

# A Review on the Role of Emotional Branding in Luxury Goods Marketing

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**Abstract**—The Indian market's perception of luxury goods is evolving rapidly, driven by rising disposable incomes, globalization and shifting customer aspirations. As a result, luxury goods are shaping a new consumer mindset in India, where exclusivity, authenticity and experiential value define the modern luxury experience. Emotional branding plays a pivotal role in luxury goods market by creating deep and lasting connections and to evoke emotions between consumers and brand. Emotional attachment is cultivated through heritage, brand values and consistent engagement, making customers feel a part of elite community. Digital influence and celebrity endorsements have further amplified the desirability of luxury goods making them more accessible and aspirational.

**Index Terms**—Brand, Emotional Branding, Luxury Goods.

## I. INTRODUCTION

On hearing the word brand, we typically start thinking of a famous company, its trademark, its logo or the products that is being manufactured by the company. A strong brand evokes trust, loyalty and a sense of identity making customers feel understood and valued. When a brand aligns with a customer's desires—whether it's a sense of accomplishment, the need of belonging or self-expression; it transforms into more than a product or service it becomes a partner for their lifetime journey. By resonating with their emotions and addressing their deeper aspirations, a brand builds trust, loyalty and a meaningful bond that stands the test of time. It serves a bridge between what people desire and they believe is possible, aligning with their values, solving their problem and inspiring their dreams.

By meticulously weaving elements such as messaging, design and customer engagement, a brand differentiates itself from competitors leveraging its unique selling proposition to create a compelling

narrative that resonates with its target audience. A brand's identity is a multifaceted construct that encompasses its core attributes, values and distinctive traits, shaping how it positions itself in the competitive landscape.

This differentiation is particularly critical in saturated market, where competitors are attention seekers, compelling a brand to amplify its distinctive features—be its superior quality, innovative solutions or cultural relevance; ensuring that the brand stand out not merely as a choice but as the preferred option. Traditionally, a brand is defined based on its physical features that identifies a seller's product and distinguishes them from competitors.

Emotional branding has emerged as a powerful strategy in marketing, gaining widespread popularity among experts and practitioners due to its ability to foster deep connections and lasting connections with customers. Psychological terminology plays a pivotal role in the process, providing a framework to understand and leverage human emotions, behaviors and decision-making patterns. This approach not only enhances brand perception but also drives customer engagement and advocacy, solidifying emotional branding as a cornerstone of modern marketing strategy. Focusing on the emotional needs and aspirations of target audiences, brands are moving beyond functional benefits to create memorable and meaningful experiences.

Luxury branding cultivates a sense of prestige and aspiration, often leveraging storytelling about craftsmanship, heritage and scarcity to create a strong emotional connection. The core strength of emotional branding of luxury goods lies in its ability to evoke desire and social status, using high-quality materials and understated elegance to convey superiority.

Luxury goods have societal impact on factors like sustainability, craftsmanship or innovation is

significant: they shape customer aspirations, influence cultural perceptions of status and wealth and often drive economic activity in local artisanal and manufacturing sectors. Therefore, societal inequalities are reinforced to create a clear distinction between those who can afford such luxury and those who cannot, contributing to the polarization of consumption patterns and social dynamics.

## II. LUXURY GOODS

Luxury goods are often differentiated by their superior craftsmanship, use of premium materials, exclusivity through limited production and timeless design. They often emphasize heritage, status, and unparalleled quality. Luxury goods often create a sense of rarity and prestige offering limited edition products or crafting unique narrative roots in cultural or historical significance. Luxury goods segment themselves based on various factors such as price, exclusivity, heritage, design, customer experience and target demographics. Premium brands are distinguished by their high-end marketing strategies like exclusive events or collaborations and rely on minimalistic premium quality and craftsmanship often catering to a niche affluent market. Their branding usually focuses on areas like storytelling, scarcity and aspirational values; creating emotional connections and reinforcing premium status.

There are some vital points to before we start analyzing luxury and designer companies. Firstly, it needs to be conceded that fashion, luxury and designer industries represent distinct yet interconnected realms of style and exclusivity. While all three cater to individual expression, they differ in accessibility, target audience, and the emphasis placed on creativity, status or craftsmanship. Luxury goods and fashion brands employ diverse strategies of not just clothing items but also cosmetics, fashion accessories or perfumes to maintain their appeal and exclusivity. Focus is majorly based on exceptional craftsmanship, limited editions collections and collaborations to create a sense of standard and desirability. Marketing emphasizes on aspirational lifestyles, storytelling and heritage through celebrity endorsements and immersive brand experiences. Additionally, they ensure consistent brand identity, across categories while diversifying product lines to cater to varied

tastes and markets, blending into tradition with modernity to sustain relevance and prestige.

Secondly, the competitive approaches adopted by luxury goods such as differentiation, exclusivity and emotional branding to secure a dominant position in the market. By offering unparalleled craftsmanship, premium materials and iconic designs which speaks prestige and status. This positioning influences consumer lifestyle by encouraging aspirational, where ownership of luxury goods becomes symbol of achievement and social standing. In doing so, these brands not only cater functional needs but also shape perceptions of self-worth and identity. Luxury goods use experimental marketing to forge deeper connections with their clientele, setting them apart from mainstream retail. Their marketing campaigns emphasize aspirational lifestyles, associating their products with success, sophistication and elegance. One factor that distinguishes luxury goods from all other goods is that they sell fashion and design, which is non-material factor.

Emotional branding connects with its end user by tapping into their feelings, values and aspirations. It creates a sense of personal connection and loyalty by telling compelling stories and evoking emotions like trust and nostalgia. By addressing deeper human needs and building a sense of belonging, emotional branding fosters lasting relationship with customers. This approach ensures the brand becomes more than just a product or service-it comes a meaningful part of the consumer's life.

## III. EMOTIONAL BRANDING

The concept of Emotional Branding was introduced by Mac Gobe over 20 years ago and detailed it in his book *The New Paradigm for Connecting Brands to People*. His philosophy is based on the observation that connections can take place on an emotional level in relationship between brands and people. Mac Gobe has laid four foundational pillars of emotional branding: proximity, sensory experiences, imagination and vision. Proximity signifies to the strategic closeness that luxury brands cultivate with their consumers, which significantly enhances emotional connections. The sense of closeness fosters brand loyalty and reinforcing their emotional attachment to the brand; which provides the consumers to crave for sensory experiences. To present a sensory experience

to the consumers it should not only heighten emotional response but also -reinforce the brand's identity and exclusivity, making the brand feel more intimate and luxurious. This can also include tactile experiences through high quality materials, visual allure through stunning design, auditory elements in bespoke environment, and olfactory branding with signature scents. An imaginative approach enhances the overall outlook of emotional branding by allowing the customers to visualize themselves in aspirational scenarios associated with the brand, thereby fostering stronger emotional connections. Thoughtful design elements can evoke emotions and feelings, shaping how consumers perceive and connect with the brand. Vision is the most important factor for the long-term success of a brand. A strong brand vision creates a sense of purpose and experience. Clarity of vision helps create a consistent and memorable identity that resonates with the target audience.

We are citing Gobe's ten commandments of Emotional Branding, which points out key differences between brand awareness and emotional pull that makes a brand favorite.

1. From consumers to people – Consumers buy whereas people live. A consumer is often approached as an enemy, as someone who needs to be attacked, whose defenses should be broken, or against whom a strategy needs to be devised to conquer. A more efficient approach is based on the rules of the game in which everyone is a winner- a partnership approach built on relationships and mutual respect.
2. From product to experience- Products satisfy needs, whereas experience fulfill desires. A shopping experience should provide something special or be an event that will be memorable and will create an emotional connection on a level that far exceeds a need. An adventurous spirit, curiosity the desire to experience the unexperienced are concepts that are starting to have an advantage over familiarity.
3. From honesty to trust – Honesty is expected, whereas trust is attractive and personal. It has to be deserved. In order for a brand to fit a customer, it is necessary for the customer to trust. The decision of certain companies to accept returns without asking any questions is considered a big step towards that goal.
4. From quality to preference- It is becoming increasingly obvious that sales are not created (at least not exclusively) by quality, but rather by preference. What brings success is the priority that is given to a certain brand. The consumer's list of priorities regarding a brand is what will decide on the success or failure of that brand.
5. From omnipresence to action- Being famous does not equal love. This statement is difficult to disprove. In order for a company and its brand to be desirable, it is necessary for them to be able to spend a certain message that will speak to the buyer's desires.
6. From identity to physiognomy- It is necessary to acknowledge the distinction between identity and physiognomy. While identity signifies recognition, physiognomy is an expression that has a much wider scope and encompasses character and charisma. Physiognomy goes hand in hand with exclusivity, a special characteristic that causes admiration and the desire to own this brand and not another.
7. From function to emotion- While the function of a product only relates to practical, external properties, its sensuality relates to experience that one gets while using the product. It is the sensory experience that has the market value.
8. From omnipresence to presence- Omnipresence is visible, whereas emotional presence is felt. Most strategies is directed toward the (omni) presence of a brand are based on the concept of quantity, not quality. The concept quality demands focusing on innovative ways in which a real, long-term relationship that can be created.
9. From communication to dialogue- It's clear that consumers are not satisfied with receiving information only; they want to exchange opinions. Digital communications, public relations, the presence of brands and promotions can do a lot more in terms of speaking to the customer that simply advertise the product.
10. From service to connection- Service sells whereas, connection signifies recognition. Connection means that the representative of the brand is trying to understand who their buyers are and that they appreciate them.

Let's explore a few real-life examples of Emotional Branding to understand this better.

- Let's take an example of Philli Patek, when you buy a Patek Philippe, you're not just getting a watch—you're investing in a legacy. Their slogan, "You never actually own a Patek Philippe," highlights the idea that these timepieces are meant to be passed down through generations. This emotional branding taps into the deep human desire to leave something meaningful behind. By keeping their production limited, Patek Philippe makes sure that owning one isn't just about luxury—it's about holding a piece of history and tradition.
- Luxury at The Ritz-Carlton means beyond high-end rooms to creating unforgettable memories. The motto "Ladies and Gentlemen Serving Ladies and Gentlemen" is a reminder that they deliver service at its utmost standards. Hence, they truly do encourage their employees to step outside the box, enabling them to expend up to \$2,000 in enhancing guests' experiences. All guest preferences, no matter the location, are tracked by an in-house Mystique system so that every visit feels tailored. By combining local culture in their offerings and upholding their standards, The Ritz-Carlton aims to make every single stay a unique one.
- Tanishq blends tradition with modern values, making jewelry more than just an accessory—it becomes a symbol of relationships and life's special moments. Campaigns such as "Ek Naya Riwaaz" cross borders of culture while still keeping with the Indian ethos. Jewelries are factors people use at weddings and festivals, thus harnessing all these emotions associated with these events by the brand for major significant events. Also, the brand forges a bond with today's generation through the depiction of strong and independent women in its commercials. That aspect of heritage and modernity is the reason why Tanishq is more than a jewelry brand but represents all that is love, happiness, and personal achievement
- Rolls-Royce leads the way in luxury by focusing on personalization and craftsmanship. With its "Bespoke" program, owners can design every detail of their car, making it a true reflection of their style. The brand's rich history and attention to detail attract those who appreciate tradition and

fine craftsmanship. More than just a car, a Rolls-Royce is a symbol of success and prestige, made even more special by its limited production. Through exclusive events and personalized experiences, the brand builds a strong connection with its elite customers.

- The "Keep Walking" campaign from Johnnie Walker has propelled the brand into the emblem of progress and resilience. Its advertisements depict people's triumph over challenges in order to foster the belief in winning themselves. The message is adapted depending on the culture, as in one made in Brazil called "The Giant Awakes", which takes advantage of the national pride. Celebrities physically endorse the brand while digital engagement participates to unify the consumers with the journey of the brand. With the likes of Jane Walker and sustainability initiatives, Johnnie Walker remains fresh. More than just the whisky, it symbolizes self-advancement and determination, thereby becoming a timeless representation of progress.

#### IV. BRAND EXPERIENCE

Brand experience has become popularized, for it seems consumers are more interested in immersive experiences than functional benefits (Bapat, 2020). In contrast to concentrating on utility, a holistic consumer appreciates brand interactions through emotions, thoughts, splash effects, and behaviors (Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2010). Brakus et al. (2009) define brand experience as a multi-sensory or affective experience that elicits behavioral and cognitive responses from any and all stimuli interlinked with a brand, including those of product design, packaging, and communication. Emotional branding includes shaping these experiences and developing relationships with a consumer (Yang, Kim & Zimmerman, 2020). This very much stressed Sensory marketing, using the five senses of sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell, to embed memory formation in the mind of the consumer which later on influences his perception and behavior (Krishna, 2012; Wiedmann et al., 2018). Well-managed sensory cues will boost store atmosphere, relaxation time, and hence preferences for a specific brand (Soars, 2009; Serrano et al., 2016), thus giving in-store-of-the-week encounters more wonderful touches. That is to say, this is a huge way those

encounters really happen to have had a tremendous impact (Kumagai & Nagasawa, 2021). Product "emotional connectivity" means way more than fulfilling product needs, offering vital human experiences of meaning, engaging store settings, unique personal interactions, and multisensory experiences (Kim et al., 2014; Kumar & Kim, 2014). According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1970), brand experiences allow the modern consumer self-actualization, leaving plenty of room for luxury brands to devise emotional strategies (Sheth et al., 1991). And yet with modern digital technology, customer experiences have gone onto omnichannel marketing further, giving personalized real-time communications that enhance the emotional bonds between the customer and the brand (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). The multisensory and emotional branding strategy has yielded memorable experiences and boosted customer loyalty in competitive markets.

#### V. EMOTIONAL BRAND ATTACHMENT

Emotional brand attachment is at the center of consumer-brand relationships. Consumer-brand connections embody emotions of love, intimacy, affection, closeness, and devotion; it is the attachment that sits at the center of strong brand relations (Fournier, 1998). Based on Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1982), emotional brand attachment is defined as "an emotion-laden bond between a person and a brand characterized by deep feelings of connection, affection, and passion." Such attachment fuels consumer loyalty and commitment in that those who are emotionally attached to a brand will engage and prefer it in the long term (Thomson et al., 2005). The emotional attachment and the quality of connections that this produces form a primary aspect of consumer bond with the brand, thus offering luxury brands a unique advantage, albeit through emotional branding strategies (Gera et al., 2022). Accordingly, luxury brands exploit emotional attachment by providing symbolic and functional benefits, which improve consumer perceptions (Parsons & Yap, 2013). Consumers that devote considerable resources into luxury brands views the brand attachment through emotions like love, passion, and enchantment-reinforcing their loyalty and willingness to speak on behalf of the brand. There is also a greater emotive connection based on sensory experience engineering

in creating emotion-based marketing, whereby sensory stimuli evoke consumer emotions and consequent connotations with brands (Hultén, 2011; Krishna, 2012). The enhanced emotional attachment and commitment to a luxury brand can be improved with active multi-sensory engagement through total experiences with the brand. Moreover, the emotional bonds of luxury brands are undergirded by the associated symbolic benefits, such as prestige and exclusivity, from enhanced expressions of self-identity and the sense of belonging (Vickers & Renand, 2003). Thus, it is, therefore, through him) mense contribution to luxury brand success that emotional brand attachment is a cornerstone through which lasting relationships can build with consumers via meaningful engaged experiences.

#### VI. BRAND STORY

Storytelling is a crucial instrument with which emotional branding has been built to create narratives that engage consumers on a deeper level. According to the works of Pan and Chen (2019), stories illustrating emotional elements, characters, or brand benefits influence consumer experiences by providing a framework for their perceptions in a manner that builds connections.

These luxury brands-Chanel, Prada, and Louis Vuitton-skillfully adopt storytelling to multiply customer touchpoints in an attention-grabbing way (Visconti, 2020). T.N. and Dhannur (2015) point out the significance of the brand story as a key antecedent to creating emotional branding by enhancing consumer associations when evoked in a charismatic manner. Kim and Sullivan (2019) explain that storytelling is a mighty tactic to inspire the imagination and talk about involving emotions and integral to brands like Burberry and Lululemon Athletics. Mucundorfeanu (2018) detained that the brand stories create one-of-a-kind experiences that in turn captivate attention and make brands worthwhile to look up to.

The act of storytelling, whether by digital or traditional means, has enhanced the experience of consumption through an influence on emotions themselves, opinions, and overall lifestyles (Kaufman, 2003; Mossberg, 2008). Yet Holt (2002) speaks in warning with regard to the importance of authenticity remaining in check to avoid the skepticism of the

consumer. Digital storytelling has become more relevant, with fashion blogs and social media platforms providing modern sites from which stories with brand narratives are framed (Valck & Kretz, 2011). The storytelling strategy has been efficiently used by the likes of Louis Vuitton, Stuart Weitzman, and Under Armour, reiterating how storytelling has become integral to branding and advertising.

## VII. LITERATURE REVIEW

Emotional branding emphasizes building meaningful relationships between brands and consumers, prioritizing emotional bonds over product features (Gobe, 2001).

According to Kim and Sullivan (2019). Consumers remember how a brand makes them feel, which drives brand preference especially in fashion and luxury. Emotional branding connects with personal values and experiences, making it effective in digital brand communities as well (Patro & Kamakula, 2019).

In luxury, it reflects self-congruity, turning consumption into a symbol of self-worth (Rodrigues et al., 2018).

Storytelling, aspiration, and exclusivity form the emotional core of loyalty in luxury branding (Adored Designs, 2021).

Luxury is seen as a multi-dimensional concept, where emotional and symbolic meanings matter more than the product itself (Berthon et al., 2009). Emotional branding helps convey these meanings and build perceived exclusivity.

Heine and Phan (2011) describe luxury as “a dream,” where emotional value surpasses material utility. Kapferer and Bastien (2009) argue that luxury’s emotional power lies in its storytelling and uniqueness. Emotional bonds, more than satisfaction, predict loyalty making emotional branding central in luxury brand strategy (Thomson et al., 2005).

Emotional brand attachment refers to a deep, emotion-filled bond characterized by affection, passion, and connection between a consumer and a brand, as grounded in Attachment Theory (Bowlby, 1982; Thomson et al., 2005).

Attachment is the core of strong brand relationships, particularly in the luxury goods sector where sentimental bonds drive loyalty and repurchase behavior (Fournier, 1998; Thomson et al., 2005).

Consumers who invest heavily in premium brands often describe their attachment in terms of love, ecstasy, and enchantment (Parsons & Yap, 2013; Gera, Garg & Rohatgi, 2022).

Brand experience is multidimensional sensory, emotional, behavioral, and intellectual triggered by brand design, packaging, communications, and atmospherics (Brakus et al., 2009; Kumar & Kaushik, 2020).

Research indicates that richly curated experiences foster emotional branding and stronger consumer-brand relationships (Joshi & Garg, 2021; Paul, 2015, 2018, 2019; Yoo & MacInnis, 2005; Mingione et al., 2020).

Stories with emotional themes, characters, or values enhance consumers’ brand experiences by fostering narrative immersion and deeper connections (Pan & Chen, 2019; Mossberg, 2008; Silverstein & Fiske, 2003)

Charismatic storytelling central to emotional branding improves consumer engagement and strengthens brand association (T.N. & Dhannur, 2015; Kim & Sullivan, 2019; Mucundorfeanu, 2018).

Importantly, stories must feel authentic to avoid being seen as manipulative (Holt, 2002).

## VIII. FINDINGS

The study reveals that emotional branding plays a crucial role in shaping consumer behavior in the luxury goods market. It was found that consumers are not merely attracted to the functional value of luxury products but are significantly influenced by emotional connections formed through branding strategies. Emotional brand attachment characterized by deep feelings of affection, passion, and identity emerged as a strong predictor of brand loyalty and consumer preference.

Brand experiences and sensory marketing were found to contribute significantly to these emotional bonds. Engaging multiple senses through store atmospheres, packaging, and digital platforms creates a holistic experience that leaves a lasting impression. Storytelling, particularly when authentic and emotionally driven, was also identified as a powerful tool for luxury brands. Narratives around heritage, craftsmanship, and personal journeys enable consumers to form meaningful relationships with the brand.

Indian luxury brands such as Tanishq and Royal Enfield demonstrate that emotional branding strategies are equally impactful in local contexts. Tanishq connects emotionally by aligning jewelry with personal milestones and progressive values, while Royal Enfield builds a sense of identity and adventure through community and lifestyle branding.

Overall, the findings suggest that emotional branding strategies including storytelling, symbolic benefits, sensory cues, and immersive brand experiences create lasting consumer-brand relationships and are essential to the success of luxury goods marketing.

#### IX. CONCLUSION

Emotional branding is essential in today's competitive market, especially for luxury goods, as it helps brands build strong emotional connections with consumers beyond product utility. It fosters trust, loyalty, and a deeper brand identity. Emotional branding has played a vital role in elevating strategies of luxury goods by shifting the focus from product function to emotional connection. It helps luxury brands stand out in competitive markets by offering unique experiences, from personalized content to immersive retail environments.

In modern society, emotional branding has made luxury items symbols of status and personal success. Particularly since the 20th century and into the 21st century, luxury goods have become more than purchase it represents a narrative of achievement and belonging. Brands like Chanel, Gucci, and Louis Vuitton use storytelling, heritage, and exclusivity to create deeper bonds with consumers, turning their products into symbols of identity and status.

In essence, emotional branding has transformed luxury consumption into a lifestyle, helping brands stay relevant, build loyalty, and maintain their premium position. Together, emotional branding and luxury marketing form a powerful combination. When used strategically, they enhance brand value, create lasting consumer bonds, and drive success by adding emotional depth to the luxury experience.

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