



The Blossom Newsletter

Orchard International Inc. September, 2011

WHAT'S NEW IN BAGS?



SILICONE

A new bag idea to keep in mind for the upcoming seasons is silicone bags. Silicone bags are not only functional, but are also a lot of fun for consumers of all ages. With rounded corners and a stretchy exterior material, these bags can hold practically anything! Silicone bags have a metal frame closure. This can be either fabric covered or left uncovered. With an infinite amount of colours and designs the possibilities are endless!

Baked Powders: new or not?



Over the past few years, we've seen an influx of baked powders hit the marketplace. All types of brands from prestige to mass are displaying an array of wet/dry, domed, marbled, metallic, sheer, sparkling or glittery baked powders as a new trend, but are they really that new? Research says no...

Alexandre-Napoléon Bourjois, one of the founding fathers of the infamous French brand Bourjois, actually invented the first baked powders in 1881! The first baked powders on the market were the iconic Bourjois blush – today, we still find shades like “Cendre de Rose” that have been sold since the 1920s!

In the late 1800s, the technology for powder pressing was not developed like it is today, so to create a more compact and practical form of powder, Mr. Bourjois mixed a loose powder with water to create a paste, filled this paste into a domed shaped mold and baked to evaporate the water. The result was a new generation of make-up which further solidified Bourjois as the official make-up of the theatres of Paris.

This powder baking technique is still used today; however, it has been refined and has new uses and applications. Baked powder technology allows for high-tech finishes and textures. Baked powders use less binding agents (oils, powders and waxes to hold the powder together) than pressed powders, so they have a much lighter and more airy feel, a more natural and translucent finish. We've also discovered that since the powder is not compressed under high pressure, the pearlescent pigments have more lustre and brilliance in a baked powder. The baking technique is often used for very glittery or metallic powders.



OUR FAVOURITES

Baked Powders we LOVE:



Square Baked



Flat Baked



Unique Shapes

Can Consumers Actually Dictate Trends?



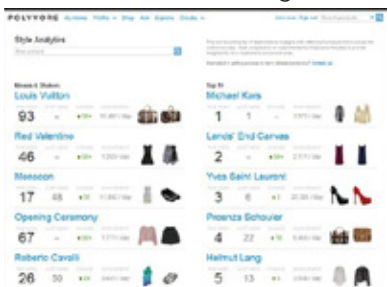
Have you ever looked at a piece of clothing or accessory and wondered "Who would ever buy this"? With the help of new analytical tracking tools from various social networks, data can take the guess work out of what products people want, what brands are "hot", and what trends are on the rise. Two such social networks are outlined below.

Polyvore.com

Polyvore.com is a social networking site where fashion-followers can design/create collages or "sets" of their favorite trends by pulling items from any online store.

Polyvore.com recently launched a beta Style Analytics tool. So what does this mean? Think of a magazine fashion spread matching high and low end fashion from all over the web. And when you choose to include those irresistible Prada shoes in your collage, with that sweet dress from H&M, Polyvore.com keeps track and uses this data to provide insight into how consumers think.

The Style Analytics tool will rank the top 100 brands on the Polyvore.com site and highlight brands that have advanced in popularity week to week. The tool aims to be a resource for companies to learn how the Polyvore.com community is or isn't interacting with their brand and also sees what trends are doing well for their competition.



* Polyvore reports 30,000 sets are created daily on the site and that they have 1.7 million unique visitors per month.

Here's what Polyvore's Style Analytics tool can do for you specifically:

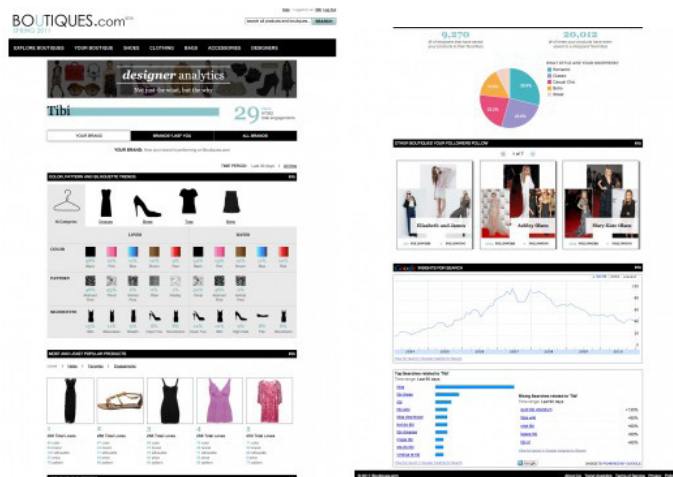
- 1) Let you know how many "sets" are created daily using your brand
- 2) Which of your products are used the most in "sets" right down to the item and color.
- 3) How your brand ranks compared to other brands on the site.

Polyvore has forged partnerships with brands like Calvin Klein, Barney's, Lancome, Zappos, Marc Jacobs, and the Gap to create branded collages that the Polyvore community of users can then share and buy from. Many of these brands also use Polyvore's technology to create contests for users. And users can share their branded "sets" via Facebook, blogs, and Twitter, serving as social advertisements for companies.

Boutiques.com

Boutiques.com is Google's designer search engine. The site leverages visual search technology to direct you to sites where apparel and accessories can be purchased. In addition, you can build your own personalized boutique and get recommendations of products that match your tastes.

This year in conjunction with New York Fashion Week, Boutiques.com introduced a bunch of new features on the site. The newest feature and the one we're most interested in is their Designer Analytics tool.



* Forbes recently wrote: "We believe that Google's superior search technology provides an edge as it pushes further into new verticals, market share gains would come at the expense of other online retailers like eBay and Amazon".

This tool is not unlike the Polyvore.com Style Analytics tool. How does it work? Designers and brands who operate shops on Boutiques.com can request access to Designer Analytics. Equipped with visual data features, Designer Analytics shows what colors, shapes and patterns are most loved and hated (ie. "I love the color, but I hate the silhouette.") in categories such as shoes, dresses and handbags. It can drill down into specific items and how they are performing within the market.

Google is also launching a public version of the tool called Trend Analytics. It uses aggregate data from both Boutiques.com and Google Search, showing the most popular colors of the season, the most-loved products and the must-have trends.

To sum it all up...these tools are still new so it remains to be seen how brands will engage with them and how meaningful the data will actually be. Is this a valuable indicator of what consumers are actually buying, or are we just click happy and over using the "Like" symbol to be part of a larger network?

Given all this, we will not be abandoning our trend books and services... just yet.