
NESS GRAPHIC T-SHIRT
SPRZ
AFTER FINE ART
ART AIN'T ABOUT YOU
ITS ABOUT WE
SPECIAL EDITION
MoMA SPECIAL EDITION
MoMA SPECIAL EDITION
LAWRENCE WEINER
$19.90
GIFT WITH PURCHASE
LAWRENCE WEINER
$19.90

PROMOTION AND HOW IT WORKS

"It is my passionate belief that we, as a company, can use clothes to bring a little joy and happiness to people around the world, and help make the world a better place."

—Tadashi Yanai, Uniqlo Chairman, President, and CEO (Uniqlo, 2015, ¶5)

AFTER READING THIS CHAPTER, YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO:

- Discuss the importance of promotion to fashion brands and retailers.
- Identify trends affecting promotion in the 21st century.
- Recognize the differences between marketing, branding, communication, and promotion.
- Discuss the elements of the marketing mix.
- Explain the communication model.
- Understand the elements of the promotion mix.
- Discuss integrated marketing communications.

Uniqlo (YOU-nee-klo) is a Japanese casual wear designer, manufacturer, and retailer that operates globally in nearly twenty countries, including Australia, China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Uniqlo's tagline, "Made for All," reflects its universal attitude toward its global product line: to sell the same things to everyone. According to its website, "UNIQLO makes clothes that transcend all categories and social groups. Our clothes are made for all, going beyond age, gender, occupation, ethnicity, and all other ways that define people. Our clothes are simple and essential yet universal, so people can freely combine them in their own unique style" (Uniqlo, n.d., ¶2).

Uniqlo's flagship store in Ginza, Tokyo, is a twelve-story rectangle with floor-to-ceiling glass facades. The merchandise is tightly folded and the labeled stacks convey the comfort and clarity of minimalism—even though there is plenty of merchandise. Mark Johnson, executive director of global visual merchandising, says that "we have lots of paradoxes" (Kelts, 2014, ¶2). Some of the contradictions: (1) Uniqlo is very much a Japanese-built clothing retailer, but it has an American-style corporate culture. (2) It combines American-style entrepreneurship and transparency with Japanese-style customer service. (3) It carries mid-range basics, but also experiments with high and fast fashion. (4) Its promotion program is focused on branding strategies even though its logo does not appear on its product lines.

As part of its promotion program, Uniqlo has partnered with the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York City to be the exclusive corporate sponsor of its free Friday nights. In another partnership with MoMA, the retailer produces the UT Collection, seasonal lines of T-shirts and assorted casual wear featuring images from works by iconic artists such as Andy Warhol and Jackson Pollock, as well as designs by contemporary pop culture celebrities such as the singer Pharrell Williams. The merchandise is featured in the MoMA gift shop as well as down the block at Uniqlo's Manhattan store (Fig. 1.0). In another promotion first, Uniqlo also opened an in-store Starbucks in its New York City location, the first Starbucks in a specialty retail store (Kelts, 2014). Uniqlo's promotion is as global as its product line. The MoMA line is featured in the Tokyo store, encased in glass, in the center of the store. The display heightens the sense of occasion without being ostentatious.

In Japan, this "brandlessness" has been key to Uniqlo's appeal. Younger Japanese, in particular, "bristle at the designer-label fetish of their nouveau-riche elders" (Kelts, 2014, p. 3). Uniqlo represents excellent service, innovation, and smart styles, and it is changing the fashion landscape, even as it remains a blank slate of identity. Uniqlo as a global fashion brand personifies the coming together of marketing, promotion, and branding in the 21st century.

This chapter serves as the foundation for studying promotion. We begin by discussing societal trends that are affecting promotion in the 21st century. Then we explain the similarities and differences between marketing, branding, communication, and promotion. Elements of the marketing mix—product, price, place, and promotion—are discussed next, followed by specific elements of the promotion mix—advertising, direct marketing, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling, fashion shows, special events, and visual merchandising. The chapter concludes with a discussion of integrated marketing communications.

PROMOTION IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Promotion refers to all of the activities a seller uses to persuade consumers to buy. Some promotion activities are intended primarily to inform and remind consumers of the product, service, or idea for sale; others are planned to entertain and engage. In the 21st century, promotion has become much more focused on entertainment and engagement. Richard Christiansen, founder and co-creative director of Chandelier Creative, offered this insight about engaging consumers: "I'm obsessed with the search for meaning in retail. As consumers we're increasingly over-connected and underwhelmed. I feel it too; I'm bored because I'm over-connected. There's little surprise for me now as a shopper. I know this sounds like PR talk, but we need to entertain people, not sell them things. More than ever, retail needs to become theatre. Brands need to become entertainers" (Wang, 2014, ¶10). The shift to engaging and entertaining consumers is a fairly new societal trend. There are several others.

New Consumer Attitudes

Traditionally, marketers have used promotion to sell, or *push*, products toward consumers. Today, marketers focus on the consumer, using promotion as a tool to engage and entertain, thereby hoping to *pull* the consumer toward a purchase decision. Influence has thus transferred, in some ways, from the seller to the consumer. More sophisticated and knowledgeable consumers are evaluating the promotions they are bombarded with and deciding whether to buy and who to buy from. Although some may argue that the consumer has always had influence, this is becoming even more evident in the 21st century. Mobile technologies have much to do with changing communication and purchase behavior.

The recession set in motion another trend affecting promotion—the sharing economy. In a **sharing economy** (also referred to as the *peer-to-peer economy*, *collaborative economy*, and *collaborative consumption*), people share assets directly with each other, coordinated via the Internet, bypassing commercial enterprises. Technology has reduced transaction costs, making sharing assets cheaper, easier, and possible on a large scale ("The rise of," 2014). It is a shift away from the established way of doing business. Many new businesses in the sharing economy emerged after the recession (Karr, 2014).

Beyond the money-saving factor, consumers use sharing economy sites to lower their environmental impact. Instead of sending items to a landfill, they share them with others (Koch, 2014). Social shopping (discussed in the next section) has an influence on the sharing economy. In addition to buying, selling, or trading, consumers use sharing economy sites to expand their personal network, liking, commenting, and sharing their style with each other (Chandra, 2014).

The sharing economy also ties into the "fauxsumerism" trend, which we will also discuss in the next section. Consumers like to shop, but they don't necessarily have to buy. Young consumers have grown up sharing-oriented and have a different sense of ownership (Koch, 2014). These consumers have been labeled NOwners (Karr, 2014). NOwners view e-commerce and m-commerce as being as much about entertainment as acquisition. They are active users of online marketplaces like eBay and apps like Airbnb. NOwners prize access over ownership and prefer renting, sharing, and bartering above owning things.

Figuring out how to support and benefit from a sharing economy is a challenge for marketers. For example, encouraging the community to come together on a regular basis is a challenge. Chandra (2014) suggests this can be achieved with promotions focused around themes or trends that take place in a digital format, such as flash sales, in-app shopping parties, and in-app promotions. Creating themed events recreates a more traditional offline experience on the online world, bringing the community together and driving engagement. As Chandra says, "Collaborative consumption companies are creating new communities and impacting the way we consume resources every day. These economies speak to a shift in our behavior, where sharing and recycling resources is becoming standard practice" (¶1).

New Technologies and Distribution Channels

Another societal trend impossible to ignore is the move from traditional platforms and technologies to new technologies involving digital distribution channels. Most consumers have at hand a smartphone, tablet, or other mobile device and use these devices routinely. The devices have become an extension of our person and of our thinking. We don't wait until later to investigate and make decisions; we are already connected and use social media, websites, texting among friends and family, and all forms of digital communication to react immediately to what we are seeing or doing. This doesn't mean that traditional distribution channels and forms of promotion should be abandoned. However, today's fashion marketers must learn how both traditional and new technologies and distribution channels can work in harmony to create effective promotions that inform and educate as well as engage and entertain consumers. According to Jamie Gutfreund, chief strategy officer for The Intelligence Group, "These customers sleep with their phones [referring to Millennials]. They can get the best deal, sometimes an extraordinary deal, in a second" (Karr, 2014, ¶14).

The growing use of mobile devices, coupled with the recession of the first decade of the 21st century, has influenced another trend, **fauxsumerism**—the preference for shopping over buying (Karr, 2014). (*Faux* is French for "false.") The 2007 recession forced customers to be more careful about spending money. And, even when the recession loosened its grip, in 2009, consumers had gotten used to the more austere purchasing pattern. Converting browsers into buyers is a big challenge facing marketers. Browsers participate in the culture surrounding shopping but not necessarily the shopping itself (Hyland, 2014). This has been termed a "tectonic shift in purchasing patterns" (Karr, 2014, p.1). Millennials particularly are using all the tools of shopping—brick-and-mortar, e-commerce, m-commerce, and social media—to engage in nearly constant shopping, but it isn't resulting in purchasing merchandise. They like everything about shopping, except for "the whole 'exchanging currency for goods' part" (Hyland, ¶1). According to one survey, 36 percent of respondents age 18 to 34 said they only buy things they deem necessary (Karr). It is important for promotion specialists to understand this phenomenon and work to develop creative, engaging opportunities that turn the enjoyable shopping experience into a successful purchasing experience as well.

New technologies and distribution channels have encouraged another new trend. **Social shopping** is an e-commerce method that combines social networking and shopping. It satisfies the needs for (1) searching information before shopping, and (2) sharing personal experiences online after use (Hsiao et al., 2010). It allows others

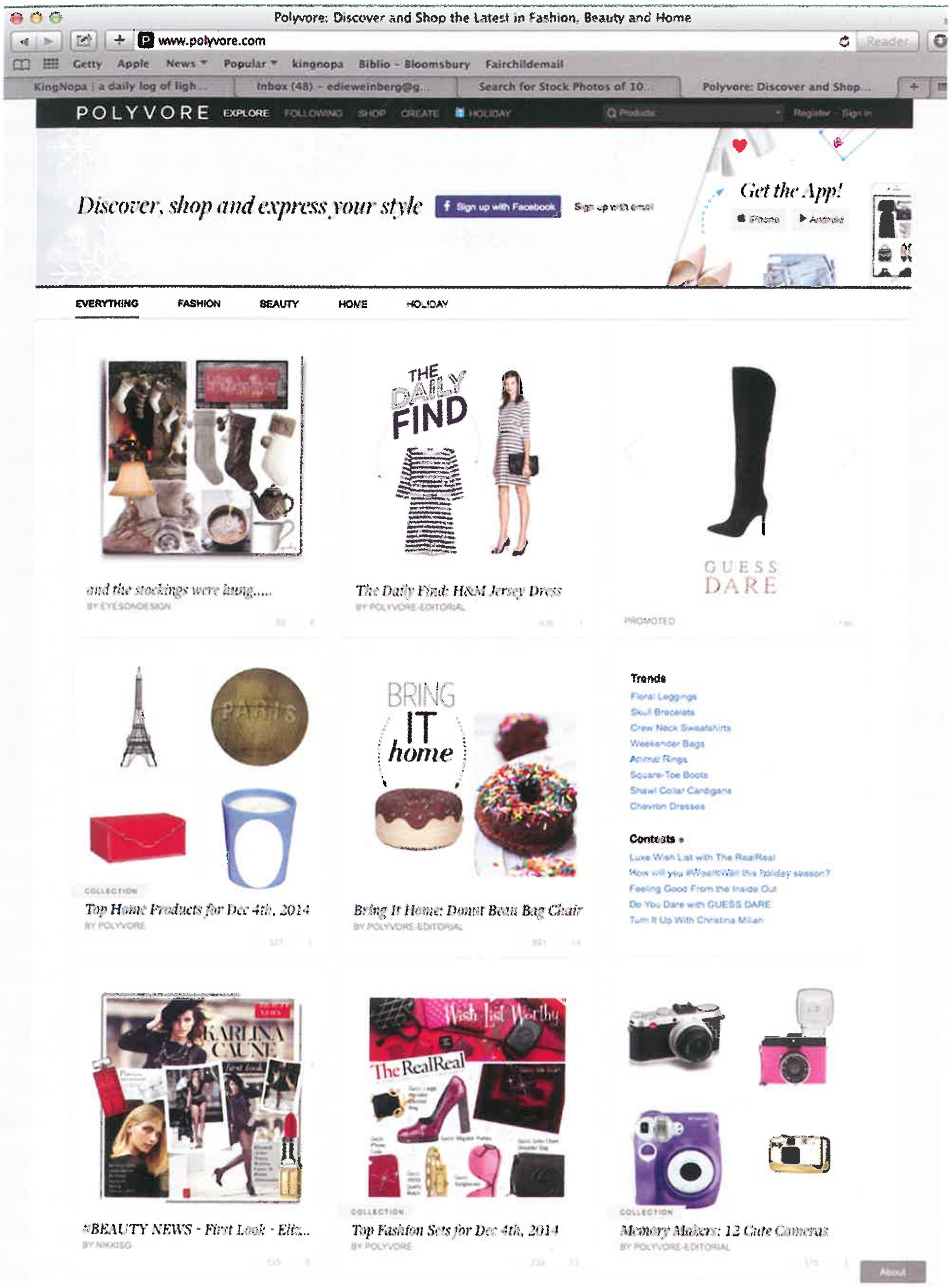


figure 1.1
Social shopping sites are gaining popularity among consumers.

to become involved in the shopping experience, using technology to mimic the social interactions found in physical malls and stores. Etsy and Polyvore (Fig. 1.1) are two popular social shopping sites (however, note that any reference to websites is outdated quickly as sites go up and come down from the Internet constantly). Social shopping sites provide blogs or virtual communities for users to share shopping ideas, exchange opinions on specific products, and recommend their favorites. People are likely to trust the information provided by other shoppers like themselves more than that provided by companies (Hsiao et al.).

Social shopping sites differ from mainstream online retailer sites such as Amazon. Amazon and other mainstream online retailers show the same products to everyone and force the consumer to make an isolated buying decision (Kamenec, 2013). By contrast, social shopping sites allow consumers to browse through product feeds curated specifically for them filled with products made popular by other users. Consumers go to mainstream retailer sites when they are ready to buy. They go to social shopping sites when they want to pleasure shop or browse (what we used to call window shopping).

New Trends in Retail

Reversing the trend of the late 1990s, when traditional brand brick-and-mortar stores went online, online retailers are now becoming **offline retailers**: they are building physical stores. Traditionally, fashion brands exist first as a brick-and-mortar store and then expand online. Many industry leaders have taken this model for granted. However, in the 21st century, that model is flipping. With their new physical stores, online retailers are seeking to eliminate the challenges of being unable to touch, feel, or try on merchandise that online presents (Li, 2014). Online retailers who pioneered this concept include Nasty Gal, Birchbox, Bonobos, and JustFab.

Traditionally, brick-and-mortar retailers were challenged in creating a seamless online experience. Two decades ago, during the first heady seasons of online shopping, offline retailers did not have the web infrastructure set up to ensure easy payment, delivery, or returns. Similarly, in the 21st century online retailers must decide what aspects of their digital sites translate best to an offline environment. JustFab wanted to present merchandise in a clean space that mimicked its sleek website. What they found, though, is that customers were afraid to shop, because the store looked like an art gallery. JustFab quickly doubled the number of display tables and brought much more merchandise onto the sales floor to make the store look more traditional and less like a website (Li, 2014).

Associated with this trend is the growth of pop-up shops. **Pop-up shops** are temporary retail spaces that spring up in unused places (Hu, 2014). Leases can be as short as a single day for promotional events designed to test new products in the market. While pop-up type retailing has been around for centuries (think horse-and-buggy carts), it is resurging in the 21st century for two reasons: (1) brands are following the trend of mobile technologies, using short-term leases to be mobile with the customers, and (2) larger online brands are using the temporary spaces to test their target market.

Another retailing trend with direct ties to promotion is **omni-channel retailing**—the evolution of a seamless approach to the consumer experience through all available shopping channels, such as mobile Internet devices, computers, brick-and-mortar stores, television, radio, direct mail, catalogs, and so on. Green (2014) described this well. You visit your favorite retailer's website. A cookie is dropped on your browser and soon you are seeing television ads promoting deals available via the retailer's mobile app. You use the mobile app to access information about the retailer and before you know it you are visiting the brick-and-mortar store. Additionally, while you are physically at the store, you are looking up products online. You are an omni-channel consumer visiting an omni-channel retailer. Promotion specialists need to be able to create campaigns that can be placed over multi-channel platforms wherever the consumer is. Macy's operates stores and websites and considers itself an omni-channel retailer. The retailer has adapted the model to the degree that it no longer breaks down sales by channel (Green).

Disruptive innovation, a term coined by Clayton Christensen (2014), describes a process by which a product or service takes root initially in simple applications at the bottom of a market and then relentlessly moves up market, eventually displacing established competitors. Those who disrupt have been termed **disruptors**. Adoption in a disruptive environment is increasingly all-at-once or never, and saturation is reached much sooner in the life of a successful new product (Manishin, 2014). New products enter the market better and cheaper than established products, seemingly overnight. However, disruptor companies need to prepare to scale down just as quickly as they scaled up, as they are replaced by the next disruptor. Some pop-up shops are examples of disruptive innovation. They enter the market on a very short-term basis, and they immediately leave the market or grow into a more established business. The offline trend is also part of disruptive innovation. Online retailers, reversing the traditional model, are seen as disruptors in the marketplace.

We have listed a few emerging societal trends here. As authors, we know that many other trends will arise as technology and communication change consumer behavior and consequently change the retail environment. Promotion will continue to play an important role in setting trends and in determining how consumers react to new trends. As students, you will need to keep your eyes and ears open to identify societal trends that affect the fashion industry.

THE ROLE OF PROMOTION

Fashion businesses use promotional messages to communicate with their target markets. Marketing agencies develop promotion campaigns to engage and entertain customers, to encourage their buy-in of the brand, product, or idea the client is selling. Retail stores use promotion to create interest in their products and sales environment. These communications are critical to a company's success.

Promotion influences the behavior of consumers and retail businesses, and the actions of fashion brands, retailers, and consumers influence promotion. **Cause marketing** has become an increasingly popular image-building promotion method. Cause marketing involves a cooperative effort between a for-profit business and a nonprofit organization. Consider the collaboration between retailing giant Target and the Kids in Need Foundation. Target's "buy one, give one" campaign during the back-to-school season offers to donate one (Target-branded) school supply to a student in need in exchange for every similar item a customer purchases (Zmuda, 2014). The collaboration is mutually beneficial: Target gains favorable publicity, and the Kinds in Need Foundation receives necessary supplies.

Billions of dollars are spent annually on promotion. In 2013, the best year for promotion budgets since the 2007 recession, advertising and promotion budgets rose 4.4 percent, to a record $108.6 billion (Johnson, 2014). Many different industries are supported by promotion spending. Of course promotion supports fashion brands and retailers, but it also supports businesses that deliver content, such as Netflix, and even physical delivery-related businesses, such as UPS. Total spending estimates consist of advertising in measured media—traditional media and display ads—and in unmeasured media, such as paid search, social media, direct marketing, and other types of promotion. Whether you view promotion as a positive force or consider it a bad influence (some say promotion leads to excess consumerism), it is a significant element in our social and economic systems.

MARKETING, BRANDING, COMMUNICATION, AND PROMOTION

The goal of all fashion businesses is to make a profit. Those businesses that don't will fail. We say this because often people get caught up in the "do good for others" or "have fun at all costs" aspects of fashion and forget that it is a business first. Target can experiment with cause marketing campaigns in one season because it was profitable in previous seasons. Promotion is one of many means fashion businesses use to make a profit, and it plays an important role in marketing programs. But what is the difference between marketing and promotion? Do the terms mean the same thing? How does branding fit into marketing and promotion? Isn't it all just communication? In this section we discuss terminology and explain the relationship and interdependency among various terms used in business and fashion.

The Marketing Mix

The American Marketing Association defines **marketing** as "the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large" (2014, ¶1). Put simply, marketing is the process of exchange between a seller and a buyer. Marketing is typically described using the **marketing mix**, which is made up of the four Ps: product, price, place, and promotion (Fig. 1.2).

Products are the goods a fashion brand or retailer sells to its customers. Designers and merchandisers look at the consumers' needs and determine product demand. *Price* is the amount of money customers are willing to pay for the fashion product. The price must meet customers' expectations for quality and value. *Place* is the location and/or distribution necessary to get the fashion product to the customer. *Promotion*, as we've already seen, is the communication that takes place between the fashion business and the consumer. Although we have described the marketing mix here in a few brief sentences, it is really a very complex set of interrelated activities.

Marketing is an umbrella term for all marketing mix activities; promotion refers to one activity within the broader marketing function. Similarly, the promotion plan is built from the larger, more encompassing marketing plan. Throughout this textbook we refer to people who work on promotions as *promotion specialists*, *promotion managers*, *practitioners*, and other related terms. We also make reference to these people as *marketing specialists* or *marketers*. Do not be confused by the terms, however. Anyone who is involved in promotion activities is also a marketer in the broader sense.

figure 1.2
The four Ps of marketing: product, price, place, and promotion.

Branding

We also need to introduce another term, **branding**—the process involved in creating a unique name and image for a product in the consumer's mind through promotion. There is a strong interdependence between marketing and branding. Marketing can be seen as a push tactic: actively promoting a product, pushing a message toward a consumer to get a sales result (Heaton, 2014). Branding is a pull strategy, working in concert with marketing. Branding is the image created in the mind of the consumer; it communicates characteristics, values, and attributes that clarify what this particular brand is and is not. Branding pulls consumers toward the product, encouraging them to buy, supporting marketing efforts. According to Heaton, "The brand does not explicitly say 'buy me.' Instead, it says 'This is what I am. This is why I exist. If you agree, if you like me, you can buy me, support me, and recommend me to your friends" (¶3).

In a move toward recognizing the broader role branding plays in a company's marketing efforts, Procter & Gamble Co., the world's biggest advertising spender, officially replaced the titles of "marketing director" and "associate marketing director" with "brand director" and "associate brand director." Additionally, the marketing function within the company has been reorganized as "brand management." The company made the move to signify the broader scope that marketing directors and branding have within the organization. Brand management in its new format encompasses four functions: branding (formerly known as marketing), consumer and marketing knowledge (marketing research), communication (known as public relations or external relations), and design (visual brand identity) (Neff, 2014). It is important to understand the roles that marketing, communication, branding, and promotion have in an organization in a linguistically changing environment.

Communication

Communication refers to the transmission or exchange of information. Anyone involved in promotion should have knowledge of communication and communication theory. For communication to occur, there must be common thinking between the message sender and the message receiver. Common thinking is established when one person or group has understood the information received. Reaching common thinking is not easy; many attempts to communicate are interrupted by obstacles.

A model of the process can help to explain communication problems. In this model (Fig. 1.3), the communication process involves a sender encoding a message and sending that information to a receiver, who decodes the message and provides a response through feedback.

Communication begins with the sender, the source of information. Individuals or organizations transmit messages to other individuals or organizations. The sender selects a combination of words or symbols to be presented textually, visually, or in combination. The arrangement of words and symbols is termed **encoding**.

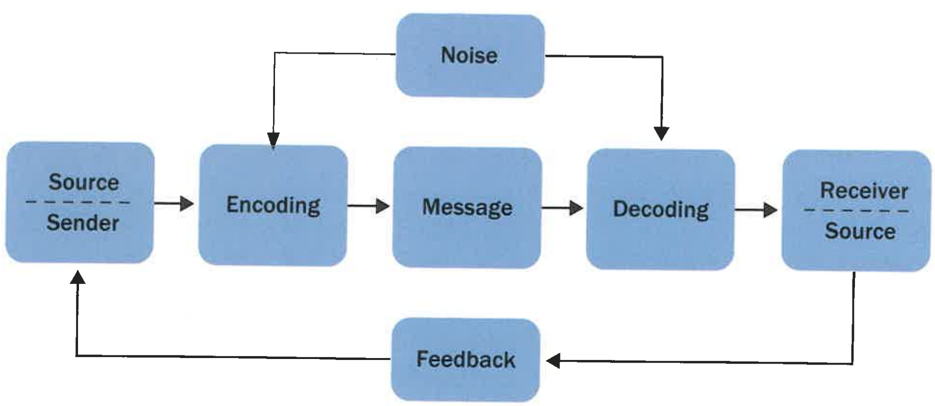
The encoded message is conveyed to the receiver through various **channels**—the methods by which the message is translated. Personal channels are direct interpersonal networks such as personal selling and word-of-mouth communication. Word-of-mouth communication is a very powerful source of information for consumers—so much so that companies plan strategies, called **buzz marketing** or viral marketing, to manage word-of-mouth discussions.

Nonpersonal channels are channels that do not involve interpersonal communication, often referred to as mass media or mass communication. The message is sent to many people at once through widely viewed broadcast, print, or digital media.

Once the message has been sent, the receiver must **decode** the message—that is, transform it back into thought. This step, which forces the receiver to interpret the message, is dependent on the receiver's frame of reference. Attitudes, values, perceptions, past experiences, and cultural background are among the characteristics that make up a receiver's frame of reference and help her understand—or misinterpret—the message.

Noise refers to outside factors that interfere with or distort the message. One way of thinking about noise is as if it were distorted pixels on a screen. Part of the message may be lost or changed through signal distortion. There are many factors that create noise in the communication model.

figure 1.3 The communication model.



Feedback is the response from receiver back to the sender. Feedback lets the sender know the message was received and how the message was understood. As with noise, feedback takes many forms. Feedback can close the communication loop, letting the source know whether or not the message has been accurately sent, decoded, and acted on.

Communication is commonly directed toward a particular audience. Some firms aim messages at the consumer market, people who consume goods and services. Other times, messages are sent between businesses in a business-to-business or trade market.

The Promotion Mix

The tools used to achieve marketing and communication goals are referred to as the **promotion mix**. In the fashion industry, promotion mix categories include advertising, direct marketing, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling, fashion shows, special events, and visual merchandising (Fig. 1.4). Each promotion mix element is introduced briefly here and will be discussed in detail in later chapters.

Advertising

Advertising, traditional or digital, is any nonpersonal message paid for, placed in the media, and controlled by the sponsor. The advertising is delivered to the audience through mass media using diversified distribution platforms—print, broadcast,

figure 1.4
The promotion mix.

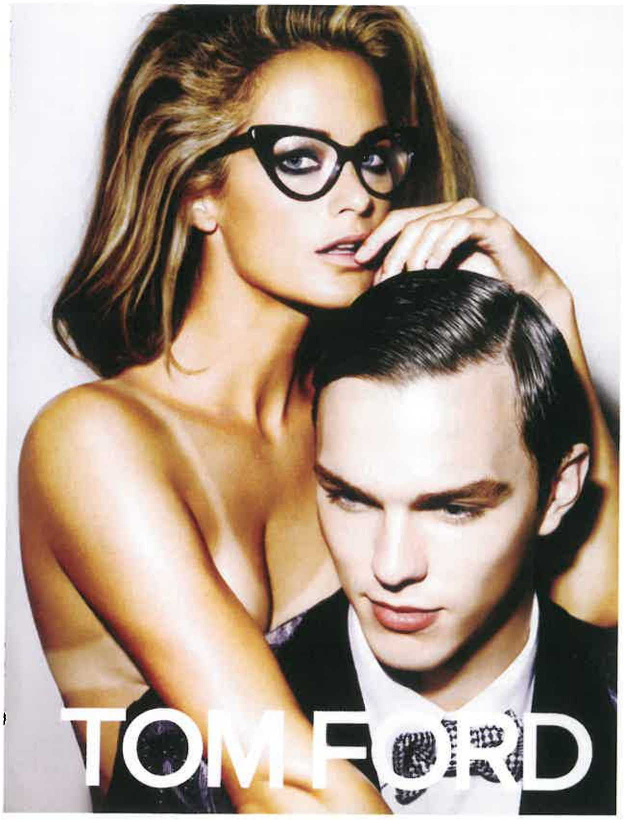


figure 1.5
Magazine advertisement for Tom Ford eyewear.

or online media; through smartphones and tablets; on social media; and through other multimedia technologies that reach mass consumers simultaneously. This communication contains information about the organization, product, service, or idea created by the fashion brand or retailer to influence sales. Figure 1.5 shows a typical magazine advertisement for a fashion brand.

Although people complain about the intrusiveness of advertising, it is one of the most effective methods for distributing information to a large audience at a reasonable cost. Additionally, advertising allows for countless creative opportunities to engage and entertain the audience. It remains a primary element of the promotion mix.

Direct Marketing

Direct marketing describes the marketing process by which organizations communicate directly with target customers to generate a response or transaction. Direct marketing is a form of advertising. It is a sponsored message delivered through traditional or new media platforms that require consumers to respond by making a call, going to a website, or visiting a store.

Direct marketing is one of the oldest promotion mix tools, and it has gained new life with the emergence of digital technologies. Catalogs are a very old form of direct marketing. The roots of mail order date back to the Middle Ages. In 1498, Aldus Manutius of Venice, a publisher, brought out a catalog of 15 texts that he had published, precursors of the paperback books of today ("A brief history," n.d.). Montgomery Ward and Sears Roebuck (Fig. 1.6) pioneered catalogs in the latter part of the 19th century. They became a dynamic form of direct response marketing.

Contemporary digital direct marketing techniques include mobile text messaging, interactive consumer websites, online display ads, database marketing, fliers, e-catalogs, e-newsletters, and e-newspapers, among other emerging techniques that are directed to customers in a personal manner.

Sales Promotion

Sales promotion, traditional and digital, refers to those activities that provide extra value or incentives to customers, employees, or distributors to generate immediate sales. It is used to encourage customers to take action through a direct incentive intended to add extra desirability to a purchase.

Some professionals refer to the entire promotion industry as sales promotion, which may lead to confusion in the advertising and promotion business. This book uses the term *promotion* as the broader umbrella term that encompasses all of the elements of the promotion mix, not just sales promotion.

Sales promotion may be consumer- or trade-oriented. The consumer or product user is the target of consumer-oriented sales promotion. These activities include contests, coupons (Fig. 1.7), gift-with-purchase, purchase-with-purchase, point-of-sale displays, refunds, rebates, sweepstakes, and sampling, among others. Such activities are meant to engage the consumer, encourage prompt purchase of products, and improve short-term sales. Trade-oriented sales promotion is directed to the distribution intermediaries such as wholesalers, distributors, and retailers. Activities aimed at the trade include promotional and merchandising allowances, price deals, sales contests, special counter displays or sales fixtures, and trade show discounts, among others.

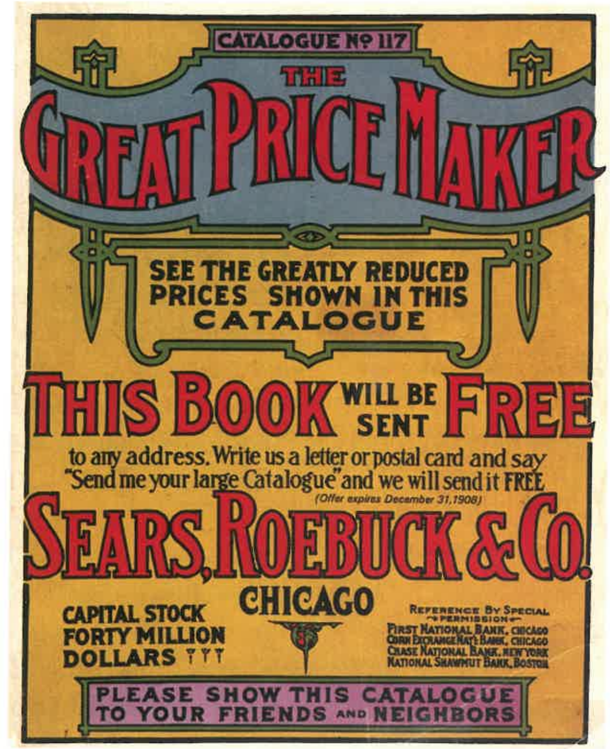


figure 1.6
Catalogs are one of the oldest types of direct marketing.

Public Relations

Public relations (PR) is a distinctive management function that helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance, and cooperation between an organization and its publics. This is a classic definition of public relations. Put more simply, public relations shapes public opinion about a fashion brand

figure 1.7
As a sales promotion technique—coupons delivered over mobile devices encourage immediate sales.

or retailer through unpaid media exposure opportunities. Any public relations activity that takes place through an electronic device is considered digital public relations.

Although many people use the terms *advertising*, *publicity*, and *public relations* interchangeably, there is a distinction between them. Advertising depends on paid sponsorship in the media, whereas publicity and public relations do not require payment for space or time. *Public relations* is a broad function that involves planning and distributing information to control and manage the image of a firm. It is much more encompassing than *publicity*, which is a term confusingly used by some to mean public relations. Publicity is a tool of public relations used by public relations practitioners.

Public relations is a promotion tool. However, public relations works differently than other promotion tools, which often have specific objectives and methods to achieve those objectives. Often the objectives are short-term, from a couple of weeks to a year in most cases. Public relations, on the other hand, has a long-term objective: relationship building. Hosting a special event as part of a public relations campaign may be a short-term objective, but ongoing public image-building and public opinion monitoring are the real purposes of public relations.

Personal Selling

Personal selling is the direct interaction between the customer and the seller for the purpose of making a sale (Fig. 1.8). This interpersonal communication enables the seller to assist or influence the buyer to purchase a product or service or act upon an idea. While the

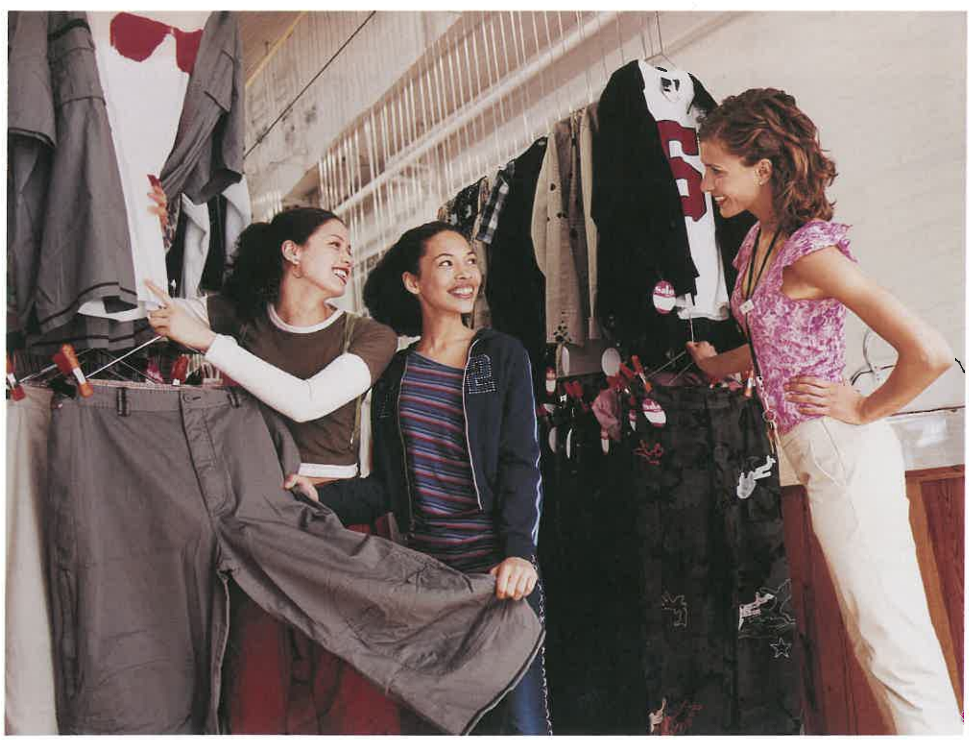


figure 1.8
Personal selling allows for personal communication to influence a sale.

term *personal selling* implies a direct, one-on-one interaction between a salesperson and a customer, digital communication has made digital personal selling—real-time exchanges between sales associates and customers—possible. Personal selling allows more direct and accurate feedback about the sales message than any other promotion mix technique.

Fashion Shows

A **fashion show** is a type of event where the latest fashion, fabric, and color trends in apparel and accessories are presented to an audience using live models (Fig. 1.9). Digital fashion shows allow for the same live action, but they are streamed over a mobile device. Fashion shows transmit messages about fashionable apparel in a fun atmosphere. They are an important promotion mix tool for fashion brands and retailers. Fashion shows have become hot news items in the 21st century, covered by the entertainment media as well as the traditional fashion media. Interest in the personalities of the designers, models, and production teams seems almost as great as the interest in the fashions being featured.

Special Events

A **special event** is a one-time occurrence with planned activities, focused on a specific purpose—to bring attention to a fashion brand, retailer, or organization, or to influence the sale of merchandise. Special events are created to bring people together at a specific time and place to share an experience. The range of event categories is almost endless,

figure 1.9
Whether viewed in person or streamed as video, fashion shows are an exciting way to see the latest fashions.

including celebrity appearances; product demonstrations or sampling; museum exhibits; gallery displays; and musical, theatrical, or sports performances. These activities are sponsored to attract new or existing customers; recognize the contributions of employees or volunteers; or celebrate performances by artists, designers, or students. Earlier in the chapter we talked about online special events as a way to create community among social shoppers. Special events such as flash sales or other app-related events can create a digital special event to engage and entertain the consumer.

Visual Merchandising

Visual merchandising is the physical presentation of products in a nonpersonal approach to promote the image of a firm and the sale of merchandise to the consumer. Typically, products are presented in window displays or store interior merchandise presentations. Figure 1.10 shows the store design for Urban Outfitters in London.

The merchandising environment encourages the creative use of merchandise presentation to generate interest and sales of fashion products. Small "mom-and-pop"

figure 1.10
Store layout and design are part of the promotion strategy for Urban Outfitters.

figure 1.11 Window displays are becoming interactive with digital technology.

retailers may rely on window displays and interior merchandise presentation as their only method of promotion. An attractive physical space with interesting merchandise presentation is an inexpensive promotional technique, especially popular with retailers with limited promotional budgets.

A new generation of visual merchandisers grew up with apps, social media, texting, and tweeting. They are bringing their social media experiences and knowledge into the retail environment, creating exciting digital visual merchandising programs that bridge the world of mannequins and window displays with the world of digital technology (Fig. 1.11).

INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

Promotion mix activities are most effective when the elements are coordinated to communicate a consistent image to the target audience. Many companies have moved toward an **integrated marketing communications (IMC)** concept, which involves coordinating the different promotional elements with other marketing activities. As a business concept, IMC is the use of one branding message throughout all promotion mix communications.

IMC requires taking a big-picture approach to planning promotion. It also dictates coordination of the various marketing, branding, communication, and promotion functions. True integration occurs when all aspects of the fashion product—from product development, package design, and brand-name creation to price and type of sales location—are coordinated. IMC attempts to project a consistent impression about the product in the marketplace.

SOCIAL AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

While one goal of promotion is to encourage and persuade consumers to purchase goods, services, and/or ideas, the persuading should not be done in a misleading or dishonest fashion. A credible integrated marketing communications plan will include the following social and ethical considerations:

- **Persuasion.** The promotional plan will encourage a consumer to take action through reason, not manipulation.
- **Ethics.** A promotional plan will be created using principles of correct conduct based on moral values.
- **Gender.** Men and women will be represented portraying contemporary roles in a nonstereotypical manner.
- **Globalization.** Language, customs, tastes, attitudes, lifestyle, values, and ethical and moral standards of each society will be accurately represented.
- **Children.** A promotional plan will not be directed at or contain material that may exploit children.
- **Cultural diversity.** A promotional plan must accurately reflect the behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, and institutions of all individuals of the country in which it is broadcast or published.

The fashion brand Uniqlo highlighted at the beginning of this chapter represents a company that has given full attention to social and ethical considerations in all of its marketing efforts.

CHECKLIST FOR PROMOTION

Fashion brands and retailers depend on promotion to inform, educate, engage, and entertain consumers. Professionals need to understand the trends affecting promotion and to understand the coordination between marketing, branding, communication, and promotion. The following is a checklist for evaluating promotion.

Ask yourself: Have I considered the following?

√ Societal trends affecting promotion
√ Marketing mix—product, price, place, promotion
√ Communication model
√ Elements of the promotion mix—advertising, direct marketing, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling, fashion shows, special events, visual merchandising
√ The message as representing one branding message
√ Ethical considerations concerning the promotion

SUMMARY

- Promotion refers to all of the activities a seller uses to persuade consumers to buy.
- Societal trends such as new consumer attitudes, new technologies and distribution channels, and new trends in retailing have an impact on promotion.
- Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large.
- The marketing mix includes the four Ps: product, price, place, and promotion.
- Branding is the process of creating a unique name and image for a product in the consumer's mind through promotion.
- Communication is a transmission or exchange of information and/or messages. It involves a sender encoding a message and sending that information to a receiver, who decodes the message and provides a response.
- In the fashion industry, promotion mix categories include advertising, direct marketing, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling, fashion shows, special events, and visual merchandising.
- Advertising, traditional or digital, is any nonpersonal message paid for, placed in the media, and controlled by the sponsor.
- Direct marketing describes the marketing process by which organizations communicate directly with target customers to generate a response or transaction.
- Sales promotion, traditional and digital, refers to those activities that provide extra value or incentives to customers, employees, or distributors to generate immediate sales.
- Public relations (PR) is a distinct management function that helps establish and maintain mutual lines of communication, understanding, acceptance, and cooperation between an organization and its publics.
- Personal selling is the direct interaction between the customer and the seller for the purpose of making a sale.
- A fashion show is a type of event where the latest fashion, fabric, and color trends in apparel and accessories are presented to an audience using live models.
- A special event is a one-time occurrence with planned activities, focused on a specific purpose, to bring attention to a fashion brand, retailer, or organization or to influence the sale of merchandise.
- Visual merchandising is the physical presentation of products in a nonpersonal approach to promote the image of a firm and the sale of merchandise to the consumer.
- Integrated marketing communications (IMC) involves coordinating the different promotional elements with other marketing activities. As a business concept, IMC is the use of one branding message throughout all promotion mix communications.

KEY TERMS

advertising
branding
buzz marketing
cause marketing
channel
collaborative consumption
collaborative economy
communication
decoding
direct marketing
disruptive innovation
disruptors
encoding
fashion show
fauxsumerism
feedback
integrated marketing communications (IMC)
marketing
marketing mix
noise
offline retailers
omni-channel retailing
personal selling
pop-up shop
promotion
promotion mix
public relations (PR)
sales promotion
sharing economy
social shopping
special event
visual merchandising

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Richard Christiansen says we are "over-connected and underwhelmed." Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Why? Make a list of ways we can reduce our over-connectedness.
2. What are some of the most important trends affecting promotion in the 21st century? What new trends have appeared since the writing of this book? As someone interested in fashion promotion, how do the trends discussed here and the new trends you have identified affect you?
3. What are the similarities and differences between marketing, branding, communication, and promotion?
4. What is the marketing mix? Explain how the four components work together.
5. What is the role of communication in the promotional process?
6. List some examples of noise that can interfere with the communication model. Similarly, list examples of feedback that can be used in the communication model.
7. How do the elements of the promotional mix relate?
8. What is the role of integrated marketing communications? Why is it important to fashion promotion?

ACTIVITIES

1. Uniqlo has described its brand as going beyond age, gender, occupation, ethnicity, and all other ways that define people. In your own words, describe what this means to you. As a class, develop a list of characteristics that describe universal clothing. How challenging was it to create this list? Explain your answer.

2. Break into teams of two or three. Select one of the identified promotional trends and give an update. How has the trend modified since the writing of this book?
3. How many different businesses or industries can you list that are supported by promotion spending? Make a list and share it in class.
4. Ask a local retailer to be a guest speaker in class. Ask specifically about his or her promotion activities. What trends are emerging related to promotion? Does this retailer follow an integrated marketing communications approach?
5. Select a fashion brand. Using print and online resources, find multiple communication messages from the brand. Do these messages illustrate an integrated marketing communications approach? Explain your answer.

ASSIGNMENT: FASHION BRAND PROMOTION CAMPAIGN

The fashion brand promotion campaign is a multiple-step project intended to cover the entire quarter/semester and correspond with most chapters in the textbook. Suggestions for the campaign are presented here; however, your instructor may have alternative requirements that you should follow.

Part 1: Select agency teams

Students should divide into teams of three or four. These teams will work together for the remainder of the quarter/semester. Each team will work as an independent promotion agency developing a new promotion campaign for an existing fashion brand. Each team should decide on an agency name.

Part 2: Select product and brands

This project works best if all teams use the same product category (denim, beauty lines, maternity wear, and so forth). As a class or at your instructor's recommendation, decide on the product category. After the product has been determined, each team should select a brand that will be the focus of their promotion strategies. If several teams want to use the same brand, the instructor or the class will have to determine how to assign brands equitably. As teams select brands, it is important to make sure different price zones (budget, moderate, designer, and so forth) are represented, to create diversity among the campaigns.

Part 3: Understanding your brand

The first step in developing a fashion brand promotion campaign is to understand the brand and its current promotion strategies. Conduct research and prepare a report describing your brand's promotion activities for:

- Advertising
- Direct marketing

- Sales promotion
- Public relations
- Personal selling
- Fashion shows
- Special events
- Visual merchandising

Be ready to turn in your written report. Your instructor may also want teams to make formal speaking presentations to the class.

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