Ed Hardy (English version)

Anastasios Stilianidis

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Herausgeber  Wolfgang Burr

Betriebswirtschaftliches Institut der Universität Stuttgart
Lehrstuhl für ABWL, Forschungs-, Entwicklungs- und
Innovationsmanagement

Keplerstrasse 17
70174 Stuttgart

Erscheinungsort  Stuttgart, Deutschland
Ed Hardy

Dipl. Kfm. techn. Anastasios Stilianidis
Lehrstuhl Forschungs-, Entwicklungs- und Innovationsmanagement
(Institute of Research & Development and Innovation Management)
Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Burr
Universität Stuttgart
Keplerstrasse 17, 70174 Stuttgart
http://www.bwi.uni-stuttgart.de/innovation
e-mail: anastasios.stilianidis@bwi.uni-stuttgart.de

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1. Case Study

Christian Audigier, founder of the fashion label „Ed Hardy“, has become one of the most aspiring designers in last few years. Since the establishment of Ed Hardy in 2004, the self-made millionaire born in Avignon (France) rapidly advanced to become the new favourite of the Hollywood stars. Before Audigier created his new label in the US, he worked for renowned companies such as Levi’s, Lee, Diesel and Von Dutch. At first, he designed jeans and was then hired as a designer, after having previously attracted attention as a salesman by his fashion consciousness and sales talent in a jeans shop. However, the great breakthrough came with the fashionable baseball cap motifs of the Von Dutch company.¹ At Von Dutch, Audigier was responsible for the upswing of the brand name by a smart positioning strategy with which he helped Von Dutch to gain worldwide awareness. Through his success, he became the chief designer and poster child for Von Dutch before bringing his own label into being.

In retrospect, Von Dutch can be seen as a test run for Audigier’s later success story with Ed-Hardy. He set up a brand which is tainted with the anarchism of the Californian rock underworld and cultivated these qualities, which never actually come into contact with such a subculture, for the mass market.²

The suitable combination of pop culture, personality and leisure clothing which was characteristic of Von Dutch, became the perfect playground for Audigier. The name of the Von Dutch label derived from the famous motorcycle mechanic and "pinstriper" Kenneth "Von Dutch" Howard, who invented "pinstriping", a technology to varnish fine flame-shaped stripes on vehicles by hand. This art is still regarded as part of the southern Californian identity. Audigier’s "Trucker Hat", a plastic cap for truck drivers in trendy colors became an unprecedented bestseller which, at the beginning of the 2000’s, decorated more or less every

¹ Cf. Ed Hardy (2009), for URL see bibliography
² Cf. Stein (2009), for URL see bibliography
head in Hollywood. ³

The founding idea and brand name of the *Ed-Hardy*-Collection designed by Audigier are the tattoo-themes. For that purpose, he purchased numerous motifs and rights from the well-known tattoo artist Don Ed Hardy and henceforth produced clothes with tattoo-themes. ⁴ Meanwhile, the label has achieved cult status and dozens of celebrities join in, ranging from Madonna through Heidi Samuel* to Martin Lawrence. ⁵ In this way, the Ed Hardy label has already achieved a turnover of approx. 80 million USD after just three years and is represented with more than 40 shops all over the world. ⁶

Besides *Ed Hardy*, Audigier has built up other labels, in particular *Christian Audigier SMET*, *Crystal Rock*, *C-Bar-A*, *Savoir Faire*, *Evel Knievel*, *Rock Fabulous* and *Paco Chicano*. The product assortment was expanded as well. In this way, a fashion mineral water is also being produced today in addition to clothes, trendy shoes, sunglasses and perfume. ⁷

*(formerly known as Heidi Klum)*

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³ Cf. Stein (2009), for URL see bibliography
⁴ Cf. Drewes (2009), for URL see bibliography
⁵ Cf. Ed Hardy (2009), for URL see bibliography
⁶ Cf. Stein (2009), for URL see bibliography
⁷ Cf. Ed Hardy (2009), for URL see bibliography
2. Task

Due to the big company success and the constant expansion, you were hired as Christian Audigier’s personal assistant with the aim of designing the labels future-oriented and to build up the strategic innovation management of the Audigier labels. It is also planned in the foreseeable future that you are to further develop and establish the *Crystal Rock* label, which is still in the build-up phase, on your own responsibility.

2.1 Innovation classification

As an industry newcomer, you would like to gain a first impression regarding the basis of Ed Hardy’s company success. Therefore, the first thing you ought to do is to classify the innovative products of the Ed Hardy label by means of the innovation categories you are familiar with and by taking different perspectives. The main objective of this analysis is the identification of the essential characteristics of innovative designer apparel.

In a second step, compare the characteristics identified with those of a company of your choice operating in the low price segment, such as H&M, and work out a comparison of the two companies. Evaluate the sustainability of the strategic advantages arising from the characteristics. Please justify your answer.

2.2 Success factors of innovations

In order to establish a sustained, strategic innovation management in your company, you have to use the resource-theoretical, leadership-oriented and diffusion-theoretical perspective as a basis. Out of these three perspectives, please assess whether the whole company is successfully positioned in future and what areas are still in need of further development. In this process, please explain in particular how these perspectives can be of help to you regarding the further development and establishment of the *Crystal Rock* label.
3. Literature

3.1 References

Ed Hardy (2009), Christian Audigier,


Drewes, Torsten (2009), Christian Audigier,


3.2 Further readings on the theoretical subjects

3.2.1 Further readings on innovation classification


3.2.2 Further readings on success factors


Die bereits erschienen Fallstudien IST 01/2009 bis IST 15/2009 sowie die weiteren hier aufgeführten Fallstudien können auf der Homepage des Lehrstuhls für ABWL, Forschungs-, Entwicklungs- und Innovationsmanagement der Universität Stuttgart heruntergeladen werden. Link: [http://www.bwi.uni-stuttgart.de/innovation](http://www.bwi.uni-stuttgart.de/innovation)

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