# Data in Fashion Sports



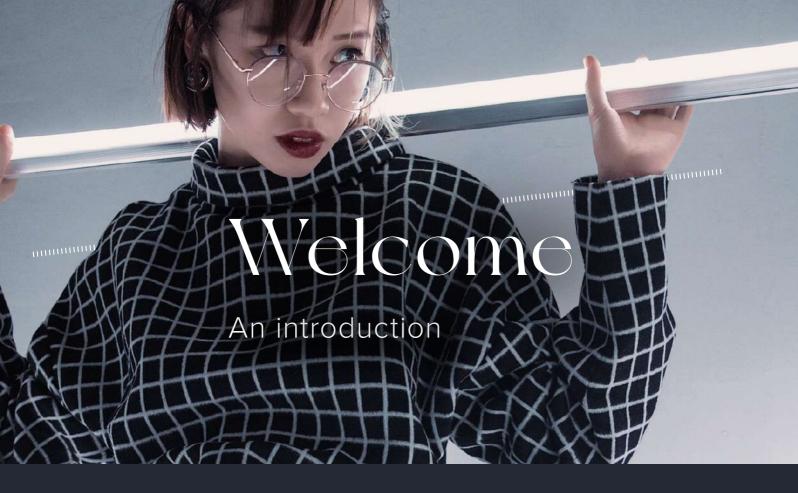
How brands are staying a cut above in 2022

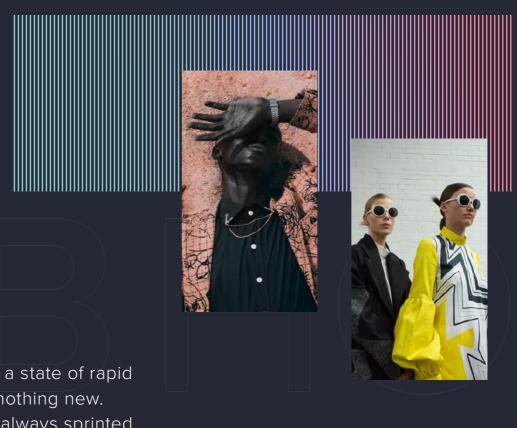


Report –









The fashion industry is in a state of rapid change... but then that's nothing new. Top fashion brands have always sprinted from one season to the next. The real challenge is not just keeping pace with change but staying ahead of it.



The most successful fashion brands create trends instead of following the crowd; those who innovate and experiment; those who take challenges as opportunities.

The key to achieving all of the above is data. It's well known that data is essential in modern business, but what is really meant by this is that the use of data is essential—unanalyzed raw data has no real value until its patterns are revealed and its insights extracted. It's about leveraging data and using the best available technology to strike a perfect balance between flexibility and efficiency.

And these are much-needed attributes in the fashion and sports domains—supply chains and tried-and-tested business models have been severely disrupted. Sales have moved almost entirely online or hybrid. Shoppers have more choices than ever with thousands of places to purchase goods at a single click. A new generation of tech-savvy and ethically aware shoppers is emerging with the expectation that fashion companies will deliver quality products while tackling sustainability issues and addressing social issues.

In this report, we'll be taking a look at the data trends and use cases that are not just helping fashion and sports brands meet the challenges to stay in the game but are giving brands a leading edge in identifying opportunities and empowering them to actually win the game. We'll also be talking about how online retargeting and branding ad campaigns can be used to communicate with clients, revealing some of our in-house data findings, and hearing insights from our own RTB House experts.

More than anything else, this report is about how the many challenges that fashion and sports brands face can, through data, be transformed into enormous opportunities to stay a cut above.

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### Inside Information

chapter 01

Why leveraging data is crucial for fashion brands





The fashion world has always been dynamic. Trends quickly emerge, grow, and disappear without warning—this season's must-have items quickly become yesterday's news.



Add to this the continuing shift to e-commerce—fashion had a global market value of \$759.5 billion in 2021, making it the number one e-commerce sector in the world, and is predicted to grow up to \$1 trillion by 2025—plus the pressure to adopt more sustainable business models, and you have the most dynamic sector there is at present.

In this context, the arguments for fashion brands fully leveraging data are plentiful. In fact, there is no area of a business that data cannot enhance. When effectively analyzed, it enables greater visibility, agility, and efficiency, from top to bottom, and the more data a brand leverage, the more optimized and flexible it can become.





#### Forecasting trends

In an industry almost built entirely on trends, there are clear advantages for an organization if it can predict their emergence. By doing this, a fashion brand can more confidently decide which styles to include in future collections and preempt its competitors by getting its designs in front of shoppers first.

Trend forecasting uses sophisticated algorithms, powered by AI, to give fashion brands the ability to track movements in the industry, assessing geography and market potential to get a head start on future trends. By knowing, with a higher degree of certainty, what the demand for particular styles will be, brands can launch collections faster and with a greater chance of success.

Because Artificial Intelligence-based predictive analytics allows brands to anticipate the size of the demand and better control production, stock levels, and surplus—for every five garments produced, two end up as inventory excess or unused deadstock—it leads to greater efficiencies and improves sustainability credentials. In fact, brands with integrated predictive platforms can reduce inventory costs by up to 15% and their carbon footprint by up to 24%.





#### Flexibility

Data, for fashion brands, perhaps above all, means flexibility. For years seasonality in fashion has unrolled in the same repeating cycle: spring/summer collections hit the catwalk in September and then autumn/winter collections come six months later.

However, climate change raises the very real possibility that winter collections will lean over to, or even blend with, those of summer, giving rise to boots in spring and lightweight coats in winter. Trends in genderless fashion, durability and sustainability only add to the flux. So, the ability to analyze the ebb and flow of all this data brings much-needed flexibility, not just the flexibility to react to circumstances but to anticipate them and seize any opportunities that arise.

#### Knowing your audience

If you know your audience better, you can engage with them in a more convincing and persuasive way. Sounds simple, doesn't it? It's not.

The amount of user data increases year on year but only extraordinary technology, underpinned by AI, can make sense of it, connect the dots, and create a more accurate picture of audiences. Data analysis can provide actionable insights that can be leveraged to drive customer engagement on any channel.





Of course, branding is massively important in fashion—a brand's value is nothing less than the way people think and feel about it, and when people love your brand, its story, style, and values, they seek it out and are often willing to pay a premium to get it. As fashion fans seek out companies that have a strong differentiating identity, fashion brands are always naturally looking to widen their reach and increase the awareness of their unique story.

Gone are the days of "pray and spray" when it comes to increasing brand awareness, whether it's introducing a brand afresh to consumers or moving it towards "top-of-mind" for people who have already heard of it. Data provides a way for a brand to focus its efforts in the right direction, target the right shoppers, and gain more of an uplift with a more efficient use of resources.







The pandemic brought into stark reality the importance of risk management for organizations across all sectors.

Operational, financial, and, in particular, supply chain risks were all brought firmly into focus. Even before the pandemic, many fashion brands were looking to manage risk in procurement, for example, by outsourcing products to extend the global supply base.



One way for brands to manage risk is to internalize product design. Yes, it has the potential to negatively impact supplier relationships but it's still seen by many as well worth doing in order to maintain product differentiation.

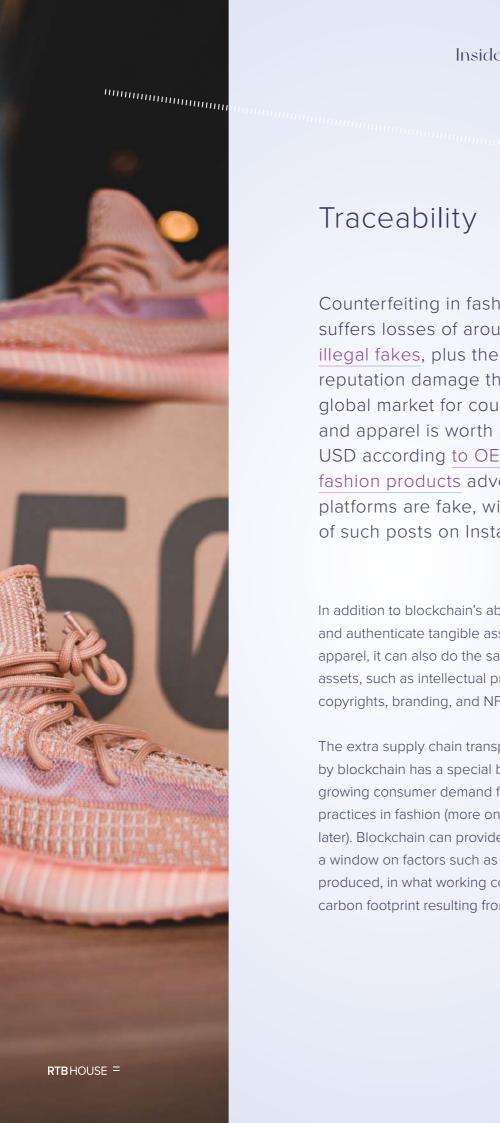
To build a clearer picture of the risk, you have to gather data, lots of it, analyze it, and draw conclusions on what the upcoming threats are. Any organization that leverages powerful analytics techniques, underpinned by Al, can anticipate risk with a greater degree of accuracy and hold a statistical edge over its competitors.

#### Augmenting the Supply Chain

Many brands have been diversifying away from more concentrated production models towards more agile, and plural supply chain ecosystems. Consequently, the old adage of not putting all your eggs in one basket has become the modus operandi of modern global supply chains.

The lifeblood of any modern, diversified supply chain ecosystem is data, and this lifeblood is largely being channeled by the Internet of Things (IoT). Al takes the data churned out by the IoT to build simulation models that can predict demand and supplier lead times. It brings operations and value chain risk into more focus. Data, and innovations like blockchain, enables greater visibility of stock from production to shipment all the way to the store or the buyer's door. Every item can be tracked in real time through the many touchpoints of the IoT.

Blockchain, a technology much discussed of late due to its key role in NFTs and cryptocurrency, is a shared ledger that not only facilitates the recording of transactions and the tracking of assets in the supply chain, but as it's immutable—an unimpeachable and tamper-proof source of truth— it can authenticate the provenance of a fashion item beyond a doubt.

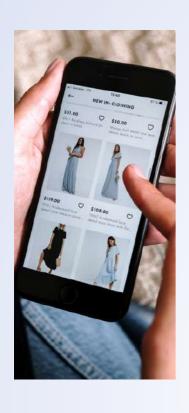


#### Traceability

Counterfeiting in fashion is rife; the industry suffers losses of around 50 B USD a year to illegal fakes, plus the inevitable brand and reputation damage that comes with it. The global market for counterfeiting in fashion and apparel is worth a staggering 450 B USD according to OECD and about 20% of fashion products advertised on social media platforms are fake, with a reported tripling of such posts on Instagram in recent years.

In addition to blockchain's ability to track and authenticate tangible assets such as apparel, it can also do the same for intangible assets, such as intellectual property, patents, copyrights, branding, and NFTs.

The extra supply chain transparency provided by blockchain has a special bearing on the growing consumer demand for sustainable practices in fashion (more on sustainability later). Blockchain can provide buyers with a window on factors such as how an item was produced, in what working conditions, and the carbon footprint resulting from its production.



#### Personalization

Shoppers not only want but expect tailored product choices and experiences with 76% of consumers being unhappy when these aren't offered.





Personalization can be a superpower in digital advertising, but it's a power that must be used wisely in order to avoid ad fatigue in consumers—when consumers grow tired of being repeatedly pelted with irrelevant recommendations, often to the extent that they turn away from a brand.

But a smarter use of data brings the ability to hyper-personalize an ad at a given moment to the needs of an individual. Numerous touchpoints are analyzed in real time to ascertain more accurately the probability of a user engaging with a particular personalized ad in a given placement.

This brings a plethora of advantages to both brands and consumers; the main shared advantage being a big reduction in returns, in fact, research shows that brands that have implemented personalization see up to a 30% reduction in product returns.













# 1 trillion USD

Fashion e-commerce is expected to grow 7.18% by 2025 and reach a market value of over \$1T USD.

— source



02

24%

In 2023, online sales will make up 24% of the fashion market. That's almost 2 times more than in 2017.

— source





Sustainability matters. 66% of consumers now consider sustainability when making a purchase and 88% want brands to be more eco-friendly.

— source



04

50%

Forbes identified a 50% drop in fast fashion sales in recent years, as customers seek out more sustainable clothing.

— source



#### 1 in 8

Around 430M people work in the fashion industry globally. That's around 12.6% of the world's population or one out of every eight working people.

— source



06

## 819 USD

The average annual outlay on fashion products per capita in the US is 819 USD. That's the highest in the world.

source



13

13 of the top 20 direct-to-consumer (DTC) brands are in the fashion and apparel industry.

— source



08

23%

Athletic footwear is predicted to generate 63.5 B USD in 2023— a 23% increase from the 51.4 B USD valuation in 2020.

— source





Nearly three-quarters of people (71%) now expect personalized interactions with brands, including fashion retailers.

— source



10



43% of all purchases in the fashion space are impulse buys. This means that online ads can be highly effective if they catch people at the right moment.

— source



As well as keeping their finger firmly on the pulse of style trends, fashion brands have to be alert to emerging trends in tech and social media, and many leading brands are looking to a wide spectrum of innovative technology to enhance the consumer experience.

This includes virtual reality, AI, social commerce, and the IoT, with 79% of organizations planning to invest in at least one IoT project in 2022/2023 to supplement communication and improve the customer experience.



# Hyper personalization in advertising—with great power comes great responsibility

The age of Al has brought with it game-changing capabilities in many fields and industries. Its strength is in being able to analyze the huge amounts of data that the digital world pumps out in real time and provide actionable business insights.

In digital marketing this has one very notable implication a brand can build a clearer picture of its customers, and therefore sell more effectively to them. In fashion, being able to work out a customer's needs in a given moment, and in less than a blink of an eye, in order to tailor communication to them is incredibly useful.

Personalized ads are nothing new in fashion e-commerce. But what is new is the ability for Deep Learning, the most advanced form of AI, to increase the potency and efficacy of ads through hyper-personalization. And as technology improves, so does efficiency.

Deep Learning can not only calibrate adds to what a customer wants, but it can also anticipate what a user didn't even think they wanted; it's a smarter, more subtle, and less intrusive form of personalization.



# Omnichannel and an increasing preference for ROPO

Communicating with consumers in a coherent way across every touchpoint of every channel and platform, reinforces brand, drives engagement, and builds trust and loyalty. To synchronize a personalized and compelling experience across physical and digital, brands need to leverage customer data.





The amount of people going online to begin their shopping journey is steadily growing with the percentage of those who describe themselves as currently shopping mostly or entirely online only a few points down from the peak of the lockdown boom at 57%.

Now that consumers can again freely make the choice between ordering online or heading to the store, many are still reluctant to try on at home and repackage items for return, instead opting for a ROPO (research online, purchase offline) approach. According to research, about 33% of consumers use the Internet as a place to get information about clothing products before purchasing in a brick-and-mortar store.





Some brands are even offering shoppers a reserve online and try-on in-store option, such as Nordstrom; where a notification is sent to a shopper when a garment is available to try on in the nearest shop—80% of shoppers used this service multiple times.

#### Data-driven sustainability decisions in fashion

Due to the increasing awareness of younger generations on the topic, sustainability credentials have grown over the last decade from a "should have" to a "must have" for fashion brands, with 52% of shoppers saying they're more likely to purchase from a company with shared values, and 42% of global customers purchasing eco-friendly and sustainable products.

And many brands have reacted to this sea change in consumer preferences, including Levi Strauss & Co., which is committed to maximizing water and energy efficiency and advancing circularity in the production of its denim. Fast-changing trends result in quickly outmoded styles, significant waste, and emissions that damage the environment.

According to research, the fashion industry accounts for up to 8% of global greenhouse gas emissions, and 3 out of 5 items of clothing end up in landfills within two years.

The vast majority of emissions occur at the raw materials stage, but when brands source raw materials, there is limited visibility and therefore it can be challenging to correctly assess the environmental impact. By infusing data into a supply chain, brands, and consumers can better assess the environmental risk of sourcing from various regions and the implications for pollution.

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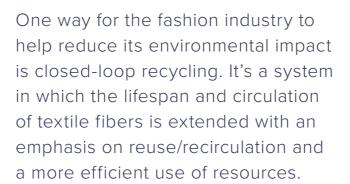
One of the main points of reluctance consumers have in regards to ordering a delivery of clothes through e-commerce is the inability to ensure an item will fit or suit them; no surprise then that an estimated 70% of fashion returns are due to poor fit or style, according to McKinsey. Inevitably a large portion of clothes need to be returned—stock that is racking up miles and gathering a larger carbon footprint—or worn for a short period and then discarded.



One technology already bringing results in this area is Augmented Reality. It is helping to reduce returns by displaying virtual items on a buyer's screen. With 3D visualization technology, consumers can use scans of their body shape and virtually try on clothes, essentially a "virtual dressing room" without having to leave the comfort of home. A good example of this is Gucci's try-on app launched in collaboration with Snapchat with which a consumer can virtually try on footwear. Shoppers can even set up virtual meetings with stylists and customer advisors.



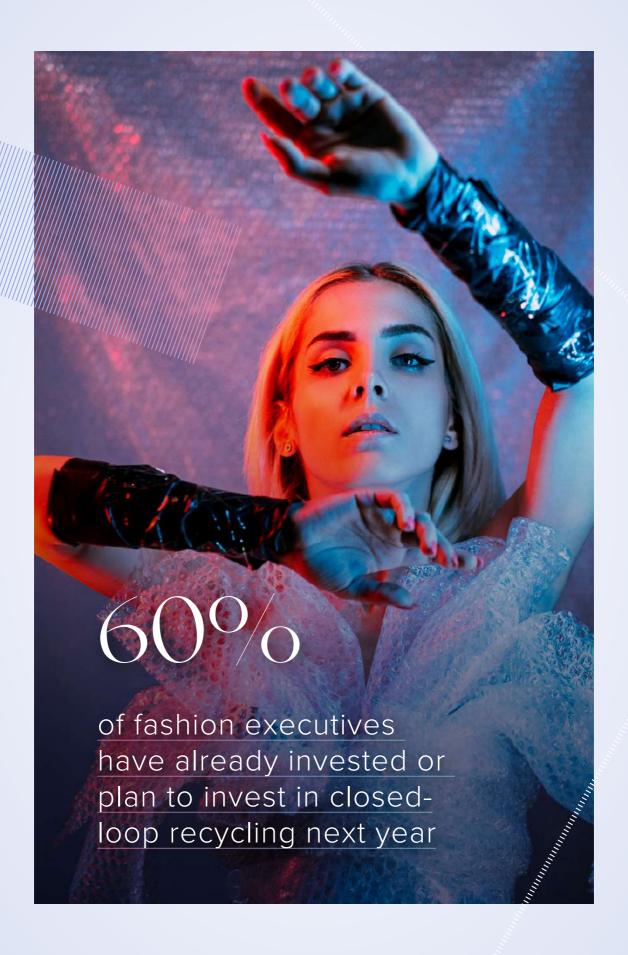




A growing demand for closed-loop recycling or "recommerce" emerged from the pandemic with a consumer turn towards thriftiness and durability, with 71% of fashion consumers planning to keep the items they have for longer, and 65% planning to purchase more durable items. This behavioral shift gave rise to the fashion resale market boom, which is growing 11 times faster than traditional retail and is tipped to reach a \$77 billion valuation in the next five years.



LOVE





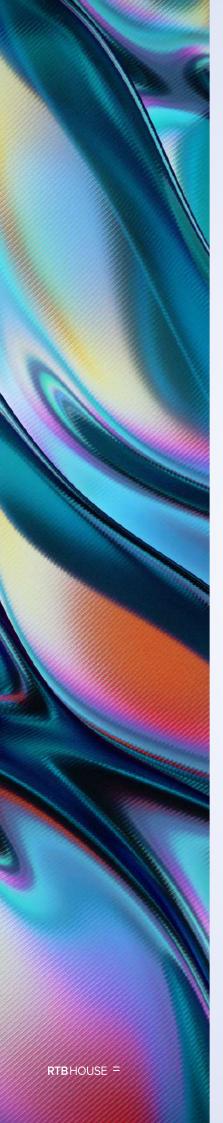


Some stand-out brands are even expressing "recommerce" as an integral part of their brand identity. Patagonia, the well-known outdoor clothing retailer, offers a free repair service, encouraging reuse, as exemplified by their groundbreaking "Don't buy this jacket" campaign of over a decade ago, actively encouraging consumers to "resume" rather than "consume".

Advancing technology in mills now means that it's possible to yield near-virgin quality natural textile fibers from mechanical recycling, and chemically recycled fibers can regain the quality of virgin fibers and be recycled several

times without any degradation in quality. It, therefore, limits the extractive production of raw materials and decreases textile waste, and is being fully embraced by zero-waste brands, such as ARO, Christy Dawn, and RE/DONE.

And larger brands are moving in the same direction; Marks & Spencer, for example, is committed to the sustainable sourcing of 100% verified recycled polyester by 2025/26.



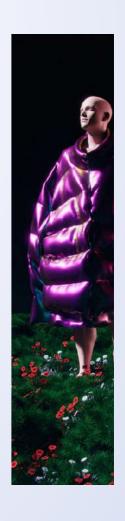
#### Putting the AI in sustAlnability



There are many ways AI can help reduce environmental impacts. As the capabilities of AI, and in particularly Deep Learning, increase so will the uses brands can apply it to. But AI is already helping to reduce waste and emissions in the industry.

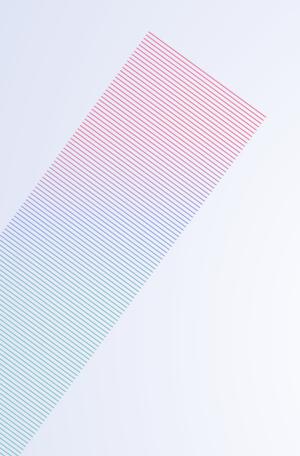
Al can help to predict trends and the level of demand they will inspire, reduce waste, as well as serve smarter recommendations to customers, which means items are less likely to be returned or quickly discarded. Al, when used in retargeting, can, with advanced recommendation engines, guide consumers in a decision to buy what they really want. The eventual purchase is more satisfactory for the user, and waste and stockpiling are reduced.

Al now facilitates 3D modeling in the design phase of clothing, which reduces the need to produce a long iterative sequence of physical samples, and again, cuts down on waste. Al can also help fashion brands x-ray deeper into the sustainability of their supply chain.



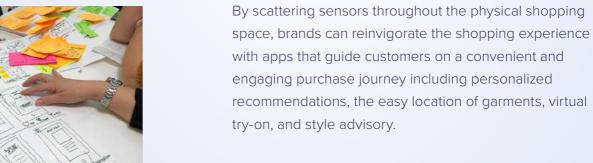






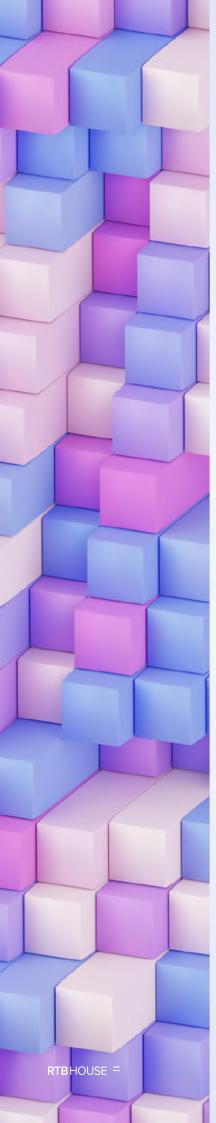
The growth of e-commerce has prompted many fashion brands to reassess the role of their brick-and-mortar stores. Now as footfall has returned to stores, many brands, whose priorities may have, quite understandably, shifted away from driving innovation during lockdown, are once again focussing on data and technology-driven use cases that enhance the in-store experience.

"Click-and-collect" is a great way to get app users into the physical store in which a shopper buys online and comes to the high street to collect their items, and often ends up buying additional products in the process—according to the ICSC, 69% of shoppers who went in-store to pick up their orders ended up buying additional items.



Store associates can even take advantage of the data to boost customer service by means of pocket-sized smart devices that supplement point-of-sale service and clienteling.



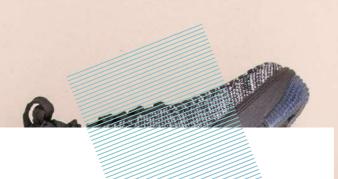


#### Product passports

With counterfeiting costing the fashion industry billions of dollars each year, brands are naturally seeking ways to establish the authenticity of their products beyond a doubt. There are also sustainability implications to counterfeiting—it's well accepted that unscrupulous counterfeiters are far less likely to impart any kind of sustainability concern into the sourcing and illegal distribution of their fake goods.

In an effort to boost authentication, transparency, and sustainability, brands are turning to a combination of technologies, such as blockchain and the IoT, that enable the sharing of immutable product information with consumers and partners. Although large-scale pilots are yet to be seen, most likely due to the lack of an industry-wide standard, "product passports" hold great potential to help verify the provenance of products, restrict counterfeiting, and enhance trust.



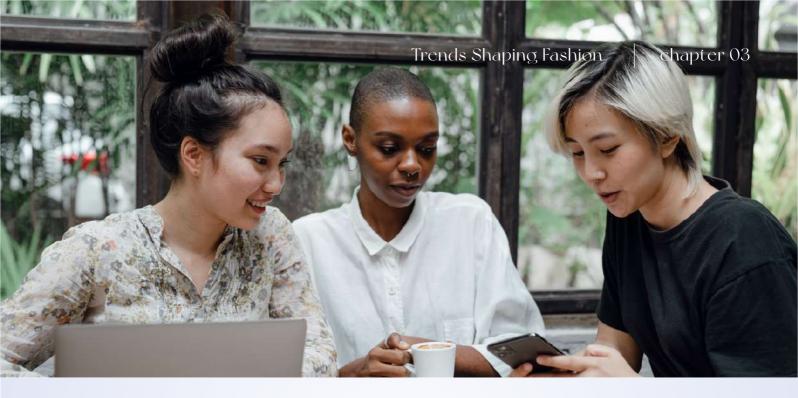




approximately

# 2 out of 5

fashion executives
plan to adopt product
passports in 2022 or
have already done so





#### Social commerce

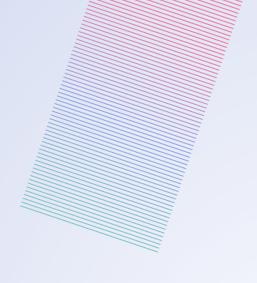
Social commerce's growth is continuing at pace with increasing engagement from brands, consumers, and investors, to the point at which social media now plays a defining role in the e-commerce marketing strategies of fashion brands everywhere. It's easy to recognize the opportunities—we currently spend on average 15% of our waking life on online networking apps, a figure which is set to keep rising. With the growing functionality of such platforms comes growing user comfort and ultra-convenient customer journeys from discovery to purchase.

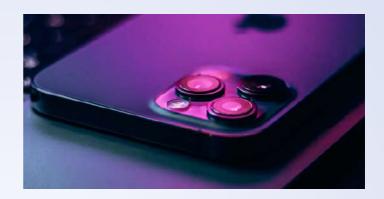
RTBHOUSE =

# 37%

of fashion executives
cited social commerce
as one of the top three
themes that will impact
their business in 2022







Social media isn't just a place for customers to discover new fashion trends; many social media networks are evolving to provide seamless in-app shopping.



Social commerce sales are forecasted to nearly triple by 2025, and in 2022 more than one-third of Facebook users planned to make a purchase directly through the platform. But social media engagement rates remain low (Facebook is now 0.064%, Instagram 0.067%, and Twitter 0.037%) perhaps due to the overt nature of much of the messaging—content marketing that is much more "marketing" than "content".

One very effective form of selling for fashion brands in a social commerce context is product video—55% of consumers want to watch videos before they buy. Platforms like Instagram and TikToK are driving sales for large fashion brands as consumers there are able to view the product on a real person or an influencer before buying.

Livestream shopping provides a way for brands to harness the power of video and drive engagement and sales, in fact, some brands are seeing astounding conversion rates of up to 30% and lower return rates through Instagram and Facebook live streaming. It's no surprise that 81% of companies plan to increase or maintain their investment in livestream selling to drive sales over the course of this year.

### The real rise of the virtual—the metaverse

The term "metaverse" is applied to platforms that offer the user some kind of social experience within an online virtual environment. The concept is that users can conduct daily activities and chores—like meeting people, interacting socially with friends, engaging in recreation, and purchasing products (NFTs) in a virtual space, via an avatar. Look no further than Forever 21's own metaverse called "Forever 21 Shop City" in which users can buy virtual merchandise, by way of their avatar, alongside physical products.

Brands have been experimenting with NFTs (digital assets that can only be owned by one person at a time) in the retail space. When Under Armour's ambassador Steph Curry broke the all-time 3-point record in the NBA, the brand celebrated by releasing digital replicas of the sneakers Curry wore in his record-breaking match; the first wearable, cross-platform metaverse shoe. Owners of these NFTs were able to "wear" the shoes in three metaverses: Decentraland, The Sandbox, and Gala Games.

## Three Words. Know. Your. Customer.

chapter 04

An interview with Jaysen Gillespie, Head of Analytics & Data Science at RTB House

Jaysen Gillespie has spent over two decades in Marketing and Analytics, working in global leadership roles for large companies which are serious about using data. Lots and lots of data.

As an expert in e-commerce and the ways that companies can provide better experiences to customers by making better use of information, we asked Jaysen about the fashion industry's relationship with data as we move into 2023.



## When do you think fashion businesses started to get serious about using data?

Fashion was an early adopter because it's so competitive and companies are always looking for ways ahead. Consumers have some loyalty, but they spread their fashion dollars across a number of sellers. What's more, fashion brands are quite open to changes and pivots because they face significant operational challenges in the best of times: tastes change over time, inventory is seasonal, and supply chains can be long and complex. Finally, fashion sellers rarely target all consumers in the market, and good segmentation has always come from making good use of customer data.

### So, are fashion brands still ahead of the pack?

Fashion brands aren't a monolith, but I would say that those brands with storefronts or substantial e-commerce sites, who have been using customer data for a long time, are out ahead. Of course, it's hard to thrive—or even survive—without being data-driven. Even brands that previously only had a wholesale business are starting to embrace the web or work with digitally advanced retail partners.

### How can fashion brands use data most effectively?

Three words. Know. Your. Customer. Now more than ever, customers are looking at your brand holistically. Fashion isn't just about the best style, fit, and purchase price. Consumers might want to know about labor conditions, where you source materials, or how your company addresses sustainability. First-party data from your core users, via both your website and self-executed consumer studies, can help with brand strategy and positioning. You need to get across the messages that people want to hear.

## What is the current most effective way for fashion brands to use data in ad campaigns?

Consumers have extraordinary flexibility regarding how they buy clothes. The fashion vertical isn't as much about

a traditional "purchase funnel" as it is an infinite consumer journey. Marketers would ideally want to expose the consumer to more precise product recommendations at a specific moment. Using more advanced technologies like Deep Learning can create ads that are tailored to the user, regardless of where that user is in their infinite consumer journey.

## Fashion is mature online, but people still love in-store experiences. How is data helping with omnichannel and ROPO customer journeys?

Connecting the "RO" (research online) part of the journey with the "PO" (purchase offline) is always a challenge. But firms who can do it gain insight into robust upper-funnel data that precedes the in-store purchase. For that reason, there are now a number of solutions that connect online research and e-commerce site activity with in-store purchase actions.

### What's a great example of using data for hyper-personalization?

Aside from using Deep Learning-based product recommendations in programmatic ads, as mentioned above, another great usage of data is in e-commerce site optimization. Rather than guessing or following the established rules, your data can help you create a more effective order of categories and products displayed, it can make more effective product recommendations and promote upselling opportunities, and can even adjust or recommend pricing. Though you have to be certain that you have the technology to get that one right every time to avoid negative consumer feedback!

## As a data expert, what would you advise fashion brands to start or stop right now?

It's a good time to do a full privacy audit, making sure you are comfortable with the provenance and use of all data collected. From there, I'd suggest looking for any data that's unconnected to your master identifiers and finding a way to plug the gaps. Finally, work to bolster first-party data and find creative ways for shoppers to benefit by providing some additional information about themselves.



Fashion is about showing yourself. The clothes people wear represent who they are to the outside world. Fashion is essentially all about identity... and transparency is now expected on all sides.





Shoppers want to feel seen and understood by brands, being communicated to as a unique individual, rather than just one of the crowd.



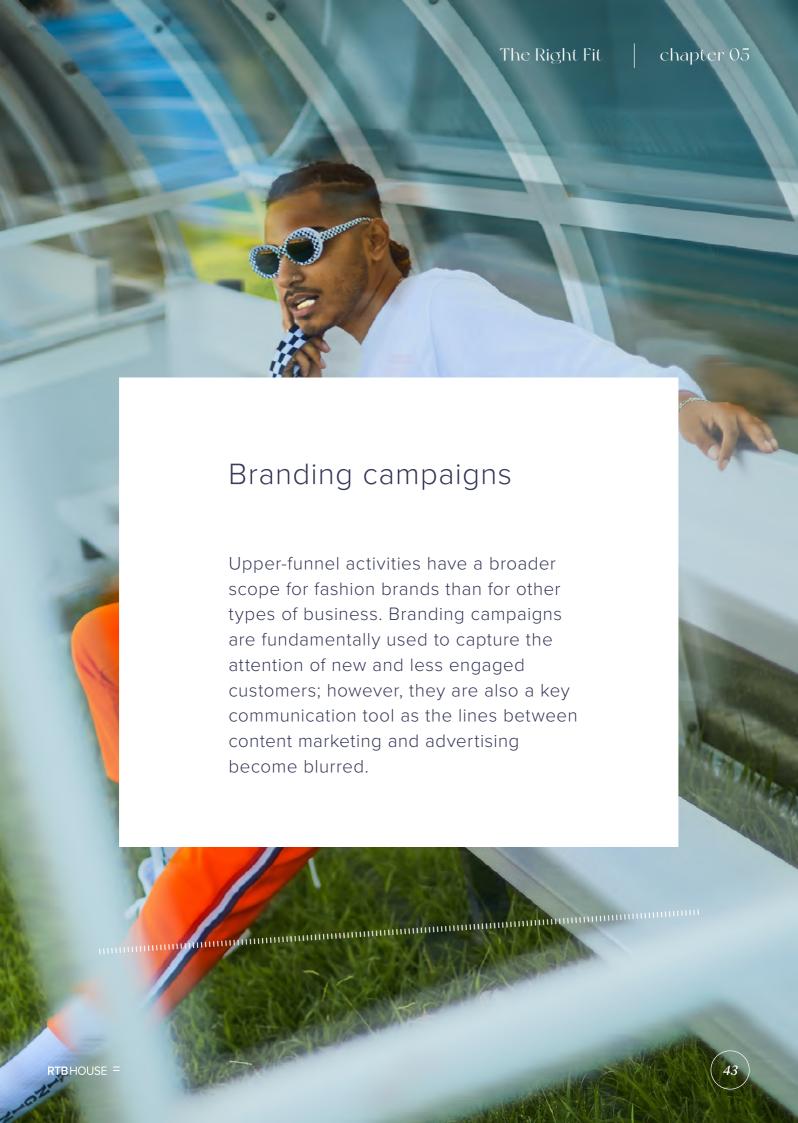


Customers also want and need to know everything about the brands they are buying from, especially younger buyers who need a brand to be aligned with their own ethical, societal, and environmental concerns.

More data and consent to sharing information from customers allows fashion brands to make better product recommendations, plan future activities based on hard facts, and increase customer satisfaction while raising revenues.



As a fashion brand, you can't achieve all of these aims with one-size-fits-all advertising. You need the right mix of Branding and Retargeting campaigns, and a clear understanding of what you might achieve from each. Here's an overview of how different campaign types work for fashion brands.





### Reaching sales prospects

The first example is what we think of as a traditional Branding campaign. However, it's worth noting that there has been a shift away from talking about "brand awareness" and there is now a great emphasis on "brand visibility".

The reason behind this is that online sales are rocketing, with the global value of fashion e-commerce moving toward \$1 trillion USD. Buyers are usually already well "aware" of the brands they love, but the suddenly overcrowded online shopping space means that these brands are losing visibility.

In such a competitive environment, fashion brands need to use ultra-dynamic content that catches the attention of online buyers. Typically, fashion brands turn to Video Advertising here. According to Statista, 85% of marketers already use the format to speak to upper-funnel prospects and the share of digital for video ads is growing at around 6.5% annually.

And with good reason. 67% of shoppers look for video content on a website. We see this at RTB House, with more and more businesses utilizing Branding campaigns. To put a number on it, we have rendered over 20 million different personalized video creatives over the last 12 months.



### Reaching people

Fashion brands have come to understand that both Branding and Retargeting ads are on the front line of their company messaging and content marketing.

Your branding ads are all about your identity, not just the products you sell. If customers wear your clothes to show their identity, your ads should be part of how you show your company identity to the world. Who are you? What do you stand for? What action are you taking on big issues?

For some brands, this may seem like a risk—particularly those that appeal to younger shoppers. Only 35% of Baby Boomers care if their personal values are aligned with the brands they buy from, but 48% of Gen Xers and over half of millennials say that it affects their shopping choices.



Done correctly, a branding campaign can help to forge deep connections with new and former customers, and increase the potential of users reacting positively when they next interact with a brand, even leading to an eventual conversion.

David McTaminey
Senior Sales Manager Agency,
RTB House

## Retargeting campaigns

We're not going to talk about the basics of retargeting campaigns. We all know that online ad campaigns are an investment in getting customers to convert interest into purchases, return to abandoned orders, and increase AOV. Instead, we'll talk about what they mean specifically to fashion brands. In a word, retargeting campaigns are about timeliness.



# Speed is of the essence & here is why:

### Recommendations

Around 43% of fashion purchases are impulse buys.

Ads need to capture the sales opportunity in real time...

and that is only possible if the recommendations in
retargeting ads are absolutely right. They need to grab
someone's attention and help them convert in real time.

### Seasonality

Fashion has always moved fast but that speed has increased in recent years. Major fashion brands long ago abandoned the idea of just four seasonal collections per year and, instead, now release dozens of different thematic lines, some of which might come and go from the shelves within weeks. Fashion brands need to make the most of major promotional events that can bring a 30-50% uplift in sales, but also capture all the smaller opportunities throughout the year. More than in any other industry, the key decision trigger for fashion brands when choosing a retargeting partner is the ability to start and stop campaigns and sub-campaigns at speed.





### Shifting dead stock

The speed at which collections come and go has created a massive stock issue for some fashion brands. If a collection doesn't land, then it can go from "new release" to "dead stock" in weeks. Fashion brands can't leave slow-moving stock sitting on shelves in stores, but they do have a slightly longer window of opportunity to move stock online, which is where retargeting can be quickly implemented to share special offers before collections go completely cold.

### Changing loyalty

Retail has changed. According to the Retail Reimagined report from McKinsey, 40% of people said they tried new brands or retailers in the first months of the pandemic. Online loyalty is different from in-store loyalty, and people have suddenly become more willing to try other options. This creates both a threat and an opportunity for retailers: shoppers may be tempted to try out competitors, but your competitors' clients are also more open to change and there is an opportunity to bring them to your store. However, this opportunity may be just a moment in time, so retargeting campaigns for fashion brands need to understand customer behavior, properly assess intent, and then strike at the right moment.



Once you've decided if your fashion brand needs retargeting ads, branding ads, or a mix of both, the next step is to implement and maintain campaigns that will bring success.

It's a 5-step process that begins with understanding your target audience and ends with constantly improving results from self-calibrating campaigns. Performance campaign

Decide on your right mix of ad types

Pure branding campaign

Choose the products and categories that you want to feature in your campaign.

Let the Deep Learning engine identify users who are likely to convert Define your broad user groups + what you want to communicacte to them

#### Information about

- Premium membership
  - Free delivery
- New product lounches
  - Refund programms
- Just beautiful brand images

These are all activities that increase Customer Lifestime Value

### Display creatives in line with your brand book.

Choose the ad types for your campaign that will lead to fast conversions

Choose your ad formats

### Highly engaging formats like video ads

which reconfigure to any device and replicate the social media content that modern web users expect

#### **ROAS?**

Increased conversion?
Higher average order value?

Define your KPIs. How will you measure success?

### Ad impressions?

Completed video views?
Increased visibility?

Calibrate and improve

With Deep Learning, if you have defined what you want to communicate and chosen specific goals, you do not need to spend time on fine tunning

Let the algorithm constantly improve your results



### Results from RTB House ad campaigns in the fashion industry

Your influencers are the advocates who actively share all that's great about your fashion brand with the world. They make an impression online and engage new and existing customers. Our ad campaigns do the same for apparel stores around the globe.





## RTB House & Fashion in numbers\*



1300+

Global fashion campaigns

2.2%

of site sales

1.3%

CTR

5.92

ROAS



The reason why online advertising has become almost exclusively the domain of Artificial Intelligence is that only Al is capable of analyzing the vast swathes of data that it needs to serve relevant ads in real time.

Only it can calculate the statistical probability of a given user engaging with or converting from an ad in a particular placement, bidding for the placement, and hyper-personalizing an ad's content to that end, all in less than a blink of an eye.







But Al comes in different forms: the industry standard Machine Learning is a subset of Al. However, Machine Learning has its shortcomings. Each algorithm has to first be trained and supervised offline and requires a huge amount of carefully structured data, meaning it's not well suited for high-level reasoning or planning. It cannot learn interactively in real time.

Deep Learning, on the other hand, represents the next generation of Machine Learning and can achieve extraordinary results in fashion campaigns.

Unlike Machine Learning, Deep Learning doesn't require training or pre-structured data, can learn in an incremental way, analyzing vast datasets, and the more often you deploy it, the better it becomes.

Marketing in fashion e-commerce is fiercely competitive and getting more so every day with research showing that over 75% of millennials now purchase online. Very often fashion brands are competing with themselves in that their clothing can be found on marketplaces and resale platforms. It's a priority to differentiate to get shoppers buying directly from you both from a revenue and data gathering standpoint.

As new collections enter ever-widening product catalogs, it becomes more challenging to—as prices change and products go in and out of stock—offer accurate and effective ads that precisely reflect such variables in real time.

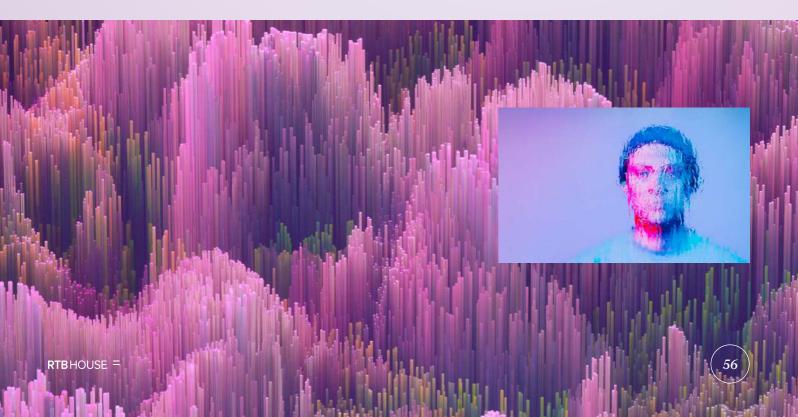
Many brands are evolving to diversify their audience and are targeting more and more buyer personas, with various types of buyers spread across their various channels and sub-brands. It's imperative to serve each group ads that are relevant to their specific needs.



Deep learning can do all of the above—the edge is provided by its use of contextual, rather than demographic data, to assess online behavior and show shoppers offers more precisely aligned to their preferences.

Our internal data shows that, with Deep Learning, fashion brands can regularly count on conversion rates above 3.5% and Return on Ad Spend above 6:1. The highest conversion rates seen in both clothing and shoe brands, while accessories have the highest campaign ROAS.

The kind of personalization that Deep Learning allows enables marketers to build a crystalline picture of a given consumer's needs, determine precisely where the user is in the sales funnel, and present bespoke content to them. With it, fashion brands can reach the right users at the right moment and with the right ads. With greater accuracy brands can sell more efficiently, improve the user experience, and generate a deeper passion for their products.



## Fashion in Focus

chapter 09

Stats for everyday and luxury fashion, sports brands, and footwear









## Luxury

The revenue of the luxury fashion market increased significantly to almost 108.4 B USD in 2021, and it's estimated that by 2025, it will reach 132.8 B USD.



02

## Everyday fashion

The ecommerce fashion industry is predicted to reach a 672.71 B USD valuation by 2023.



## Sports

The global sportswear market is predicted to grow from 170.94 B USD in 2021 to 267.61 B USD in 2028 at a CAGR of 6.6%.

The rising adoption of smart sportswear, the surge in female participation in sports, and increasing health awareness among the world's population are driving growth.



04

## Footwear

In 2022, the footwear industry is projected to grow by 16.2% and is expected to turn out 2,360 million pairs by 2025.

## A Look Inside

chapter 10

Insights from an RTB House expert



At RTB House, we measure everything. Rafał Rysiejko, AMS Business Intelligence, shares tips for the fashion industry based on literally billions of single pieces of information from our database.



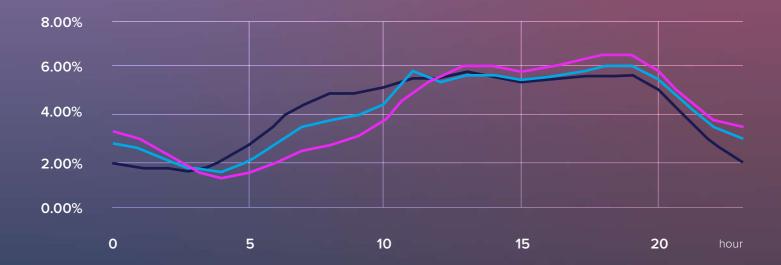
The key for fashion brands over the last 5 years—even just the last 2 years of rapid change—has been keeping pace with both competitors and customers. From 2017 to 2021, we started working with three times more advertisers and saw a similar multiplication in conversions.

Undeniably the landscape is much more competitive and brands need to find ad partners that can reach out more effectively to their specific audiences. As the scale of competition grows, hyper-targeted ads become the

only way to stand out from the crowd. Top brands need to be prepared for a similar influx of competition; for example, more consumers, particularly during peak seasons, might mean more investment needed as the competition increases.

Customer habits have also changed. They are open to more offers but also shop in different ways. Prior to the pandemic, we saw that conversion rates for fashion ads were around 2% at 7 a.m. and peaked at 7% in the evening as people shopped after work. Now, with the rise of the home office, the lines are blurred. Even though they are at work, people shop throughout the day, and we now see a consistent conversion rate of around 5-6% from the morning through to about 8 p.m.

### 2019 2020 2021





Rafał Rysiejko
Business Intelligence Expert
RTB House

For fashion brands, this means that opportunity is everywhere, all of the time. But that doesn't endorse taking a scattergun approach. It's still essential to target people with the right ads at the right moment. Conserving budget is about making sure that ads are visible.

At RTB House, one of our biggest wins has been scaling up branding ads without minimizing their impact. We delivered around 16 times more viewable branding ad impressions in 2021 compared to 2020, while actually increasing the viewability by 3 pp. I think this is the result that all brands should be aiming for right now—scaling up ad campaigns to stay relevant in an ultracompetitive market, but keeping budget efficiency at the best possible level, making sure every single ad has an impact.

Sports expert comment

## The Competitive Edge

chapter 11

Sports brands and the data advantage



Expert interview with Edo Povel, Country Manager Benelux, RTB House

## Sports fashion is grounded in performance. How can brands in this domain use data to improve their own business performance and help their customers push theirs?

Sports are obsessed with stats and precision measurement. Sprint times are measured to the hundredth of a second; Formula One lap times go down to the thousandth. In football, we now have stats for every player's pass completion, goal contributions, distance run per game, and everything else imaginable...And it's not just professionals. Amateur athletes and casual fitness enthusiasts track every kilometer run, average times, altitude, and carbs burnt.

It makes sense that sports brands are leaning into the data that people generate. The first valuable source of data is online browsing information. However, sports brands are starting to look into ways to leverage other information that users are willing to share if they believe it will improve their performance. Wearables and sports apps should become a strong link between brands and individual users.

## So, how can the data from wearables generate more accurate product recommendations?

When people share their performance data, companies can make more tailored recommendations. For example, if the app shows that the runner spends 70% of their time in the forest, then recommendations for trail running shoes instead of sleek-soled road shoes are a win-win. The customer gets a better product and improved performance...and is less likely to twist his or her ankle. And the brand gets to start a long-term relationship with that user, which is vitally important as the online landscape becomes more competitive.

### But, is there any kind of trade-off with user privacy?

Brands need to respect user privacy and only use data that is shared with consent. However, there is so much of this freely given data that there is really no need to cross any boundaries. In fact, brands can look for new and engaging ways to gain more data from willing customers. Interactive ads are one such opportunity to create personalized recommendations through voluntarily given data. Let's say that the brand has identified a potential customer as a keen runner. An interactive banner might ask a question like "What part of you gets coldest while running?" and have ears, fingers, or calves as the answers. Depending on what the user clicks, they might be shown a headband, gloves, or knee-high sports socks.

## How do you see the future of personalized marketing in sports fashion?

So, as we move into a cross-connected and highly interactive future, we don't just think about data as zeros and ones. It is whatever customers are willing to tell us about themselves, which we can then use to improve their experiences. Sports brands actually have a distinct advantage here, as people are already generating so many touchpoints and are looking for incremental gains. They will share data if they think it gives them that advantage...even if it is just a hundredth of a second.



The pandemic brought an increased awareness of health and fitness.

It galvanized us to take more of an active role in our health and well-being, which, in many cases, manifested as increasing the amount we exercised and a wish to carefully monitor our progress.





The accelerating technology of wearable devices offered this very thing—the precise tracking and monitoring of health and performance with a rising list of metrics, such as steps taken, calories burnt, workout types, heart rate, BMI, and sleeping patterns. So, it's perhaps no surprise that the global wearable market was valued at 62.11 B USD in 2021, and is forecast to be worth 145.49 B USD by 2027.

"Wearable" is a term used for any smart device worn on the body. A number of factors are feeding the rapid growth in this market: a steadily rising demand for health and fitness, growing urbanization, rising disposable income, improvements in fast connectivity through 5G upgrades, enhanced devices, and a growing population of internet users.

Wearables serve a widening range of fields alongside health and fitness; for example, education, entertainment, and banking. They include fitness trackers like Fitbit, Bluetooth headsets such as Airpods, VR headsets and glasses, and of course, smartwatches. But it was smartwatches that dominated the market in 2021

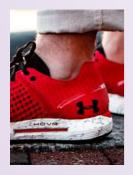




with a share of around 43% in the US, and it's easy to explain this dominance— they provided the ability to help monitor health parameters at a time when many people were most concerned with their personal fitness

But even before the pandemic, the market was up-trending; as early as 2013, US sports brand Under Armour bought fitness app MapMyFitness for 150 M USD, and in 2015 Apple launched the AppleWatch, which became the best-selling wearable device on the market. Other sports fashion brands also then jumped into the game by acquiring burgeoning fitness apps for significant figures in a buyout frenzy.

## The great fitness app buyout frenzy



2013

## 150 MUSD

Under Armour acquires
MapMyFitness for 150 M USD



2015

## 85 MUSD 475 MUSD

Under Armour buys Endomondo for 85 M USD and MyFitnessPal for 475 M USD

## 239 M USD

Adidas acquires Runtastic for 239 M USD

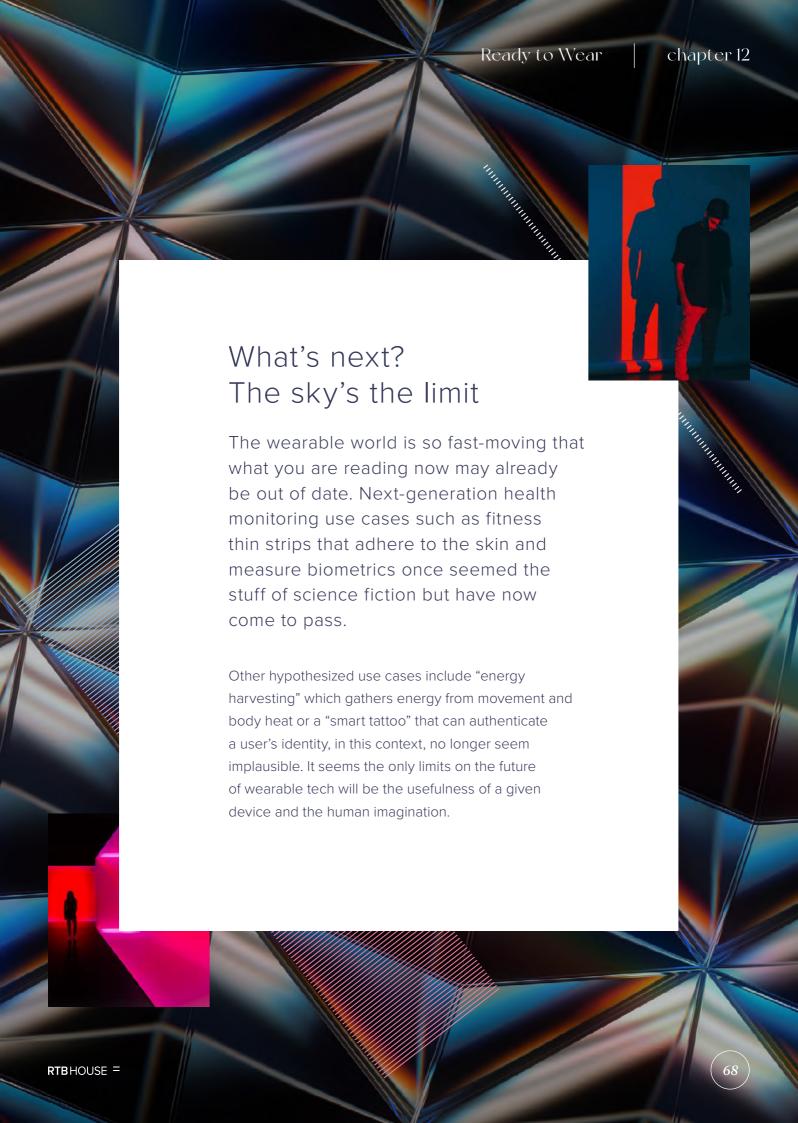


2016

## 85 MUSD

Asics buys Runkeeper for 85 M USD

The price tags were significant, but for good reason. Acquisitions like these allow brands to establish and nurture ongoing relationships with app users, helping them to improve their fitness and performance. This thereby drives loyalty and a deeper connection with a brand. It also provides a brand with more consensual user data, which can be used to personalize product offers that will enhance the fitness regime and health of customers.



### The market at a glance

2021

35%

North America accounted for the lion's share of the wearable market with around 35%

2021

2.1 B USD

Google acquired the well-known brand Fitbit

2022 -2027 13.85%

The global wearable market is expected to grow at a CAGR of 13.85% over the forecasted period of 2022-2027

5 players  $60^{\circ}/_{\circ}$ 

The market is dominated by five main players, accounting for a 60% plus share of the market

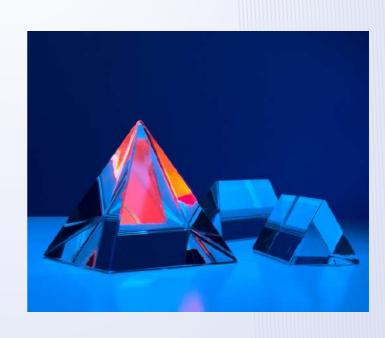




# 6 Tips for Better Fashion Ad Campaigns









## Limber up, be flexible, and think on your toes

The dynamic nature of the fashion business dictates agility. It's an environment in which a kind of accelerated Darwinism selects only the fittest and most flexible brands. Fashion organizations need agility from top to toe, especially in ad campaigns. For this, you need fully transparent campaign reporting and 24/7 goals monitoring. This way your campaign's goals and stats can be monitored around the clock.

With such flexibility, you can calibrate campaigns as they unfold—scale them up or down quickly in response to holiday or sales periods, pivot them due to unforeseen circumstances, or fine-tune them for optimal efficiency. Pick a partner who provides dedicated support, knows your business well, and can help you build bespoke and highly agile campaigns.

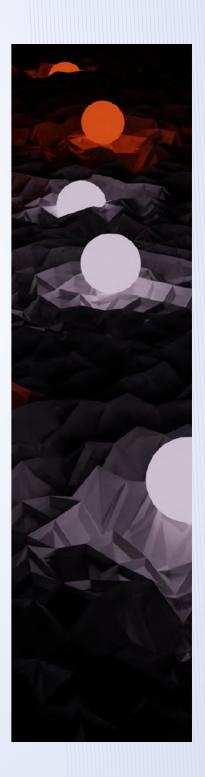
## Get granular—audience segmentation

As society changes and becomes more diverse, so do personas. New personas are emerging all the time—those centered on sustainability, those who want to see a more equitable world, and those interested in genderless fashion—and new personas will continue to emerge going forward.

In this context the ability to create many different customer segments that are appropriate for your business is key.

Advanced segmentation with bespoke shopper journey scenarios will help you achieve your business and marketing goals and drive efficiencies across your entire sales funnel.

Again choosing the right partner with the most advanced and flexible technology will allow you to reach the goals that are unique to your marketing strategy and deliver tailored creatives to each segment—for products that a given user actually wants. By bidding differently for placements for specific segments, you can increase volume while driving ROAS.





### Personalize to perform

By combining good data with the most advanced technology (Deep Learning in our case), you can lift your performance metrics, boost sales, and increase your Average Order Value (AOV). A correctly calibrated ad served at the right time and in the right placement creates an impression beyond its screen life; accurate recommendations simultaneously increase the likelihood of engagement and conversions and bolster the perception of a brand, which, in turn, boost loyalty and Customer Lifetime Value (CLV).

Al, and in particular Deep Learning, when applied to e-commerce, increases efficiency by up to 41%. It is constantly learning and increasing its accuracy in the prediction of purchases a shopper is most likely to make. This makes Al especially well-suited to identifying quickly changing personas in fashion as it's capable of building behavioral profiles in real time and adjusting an ad's content based on a given shopper's responses to previous interactions with an ad. It more accurately predicts purchase intentions by analyzing not just basic data such as products and product categories visited; it also brings into the mix the visit time on products and the sequence of visited subpages in an online store and customizes content for that specific person, time, and place.

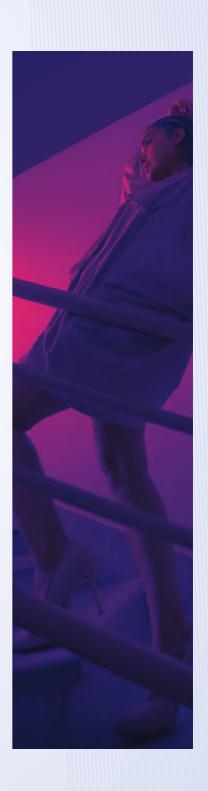
### Set creatives to stun

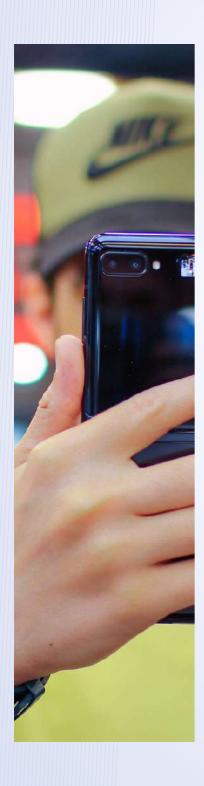
In fashion e-commerce, look and feel is as important for creatives as it is for the products themselves. Consumers shop with their eyes and presentation is everything. Only attractive, engaging, and high-quality ads can create the perception of an attractive, high-quality brand.

As we're spending more and more time online, our attention spans have decreased to a point that many of us have developed a kind of ad blindness—it takes a stunning ad to catch our attention.

For those users primarily in the discovery shopping mode (in which impulse buying is most prevalent), quality and arresting creatives can make all the difference.

Make sure you choose a partner who values the power of personalization in ads but fully grasps the importance of great-looking, best-in-class creatives that fully adhere to your brand book.





# Bolster omnichannel by exploring innovation

The majority of fashion consumers pass through multiple channels before deciding to make a purchase, with at least four points of contact. As omnichannel accounts for around 40% of purchases in the sector, there is significant motivation for fashion brands to seamlessly integrate CRM data with campaigns, combine the strengths of different channels, and provide a coherent shopper experience. The online user experience should mirror the kind of quality, personal service that shoppers expect to receive in person when they are in a store.

But there's no denying that the marketing strategy of fashion brands is now tilting towards social commerce and in-app. Gen Z has now replaced millennials as the primary target market of most fashion brands. This generation grew up around smartphones and advanced digital technology, and an estimated 53% of this group shop online via smartphone, in fact by 2025, it's predicted that 10% of all retail sales in the US will be generated via mobilecommerce, with a lift of almost 7% since 2018.

Reaching shoppers wherever they are no longer just means across devices—smartphones, laptops, tablets, Smart TVs, or game consoles—social platforms, and physical geographies; it also means being alert to the potential of the metaverse and NFTs. Innovations are sure to emerge that the next generation of shoppers will embrace in an even faster-moving future.

# Turn up the heat of promotional periods

There are many techniques that can help raise the temperature of your hot promo periods.

Reacquisition campaigns can target shoppers that have stalled and leverage historical data in order to provide accurate product recommendations. There are also reinstall campaigns that seek to persuade users that have installed your app with incentives to return to the fold, as well as abandoned cart campaigns that significantly reduce the number of abandoned transactions.

Again, using the best technology (underpinned by AI) with advanced analytics and adaptive bidding can enhance relevancy and manifest higher CTR and conversion rates. Highly customizable and consistently high-quality creatives also have a big role to play.

By featuring certain categories or a combination of them, you can increase revenue and move backfill stock with more effective cross-selling and up-selling recommendations. And let's not forget how key the periods leading up to promotion periods are—teaser campaigns help to build awareness and anticipation by letting consumers know of upcoming collections, offers, and discounts.



# A Step Ahead

chapter 14

Ads that are ready for the cookieless world



Expert comment from Mateusz Ruminski, Project Manager, RTB House



## Ads that are ready for the cookieless world

For a quarter of a century, third-party cookies have tracked cross-site behavior allowing marketers to personalize offers to the tastes of a given user. This has clearly brought significant marketing benefits, however, Google has decided that these come with too great a compromise on user privacy, and the phasing out of cookies on Chrome is currently expected to happen by 2024.

Fashion in particular has reaped the advantages of programmatic advertising across the entire funnel and research shows that at least 80% of all marketers currently employ cookies. Cookieless is going to make personalizing advertising content much more complex for all brands. This will necessitate working with partners who have the expertise and technological capabilities (such as Deep Learning) needed to analyze the vast amount of complex data points to fully support the multiple techniques that are set to replace cookies.



The cookieless future will differ from what we know. There are many data sources that will no longer be available. However, there are plenty of new ones that will expand the possibilities of personalizing advertising messages.

For example, in today's world, many publishers are reluctant to share their data with external companies, because they could tie it with third-party cookies and leverage it for their purposes without the publisher benefiting from it. In the future, publishers can share such data without cross-site identifiers tied to the user. It is a win-win scenario, as the publisher can monetize the website more efficiently, and the advertiser can target users, who, for example, tend to read fashion-related articles more frequently than others.

Importantly, this could be done at scale, provided that a standardized methodology is applied. One example of such methodology is the Seller-Defined Audiences concept developed by the IAB Tech Lab. It allows publishers to share information about the user's segment in a dedicated field in the bid request. Simply speaking, the publisher has a dedicated place to tell the buyer, "This user fancies luxury t-shirts."

On the other hand, it doesn't mean that classical use cases, like remarketing, will suddenly disappear. Quite the opposite, there are new technologies in the making, directly supporting this use case, under the Privacy Sandbox initiative. This means that instead of following each individual user across the internet, on the advertiser website they can be added by the ad tech vendor to groups large enough to prevent reidentification. Later on, when the user visits the publisher's website, the ad tech vendor sees "this user is a part of blue shirts fans interest group" without knowing who the user is specifically.

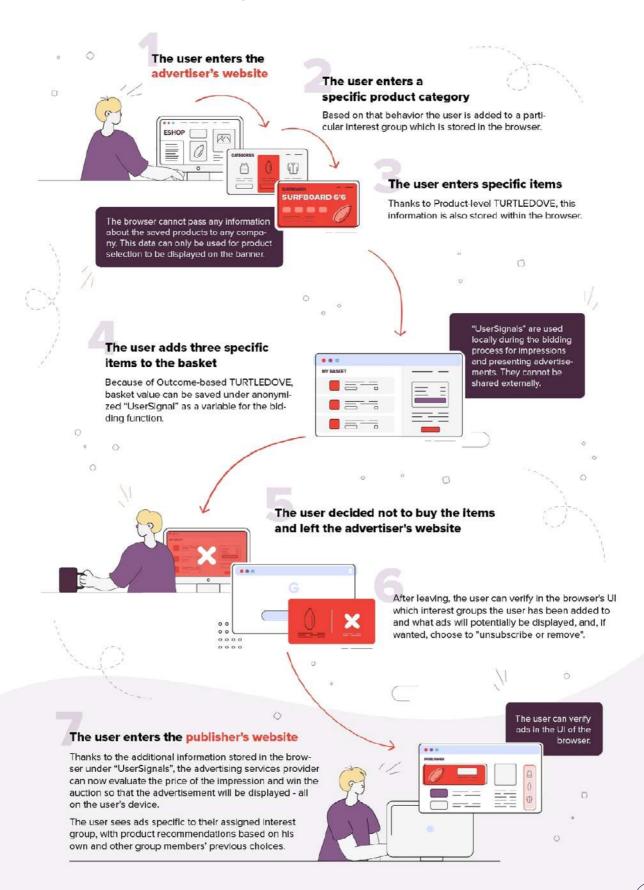
It doesn't mean that personalization will be done on a group level. RTB House has developed two concepts within FLEDGE that allow it to display personalized product recommendations on ads, as well as precisely evaluate the bid price. How is it possible? See the infographic below for more details.

It's clear that the goalposts are about to be moved, but this doesn't mean that fashion brands can't keep scoring high points. But it is imperative that brands get ready for cookieless, to seek partners that are fully capable of accessing and interpreting anonymized data to serve relevant ads in the new paradigm.



Mateusz Ruminski Project Manager, RTB House

### After Cookies: What Will The Retargeting Journey Look Like For Users





chapter 15



At RTB House, we celebrate online commerce and are continually looking for ways to supercharge conversion rates and revenues for fashion brands.

We run hundreds of active campaigns for all types of businesses—from marketplaces to multi-brand stores, fashion and footwear, apparel and accessories, luxury and lingerie, and suits and sports.

Whatever your range, we've got you covered as either a sole advertising partner or as part of a multiple retargeting scenario.



MINTO.

#### Miinto

A leading European online marktplace.





RTB House raised revenue by 200% and ROAS by 18% for a renowned European marketplace that sells over 5000 brands in over a dozen countries.

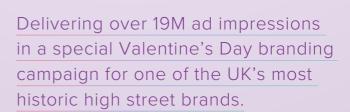
— Read more



#### Debenhams

A UK clothing retail champion since 1778, relaunched in 2021.





— See the full story



#### Neiman Marcus

Iconic US-based luxury retailer shifting to omnichannel sales.





Neiman Marcus beat the iROAS goals for its holiday campaign by 65% with help from RTB House, with 20% higher conversion and a 26% increase in incremental sales revenue.

See the full story



#### Steve Madden

A global footwear brand built up over three decades and famed for its designs.





Find out more

# About Us

chapter 16

#### RTB House

RTB House is a global company that provides stateof-the-art marketing technologies for top brands and agencies worldwide. Its proprietary ad buying engine is the first in the world to be powered entirely by Deep Learning algorithms, enabling advertisers to generate outstanding results and reach their goals at every stage of the funnel.

Founded in 2012, the RTB House team comprises 1000+ specialists in over 30 locations around the globe. It serves more than 3,000 campaigns for clients across the EMEA, APAC, and Americas regions.

After successfully deploying Deep Learning into 100 percent of its algorithms in 2018, RTB House has continued its research in the field of Al. The Al Marketing Lab and Creative Lab were set up as new divisions of the company focused on inventing and advancing MarTech products. The company's Al-based product offering includes retargeting solutions and branding campaigns with ultra-effective Video Ads.



Contact / Credits

# Let's Talk

chapter 17

## Speak to us about

- Campaigns for online fashion brands
- Omnichannel and hybrid sales models
- The advantages of Deep Learning
- Improving performance campaigns
- Branding and visibility campaigns
- Multiple retargeting strategies
- Video Ads, Social Banners, Chat Banners
- Adapting to the cookieless future

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