

# Lush Cosmetics: Online Consumer Behavior

Ayushi Patel

Professor Laura Dwyer

Consumer Behavior

5/1/2022

## Background Information and History

Lush is a cosmetic company centered around people and activism. The products range from body to face, helping customers improve their image with sustainable solutions. Lush is built on the values of natural beauty products. Before Lush came to be, Constantine & Weir was the original start. The owners (who both had careers within the beauty industry) wanted more natural beauty products so they decided to create their own company. As others began to join



their mission, they created their own formulas for beauty products based on natural ingredients. The company then further developed a mail-order company called Cosmetics To Go. This led to innovative products such as the bath bomb, shampoo bar, and massage bar. As they were developing formulas and creating products, they kept in mind key issues such as animal testing. They wanted their company to practice what it preaches so these key issues had made an impact on how the company would operate. Strict buying policies were put in place to avoid suppliers who

tested on animals and pushed for alternatives. Sadly, both the companies came to an end just six years into operations.

Lush came along in 1995 as it opened its first shop in Poole. The company focused more on products rather than the crazy add-ons. This ideology led to their naked packaging concept (reducing packaging for every product) and placed more importance on the origins of their ingredients. Customers purchased things that they believed had value so Lush wanted to make sure that value could be seen. The company began to have locations all over the world with 269 locations being in North America. Lush has become a well-known company for its products and the activism tied to them.

Though it is a popular company, Lush is seen as a second-tier company with many first-tier competitors. One such competitor is L'Oreal. L'Oreal is a cosmetics company that makes products for both women and men. With the presence they have, L'Oreal is seen as a luxury brand with products that have the best ingredients for the skin. Though the ingredients may have been tested on animals or gathered unethically, the products are made for consumers to live their best life based on what they want. The packaging also adds to the aesthetics as they are fashioned in a high society way. They continue to push the idea of luxury with many celebrity endorsements. Another competitor is Bath and Body Works. This company is known for its incredible line of



body care products and candles. With new scents constantly being introduced, consumers have a wide variety of products to choose from. The packaging is quite enticing as it draws consumers to the products. Bath and Body Works is well known for its store environment. With the iconic blue and yellow, the consumers are truly awake as they shop around the store. The scents of the products can greet a customer a mile away. There are many more competitors that create a difficult fight for recognition but these two companies stick out.

## Target Market

From my initial search of Lush, I believed that the target market was women within the Millennial to Generation X range. Though beauty products are made for everyone to use regardless of the gender they identify with, I still associated Lush's products with women as women are used to showcase the products on the website. Lush has come to say that its product does not have a gender bias. They strongly believe that its product can be used by anyone who wishes to use it. "Skin is skin, hair is hair and personal taste is all that matters". Lush is a company driven by activism. From Black Lives Matter to climate change, they are for change that brings a more equal, brighter future. Having sustainable packaging and purchasing supplies through ethical sources are just some ways that the company executes values into its practice. Target consumers will have their values and opinions aligned with Lush. May it be all of them or just one, the values and opinions of the consumer are more likely to align with the company. If the values or opinions do not align, the consumer is using the product for the results they see. Lush's products help consumers deal with problems of the body such as dryness and acne. If a consumer is curious as to which product is best for them, they can go to one of their physical locations where an associate can help them or they could research their desired product through the website.



The problem that consumers of Lush face is finding ethically made products. The beauty industry is notoriously known for experimenting with animals to create products for humans. Many people, especially Millennials and Gen X, are against this practice. Lush does not test on animals. "Invented by humans, tested on humans, suitable for all humans". To further this, the majority of their products (95%) are vegan and all of their products are vegetarian. To be vegan

and/or vegetarian, products are made from ingredients that are not derived from animals. This is great for consumers who are strongly against animal testing and/or using animal-derived ingredients in their products. Lush also believes in naked packaging for many of its products, mainly products that are solid and firm such as shampoo bars. This is great for consumers who are concerned about waste produced by packaging as that is a critical concern for consumers of today. For products that can't fit the naked standard, they are placed in packaging that is made from "recycled, recyclable, reusable or compostable materials". They have even created a unique system where returning five of their iconic black pots to their store earns you a free face mask. Though Lush creates a great opportunity to buy products made ethically, it comes at a higher price. Because of the way products are made, prices will be higher which may be a deal-breaker for consumers. Nonetheless, if a consumer truly believes in what Lush is doing, they will spend the money to support a company that is for the people.

## Brand Personality

Using Aaker's Dimensions of Brand Personality, Lush fits into the Sincerity and Excitement categories. Lush is an honest, sincere, real, and original company that fits into the Sincerity category. The ingredients they use are bought from suppliers that don't test on animals and use plant-derived alternatives. This fact is known on their product, if there is the packaging on the product, as well as on their website. Making this information aware to their consumers makes them honest and sincere as they are telling the truth behind their products in addition to practicing what they preach. Lush is an innovative company as they have created the bath bomb and shampoo bar which is quite popular among consumers today, making the company real and original. Lush is daring, trendy, spirited, and up-to-date which puts them into the Excitement category. As many of its competitors are finally creating products that are vegan or using



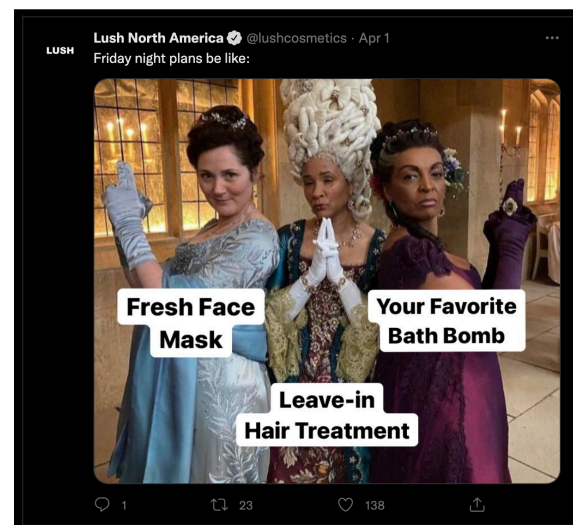
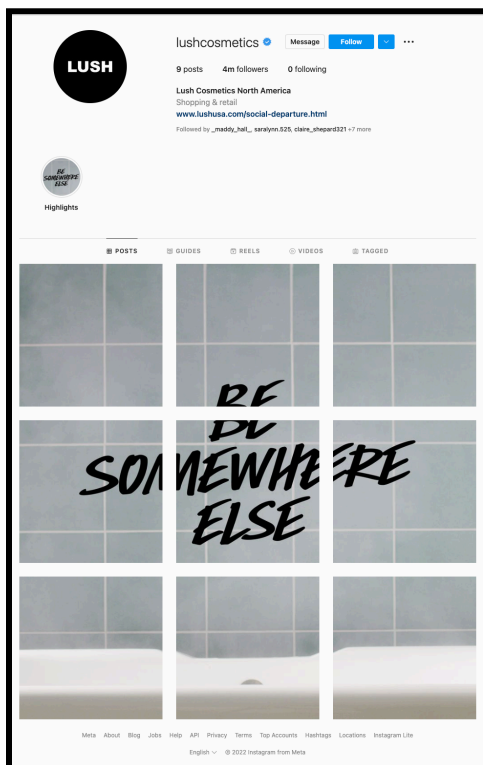
plant-derived ingredients, Lush has been doing it from the start. They keep pushing the line in creating ethically made products as they find new alternatives and incorporating them into their products, making them daring. They continue to push critical issues in both society and the beauty industry. From animal testing to plastic pollution, they consider these issues and do something about them to prove their stance. Many of their competitors and other companies outside of the cosmetics world tend to make promises for change yet provide no proof of such promises. Lush provides that proof by being transparent with their consumers. This drive for change makes them spirited. In terms of trendy and up-to-date, the products tend to change to adjust to what consumers want and what is popular at the time. They had created the original



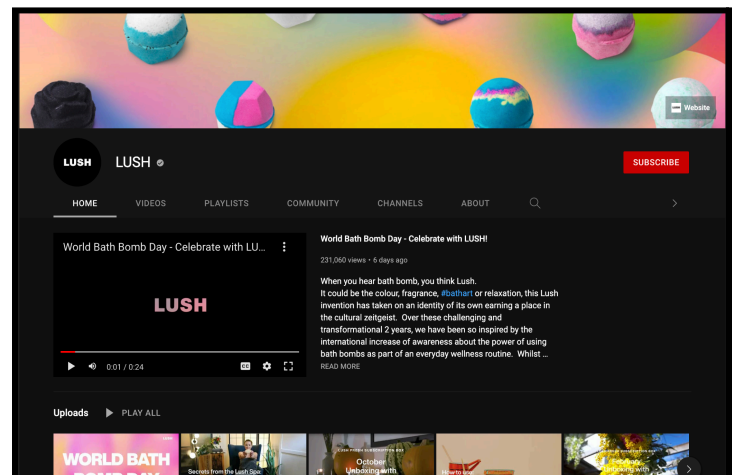
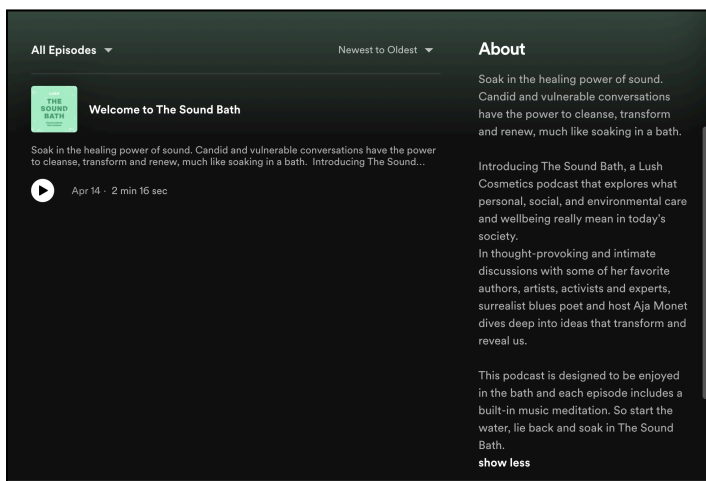
bath bomb and shampoo bar which started the trend that is loved by many. As this trend picked up, they created relevant formulas that speak to the customers. As the company started from the start, customers pay for products that they see value in. Products that are out of date have no value which isn't a problem for Lush. This company is quite in touch with its consumers and what's going on in the world.

## Marketing Communications Online Presences

Currently, Lush is not posting on social media in an effort to show the effects of social media on mental health. Activism truly runs deeply within the company. Its Instagram currently consists of 9 images that come together to show the hashtag of the movement. I do not know how the Instagram page previously looked nor know the posts so I can't comment about habits on that platform. Facebook and Twitter do have a similar message where they have declared that they are stopping social media but still have their past posts. As I was doing my research into its Facebook page, many of its consumers provide feedback in the comments of their posts. Some are answered while many are overlooked, especially those that are negative. They take their Facebook more seriously as they announce product launches and educate their consumers about the products that they have. They also post about the social issues that they are advocating for such as fair justice for innocent criminals. They handle their Twitter in a similar fashion but incorporate trendy and humorous posts. Incorporating memes and popular astrology associations, Twitter seems to be styled to speak to its younger consumers.



Even with the hurdle of the no social media movement, Lush does have other platforms where they post such as a YouTube channel, podcast, and blog. Its YouTube channel allows consumers to see how products are made, how to use products, make announcements about their company, and much more. This platform gives more of a visual guide to the company and the products. They say a picture is worth a thousand words so a 30-second video will have a stronger impact on consumers. The podcast is quite new and only has one post on it. The purpose of the podcast is for people to take a deeper dive into personal care. The episode that I have listened to introduced the idea of “conversations that cleanse”. These conversations bring up ideas and thoughts that help cleanse the body of negative thoughts and bring out more positivity. The blog is composed of stories to help consumers understand themselves and the company. Such stories include how to choose the right body scrub, how to be a trans ally, and a history of the bath bomb. The stories are extremely beneficial for clueless consumers new to Lush. Though they want to buy products, they don’t know which products are the best for them. These articles can be a great helping hand for new consumers.

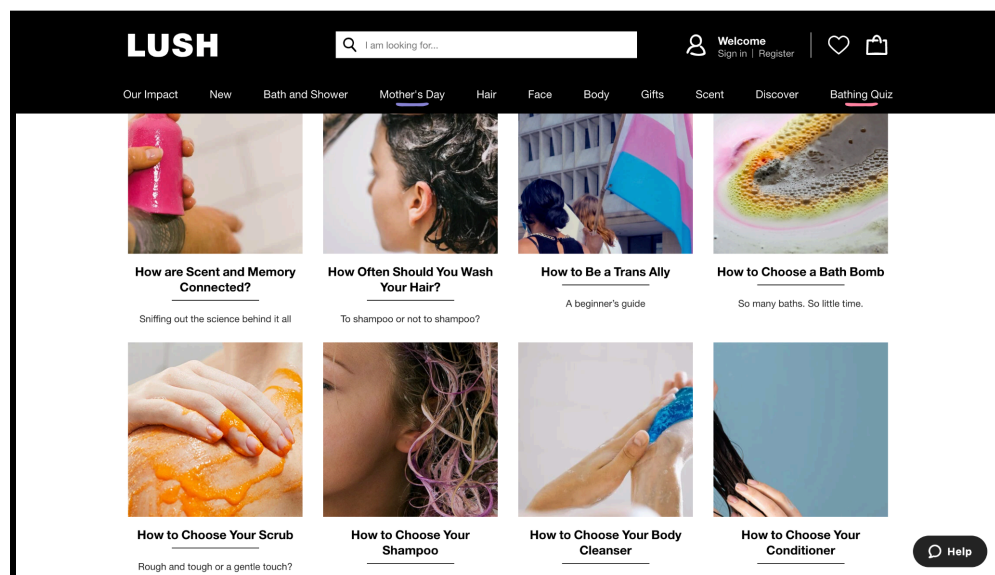


## Quality of their Online Presence

Lush uses culture and reference groups as external influences on consumers. Lush heavily rely on WOM (word of mouth) as its main source of advertising. WOM is a powerful technique as consumers tend to trust the words of those around them rather than the ones of the company. Consumers create reference groups to who they may refer for help in deciding what products to use. This could be indirectly by observing the products used by the group or directly by asking questions. Culture is the other influence used by Lush. With the increased attention toward equal treatment for African Americans, the Black Live Matter campaign has shown the brutality that is faced by African Americans. Lush supports this campaign and many other campaigns/organizations. On the website, the company gives consumers a deeper dive into Black Lives Matter. These details can help consumers better understand what people are truly going through. Certain products purchased by consumers have a certain percentage donated to the organization associated with the products. Culture is also featured through products display as

people within different cultures are seen using the products. Photos on the website and in physical stores show people of all types using the products This influence tells consumers that the products have no biases and it is truly meant for everyone.

In terms of internal influences, Lush uses perception, emotions, and learning. They have worked hard for consumers to perceive the company as environmentally friendly and ethical. From the creation of the ingredients to the shelving of the products, Lush takes careful steps to make sure that they are ethical and green. They make consumers aware of the steps they take to show transparency. This allows for a better perception created by consumers. Many companies aren't upfront and honest about how products are created but Lush is a glasshouse. They will be honest to their consumers because the consumers matter the most. They also play on emotions with their activism. As they highlight the campaigns that concern the people of today, consumers can get attached as they know that Lush has genuine care for its consumers. By supporting and donating to campaigns/organizations, consumers feel more positive about the company. A company that shows that it cares for its consumers in both the products and social issues can create a great sense of emotions in consumers. Last but not least is learning. Lush is teaching consumers how products are made, how the products are used, how to be a part of social issues, and much more. Consumers get to learn about the basics of the company as well the deeper roots. YouTube videos add a visual aspect to effectively teach consumers. For those who like reading, Lush has many stories for consumers to read to better understand the company and the products. Companies like to get inside the minds of their consumers and this is how Lush has a lasting effect on the minds of their consumers.



## Consumer Behavior Purchase Decision Process

The Purchase Decision Process consists of problem recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, purchase, and post-purchase satisfaction.

In the problem recognition stage, consumers have a problem that they want to solve. Lush provides solutions to problems relating to body improvement, ethically made products, and sustainability. People have issues finding products that can solve body issues such as acne and dryness. It is also difficult to find products for different skin types. Lush has an array of products that solve such problems. A consumer with anybody issue can find a solution. Lush shows these solutions with filters on their websites, labeling on the packaging, and knowledge of store associates. Filters on the website help narrow down a solution based on scents, benefits, skin types, and several other factors. On the packaging of the product, if it has it, the label describes what the product is best used for. Associates at the store can understand the consumer better and give them the best product for their problems. More recently, consumers are more worried about the impact a product has on the world. Issues surrounding ethics and sustainability are important factors for consumers. Lush creates products with these key issues in mind. For solid products that don't need packaging, they avoid using them to enforce their sustainability goal. For products that need it, they are made from earth-friendly materials. Some of the packaging can be recycled to physical stores for rewards. Some products have stickers on them to show who had made the product to show the ethics behind them. To further the ethics of the product, ingredients are bought from suppliers who don't test on animals and use plant-derived alternatives. Problems have solutions that Lush can provide.



In the information search stage, consumers dig into research to find a solution to their problem. On its website, Lush provides descriptions of the product so that consumers have a better understanding of the products. These descriptions provide how to use information, the list of ingredients (including a breakdown of the type of ingredient), and company policies for customers who may want to return items. In my opinion, the information is very effective. Since the company has outlined its policies on returns and shipping, it can encourage consumers to buy products without the fear of not liking them. The description further helps consumers find products that better suit them. In their research, they can create a list that fits what they need/want.

In the alternative evaluation stage, consumers look at alternatives to see if another product can solve the problem at an advantage such as lower price. Though Lush doesn't provide evaluation criteria (where it compares its products to products from other companies), Lush highlights the parts of the products that make it better compared to its competitors. This is mentioned in their values and descriptions of products. Though an obvious comparison is not made, Lush pushes to show its advantages in every possible way.

In the purchase stage, consumers purchase the product that they believe solves the problem. It is very easy to buy products from the website and physical stores. The website shows you the variety of products that they have even the ones that aren't in store. The site also allows



consumers to see which products are available in the store for in-store pickup. The physical stores have the products out in the opening, showing what they have in stock. Consumers can test products before they actually purchase them so they feel more confident about the choice they are making. The purchasing process is quite simple and allows consumers to get what they want without a hassle.

In the post-purchase satisfaction stage, consumers deal with their feeling about the product after purchase and use. After purchasing a product, consumers will be sent an email to rate the service and/or product that they received from the company. I haven't purchased anything from Lush to guarantee a survey email but it is a common post-purchase technique that many companies use so Lush is more likely to use it. This survey allows consumers to communicate with the company on areas of improvement and areas where they have done well in. Consumers will also put their opinions about the product online to grab the attention of the company and to make other consumers aware. There are both good and bad comments on every platform where consumers can express their opinions. I have stated previously that Lush hasn't made effort to contact a majority of its consumer that have negative feedback. The comments tend to stay there with no reply from the company.



## Marketing Strategies

After taking a closer look into Lush, there are some strategies I would strongly recommend that Lush uses to continue on its successful path. First is to use celebrities to endorse products. Celebrities such as Halsey use Lush's products yet Lush doesn't create a relationship with these celebrities to bring their fans to Lush. If Lush reaches out to more celebrities, especially those with values that match up with Lush's, they can bring awareness to potential consumers. It is risky to choose celebrities as the company doesn't know what actions they could take in the future but benefits can outshine the costs if research is done correctly. Fully examining the celebrities' reach, understanding them as a person, and working with them side by side can give the company a better look into who the celebrity truly is. I strongly recommend using Halsey as their first endorsement as their values do match with many of Lush's as well as the fact that they use their





products. It is better that the celebrity advertises products they like to use to show their genuine relationship with the company.



My second strategy would be to better their relationship with consumers online. From my research into the numerous platforms that they are present on, they don't tend to reply to negative feedback. This could make consumers feel that they aren't being heard or taken seriously by the company. Lush does care for its consumers which is why they have so many products for a variety of needs that consumers may have. If they aren't listening to the concerns of the people, then they aren't a company for the people. They should stay on top of negative comments by reaching out to consumers to see what the problem is. If not handled, the consumer could be a serious problem for the company in the future which means a lot more damage control. This input from consumers can be very beneficial for the company as they can improve and be better. No company is perfect as

they always have room for improvement.

The last strategy I recommend is to go outside of the media that they have control and extend their marketing efforts into different media. Lush has a tendency to use media where they have complete control such as social media platforms.

There are little to no advertisements in magazines, TV, and billboards. Although these traditional forms of media, they are still impactful on the consumers. Magazines may not be popular but many who shop in person are more likely to glance at them as they are in the checkout lines. Consumers are also on the road so using billboards would be beneficial to expose the company to potential consumers. TV advertisements may be out of date so they can implement ads on streaming services and/or on YouTube. They do lose control in some aspects when using these media but it has a great benefit of bringing the company to the people. Lush may have good reason to avoid these media as they can be pricey. These additional costs could go into research and development to create better products but there is no use in new products if consumers aren't made aware of them.

Every opportunity can be a marketing opportunity and Lush needs to seize as many as it can. Word of mouth is a very strong technique that keeps consumers



coming to Lush but it can only do so much. Lush needs to step out of its comfort zone to bring in new consumers.