

No brand: brands that deny traditional marketing

No brand: marcas que negam o marketing tradicional



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ABSTRACT

The study aims to understand how No Brand niche brands, which deny traditional marketing, create the necessary communication for the sale. From a qualitative analysis, the understanding of the fashion brand The Unbranded Brand is expanded. It identifies the different marketing characteristics present in the communication of traditional brands and No Brand brands. It discusses how a brand can be conceptualized “no brand”, describes the positioning, aesthetics, and communication of No Brand brands. The conclusions are that the goal is to simplify sales and communication, create a niche for fatigued consumers and make prices more affordable, but above all, sell for the concept of not having a brand. However, it is perceived that in the fashion business, the concept suffers restrictions in the application given that the products have strong immaterial and creative content.

KEYWORDS

No Brand. Fashion Brands. Traditional Marketing.

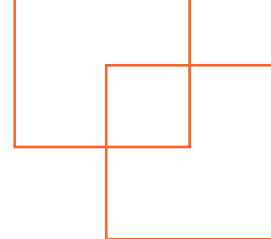
RESUMO

O estudo visa compreender como as marcas de nicho Sem Marca, que negam o marketing tradicional, criam a comunicação necessária para a venda. A partir de uma análise qualitativa, amplia-se o entendimento sobre a marca de moda The Unbranded Brand. Identifica as diferentes características de marketing presentes na comunicação de marcas tradicionais e marcas Sem Marca. Ele discute como uma marca pode ser conceituada como “sem marca”, descreve o posicionamento, a estética e a comunicação das marcas Sem Marca. As conclusões são que o objetivo é simplificar as vendas e a comunicação, criar um nicho para consumidores cansados e tornar os preços mais acessíveis, mas acima de tudo, vender pelo conceito de não ter marca. No entanto, percebe-se que no ramo da moda, o conceito sofre restrições na aplicação visto que os produtos possuem forte conteúdo imaterial e criativo.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

No Brand. Marcas de moda. Marketing tradicional.





INTRODUCTION

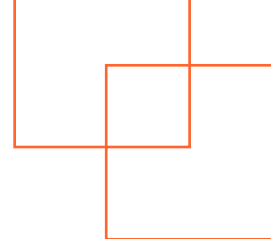
As defined by INPI - Instituto Nacional da Propriedade Industrial (2017) a trademark is “a distinctive sign whose main functions are to identify the origin and distinguish goods or services from other identical, similar or related goods or services of diverse origin”. A brand is the whole set of elements that involve a product or service with the aim of giving it meaning and/or value. The variety of elements strategically placed in a merchandise varies in terms of images, sounds, words, symbols, music, colors, among so many other mechanisms that are purposely there.

Owning a brand has become much more than functionally “marking” or identifying a product. More than that, it has come to mean value, telling stories, providing a certain lifestyle, proving a status and certifying quality. In contrast to this “logomaniac” structure where the most seen is better and the most expensive is more reliable, a movement known as No Brand has emerged, consisting of brands that are sold precisely because they do not have brands, exemplified in the field of fashion with the jeans brand The Unbranded Brand, or also with the brand Brandless, which sells products from stationery to food.

No Brands defend the democratization of the good for an affordable price, since they work differently from traditional companies, combining factors that, although not a priority, end up allowing for the reduction of the final cost of the products. Such factors are products with minimalist aesthetics, printing on the packaging only what is necessary – providing rest for the eyes of those who consume - dedicated to quality, transparency and simplicity. And it is through such actions that this trend proposes the detachment from brands and supports the consumption of products based only on their functionality and not by the symbol or name they carry on their surface, a dynamic which is present, for example, in the various Brandless brand products.

As we live in a society where belonging and identification with material goods are basic principles for the purchase relationship, and that we are manipulated and exposed to brands at all times, the research question arises: how do No Brand brands communicate with consumers to create the necessary bond for consumption? Thus, the problem is especially relevant in the Fashion sector, where brands symbolize both the status and the representation of quality.

The objective of this research is to contribute to the understanding of No Brand behavior, to identify the market niche and how a brand



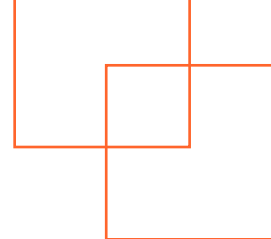
conceptualized as “no brand” sells and communicates. It is also intended to disseminate knowledge among fashion professionals - both in the market and in academia - about this new trend, influencing and contributing to the way of thinking, doing and changing fashion. Thus, to answer the questions presented, we use qualitative research, supported by bibliographic review, and descriptive research, with analysis of the fashion brand The Unbranded Brand through images and information contained in the corporate website.

To define the concepts and style of No Brand, the analyses are developed through qualified sites, because it is still a recent concept and for this reason, there is not enough comprehensive information in scientific publications and books. The comprehension and definition of traditional brand marketing comes from authors Chevalier and Mazzolovo (2003), who discuss the power of logos as a strategy for brand differentiation; Miranda (2008), who raises questions about the importance of the symbol in the formation of the individual in society, especially in the fashion industry. In the conception of a new type of marketing, social trends, consumption and niche market, the authors Kotler (2016) and Anderson (2006) are mentioned, getting closer to the concepts of new No Brand brands.

2 THE CONCEPT OF NO BRAND

No Brand can be defined as a recent market trend, which aims to debrand brands. Take away from products, goods and objects the excessive amount of information, which in most cases is not necessary. In addition, they promote a different style of purchase and relationship with consumers, more humane and simplistic. Both Starmen (2017) and Joel (2013) state that removing the cover that involves a brand can help bring its essential qualities, making it more real, honest and interesting. The move is known as debranding, a necessary response to brand fatigue.

The emergence of brands on a large scale, according to Mazzalovo and Chevalier (2003, p. 27), as it is known, is mostly derived from the Industrial Revolution, with the advance of machinery, the growth of mass production and the need to always be advertising products. Thus, Raymond Bauer and Stephen Greyser (1968, apud Mazzalovo and Chevalier 2003, p. 18) estimate that an American citizen was subjected to around eighty exhibitions to advertisements, today this number reaches around twenty thousand. And it is in the continuation of this pattern that we



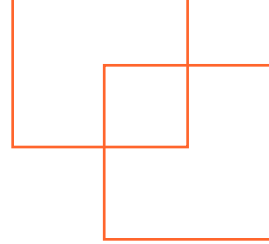
find the new consumer: saturated and confused at the time of purchase. There are many personalities, opinions and lifestyles available to the consumer, who no longer distinguishes what really matters inside a package.

According to Mazzalovo and Chavelier (2003, p. 26) a brand can be defined as a group of symbols and meanings, that is, a figurative representation of a product or service. Furthermore, it works as an exchange system in which two poles are closely related. The authors also state that, as a result, the brand becomes a symbol of trust for those who consume and a commitment to quality on the part of the producer. Kotler (2016, p. 65, our translation) defines “a brand as a set of images - usually a name, a logo and a slogan - that distinguishes a company’s product or service offer from those of its competitors”. For the authors cited, the brand represents the connective link that remains in the consumer as a reminder of history, values, partnership and commitment, the link being an unconscious symbol of credibility.

In this context, brands exist because they can be identified and differentiate themselves from their competitors. According to Mazzalovo; Chavelier (2003, p. 26) the consumer chooses the brand for its qualities, and therefore the differentiation of the brand is part of the contract in the relationship between the two parties: consumer and product.

According to Kotler (2016, p. 77) even so, through different channels - online and offline - consumers are still subject to an excess of product quality, promises, arguments and conventions. No longer believing in miraculous and incredible advertisements that are too incredible to be true, consumers start not believing, choosing to trust more honest sources: friends and family. Promises from companies and unfulfilled advertisements lead to disappointment in purchasing practice, which in turn creates a space for frustration. It is in this context that the No Brand trend has its place. According to Elegem (2017), the No Brand logic assumes that when the brand is diminished in relevance, the only thing left is the “naked” product: without marketing, which is often used as a tool to cover up the failures of the product. Also through this thought, the author exemplifies the behavior of “unchecking” as the experience of a user: when using a collaborative platform, or renting a car, for example, what matters is the functionality of the product in achieving the promised goal, and in this case, the brand is no longer something relevant.

Defenders of the ideology that everyone deserves the best, and the best should not cost more, the creators behind brands without brands have found within a society fatigued by advertising a space to be expanded: the sale of the literal product, what it really is, and not an idea of it.



That, according to Perez, can be defined:

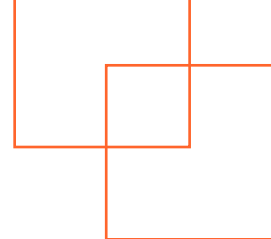
Without a brand, a product is one thing - a commodity, a coffee bag, a shoe or a gravy can. For most product categories, the consumer's perception of a generic product, without a brand, tends to be dominated by the product's condition as a thing, by its merely functional attributes and benefits, depriving it of its emotional burden (PEREZ, 2004, p. 11, our translation).

In this understanding, uniting discontent for false promises, exhaustion for excessive exposure to brands and with new ways of thinking and buying, No Brand customers "serve the "new" type of consumer, who is tired of marketing stories and only wants to buy a good product, not the lifestyle story behind this product" (ELEGEM, 2017, pg. 87, our translation).

3 THE NICHE OF NO BRAND

According to Kotler (2000), a niche can be defined by a certain group, or small market, whose needs are not being fully met. Thus, it is understood that the emergence of No Brand brands can be related to a market need felt by the new consumer profile, which is no longer contemplated when buying traditional products. This lack is now solved once the needs of customers and the understanding of the social situation in which the market is inserted are placed as the focus of a brand.

To recognize the insufficiency of a sector within a given market (here the scale is already reduced from market to sector), to gather its particularities and with that, to build a new commerce, is to segment or niche, and in this way, to make specific and increasingly reach the needs that consumers may have. Las Casas (2015, p. 1, our translation) states that "grouping homogeneous characteristics in consumption from heterogeneous markets facilitates knowledge, [...] differences allow the formation of exclusive segments and knowledge of their structures, consumption habits, evolution, and change becomes a competitive advantage." Thus, still according to the author, segmenting means dividing heterogeneous markets into smaller groups that are formed by homogeneous consumers. Similarly, Anderson (2006, p. 153, our translation) states that "as a consequence, we can consider culture today not as a big blanket, but



as the superposition of many intertwined threads, each of which is individually accessible and interconnects different groups of people at the same time. It also ensures that, in short, we see the displacement of mass culture into a huge variety of parallel cultures, a movement that can be seen in the emergence of No Brand brands - which coincides with the new existing consumer profile and the demand for other brand positions.

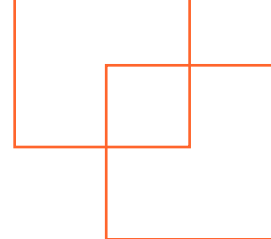
In relation to the need for market specification and a new consumer with new ideals, Carvalhal (2016, p. 96, our translation) states that “the current era of marketing is about identification. Not just “what” products “have,” “what they do,” or “what they make us feel” that attracts us. He also defends that today, all take place at the same time, summarizing in the notion of “who is” the brand, and also, that this evolution in the understanding of the brand makes a lot of sense for the planetary era in which we live: that of being. However, as everything has changed, the points of identification with a brand need to evolve as well.

In this sense, Kotler (2016, p. 33, our translation) claims that “a new kind of consumer, one that will be the majority in the near future, is emerging globally - young, urban, middle class, with strong mobility and connectivity”. In addition, he says that “in a highly technological world, people yearn for deep involvement. The more social we are, the more we want things tailor-made for us” (KOTLER, 2016, p. 12, our translation).

It is through this evolution that No Brand brands have found market opportunity, and have therefore developed the niche of brands without a brand: current, which talks to the new ideology of “being” and satisfies the search for greater identification with products by consumers.

4 POSITIONING OF NO BRAND BRANDS

Brands that identify themselves as No Brand start to use a new positioning before the market and consumers. Friendlier to their customers, advocates of transparent marketing, dedicated to quality and economy. For Tina Sharkey, co-founder of the brand Brandless - an American supermarket chain - where everything is sold in simple and functional packaging, with an affordable price range, to market in a non-branded fashion is “about the true democratization of the good. It means that everyone deserves better things at affordable prices. Everyone deserves to be seen not for what they do, but for what they are” (SHARKEY, 2017,



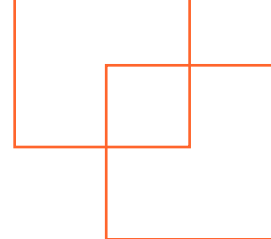
our translation).

The concept practiced by No Brand brands, which promotes accessibility to good products at good prices, comes from the understanding that the most expensive is not always the best, as well as a symbol printed on the surface of a product does not guarantee quality. This is because, according to Sharkey (2017), the products manufactured today do not go directly to the shelf and consequently to the final consumer. Traditional brands apply high mark-ups on the cost of manufacture on goods, such as distribution and inventory, for example. Thus, for No Brand brands to be able to market in accordance to their principles of economy and accessibility, it is necessary to cut the middle way between the supplier and the shelf. With this, the extra fees that are usually hidden in the product by marketing, names and packaging, for example, are eliminated, making the final price much more accessible and taking the goods directly from the producer to the final consumer, according to Sharkey (2017).

Brands that work in a conventional way continue to offer products on shelves and consumers continue to choose to buy them, however, there is a new No Brand market niche to be researched, enabling new shopping alternatives and questions. According to YAHN (2018, our translation), the quality of traditional brands is not denied, “what changes now is that there are quality options at more affordable prices and that communicate through essential values, values that in turn reach new consumers, a more informed generation with greater power of choice. Therefore, producing and selling in a non-branded way is, according to Alterman (2017, our translation), apud Lidsky (2018, online), “representing less, which is more, more what the customers want”. In addition, it is bringing to the market, especially the fashion market, a new way of communicating through sales. Precisely because it is a branch currently saturated with names and symbols, where often a brand has more weight than the product, “debranded” thinking is a new proposal.

5 TRADITIONAL VERSUS NO BRAND MARKETING

Marketing can be defined, according to Las Casas (2015, p. 1, our translation), by a “philosophical orientation of marketing characterized

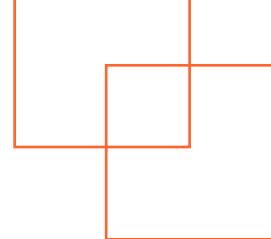


by the search for the satisfaction of consumer desires and needs". For a long time, the way of doing marketing has changed little, however, with the growth of the Internet we see advances in how to understand the market and reach the consumer. Therefore, the new model of Marketing is directed to digital media, in a more inclusive way, involving an audience with less time, with more access to information and that is more curious (KOTLER, 2010).

Digital marketing comes as a complement to traditional marketing, and according to Kotler (2010, p. 69, our translation) "both must coexist, with interchangeable roles, along the path of the consumer," in addition, "as digital marketing is more controllable than traditional marketing, its focus is to promote results, while the focus of traditional marketing is to initiate interaction with customers. The way to sell and communicate through digital means comes in response to a generation that, still according to Kotler (2010, p. 20), has the power in its hands, and more than that, has the connectivity as the most important agent of change. Through this context of marketing, linked to brand fatigue, consumer behavior emerges and consequently, the No Brand style of selling. According to Kotler (2010, p. 27, our translation) "The concept of consumer confidence is no longer vertical. It is now horizontal. In the past, consumers were easily influenced by marketing campaigns" since today there are more demanding and challenging customers. Moreover, this new user now recognizes other sources of information as safe, instead of advertising campaigns, such as spontaneous conversations, social circles, i.e. spheres of influence supplanting traditional marketing communications.

Adolpho (2011, p. 174, our translation) confirms that "the consumer does not trust the brands presented to him/her so easily by advertising and prefers the neutral opinion of friends. The consumer is experiencing a credibility crisis". Moreover, the author (2011, p.161) claims that the difference is the simplification of the fields of knowledge provided by the Internet, generating mass accessibility to information that, until then, was accessible to few. Thus, the power of truth goes to the hands of the client. "External simplicity to elaborate internal complexity" (ADOLPHO, 2011, p. 160, our translation).

Rublescki (2009) highlights the advantages of digital marketing, pointing out above all the ease of knowing the consumer, the flexibility to change the content of campaigns according to the response of consumers, the interactive essence, lower costs and ease of control given the availability of parameter and their measurement.



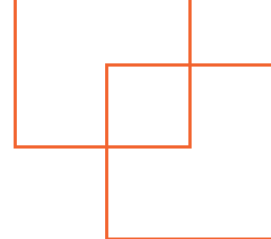
Cintra (2009) states that digital marketing strategies have proven effective in many businesses, while Toledo et al (2002, p. 52, our translation) argues that “the migration from mass advertising to a one-to-one marketing approach has been facilitated by technology applied on the Internet.

It is important to note, according to Kotler, Kartajaya and Setiawan (2016), when describing Marketing 4.0, that technological convergence ends up leading to a convergence between digital and traditional marketing. Today, it is essential to have this flexibility present in brands, as well as the ability to adapt to the rapid changes in technological and consumer trends and to add all this to the organizational identity. Although No Brand does not have dissemination as a pure ideal, it influences traditional brands to absorb aspects as a response to new values and aspirations of consumers, which are constantly evolving.

It is in this context that No Brand fits the digital marketing model of selling that, consequently, adjusts to the profile of consumers that is emerging. More connected, with access to instant information, without having to place all confidence in brands because they are brands, active, saturated by excessive commercial appeal and with a desire for more transparency. Thus, one notices more and more trends focused on the human, internal and necessary. According to the author, the search for simplicity in favor of a movement of non-consumerism and the search for sustainability are devaluations of what is outside to value what is inside each one. Much of this can be associated with living in the age of information and truth, where nothing else can be hidden or covered up as was done until then.

By analyzing the principles followed by the No Brand trend, one perceives the relationship between the theories defended by authors (Kotler (2010); Adolpho (2011); Las Casas (2015)) and the practice of new companies on the market. Adolpho (2011, p. 161, our translation) highlights that brands that present simplicity and sincere relationship with the consumer will gain their sympathy because they make the complex simple, and the inaccessible democratic, and supports the idea that this “simple does not mean lowly, mediocre or bad, but so elaborate that only what is really essential is presented to the user. Which again matches the practice of No Brand brands, where products have quality equivalent to traditional brands, but simpler and more economical aesthetics and operation.

Consequently, it is understood that society, with access to technolo-



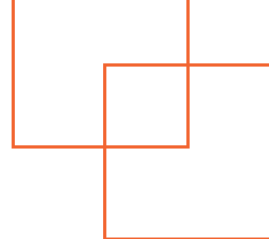
gical advance, helped in the construction of No Brand Marketing. Social transformations created by new consumers and buying patterns that make of this set a new lifestyle and choices, and this type of demand generated the No Brand movement. For the author, investing in this model focusing on its consumer audience, being closer and more natural will be the other great advance of new brands. Having said that, we understand the importance of the No Brand market when analyzing the new niche of target audience, saturated with advertisements and that no longer buy the idea of a symbol as before. For this reason, placing the consumer as a guide and satisfying their needs has become a growing type of business.

According to Erskine (2017), in 1986 the New York Times published an article called “No-Frills, No Sales” in which it addressed the generic drug trade. The goal was to consume products of the same quality as medicines from known brands and laboratories, but without paying extra for marketing, packaging or name. According to the author, the fall occurred when users began to question the quality of generic products, and with that, well-known brands and competitors fought over prices, returning as an option of recognition and confidence to consumers, leading the group of generics almost to extinction.

It is important to summarize the arguments presented in Table 1, comparing relevant factors in the sale of brands through traditional marketing and No Brand brands, contributing to a better understanding of their differences and complementarities.

Table 1: Differences between Traditional Marketing and No Brand Marketing

Factors	Traditional Marketing	No Brand Marketing
Marketing	Focus on advertisement.	Digital and engagement marketing, transparent and objective communication.
Communication	Persistent, exaggerated and often misleading, focused on selling the product through external and aesthetic conventions.	Sincere, simple, direct, transparent, objective, seeks to inform the product as it is.
Information	Excess information and not always necessary content.	Simple, presents only what is essential for understanding the product.
Consumer	Search for status and satisfaction in the purchase of the product, has brands as symbols of credibility, the most expensive is better.	Concerned with sustainable causes, analyzes attitudes, purchase by necessity and functionality.



Purchase style	The brand is more relevant than the product.	The product is more relevant than the brand.
Relationship	Fatigued, dependence on social affirmation, status and credibility of brands.	Friendly, close, true and realistic, transparent in sales.
Product	Subjective quality, covered by Marketing actions, high prices.	Superior quality or equivalent to traditional brand products, lower price, more economical.
Packaging	Aesthetically charged, seeks to attract attention and sell by external appearance.	Simple, clean and minimalist aesthetic, functional and objective.
Cost	High by the mark-ups added by each process of the value chain, from manufacturing to selling the product (brands, suppliers, producers, packaging).	No mark-ups or extra fees, since the sale seeks to be directly between the supplier and the final consumer.
Prices	High, leveraged by symbolic value and brand status.	Fair, focused on delivering intrinsic value and quality.

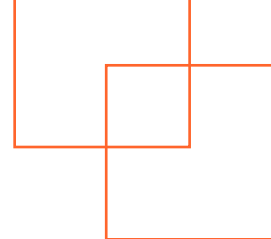
Source: elaborated by the authors.

To answer the research question, which reflects on how No Brand works for fashion, the next item exposes the relevance of symbolism in fashion consumption.

6 SYMBOLISM IN FASHION BRANDS

In the fashion segment, according to Cobra (2008, p. 44, our translation) “the marketing of the companies was aimed at building the brand without taking into account its symbolic value. Currently, the symbolic has gained prominence for what the brand represents in intangible terms, therefore being managed permanently by this aspect”. In addition, fashion brands seek the power to provide an image of quality and status, surpassing the limits of the physical attributes of the product, registered in the conscious, to beyond, which would be intangible values, that is, their “soul”, installed in the unconscious. (COBRA, 2008, our translation).

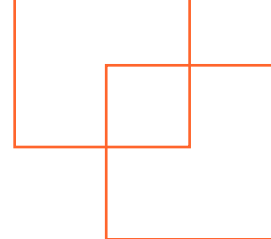
According to Miranda (2008), symbolic consumption behavior is an important area for 21st century marketing, since events such as globalization tend to diminish borders between cultures and countries, which in turn provokes in the human being the need to possess an identity, linked to a certain group, being able to distinguish it from the crowds. Through symbols, fashion is branded and makes a mark. Precisely because it is a



segment of social affirmation, confirmation of quality and status, signs (meaning) and symbols (image) are present as unconscious evidence in the midst of products. For Miranda (2008, p. 55), the consumption of fashion brands is the exercise of symbolic consumption, being a form of expression that establishes the social identity of the individual.

The author states that products are associated with the personality of the consumer through visibility, variability and differentiation. These associated attributes lead to the personalization of consumption. For the author, the word brand summarizes the “language of consumption”, the products propose an acronym and this acronym/brand may replace its name. An example is the brand Levi’s, which emerged as a synonym for jeans. In its principle, the brand has the function of indicating a product, however, in the background it seeks to mobilize affective connotations. In this context, it is understandable the importance of symbolism for the market itself, but especially in fashion. In general, the matter of aesthetics and status have always had great value, as an example the author compares the situation with the purchase of a bag of rice in the supermarket: at this moment, the consumer is not so concerned with the eloquence of a product that will be hidden in the closet, nor with the butter that goes to the table. However, the situation is quite different - almost beyond any comparison - when faced with jeans pants. In other words, fashion is exposed, and once exposed, it has social power and influence on how the consumers see themselves and how they plan for others to see them.

Still in this context, Miranda (2008, p. 29) maintains that the construction of personal identity takes place through the use of brand identity, which is built from the projection of an ideal image, leading people to fall in love with a brand, because in it they will see themselves or they will see what they would like to see in themselves, completing the uncomfortable emptiness of not being satisfied with themselves. In addition, the author defends that the individual does not adjust to society without sharing its meanings, language, clothes and habits. Thus, symbols in general drive the purchasing attitude of one product or another, varying according to the meanings expressed in the society where the individual interacts, how the individual is defined and wishes to be perceived, contributing in the construction of individual and social identity, and for this reason, fashion - which is made and depends on signs and meanings - has a relevant role in the formation of the social.



7 THE UNBRANDED BRAND

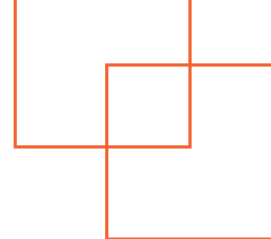
To understand how No Brand brands communicate with their niche consumers, the work proposes to analyze marketing strategies, communication and aesthetics of fashion brand products with No Brand proposal. The American premium jeans brand, The Unbranded Brand, was identified through the website page (<https://theunbrandedbrand.com>).

For the proposed analysis, it is first necessary to understand the meaning of communication, since it is the basis for the exchange of meanings between two agents. Thus, according to Pinheiro (2005, p. 10, our translation) “communication comes from the Latin *communicare*, which means to make common, share, exchange opinions, associate, confer. The act of communicating implies exchanging messages, which in turn involves sending and receiving information. Communication is the provocation of common meanings between communicator and interpreter using signs and symbols”.

Thus, the study of the transmission of messages made by the brand and their reception by consumers is fundamental to understand how the public reacts to and understands the message that the brand sends. This evaluation is made possible through the observation of the corporate website, as well as through videos (reviews) made by consumers when they receive the online purchased products from the brand.

The Unbranded Brand is an American premium jeans brand, which does not have a logo, washing, advertising, embroidery or celebrities in campaigns, but focuses on quality. Its distinctive characteristic is selling jeans - famous fashion product with big names that represent the segment - with the No Brand concept: “The Unbranded Brand is a crazy concept in the world of premium apparel. While other companies try to create a brand image through expensive ad campaigns and celebrity endorsements, we do the opposite. Have you ever wondered why some “premium” jeans cost as much they do? What is the difference between jeans that sell for \$250 and others that sell for \$80? (THE UNBRANDED BRAND, 2019).

Both the sale and the brand and product information are contained on the website itself. The Unbranded Brand jeans are purchased over the internet, with the price ranging from jeans pants to jackets ranging from US\$ 80 to US\$ 133. In addition, the site informs distribution centers in several states of the United States, which contain pieces of the brand or other sites that also resell online around the world, such as Canada,



China, France, and Germany among other countries. The pieces sold are classified as raw denim. The site explains raw jeans and why the choice for such product. According to the creators (2019), "Raw denim is the term for denim fabric that is unwashed and untreated. The vast majority of jeans sold today are produced by washing and distressing the denim in order to create an artificial worn-in look." Then concludes that they chose raw denim for its beauty, which will fade over time, obtaining a faded and unique personalized piece. (THE UNBRANDED BRAND, 2019).

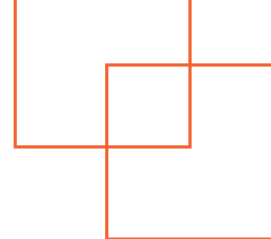
For a better understanding of The Unbranded Brand concept, it is necessary here to analyze 3 images taken from the site itself, paying attention to the aesthetics of No Brand products, their positioning and, consequently, the communication with their niche public. The piece of Figure 1 is arranged as presented in the site for the purchase. The raw and dark jeans, without details, tears or washes, once again relates to the concept of the brand.

Figure 1: The Unbranded Brand Jeans pants



Source: The Unbranded Brand. Available: <https://theunbrandedbrand.com/collections/all/products/ub301-straight-fit-indigo-selvedge>. Accessed March 19 2019.

The leather patch label is smooth, with nothing printed or engraved, symbolizing the absence of a brand, which draws a lot of attention, since these labels usually have the brand written or embroidered. Another relevant aspect is the white internal fabric label - which usually carries the name or information about the piece - and, in this case, has no function, since it is there in white, just to remind the absence of a brand. The trimmings - in this case buttons - placed on the product, as well as



all the rest, are always unmarked, without any kind of information or anything that refers to the brand. Moreover, the piece is simple, without ornaments, printed writings or mini labels embedded, all so that it is as debranded as possible.

The second item analyzed, represented by Figure 2, is a traditional jeans jacket model, made in the raw dark color - as well as the pants and the other pieces of the brand - denoting the reduction of processes placed in the manufacture (washing and treatment).

Figure 2: The Unbranded Brand jeans jacket



Source: The Unbranded Brand. Available: <https://theunbrandedbrand.com/collections/jacket/products/ub901-denim-jacket-14-5oz-indigo-selvedge>. Accessed March 19 2019.

Everything in the product is basic and functional, in order to be what it is. The jacket has buttons, which again are smooth, without markings or ornaments. And just like the pants, its internal label is plain white fabric, again, reinforcing the concept of No Brand brands in not marking their products with printed names or symbols. Figure 3 - taken from the home page - located at the top of the site, is the first image to be noticed when accessing the brand webpage.

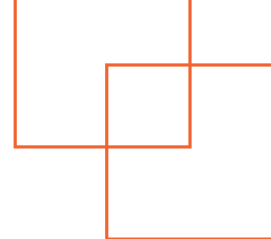


Figure 3: The Unbranded Brand brand



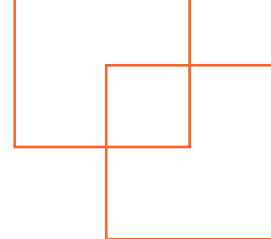
Source: The Unbranded Brand. Available: <https://theunbrandedbrand.com/>.

Accessed March 19 2019.

It works as an introductory advertisement of the brand, since it contains the informative sentences of the operation and concept of The Unbranded Brand, demonstrating to the user, at first sight, its central idea in a simple and direct way. The phrase reads: “No Branding. Without Branding. No Embroidery. No Advertising Campaigns. No Celebrities. All you pay for are the jeans. What a simple concept” (THE UNBRANDED BRAND, 2019) and right below, a button reads: “discover the collection”, which leads to the product catalog with prices and purchase options. Behind the sentence, you can see a body wearing the brand’s pants. The photo focuses on the patch label of smooth brown leather, one of the great references of the brand concept, and again, the pants follow the pattern of dark raw jeans, unwashed and with no embroidered ornaments, illustrating through the product what the sentence defends.

Besides the main page of the site, where it is already possible to find pants for purchase, ads (like Figure 3) and Instagram of the brand with photos of customers wearing the products, there is also the “About Us”. In this tab are registered in more detail the concept and features of the brand that make it a brand without brand. According to the creators of The Unbranded Brand:

We think overpriced and overpriced jeans are silly. That’s why we decided to focus on the core essentials instead: great fit, solid cons-

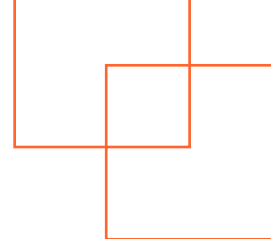


truction and top quality selvedge denim. By eliminating all that is unnecessary about branding, we can offer a better product at a better price. The Unbranded Brand is as simple as that. (THE UNBRANDED BRAND, 2019)

8 FINAL REMARKS

The study made possible a better understanding of the No Brand trend, its concepts, market niche and ways of communicating. The bibliographic research aided the comprehension of the subject as quite recent in Brazil, so investigating scientifically it is relevant to the area of fashion, since these brands are still emerging. It was also possible to compare traditional marketing, - to which society has been acquainted for some years - with the current digital marketing and how it is established in the No Brand niche. With this, it is understood that it is a current coming from the need of a generation that has the internet in its hands, instant knowledge and willingness to make life more true and human, so the relationship between No Brand and its customers is created as transparent, accessible, with a predominance of online communication, through friendly conversations, and thus reaching a specific niche of customers, where a stronger bond of engagement is built, completing the cycle - spontaneously - when the consumer spreads the brand on social networks, with friends and family.

When analyzing The Unbranded Brand jeans, one identifies the brand's No Brand positioning, with simple aesthetics, functional products, transparency in communication, more economical and accessible in price. However, the presence of blank labels, without embroidery, is questioned, which still reminisce the absence of a brand, reinforcing what brands exist, and that there - where that specific piece is blank - should have a printed name. The notion of de-branding a world where there are already so many brands is innovative and according to authors, it is possible to fulfill certain aspects and transform a traditional brand into a brand without a brand. However, the authors believe that there is still too much attachment to brands and status, giving immaterial meaning to society, especially in the fashion sector. Thus, the conclusion is that a brand - mainly a fashion brand - has difficulties in following the parameters that construct a No Brand brand, because of the immaterial aspects of fashion products and their symbolism which are present in



the fashion industry as a representation of status, social space, and consequently, of the individual. Thus, even if No Brand brands are positioned as debranded, they present some element of identification to mark themselves, - such as a patch of smooth leather, for example - without necessarily the presence of a logo or a written name. That is, No Brand brands, especially in fashion, are sold through the discourse of “not having a brand”.

Traditional brands will not cease to exist or to have credibility, however, No Brand brands appear as an alternative to a certain niche demand in response to the fatigue of advertisements, logos and names. Therefore, it is important to create companies with No Brand values, focused on what the consumer really needs, on their new ideology of the search for “being” and not for “appearing”, to look more inside themselves and care about the meaning and not their symbols, especially in a saturated sector like the fashion market.

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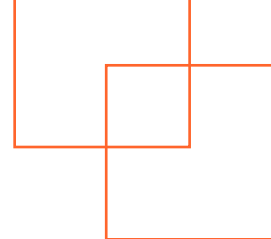
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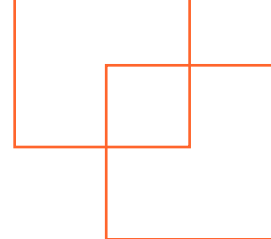
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