

# How Mr Price used bloggers to produce branded content to build brand equity

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A dynamic shift has taken place in the advertising and marketing landscape. With the growing importance of the internet, marketing communication practices have come to a crossroads - both in the way media is consumed, and how it is created. Brands are now pursuing solutions that go beyond traditional mass communication practices in order to differentiate themselves in increasingly competitive markets. One that has gained considerable attention of late is content marketing, as evidenced by the 69 percent increase in use of the term over the past four years (Google Trends, 2016).

The internet has also changed the consumer's buyer journey as is seen in the fashion industry. These days, consumers spontaneously and powerfully connect with brands instantly. They are also faced with an overload of marketing stimuli. They have become savvy, rejecting the barrage of traditional mass communication messages. Despite this overload however they remain hungry for information. The good news is that fashion brands can build relationships with consumers by being present within the consumer journey and guiding them through the clutter with relevant content.

## CONTENT MARKETING AND BRAND EQUITY DEFINED

Contrary to traditional push-strategy advertising, content marketing uses a pull strategy approach by creating and distributing relevant and consistent content to attract and retain audiences

to drive them to action (Content Marketing Institute, 2016). Content messages aid in brand recognition, trust, authority, credibility and authenticity.

Kotler & Keller's (2009) definition of brand equity as added value bestowed on products and services is also reflected in the way consumers think, feel and act with respect to the brand, as well as its prices, market share and profitability. In this article, we consider some vital components to customer-based brand equity. Brand equity arises from differences in consumers' responses, and consumers reflect these differences in their perceptions, preferences and behaviour related to all aspects of the marketing of a brand.

These components can be found within any of the five stages of Kotler & Keller's BrandZ brand equity model. The interdependent five stages (2009) namely Presence, Relevance, Performance, Advantage and leading to the final stage of Bonding, illustrates a brand's marketing activities path towards building equity. Using content marketing can support brand objectives like awareness, customer attraction and retention, generating leads, as well as building relationships and loyalty. For successfully building brand equity with content marketing however, one needs to show brand benefits with informative and entertaining content.

## CONTENT MARKETING THROUGH THE USE OF FASHION BLOGGERS

The fashion world is a notoriously fast-paced industry. Due to globalisation and the rise of the internet, new trends launch faster than ever before. Within this industry fashion bloggers have become essential. They are indirect advertisers who circulate trends through the internet, social networks and blogs, triggering purchase intention while relying heavily upon immediate visual stimulation.

Content marketing in fashion brand



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practices is obviously important, but studies show that brands are facing various adoption challenges. A survey by Curata (2011) found that 73.6 percent of marketers report their biggest challenge being to produce original content. As a solution, 48 percent of these marketers are turning to content curation to publish on their blogs, websites and social media channels. Curated content is the process of tailoring existing content from a variety of other sources to fit their own audience. As such, bloggers and social feeds become really important in this sphere. It enables brands to constantly communicate with their audience, and it boosts visibility and reach.

## Lucky Pony

My name is Angie Batis Durrant. I live in Johannesburg, South Africa. I'm a mom to Nina James Durrant, my beautiful baby girl.

I own a diner joint called Mr Big Stuff in Braamfontein. I co-own Good Luck Club number 2. I used to own a coffee/art space/cake shop called Wolves, a noodle/dim sum bar called The Good Luck Club and a coffee roastery called Father.

I run an online content developing company called Golden with my business partner Anna-Belle. I work as a freelance art director and photographer. My Shane set this blog up for me, he is one of the nicest things that I have in my life. I hope you enjoy my posts. Bye bye.

Mr Price Blogger: Lucky Pony



## HOW CONTENT MARKETING CAN BE USED TO FACILITATE BRAND EQUITY

The Local brand Mr Price is an old hand at curated content marketing. In 2015 the brand approached local bloggers to create content for their new denim range. The content was then posted on the Mr Price Facebook page with the hashtag #MRPdenim. As such the brand did not create new content but rather shared existing content created by the bloggers.

The researcher wanted to identify the sentiment around the content, while also looking at the role the blogger content played in building brand equity. This was done through analysing differential responses by consumers reflected in perceptions, preferences, and behaviour related to the blogger content.

The differential responses analysis of consumers to the blogger content gave an indication of consumer emotions and the tone of conversations. This in turn, became useful to track positive or negative impact on the brand. In Mr Price's case, the sentiment was overall positive and it had successfully moved the audience through the lower stages of the BrandZ model. Posts from consumers querying the price, size and store availability of products showcased attested to the positive reception. What is more, words such as 'like' indicated a moderate effect towards the product while words of 'love' and 'in-love' showed an intense desire for the product. The content not only attracted an audience but there was also some real engagement taking place between the consumer and the brand.

The activities of the bloggers also created secondary brand associations, brand and product familiarity as well as product and category awareness which form part of the foundation upon which brand equity is built. The majority of consumers were also found

to be within the second phase of the model namely relevance, showing an opportunity for the strengthening of relationships through an always-on content strategy that will continue to engage this audience throughout their lifetime.

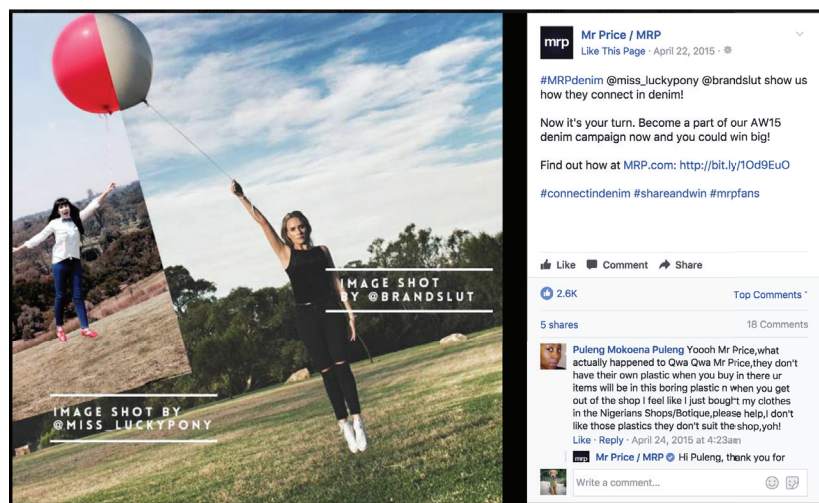
## AN ALWAYS-ON COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Within an increasingly competitive market, it is crucial that a fashion brand maintains and builds its brand equity. Therefore, a brand needs to bond with their consumers by moving them through each phase of the BrandZ model. The resultant loyalty will enable the brand to maintain its market share despite competition from new and established competitors. By facilitating the right knowledge via bloggers, successful brands with high equity will therefore generate positive consumer predispositions based on the products and marketing messages which they communicate making their brands more meaningful, differentiated and salient than their competitors.

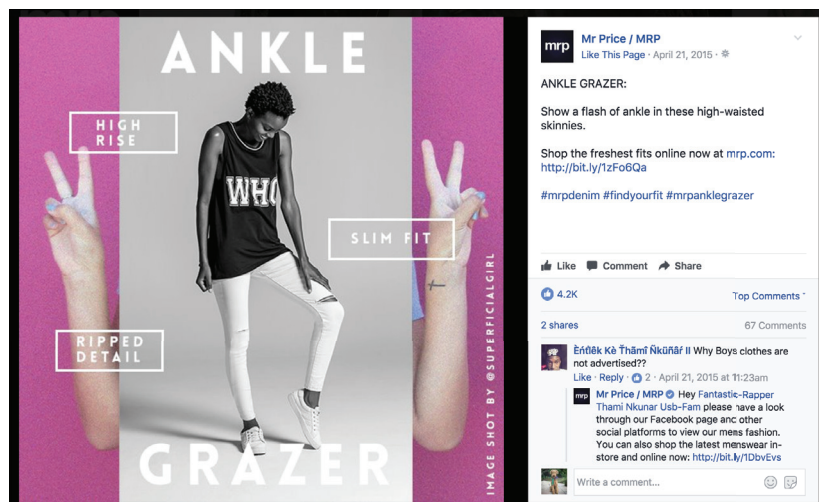
Content marketing should as such not be viewed as a once-off tactic but should rather form part of a fashion brand's always-on communication strategy. In doing this the content published whether owned or curated will continue to engage consumers throughout their life cycle and keep the brand top of mind, creating a passionate subscriber to the brand as opposed to creating just a customer.

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Bloggers: Lucky Pony and Brand Slut



Blogger: Superficial Girls