



FRENCH CONNECTION

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Have French Connection Lost their Way?

French Connection have struggled to clearly define and segment their target market through lacking a distinctive brand image, insufficient and outdated marketing communications and oversaturated product ranges with the absence of differentiation. Resulting in rapid market share depletion amid intense competition, which is reflected by their store closures and extremely poor financial performance. Re establishing connections with consumers is crucial for their recovery.

Identified Brand Issues



Neglected the Millennial Consumer



Confused Product Offering



Lack of Brand Identity



Poor Marketing Strategies



Unclear Pricing Strategy



Neglected Sustainability Initiatives



Proposed Mission Statement

“To revitalise the brand image and offerings to meet the target markets needs and aspirations of quality, style and relevance, whilst striving to enhance in store customer experiences and authentically connecting with consumers”

Strategic Objectives Timeline



Innovation Concepts

The individual brand concepts have been carefully crafted to resolve the identified issues within French Connection. These strategic measures will be implemented to ensure optimal impact and coherence with overall strategic objectives.

- Capsule Collection
- Rebrand
- Lookbook
- PR campaign



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Justification

Taking a strategic perspective and drawing upon the research findings outlined in the report, the proposed concepts for French Connection are designed to attain the brand's strategic objectives. This involves the execution of a strategic roadmap aimed at strengthening connections with the target audience, cultivating a compelling brand identity and refining marketing communication strategies. The overarching goal is to re-establish themselves in the market and secure a competitive advantage.

REFINE

REFOCUS

REINVENT

COLLECTION LOOKBOOK

Context

French Connection's financial instability and brand identity struggles weaken its market position, exacerbated by ineffective marketing strategies and disengaged consumers (Dirvanauskas, 2022). To address this, this report proposes a strategy centred on developing and promoting a captivating digital and physical lookbook.

This initiative aims to enrich the customer experience, rejuvenate brand identity and cultivate loyalty among French Connection's target audience by showcasing the latest collection and providing styling inspiration. It aligns with the brand's strategic direction, emphasising a renewed focus on the neglected consumer base and effective marketing communication strategies.

This approach confronts three of the identified brand issues directly, aiming to rebuild market presence and consumer relationships for French Connection's long-term success in the fashion industry.

Key Issues



**Neglected the
Millennial Consumer**



**Lack of
Brand Identity**



**Poor Marketing
Strategies**

Research Findings

Academic research highlights marketing communications' role in fashion, fostering brand awareness and loyalty (Belch and Belch, 2011). Lookbooks emerge as powerful visual tools, showcasing collections and reinforcing brand identity (Lea-Greenwood, 2013). They leverage visuals and offer targeted communication to engage consumers, influence purchasing decisions and cultivate loyalty (Easey, 2009; El Demedash et al., 2017). **Commercial research** emphasises providing consumers with value to foster loyalty, as overly aggressive selling campaigns can be off-putting (Forbes, 2023). Lookbooks provide added value to consumers by offering styling inspiration, thereby enhancing brand experience and building stronger bonds. Additionally, the return to cultivating brand awareness is notable as consumers still respond positively to strong brand strategies, despite the effectiveness of data-driven marketing (Forbes, 2024). Lookbooks effectively encapsulate brand identity, resonating with target audiences.



Alicia McTaggart

Lookbook Objectives

1. **Improve Marketing Communications** - Use the lookbook to communicate the brand's message and offerings to target consumers.
2. **Reconnect with Target Audience** - Visually engaging lookbook that resonates with the target audience's preferences and interests
3. **Reinforce Brand Identity** - Revitalise brand image by showcasing the rebranded aesthetic and personality through the lookbook.



Concept

The digital and physical lookbook will feature compelling imagery of French Connection's latest collection and various styling concepts, with QR codes or links for direct product purchase. Serving as a visual narrative, it encapsulates French Connection's rebranded aesthetic and identity, aiming to attract and retain consumer interest. This approach fosters deeper emotional connections with the brand, driving loyalty and sales. Additionally, emphasises is placed on tailoring content to appeal to the overlooked consumer base, ensuring accessibility across formats to maximise impact and reach.

Justification



A French Connection lookbook aligns seamlessly with the brand's strategic direction, by prioritising an elevated marketing communications strategy **refocused** to the neglected target audience, the lookbook encapsulates the brand's identity. Through visually compelling imagery and captivating storytelling, it showcases the rejuvenated brand image and fosters meaningful consumer relationships. Minimal operational changes mitigate risk, making it a compelling solution to address current challenges. Overall, integrating a lookbook into French Connection's strategy aligns with its vision of **reinventing** the brand's identity and enhancing marketing communications to recapture the consumer base and return to success in the fashion industry.

REFOCUS

REINVENT

LOGO & PACKAGING

REDESIGN

Introduction

The Strategic Development Report reveals that French Connection is currently in a vulnerable market position, due to its lack of clear brand identity and uncertainty about its target audience. This has led to diminishing customer loyalty and perceptions of the brand being outdated. The proposed rebranding strategy seeks to address these challenges by refining, refocusing, and reinventing the brand to reestablish a competitive presence in the market.

Rebrand Objectives

Revitalise Brand Identity to a Timeless & Sophisticated Image

Focus on Targeting a Specific Demographic

Research & Development

Old Font	New Font
	BURBERRY LONDON ENGLAND
	SAINT LAURENT PARIS
	J I G S A W LONDON
	BALENCIAGA
	DIOR
	 BALMAIN



Research was carried out on the millennial demographic, targeting women in their late 20s to 40s. Findings revealed a preference for the “Quiet Luxury” minimalist aesthetic (Amed & Berg, 2023) and ethically conscious shopping habits (Amed & Berg, 2022). This research guided rebranding decisions more specifically on logo and packaging designs, with a focus on other luxury brands’ strategies. While secondary research recommended a bold serif font, primary research showed the new target audience preferred a sans serif font for its elegance. This choice aligns with the brand’s refined aesthetic and differentiates French Connection in the premium market with its new brand identity.



Ella Milburn

Concept Visualisation

The rebranding strategy seeks to capture French Connection's new brand identity and target demographic by redesigning their brand image with a simple, sophisticated aesthetic to increase brand equity (Muzellec & Lambkin, 2006). This includes redesigning new packaging concepts with reusable tote bags and more sustainable in-store and online packaging featuring the new logo and core colors, supporting the refreshed image and aligning with consumer values.

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NEW: Luxury 'FSC
Certified' Paper Bags
100% Recyclable

NEW: Reusable
Tote Bag Made with
recycled cotton
fabric

NEW: 100% Compostable
Online Delivery Bags

Justification

The Strategic Brand Report (2024) emphasises the necessity for operational changes at French Connection. The proposed strategy aims to elevate the brand's market position and facilitate a return to success. Throughout the process, careful consideration has been given to the following key terms to ensure alignment with the proposed goals.

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'**Reinvented**' Brand identity that opens up opportunities to explore the premium sustainable market. '**Refined**' Target Audience allowing consumer loyalty to grow

Key Issues
Targetted



Lack of Brand Identity



Neglected Sustainability
Initiatives



Neglected the Millennial
Consumer

FC

PR & COMMUNICATIONS

Introduction

French Connection plan to boost communications with dynamic PR and marketing pushes with Manchester-based PR firm 'Aura Media', coinciding with the launch of 'Back to Basics' range and revitalised branding. The targeted campaign aims to propel French Connection back into the middle market fashion spotlight, to capture attention and **reconnect with the female millennial consumer market**. Over two years (2024-2026), efforts include **enhanced digital media**, **interactive pop-up events**, **influencer marketing**, and **press releases** to garner positive coverage.

Pop Up Events

ALLSAINTS

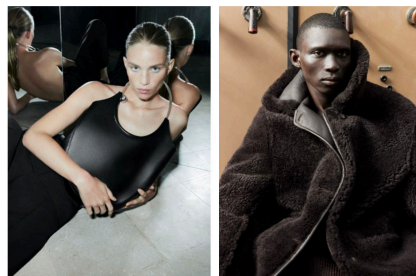


Press Releases

COS

COS

COS DEBUTS ITS AUTUMN WINTER 2023 ATELIER COLLECTION AT NEW YORK FASHION WEEK, A COLLECTION FOCUSED ON CRAFTSMANSHIP AND FINE FABRICS



20 September
London, UK

COS unveils its latest Atelier collection, marking the third season of the capsule since debuting at

Social Media

Dencheva (2023) states, **millennials prioritise reliability in brands**. Hall (2024), states influencers who put their reputations on the line to endorse a company, convey more credibility than traditional marketing.

Kontonis (2017) "Social media influencers are the **#1 factor driving fashion shopping decisions among female Millennials**", which underscores the **importance of third-party recommendations** from figures, whom consumers already follow and trust.

Tactics



Press Release
Announcing
'Back to Basics'
Collection

Targeted
Influencer
Marketing
Campaign



Exclusive
Pop Up
Events

Campaign Objectives

RE ENGAGE AND TARGET 25 -35 YEAR
OLD FEMALE CONSUMER

GENERATE EXCITEMENT FOR NEW
COLLECTION LAUNCH

CREATE INNOVATIVE DIGITAL &
PHYSICAL CAMPAIGN COVERAGE

INCREASE CONSUMER
BASED INTERACTIONS & SALES

Pop Up Event

At The Alan

The proposal involves **two pop-up events** at The Alan, Manchester, aiming to reconnect with the new consumer base and **engage key press contacts**. The first event features a dinner and new collection presentation for media outlets like Cosmopolitan and influencers, with a focus on Instagram via **#backtobasics**, driving traffic to social media channels. A **follow-up event** offers an **exclusive preview for a limited number of the public**, creating a buzz before the nationwide release.



AuraMedia

Influencer Marketing Campaign

Mollie Campsie

A social media strategy with **Mollie Campsie** should be developed to **directly shape consumer perception** of the brand. With a highly engaged 715k Instagram following, predominantly millennials, Mollie will curate posts featuring the new collection to **inspire consumers**, with seamless purchasing facilitated through **affiliate links**. Moreover, a takeover of French Connection's Instagram will feature 'Mollie Campsie Favourites,' **showcasing her style guidance** of her preferred pieces.

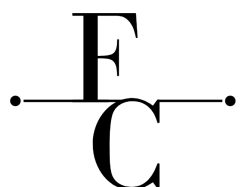
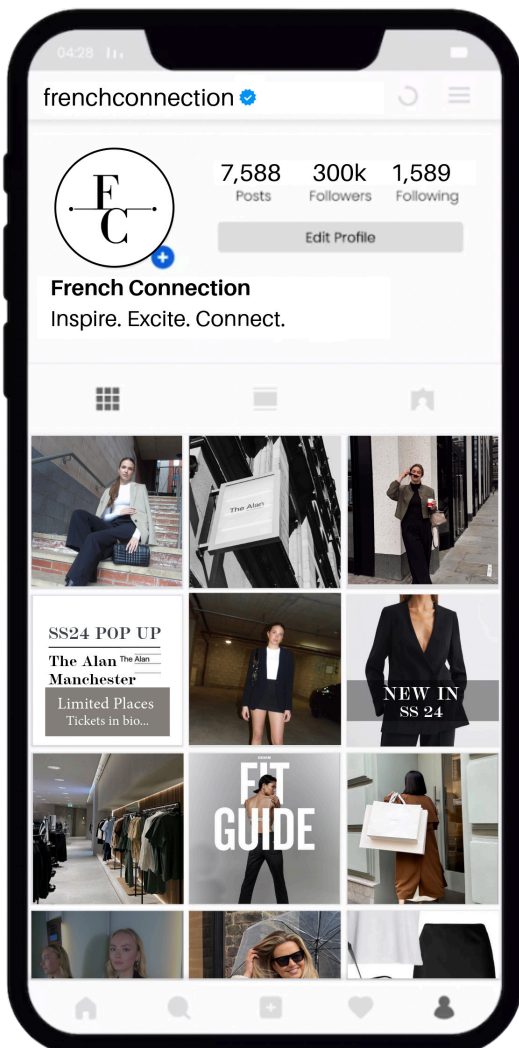
Justification

REFOCUS

REINVENT

The 2024 strategic brand report emphasized the **disconnection with the target market and the erosion of brand identity and values**. To address this, marketing efforts are vital to

communicate these changes to the redefined consumer base and expand the brand's reach. This will enable French Connection to **solidify its brand image**, establish **trust** and authenticity, and convert potential customers into paying ones. Ultimately, the goal is to **refocus** and **reinvent** the brand through targeted messaging, leveraging collaborations and digital transformation.



BACK TO BASICS RANGE

Key Issues



Strategy

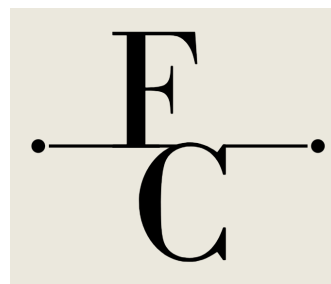
French Connections current product range will be streamlined in an effort to take the brand back to basics. Once their target market has been redefined, they can focus on how to meet the needs of the millennial demographic and improve their customer retention. A capsule range will encompass this target group's need for quality and timeless designs, while creating brand recognition through the use of elevated basics to prioritise minimalism over fad trends.

Their unclear pricing strategy will be addressed as the brand is repositioned into the premium market, in order to give their products a more luxury feel. Through creating a capsule range, French Connection are opening up many possibilities where they can improve their sustainability initiatives by reducing consumption of fad trends and researching more practical materials. The aim is to produce a cohesive and versatile range, in which the brand can base their future ranges on, to keep unity within their product offering in the future.



Objectives

- 1 Redefine Target Market
- 2 Improve Customer Retention
- 3 Create Brand Recognition



Refine

Streamline target market to allow their needs to be met more effectively

Refocus

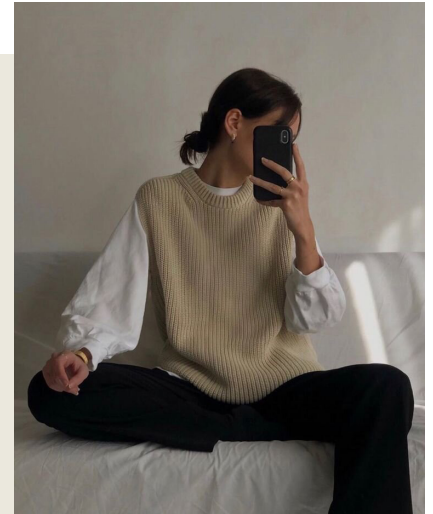
Analyse the needs of the target demographic and upcoming trends in the industry

Reinvent

Create a new range to encompass needs, trends and sustainability

Research & Development

The idea of reducing consumption is slowly pushing the fashion industry towards a more sustainable future through buying less but better quality clothing. The capsule wardrobe trend integrates this into the consumers wardrobe by collecting a selection of garments with great quality and versatility, to take the wearer through summer through to winter. Developing a capsule collection will monopolise on the “slow fashion” trend to increase consumer retention, while inviting a more sustainable minded consumer to the brand.

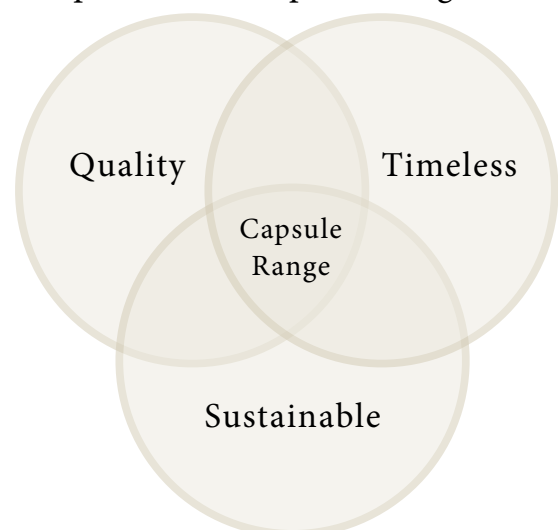


“To revitalise the brand's offerings to meet the target market's needs and aspirations of quality, style and relevance, whilst authentically connecting with consumers through sustainable means”

Justification

The Brand Development Report (2024) highlighted the need for a streamlined product offering in order to revitalise the brand identity and gain a competitive advantage. A capsule range will take the brand back to basics and supply them with the building blocks they need to build a strong brand portfolio and reputation.

The three key themes for the design of this range are high quality, timeless designs and sustainable practices, with the combination of these pointing towards the development of a capsule range.





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