



INTEGRATED
DIGITAL STRATEGY
FOR



**GRADUATE
FASHION
WEEK**

Emily Watts
15095984

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1a. Introduction

Founded in 1991, Graduate Fashion Week is a charity organization which aims to promote graduates and the work they are capable of within the fashion industry. (gfw-au, 2016) By uniting both UK and International universities, GFW has become the world's top event of its kind, promoting the work of over 1000 students and graduates (njal-au, 2016). Recently celebrating its 25th year, the event has been responsible for the initial success of some of today's leading designers, including now patron Christopher Bailey, Matthew Williamson and Julien Macdonald (ArtsThread-au, 2015).

Within the industry, the charity sits as a great gateway for students and the industry, increasing synergy between the two. It targets mainly millennials but also many other creatives from students and graduates, to young industry professions, as well as those already established in fashion (Bumpus, 2013). The overall aim of the charity is to gain these attendees, universities and sponsors in order to create the best event possible (Gee, 2016).

In order to promote the event, a digital marketing strategy is used, which must be updated year on year. Graduate Fashion Week benefits from one to ensure the smooth running of the event. Without a strategy, it is also likely events like this would become outdated (Bennett, 2016)

In order to thoroughly understand Graduate Fashion Week and the digital marketing it needs, PR Smith's SOSTAC marketing model can be used.



Figure 1: Sostac Model (Smith,2004)



left, image source:
Huffington Post

1b. SOSTAC of GFW

SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Currently sits in-between University Graduates, Young Professionals and those Established in the Fashion Industry - Graduate Fashion Week as a brand is well respected, has previously promoted some of today's most well-known designers. (Artstthread-au, 2015) - Has strong resources due to already well developed University and Sponsor links. (gfw-au. 2016) - As powerful charity patrons (Artstthread-au, 2015)
OBJECTIVES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To have high attendance of the event, in order to promote the graduates, universities and sponsors to the widest audience possible (Gee,2016) - To have a high brand awareness, and a following that engages with content produced. - To increase opportunities for those involved, whether just graduating or already established within the industry.
STRATEGY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Currently uses several methods within a strategy surround pre-the event, during and post. (Gee,2016) - Targets mainly millennials as this is the most common age for graduates. - Also targets other creatives with interest in the industry. - Celebrity patrons increase credibility of the event. (Artstthread-au, 2015) - Uses a variety of methods from the website to other social media platforms. (gfw-au. 2016)
TACTICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Many tactics used- their own website and social media. - Consideration of the 7Ps- place, price, promotion, people, physical environment, process and product. This covers who is invited, how much to charge for tickets, how will the brand become more well-known?
ACTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Currently responsible for the promotion of over 63 Universities and 37 Sponsors (Gee, 2016) - All University promotion must be equal - These will be reconsidered throughout the report.
CONTROL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Following the event, the number of impressions and users engaged is measured. For example, the number of images shared on Instagram following the event. (Gee, 2016) - Makes a report of all press carried out through the event

Table 1: SOSTAC of GFW

1c. SWOT of GFW

STRENGTHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Networking opportunity for students and young professionals - Can offer inspiration for those in creative industries - Gives graduates recognition for their work, often resulting in job opportunities (Elan, 2016) - Has powerful patrons, Nick Knight, Vivienne Westwood, Christopher Bailer, Victoria Beckham. (Elan, 2016) - Offers scholarships for students across the UK (gfw-au, 2016) - The world's leading event of its kind (Ravensbourne, 2016) - ASOS tweet about the event to over 1million followers. (asos twitter,2016) - Gives universities outside the capital the same opportunities as those within (Elan, 2016) - Some of today's most successful designers had early success at GFW- including Julien Macdonald. (Artstthread.au, 2015) - Website is Good for mobile access (gfw.au- 2016)
WEAKNESSES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The patrons themselves do little to promote the event, their following could be out more to use - Little following on Facebook (Facebook, 2016) - No program available for the day- suggesting the days are somewhat unorganized when you arrive - Primary research suggests students in some creative fields are unaware of the event. (Appendices) - Fashion influencers- currently not many that involved (gfw.au – 2016)
OPPORTUNITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inviting new ambassadors who are digital influencers to give extra promotion - Create more awareness of the drink receptions after parties etc. by having influencers blog about them. - Involve students at universities to be ambassadors and hand out flyers.
THREATS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Loss of interest from public due to lack of fashion influencers - Loss of relevance due to having been going for 25 years. - Website at risk of becoming outdated (Bennett, 2016) - Missing out on attendees due to low event awareness on some student courses.

Table 2: SOSTAC of GFW

2. Pre- Event

2a. Patrons

The following of Graduate Fashion Week needs to be increased in order to gain more attendees for the event. This is of particular importance in the months beforehand, when event awareness is crucial. One main way following could be increased is through the charity's patrons; Christopher Bailey, Nick Knight, Vivienne Westwood and Victoria Beckham. (Bazaar, 2015)

The power of these individuals on social media is huge due to their large followings. A social media post from any one of them about GFW would therefore be great promotion for the event. For example, if Victoria Beckham tweeted, it would be promoted to a following of 11.2 million followers. (twitter, 2016) Since it can be assumed many of her followers have an interest in fashion, this would likely attract more of the right demographic to GFW. Supporting this, it has been found that of 16-24-year-old twitter users, 54% follow celebrities, showing that celebrity tweets would be an effective way to reach this audience. (Langford, 2014) When Alesha Dixon tweeted her excitement for being a judge, it received 51 likes. (Dixon, twitter, 2016) Considering Victoria Beckham has eleven times more followers, it is likely that engagement would be much higher if she did the same.

Ideally, the patrons would post about graduate fashion week a couple of months prior to the event, allowing time for those interested to still purchase tickets. Then a second post perhaps the day before in order to build excitement and interest around GFW.

2b. Digital Influencers

Increasing Following Through Digital Influencers

Arguably more powerful than these more traditional celebrity ambassadors, digital influencers could also do huge amounts for promoting the event. Since around 2005/2006 when blogging became popular, individuals have found themselves with sometimes millions of followers. (Blalock, 2016). It has been found 23% of influencers' followers will buy a product due to an influencer's recommendation, highlighting the trust people will put in those influencers they admire. (Jones, 2014)

By including influencer collaborations as part of the GFW strategy, bloggers could post about their excitement for the event prior to the week, and then post other content during and after GFW. This would not only increase the charity's awareness, but is likely to encourage others to come to the event too. It is also a way of engaging with new markets, since influencer's followers often include demographics otherwise hard to aim at (os-fashion.au, 2016) By reaching those global readers, a wider awareness of the event could be created.

Currently, Susie Lau is an ambassador for the event (fashioncapital, 2016), meaning she writes blog posts on attending which then are exposed 15,000 readers daily. (messmag, 2014) By having more influencers attend the event, more promotion could be achieved. Table 3 shows specifically who could be invited and what they could do, including details of a pre-event-competition .

Name	What New Strategy can they Implement?	Why is this Beneficial?
Susie Lau	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Already involved, but could run an Instagram competition prior to the event- in order to win 2 tickets. - Continue to post on her blog and Instagram about the event. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Post about competition to 320k following -Photo posted must be shared to be entered. Susie Lau will then announce winner -By being shared, huge event awareness would be created. -Competition prize would be tickets to the event.
Imran Amed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Represent the presence of Business of Fashion. -Be the face of the sponsorship from B.o.F (as discussed in New Sponsorships- see table 4. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Draws attention to sponsorship, promoting the company -Shows the events understood importance of fashion business.
Ashley Madekwe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Post on her blog and Instagram pre, during and after the event. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Reach over 600k following -Greatly increase event awareness
Jessica Ann Woodley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Post on Instagram before, during and after the event. -Use the hashtag (discussed in the next section) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Would reach 500k following -She is a creative director, therefore may have an appropriate following for the event
Jessie Lethaby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Create a video-blog of the day -Post about the event on Instagram. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Would reach 238k subscribers -Her 'edgier' style would fit the creativity of the event, therefor pushing the brand. -Appropriate Demographic of following to the GFW target audience (Silvers, 2015).

Table 3: What Digital Influencer Strategies.

2c. Using Hashtags

Another technique for building interest in the event beforehand, would be through the use of a hashtag. According to the Digital Branding Institute, an effective hashtag should be memorable and clear. (Delane,2016) If the celebrity patrons and influencers used hashtag GFW2017, other attendees would be likely to do the same. This would then allow potential attendees to feel the GFW 'buzz' initially, and be more likely to go. The use of this hashtag during and after the event would also be beneficial, as more mentions would increase visibility on search engine's rankings. (seoperson-au 2016)

2d. Universities

Currently, there are 40 UK and 23 International Universities that take part in GFW (test.gfw- au, 2016) Whilst this wide variety of universities is a strength of GFW, the number of students within these universities that know about GFW could be increased. Primary Research suggested whilst those on fashion courses tended to know about GFW, students on other creative courses knew less about it . However, these other students consistently expressed an interest in attending the event, after being informed about it. (Graduate Fashion Week Survey, 2017) Figure 2 shows other results from the primary research, which emphasize the need for increased event awareness.

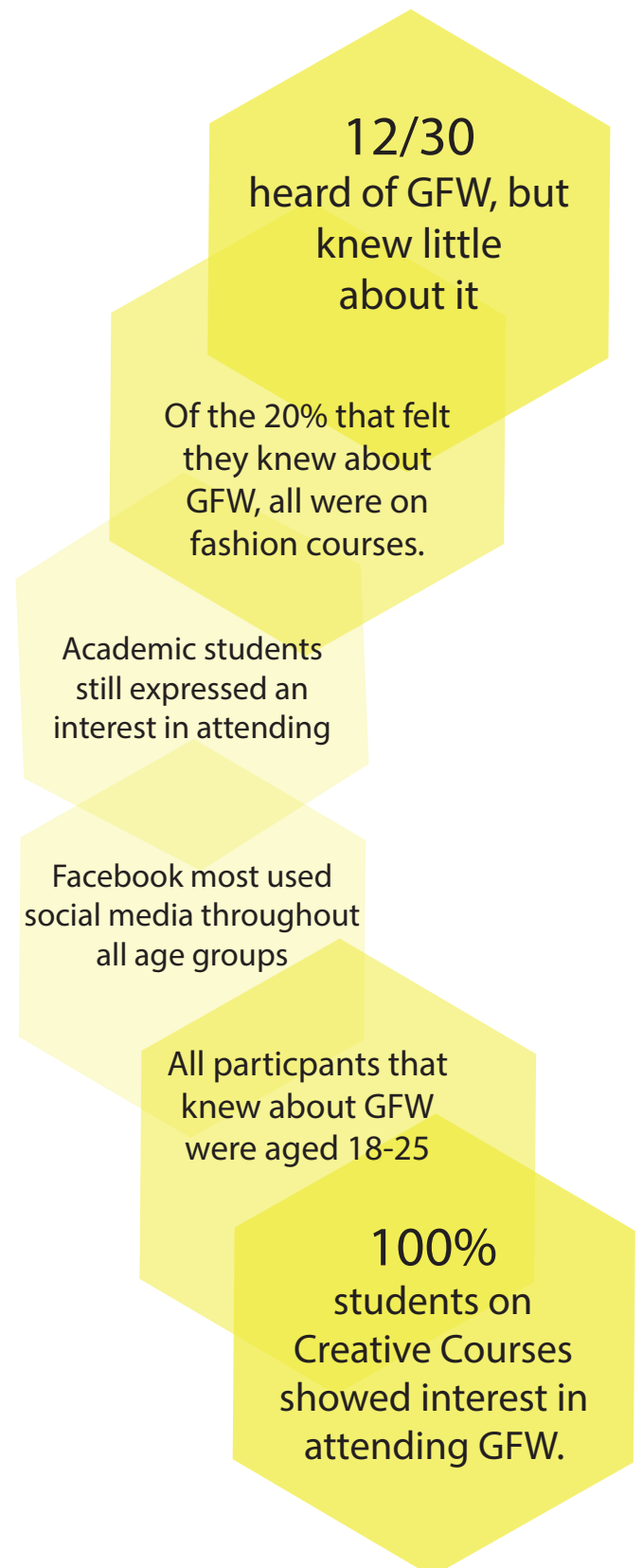


Figure 2: Primary Research Results- information from the conducted survey and 2 Interviews. - Shown Figure 8 in Appendix.

Speaking to a fashion journalism student, she stated,

'I would like to attend in order to support people of my age group.'

A student photographer stated,

'I'd be interested in attending in order to meet more people in my field and to network.'

In order to inform these other students beforehand, the head of creative courses could send out an email to all students. An events organization report stated that emailing was the single most effective tactic by marketers (walker, 2016), and therefore should be central to any campaign. This was supported by a WGSN report which stated that despite talk of dying email marketing, 'the rate at which Millennials are checking their email inboxes suggests otherwise'. Rather than lose this platform, it has simply increased the importance of emails being mobile-responsive, since this age group prefer this device (wgsn-au, 2016)

It has been found that 1 in 5 millennials access the internet exclusively through mobile devices (Rodriguez, 2015). This actually highlights one advantage of the current GFW website as a whole. Whilst it could be improved to have easier use, the page is highly mobile friendly with obvious links to the charity's other platforms. (see Figure 3 right)

2e. Student Ambassadors

Alongside reaching more students through email, GFW could introduce student ambassadors at all involved universities to increase brand awareness. This would mean getting student volunteers to be on campus and hand out flyers with information about the event on, (See table 4 for sponsorship of flyers). This tactic has been used by Red Bull who have found that using students offers credibility to the brand (Rogers, 2011). A red bull marketer stated it was students who have become the brands best ambassadors (O'brien, 2014), suggesting they have the capability to do the same for an event like GFW. (See timeline for when this would take place).

2f. New Sponsors

With 37 sponsors already (gfw-au, 2016), GFW would benefit from new sponsors, even if to fund smaller aspects of the week. See table 4 for details on who and what they could do, including the production of a program.



Figure 3.
(Above, image source: gfw-au. 2016)

Who?	What can they do?	Why is this Beneficial?
Business of Fashion	<p>-Produce programs and schedules for the week's events.</p> <p>- Attendees can then purchase these on arrival</p>	<p>-clearer schedule for attendees</p> <p>-therefore likely to have a more organized, better experience</p> <p>-then more likely to get the most out of the days, and return in future.</p>
Kodak	<p>-Introduce photo booths around the event and at after parties.</p>	<p>-Instead of physically printing out photos taken, users of the photo booth can upload the pictures straight onto a social media platform</p> <p>-Automatically post with the hashtag for the event</p> <p>-Offers promotion for the event, and the sponsor.</p>
Red Bull	<p>-Provide drinks during the days and at after- parties.</p> <p>-Can be drunk on its own or mixed with alcohol, which is already sponsored.</p>	<p>-Brings down the cost of after parties</p> <p>-more people can therefore attend, and promote it on social media, increasing awareness of the event.</p>

Table 4: New Sponsor Strategies

3. During Event

3a. Broadcasting Shows & Facebook Live

In the 2016 digital strategy, the GFW team consisted of 22 people, including 2 individuals working on social media. The previous aim was to have posted about a certain show or catwalk within 20 minutes. (Gee, 2016). Although already a quick turnaround, by increasing the number of people working on social media, this could be improved upon. In order to up their game, an extra person to real-time stream certain shows or talks would mean those unable to physically attend the event, could still feel involved.

Facebook would work well for this new aspect of GFW due to the new live stream feature, introduced in April 2016. Zuckerberg stated that by enabling live broadcasting, people can feel connected in a more personal way. (Zuckerberg, 2016). Another advantage of this platform is that the primary research found it to be the most popular social media site. This was supported by sproutsocial.com, which found of 18-29 year olds, (the demographic most targeted by GFW), 87% are facebook users (Patterson, 2015). The platform has over 1.79 billion users (statista, 2016), which is over 50% more users than the second social media leader, whatsapp. shown in figure 7 in the appendix.

However, since GFW currently have 8000 more followers on Instagram than Facebook (see Figure 3 below), a post here informing followers of the live streaming available on the other platform would be beneficial. By directing followers here, the Facebook following would likely be increased.

This live streaming addition could work particularly well for the talks given by the asos panel, for example. The talk could be live streamed on both the GFW facebook page and the asos facebook page, with both having a link to the others'. This would increase awareness of GFW through being exposed to asos' 4.4 million followers. (facebook, 2016) Asos' previous live stream videos have gained around 60,000 views, (Caffyn, 2016). Since this figure is on par with some of Facebook's biggest publishers, it suggests engagement would be strong. By showing involvement with GFW, this would also offer promotion for asos, benefiting both parties.

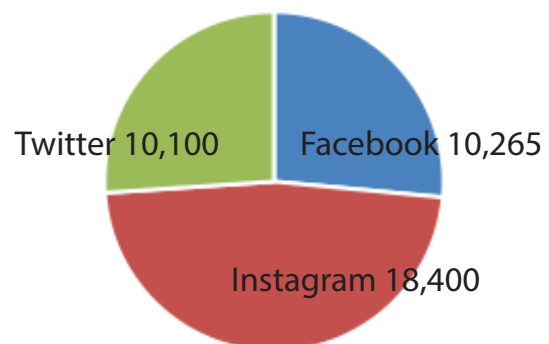


Figure 4: GFW Followers
source: twitter.com facebook.com Instagram

3b Instagram Coverage

Whilst Facebook added the 'live' feature, 2016 also saw Instagram introduce 'stories', letting users share moments from the day you wouldn't necessarily want to keep on your profile. Having invited more social media influencers to the event, encouraging them to post not only on their Instagram profiles, but also post Instagram stories would be beneficial. With 100 million daily active viewers (Hitz, 2016) this platform can do a lot for event awareness.

Instagram has also been found to have the largest percentage growth of followers for brands, shown below in figure 4, this emphasizes that more attention is now being paid to the platform. (Hutchinson, 2016)

3c. Snapchat Coverage

Snapchat can also be used to increase event awareness for Graduate Fashion Week. Encouraging influencers and celebrities to also use this would be effective for reaching GFW's target market as millennials have been found to account for 71% of snapchat's user base (Litza, 2016). During the event week, it would be worth GFW having a live story that attendee's could contribute to, in order to emphasize the event buzz. This was used at the VMAs where the live story totaled 12 million views (Dodson, 2015). This was more views than all other live broadcasts of the event combined, emphasizing the platform's power.

Christopher Bailey and Snapchat have already established a relationship, which could work in favor of this strategy. In October, Burberry shot and released a campaign exclusively for snapchat, available for only 24 hours (Karmali, 2016) They also used Snapchat at the SS16 show a month previously. This resulted in Burberry being the most mentioned designer from London Fashion Week, perhaps as a result of their use of this social media. (Shelley, 2016)

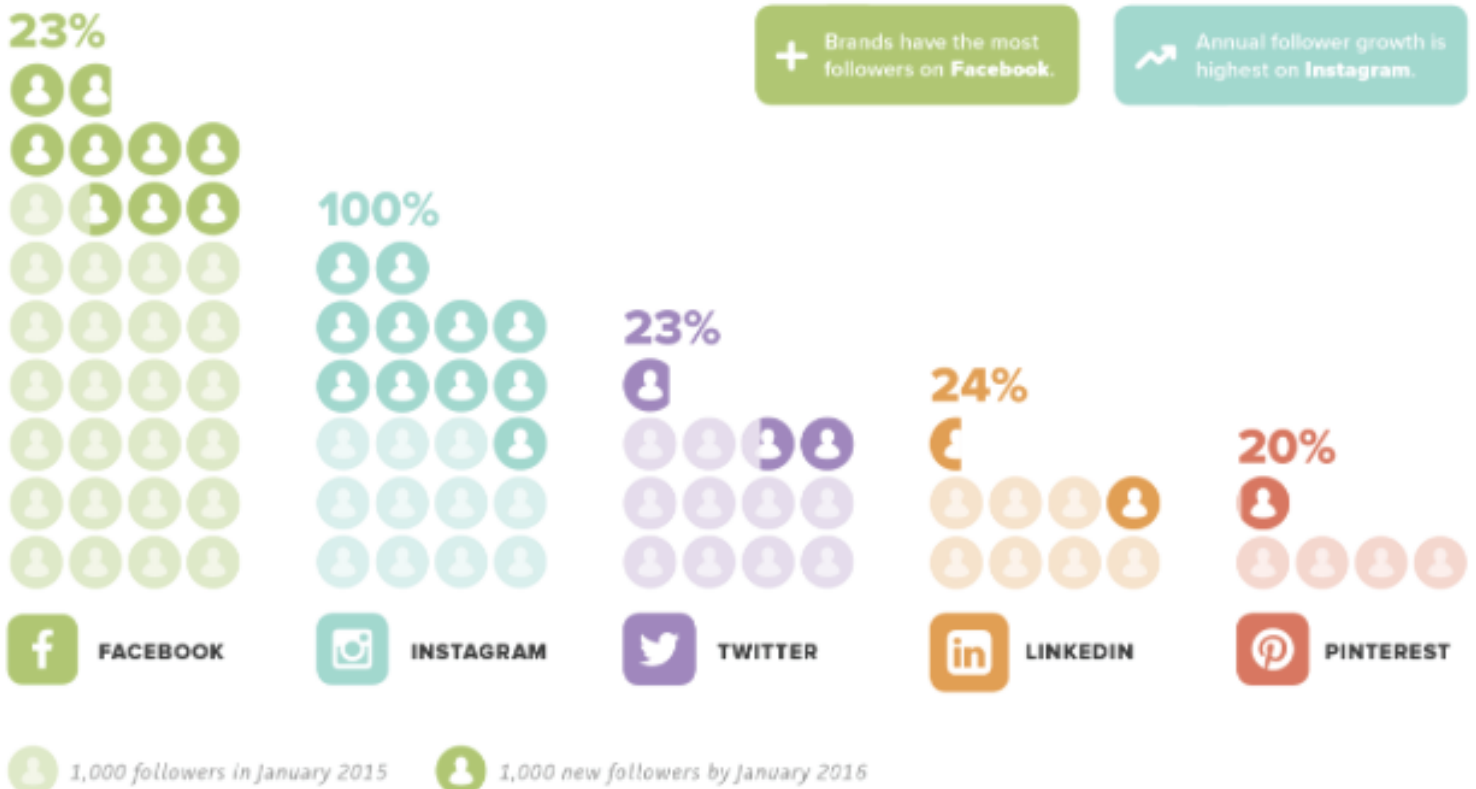


Figure 5: Follower Growth on Social Media (Shelley, 2016)

3d. Virtual Reality

Virtual Reality technology has recently been used in the fashion industry to give consumers a better user experience within stores. At Topshop's flagship store, customers have previously been given headsets to watch the brand's runway shows (Han et al, 2016). This was well received, with the global marketing director stating they 'we couldn't have asked for better results'. With Topshop Unique also using new technology in their latest collection shows, perhaps it is no coincidence the brand became the second most mentioned fashion emporium on twitter in 2016. (Shelley, 2016)

It is therefore possible that Topshop could collaborate with GFW to have a virtual reality area at the event. In order to fit this into the budget, sponsorship from Samsung could be initiated since they have been stated to be ahead in terms of virtual reality gear. (Robertson, 2016) Being involved with GFW would also give promotion for both Samsung and Topshop, making it worthwhile for all involved.



image source:
thebwd.com

4. Post- Event

4a. Thanking Sponsors, Influencers & Universities.

Following the event, the charity currently thanks the sponsors and attendees. (Gee, 2016) In order to ensure this is carried out in a short time frame, both thank you letters and social media posts could be pre-written, emphasizing how appreciated the sponsor help was. The same should be carried out for the attendance of digital influencers.

Totaling up the statistics of social media impressions is also important at this time and could be included in the thank you letters. By showing sponsors and influencers the success of the event, they would be more likely to return next year. For example, mentioning that 338 photos were shared on Instagram at GFW 2016 (Gee, 2016). With the Instagram competition strategy for 2017 (see table 3) this figure would likely be much higher.

Again, letters to universities thanking for attendance and involvement could be pre-written. Content filmed and captured throughout the event needs to be promptly sent to the universities for their own use.

4b. Thanking Other Attendees.

An email thanking those who bought tickets and attended should also be sent out, including a video of the week's highlights. It has been found that emails that include videos increases the click-rate by 96%, increasing engagement (Insivia, 2016). A survey could also be included in this email, as it would be beneficial to receive feedback from attendees (Crestodina, 2016). This could offer improvement for the future strategies, or could be used to gather positive statements for use in future promotion.

4c. Follow up Social Media Posts

Posts about the work shown at GFW would also be important, on both the GFW website/social media accounts, and those of the influencers that attended.

'Businesses that enjoy the best engagement are the ones that maintain the quality, volume and speed of posts long after all the catwalks ends' (Maddison, 2015)

Summary posts should be made to round up the highlights of the event, and a gallery of photos of the website could be made to ensure it is clear what a success the week was (Cresidona, 2015). In order to keep up interest in the event, backstage photos could be posted on the GFW Instagram account, to give people the feeling that they are still seeing exclusive new content. This is a tactic used by London Fashion Week, where brands later share unseen photos to further promote their collections (Gupta, 2017).

4d. Collaborations with Fashionscout.com & ShowStudio.com

Fashionscout.com is an established fashion showcase that particularly places emphasis on emerging designers (fashionscout, 2016). An article on their website showing the event winners would therefore increase awareness of GFW and the leading students that took part in it.

A similar collaboration could be initiated with Nick Knight's website showstudio.com. This award-winning platform has huge power in terms of communication fashion online (showstudio, 2016), and therefore would do a lot for promotion GFW and those students involved. Here, an interview with the winner of the gold award could be used to promote the charity and the work it does.

With both collaborations, the GFW website could post letting readers know about this extra content on these platforms. This would therefore offer promotion for all involved.

5. Conclusion

With all new digital strategies in place, the event would likely reach a wider audience and attract more attendees. With the help of new influencers and sponsors discussed, the charity would be able to cope with this expansion, and produce an event that would successfully achieve the objective of promoting graduates and their work in a professional manner.



image source:
lenismodelman-
agement

Appendices

2017

Event timeline.

January							February							March							April						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7				1	2	3	4				1	2	3	4							1
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
29	30	31	26	27	28	26	27	28	29	30	31	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30								

May							June							July							August						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6					1	2	3							1			1	2	3	4	5
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
28	29	30	31	25	26	27	28	29	30	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	27	28	29	30	31						

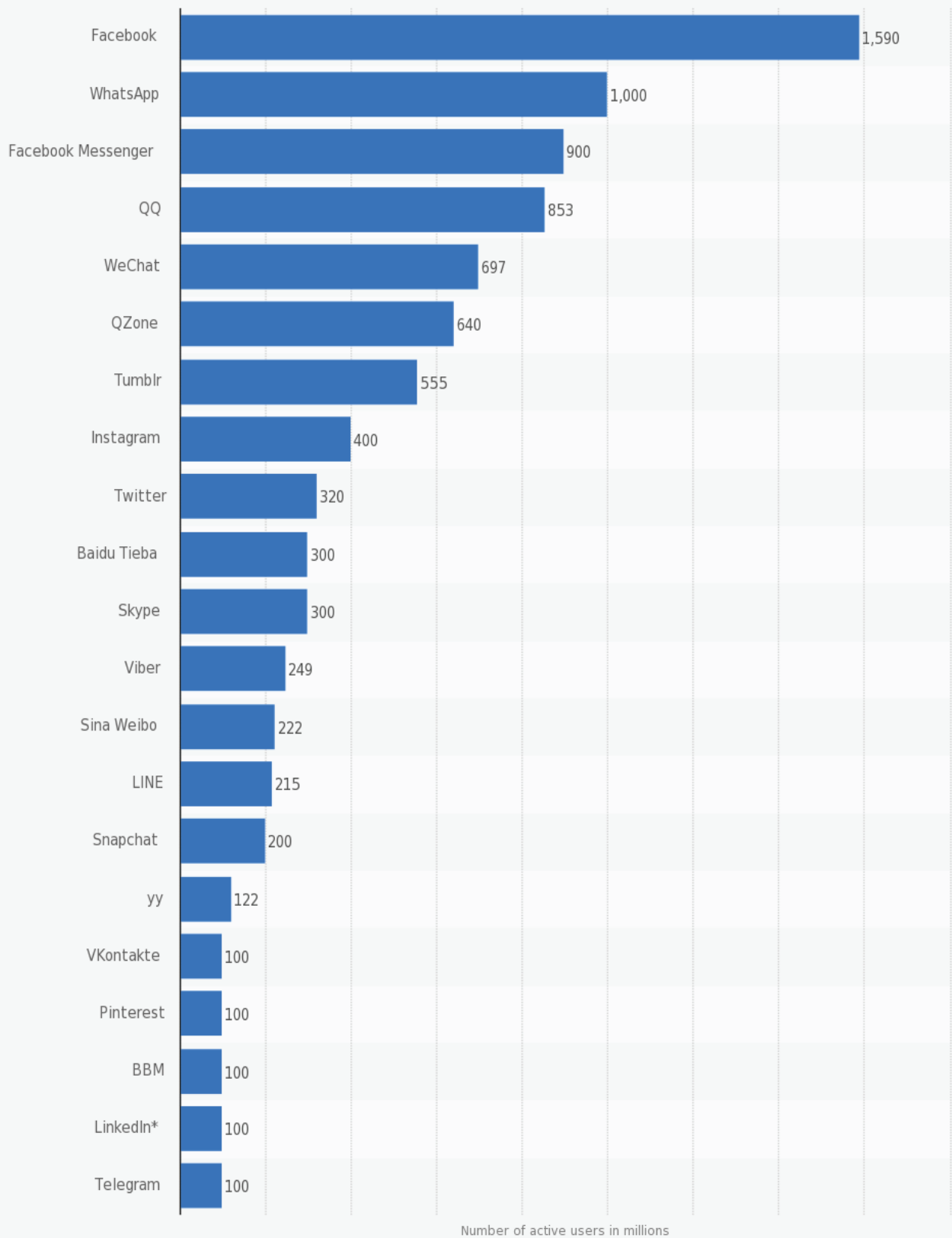
September							October							November							December						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S	S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
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3	4	5	6	7	8	9	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
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24	25	26	27	28	29	30	29	30	31	26	27	28	29	30	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31					

www.calendarlabs.com

- January- Regular Social Media Posts on all platforms. Last year's content shown throughout month.
- February- Regular Social Media Posts on all platforms as in January.
- March- TICKETS GO ON SALE. Social Media Posts surrounding this. Week 5-11th **PATRONS ANNOUNCE TICKETS**. 19th **INSTAGRAM COMPETITION ANNOUNCED**.
- April- Increase of Social Media posts. Week 2-8th **INFLUENCERS ANNOUNCE ATTENDANCE**. 19th **INSTAGRAM WINNER ANNOUNCED**.
- May- First Week- another mention of tickets. Higher rate of Social Media posts kept up throughout. 3/10/25 **SPONSORS ANNOUNCED**
- June- 4-7 **GRADUATE FASHION WEEK**. Social media frequently updated. Updates from Patrons & Influencers throughout. 11-17th Thanking Letters & Posts. 18-24th Collaborations with FashionScout/ ShowStudio 25th send out thank you email to public, including survey.
- July- 7th Follow up with Award Winners. Post backstage content throughout month.
- August- Keep up increased rate of Social Media Posts that was built up from April.
- September- Start of New Accademic year- posts about this.
- October- Regular Social Media Posts on all platforms.

Figure 6: Timeline of Events.

Leading social networks worldwide as of April 2016, ranked by number of active users (in millions)



Source:

Facebook; We Are Social; WhatsApp; Twitter; Tumblr; LinkedIn; Google
 © Statista 2016

Additional Information:

Worldwide; We Are Social; WhatsApp; Tumblr; LinkedIn; Google; as of April 18, 2016; social networks and messenger/chat app/voip included

Figure 7. Social Media Usage (Statista, 2016)

Primary Research Survey:

Graduate Fashion Week Survey
Please Circle Results

1. What is your age?

- 18-25
- 26-36
- 37+

2. Are you a student?

- Yes, on a creative course
- Yes, on an academic course
- No

3. Which Social Media Platform do you use most?

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Snapchat
- Twitter
- Other – (please specify)

4. Have you heard of Graduate Fashion Week?

- No
- Yes, but I know little about it
- Yes, I know about Graduate Fashion Week

If yes, how have you heard about it?

5. Would you like to attend Graduate Fashion Week?

- Yes
- No
- Please explain why?

6. If you wanted updates on GFW, or any event, which social media would you like it through?

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Snapchat
- Twitter
- Other – (please specify)

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