

23RD AUGUST 2023 | ISSUE N.008

VELVET *Edge*

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF BLUVELVET FASHION CONSULTING



Intelligent Design

From Fashion's earliest past to its effervescent future, the quest for relevance in the industry has remained a perpetual journey, punctuated by crossroads where creative authenticity intersects with the ever-shifting currents of style's evolution. Whether leading an indie brand or Couture house, today's fashion leader must balance creative integrity and the perpetual evolution of fashion trends — requiring a nuanced approach and an adept equilibrium that preserves the brand's essence, while remaining responsive to the dynamic currents of the industry.

That balance is easier envisaged than achieved; Any slip in implementing it, and the brand becomes yesterday's hot item overnight, commencing a downward slide in today towards a cold obscurity in tomorrow. On the other hand, excessive pandering to trends means the brand stands the risk of isolating its core tribes and holding the bag when a profitable trend has moved on. Navigating the fine in-between, where market success and brand acceptance occurs, demands a multifaceted approach, integrating the brand's origin with its forward trajectory.

To achieve this equilibrium, brands must learn to:

Know and Respect the brand's Core Identity

The brand's core identity must remain as the mantle around which the entire brand ecosystem revolves. That core includes the foundational elements that define the brand—its ethos, aesthetic, and values. This clarity serves as the compass for all future design decisions. A strategic leader ensures that any adaptation or innovation resonates with this identity, creating a seamless synergy between constancy and flux.

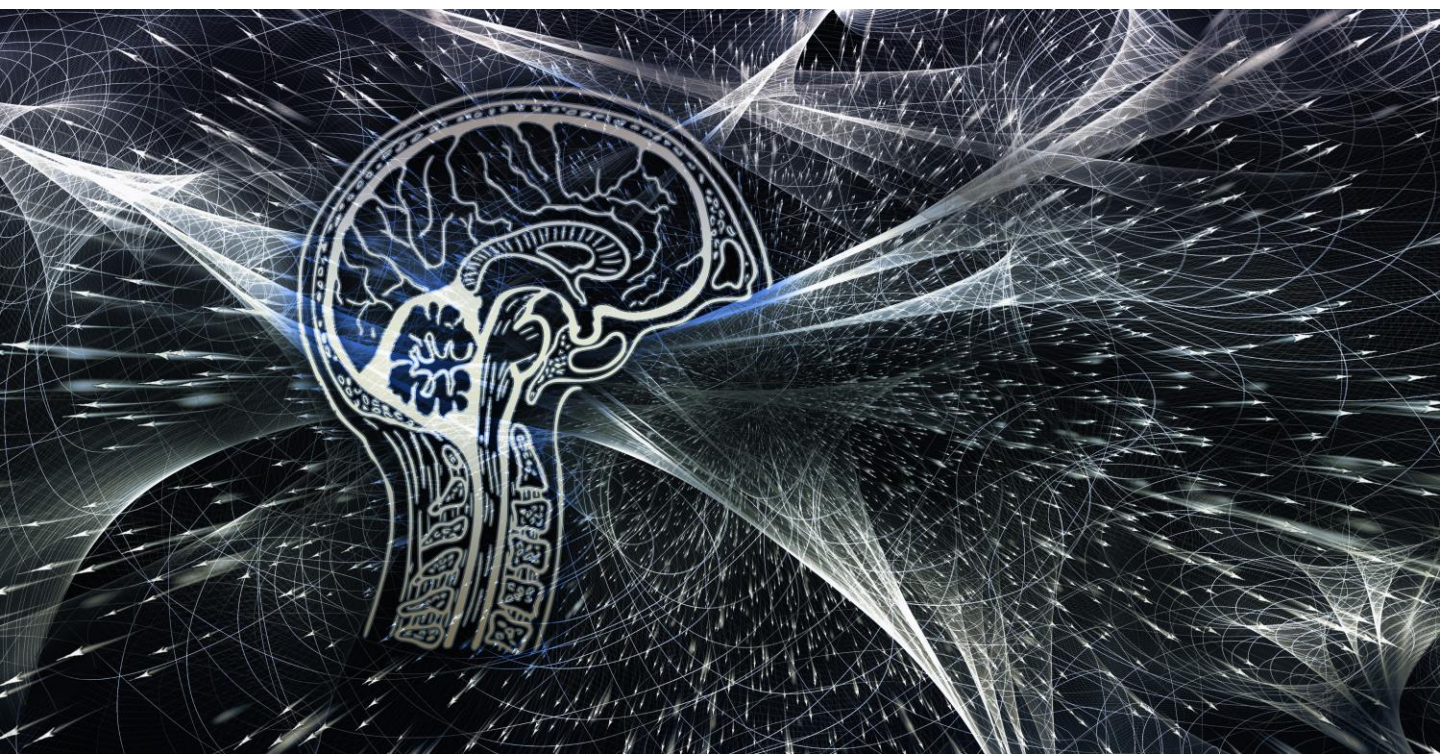
Invariably, the real art form of the ingenious fashion leader is making collections that look very old and very new; feel very then and very now, all at once. In fashion, translating the future and forging legacy must happen side by side.

Know and Respect Market Intelligence

It is important for every fashion brand to cultivate a robust system for tracking market trends, consumer behaviour and, industry insights to anticipate shifts. A proactive leader uses this intelligence to inform design decisions and ensure that the brand remains attuned to emerging preferences. By juxtaposing its brand style with a keen understanding of consumer needs, a brand can see areas of convergence between its brand origins and the prevailing market desire. This allows it to tailor its offerings that resonate with contemporary demands while staying faithful to its DNA.

Respect User-Generated Design (UGD)

From the humble days of tripadvisor.com, user-generated content is now considered a veritable source of product acceptability and marketing. That learning should also extend to design. The modern fashion brand should incorporate an iterative design process that encourages experimentation and evolution. Design-wise, that involves engaging with target audiences early and often to solicit feedback. By involving consumers in the design journey, a brand leader gains insights that can shape the direction of collections. This inclusive approach ensures that the brand's offerings are not just a projection of trends, but a reflection of consumer desires — especially that of the brand's core tribes. With the advent of AI, User Generated Design will take several forms as fashion progress further into the decade.





“Today’s Fashion brands must orchestrate a symphony where creative authenticity harmonizes with [Fashion] evolution ”.

Respect Collaborative Engagements

Forging collaborations with influencers, designers, and other industry stakeholders has become a powerful way to mint brand currency, inject brand invigoration and generate social equity. For design, collaborations provide a window into varied perspectives, sparking fresh ideas that can rejuvenate the brand's creative expression. Engagements with like-minded partners also expose the brand to different markets and audiences, facilitating opportunities for new growth in design innovation and outlook

Recognize Cultural Diversity

Crafting fashion collections inspired by indigenous art forms and cultures as well as collaborating directly with local artisans, can help brands maintain relevance and uphold brand essence. This approach honours heritage and produces distinctive pieces that appeal to an increasingly culturally conscious market. It also opens up the fashion brand to a whole new body of design knowledge, that can be subtly employed – in future collections – to bolster the brand's own typical style.

Leverage Technology

Exploring emerging technologies to integrate smart, adaptable fabrics and wearable tech into designs can help the brand stay on trend. This unexpected fusion of fashion and technology can create innovative, standout collections that resonate with modern consumers. This resonance can serve to rejuvenate the brand in the minds of its core consumers and signal to the market that the brand is fresh and in touch – a positioning every fashion brand constantly craves and envisions.

Today’s fashion brands must orchestrate a symphony where creative authenticity harmonizes with the evolution of fashion. The successful fashion leader deftly navigates through this duality, effectively steering the brand toward the future while respecting its past. By aligning the brand's core identity, staying attuned to the pulse of the market, fostering a user-aligned design approach, and embracing collaborative engagements and technology, leaders can traverse this tightrope in a centred and certain way - yielding a brand that connects with its origins while embracing the currents of change.

