



APPAREL ENTREPRENEURS MARKETING ON THE WEB

Tywanda Moss and Evelyn L. Brannon
Auburn University, AL 36849

Until recently, the Web user represented only one consumer profile—the technology savvy young male. Now that Web demographics show a shift toward a broader audience, study of the Web as a marketing venue for a wider variety of products is essential.

The purpose of this research was to investigate the connection between Web design by apparel entrepreneurs and the reaction of consumers to those Web pages.

A convenience sample of 190 Generation X consumers was recruited at a university in the southeast U.S. to participate in the study. In the initial sessions, profile information was gathered and subjects were introduced to the evaluation questionnaire and instructed on locating the three Web sites used in the study. For the evaluation, consumers were invited to spend as much time as they wished exploring the site. A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect their evaluation of the Web site design including issues like consistency of design and ease of navigation, and apparel design and quality offered at the site.

Findings show a preference for a site with fashion-forward apparel with an "edgy" approach to fashion and site design. Preferred next was a site featuring t-shirts handpainted in pastel florals. The site with a homey, country look but very sophisticated customization options for apparel was the site least preferred—at least partly because of a mismatch between the target audience for the site and the subjects. The preference pattern reflects the connection between the demographics of the sample and the success of the most preferred site in targeting those consumers.