

Assignment 1

How has Tiffany&Co created a universal self-expression benefits across cultures that people seek when acquiring a “Return to Tiffany” necklace?

Section I: Tiffany&Co- “Return to Tiffany” Necklace

Tiffany&Co has positioned itself as one of the leaders in the luxurious jewelry retail industry through its recognizable and unique collections. One that, particularly, captures the eye is the “Return to Tiffany” collection that draws its inspiration from the Fifth Avenue flagship in New York, its place of origin. According to a Reuters article, Tiffany&Co has successfully reached and surpassed the anticipated results from advertising campaign as expressed by Jefferies analysts: “The Tiffany brand is getting it’s mojo back with US consumers”¹ (Vibhuti). By exploring this brand’s product category, I hope to find the consumers’ underlying motives and values that act as driving forces in seeking and purchasing the necklace that have characterized Tiffany&Co’s success. In addition, I expect for customers to have an associative network and responses that relate to the luxurious industry and to the concept of gift-giving ultimately leading to values referring to social connections. This is based on the perceived notion that, as seen through its marketing techniques, Tiffany&Co relies on emotional strategies as well as consumers’ associative networks in order to build and update their brand image that is reflected upon the necklaces’ symbols. In more depth, I wish to explore the effect of holding different cultural values on Tiffany&Co’s perceived brand and how these values can be understood geographically regarding marketing recommendations.

Section II: Visual maps

Please refer to Exhibit 1

Section III: Results of the Laddering Technique

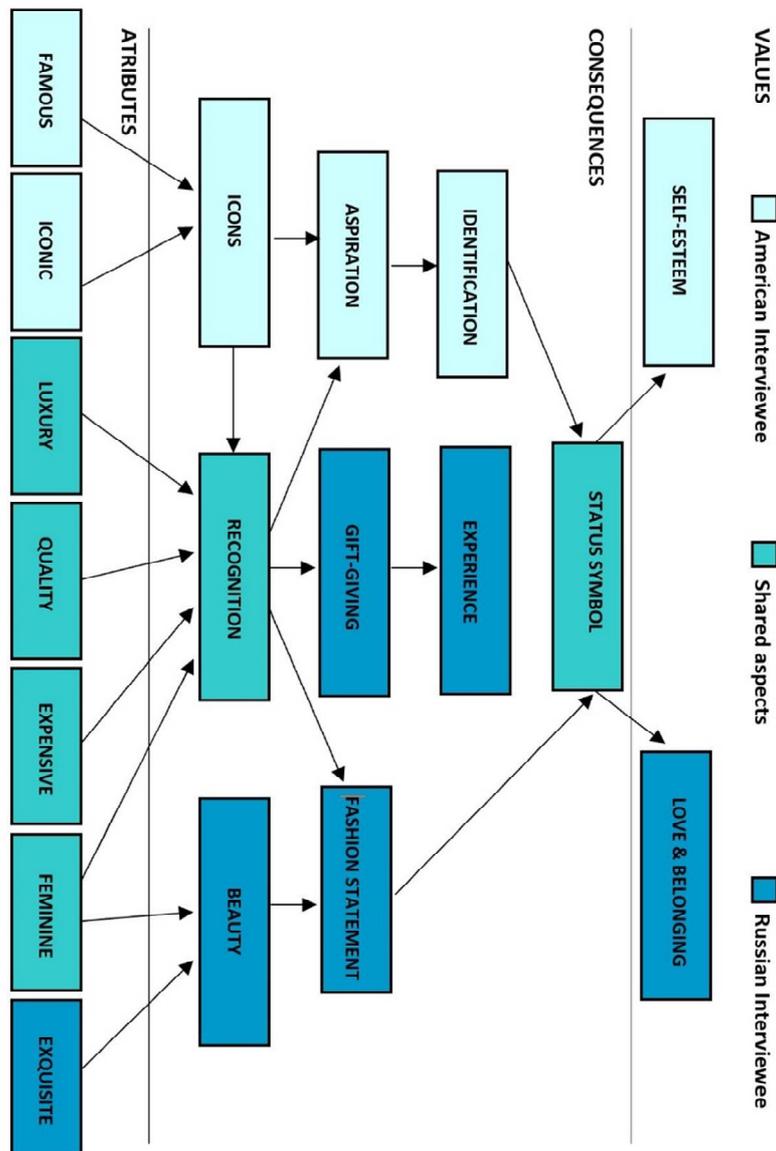
In this paper, I wish to uncover the role of cultural differences that underlie in the process of purchase while simultaneously creating a universal image of luxury. For this purpose, I have interviewed two people with different backgrounds; one is from Russia and the other from the United States of America. Despite cultural differences, Tiffany&Co inspires a widely accepted image of luxury, quality and femininity that can be seen through shared attributes. Nevertheless, we can see that despite this common concept, customers’ values differ as well as the consequences implicated. For example, according to the Russian interviewee, feelings that were reported when wearing a Tiffany&Co necklace were part of the semantic field of Beauty such as: style, put together and elegance while the American interviewee focused on celebrities and fame.

As the interview with the Russian person unraveled, I pin-pointed two major consequences that lie within the Fashion statement that gave way to the importance of relationships that is reflected upon the form of gift-giving. As described by the interviewee, it is essential in Russian cultural

¹ Sharma, Vibhuti. “Tiffany's results beat estimates, profit outlook up”, Reuters:
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-tiffany-results/tiffanys-results-beat-estimates-profit-outlook-up-idUSKCN1LD14R>



Exhibit 1



values to place an emphasis on one's appearance. This stems from the belief that if one puts effort in creating a good impression it means that one cares about the social interactions and relationships. When carrying on the conversation, I understood that the interviewee placed great emphasis on past experiences that stem from the era of the Soviet Union where if one has access to a special piece of jewelry, they would promote it on oneself and attempt to differentiate themselves from the crowd as it was expressed that many had similar lifestyles.

Further on, it was even expressed that women had just their beauty in order to make a difference and they believed by doing so through Fashion statements. The fact that the Tiffany&Co necklace is an emblematic representation of luxury plays a part in its facilitated process of recognition that places a status symbol and position. As a result, through these several factors of luxury and recognizable quality, there is a great emphasis on physical appearance and status symbols that many women believe to achieve by acquiring luxurious jewelry; in this case a



Tiffany&Co necklace. This ultimately leads to the value of Love and Belonging within the social environment as one wishes to be part of an aspiring group and be accepted.

Even if there is a common thread between the two people, the source of the motivation in acquiring a necklace is different. The American interviewee reported Tiffany&Co to be Famous and Iconic. When following this thought, I uncovered the link to major beauty icons such as Audrey Hepburn in the movie: “Breakfast at Tiffany’s” as well as the modern television series “Gossip Girl”. Through the interview, I could link the characters’ role in these popular cinematographic pieces to the identification process that some customers undergo. The interviewee reported that the source of enjoyment in watching these stemmed from the fact that one could aspire or identify to the fictitious characters. As a result, the customer’s mind is engaged in actively creating and desiring a lifestyle they wish to attain or to sustain. Overall, there is a reported feeling of fame by borrowing the brand’s strategic position as a universal symbol of elegance and luxury that is recognizable. For example, the interviewee reported to have watched the Golden Globe Awards and to have noticed Lady Gaga’s necklace from Tiffany&Co. In a sense, one can see how this brand is recognizable and inspires fame through icons in the cinematographic and music industry.

It is interesting to notice how the Russian interviewee expanded on the act of gift-giving unlike the American interviewee. The Russian Interviewee reported that if they had to offer a gift to a special person, they would offer a Tiffany&Co necklace due to its broad appeal through simplicity and recognition as well as the experience when opening the package. This experience was described to be special as the interviewee felt it took part in deepening their relationship. In my opinion, this is reflected upon the type of culture that a customer identifies with. Furthermore, as we can see both interviewees reported the necklace to be recognizable, but it uncovered different consequences. For the American person, the recognition aided the identification process through aspiration of high social status in order to raise one’s own self-esteem. However, for the Russian interviewee the recognizability of the necklace defined the fashion statement that linked to the image of status symbol as a token of acceptance into society, thus the value of Love and Belonging. Nevertheless, it is important to note that both interviewees reported that possessing this necklace is a status symbol of high society, but through difference consequences.

Overall, there is a backbone framework underlying the Tiffany&Co necklaces that include an image of luxury and quality. As a result, the universally aspirational status that is felt to be achieved when acquiring the necklace stems from its recognizability around the world. Nevertheless, customers from different cultures valued varying aspects of the experience that, ultimately, the necklace rests upon such as love and belonging and self-esteem.

Section IV: Marketing Recommendations

As it can be seen in Section III, there are founding brand pillars in Tiffany’s product category image that relates to the luxurious world. Consequently, as a marketer, it is essential to focus on the brand pillars that have a great reach across cultures and promote these universally accepted attributes in the recognizability of the brand. However, it is also crucial to understand the different factors that play a major role in the customer segment’s values in order to differentiate the brand from competitors. In this section, I will highlight and recommend how Tiffany&Co can exploit their universal strength as a luxurious brand and explore the importance of cultural values in the purchase process that can offer a geographic competitive advantage.



As noted in Section III with its attributes, we can see that Tiffany&Co has successfully positioned its necklaces as a luxurious feature. However, it is important for the company to innovate in order to adapt to diverse cultural values while remaining true to their identity. One way Tiffany&Co could expand their global reach is to partner with and sponsor Instagram influencers as well as bloggers. This would satisfy the consequences of both interviewees – Fashion Statement and Identification – that combine with the status symbol. As expressed in a research paper by Duffy, “according to the 2013 Technorati Digital Influence report, blogs are “the third- most influential digital resource when making overall purchases,” behind only official brand and retail channels.” (Duffy, 10) and that “a 2016 study jointly conducted by Twitter and the analytics firm Annalect found that roughly 40 percent of respondents purchased an item on-line that was used by a social media influencer on Instagram, Twitter, Vine, or YouTube.” (Duffy, 10) These findings show a promising result for the marketing recommendation that would enhance the perceived brand value of Tiffany&Co as it would aid in the purchasing process.

Furthermore, Tiffany&Co should focus on enhancing the created experience when obtaining a Tiffany Necklace; whether if its for gift-giving or to strengthen one’s own image. In order to do this, I would recommend Tiffany&Co to consider engaging in the Visual Narrative Art (VNA) as expressed in the research paper by Gorson. As expressed in the same paper, “the researchers further proposed that emotional and implicit thinking play a significant part in luxury brand consumption because these brands often are presented in symbolic and affective contexts (Megehee & Spake, 2012)” (Gorson, 9). As a result, campaigns should be focused on the interaction with the customer that would place emphasis on the status symbol seen by both cultures. For example, according to an article by eTail, Tiffany has created an Augmented reality app: “Engagement Ring Finder” that would engage with consumers. I would recommend developing this app in order to include other product categories in order to have a broader appeal.

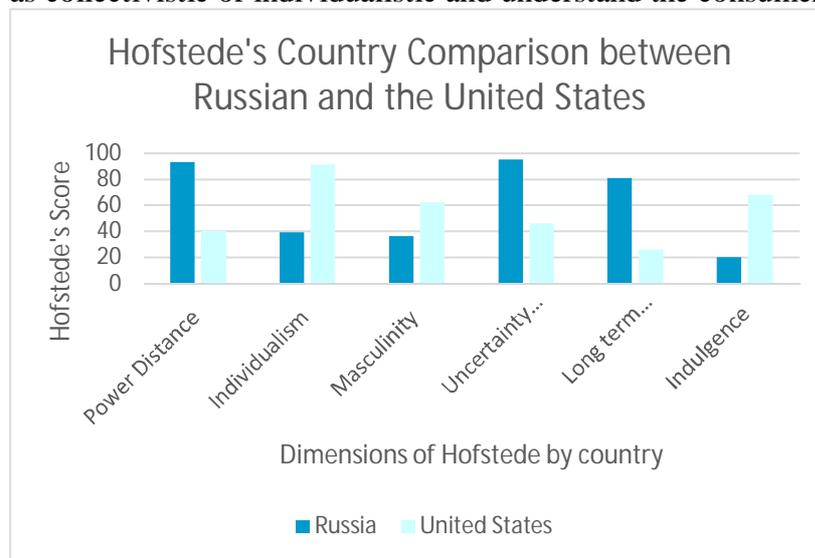
It is important to note that these marketing recommendations allow Tiffany&Co to recirculate and expose the consumer multiple times to the brand that would aid in the encoding process. This would integrate, in the long-term, in the consumer’s memory and make it easier when retrieving information, thus strengthening decision-making when purchasing.

Even if focusing on Tiffany’s brand pillars is essential in creating a broad appeal, as reported by the two interviewees, it is also crucial to consider the different cultural values. According to a research paper, “provincial norms, referring to the norms of one’s local setting and circumstances, are another important consideration for the use of social norms in persuasion” (Goldstein, Cialdini, & Griskevicius, 2008 PAGE 6). This is a component of the “Focus Theory of Normative Conduct” (Cialdini, Reno, & Kallgren 1990)” (Gorson,4) which expresses that social norms may influence people’s behavior. It is expressed in the same research paper that by incorporating city monuments depending on the geographic location of the customer’s segment, it “could increase the perceived similarity between the people in the commercial and the consumers in certain locales” (Gorson, 7). As a result, this would build upon the previous marketing recommendation by engaging with customers as well as differentiating it geographically. This would allow the customer to relate on an emotional level and feel implicated.

Referring to the different cultural values that are implicated, Tiffany&Co should employ the Emotional Regulation Consumption (ERC) that, is described in Gorson’s paper, “proposes that people buy products they believe will make them happy as a way of managing their emotions (Kemp & Kopp, 2011)” (Gorson, 2). I believe this is reflected in the consequence of gift-giving for the Russian interviewee whom expressed that gift-giving deepens the relationship as both



the giver and receiver are happy and for the consequence of identification and aspiration for the American interviewee whom expressed that achieving a certain lifestyle could bring joy. Regarding the American's interviewee search for an aspirational lifestyle, Tiffany&Co has successfully maintained an image in relation to the cinematographic industry. Thus, I would recommend for the company to utilize this success by practicing product placement in movies or series that they believe will reach the targeted audience. A successful example of this technique was, according to TheGuardian, the image of the social aristocracy in "Breakfast at Tiffany's" through Audrey Hepburn's character who "was positioned as a kind of [...] aristocratic, sophistication of Grace Kelly" (Rennie) as well as the firm's role in the "the aspirational American dream" (Rennie). According to Wiles's paper, "film product placement has the potential to improve brand equity, and improvements in brand equity have long been associated with increased consumer demand and increases in cash flow levels (Aaker and Day 1974; Conchar, Crask, and Zinkhan 2005)" (Wiles, 4). Consequently, I would recommend Tiffany&Co to collaborate with the cinematographic industry in order to develop and update the attribute of fame to the brand image as well as priming the consumers that would spread activation to ultimately affect their associative networks. Furthermore, it is important to keep in mind Hofstede's country comparison scores that describe the inclination of a society such as collectivistic or individualistic and understand the consumer.



Overall, Tiffany&Co is a global brand that inspires luxury and quality but there are underlying consequences that are affected by cultural values. Tiffany&Co should understand the different customers through Hofstede's insight but should also maintain and update their universal image through various frameworks such as Focus Theory of Normative Conduct and Emotional Regulation Consumption as well as collaborate with influential figures in the media and cinematographic industries

Section V: Bibliography

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