

Conditions for Luxury Branding by Japanese and French Companies

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Abstract

We aimed to define the requirements for achieving luxury branding by evaluating and comparing leading brand companies. We analyzed and considered the conditions needed to achieve luxury branding through case studies and comparative analyses of the brand companies Louis Vuitton (the leading French luxury brand company), GOYARD (a French premium brand company), and SOMES SADDLE in Japan. We also the tools of marketing strategy and customer experience for the case studies. We propose here the main points that contribute to the development of luxury brands in Japan. This information should be useful for Japanese companies interested in developing luxury brands.

Keywords: Luxury Brand, Luxury Marketing, Customer Experience, LVMH, GOYARD

1. Introduction

Many brand businesses have been developed and are steadily expanding all over the world, and they make unique contributions to our lifestyles.

Generally speaking, quality or deluxe products, such as Louis Vuitton, Chanel, and Hermes are mainstream and owned by the upper classes and wealthy, although they have now become more affordable even for the middle classes: the brand phenomenon called “popularization of luxury” has occurred. These brands are not declining in status, and the products are still selling and maintaining their status even in the current recession.

Luxury brands glow as brands and radiate an aura, even after their popularization. LVMH (Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton) in France is a leading company that markets a luxury brand. Although there are many well-known French brands, few companies can be regarded as having luxury brands. In Japan there are Popular Japanese brands in a broad sense, but companies regarded as having luxury brands are virtually non-existent.

Why do luxury brands exist in France but not in Japan? Moreover, why is it that a premium brand in Japan is not recognized as a luxury brand globally? With these questions in mind, we examined the conditions needed for the creation of a luxury brand by comparing, analyzing and considering representative case examples from the viewpoint of marketing strategies and customer experience. The examples included “Louis Vuitton,” a French luxury brand; “GOYARD,” a famous French premium brand; and “SOMES SADDLE,” which is famous as the highest-class Japanese brand of horse saddle (Harness equipment). On the basis of these comparative analyses and discussions, we highlight the differences between luxury brands in Japan and France, and we consider the conditions required to create a luxury brand.

2. Conceptual Framework for Luxury Brands

First, to clarify the direction of our comparison and discussion, we arranged luxury brands from France and Japan comprehensively in a matrix (Table 1).

Table 1. Matrix for analysis of luxury brands

		Brand type	
		Luxury	Others (premium etc.)
Birthplace of Brand	France	Category 1 e.g. Louis Vuitton, Hermès	Category 2 e.g. GOYARD, LE TANNEUR, LANCASTER PARIS
	Japan	Category 3 No examples	Category 4 e.g. SOMES SADDLE, INDEN-YA

The matrix for analysis of these luxury brands consists of two axes: the birthplace of the brand and the brand type.

France is the birthplace of the Category 1 domain of luxury brands (e.g. Louis Vuitton and Hermès). France is also the birthplace of the Category 2 domain, which includes everyday brands that are not luxury brands but are premium brands, such as GOYARD, LE TANNEUR, and LANCASTER PARIS. Japan is the birthplace of Category 3 luxury brands, but Japanese brands in this category are virtually non-existent. Japan is also the birthplace of the Category 4 brands domain. As with category 2, many brands are included in this category (e.g. SOMES SADDLE and INDEN-YA).

We then consider the direction of our comparative examination based on this analysis matrix. Our aim is to highlight the conditions of development of luxury brands through a comparative examination of brands in France and Japan. We therefore need to extract the necessary conditions by weighing each category in the analysis matrix by using the following methods.

a. Comparison between Category 1 and Category 2

Comparison of the French brands was attempted through a case analysis of Categories 1

and 2. Although these are all French brands, the differences between luxury brands and the others (e.g. premium) brands were considered and the conditions for the existence of luxury brands were extracted on the basis of this consideration.

b. Comparison between Category 2 and Category 4

We attempted to compare the everyday French and Japanese brands by using a case analysis of Categories 2 and 4. We examined the differences between the birthplaces in terms of brand and the common points determining why a brand was not a luxury brand, and we extracted the constraints that prevented an everyday brand from becoming a luxury brand.

As mentioned above, we defined the directionality of the analysis matrix comparison. On the basis of this direction, we extracted the conditions required for the existence of a luxury brand by using a case analysis, as described below.

3. Case Study

A brand representing each category was selected for the case analysis. The luxury brand “Louis Vuitton,” representing LVMH, was selected for Category 1; “GOYARD,” the French bag brand that has been capturing the spotlight recently, was selected for Category 2; and “SOMES SADDLE,” which is a famous Japanese harness manufacturer, was selected for Category 4.

In analyzing each sample, two frameworks were utilized: the brand marketing strategy, and the customer’s experience of the meaning of brand value.

Brands selected for the case analysis met the following five criteria:

- a. High-profile luxury brands
- b. High-profile brands in each country, including everyday brands

- c. The same types of product for each brand (in this case, “bag” products)
- d. Comparable brands for consideration between foreign and domestic brands
- e. No previous analysis between luxury brands and everyday brands.

We selected a framework for marketing, because we considered that even companies handling luxury brands and everyday brands require marketing strategies, and such strategies may occupy an important place in marketing to customers. We selected the customer experience framework because we considered that, to customers, brand products have not only functional convenience, but also values that evoke human emotions. This is true in particular for luxury brands, which have intrinsic value to the customer, so we considered that our analysis of luxury brands would yield some important findings.

As mentioned above, our analysis and discussion of the conditions required for the existence of luxury brands were performed by comparing three case analyses and two frameworks.

3.1 Case analysis of LVMH (LOUIS VUITTON)

3.1.1 Overview of LVMH

LVMH owns more than 60 luxury brands (i.e. brand-operating companies). It is a holding company that acts for these companies. Five sections—“wine and spirits,” “fashion and leather goods,” “perfume and cosmetics,” “watches and jewelry,” and “selective retailing” are managed as brand businesses. The company’s sales revenues amounted to 17,053 million euro (in 2009), and the company is now the world’s largest conglomerate holding luxury brands.

The core brand enterprise divisions include a fashion and leathergoods section. LOUIS VUITTON MALLETIER (founded in 1854), which is also the core brand of the whole of LVMH, manufactures the canvas and leather goods, focusing on travel bags. These bags are characterized by unique patterns, or sales lines, such as the famous Monogram and Damier (Figure 1).



Fig. 1 Louis Vuitton bags (source: LVMH website)

LOUIS VUITTON MALLETIER started when its founder, Louis Vuitton, became a wooden box manufacturer and packing contractor who was a purveyor to the court of Napoleon III. Louis Vuitton was favored by the Empress Eugénie, and the value of the brand increased to the point where it won the Grand Prix at the Paris World Fair in 1889.

There are now 13 factories worldwide. However, the studio, or craftsman training school, which is the backbone of the enterprise, has not moved from the Paris suburb of Asnières, and the company continues the traditions that were developed when it was first established.

3.1.2 The marketing strategy of Louis Vuitton

Here, we examine the marketing strategy of Louis Vuitton. Table 2 shows our analysis of Louis Vuitton by considering a five-point brand marketing strategy, including the four Ps (product, price, place, and sales promotion).

From this above analysis, the marketing strategy of Louis Vuitton can be understood as follows: the prominent product quality is maintained, the bags are marketed at a fair price even though they seem to be expensive, and the sales channel is strictly limited to direct sales.

There is little advertising, but the company improves awareness of its products by using many media to obtain effective publicity. This makes the brand unique, and at the same time the products have unique and smart characteristics, so that the buyer understands that Louis

Vuitton has an origin that supports individuality.

Table 2. Marketing strategy of Louis Vuitton

Item	Details of marketing strategy
Product	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Manufactured by craftsmen with unique leather processing and canvas processing - Special product because of discrete manufacturing
Price	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prices range from thousands to hundreds of thousands of yen. - Fair prices are maintained, and prices do not escalate suddenly.
Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bags are sold directly, not indirectly. - Distribution of a second line is prohibited.
Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Little advertising (including commercial message on TV) is used. - Product awareness is improved by utilizing publicity.
Brand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The products have unique and smart characteristics. - The originality supporting the brand value is famous.

3.1.3 Customer experiences created by Louis Vuitton

We next analyze the customer values that Louis Vuitton has created from the viewpoint of the customer experience. Table 3 shows the details of our analysis of the value of Louis Vuitton in terms of five strategic customer experience SEMs (strategic experiential modules), which make up the customer experience framework.

On the basis of the above analysis, if Louis Vuitton is viewed from the perspective of customer experience creation, we can see that it creates the values of SENSE, FEEL, THINK, ACT, and RELATE.

The company creates a value that appeals to the senses of the customer. These five customer experiences unite to enhance the brand value of Louis Vuitton, thus securing its

luxury position.

Table 3. Customer experiences created by Louis Vuitton

Classification	Customer experiences
SENSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The fundamental suitcase design that is evocative of Louis Vuitton - The Louis Vuitton monogram, a unique mark that everyone knows
FEEL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The snazzy feel of the specially processed leather - The unique, solid feel the bag has when being carried
THINK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Surprise with the functionality of the bag and the ability of skilled craftsmen with the souls of artisan
ACT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The change in everyday behavioral style that comes with owning a particular commodity that it was not formerly possible to own
RELATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The extravagant feeling of relating to others with emotional attachment to the brand through the philosophy of Louis Vuitton

3.2 Case analysis of GOYARD

3.2.1 Overview of GOYARD

GOYARD was established after Francis Goyard, a suitcase maker, became successful and, in 1853, changed his company name from Morel to “Maison Goyard.” Before Morel became successful, the Goyard family had been managing a company that manufactured rafts. It had developed a canvas that had excellent durability and water resistance—taking advantage of the raft-making technology transmitted from generation to generation—and applied it to the manufacture of suitcase covers. The GOYARD trade mark is formed from the initial Y with three chevrons. The symbol means “forest” and is said to express the history of both the GOYARD family and humankind.



Fig. 2 Hard GOYARD suitcase (source: GOYARD website)

The business expanded to Monte Carlo, New York, and Philadelphia, and awareness of the company was raised internationally when it received a silver medal at the World Expo in Paris in 1900, and gold medals at an international exhibition in Milan in 1906 and at an English–French exhibition in London in 1908. The customer list at the time included the British royal family, Sir Conan Doyle, and the Czar of Russia.

The products of GOYARD have staying power. They are lightweight and use canvas of fine quality. Special orders to meet customers' needs are the main products. Moreover, worldwide there are about 14 stores, centering on the Paris main store and including sales bases in Europe, North America, South America, South Korea, and Japan. The company focuses on counter sales.

3.2.2 Marketing strategy of GOYARD

We next examine the marketing strategy of GOYARD. Table 4 shows our analysis of GOYARD by considering a five-point brand marketing strategy.

From this analysis, the marketing strategy of GOYARD is as follows. It is a high-quality product that utilizes a unique material. The products are sold at high figures recognized to be expensive in the market, and the sale channel—direct sales—is limited. There is little advertising, and little media publicity has been sought. Although this is a unique brand, it

cannot be said that its individual characteristics are so strong and sparkling that no other brands could follow it. The company’s history is not well known and therefore does not add greatly to the brand value.

Table 4. Marketing strategy of GOYARD

Item	Detailed marketing strategy
Product	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A travelbaghat uses a unique material called Toile Goyard - A design that gives excellent texture, durability and waterproofing
Price	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The price ranges from 200,000 yen to hundreds of thousands of yen. - The actual price is seldom openly disclosed.
Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Operates from the head office in Paris and from 14 stores in the world. - There are no mail orders or network sales. The bags are sold through direct sales.
Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is little large-scale advertising. - There is little media publicity.
Brand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The brand is unique, but does not rate highly for originality. - The company’s history is not well known and therefore does not add greatly to the brand value.

3.2.3 Customer experiences created by GOYARD

We next analyze the customer values that GOYARD has created from the viewpoint of the customer experience. Table 5 shows the details of our analysis of the value of GOYARD in terms of five strategic customer experience SEMs.

On the basis of the above analysis, if we view GOYARD from the perspective of creating a customer experience, we can see that the company creates four values: SENSE, FEEL, THINK, and RELATE.

Table 5. Customer experiences created by GOYARD

Classification	Customer experiences
SENSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The design of the unique canvas that is evocative of GOYARD - The unique logo that represents GOYARD
FEEL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The texture enables the user to feel the strength of the special canvas. - Creation of textures with premium accents by using a unique design and a unique material
THINK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Surprise about the technical skills required to process the material and apply it to suitcases and bags by using specialized craft techniques
ACT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are no particular behavioral changes that occur from owning a bag.
RELATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There may be, on a small scale, a feeling of relating to other devotees who are attached to the brand.

In terms of ACT, there are no special lifestyle changes that occur through owning a GOYARD bag, and for RELATE, groups of devotees do not seem to have formed on a large scale.

The company has created part of the brand value by appealing to the senses of customers, and part of the customer experience raises the brand value of GOYARD; however, we consider that this is insufficient for GOYARD to be a luxury brand.

3.3 Case analysis of SOMES SADDLE

3.3.1 Overview of SOMES SADDLE

SOMES SADDLE is the only domestic horse implement maker and was born in Utanai, Hokkaido, a coal mining city in Japan. From the day of its establishment in 1964, the company has produced high-quality domestic harness by using technology and training

specific to the manufacture of these products. In parallel with its exports, it attracts new professional jockeys in the Japan Racing Association and National Association of Racing, and its customers, who include the Imperial family, are engaged in horsemanship. The company's harness has historically been used in official ceremonies of the Imperial Family, such as the Celebration of Emperor Heisei's accession to the throne. The company produces bags with beautiful designs by applying the leather-processing techniques it has fostered through saddle making.

Recently, a special area was set aside for major sales at the opening of the Isetan Men's Department store in Shinjuku, and at the Hokkaido Toyako Summit in 2008 the products were selected as congratulatory gifts for the leaders of each country. The company has been steadily gaining new customers and followers.



Fig. 3 SOMES SADDLE bags (source: SOMES SADDLE homepage)

The company now operates mainly from its head office in Utashinai, Hokkaido, and from showrooms in Sagawa, Hokkaido, and Tokyo. It also has direct management distributors in Aoyama (in Tokyo) and Sapporo (in Hokkaido). The plant is also located in Hokkaido. The company provides an environment in which craftsmen can work without reserve by implementing a “basics” policy, whereby goods are “handmade” and there are “limited

products with a wide variety.”

3.3.2 Marketing strategy of SOMES SADDLE

We next examine the marketing strategy of SOMES SADDLE. Table 6 shows our analysis of SOMES SADDLE by considering a five-point brand marketing strategy.

Table 6. Marketing strategy of SOMES SADDLE

Item	Detailed marketing strategy
Product	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bags are fabricated by using technology developed for making horse harness. - Limited types of products, but with a wide variety and hand-sewn
Price	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Highly priced compared with other domestic bag brands - Priced at about 200,000 yen—equal to European premium brand prices
Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bags are sold at directly managed stores, department stores, specialty stores, and internet stores. - There are three directly managed stores, in Sapporo, Sunagawa (in Hokkaido), and Aoyama (in Tokyo).
Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Little advertising is done. - Publicity (e.g. in magazines or on TV) is actively sought.
Brand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The company has an original brand that has individuality because of its origin as a harness brand. - The history that created the brand value is short.

On the basis of this analysis, the marketing strategy of SOMES SADDLE is as follows. It is a high quality product that grew from the technology used to make horse harness. The products are sold at high prices recognized as expensive in the domestic market, and the sales

channel is direct and limited.

There is little advertising, but publicity that utilizes the media is actively pursued. Although the fact that the brand started as one for horse harness gives it individuality, the history of the origin of SOMES SADDLE is considered to be short.

3.3.3 Customer experiences created by SOMES SADDLE

We next analyze the customer values that SOMES SADDLE has created, from the viewpoint of the customer experience. Table 7 shows the details of our analysis of the value of SOMES SADDLE in terms of five strategic customer experience SEMs.

On the basis of this analysis, from the perspective of customer experience creation, we can see that SOMES SADDLE has created four values: SENSE, FEEL, THINK, and RELATE.

Table 7. Customer experiences created by SOMES SADDLE

Classification	Customer experiences
SENSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The lean, beautiful design of the bag, which comes from its saddle-making history - The feel and texture of high-quality leather materials chosen in Europe
FEEL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A sense of reliability from the emphasis on similarity to harness-making, because horse harness and saddles are displayed together with the bags
THINK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Admiration for, and surprise at, the selection of materials and the experienced craftsmanship and advanced techniques used to make horse harness
ACT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is no particular behavioral change associated with owning a bag.
RELATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A feeling of relating to those who love using SOMES SADDLE horse harness equipment.

For ACT, in the same way as with GOYARD, it is unlikely that special lifestyle changes will occur through owning SOMES SADDLE products. For RELATE, we consider it likely that only small-scale groups of SOMES SADDLE devotees will form.

SOMES SADDLE has created part of its value by appealing to the senses of customers, and it seems that some customer experiences are raising the brand value. However, we consider that this is insufficient for the brand to be a luxury one.

4. Comparative Analysis of Case Studies

4.1 Comparison of Louis Vuitton and GOYARD

Here, we consider the differences between Louis Vuitton (Category 1) and GOYARD (Category 2) in terms of marketing strategies and comparisons of customer experiences, based on the case analysis from the analysis matrix. These are both domestic brands in France, but what kinds of differences are there between French luxury brands and everyday brands?

Table 8. Differences in marketing strategies (Louis Vuitton vs. GOYARD)

Items	Comparison of marketing strategies (differences)
Product	There are differences in the materials (treated leather or canvas).
Price	There are differences in the absolute values of the products (hundreds of thousands of yen, or a fair value).
Place	Although they both have direct-sales systems, there are differences in the controlled second line of sales intentionally.
Promotion	Although both use little advertising, they differ in their use of media publicity.
Brand	There are differences in whether their characteristics are unique, and in the product awareness that creates brand value.

The differences in the marketing strategies of Louis Vuitton and GOYARD are shown in Table 8.

From the above comparison, we can see that even with famous French brands there are large differences in marketing strategies.

We next look at the differences in customer experiences created by Louis Vuitton and GOYARD (Table 9).

Table 9. Differences in customer experiences (Louis Vuitton vs. GOYARD)

Classification	Comparison of customer experiences (differences)
SENSE	Although in both cases the brand image is evoked by the design and both brands have original logos, they differ in whether the brand history and origin can be evoked.
FEEL	There are differences in the innate feelings derived from the brand images.
THINK	They differ in whether the innovative point is made by keeping the original brand image and functionality.
ACT	They differ in whether the customer's sense of usual value of the bag and behavioral style are affected.
RELATE	There is a difference in whether a special sense of camaraderie centering on the brand is produced.

On the basis of the above comparison, we can see that there is a big difference between luxury brands and premium brands in terms of both the experience of value and the marketing strategy.

4.2 Comparison of GOYARD and SOMES SADDLE

Here, we consider the differences between GOYARD (Category 2) and SOMES SADDLE

(Category 4) in terms of marketing strategies and comparisons of customer experiences, based on the case analysis from the analysis matrix. Although the birthplaces of the two brands differed, neither was a luxury brand.

The common features of the marketing strategies of GOYARD and SOMES SADDLE are shown in Table 10.

Table 10. Common features of marketing strategies (GOYARD vs. SOMES SADDLE)

Items	Comparison of marketing strategies (similarities)
Product	The technology and experienced craftsmanship for manufacturing high-quality products are maintained.
Price	Although the price range corresponds to the value of the product, it is not a high price that the customer will hesitate to pay.
Place	Although the sales systems both use special stores that are directly managed, the sales networks are small.
Promotion	Little advertising is done; publicity is actively sought, but not on a grand scale.
Brand	Although both brands have individuality, their histories as sources of brand value are short.

On the basis of the above comparison, although these are both famous brands in their respective countries, no big difference in marketing strategy is seen; instead, there are, amazingly, many common features.

We next compared the customer experiences created by GOYARD and SOMES SADDLE (Table 11).

The above comparison shows that there are no big differences in the customer experiences created, as was the case with the marketing strategies, and there are no special points in

common.

Table 11. Comparison of customer experiences (GOYARD vs. SOMES SADDLE)

Classification	Comparison of customer experiences (similarities)
SENSE	Discrimination by which the corporate image is evoked by the product design is small or lacking.
FEEL	Especially. there is no similarity.
THINK	The experienced craftsmanship and high technical capacity required to make a high-quality product are apparent.
ACT	There is no element that facilitates changes in customer behavior and lifestyle.
RELATE	Although there is a sense of identification with the brand’s devotees, this is small in scale.

5. Conditions of Luxury Branding

On the basis of the three case analyses and the comparisons from the two viewpoints, we now consider the conditions required for luxury branding. As an axis for determining these conditions, marketing strategy and customer experience are arranged as conditions on the sides of “strategy execution” and “value creation,” respectively.

The conditions for realizing a luxury brand are first considered from the comparisons of Louis Vuitton and GOYARD (Table 12). The table shows that status as a luxury brand can be established to great effect by demonstrating only a single condition but by realizing all conditions together.

We next consider the conditions under which an everyday brand cannot be a luxury brand, from the comparison of GOYARD and SOMES SADDLE (Table 13). These constraints to realizing a luxury brand are in some ways inextricably associated with the conditions for

realizing a luxury brand. Resolving such constraints is important, but they cannot be solved simply.

Table 12. Conditions for luxury brand realization

Perspective	Conditions for luxury brand realization
Strategic aspect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Realization of a product in which excellence of quality and history are assumed - Realization of an appropriate price that is high but gives value - Establishment of a distribution channel that has limited power, and strengthening of circulation control - Improvement in positive notability, with emphasis on publicity - Activities designed to inform consumers of the product origin as a source of brand value
Value-creating aspect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A highly distinctive design or logo that evokes a sense of tradition and history. - A unique aesthetic consciousness that induces a distinctive sense through brand image. - A unique technology of brand story–based innovation and know-how that realizes functionality. - Prompting of a change in the consumer’s sense of values on the basis of the brand’s original philosophy, as well as a sense of associating action style. - Prompting of the formation of social groups based on a unique sense of solidarity centering on the brand and a powerful group consciousness.

Table 13. Constraints on luxury brand realization

Perspective	Constraints on luxury brand realization
Strategic aspect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Although the product is a quality one, no product storyline is transmitted. - A high product price that absolutely realizes value is not achieved. - Although there is a direct-sales organization, there are very few distribution channels. - The brand does not use publicity well. - The origin or history of the brand value is not widely known.
Value-creating aspect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is little ability to discriminate the brand on the basis of imagined tradition and history. - The brand story is not contagious, although the products have high quality and technical merits. - Any brand devotee groups are small, and the product is not a social phenomenon.

6. Limitations

These qualitative analyses were centered on each case study and the comparisons, and no quantitative analysis was performed. We plan in future to attempt a quantitative analysis to support the objectivity of our analysis.

There have been few reviews of the literature on luxury branding, and the execution of a further literature search that covers other brands is a future task.

7. Conclusion

We performed three case analyses by examining marketing strategy frameworks from a brand viewpoint and also customer experience frameworks. We investigated three leading

brands in France or Japan, namely “Louis Vuitton”, “GOYARD”, and “SOMES SADDLE.” We defined the direction of our comparative analysis by using an analysis matrix. We then attempted to extract information on the conditions for realizing a luxury brand and the constraints on realizing a luxury brand.

The elements contained in the conditions for realizing a luxury brand can be summarized in the following three points.

- (1) The brand image and corporate image are recognized by everyone.
- (2) The brand story is included in the product and in the technology supporting it.
- (3) A unique sense of presence is contagious through the brand.

To a customer, “luxury” means the deep satisfaction of the absolute presence that other brands never have. The customer needs to consider the product to be the “one and only indispensable item.” To achieve luxury, it is essential that everyone recognizes the brand at a glance. It is important that the luxury image that the brand and company present is designed clearly and is directly contagious to customers.

Next, the history, tradition, and the founder’s soul, with associated anecdotes, along with the obsession with development that a luxury brand holds, are reflected in detail, for example by the material of the product, the color, and the design. These things make it possible to induce a special feeling whenever the customer uses the product.

It is also important that the “special presence”—the mission of a luxury brand—comes across to the customer. A product that just has stateliness and great flamboyance will not become a luxury brand. The special presence of a luxury brand can be drawn out by realizing advanced technology, including experienced craftsmanship.

In terms of function or benefit, there is a seemingly infinite variety, but a luxury brand has an absolute presence and is equipped with overwhelming appeal.

As seen from the examples in this case, “Louis Vuitton” fulfills these conditions clearly and covers the three elements. Therefore, anyone can feel the presence of this “luxury brand.”

On the other hand, although “GOYARD” and “SOMES SADDLE” are established brands, the conditions or three elements are not completely fulfilled, and there is no cohesive, synergistic effect. Therefore, these brands do not have the overwhelming presence to be considered luxury brands.

To increase our precision in defining the prerequisites for a luxury brand, we intend to extend our investigative coverage of luxury brands (e.g. to Chanel and Hermes). Our aim is to uncover novel implications for the creation of Japanese luxury brands by studying the unique value of the luxury brand.

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