



ACADEMIC PAPER

Fast fashion requires fast marketing

Category
management in
fashion

The role of category management in fast fashion positioning

301

Mandy Sheridan, Christopher Moore and Karinna Nobbs
Business School, Glasgow Caledonian University, Glasgow, UK

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this article is to review the potential contributions of category management (CM) to the UK fashion sector and subsequently to establish evaluation criteria for the application of CM in the UK fashion sector.

Design/methodology/approach – Qualitative research was employed through an exploratory case study method.

Findings – Category management is limited in its application in the fashion industry. The study found that fashion companies adopted collaborative structures in order to implement a CM approach and a CM approach contributes to the development of a fast fashion business orientation.

Research limitations/implications – Exploratory case study method does not allow for the results to be generalised.

Originality/value – The paper proposes a model of the evaluation of the application of category management in the fashion sector.

Keywords Customer satisfaction, Supply chain management, Fashion industry, Retailing, Buyer-seller relationships

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

“Fast fashion” – the term used to denote among other things, the strategies that Retailers adopt in order to reflect current and emerging trends quickly and effectively in current merchandise assortments (Ferne et al., 2004) raises important issues with respect to the processes of effective merchandise management. Within the retail grocery sector, category management (CM) strategies have been adopted which seek to re-align retail buyer and manufacturer, (as supplier) relationships to make these more collaborative and hence more responsive to market opportunity. Defined as “the strategic management of product groups through trade partnerships, which aims to maximise sales and profits by satisfying customer needs” (IGD, 2002, p. 1), CM has proved to be an efficient and effective way for food companies to quickly respond to market trends as these emerge – and as such it is perhaps reasonable to assume that a CM approach may have application as a response to the effective management of fast changing fashion merchandise. Drawing from a review of the CM literature and based upon a multi-case study analysis of the merchandise management strategies of leading British fast fashion retailers, the aim of this paper is to examine the contribution of CM as a strategic business development tool for the adoption of a fast fashion positioning

