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The Changing Meaning of Luxury

Ian Yeoman and Una McMahon-Beattie

Introduction

When Marie Antoinette supposedly said “let them eat cake”, she was seen as a luxury junkie who’s out of control spending grated on the poor and unfortunate French people. But today, cake has become one of our favourite luxury foods. A revolution has taken place where individuals in the world have got richer. Luxury is no longer the embrace of the kings and queens of France but the mass marketing phenomenon of everyday life. Simply put, luxury has become luxurification of the commonplace (Berry, 1994; Twitchell, 2001). The word luxury is derived from *luxus*, meaning sensuality, splendour, pomp and its derivative *luxuria*, means extravagance, riot and so on. The rise of the luxury in Western society is associated with increasing affluence and consumption. It is a phenomenon that has been creeping up in society for hundreds of years. At the turn of the twentieth century, it was Thorsten Veblen (1899) who coined the term “conspicuous consumption” in his theory of the leisure class. Veblen’s argument is based upon the belief that as wealth spreads, what drives consumers’ behaviour is increasingly neither subsistence nor comfort but the “attainment of esteem and envy of fellow men”. Because male wage earners are too circumspect to indulge themselves, they deposit consumption on surrogates. Vicarious ostentation is observed in Victorian men who encouraged their wives and daughters to wear complicated trappings of wealth. Veblen thought that the purpose of acquisition was public consumption of esteem, status and anxiety displayed by materialism. What Veblen termed as conspicuous consumption were the trophies such as slaves or property where people would show off their wealth. The ideas contained in Veblen’s study of luxury and conspicuous consumption were developed in the works of John Galbraith such as *The Affluent Society* (1958) and Vance Packard’s *The Hidden Persuaders* (2007), *The Status Seekers* (1962a) and *The Pyramid Climbers* (1962b). Galbraith’s work moved us from an understanding of luxury based upon royalty and those that were born into money to those that made their money such as the

Carnegies and steel, Ford and the motorcar or Hughes and aircraft. Further works by Schlor at Harvard University (1991, 1998) explored how Middle America was becoming more affluent and wealthy. Luxury goods were no longer luxury goods but everyday household goods (Silverstein et al., 2005).

The changing meaning of luxury

The concept of luxury is incredibly fluid and changes dramatically across time and culture. In the past it was associated with champagne, caviar, designer clothes and sports cars. Nowadays with increased affluence, luxury is a blurred genre which is no longer the preserve of the elite. More and more consumers have traded up as the old values of tradition and nobility have become less important. People are enjoying much more material comfort in comparison to previous generations, resulting in a trend of a cultural shift for personal fulfilment and aspiration through experience. Therefore, it could be argued that luxury is increasingly about experience and authenticity (Yeoman et al., 2005), rather than monetary value. This is not to say that luxury is about status, but luxury is more than monetary value. Indeed, they run side by side. This focus on aspiration and experience means increasing emphasis on personal transformation through, for example, wellbeing and travel. It means that consumers want to improve their life. This is what Danziger (2005), Israel (2003) and Gambler (1997) identify as the feminization of luxury, where luxury has moved on from its male trophies and status symbols towards experience and indulgence. This is perhaps attributed to women's increasing buying power in society which is driving luxury markets such as wellbeing, clothes and tourism. At the same time, the old world luxury of consumption and elitism still prevails especially in emerging economies of China. So today, luxury can be categorized into materialism, enrichment or time (see Figure 6.1).

Materialism

Materialism is not dead. Fast cars and Ferraris are man's desire for exclusive, expensive, best quality, self-indulgent, conspicuous, tangible overt goods and experiences. As luxurification is becoming more commonplace due to the rises in disposal income of the middle classes, consumers start to trade up. In 1985, 99 per cent of Chinese consumers could be classified as poor, but by 2025 only 10 per cent will be, according to forecasts by McKinsey (Figure 6.2). McKinsey (Farrel et al., 2006) has established that urban households will make up one of the largest consumer markets in the world, spending about 20 trillion RMB (0.12 RMB: US\$1). Over the next 20 years an increasing number of rural Chinese will migrate to the cities to seek higher paying jobs. These working consumers, once the country's poorest, will steadily climb the income ladder, creating a massive new middle class. Rapid economic growth will continue to transform the impoverished but

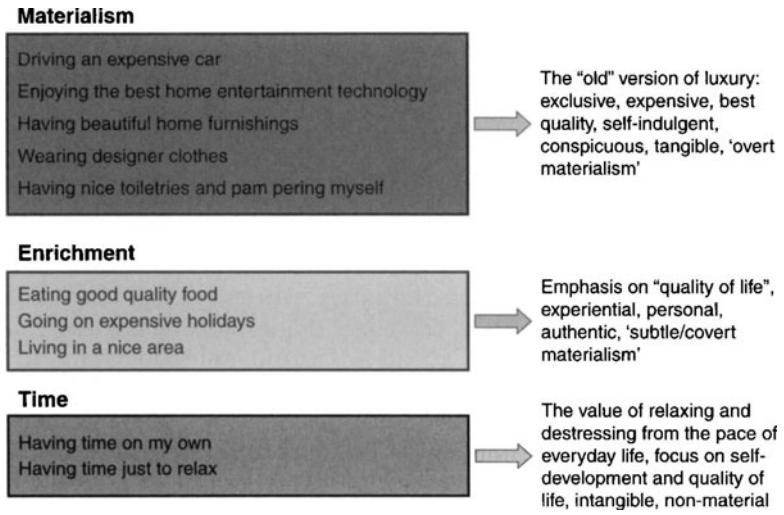


Figure 6.1 The changing meaning of luxury.

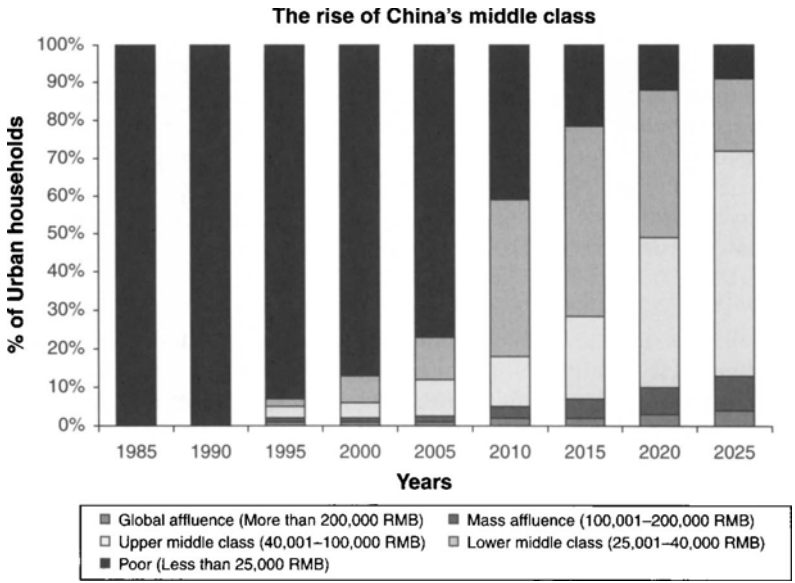


Figure 6.2 China's rising middle-class consumers.

largely egalitarian society of China's past into one with distinct income classes.

As China's economy grows, there will be a steep growth in the middle class through to 2015 with lower middle classes emerging, defined as households with annual incomes of 25,001–40,000 RMB. A decade later, the upper middle class, with annual household incomes of 40,001–100,000 RMB, will follow. These numbers may seem low compared with consumer incomes in the world's richest countries – current exchange rates and relative prices tend to understate China's buying power – but such people are solidly middle class by global standards. When accounting for purchasing power parity, a household income of 100,000 RMB, for instance, buys a lifestyle in China similar to that of a household earning US\$40,000 in the USA. By about 2015 the lower middle class number will exceed some 300 million people, representing the largest segment in urban China and accounting for about 44 per cent of the urban population with a total spending power of 4.8 trillion RMB. By 2025 this segment will comprise a staggering 520 million people – more than half of the expected urban population of China – with a combined total disposable income of 13.3 trillion RMB.

The rising middle classes of China means massive expansion of luxury spending in this country which is characterized by aspirational and conspicuous spending. China is now Louis Vuitton's second biggest market and Mercedes-Benz's fourth largest. In other emerging markets like Russia, perceptions of luxury differ from mature markets such as the UK and France. Russian consumers perceive luxury as expensive holidays, driving an expensive car, living in a nice area or nice beautiful home furnishings (Figure 6.3).

Examples of materialism stretch no further than “bling”, which is a slang term popularized in hip hop culture, referring to flashy or elaborate jewellery and ornamented accessories that are carried, worn or installed, such as cell phones or tooth caps. The concept is often associated with rappers (Yeoman, 2008). Bling features in many luxury materialistic products. Taking mineral water as an example, Bling H2O (<http://www.blingh2o.com>) is bottled water that comes in limited edition, corked, 750-ml frosted glass bottles, embellished with Swarovski crystals. Established in 2005 by a Hollywood writer-producer who noticed that “you could tell a lot about a person by the bottled water that they carried”, Bling H2O aims to be the “Cristal Champagne” of bottled water and is spotted at everything from the MTV Awards to the Emmys. The bottles cost from US\$17 to US\$480. Then there is Evian, whose limited release Palace (<http://www.evian.com/us/>) bottle is only available in high-end bars and restaurants. Featuring a specially designed pouring top and accompanied by a stainless steel coaster, the bottle sells for US\$15–20. Then there is Tasmanian Rain (<http://www.tasmanianrain.com>) captured on the pristine north west coast of the island of Tasmania, Australia. The water is collected “just minutes from where the



Figure 6.3 The percentage of Russians who choose the following as the best or second best description of “luxury” in their life.

Source: [http://www.tomorrowstourist.com/Future Foundation](http://www.tomorrowstourist.com/Future_Foundation) (2008).

World Meteorological Organization records the world’s purest air”. As this rain has travelled eastward via air currents over Antarctica and 10,000 miles of ocean, it contains 17 parts per million of dissolved solids. Tasmanian Rain is collected by a custom-designed catchment facility and never touches the ground. On a final thought, taking bling to the extreme, Portuguese paper products company Renova sells Renova Black (<http://www.renovaonline.net/black>), lauded as the first fashionable and world’s most expensive toilet paper. Price per roll is €3.00. Renova Black is also available as Renova Red, Renova Orange and Renova Green.

According to the website <http://www.trendhunter.com>, an interesting sub-trend associated with materialism is the “best of the best” in which an avalanche of interesting, well-designed goods and services from all over the world has been unleashed. Consumers expectations have been raised and they are getting use to the “best of the best”. The best museums and hotels have a modern contemporary feel, a growing number of mundane products are getting an upgrade, a growing trend of brands is co-creating as famous designers work with blue chip brands to take on anything from phones to suitcases to mass-produced coffee machines.

Architecture is also a great example of “best of the best”; it is the world of starchitects that is now truly leading in design, in lifestyle marketing, in introducing new domestic services and convenience concepts and their innovations are by default, very visible to the public. Which means that consumers will come to expect similar design, services and branding innovations in other industries too. For example, the new financial exchange of the Shenzhen Stock Exchange (SSE) (<http://www.szse.cn/main/en>) is designed by

Rem Koolhaas's Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA). The 250-metre high building features a floating base, edged up the tower to become a platform to support and launch the area which it liberates on the ground. Financial information streams down digital banners hanging from the elevated platform, and the space between the raised platform and the ground is used as a covered urban plaza, large enough to accommodate public festivals. The Songjiang hotel in Shanghai is designed by Atkins Architects and is a five-star resort hotel. Atkins won an international competition for the contract, the challenge of which was to build a luxury hotel in a water-filled quarry in the area. The project incorporates environmentally friendly elements such as green roofing. The final hotel will have room for 400 beds and will include underwater guestrooms. It is part of a larger project that Atkins is undertaking, which is designing a new city on the outskirts of Shanghai for 500,000 people called Songjiang Garden City. The best of the best means consumers are getting used to chic and becoming intuitively materialistic.

Enrichment

UK consumers enjoy a variety of sophisticated pastimes and distractions and so many of our leisure activities are treated as indulgences. Indeed, our transformed leisure tastes have dramatically altered consumer expectations of luxury. Now, luxury is sought increasingly through experiential offers as well as through the purchase of material goods. Since the 1990s consumer spending portfolios have shifted to include ever increasing levels of spending on leisure activities, eating out, hotels and so on. This is classified in Figure 6.4 as spending on "enrichment". According to forecasts, such spending will

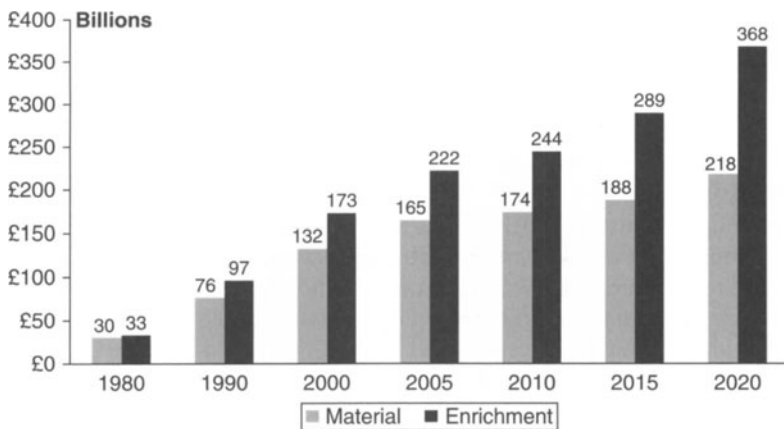


Figure 6.4 Growth in spending on enrichment.

Source: Office of National Statistics/Experian.

continue to grow at an impressive rate while material goods spending will sustain demand experience and enrichment will be defining features of our future consumption of luxury.

Enrichment is all about improving the quality of your life through experimental and less subtle material – not the “bling” but the wow. This drives the desire for new experiences – the constant search for novelty and change or diversity and activity. As a consequence, Chris Anderson (2009) calls this the “Long Tail” in which the future of products are micro markets, hence in the tourism industry we see product offerings such as “Knitting Holidays with Royal Caribbean Cruises” or the “Australian Garden Gnome Festival in the Blue Mountains” (Yeoman, 2008). One of the drivers of experimental life is individualism. As consumers become more culturally and financially liberated, they break cultural norms and an identity is formed which is more fluid. As they seek novelty and experiences, they also want to identify with similar minded people, or what some sociologists call collective individualism (Yeoman, 2008). The individualistic modern consumer sees an advantage in joining forces with others, finding the best sources of intelligence, pursuing economies of scale and sharing experiences – leveraging the input, knowledge and network of groups and communities and entering into a kind of “sharing” engagement more generally. This creates a sense of belonging, whether it is the ramblers club or supporting the local football team. Niche markets and short break holidays are built on collective individualism, like minded people sharing activities such as knitting holidays or garden gnomes. With rising affluence, consumer values have changed, with a lessening emphasis upon material possessions and an increasing concern for experiential and quality of life issues. The consumer is spending in new ways that grant them access to new experiences or awareness of new ways of living. As goods and services are no longer enough, in today’s society an increasingly competitive environment means retailers must learn to stage experiences; this is what Pine and Gilmore (1999) called the “Experience Economy”. The biggest beneficiary of this phenomena has been the leisure industry and out of home expenditure. As affluence has increased over the past 30 years there has been a corresponding rise in the repertoire of activities that consumers “try out” in any given time period. Today, consumers differentiate themselves with what they do rather than what they buy; they are more individualistic than any other generation.

Increased affluence allows consumers to trade up more regularly allowing for luxury to become an everyday event for more people. To satisfy their pre-occupation with self-expression and individualism, consumers of the new luxury frequently mix and match a wide variety of high and low-status brands. And not only can they afford to buy luxury, but increasingly they view it as something they should have as an established and unquestioned privilege.

Consumers today want to undertake a broader range of activities and want to experience new things that were available in the past and certain activities are no longer regarded as “special”. For example, most people do not feel that going out for a meal is any longer something out of the ordinary. This is not to say that they don’t enjoy going out for a meal or that a meal can’t be a special occasion – but simply that eating out is now regarded as a more everyday activity than in the past. There is a profound yearning for new experiences – which has resulted in a “checklist mentality” when it comes to trying new things. Consumers increasingly try out something once so they’ve had the experience but won’t necessarily do it again – a one-off experience that doesn’t have to enter their regular portfolio of activities. In doing this they will also often take a risk and try something adventurous. The consumer wants to be challenged, is seeking a thrill and wants to avoid boredom (Yeoman, 2008).

Time

In the Western world, there has actually been a decrease in paid work time during the last decade – although there is a misconception that the opposite is happening (Yeoman, 2008). Still, people’s perception that they live under increased time pressure is growing, perhaps because after time has been allocated to both paid and unpaid chores like housework, the leftover time for leisure is crammed with an ever growing desire for doing more stuff, go on more holidays, regularly seeing friends and family and so on – but there still only remains 24 hours in the day. Women as well as people in the family stage/career stage are more likely to report stress. In effect free time has become an ever more sought after resource and so has the understanding of “quality time” changed. This means that luxury for more people translates into the simple pleasure of having time on their own to relax. This can mean legs up reading a book or, as many leisure providers have already spotted, taking a liking to recreational therapies such as spa treatments or yoga classes. This is about striking the balance and combining the desire for leisure, self-development and new experiences, and creating a time oasis for all those busy, stressed out people.

Products that can help busy consumers enjoy more time for themselves are arguably bestowed with a luxury or premium dimension and are closely related to consumer desires to enjoy experiential leisure indulgences. Examples include The Pure Package (<http://www.purepackage.com>), a delivered-to-your-door healthy meal plan or Radox campaign (aimed at women) which stresses the need for “selfish time” (be-selfish.co.uk) and positions its products as a source of luxurious self-indulgence. The time booster is still a valid expression of luxury for the modern day consumer.

Given societies established long working hours culture and tendency of consumers to be acutely aware of day to day time pressures, the luxury

dimension of time is naturally elevated, whether it is luggage services, such as Firstluggage <http://www.firstluggage.com>, which takes the hassle out of worrying about whether your luggage has arrived at your holiday destination. FlyLite (<http://www.flylite.uk.com>) takes the concept a few steps further. The company not only picks up and delivers a member's bag, but also packs it, dry cleans the contents and keeps everything in storage until the customer's next flight. How it works? Customers receive a suitcase from FlyLite, which they pack with their favourite travelling gear, from suits and shoes to golf clubs and toiletries. FlyLite then collects the bag and stores the contents. A full inventory is made and placed online, allowing users to browse through their wardrobe and select what they'll need for their next trip, using a simple drag and drop interface. After they've entered their destination and arrival dates, FlyLite takes care of the rest. Leaving customers to zip through airports, fly blissfully luggage-free, and find their suitcases waiting for them at their destination, without having to worry about clean socks or packing. The service costs US\$100–200 per trip and is currently only available in the USA.

So it seems that people are generally welcoming the growing intensity of their lives, but they are also beginning to search new oasis of time and space to complement (but not replace) their hectic hours. There's a growing perception, both from consumers and business alike, that downtime can actually be beneficial. Several organizations have already started to tap into this need for time oasis with, for example, a vast array of new holiday formats emerging (such as rural retreats, remote beach getaways, spa resorts and so on). The Japanese-style Yotel (<http://www.yotel.com>) in London's Gatwick Airport offers luxurious and stylish cabins for rent for travellers with very early departures, or who might have a long layover between flights or are delayed for hours. Four hours in a standard cabin costs a very affordable UK £25 (UK £40 for a premium cabin). Here you can snooze the hours away comfortably and in style.

A similar concept is found in Vancouver Airport and New York's Empire State Building where MetroNaps (<http://www.metronaps.com>) operates an urban catnapping business. For US\$14 you can treat yourself to 20 minutes in their very futuristic (luxurious) looking sleep pods. Meanwhile, the slow travel movement emerges out of eco-ethical concerns but springs from the trend known as authentic-seeking (Yeoman, 2008). The challenge to consumerism posed by global warming could make the slow travel revolution a very real phenomenon. People will not be able to jet off everywhere so they will have to become more patient and welcoming of less plugged-in, less always-on-the-go lifestyles. The slow travel phenomenon takes this into account – it advocates train journeys across Europe and local excursions. The slow travel, slow design, slow food developments are all about having fun and active experiences but here the emphasis is on taking a step back, having a more authentic moment and savouring time.

Changing behaviours

Luxury and quality

For many, luxury is often achieved not through the accumulation of multiple goods but through the purchase of a particular, special item. Many consumers aspire to access goods, experiences and treats that would normally not feature in one's day to day consumption. Research by the Future Foundation (2010) has noted significant numbers across all ages and social grades who agree that they would "rather own one good thing than lots of cheap things". One extracts the sense that at least a small dose of luxury is taken as a birthright by the mass of consumers and that millions are primed to upgrade to quality rather than accumulate quantity. The feature drives the evolution of *premiumization*: we all grow less motivated by the ordinary. Data by the Future Foundation (2010) suggest that the youngest age groups are consistently the most aspirational – over half would pay significantly more for a car and over 40 per cent for a pair of jeans in a luxury category. However, there is also another trend at play here. Verifiable quality is playing an ever sharper role within consumer expectations. It is just not particularly fashionable to presume in favour of the pretty and the over-priced – as if that were collectively a guarantor of a luxury outcome. Across so many markets, recession strengthened the maximizing instinct – the willingness to take time to scrutinize offers in search of both a quality and value-for-money result.

Luxury for rent

The appeal of renting luxury products instead of buying continues to rise. Nearly a quarter of 15–24 year olds and over a fifth of 25–34 year olds are favourable to the idea of getting access to luxury products by hiring or renting them according to research by the Future Foundation (2010). The renting trend chimes with another evolution in luxury consumption – that of the weakening appeal of showy, materialistic wealth and a growing intolerance for wasteful consumerism. Tracking data by the Future Foundation (2010) show us that high levels of eco-sensitivity remain and these attitudes will naturally impact upon luxury purchasing and indulgence. Although an ultra-hedonistic type of luxury indulgence is still something that consumers will – at least occasionally – want to satisfy, certain luxury aspirations are undoubtedly subject to greater scrutiny and questioning now. Luxury in this decade naturally become a lot less noisy, a lot less ostentatious – but it remains a potent and almost universal motivation nonetheless.

As a consequence, luxury has now become so democratic that it is ubiquitously for rent. The growth of websites such as <http://www.bagborroworsteal.com> offers couture and designer handbags for rent – allowing a larger group of consumers a share in the luxury lifestyle, without the need for a luxury-sized salary. Bag Borrow or Steal was first to market offering

the concept of borrowing luxury products and is leading a revolution in the way consumers shop for designer goods or gain access to exclusive events/lifestyles. “Quintessentially” (<http://www.quintessentially.com>), an international concierge service and members’ club, offers customers access to first-class airport lounges, designer fashion shows, nightclubs and exclusive events closed to the public for a membership fee ranging between UK £750 and £2500. You can rent a Ferrari or Aston Martin car for an evening from the Classic Car Club and connect to auction sites like Ebay (<http://www.ebay.com>) and Portero (<http://www.portero.com>) where you can bid for second-hand luxury items for a fraction of the price-tag for new items. These services enable customers to “access the inaccessible”. For both emotional and practical reasons consumers are, on the margins, rejecting owning products in favour of renting them. This development indicates a shift in the consumer mindset towards the ownership of possessions and luxury items. Renting allows consumers to sporadically dip into the luxury lifestyle without paying the full (unaffordable for most) price for the privilege. Fractional living like this gives them a chance to adopt an alternative, more glamorous and stylish persona for a short period of time and indulge in celebrity lifestyle – all on a budget.

Mercurial consumption

According to research by the Future Foundation (2010) over 60 per cent of UK consumers agree that they shop around extensively to get the best deals. Consumers are very aware of tariffs, even when they think about treats and indulgences (whose suppliers may once have expected that as incomes generally grew many consumers might take a more carefree attitude to price). Searching for discounts is becoming a more commonly attractive behaviour and any negative or socially unappealing association in relation to bargain-hunting in luxury markets are. Flatters and Wilmott (2009) call this mercurial consumption in which consumers extensively search out for bargains. The use of technologies and websites such as <http://www.farecast.com>, which advises travellers of the optimal time to purchase an airline ticket or price, or grabbing last minute offers from websites, such as <http://www.grabaseat.co.nz>, which offer last minute air travel deals to New Zealand consumers, or <http://www.5pm.co.uk>, which offers diners the chance of discounted meals after 5 pm that evening. Basically technology and social media networks accelerate this trend of mercurial consumption.

Exclusivity

The discount club Little Emperors (<http://www.littleemperors.com>) offers customers concessions of up to 60 per cent from a range of luxury brands including Cartier and Jimmy Choo as well as discounts on experiences and services like holidays, chauffeuring and restaurants. Elsewhere on the

Internet, successful luxury shopping sites include <http://www.vente-privee.com> and <http://www.Cocosa.com>.

One of the challenges for luxury brands is that they face the risk of being perceived as too accessible and losing their exclusive appeal. Appealing to the masses can be lucrative but luxury goods manufacturers also run the risk of, so to speak, disturbing their meaning-narrative. These brands have long been perceived as scarce and out of reach. Louis Vuitton (<http://www.louisvuitton.com>) has had to fight hard to preserve its image after thousands of fake copies of its handbags can now be found in almost any street market around the globe. Burberry (<http://www.burberry.com>) has suffered when somewhere along the line the brand became the new status symbol for working-class youth (Yeoman, 2008). Luxury brands at the top end risk over-exposing themselves by expanding too far into the mass market and must find new ways to maintain their luxury credentials. In other words, they have to redefine “real luxury” from “mass luxury”. The definition of luxury has also gradually expanded from material goods such as designer clothes and jewellery and many of the traditional luxury providers now face competition from new forms of luxury such as new types of lifestyle holidays, spa retreats and other “experience providers”.

New expressions

Consuming luxury in a more socially aware manner is a trend that is growing in importance. Thirty-one per cent of Britons (Future Foundation, 2010) agree they would be prepared to pay significantly more for a luxury car if it were environmentally friendly and a quarter would pay more for a luxury ready-meal if it were locally produced. Just over a fifth would pay more for a luxury shampoo that was environmentally friendly. It is clear that such still emerging twenty-first century values are becoming more commercially significant. Luxury is becoming more closely aligned with deeper issues such as eco-awareness, intelligence, healthy and ethical lifestyles. The appeal of say, a technologically superior Smartphone's sophisticated game console that is focused on improving body or mind, personalized professional fitness services or rich and locally produced foods has been strengthened because of their associations with social values that are increasingly thought to be attractive, admirable and aspirational.

Premium pricing

Luxury has a psychological association with premium pricing. Allsop (2004), states that premium value is price and quality plus the intangibles of style, uniqueness, occasion and experience. Here, goods and services such as home furnishings, holiday accommodation, food for a dinner party, restaurants and home electronics have a high perception of value. But goods such as plane tickets and electricity have no added value. Hence the implication for

marketing is that consumers are willing to pay more for certain goods and not for others. To the marketer it means creating a brand equity or value for which the consumer is willing to pay extra. Marketers view luxury as the main factor to differentiate a brand in a product category, as a central driver of consumer preference and usage (Vigneron and Johnson, 2004). In order to understand the “extra value”, it is important for marketers or pricing managers to identify the key factors from a consumer perspective. The factors are:

- Never underestimate the customer – as consumers have a desire, interest, intelligence and capability to trade up. They are willing to pay for that extra value, time or aspiration.
- Consumers will shatter the price – volume demand curve. Consumers are not looking for an incremental improvement. Pricing managers must go for premium prices and higher volume, not being scared to take a risk.
- Always create a ladder of genuine benefits rather than confusing the consumer with meaningless innovations. This means technical and functional benefits that result in emotional advantage for the consumer. Additionally, do not pretend to be something you are not.
- Escalate innovation, elevate quality and deliver a flawless experience. The market for luxury is growing but it is unstable. This is because the market does not stand still as new competitors enter the market. It is a constant battle to keep ahead, as there will always be a lower priced alternative around the corner.
- Extend the price range and positioning of the brand. It is important to create, define and maintain a distinct character and meaning for each product offering at every level in the value chain. This way, there is a tenfold difference between the lowest and highest price points. Luxury means driving aspiration and accessibility.
- Remember to customize value chains to deliver benefits. Create wealth and quality in the chain and ensure that this is managed.
- Use influence marketing and success through brand apostles. In a world where advertising is under pressure due to choice and trust, put your emphasis on core customers who will deliver your luxury product capital.
- Continually attack your product like an outsider. Think as the competition or a maverick. The competition will beat you if you don't.
- Authenticity is the new exclusivity.

Conclusion

As society becomes more wealthy the definition of luxury changes, making luxury more accessible to the masses but creating difficulty for luxury products to defend that exclusivity. Over the last decade, the concept of

luxury has transformed itself from materialism to time and aspiration, making luxury more reachable and democratized. Smaller, affordable luxuries and premiumized products are strengthening their appeal as consumers continue to satisfy their need for regular treats and indulgences in their lives. At the same time, luxury products have set out to protect their exclusivity through premium pricing and authenticity.

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