies. Nevertheless, it also shows that rapid crisis management, portfolio diversification, and renewed focus on core product lines can help companies recover from reputational and financial shocks.

¹⁷ Valinsky, J. (2024). Adidas' retro-inspired shoes are flying off shelves. Retrieved from: <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/04/30/business/adidas-earnings-samba-sales>

¹⁸ Adidas AG. (2025). Income statement. In Annual report 2025 – Group management report: Financial review. Retrieved from: <https://report.adidas-group.com/2025/en/group-management-report-financial-review/business-performance/income-statement.html>

4 Sustainability in Footwear Marketing

Sustainability has become a central element of marketing strategies in the footwear industry. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), growing environmental concerns, regulatory pressures, and increasing consumer awareness are encouraging companies to integrate sustainability into both product development and brand communication. As a result, sustainability is no longer considered only a production issue but also an important **marketing** and **brand positioning strategy**.

Consumers increasingly evaluate footwear brands not only on price, design, and performance but also on their environmental and social impact. This shift in consumer behaviour has encouraged companies to highlight sustainability initiatives in their **marketing communications**. By promoting environmentally responsible materials, ethical sourcing, and transparent supply chains, footwear brands aim to strengthen consumer trust and differentiate themselves in a competitive market.

4.1 Green marketing in the footwear industry

Green marketing refers to marketing techniques that **promote environmentally responsible products** and **sustainable practices** to meet consumers' needs. With increasing global environmental awareness, sustainable products and practices are becoming more important for footwear brands when determining their brand positioning and developing various products (Neumann et al., 2021¹⁹).

Branding strategies that utilise **green marketing techniques** enable brands to alter their perception in relation to their direct competitors and to build customer loyalty based on the principles of sustainability (Javed et al., 2024²⁰). Because of the way in which the success of green marketing is directly linked to how credible the sustainability claims are made, if brands do not put their money where their mouth is when it comes to sustainability, the end-users may view them as having engaged in "greenwashing" and, as a result, their reputation and likelihood of purchasing from that brand will decrease significantly (Marko & Kusa, 2023²¹).

One important approach in green marketing is to promote the **circular design principles**, which aim to reduce waste and extend the life cycle of footwear products. There are three primary elements to implementing circular design principles:

- designing products for durability and repairability;
- using recyclable or biodegradable materials;
- facilitating product disassembly and recycling at the end of the product life cycle.

Many footwear companies are also experimenting with **recycled materials and post-consumer waste** in their manufacturing processes. These initiatives not only reduce environmental impact but also allow brands to communicate innovation and environmental responsibility to consumers. It can significantly **positively affect brand value**.

¹⁹ Neumann HL, Martinez LM, Martinez LF. (2021) Sustainability efforts in the fast fashion industry: consumer perception, trust and purchase intention. *Sustainability Accounting, Management and Policy Journal*, Vol. 12 No. 3 pp. 571–590. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.1108/SAMPJ-11-2019-0405>

²⁰ Javed T, Mahmoud AB, Yang J, Zhao X. (2024) Green branding in fast fashion: examining the impact of social sustainability claims on Chinese consumer behaviour and brand perception. *Corporate Communications*, Vol. 29 No. 6 pp. 915–934. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.1108/CCJ-12-2023-0169>

²¹ Marko M, Kusá A (2023), Greenwashing and the nature of education in relation to consumer trust in fast fashion marketing communication. *Communication Today*, Vol. 14 No. 1 pp. 86–98. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.34135/communicationtoday.2023.Vol.14.No.1.6>

4.2 Consumer awareness and green marketing

In recent years, consumers have been much more aware of environmental problems than they were in the past. An increasing number of consumers prefer to buy goods with a lower environmental impact and produced using responsible production practices. As a result, footwear brands have begun to promote their sustainability messages more often as part of their overall marketing strategy (Jave-Chire et al., 2025²²).

An **eco-label** or **sustainability certification** is the most common way for brands to tell consumers about the environmental performance of their products (Donato, 2025²³). Eco-labels provide consumers with a way to identify materials or products that are manufactured using environmentally friendly production processes. Manufacturers can demonstrate the use of sustainable materials, responsible leather sourcing, or reductions in carbon emissions through eco-labels to show that they are credible companies.

Digital technology has also been playing an increasingly important role in helping companies improve their **transparency**. QR codes, online platforms, and dedicated sustainability pages enable companies to provide consumers with in-depth information about the source, production methods, and environmental impacts of their products. Online and digital tools help manufacturers effectively communicate their sustainability goals to their consumers while **promoting responsible purchasing behaviour**.



Fig. 11: Eco-labels and sustainability certifications used to communicate environmental performance in footwear products. Source: <https://www.shopsuggies.com/pages/suggies-sustainable-shoe-guide>

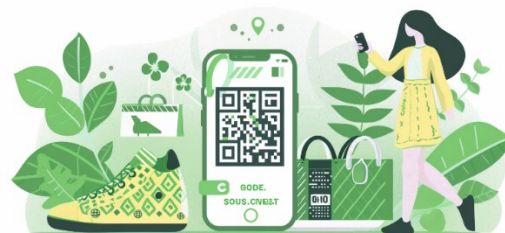


Fig. 12: Digital transparency tools such as QR codes providing information about product origin and materials. Source: <https://www.segura.co.uk/resources/press/digital-product-passport-fashion-preparation>

Brands, organisations and research institutions can collaborate to raise consumer awareness of sustainability through **educational campaigns**.

An example of this is the initiative **Run For The Oceans** (Fig. 13), which Adidas²⁴ launched with its partner Parley for the Oceans, aiming to raise awareness of marine pollution. As part of this global initiative, runners around the world can participate in events while learning about the effects plastic waste has on the environment. Additionally, the funds generated from this campaign support educational programmes and initiatives aimed at conserving ocean environments.

²² Jave-Chire, M., Alvarez-Risco, A., & Guevara-Zavaleta, V. (2025). Footwear industry's journey through green marketing mix, brand value and sustainability. *Sustainable Futures*, 9, 100561. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sftr.2025.100561> Retrieved from: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2666188825001315>

²³ Donato, C. (2025). Eco-label as a sustainable communication tool. In *Eco-label visual design and sustainability: The impact on consumer perceptions and market trends*. Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland. Retrieved from: https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-031-82761-7_2

²⁴ Adidas (n.d.), Run for the Oceans: Global initiative to help end plastic waste through sport and community engagement. Adidas Official Website. Retrieved from: <https://www.adidas.com/om/en/runfortheoceans.html>

Decathlon²⁵ collaborates with universities, research centres and innovation laboratories to create more sustainable sports footwear and equipment – by collaborating with these institutions to develop innovation and sustainability programmes that share product lifecycle and research information with their customers, the company enables consumers to understand how product design, raw materials (selection) and recycling initiatives contribute to reducing the environmental impact of their products.



Fig. 13: Adidas × Parley for the Oceans campaign raising awareness about marine pollution and sustainable materials. Source: <https://www.adidas.com/om/en/runfortheoceans.html>

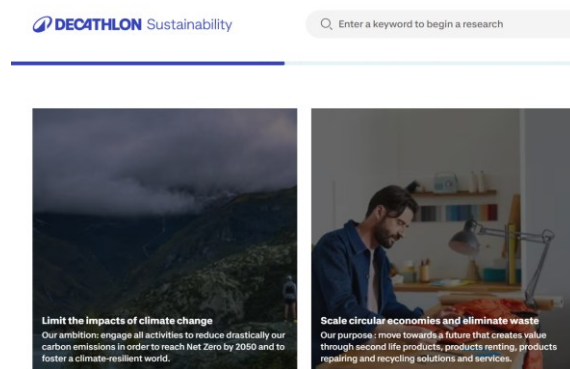


Fig. 14: Decathlon sustainability communication highlighting eco-design and responsible product development. Source: <https://sustainability.decathlon.com/>

Allbirds communicates the carbon footprint of its products as part of its marketing strategy, encouraging consumers to consider environmental impact when making purchasing decisions. The company became recognised for its sustainability-focused identity, but later faced declining sales and loss of market relevance (Wahba, 2026²⁶). This case shows that sustainability alone is not enough for long-term success, which also depends on innovation, consumer appeal, and competitiveness.



Fig. 15: Carbon footprint communication as part of sustainability marketing strategies – Allbirds brand. Source: <https://www.cnn.com/2020/09/28/allbirds-company-wants-people-to-understand-shoes-carbon-footprint.html>

²⁵ Decathlon (n.d.), Sustainability strategy: Climate action, circular economy and social impact commitments. Decathlon Sustainability. Retrieved from: <https://sustainability.decathlon.com/>

²⁶ Phil Wahba. (2026). Five hard lessons from Allbirds' 99% stock plunge and \$39 million fire sale. Fortune. Retrieved from: <https://fortune.com/2026/04/01/allbirds-fire-sale-stock-plunge-39-million/>

4.3 Resource-efficient production and environmental impact

An important factor in sustainability is increasing the **efficiency of shoe production**. Companies want to produce shoes while reducing the energy, greenhouse gas, and water use.

There are several things a company can do to help it achieve this goal. Some companies choose to incorporate renewable energy sources into their production, while others focus on optimising their processes and reducing waste.

Even though these improvements primarily occur at the production level, shoemakers are incorporating them into their marketing strategies. Many footwear companies highlight their **environmentally friendly manufacturing methods** in their **brand stories** when marketing to potential customers.

An example of this is the way **ECCO**²⁷ has promoted its advanced leather production methods to help reduce both water usage and environmental damage. By promoting these initiatives in its marketing communications, the ECCO brand is perceived as both technologically advanced and environmentally conscious.

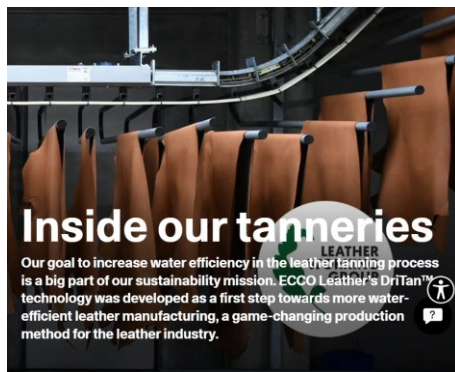


Fig. 16: Sustainability storytelling in footwear marketing: ECCO promoting environmentally responsible leather production. Source: <https://us.ecco.com/stories/sustainability>

Also, as noted earlier, **Adidas**²⁸ has launched shoes made from recycled ocean plastics, emphasising eco-friendly innovation in its marketing to consumers (Fig. 17).

Similarly, **Nike**²⁹ has promoted its commitment to reducing production waste and utilising recycled raw materials in its shoe manufacturing facilities (Fig. 18).



Fig. 17: Adidas marketing campaign promoting footwear made from recycled ocean plastics. Source: <https://parley.tv/initiatives/adidasxparley>



Fig. 18: Nike's sustainability-focused marketing campaign highlighting the use of recycled materials in footwear. Source: <https://www.nike.com/my/sustainability>

²⁷ ECCO (n.d.). Sustainability: Environmental goals, water reduction technologies and responsible production practices. ECCO Official Website. Retrieved from: <https://us.ecco.com/stories/sustainability>

²⁸ Parley for the Oceans (n.d.). Adidas x Parley: Eco-innovative footwear and apparel made from ocean plastic. Parley Initiative. Retrieved from: <https://parley.tv/initiatives/adidasxparley>

²⁹ Nike (n.d.). Sustainability: Move to Zero initiative and circular design strategies for reducing carbon and waste. Nike Official Website. Retrieved from: <https://www.nike.com/my/sustainability>

4.4 Ethical and social responsibility in marketing and branding

Sustainability in footwear marketing also includes **social responsibility and ethical business practices**. Consumers and customers must expect companies to provide fair labour conditions, source materials ethically, and manage their suppliers responsibly. Therefore, a number of footwear companies incorporate social responsibility into their marketing and communication to build consumer trust and strengthen their accountability.

Brands often highlight commitments such as (Cuesta-Valino et al., 2024³⁰):

- fair labour practices;
- safe working conditions;
- responsible sourcing of raw materials.

Transparent communication about these initiatives helps strengthen consumer trust and enhance brand credibility in global markets.

Ethical and social responsibility in branding also requires companies to communicate their sustainability initiatives transparently and truthfully. In addition, brands that incorporate social and ethical responsibility into their identities must use clear, honest communication when promoting their sustainability initiatives. These companies need to create messaging that accurately represents their environmental and social practices. Misleading or overstated claims about a brand's sustainability, commonly known as "**greenwashing**" can undermine a brand's credibility with consumers and cause distrust (Marko & Kusa, 2023³¹).

Responsible footwear brands, therefore, adopt several principles when communicating sustainability in their marketing strategies. First, companies must ensure that **sustainability claims are truthful and supported by verifiable evidence**, such as certifications, environmental reports, or measurable sustainability indicators. Second, brands should promote **transparency about materials, sourcing, and production processes, enabling consumers to better understand how products are manufactured and their potential environmental impact**. Finally, companies must avoid **misleading advertising or vague environmental claims** that could create false impressions about the sustainability performance of their products.

Footwear brands that communicate their sustainability efforts clearly and honestly will be able to build consumer confidence and long-lasting brand credibility in an increasingly sustainability-focused market.



Fig. 19: Principles of responsible sustainability communication in footwear marketing

³⁰ Cuesta-Valiño, P., Gutiérrez-Rodríguez, P., García-Henche, B., & Núñez-Barriopedro, E. (2024). The impact of corporate social responsibility on consumer brand engagement and purchase intention at fashion retailers. *Psychology & Marketing*, 41(3), 649-664. Retrieved from: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/mar.21940>

³¹ Marko M, Kusá A (2023), Greenwashing and the nature of education in relation to consumer trust in fast fashion marketing communication. *Communication Today*, Vol. 14 No. 1 pp. 86–98. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.34135/communicationtoday.2023.Vol.14.No.1.6>

An example of responsible marketing practices is provided by **Timberland**³². The company actively communicates its environmental and social initiatives, including responsible leather sourcing through Leather Working Group-certified tanneries and the use of recycled materials in many products. Timberland also promotes environmental programs such as **tree-planting campaigns** and **community engagement projects**.



Fig. 20: Timberland sustainability marketing campaigns highlighting environmental initiatives and responsible sourcing. Source: <https://www.timberland.com/en-ie/blog/sustainability/what-is-sustainable-fashion>

European brands also emphasise transparency in their sustainability communication. For example, **Dr. Martens**³³ has introduced initiatives to improve product durability and responsible sourcing, while communicating these commitments through **sustainability reports** and **marketing campaigns**.



Fig. 21: Sustainability communication and responsible branding in Dr. Martens marketing campaigns. Source: https://www.drmartens.com/us/en/sustainability?srltid=AfmBOor_b9hnFLi4y69aOXzq8qNGtbllIOqY_L91rgS8UGlJxBaBh-Hj&

Camper³⁴ uses its entire brand identity as a canvas to develop a sustainable footprint. The brand consistently demonstrates progress on its journey towards sustainability with the slogan "**A Little Better, Never Perfect**", which underscores its commitment to long-lasting, repairable footwear and transparency about continuous improvement. Camper uses recycling and second-life programs to extend the lifespan of all its products. In addition, Camper builds customer loyalty by using natural, recycled, and low-impact materials and by applying its B Corp Certification as evidence of its

³² Timberland (n.d.). What is sustainable fashion? Definition and environmental impact of responsible clothing. Timberland Official Website. Retrieved from: <https://www.timberland.com/en-ie/blog/sustainability/what-is-sustainable-fashion>

³³ Dr. Martens (n.d.). Sustainability: Planet, Product, People strategy and targets for sustainable materials and circular design. Dr. Martens Official Website. Retrieved from: <https://www.drmartens.com/us/en/sustainability>

³⁴ Camper. (n.d.). Better collection women. Retrieved from: https://www.camper.com/en_ES/landings/better_collection_women

dedication to ethical business practices. Although Camper has opted out of promoting sustainability in its marketing campaigns, it urges consumers to purchase responsibly and provides authentic narratives about its products.

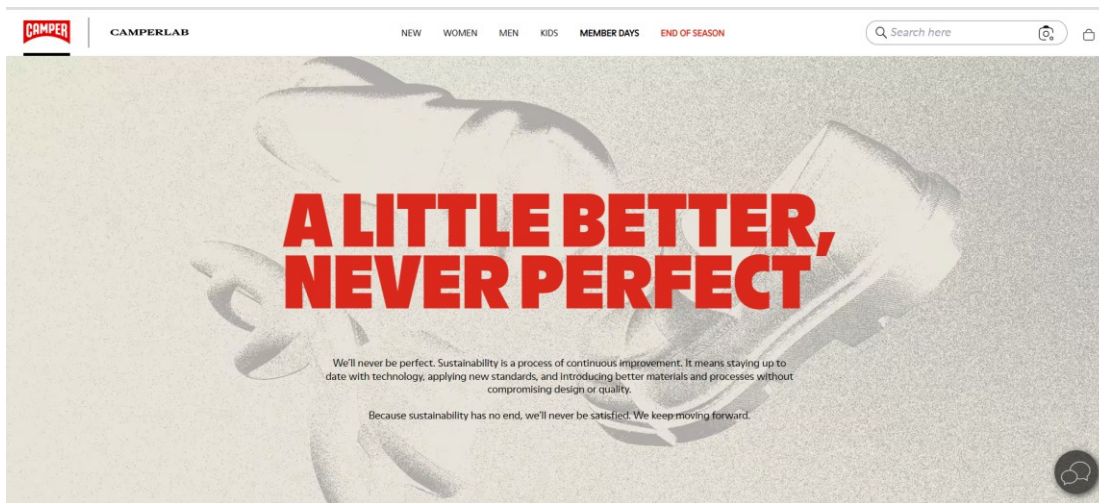


Fig. 22: Sustainability communication in Camper marketing campaigns. Source: https://www.camper.com/en_ES/content/sustainability

5 Digitalisation in Footwear Marketing

Digitalisation has transformed the way footwear companies interact with consumers, develop marketing strategies, and manage sales channels. Digital technologies enable brands to collect data, personalise marketing communication, and create immersive consumer experiences.

In the next five years, digitalisation is expected to further reshape the footwear industry through **artificial intelligence, data analytics, and new digital consumer experiences**.

5.1 Artificial Intelligence in marketing

Artificial intelligence (AI) is increasingly used in various aspects of marketing. Using AI tools, it is possible to process consumer data, automatically generate marketing copy, and assist in making marketing decisions based on this data.

Automated product descriptions

Nike uses AI-driven tools to help **generate and optimise product descriptions** for its e-commerce platforms, ensuring that product information is consistent, searchable, and tailored for digital marketing channels.

Personalised recommendations

Zalando uses AI-powered **recommendation algorithms** to suggest footwear products based on user behaviour and previous purchases. These personalised recommendations help improve customer engagement and increase online sales.

Adversiting visuals

Puma has experimented with AI-assisted design tools to **generate marketing visuals and digital campaign content** for social media platforms. This allows the brand to produce marketing materials more rapidly and adapt them to different markets.

Translation and localisation of marketing contents

Brands use AI-based translation systems to **adapt product descriptions, advertising messages, and website content** for different international markets. This enables the companies to communicate effectively with diverse consumer groups.

Demand forecasting

Adidas uses AI-driven data analytics to **track consumer preferences and predict which footwear styles are likely to become popular**. These insights help marketing teams plan product launches and promotional campaigns more effectively.

Fig. 23: Applications of Artificial Intelligence in footwear marketing

For instance, AI systems are being utilised in the footwear industry to generate product descriptions for online retailers, create **personalised recommendations for consumers, generate visual advertising content** using AI-generated computer images, and **translate and localise marketing content** for specific markets (Chen et al., 2023³⁵).

Additionally, AI enables businesses to **identify new trends** in consumer behaviour and to **anticipate future demand**.

By employing these technologies, businesses can increase their marketing effectiveness and respond quickly to market shifts.

³⁵ Chen, H. J., Shuai, H. H., & Cheng, W. H. (2023). A survey of artificial intelligence in fashion. IEEE Signal Processing Magazine. 40(3), 64-73. Retrieved from: <https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/abstract/document/10113373>

5.2 Big Data and data-driven marketing

Footwear brands have access to vast amounts of data through digital platforms. By collecting and storing customer information through digital platforms (such as e-commerce sites), footwear brands can access a wealth of data about their customers.

By analysing this data, footwear brands will gain a better understanding of customers' purchasing behaviours and preferences. By utilising a data-driven marketing strategy, footwear brands can **enhance their customers' online shopping experiences, optimise their advertising campaigns, accurately predict the demand for products and improve their inventory management** (Sun, 2025³⁶).

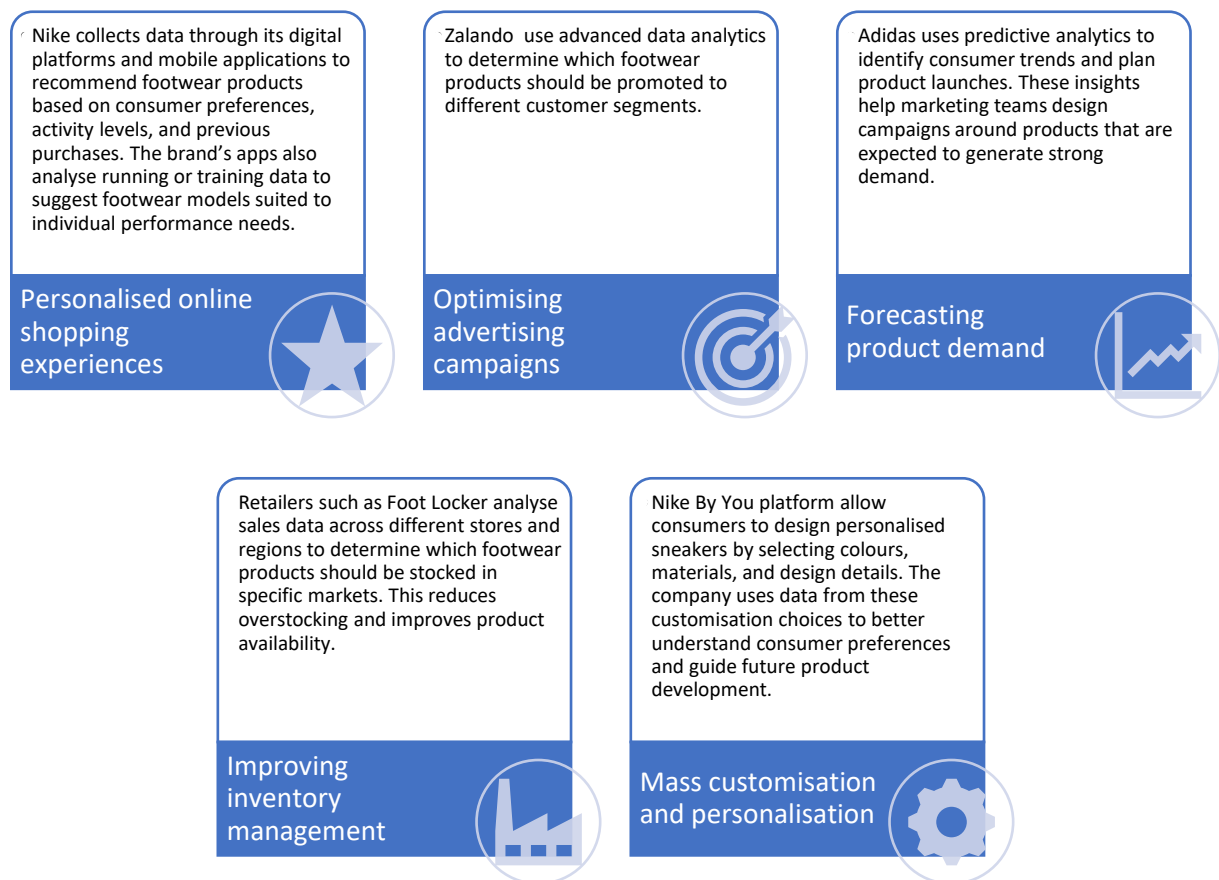


Fig. 24: Applications of Big Data in footwear marketing

³⁶ Sun, H. (2025). Research on Precision Marketing and Design Strategies for Contemporary Fashion Design Driven by Big Data. Retrieved from: https://www.webofproceedings.org/proceedings_series/ESSP/ICAMFSS%202024/S44.pdf

5.3 Virtual and Augmented Reality

Digital technologies, such as Virtual and Augmented Reality technologies, allow consumers to **visualise products in immersive environments** (Designboom, 2019³⁷; Hindustan Times, 2019³⁸).

Examples include:

- Virtual try-on tools that simulate how shoes look on the user's feet;
- Augmented Reality filters and applications in mobile devices;
- 3D product visualisation on e-commerce platforms.

To increase user or consumer engagement and brand visibility while also improving consumer purchase intent, **AR filters** on platforms such as Snapchat provide consumers an opportunity to interact with a brand/product in an entertaining way. Users can use their phone's camera to **virtually try on** and **customise** the product, thereby creating a more **engaging experience** than traditional advertising gives consumers. By encouraging consumers to explore the products they are interested in, share photos of themselves "wearing" these products on social media and buy the products directly through the app, AR filters **enhance brand visibility** and **user engagement**, and strengthen purchase intent by allowing consumers to see themselves wearing the product prior to making their purchase.

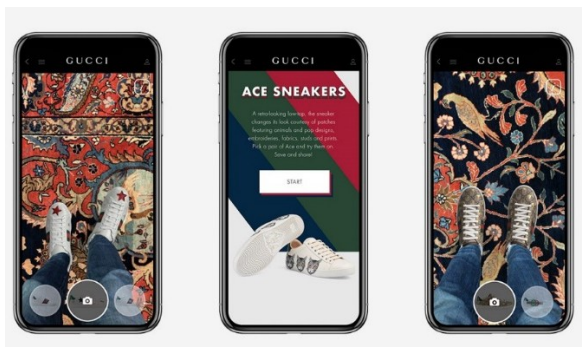


Fig. 25: Virtual sneaker try-on using augmented reality in the Gucci mobile application. Source: <https://www.designboom.com/technology/gucci-wannaby-app-virtually-try-shoes-on-using-augmented-reality-06-26-2019/>



Fig. 26: Augmented Reality foot-scanning technology used by Nike to recommend shoe sizes. Source: <https://tech.hindustantimes.com/tech/news/nike-uses-ar-to-find-you-the-perfect-shoe-size-story-Y8j1GXrfzCfHu0EjQXXhgl.html>

The AR system referenced in Redaelli et al. (2009)³⁹ enables individualised footwear customisation via a 'magic mirror' used in retail. As part of the augmented reality experience, the initial step is to scan the client's foot to obtain five distinct measurements. This allows clients to create, modify, and personalise their footwear options, beginning with the original design and then selecting their desired leather types, colours, and soles. Components required for this functionality include an LCD screen that serves as a mirror, a camera capable of capturing live images of the user's feet, and a

³⁷ Designboom (2019). Gucci Wannaby app lets users virtually try on sneakers using augmented reality. Designboom. Retrieved from: <https://www.designboom.com/technology/gucci-wannaby-app-virtually-try-shoes-on-using-augmented-reality-06-26-2019/>

³⁸ Hindustan Times (2019). Nike uses augmented reality to find the perfect shoe size through foot scanning technology. Hindustan Times Tech. Retrieved from: <https://tech.hindustantimes.com/tech/news/nike-uses-ar-to-find-you-the-perfect-shoe-size-story-Y8j1GXrfzCfHu0EjQXXhgl.html>

³⁹ Redaelli, C., Pellegrini, R., Mottura, S., & Sacco, M. (2009, June). Shoe customers' behaviour with new technologies: the Magic Mirror case. In 2009 IEEE International Technology Management Conference (ITMC) (pp. 1-10). IEEE. 10.1109/ITMC.2009.7461388 Retrieved from: <https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/abstract/document/7461388>

tracking system that continuously monitors the user's feet' position and direction throughout the user's interaction with the wearable technology.

Timberland created a **digital mirror** (Fig. 27) that allows shoppers to see outfits on a virtual avatar.



Fig. 27: Timberland digital mirror. Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5TZmQPdhpak>

5.4 Digital platforms and omnichannel strategies

Modern footwear brands increasingly adopt **omnichannel marketing strategies**, integrating physical stores with digital platforms.

Consumers may interact with brands through multiple channels, including:

- brand websites;
- e-commerce platforms;
- social media networks;
- physical retail stores.

The use of **social media** also enables the footwear industry to implement marketing strategies across multiple channels. On social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok, brands can connect directly with customers to build community; therefore, social media is essential for strengthening brand loyalty (Bonilla et al., 2024⁴⁰).

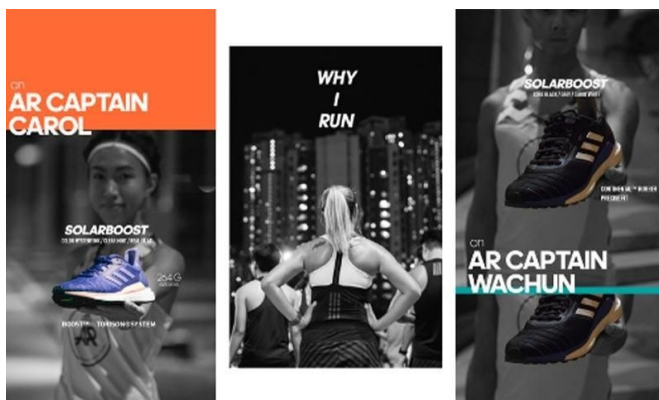


Fig. 28: Adidas is engaging consumers through social media marketing campaigns. Source: <https://www.marketing-interactive.com/adidas-runners-runs-social-media-campaign-with-multiple-ig-stories>

⁴⁰ Bonilla-Quijada, M., Olmo-Arriaga, J. L. D., Adreu Domingo, D., & Ripoll-i-Alcon, J. (2024). Fast fashion consumer engagement on Instagram: a case study. *Cogent Business and Management*, 11(1). Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2024.2322111>

Footwear brands frequently use **influencer collaborations and user-generated content** (Fig. 29) to increase brand visibility and stimulate consumer engagement. Athletes, fashion influencers, and content creators often showcase footwear products in everyday contexts, helping brands reach wider audiences and shape consumer perceptions.

For example, Puma (Fig. 30) targets young consumers through social media platforms and through partnering with athletes, musicians, and influencers. These digital marketing tactics allow the brand to increase its appeal to younger consumers and solidify its global footprint in the fashion industry.



Fig. 29: User-generated content promoting Converse footwear within digital communities. Source: <https://www.instagram.com/laurensbigadventure/>

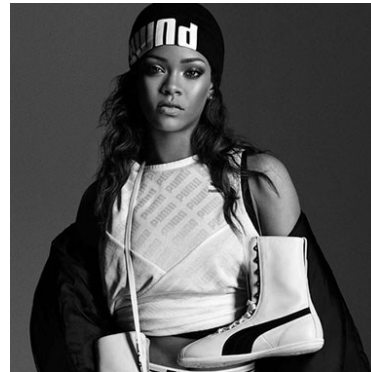


Fig. 30: Celebrity collaboration as part of Puma's social media marketing strategy.

Source:

<https://www.worldfootwear.com/news/rihanna-puma-a-profitable-partnership/2505.html>

Through visual representations, footwear brands can showcase their products and connect with their target audiences by providing visual evidence of how their products fit into a lifestyle, support athletic performance, or align with fashion trends. This marketing method has been shown to significantly influence consumer purchase motivations by providing consumers with a visual way to associate specific footwear brands with lifestyles, athletic performance, or fashion trends (Zahran, 2025⁴¹).

Another example is Dr. Martens and how it uses digital storytelling to create a strong connection with its target demographic of youth and music. By soliciting user-generated content and collaborating with various artists, Dr Martens can effectively build connections with its global consumer communities (Fig. 31).



Fig. 31: Dr. Martens digital storytelling connecting footwear with youth culture and music communities. Source: <https://hypebae.com/2024/10/nia-archives-dr-martens-campaigns-boots-like-no-other-1460>

⁴¹ Zahran, A. M. (2025). The impact of marketing strategies on the success of the fast fashion industry: A systematic review. *JUMDER: Jurnal Bisnis Digital dan Ekonomi Kreatif*, 1(3), 1–15. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1234/jumder.v1i3.25>. Retrieved from: <https://journal.dinamikapublika.id/index.php/JUMDER/article/view/25>

Another benefit of a digital platform is its **speed** and **accessibility**. For example, footwear companies can easily tell their followers about new products, such as product launches, special-edition products, or partnerships. They can also react instantly to consumer feedback and changes in the fashion world. This immediate communication enhances brand loyalty and often generates a sense of urgency among consumers, particularly with sneaker launches or limited-collection drops (Sharma, 2020⁴²; Liu, 2022⁴³).

Through social media, footwear companies can combine **brand storytelling**, **community interaction**, and **real-time trend monitoring**, making these platforms essential tools in contemporary marketing strategies.

A good example of an **omnichannel strategy** in the footwear field is **Vans** (Fig. 32). The brand connects its physical stores, online shop, and digital platforms to create a consistent shopping experience across multiple channels. Consumers can explore products through the brand's website, mobile platforms, and social media pages, and then purchase them either online or in physical stores.

This combination of community-oriented marketing, an omnichannel strategy, and a focus on customer experience has created a strong sense of community. The digital aspect includes promoting skateboarding culture and music festivals, as well as collaborations between the company and artists, while the in-store experience adds another layer of engagement.

The combination of digital and in-store experiences improves brand loyalty by enhancing the brand image and connecting with customers.

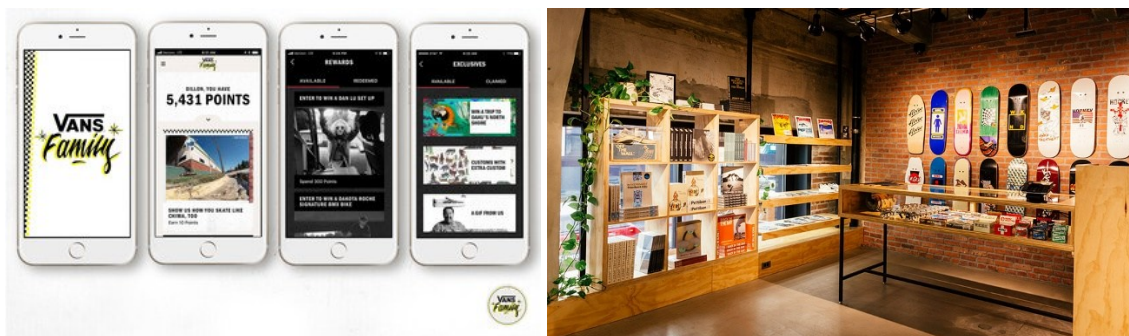


Fig. 32: Integration of digital platforms, community engagement, and physical retail in Vans' omnichannel marketing strategy. Source: <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/vans-launches-vans-family-loyalty-program-to-deliver-a-brand-new-off-the-wall-customer-experience-300603463.html>; <https://chainstoreage.com/first-look-check-out-vans-new-store-concept>

⁴² Sharma, A. P. (2021). Consumers' purchase behaviour and green marketing: A synthesis, review and agenda. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 45(6), 1217-1238. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ijcs.12722>. Retrieved from: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/ijcs.12722>

⁴³ Liu, J., & Liu, Y. (2025). Asymmetric impact of matching technology on influencer marketing: Implications for platform revenue. *Marketing Science*, 44(1), 65-83. <https://doi.org/10.1287/mksc.2023.0211>. Retrieved from: <https://pubsonline.informs.org/doi/abs/10.1287/mksc.2023.0211>

6 Case Study and Project Work

6.1 Case study – CONDUR by alexandru

BRAND DNA

FOUNDED

1991

FOUNDER

Alexandru

CATEGORY

Premium Footwear

PHILOSOPHY

Wearable Art

CONDUR by alexandru

is positioned as a premium footwear brand, defined by the interplay between craftsmanship, art, design, and authenticity.

The story began in 1991 with one man: Alexandru, passionate about beauty and uniqueness. Over the years, he turned his passion into art — creating shoes that are not just footwear, but true masterpieces.

"Shoes for women who prefer to read instead of buying shoes — and for men who strongly believe in the notion of gentleman."

— Alexandru, Founder

SHE IS NOT THE MASSES.

SHE IS THE EXCEPTION.

HER WORLD

- Authenticity is non-negotiable
- Art lives beyond galleries
- Digital is influence, not noise

HER DESIRE

- Not just to wear — but to express
- Not just to own — but to belong
- Not just to see — but to feel

HER PROFILE

- Age 30–70, creative leaders
- High income, strong personal style
- Digitally engaged & influential

CONDUR by alexandru — A reflection of her identity. A statement of individuality. A form of wearable art.

MARKETING STRATEGY

The 4P Model

PRODUCT	PRICE	PLACE	PROMOTION
<i>Not footwear. Wearable art.</i> • Distinctive design & visual identity • Artistic inspiration & collaborations • Focus on aesthetics, comfort <i>Positions product as wearable art — emotional & symbolic value beyond functionality</i>	<i>Not a cost. A statement of value.</i> • Premium pricing strategy • High-quality materials & craftsmanship • Strong artistic and symbolic value <i>Reinforces accessible luxury positioning and supports brand exclusivity</i>	<i>Not distribution. A controlled universe.</i> • Official website & digital platforms • Social media: Facebook & Instagram • Collaborations & capsule collections <i>Ensures brand control and curated experience through selective omnichannel approach</i>	<i>Not advertising. A narrative.</i> • Authentic storytelling • Concept-driven campaigns • Facebook & Google Ads (lookalike 10%) <i>Builds emotional connection and brand awareness with targeted digital reach</i>

STRATEGIC CAMPAIGNS

Storytelling and Identity

Real Women Real Life

Authentic voices. Real stories. True impact.

Magic Blue — Art & Partnerships

Where art meets the art of craftsmanship.

Sensory Campaigns with AI

Hyper-realistic visuals beyond imagination.

Real Women Real Life

Concept

Real clients become ambassadors, leaders & inspirational role models.

Execution

Personal storytelling, product in real-life contexts, authentic content.

Impact

Builds trust, creates community, transforms customer into brand vector.

Campaign Visuals



7 în fiecare zi
CONDUR
by alexandru



Fig. 33: Real Women, Real Life. Source: CONDUR by alexandru

Magic Blue

Art and Partnerships

Concept

An artistic collaboration inspired by the universe of Hamid Nicola Katrib.

Strategic Direction

Integration of art into the product. Color as symbol — blue = emotion, depth.

Brand Value

Reinforces premium positioning. Creates cultural & artistic associations. Transforms product into a collectible object.



Fig. 34: Magic Blue Art & Partnership Source: CONDUR by alexandru



Fig. 35: Magic Blue Art & Partnership Source: CONDUR by alexandru

Sensory Campaigns with AI

Concept

Fusion of product, visual art & sensory experiences.

Execution

Footwear in ice cream universe (pistachio, vanilla). Dynamic visuals emphasizing movement & texture.

Impact

Hyper-realistic visuals. Creative exploration beyond physical limits. Innovative visual storytelling.

Campaign Visuals



Fig. 36: Sensory Campaigns with AI. Source: CONDUR by alexandru

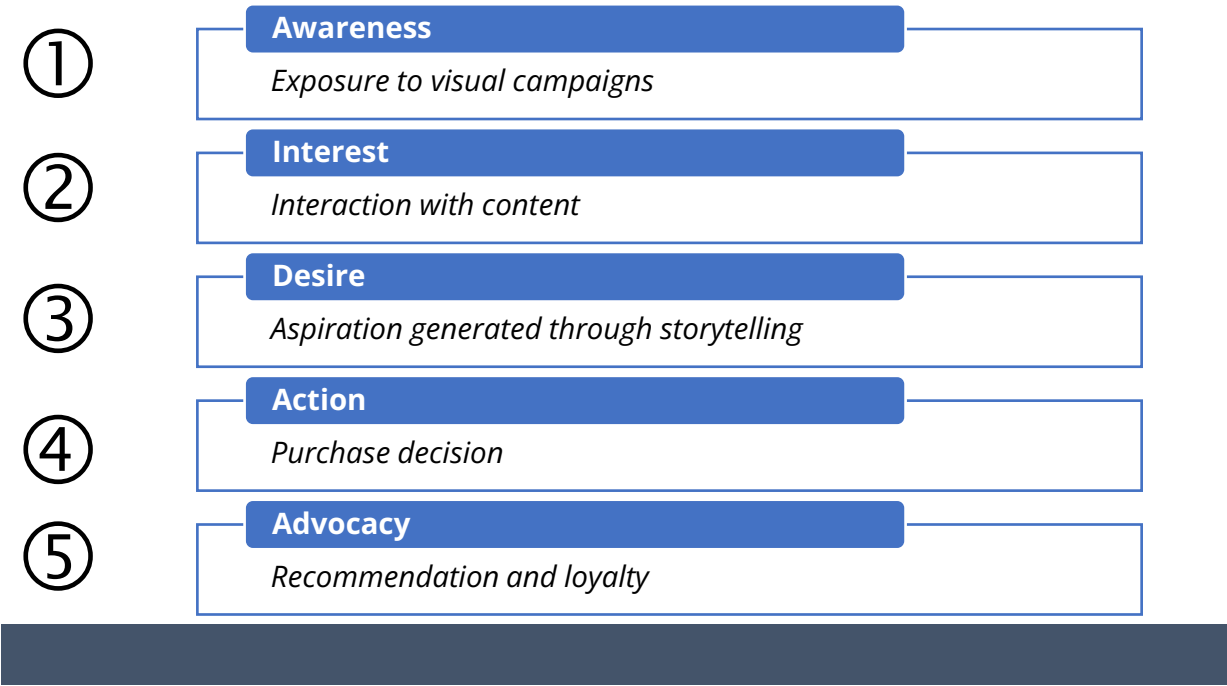
KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Marketing Strategy Evaluation

KPI CATEGORY	INDICATORS	STRATEGIC RELEVANCE
Brand Awareness	Impressions · Reach Social media mentions	Visibility focused on reaching a relevant, value-aligned audience — not just broad exposure.
Engagement	Likes · Comments · Shares Engagement rate · Content saves	High engagement reflects genuine emotional connection — essential for storytelling-driven campaigns.
Conversion	Conversion rate · Orders Average Order Value (AOV)	Conversion is influenced not only by functional value, but also by emotional appeal and brand narrative.
Customer Loyalty	Repeat purchase rate Referrals · UGC	Loyal customers become brand advocates, supporting organic growth and strengthening community.
Brand Perception	Direct feedback · Reviews Emotional associations	Ensures maintenance of a coherent premium, artistic, and authentic brand image.

MARKETING FUNNEL EVALUATION

The Consumer Journey — from Awareness to Brand Advocacy



STRATEGIC INSIGHT

"The success of the strategy is not defined solely by conversion — but more importantly by the transformation of the consumer into a brand ambassador."

- Success is defined by the quality of the relationship with the consumer
- KPIs must reflect not only economic impact, but also brand value
- Premium niche marketing wins through relevance, emotion & community

CONDUR

by alexandru

Does not just sell products.

It creates a universe.

*One where the consumer is not just a buyer,
but part of the story.*

Where strategy becomes art.

www.condurbyalexandru.com

6.2 Structure of the project work

Topic/Theme: Develop a marketing strategy based on the 4P (Product, Price, Place, and Promotion) for a footwear brand, following the proposed stages: market and consumer, competitive analysis, product, pricing, distribution and promotion.

Market & consumer analysis

- Define the target market. Describe the customer using:
 - Demographics (age, gender, income, location);
 - Lifestyle (active, fashion-oriented, eco-conscious, etc.);
 - Behaviour (shopping habits, brand loyalty, online/offline preferences).
- Identify consumer needs and pain points.
 - What problems does the consumer face? (e.g., discomfort, lack of sustainability, high prices)
 - What needs does the product satisfy? (comfort, style, status, performance, etc.)
- Present main trends in the footwear industry (connect the trends to the chosen category product).
 - Sustainability (eco-materials, circular design);
 - Digitalisation (e-commerce, customisation tools);
 - Fashion trends (chunky sneakers, minimalism, etc.);
 - Health & comfort (ergonomics, athleisure).

Competitive analysis

- Identify main competitors (2–3 brands). Choose brands that target a similar audience or offer similar products.
- Present a positioning comparison. Compare competitors based on:
 - Price level;
 - Style/design;
 - Quality or performance;
 - Brand image.

Product strategy

- Provide a product description (type of footwear, materials, design, functionality, innovation aspects)

Pricing strategy

- Define the pricing model (premium, mid-range, budget)
- Explain the price based on the target consumer, competitors (higher, lower/similar), and value perception (design, quality, brand story).

Distribution strategy

- Present the sales channels to be used:
 - Online (own website, marketplaces);
 - Offline (retail, pop-up stores);
 - Omnichannel strategy (click & collect, online customisation + in-store pickup, etc).

Promotion strategy

- Point the communication objectives (brand awareness, product launch visibility, engagement or sales);
- Define a key message/brand story;
- Propose a promotional mix (Social media campaigns, influencer marketing, events/collaborations);
- Create a content example (Instagram post idea, campaign slogan)

Note: Integrate modern marketing trends such as **sustainability & ethical branding**, **digital marketing** (TikTok campaigns, Instagram storytelling, AI-generated content), **personalisation** and **co-creation** (custom design options, user involvement), **community building**, **experience-driven marketing** (events, immersive retail, storytelling experiences).

Presentation & evaluation

- Compile a visual (presentation) and written report documenting all project stages.

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