



Thoughts on a Modern Brand

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The text offers a reflection on the characteristics of a modern brand in an evolving social and economic context. A modern brand stands out by constantly aligning with society while being forward-looking and initiative-taking. It boldly asserts its choices and values in a direct and powerful manner. Far from being static, the modern brand is in perpetual motion, challenging established habits and norms. Finally, it positions itself as a bearer of a certain truth, in the service of social progress and human well-being.

To understand how brands can adopt a modern stance, the text then analyses recent changes in consumer behaviours and expectations. Simplifying the offering and focusing on the utility of products and services is essential. Moreover, adopting an authentic CSR approach will become indispensable, as consumers are no longer satisfied with mere words. Finally, understanding the customers' perspectives and collaborating with them in the design of innovative products and services allows brands to stay attuned to the market and meet its expectations.

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I. What is a Modern Brand?

We propose to approach this question from three perspectives: the brand as strong in marketing terms (i.e., with strong brand equity), the brand as strong sociologically (i.e., embedded in the collective imagination), and finally, the brand as strong semiotically (i.e., perceived as having a strong personality).

To say that someone is modern is to consider them coordinated with their time, almost the unexpected, and futuristic. The history of art separates the two periods of modern art and contemporary art. Thus, beyond qualifying an era, it is indeed a state of being and a state of mind that are the main characteristics of modernity.

The modern subject asserts itself as the origin of its life. He assumes what he is.

« What intrinsically defines modernity is undoubtedly the way in which the human being is conceived and affirmed as the source of their representations and actions, as their foundation (subjectum, subject), or even as their author. »

Alain Renaut, L'individu


To be modern is to refuse to anchor oneself in habits and certainties. It means accepting the questioning of certain principles and embracing this inquiry. This applies even in fields as codified as art.

« Modernity is the transient, the fleeting, the contingent, half of art, the other half of which is the eternal and the immutable... This transient, fleeting element, whose metamorphoses are so frequent, you do not have the right to despise or do without. By eliminating it, you inevitably fall into the void of an abstract and indefinable beauty, like that of the only woman before the first sin... In short, for all modernity to be worthy of becoming antiquity, the mysterious beauty that human life involuntarily imbues it with must have been extracted... »

Baudelaire, Œuvres complètes

In sociology /philosophy ¹ :

¹ Tellez, Jean « Introduction à la Pensée de Comte Sponville »



Modernity is currently the subject of a debate that pits Moderns against Postmoderns, and even Hypermoderns. The Moderns are defined by a set of ideals, values, and beliefs that are not only contemporary but are also driven by a sense of historical direction: universalism, humanism, human rights, progress, emancipation, secularization, and democracy. History is seen as being guided by the ideals of the Enlightenment. We must defend them because they are justified by history or imposed by some universal rationality. This implies that these "rational" ideals are true. They would have the support of truth, nothing less. The others, the Anti-moderns, the reactionaries, the nostalgics for a mythical past, are in error. The Moderns thus have a dogmatic conception of modernity.

We can now try to apply all of this to a brand. Thus, a modern brand would be:

- Coordinated with society but always future-oriented, hence initiative-taking.
- A brand that embraces and stands by its choices, thus direct and powerful.
- A brand that is always in motion, questioning choices and habits.
- A brand positioning itself as the holder of truth, a truth in the service of humanity and social progress.


To understand what a modern brand might be today or in ten years, it is necessary to look at current societal and social developments. We present a selection of reflections in the following section.

II. Stimulating Reflection on Modern Branding

A. The purchasing habits of the French between 2022 and 2023²

The purchasing habits of the French in 2023 are marked by a search for low prices, more responsible consumption, and the increasing use of technologies to compare and purchase products. The commercial

² Baromètre Shopper 2023 (IPSOS)



landscape is evolving towards a multi-channel model where physical stores and e-commerce coexist and complement each other.

Indeed, there has been growing concern for spending control in recent years. Following the COVID-19 health crisis and after two years marked by restrictions and forced savings, consumers are now opting for "selected savings", prioritizing spending on essential needs. In fact, 87% of consumers make purchasing decisions in store to balance their means and their desires, and 66% buy more products when they are on promotion.

Additionally, multi-channel has become the norm, with 81% of French people using multiple channels to make their purchases, reflecting changing consumer habits in an increasingly connected world.

At the same time, the environmental sensitivity of French consumers is increasing, with 72% of them declaring that they are attentive to the origin of products and their environmental impact, according to Nielsen. This growing concern for more responsible consumption reflects an evolution in the values and concerns of consumers, who seek to align their purchases with their personal convictions.

Key figures:

- The smartphone is the main online purchasing tool, with 42% of French people owning one in 2023 (vs. 30% in 2012)
- The tablet is becoming a growing purchasing channel, with 15% of French people owning one in 2023 (vs. 7% in 2012)

B. Personal Data French are Ready to Share³

- 72% of French people say they are comfortable sharing personal information online, but only 62% are willing to share their online purchase data with brands in exchange for personalized offers.

³ Sensio, E., « L'Année Internet 2023 », Médiamétrie & « 85 % des responsables IT français s'attendent à ce que l'IA générative joue un rôle majeur dans leur organisation », Salesforces. (Août 2023)

- 59% are willing to share additional information with brands in exchange for a smoother, more personalized customer experience and 58% are willing to share their location with brands in exchange for location-based offers and services.
- 66% are more likely to buy from brands that provide them with relevant offers and recommendations.

At the same time, a Kantar study also conducted in 2023 reveals that 70% of French people believe that brands must be transparent about the way in which they collect and use their personal data. Additionally, 64% are more likely to trust brands that allow them to control the use of their personal data, while 58% are willing to pay more for products and services from brands that respect their privacy.

These figures highlight the growing importance of personalization and transparency in the relationship between consumers and brands, as well as the need for companies to implement data collection and use practices that respect expectations and consumer concerns.

C. The Importance of Social Media in the Purchasing Process⁴

In a context of the rise of e-commerce in France, 87% of French people have made at least one online purchase in 2023, compared to only 48% in 2013. This trend marks a notable change in consumption habits, consumers now favour their purchasing power and more restrained consumption.

The drive has also established itself as a purchasing method lastingly anchored in the habits of the French since 38% of households use the drive for their food shopping, recording an increase of 10 points since 2019. This trend reflects the growing preference for convenient and fast purchasing methods, adapted to the modern lifestyle.

On the other hand, despite the rise of e-commerce and the widespread use of smartphones for online purchases, the French remain among the least socially engaged online when it comes to advertisements on social media. Only 15% of French people buy after seeing an advertisement on social media, and 7% following a post about such an advertisement, according to data from various sources.

D. The Importance of the Purchasing Experience⁵

Current shopping trends demonstrate that consumers are looking for a personalized and immersive experience, even in an increasingly digital context. As online shopping continues to grow with 70% of affluent customers saying they buy more online than 5 years ago, a focus on the shopping experience can lead customers to favour physical stores. Two innovative tactics have recently emerged to meet this demand: mobile stores and the reinvention of the window display. In both cases, the key lies in personalizing the customer experience.

Take the example of the haute couture clothing brand Voyage Couture. Instead of opening traditional stores, the brand decided to create a unique experience by launching a “Pop-Up Jet set,” a pop-up boutique installed in a private jet converted into a luxury showroom. This innovative concept allows the brand to travel around the world, stopping in destinations popular with its target customers. At the same time, a digital communication campaign entitled #FlyInStyle was launched on social networks, generating strong enthusiasm, and attracting the attention of fashion lovers looking for an exclusive shopping experience.



⁵ Laine-Devroede, N. « Le e-commerce a satisfait des consommateurs qui ont privilégié leur pouvoir d'achat et une consommation plus sobre », Fevad, La Fédération Du E-commerce Et De La Vente À Distance. (Janvier 2024)

Lululemon is another interesting example. This premium sportswear brand launched Lululemon Lab, an experiential store concept located in trendy urban neighbourhoods. These spaces serve as design laboratories where customers can discover exclusive collections designed in collaboration with local designers. In addition to clothing, Lab stores often offer community events, yoga workshops and wellness sessions, providing a holistic experience that goes beyond the act of purchasing.



Finally, we find the example of Burberry which opened the first “Burberry Social Retail Store” in Shenzhen, China. This innovative store integrates advanced digital technologies to provide an immersive and interactive shopping experience. Customers can use the Burberry WeChat app to unlock exclusive features, such as augmented reality experiences, personalized recommendations, and interactions with other customers. The store is designed to encourage social engagement and community participation, providing customers with a unique shopping experience in the world of luxury.



E. Social class and DIY projects ⁶

In recent years, the motivations, and behaviours of men regarding DIY activities have undergone significant changes. Economic and social factors, particularly the economic crisis, have placed increased pressure on household finances, prompting men to turn to DIY as a means of saving money. It is also important to note that gender roles have evolved, with men becoming more involved in domestic tasks, including DIY projects, reflecting a shift in the traditional division of responsibilities within the household. Following the COVID-19 crisis, the increased amount of time spent at home has further heightened interest in home improvement. This phenomenon is also amplified by a growing appreciation for craftsmanship, indicating a societal trend towards a renewed appreciation for manual labour and artisanal creation.

Modern technologies have also played a crucial role in this evolution. The advent of online tutorials and digital tools has made DIY more accessible than ever, allowing men to embark on home improvement projects with greater confidence and skill.

Thus, men's motivations for their home improvement projects are no longer limited to constructing their masculine identity. Other factors, such as economic constraints, the appeal of modern technologies, and evolving gender roles, now play an equally significant role. This evolution highlights the importance of considering a broader range of social, economic, and cultural factors in understanding men's behaviours regarding DIY and home improvement.

F. Roadmap for Brands in 2024

The three key concepts expected by the French are: simplification, utility, and a committed CSR role.

Families have an increased expectation for simplification, particularly regarding the selection of basic products, clarity, and readability of the offer. Consumers, constantly pressed for time, demand simple and seamless experiences. Therefore, companies must simplify their offerings, communication, and purchasing

⁶ Mercier E., Latrille P. & Lamotte D., “Les Français en réparation d’objet”, IPSOS. (Juillet 2023)

processes. The integration of technologies such as artificial intelligence can help simplify the customer experience. Additionally, they expect brands to be innovative by focusing more on utility, which should either facilitate daily life (an innovation that makes life easier) or highlight patriotism (an innovation that highlights French expertise). Finally, families expect brands to take real CSR actions, not just make statements. Environmental and social concerns continue to grow in importance for consumers. Thus, companies must adopt a sincere and transparent CSR approach. CSR engagement can become a major strategic lever to stand out in the market.

G. A Future Business Model: CEM (Customer Experience Management)

CEM proposes customer attention as the central element of the business (and thus brand) strategy. It offers new opportunities for companies to differentiate and grow. This business model considers that the customer relationship (the real one, not just CRM) is an asset, even an asset of the company, with the idea being to transform every consumer of the brand into a supporter of that brand. CEM seeks a balance between the desires of consumers (e.g., resolutions, value, competence, practicality) and the company's needs for growth and profit. It enables the company to achieve a high CLV (Customer Lifetime Value).

Choosing CEM as a business model means anticipating consumers' desires, adopting a CEM mentality at all levels of the company, and understanding the consumers' point of view.

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