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STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT REPORT

GAP

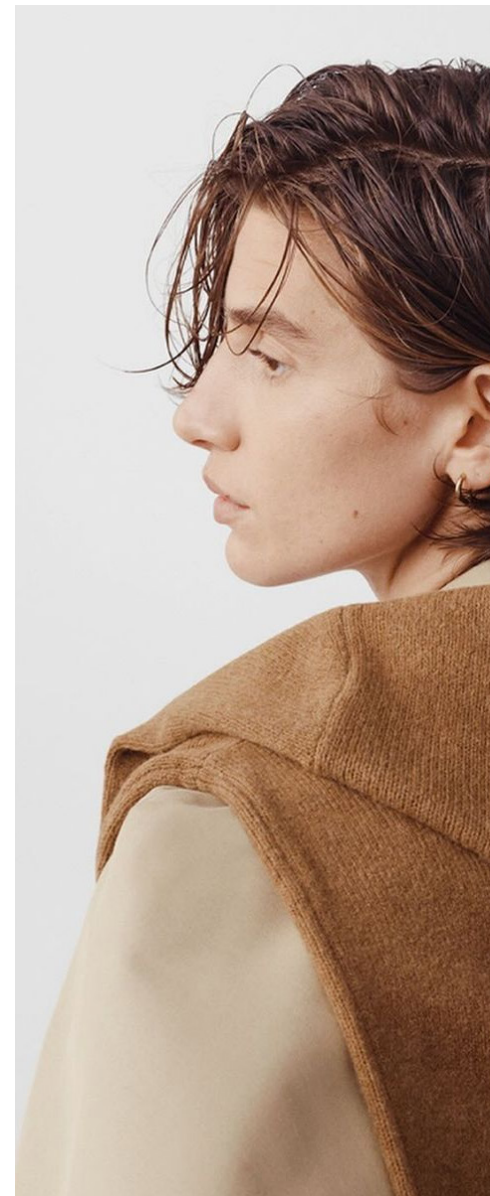
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Historically, Gap was a generational reference point, building a strong legacy synonymous with American fashion. Over several years, Gaps popularity and prominence has diminished gaining a reputation of being outdated and undistinguished, due to an abundance of internal issues and societal change. Facing a diminished repetitional heritage, Gap aim to 'bridge the gap between all generations'. However, such a broad consumer demographic has proved unsuccessful resulting in an inability to meet any consumer needs.

Facing prevailing challenges, the future of the fashion industry is uncertain, therefore capitalising on the right opportunities enables Gap to differentiate themselves on quality, design and marketing communication factors, appealing to the growing remunerative generation z and millennial market.

NEW MISSION STATEMENT

*"THROUGH AUTHENTICITY, WE AIM TO REINVENT THE
ICONIC AESTHETIC AND CAPTIVATE THE GAP COMMUNITY
THROUGH EMOTIONAL CONNECTIONS AND EXPERIENCES;
DEMOCRATISING FASHION WHILE PRIORITISING
SUSTAINABILITY TO REJUVINATE AND REINVENT THE GAP
LEGACY"*



TOP 3 WORDS RESPONDANTS

AMERICAN

OUTDAT

MARKETING

REINVIGORATE

SUSTAINABILITY

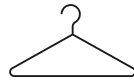


ASSOCIATED WITH GAP:
ED CLASSIC

BRAND ISSUES



CONFUSED TARGET MARKET



POOR APPAREL OFFERING



LACK OF SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES



WEAK BRAND POPULARITY IN THE UK



FAILURE TO ADAPT TO NEW TRENDS

STUCK IN THE MIDDLE

DIFFERENTIATION
FOCUS

Primary research, macro-environmental analysis and internal factors have informed six recommendations for Gap's strategic direction, allowing Gap to reinvigorate their once distinguishing position in the UK. These will be amalgamated through a diversification focus strategy resulting in a transformation that will be implemented through incremental changes to mitigate risks. Each proposed strategy will provide Gap with opportunities and scope for growth to advance their position in the market and consumers minds.

RECOMMENDATIONS TIMELINE



GAP

DEVELOP A GAP CO-BRANDED RENTAL RANGE

GAP | Wales Bonner

RENTAL COLLECTION

CONTEXT AND CONCEPT OBJECTIVES

To support Gap's new strategic direction, it has been recommended that Gap develop a co-branded rental range along with Wales Bonner. This is with the aim of capitalising on the reputation of Wales Bonner and maximising the benefits of each brand by exerting positive synergy through mutual cooperation in an attempt to achieve immediate recognition and positive evaluation (Lee, 2023; Mróz-Gorgoń, 2016). With its rapid growth, the apparel rental market presents a great and perhaps obvious opportunity for fashion retailers to explore (Badiei, 2024). Therefore, not only will this build positive brand equity among the newly defined Millennial and Generation Z target consumers, but will also diversify away from a fast fashion business model, generating a stronger sustainability initiative, fostering loyalty with a rising cohort of consumers who's sustainability actions are matching their intent (Hudson, 2023).

Informed through comprehensive research into Gap and ascertaining insights from principle changes in the external environment and consumer behaviours; this aims to strengthen Gap's market position within the UK remedying the effects of the brand's key issues identified in the strategic development report (2024). Mainly it will improve negative consumer perceptions and connotations of the brand linked to being outdated, unsustainable and undistinguished while contributing to the strategic development of a clear brand direction within the UK.



OBJECTIVES

- 01** *Develop a distinguished and appealing co-branded appeal range resonating with UK consumers encouraging greater brand recognition in the UK with Gap's redefined Millennial/Gen Z market*
- 02** *Generate sustainability and circular initiatives through implementing a rental selection within apparel offerings, increasing consumer interest and strengthening sales*
- 03** *Improve product quality and longevity both aesthetically and physically, reducing overconsumption and fostering greater brand loyalty, revitalising brand image*

VISUALISATION

A conceptualisation of a AW 25/26 range plan has been produced to aid visualisation of the Gap x Wales Bonner rental direction. With a weakened brand identity in the UK, the Gap x Wales Bonner rental collection is aimed at a UK Millennial/ Generation Z consumer base with the hope that Wales Bonner's reputation as one of the most talked about designers of a generation (Chitrakorn, 2022) who's designs embody a rich exploration of her own Caribbean and British identity, will revitalise Gap's ailing distinctions.

The range focuses on improving the quality and longevity of designs, aesthetically and physically; allowing consumers to experience quality apparel at a fraction of the cost; while providing a distinguished selection of apparel that resonates with the UK consumer, resulting in an improved consumer perception.



“Fashion apparel rental is expected to grow to a market size of US\$7.45bn by 2026”
- Statista, 2024

“Collaboration provides attainable luxury as 37% of consumers aspire to a lifestyle they aren't necessarily able to afford”
- Nyfeler, 2022

“60% of Gen Z and Millennials have purchased collaborative releases”
- Statista, 2022

GAP FOR GOOD

BRAND ACTIVATION STRATEGY

OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

As part of the 'Gap for Good' sustainability initiative, a new marketing strategy has been proposed. The campaign will aim to overcome the poor focus on the UK market, through the creation of a UK-based brand activation event, in collaboration with Glastonbury Festival. Focusing on upcycling initiatives, the event aims to bring old Gap products back to life and host interactive workshops to improve consumer knowledge and skills surrounding garment upcycling, therefore improving Gap's popularity and creating better consumer perceptions within the UK.

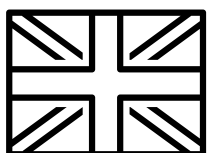
KEY ISSUES



A CONFUSED TARGET MARKET



A LACK OF SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES



WEAK BRAND POPULARITY WITHIN THE UK.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



GENERATE BRAND EXCITEMENT WITHIN THE GEN Z AND MILLENNIAL AGE GROUPS.



DESIGN A BRAND ACTIVATION STRATEGY TARGETED TOWARDS UK CONSUMERS.



CREATE A MARKETING STRATEGY WITH A FOCUS ON SUSTAINABILITY.



INCREASE SALES OF GAP PRODUCTS WITHIN THE UK, WITH AN IMPROVED BRAND REPUTATION.

EVENT SPACE MOOD BOARD



RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

Research into festival collaborations found that desirable characteristics have been achieved by brands such as Chilly's, H&M, and Levi's. These events included influencer promotions, interactive games, and interactive artwork, all of which have been proven successful, and have been reflected in Gap's strategy to increase consumer satisfaction.

This strategy also creates better brand storytelling through interactive experiences, which "enables marketers to develop a deeper connection with the audience" (Whitler, 2018), therefore meeting a key strategic objective of generating brand excitement, and increasing consumer knowledge of the Gap for Good campaign.

JUSTIFICATION

The brand collaboration between Gap and Glastonbury Festival works to incorporate sustainable practices and consumer personalisation touchpoints. By undertaking strategic planning regarding the promotion of the event, both WOM and E-WOM will help to promote Gap to the newly identified target market within the UK.

Creating these new, interactive experiences, will result in greater consumer interaction across social media, and further increase sales within the UK. Overall, the new strategy aims to re-establish Gap within the market, leading to greater popularity and recognition surrounding the brand.

GAP

Originals

OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

To help improve Gap's popularity in the UK, a vintage inspired range has been proposed under the name 'Gap Originals' for AW25/26. The range will be aimed at a younger, Generation Z/Millennial consumer to try and rejuvenate the brand. It will also be marketed at a higher quality and price point compared to Gap's current product offering. Additionally, a merchandising strategy has been developed to help maximise sales of the range. This strategy aims to strengthen Gap's brand presence in the UK, whilst also better understanding the needs of their new, future consumer.

KEY ISSUES



WEAK BRAND POPULARITY IN THE UK



POOR APPAREL OFFERING



FAILURE TO ADAPT TO NEW TRENDS



CONFUSED TARGET MARKET



REAFFIRM AND STRENGTHEN GAP'S
BRAND IDENTITY IN THE UK



IMPROVE GAP'S APPAREL OFFERING
TO INCLUDE A VINTAGE INSPIRED
RANGE AT A HIGHER PRICE POINT
WITH IMPROVED QUALITY



IMPROVE GAP'S MERCHANDISING
STRATEGY TO HELP IMPROVE SALES



REDIRECT ATTENTION TOWARDS
GAP'S FUTURE, YOUNGER CONSUMER



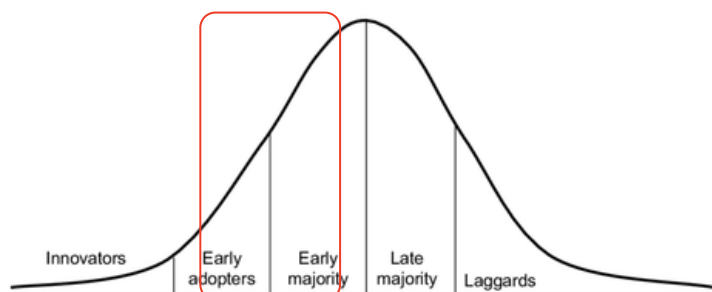
RANGE VISUALISATION



AW25/26 VINTAGE RANGE

RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

Vintage Gap products have recently risen in popularity, this is driven by nostalgia and the current Y2K trend, as well as the high quality of vintage Gap pieces (Bain and Elson, 2023). Research also suggests that the rise in popularity of vintage clothing is due to a desire for familiarity in a society that is constantly changing and becoming more fast paced than ever (Palmer and Clark, 2005).



JUSTIFICATION

Gap's new product range and merchandising strategy has the potential to reinvigorate the brand if executed successfully. UK consumers miss Gap's high quality and would like to see more vintage inspired products (Appendix 1), showing there is a clear consumer demand for the range. A strong merchandising strategy is also imperative as good product availability is essential to providing consumer satisfaction and strong customer loyalty (Grant, 2014).





A VINTAGE

GAP

CAMPAIGN

OVERVIEW AND CONTEXT

To support Gap’s new strategic direction the production of a Vintage Gap marketing campaign for A/W 2024, aimed at Gen-Z and millennials will aid in reinvigorating Gap’s presence in the UK market. The campaign showcases a promotional video displaying a choreographed dance, aligning with Gap’s classic strategic marketing but targeted to the Gen-Z and millennial demographic. This will be achieved by integrated marketing communication across all social media platforms. The purpose of this campaign is to bridge the gap between the original Gap of their timeless style with vintage design, style and aesthetics as a strategy to bring back Gap to the forefront of the UK consumers' minds.

KEY ISSUES

- 1LACKS UK PROMOTIONAL MARKETING
- 2CONFUSED TARGET MARKET
- 3FAILURE TO ADAPT NEW TRENDS

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES



TO SUCCESSFULLY PROMOTE A VINTAGE GAP CAMPAIGN



TARGET UK GEN-Z/ MILLENNIALS CONSUMERS THROUGH VINTAGE AESTHETICS

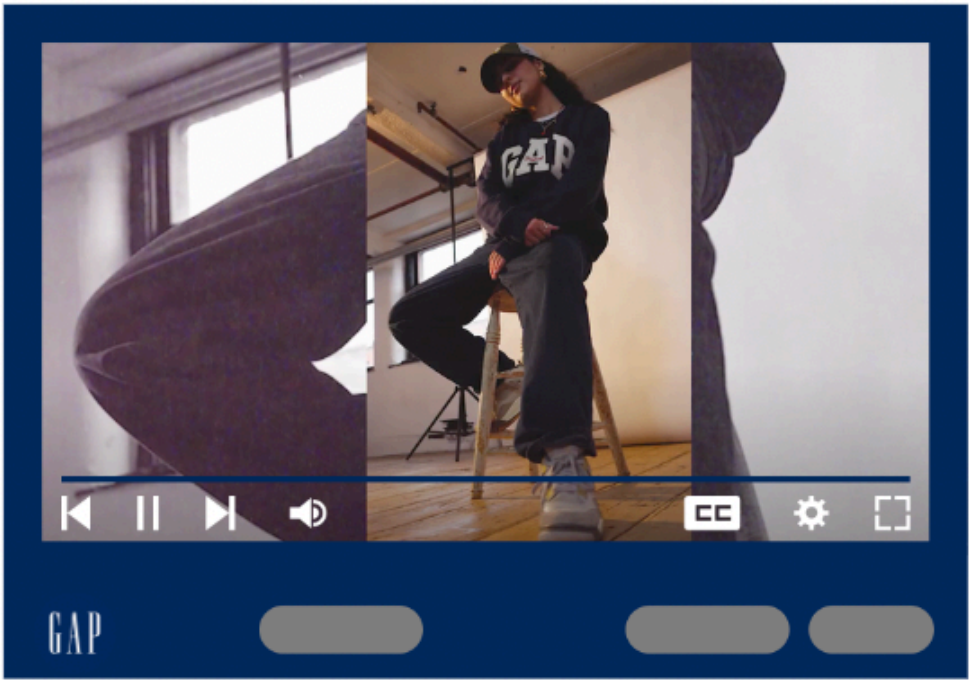


TO INCREASE GAP’S RELEVANCE TO THE UK MARKET

CAMPAIGN VISUALISATION



INSTAGRAM



YOUTUBE



LONDON TUBE



TIKTOK

RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

With the growth of vintage fashion on the rise— 'Searches for 1990s-inspired fashion are up 90 percent year-over-year, according to Trendalytics (Kennedy, 2024), highlighting the desire of the trend.

As a result, this presents an opportunity for Gap to leverage from this trend as research has shown that “searches for “vintage Gap” went up 114% in June...A new trend for vintage Gap has seen demand for high street store’s clothes from the 90s and 00s soar” (Fisher, 2023). The surge of demand is a direction the Gap should follow that can strengthen its brand image and capitalise on this particular trend.

JUSTIFICATION

Gap’s vintage marketing campaign has the potential to be successful as there is a correlation between the vintage trend and the desired targeted consumer. Meaning that there is a high chance of success as the campaign will resonate with their preference and interest which will be embodied through the promotional video to achieve the campaign objectives.

Although doing a movement piece for a promotional video isn't a new idea for Gap there have been many iconic moments in this approach. For example, the “brand’s iconic Nineties campaigns like the “Khaki Swing” commercial and “Everybody In Cords,” and their “late advertisement revitalising GAP by combining the a “Grammy-winning” artist Tyla & Jungle’s “Back on 74” (Strategic Report, 2024), which depicts a successful direction to strengthen their brand image in the UK.



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