

Coco Chanel's Design Management Method and Fashion Revolution

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Abstract. Taking biography as the main research material, this paper systematically explores a real Coco Chanel from the aspects of her life, spirituality and changes of the times. The paper analyses the "Queen of Fashion's" pursuit of simplicity and comfort, the clothes she designed, as well as the creation of mysterious and distinctive perfumes and magnificent jewellery. The tragedy of her childhood did not stop Chanel from becoming a pioneer of world fashion. Even with her emotional ups and downs, she still broke through in the fashion, art and even business worlds with her strong and independent attitude, and also influenced a generation of women to strive for freedom and independence.

Keywords: Coco Chanel; women's design; design management.

1. Introduction

Fashion designer Coco Chanel (1883-1971) was a twentieth-century businesswoman whose products included fashion, perfume, and jewelry. Born into a financially troubled household, Coco Chanel spent her early years in an orphanage. But this difficult start prevented her from becoming conceited and lost in her own pain, and it also greatly influenced her will to challenge the accepted standards. She quickly transformed herself from a milliner to a trend-setter, and eventually all the upper-class people held her up as a fashion benchmark. The company's emphasis on comfort, usefulness, and style in its fashion philosophy challenged the then-dominant ideas about women's clothes. These conventional wisdoms usually gave form-fitting fashions and elaborate ornamentation top priority. One may call her a modern women's fashion icon. Her creations dismantled many barriers, and her impact on aesthetics and style permanently altered the globe.

Coco Chanel was also a trailblazer in the cultural revolution. Chanel is attributed with starting her career in the fashion sector at the start of the 1900s when she founded her own headgear company in Paris. Rich ladies all across the world quickly became aware of Chanel's designs because of their understated elegance and simplicity. She not only changed the course and mainstream of fashion during the 20th century, but her inventions and works also influenced the cultural perceptions of some people. She went through a lot of romance, mystery, and scandal throughout her life [1]. Her inventiveness and commercial acumen helped her to overcome her lowly origins and become a prosperous businesswoman.

This paper will analyse in-depth a range of creative works that Coco Chanel invented. Among these inventions are small black dresses and outfits for women. Finding out how much these works changed how modern women saw themselves and where they fit in society is the aim of this investigation. Chanel's commercial approach with respect to the premium market is a second crucial element of this research. The study focuses, more precisely, on Chanel's deliberate use of scents, most notably Chanel No. 5, to increase the brand's reputation worldwide. Both the way that modern fashion designers have been motivated by Chanel's legacy to preserve innovation within the industry and the continued profitability of her brand after her death will be examined. In sum, this paper attempts to offer a critique of how Chanel's designs transformed the way women dress for daily life, her brand design management concept and marketing approach and how the brand's global expansion has led to a lasting impact in the global fashion business.

2. Early Years and the Creation of Personal Brand

Born in a Saumur, France, poorhouse on August 19, 1883, Gabrielle Bonheur Chanel. Her father was a wandering salesman and her mother was a laundress. Between the cities of Paris and Toulouse, in the central south-west region of France, is the little railway town of Brive-la-Gaillarde, home of the Chanel family. Chanel said in later interviews that she felt abandoned by her father, who probably hated his wife and kids for forcing him into poverty [1].

Chanel tried so hard to hide this part of her early years throughout her teens. She also said she believed her father did not love her. His wife for forcing him into a life he had been able to effectively escape before. When Chanel was eleven years old, her mother died, and her father gave the kids to a poor peasant family to look after. Chanel's father didn't come back to see them until she was of majority.

In a patriarchal, male-dominated social system, women with no economic autonomy have always been in a passive and subordinate position. Chanel was not satisfied with this life, she was more looking for an opportunity to change her destiny and start her own business. In 1910, Gabrielle Chanel opened a women's hat shop in Paris, France. With excellent sewing skills and simple and durable design style, the hat shop's business is booming, and in 1915, she opened two more "Chanel boutiques", officially entered the Paris fashion industry and founded her own personal fashion brand "Chanel". In the French fashion industry is dominated by male designers in that era, 1920's French women's clothing with the emergence of Chanel has undergone a groundbreaking change and awakened women's independent consciousness of dress, by the fashionable women at that time as a philosophy of dress. This period is also known as the "Chanel era" in the history of Western clothing.

It is undeniable that Chanel's fashion sense and the designs she would create later on were closely influenced by her early years. As to an essay by Hamish Bowles for Vogue published in 2005, Chanel was greatly influenced by her early years spent in a convent. "The five-star pattern found on the convent's stone mosaic floors inspired many of Chanel's jewellery designs. The experience of being a member of a mediaeval convent was so ingrained in Chanel's mind that it had an effect on her design aesthetic. This was reflected in the product packaging, which mirrored the stark white walls of the convent with their dark black trim, and in the elegant interlocking Cs of the Chanel logo, which were inspired by the stained-glass windows of the abbey. Aubazine abbey's mosaic patterning is also evocative of Chanel's elaborately beaded and embellished evening gowns" [2].

3. Chanel's Design Philosophy

The first Chanel hat store established in Paris in 1909. A second store opened in 1910 at 21 rue Cambon in Paris, which swiftly expanded to include apparel design [3]. Chanel's love of sports and the outdoors was also reflected in her clothes designs, which favoured minimalism. She began by purchasing straw hats from a department store and accessorising them with simple ribbons, a look that quickly became popular among Parisian ladies [1]. By these early triumphs, Chanel changed the course of fashion history indelibly and not simply made a name for herself in the business. This change was motivated by her unique design philosophy and desire of female freedom.

With Chanel's ascent to fame, the corseted feminine form was formally eliminated, as Harper's Bazaar declared in 1915, "the woman who hasn't at least one Chanel is hopelessly out of fashion" [4]. Her impact caused the "aigrettes, long hair, and hobble skirts" that previous generations' women had to wear to go out of style very fast. Her sense of design totally changed the post-World War I stylish woman. Chanel was renowned for her look of young ease, unrestricted physicality, and unbridled confidence in her athletic prowess [3].

First unveiled to the public in 1923, the Chanel tweed suit was made with comfort and utility in mind. It was built up with a shirt and jacket lining of jersey or silk with a skirt and jacket of soft, light wool or mohair tweed. Chanel did not, as was typical in modern style, utilise shoulder padding or stiffen the fabric. She left the coats plain, cutting them on the straight grain and without adding bust darts. Mobility was thus made easy and quick to achieve. She fashioned the neckline to leave the neck open

and comfortable, and she included useful pockets. A grosgrain stay wrapped about the waist of the skirt replaced a belt. Wearing the skirt was now more comfortable [3]. Most crucially, fitting needed meticulous attention to detail. The customer stood with their arms folded at shoulder height throughout the measurement. Chanel wanted to make sure that women can wear her suit to many different activities in their daily lives without unintentionally revealing areas of their bodies they wanted to keep hidden [5]. Every single customer would have their outfit adjusted several times until it was comfortable enough for them to go about their everyday business without any problems.

In 1926, Chanel debuted the "little black dress," which became an instant sensation and a mainstay of the fashion industry very fast. The much discussed idea of the little black dress is one of Chanel's contributions to the fashion business. This evening gown broke the moulds of the fashionable evening gowns at the time with its simplicity, excellent cut, and colour. Both beautiful and useful, it was an alternative. The versatility and simplicity of wear of dresses have made them a necessary item in women's wardrobes. One of the trailblazing actresses to wear Chanel's tiny black velvet dress with a white collar in 1912–1913 was Suzanne Orlandi. Chanel promised to dress all ladies in black as she was watching an opera crowd in 1920. Chanel was seen in 1926 wearing a long-sleeved tiny black frock that the American version of Vogue called "garçonne" [6]. Vogue projects that stylish women will choose this understated yet stunning style as their uniform of choice. Conversely, this minimalist style drew harsh criticism from the male media. "No more bosom, no more stomach, no more rump... Feminine fashion of this moment in the 20th century will be baptised lop off everything," they lamented [9]. This was a new revolution for women, brought about by the aesthetic that was popular among men. "I imposed black; it's still going strong today, for black wipes out everything else around," declared the fashion brand Chanel [6].

Unlike the ornate, corseted attire of the day, the Little Black Dress is a simple, knee-length style devoid of extraneous embellishments. Because of its simplicity, the dress could be worn to a range of formal occasions and represented a shift in women's fashion towards more practical and comfortable pieces that represented women's evolving social status. Chanel stressed wearability and style over the so-called traditional rules of women's clothing. This can have had a part in the flowing, draped form of the garment. The Little Black Dress opens women from all social classes to high fashion design by removing the constraints imposed on them by traditional apparel and becoming an item that represents a new style in a woman's wardrobe. Other than that, the Little Black Dress's fabled reputation in popular culture has cemented its role as a timeless fashion icon, lauded for its sophisticated beauty and practicality. It captures the independent, driven by her career, stylish modern lady who is still having an influence on the fashion business, symbolising a turning point in society and fashion. Maybe the Chanel bit was a kind of cry for female independence in the male-dominated era of the time.

Coco Chanel's little black dress is cleverly designed and sold. Chanel has first and foremost expertly positioned the little black dress as a symbol of elegance, simplicity, and modernity. Chanel is therefore selling a way of life and attitude as much as a line of clothes. The actual garment of the modest black dress is not as important as the desire of beauty and self-expression. The way this brand is presented attracts modern women who respect independence and style. They are more of a scream for women's liberation and the search of the new era ladies than a means of enhancing their sense of style. Chanel also knows how to use advertising and celebrity endorsements to promote the little black dress. When the little black dress was first debuted, Chanel promoted it using the mainstream media of the day, especially fashion magazines and newspapers. Chanel increased the allure and practicality of its offering by showcasing in the media the versatility of the little black dress. This approach enhanced public opinion of the brand and increased knowledge of the little black dress. Chanel also focused on promoting the little black dress through celebrities, who wore it at upscale fashion shows and social gatherings. In *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, Audrey Hepburn, for example, wore a Givenchy little black dress. Its influence and style, albeit not being Chanel's, fit the little black dress brand image and so indirectly promoted the concept of the little black dress. The fashion elite prefers the tiny black dress because Chanel also organises or attends expensive social events on a regular basis. It is

remarkable that Chanel never stopped innovating with the little black dress; she has continuously released new styles to satisfy her clients' ever changing preferences and fashion trends. Sales and brand interest rise when the little black dress is kept contemporary and stylish by this continuous product refreshment strategy.

Apart from her "little black dress" and "Chanel tweed suit," Coco Chanel's design philosophy also entails a major change in the concept of gender, i.e., the inclusion of male elements into women's clothing. This deliberate move totally altered the way women dressed, and Chanel's creations unmistakably included male elements. Notable was her pant suit advertising. The early 1900s saw pants as still being socially unacceptable. Chanel did, however, not simply dress in pantsuits in public; she also incorporated them into her collections. She designed spacious, comfortable pantsuits that gave women confidence and a new lease on life so they could move freely in many social situations without being constrained by traditional skirts. Chanel also popularised the navy broad collar shirt for women. Chanel's designs were also much influenced by her time spent on the Venetian island of Lido. Originally a staple of male clothing, these shirts grew into a stylish and practical addition to women's wardrobes. Her idea for her designs came from the local wide-bottomed jeans and cork-soled sandals. Once they became a worldwide fashion trend, these patterns represented a more significant shift in society as women began to wear these usually masculine garments in more official and public settings [1].

From a small Parisian hat company, the Chanel brand began to expand as menswear components and Coco Chanel's design concepts became more and more popular. With her vision and business acumen, Chanel quickly transformed the little headgear store on Rue Cambon in Paris into a full-service women's clothing and accessory store. This early success spurred Chanel to continue to build the company. After the First World War, Chanel continued to update women's fashion by producing new designs in the 1920s, notably her ground-breaking "little black dress" and lightweight jersey sportswear, which gained her designs enormous appeal and recognition both in France and abroad [1].

Chanel expanded commercially beyond clothing; her perfume business innovations were just as revolutionary. Working with Russian chemist Ernest Beaux, who had immigrated to the US, Chanel produced a perfume in 1921 that resulted in the ground-breaking new scent known as Chanel No. 5 [3].

When Chanel first unveiled Chanel No. 5, the fragrance business experienced a dramatic upheaval. The scent, a ground-breaking creation by French-Russian scientist and perfumer Ernest Beaux, transformed the perfume industry. The bottle design, which was part of the product's branding, highlighted elegance and simplicity in stark contrast to the elaborate crystal fragrance bottles of the day. Chanel set out to produce a scent that would capture the essence of 1920s modern femininity. Single garden flower essences for "respectable women" and heavier, indolic odours linked with more provocative figures were the two categories into which the conventional fragrances of the day fell [1]. Chanel spent years living in the strict and regulated Aubazine convent, hence the number five had great significance for her. She wanted a scent that would appeal to the free spirit of the flapper, breaking away from these conventional categories. Chanel chose the fifth vial, attributing to it qualities of good fortune and significance, because it was considered as a symbol of purity and mysticism when she was given sample odours numbered from 1 to 24 [7].

Following a private advertising event in Grasse, where she shocks and thrills affluent dinner guests by spraying them with the smell and introducing them to it, Coco Chanel launches her imaginative marketing plan for Chanel No. 5. As Chanel No. 5 gained popularity in 1924, the Chanel Perfume Company produced, marketed, and distributed the product in New York, marking its first major new market. Chanel launched a cautious first marketing campaign in December 1924 when a clandestine advertisement in the New York Times showed off every scent that was offered at the posh Bonwit Teller department store. Chanel No. 5 became a sought-after souvenir for troops during World War II when company leaders made the audacious decision to distribute the fragrance to military exchange

stations. Then Chanel audaciously unveiled the "pocket flacon" to boost middle class perfume sales by opening up scent to a wider range of people. Chanel gained notoriety following World War II for preserving her public persona by providing American troops with free Chanel No. 5 perfume at her Rue Cambon store [7]. Chanel was facing possible arrest for her wartime efforts. Through deft advertising and celebrity endorsements—such as the iconic moment when Marilyn Monroe endorsed the fragrance, declaring that she wore nothing but Chanel No. 5 while sleeping—Chanel No. 5 has changed with the times and maintained its iconic status while drawing in a new generation of consumers.

Coco Chanel was certainly a visionary in the area of fashion as well as a master strategic visionary in the world of business, as shown by the debut of Chanel No. 5 and its slow ascension to renown and then its continuous success. Her extraordinary skill at fusing mainstream appeal with exclusivity and her keen awareness of market dynamics allowed her to create more than just a fragrance. Chanel is a creative businesswoman and the forerunner of modern brand management strategies, as seen by her choice to separate her perfume business from her design business. When the Second World War was reshaping the landscape of luxury marketing, Chanel skilfully turned potential obstacles into new opportunities [7]. Her creative choice to market Chanel No. 5 at military barracks exchange points not only expanded the business during the war but also cemented its standing among troops as a symbol of affection and a keepsake to take home at its end. By use of these well planned events, Coco Chanel created a mystique in addition to selling perfume. Her sharp business judgements, bold marketing decisions, and savvy negotiating strategies in the complex world of luxury products and design left a lasting influence on the company. A tribute to her brilliance, Chanel No. 5 is a smell that never goes out of style and captivates people everywhere.

Apart from its particular fragrance composition, Chanel No. 5 perfume is still highly sought after by many women today because of its cultural resonance and nostalgic emotion. Unquestionably, the Chanel No. 5 perfume smells great and comes in a beautiful bottle. Aldehydes, a component that enhances perfume layering and gives a highly unique and elegant flowery scent, were added for the first time to perfume. This scent is unique in the perfume business because of its inventiveness and complexity, which also bring a new sensory experience. Chanel sought a design to combat the expensive, fussy, overly detailed crystal scent bottles, and women of all ages like the sophisticated and sensual fragrance that is produced by mixing the typical flower notes of rose and jasmine with a base combination of sandalwood and vanilla. At the period, Lalique and Baccarat became famous for the exquisite, expensive crystal scent bottles. Her bottle would be defined as "pure transparency.... an invisible bottle". The rectangular bevelled lines of the Charvet toiletry bottles, which were favoured by her lover Arthur "Boy" Capel and packaged in a leather travel case, are generally thought to have inspired the bottle design [8]. Some claim she was envious of the whisky decanter he used and wanted to replicate it in "exquisite, expensive, delicate glass". The perfume bottle itself becomes a fashion statement due to the simplicity of the design, which also displays the richness and sophistication of the House of Chanel. Together with its clean lines and simple form, its traditional label and cap visually identify the fragrance right away and increase brand identification. But the fragrance has also held up so beautifully over time for other reasons. For Chanel No. 5 not only sells a unique scent but also memories and emotions. Many individuals equate the aroma with nostalgia—that of a mother or grandmother—and this emotional link across generations has strengthened the fragrance's marketing appeal. Naturally, Chanel's mastery of consumer psychology and its rapid action to this chance are to thank for this.

4. Reasons for the Continued Success of the Chanel Brand and its Marketing Philosophy

Over the course of its more than a century-long history, the Chanel brand has been one of the most brilliant myths in the fashion business and is still appreciated by women today. The following aspects are significantly responsible for the Chanel brand's continuous splendour: original design ideas, great craftsmanship, efficient brand management, and powerful cultural impact. Chanel was founded by Coco Chanel in 1910, and during that period, the Chanel brand has led the worldwide luxury market.

Coco Chanel's design philosophy fundamentally altered how women dressed, and her own story of climbing from a modest and lonely life to the top of the fashion business is one of the key reasons the House of Chanel has prospered for so long. Not only did Coco Chanel's life story—a rise from a destitute and lonely childhood to the top of the fashion business garner her many fans, but her design philosophy changed women's clothing. Coco Chanel's designs gave women greater independence and confidence by addressing the comfort and usefulness of the clothes in addition to its looks. Her designs were focused on the demands of women and rejected the pompous and constrictive early 20th-century women's attire. For example, she made well-known the "little black dress," which is now a wardrobe essential for women of all social classes because to its grace, simplicity, and ease of accessorising. This seemingly simple ensemble offered a new image of the woman as a modern, autonomous human being, one that symbolised power and freedom. Not only did these Chanel products accomplish a ground-breaking feat at the time, but throughout time, these elements and concepts have influenced subsequent designs and drew in a new generation of loyal customers. Because of its brand identity and the history of these innovations, which taken together have made the company a pioneer in the fashion industry, Chanel is a representation of high fashion and the independent spirit of women.

For still another reason, the Chanel brand has survived in the fashion business: it can evolve and adapt to the times without compromising its classic brand history. The business has expanded to encompass cosmetics, jewellery, eyeglasses, and many other items since Coco Chanel's day. Like its jewels and cosmetics, which are highly sought after by clients and renowned for their elegance and sophistication, every recently launched range has assiduously followed the brand's high standards and fundamental aesthetics. Karl Lagerfeld's guidance has enabled Chanel to successfully combine historic and modern elements to appeal to a younger clientele. The company is nowadays younger and more modern. Through its flagship stores and global digital marketing campaigns, Chanel has effectively engaged with consumers worldwide in addition to participating in a variety of cultural and fashion events that have enhanced the brand's cultural position in the public's mind and strengthened its relationship with high-end consumers. Chanel's constant search of innovation and thoughtful response to market changes have allowed it to become a leading global luxury brand and establish fashion trends.

Chanel's marketing strategy has been crucial in its ongoing success; it has particularly helped to improve the brand's reputation through upscale fashion shows and celebrity endorsement. Chanel not only showcases its newest designs but also fortifies its status as a high fashion icon by hosting esteemed fashion shows in important fashion centres like Paris, New York, and Tokyo. Many times, these events attract well-known figures in the fashion industry, whose attendance and social media sharing raises exposure of Chanel. Chanel also regularly arranges co-branded events, offline activities, and keeps up with the times by keeping its flagship stores in big cities all over the world. Chanel demonstrates its superior strategic acumen in terms of PR and advertising as well. The company not only hires advertising spokespersons who complement its image, including models and movie stars, but it also methodically prepares the substance of its advertisements to make sure it conveys the brand's beautiful, classic, and avant-garde character. Usually well-known personalities, these spokespeople captivate a wide range of target audiences with their grace and flare, which perfectly encapsulate Chanel's brand.

5. Conclusion

Since Chanel's death in 1971, biographies of her have proliferated. Confusion is the essence of a legend, and that's why they are so fascinating to follow. In these works, it is as if we could hear Chanel herself tell the story of her life, the excitement and the ups and downs of her life. Her simple, stylish, elegant and sophisticated clothing design concepts are already familiar to us. What is less well known is that Chanel No. 5., with its minimalist packaging, also exudes an air of freedom and independence, with comet jewellery and crystal bracelets concealing her strong attitude towards breaking down traditional class attitudes. Having grown up in an orphanage and from humble origins, she refused to settle for less and transformed women's fashion with innovative designs like the little black dress and

the Chanel suit, which combined comfort and elegance. She revolutionised the high-end product marketing and fashion business with the introduction of Chanel No. 5. Even now, the Chanel brand, which maintains timeless elegance while adapting to changing trends, embodies her. Because of her philosophy, which irrevocably changed how women dress and show themselves, Chanel is a timeless name in fashion. She not only designed clothes, design life, with their own design for their own happiness; her ideology and behaviour has also deeply influenced a generation of women. Chanel showed us a wonderful life full of legends.

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