

L'OEIL by L'Observatoire Cetelem

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Week 1 | 4 June

Could subscriptions become a new way to consume?

Clothing hire was for a long time perceived as a niche market created to satisfy the vanity of the privileged few. Today, however, it has raised fresh interest among major groups seeking to reach a wider audience.

<https://www.instantluxe.com/location>

Seen on the web

The cofounders of Chinese giant Alibaba recently announced that they had invested \$20 million in US clothing rental website Rent The Runway. In France, meanwhile, the Kering group is quietly trialling its own "subscription" model (which it favours over the word "rental"). It has even recruited the former managing director of eBay to head the project. And these are not the only signs that this new consumption model is rapidly growing in popularity, several years after it first appeared on the net. Another illustration is the Instantluxe website launched in 2009 and acquired by the Galeries Lafayette group in 2016. The site recently launched a rental service, which is currently limited to its leather goods range.

What to think of it?

After the rise of fast-fashion, whose low prices reflect the fact that the clothing in question is not necessarily made to last, not to mention the success of vintage items and peer-to-peer selling, which have made it acceptable to buy pre-worn clothes, an increasing number of companies are now renting out luxury products, the latest of the new consumption models that seem to be taking over the consumer landscape. Having traditionally been associated with long-term ownership and even the idea of bequeathing assets to heirs, luxury brands have **seen their world disrupted by the vagaries of fashion**, which have forced them to bring out multiple collections and come up with ephemeral offerings. This has been something of a paradox for the sector. Today, they display a desire to **go further still by renting out their products**, a chance for them to **reach new populations** who enjoy luxury as much as their usual customers, but have more modest resources. Rental allows a customer to have the latest model or a model that they cannot afford to buy. Rental allows them to try a product before they buy. Rental is perfect for special occasions. **Rental also means becoming a subscriber rather than a buyer**, which will invariably affect the way in which the brand/buyer relationship is viewed: **why should loyalty always be associated with possession?**

Summing up

On 2 June, Paris, London and Berlin hosted Plastic Attack day, where consumers could shop in supermarkets and leave all plastic packaging in the store.

<https://www.facebook.com/PlasticAttackGlobal/>

A new breed of pedestrian crossing was recently trialled in Cysoing, in the north of France. The white rectangles usually painted on the road are now represented in 3D and appear to be floating in mid-air. This optical illusion is designed to prompt motorists to slow down as they approach the crossing.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=scFEZjm0Nhg>

With its latest loyalty programme, which is being trialled in Spain, L'Occitane offers certain advantages to those customers who are most active on social media.

Catching the eye

According to the zOOM survey by L'Observatoire Cetelem entitled "From tradition to modernity: is this a cultural revolution?", 85% of French consumers believe that digitalisation has made art more accessible, while 84% are of the opinion that it will have a positive impact on the propagation of cultural assets.

Week 2 | 11 June

Rather than focusing on convincing consumers to buy more, tomorrow's retailers will try to encourage buyers to take greater responsibility.

After the quest for zero waste, finding ways of extending the lifetime of products is the latest challenge picked up by retailers.

<http://www.hm.com/de/takecare#/>

Seen in Hamburg

At number 12 Spitalerstrass in Hamburg, H&M recently unveiled its latest pilot concept store, dubbed Take Care, which is geared towards highlighting the brand's green credentials and its intention to use only recycled or sustainable materials by 2030. What Take Care offers is not just another range of clothes aimed at a particular age group or lifestyle, but cleaning products (the brand's first line of detergents, which are "Good Environmental Choice" certified and made in Sweden), sewing workshops (led by influencers) and advice, both online and on tablets, to help customers keep fashion items for longer (removing lipstick stains, sewing on a button, darning, etc.). Customers can also have their clothes mended at the store by a professional, regardless of the brand. The project, which is currently at the trial stage, is set to be deployed throughout H&M's retail network.

What to think of it?

Other than the fact that it doesn't sell clothes, the originality of H&M's latest store concept lies in the idea of **rallying customers around a cause that will benefit the planet**. The aim here is not to pass on a proportion of the proceeds to charity, to bring eco-friendly products and packaging to the masses, or to place a spotlight on manufacturing conditions, but to encourage buyers to take care of their purchases by helping them to extend product lifetimes. **Why should retailers be alone in making an effort?** Geared towards attracting attention as well as new populations, this concept will be perceived by those with a sharp eye as heralding **an important future avenue for retail**. Following in the footsteps of retailers that sold products and then sold services to make the most of the products purchased, we are now entering an era where **retailers encourage their customers to reduce their purchasing frequency by extending the useful life of items they already own**. Will textile brands soon be offering in-store workshops similar to those we now see in DIY stores?

Summing up

In the Netherlands, one online brand that leads the way when it comes to acquiring physical space is cycle retailer Fietsenwinkel. The firm has opened more than 30 showrooms, where consumers can try out their products before buying them online.

In its new store in Antwerp, Samsonite offers customers the chance to have personalised text printed on the handle of their suitcase.

We+ar TRBL has developed t-shirts and sweatshirts with an embedded screen that displays fixed images and slideshows transferred via Bluetooth using a dedicated app. The screen is flexible, removable for washing and energy self-sufficient for four days. The market launch is planned for this summer.

<https://www.weartrbl.com>

Word of the month

Plogging: a Swedish concept that combines the terms "plocka upp" ("pick up" in Swedish) and "jogging". It can be defined as picking up the litter one finds while out jogging. A great way of keeping fit and being good to the environment at the same time.

Could the quest for wellbeing soon come with a side order of beauty?

While healthy promises are gradually gaining territory in our plates, very few have penetrated the world of beauty. The crossover is only just beginning...

<https://tttruck.com/foodtruck/foodtruck-clarins-by-michalak>

Seen in Neuilly-sur-Seine and in the 17th *arrondissement* of Paris

In April this year, Clarins operated a slightly offbeat food truck in conjunction with high-profile pastry chef Michalak. It offered a set menu for €14 that included a “vegan super-bowl” packed with superfoods (quinoa, avocado, pomegranate), a drink inspired by Clarins and a creative dessert dreamt up by the aforementioned TV chef, who is always looking to go off the beaten path when it comes to flavours and colours: the coconut and mango Kosmik. This unique combination of tasty and healthy foods also promises cosmetic benefits in the form of more beautiful skin.

What to think of it?

At the tail end of 2017, L'Œil spotted a new store launched on the Champs-Élysées by L'Occitane en Provence and Pierre Hermé. Beyond its slightly experimental concept, which was primarily intended to create a buzz, it looked as though a brand-new retail model had seen the light of day. A few months later, **the idea of bringing together the worlds of food and beauty** is back, in the form of a food truck created by Clarins and Michalak. Ten years ago, Danone launched Essensis, a yoghurt that was claimed to reduce wrinkles. But it was too soon. Today, **the relationship between food and skincare is being pursued once again**. In the past, intellectuals often highlighted the power of the fashion trade. Today, the world of food has taken the baton and is helping us to understand our society (environmental concerns, a focus on origin and processing, a desire to be surprised and re-enchanted each day, etc.). Food's status changed with the emergence of “fooding”, when it became a lifestyle choice in the same way as design and fashion. Now it is setting foot in the land of beauty. **“Eating beautiful” has now become an extension of eating well**. Having more radiant skin, while feeling regenerated and re-energized thanks to one's diet could well breathe new life into the much sought-after “beauty experience”, which currently seems more or less confined to massages and makeup.

Summing up

The Carrefour and La Poste groups recently signed a partnership to speed up the nationwide development of home delivery services.

The City of Paris has created a “Made in Paris” accreditation in partnership with the Paris Chamber of Commerce and Industry, to showcase the excellence and vibrancy of Parisian craftsmanship.

<https://www.entreprises.cci-paris-idf.fr/web/cci75/label-fabrique-a-paris>

In Dubai, traditional car licence plates will soon be replaced with display screens allowing motorists to pay for parking or signalling that the vehicle has been stolen.

A glance in the rear-view mirror

More than 13 years ago, in January 2005, L'Œil reported on the “workshops” offered by brands. The future was already upon us.

Brand workshops

The facts

Inspired by the plethora of cooking classes on offer, fashion label Thierry Mugler recently launched four beginner perfume workshops led by experts (one-day sessions costing €150): *Passion nez*, *Les secrets de la création olfactive*, *La saga des parfums* and *Histoire et secrets d'épices*. Less glamorous, but in the same vein, innovative appliance manufacturer Dyson regularly holds workshops in its Paris showroom enabling consumers to see how its products work. Meanwhile, at the

foundries of cutlery manufacturer Laguiole, you can now learn how to make your own knife under the guidance of a master cutler (€160 for an eight-hour course).

Analysis

These three original initiatives may well provide a taste of the future, while illustrating the media's limitations when it comes to conveying the messages of brands and the latter's need to come up with new ways of reaching their audience. The aim here is no longer to strengthen the bond between consumers and products, which is often the goal of the demonstration workshops traditionally held by brands in stores, but to build a relationship between individuals and a brand's philosophy, based on a greater understanding of its know-how and manufacturing processes. Brands are becoming teachers and individuals their students. Could this be a new way for brands to cater for consumers' hunger to understand, while establishing more emotional and even physical ties with them?

Week 4 | 25 June

When a brand becomes a place to meet.

How can a brand manifest itself physically? Lexus has an answer.

<https://www.lexus.eu/discover-lexus/lounge-by-lexus/#tour>

Seen in Brussels

On 25 April this year, carmaker Lexus inaugurated its “Lounge by Lexus” at Brussels airport. Its design is inspired by Omotenashi, a Japanese form of hospitality founded on the discreet anticipation of customer needs. Covering a surface area of 700m², the facility has capacity for 175 guests, a central lounge, a bar, an upper lounge with a more relaxing atmosphere, and a separate section that is more muted and equipped with workspaces. It also features an area devoted to the brand, which enables visitors to explore Lexus designs and Takumi craftsmanship through “storytelling” displays containing objects, photos and books retracing the brand’s history, from its cutting-edge technology to its motorsport victories. The space also includes a vast spa, rest zones and a listening room featuring the best in hi-fi. This facility for frequent flyers is incorporated into Brussels Airlines’ Loft area and is open every day from 5 am to 9 am.

What to think of it?

When a carmaker opens its own lounge in an airport, this clearly highlights the desire of today’s brands to **surprise people by turning up where they are least expected and offering entirely new experiences** to their customers. This particular example is not just a place to relax or yet another showroom presenting new models, which can sometimes be the case in airports, but **a veritable showcase for the brand’s values** and, more specifically, for **how it sees its relationship with customers, as well as with design and craftsmanship**. The idea is to listen to the former, anticipate their expectations and draw them in by telling them a new story, one that is suggested rather than asserted, to spell out the importance the brand places on the customer relationship. But the aim is also to highlight the brand’s links to the latter, to underline its keenness to innovate and to maintain a degree of aesthetic continuity. Both components of this approach allow Lexus to **step out of the confines of its core business and mark itself out as a lifestyle brand** that is both innovative and international. Previously, brands strived to reach all potential buyers. Today, some are seeking to **address the widest possible audience by creating multiple points of entry**, so as to attract attention, display their know-how and demonstrate their commitment to design, technology and even craftsmanship.

Summing up

In the United States, more and more museums offer time slots devoted exclusively to visitors with strollers and children under 18 months. Exactly the kind of scheme that can expand an audience.

Amsterdam has teamed up with retailer Explicit Wear and manufacturer Gumdrop to create Gumshoe, a sneaker whose sole is 20% recycled chewing gum recovered from the city’s streets. A clever way of raising awareness of this form of pollution.

<http://www.gumshoe.amsterdam>

Christian Y. / Brand, Communication & Advertising

British hair salon chain Bauhaus offers a “quiet chair” that enables customers to have their hair done while relaxing and without feeling obliged to have a conversation.

<http://www.hairbauhaus.com/the-quiet-chair/>

Catching the eye

According to a survey conducted by Mindshare and MPanel from 24 to 27 March 2018 on a sample of 825 men and women aged 16 to 70, 35% of French people no longer touch the screen of their phone when they want to make a call. Instead, they just ask Bixby or Siri to do it for them. Similarly, one-third prefer to dictate their text messages rather than typing them out and to request a map route using voice commands.