

“Threads of Change”

The Strategic Role of PR in Fashion’s Shift Toward Inclusivity

Gabriella Rose Olson

University of Colorado Boulder

College of Media Communication and Information

Department of Advertising, Public Relations, and Media Design

Defense Date: April 7th, 2025

Thesis Advisor

Professor Diane Elliston, Department of Advertising, Public Relations, and Media Design

Honors Committee

Dr. Erin Schauster, Department of Advertising, Public Relations, and Media Design

Outside Committee Member: Angelica Kalika

Table of Contents

Chapter One

Introduction	Page. 1
Literature Review	Page. 4
Research Questions	Page. 7

Chapter Two

Method	Page. 8
Case Study 1: Victoria's Secret	Page. 10
Findings	Page. 19
Case Study 2: Brandy Melville	Page. 21
Findings	Page. 26
Case Study 3: Abercrombie & Fitch	Page. 27
Findings	Page. 35

Chapter Three

Discussion	Page. 36
Conclusion	Page. 37

References	Page. 40
------------	----------

Introduction

In an era where consumers demand representation that mirrors the diverse realities of society, brands can no longer afford to overlook the importance of fostering inclusivity in their messaging and practices. This shift is particularly pronounced in the fashion industry, where the visual and cultural impact of branding significantly shapes public perception. Inclusivity and diversity have emerged as fundamental values, transforming aspirational ideals into critical components of a brand's public image. The public relations (PR) teams representing these brands play a pivotal role in navigating this transformation as they craft and communicate the narratives that define how brands are perceived.

Despite significant strides toward inclusivity, the fashion industry has a history of exclusion, with many brands struggling to overcome perceptions of tokenism or inauthenticity. Consumers have grown more discerning, rewarding brands that demonstrate genuine commitment to diversity while holding others accountable for superficial or performative efforts. This dynamic has created a complex landscape for PR professionals, who must balance the demand for authentic representation with the business objectives of the brands they serve. The challenges are immense: How does a PR team ensure a brand's inclusivity message resonates as authentic? What strategies differentiate brands that thrive in this space from those that falter? These are not merely academic questions but pressing concerns for an industry grappling with evolving societal standards.

To explore these challenges, this thesis analyzes three case studies of fashion brands to investigate the impact of diversity and inclusivity efforts—or the lack thereof—on their public image and business success. By examining the PR strategies behind these case studies, this research aims to uncover what distinguishes thriving brands from those whose efforts are met with skepticism or backlash. Through real-world examples, this study will provide insights into effective practices and common pitfalls, offering valuable lessons for PR professionals striving to adapt to shifting standards and expectations.

This topic is both timely and critical. It is no longer acceptable for fashion to ignore large segments of the population in terms of size, ethnicity, and gender. The fashion industry must rise to meet the expectations of its audience. The failure to authentically embrace inclusivity can have tangible consequences, from damaged reputations to lost revenue. Conversely, brands that successfully integrate diversity into their brand culture and PR strategy can reap rewards in customer loyalty, brand equity, and financial performance. The importance of these outcomes underscores the necessity of understanding best practices for PR professionals who wish to guide their brands toward meaningful and sustainable inclusivity.

At the core of this thesis lies a set of key research questions: What best practices can PR professionals adopt to foster an inclusive brand image that resonates as authentic? Which fashion brands have successfully achieved this, and what specific strategies contributed to their success? Which brands have struggled, and what factors led to perceptions of inauthenticity in their diversity efforts? What measurable business benefits are associated with inclusive PR practices?

And finally, what common pitfalls can cause a brand to appear insincere in its messaging and actions?

This thesis hypothesizes that **fashion brands that implement genuinely inclusive public relations (PR) strategies not only enhance their reputation but also experience measurable business advantages in both the short and long term—such as increased customer engagement, brand credibility, and market share.** In contrast, **brands that engage in seemingly performative or superficial inclusivity efforts—such as Victoria’s Secret, Brandy Melville, and Abercrombie & Fitch—often face public backlash, reputational harm, and negative financial repercussions.** By examining successes and failures within the industry, this research seeks to provide actionable insights for PR professionals tasked with navigating the complexities of diversity and inclusivity in fashion.

To illustrate the stakes of inclusivity in fashion PR, this thesis examines three brands that represent distinct outcomes in this evolving landscape: **Abercrombie & Fitch, Brandy Melville, and Victoria’s Secret.** Each presents a unique case study on how public relations strategies surrounding diversity and inclusion can either strengthen a brand’s reputation or expose it to public scrutiny and criticism. Abercrombie & Fitch, once infamous for its exclusionary practices, has pursued a strategic rebranding rooted in inclusivity. Brandy Melville, by contrast, continues to face criticism for its refusal to evolve despite mounting pressure for broader representation. Meanwhile, Victoria’s Secret serves as a prime example of a brand whose delayed pivot to inclusivity followed years of controversy and declining market relevance. Together, these case studies provide a valuable comparative framework for understanding how authenticity, timing,

and communication strategy impact reputation and business performance in a value-based culture. The following literature review will explore key academic perspectives and industry insights that contextualize this analysis.

Literature Review: Fashion PR, Inclusivity, and the Rebranding Imperative

Over the past decade, fashion brands that once thrived on exclusivity have been forced to confront growing demands for inclusivity, transparency, and representation. Through an examination of Brandy Melville, Victoria's Secret, and Abercrombie & Fitch, it becomes evident that public relations strategy plays a pivotal role in either reinforcing or challenging outdated brand identities. Each of these brands provides insight into the consequences of resisting cultural evolution—and the potential for recovery through strategic rebranding.

Past Literature

Exclusivity and Backlash: Brandy Melville's PR Silence

Brandy Melville's rise in the early 2010s was marked by an aspirational aesthetic that heavily relied on whiteness, thinness, and a "one size fits all" product model. The brand deliberately cultivated exclusivity, relying on selective influencer reposting and tightly controlled content that aligned with narrow beauty ideals (Lang, 2024; Oh, 2023). Unlike competitors, Brandy Melville has never employed a visible PR team or external agency. Instead, it operates with what the USC Annenberg Center for Public Relations (2024) described as a "Country Club Approach," marked by intentional opacity and exclusivity.

As consumer expectations evolved toward inclusivity and representation, Brandy Melville remained largely unresponsive. Criticism intensified following the release of Brandy Hellville & The Cult of Fast Fashion, which exposed discriminatory hiring practices, racial bias, and a toxic workplace culture (Lang, 2024). Yet, the company made no public response, highlighting a key weakness in its communication strategy. This refusal to engage has alienated both young consumers and parents, positioning the brand as increasingly out of step with current values (Liu, 2023; Perry, 2024).

Rebranding as Redemption: Victoria's Secret and Abercrombie & Fitch

Victoria's Secret, once the pinnacle of hyper-sexualized femininity, began to decline in the mid-2010s amid backlash over its lack of body diversity and transphobic comments by executives (Cardenas, 2021). The brand's turning point came with leadership changes and the decision to retire the "Angels" in favor of the "VS Collective," a group of diverse and accomplished women (Stylehistoria, 2024). Strategic messaging emphasized empowerment, with campaigns featuring phrases like "We've changed" and "We see you," directly acknowledging past missteps (Marcyces, 2022; Friedman, 2022).

Still, the rebrand has met mixed reactions. While financial recovery is underway—with net income rising from \$109 million in 2023 to \$165 million in 2024 (Victoria's Secret & Co., 2024)—consumer trust remains fragile. Many Gen Z consumers appreciate the shift but question its authenticity after years of exclusion (Adigun, 2023).

Abercrombie & Fitch offers perhaps the most comprehensive example of transformation. Once infamous for discriminatory hiring practices, sexualized advertising, and its “Look Policy” that promoted thin, white models, Abercrombie faced legal backlash, financial losses, and cultural criticism (LeTrent, 2023; Ainsworth, 2022). Under CEO Fran Horowitz, the company eliminated exclusionary policies, redesigned stores, expanded sizing, and prioritized inclusive hiring and marketing. Its campaigns, like Face Your Fierce, spotlighted racial, gender, and body diversity, and partnerships with organizations like The Trevor Project reinforced its commitment to equity (Ritschel, 2020; Johari, 2025). (The Trevor Project, 2025) The Trevor Project is a leading suicide prevention and crisis intervention organization for LGBTQ+ young people.

Abercrombie also responded publicly to the 2022 Netflix documentary *White Hot: The Rise & Fall of Abercrombie & Fitch*, distancing itself from past leadership and reinforcing its new values. This transparency and alignment between internal reform and external messaging have led to measurable growth, with annual revenue hitting \$4.95 billion in 2025—its highest in company history (Macrotrends LLC, 2025).

Summary of Past Literature

Across these case studies, a clear narrative emerges: Exclusivity may yield short-term cultural capital, but long-term brand trust relies on adaptability and inclusivity. Brandy Melville’s silence in the face of criticism reflects a PR model ill-suited to modern expectations. In contrast, Victoria’s Secret and Abercrombie have demonstrated that strategic communication, backed by tangible change, can help restore credibility and profitability. Each case reinforces the centrality

of public relations in brand survival, especially as younger consumers demand authenticity, diversity, and ethical alignment from the brands they support.

Research Questions

1. Do consumers continue to support exclusionary fashion brands despite public backlash, and what does this reveal about the limitations of PR silence?
2. How do consumers respond to inclusivity initiatives in fashion, and what factors, such as the nature of the initiative, the scale of the response, timing, and the online media response, influence whether these efforts are perceived as authentic or performative?
3. What role does public relations play in ethically helping fashion brands rebuild trust, reshape their image, and achieve long-term success following reputational damage related to exclusivity or lack of diversity? Ethics is understood here as the commitment to minimizing harm and promoting fairness, accountability, and respect for all stakeholders, including consumers, employees, investors, and the broader community.

Methods Section

This thesis employs qualitative content analysis as the sole research method, utilizing secondary sources to investigate how public relations strategies around diversity and inclusivity influence brand perception and business outcomes in the fashion industry. Through a comprehensive review of academic literature, scholarly articles, industry reports, previous case studies, and media coverage, this study aims to identify patterns, themes, and best practices in PR strategies related to inclusivity.

The analysis focuses on three major fashion brands—Abercrombie & Fitch, Brandy Melville, and Victoria’s Secret—which each represent different approaches and outcomes regarding inclusivity in their public relations. By synthesizing findings from peer-reviewed journals, existing case studies, books, trade publications, and documentaries, this research critically evaluates how each brand has navigated inclusivity challenges and how their strategies have been received by the public, media, and industry experts.

Rather than collecting original data, this thesis engages in textual analysis of existing materials, including brand messaging, campaign narratives, public statements, and public and third-party commentary. This commentary encompasses not only traditional media coverage but also social media responses, analyzing how consumers have engaged with and reacted to inclusivity initiatives over time.

In addition to academic and industry sources, this thesis incorporates an extensive review of online platforms, beginning with media outlets such as Forbes, Vogue, The New York Times, Los Angeles Times, The Washington Post, PAPER Magazine, The Guardian, The Business of Fashion, ABC News, PRWeek, and Nylon. This review focused on campaigns, media coverage, and audience interactions between 2020 and 2025, capturing the evolving discourse around brand inclusivity efforts. In parallel, social media analysis was conducted across Instagram and Twitter (now X), with particular attention to brand messaging and consumer reactions.

For Victoria's Secret and Abercrombie & Fitch, emphasis was placed on campaign launches and real-time audience responses on Twitter, where public commentary often shaped broader perceptions of brand authenticity. For Brandy Melville, the analysis focused primarily on Instagram, the brand's main platform for communicating its image and engaging with its audience through curated visual content. While primary analysis centered on brands facing reputational challenges (Victoria's Secret, Brandy Melville, and Abercrombie & Fitch), the study also reviewed brands with positive consumer engagement—such as Aerie and Savage X Fenty—to better contextualize effective PR strategies within the broader fashion industry landscape.

This method allows for a broad and critical perspective on inclusivity in fashion PR while avoiding the logistical limitations of primary research. It also enables the incorporation of a wide range of expert insights and historical context, offering a nuanced understanding of how diversity and inclusion are strategically managed—and sometimes mishandled—within fashion communications.

Case Study: Victoria's Secret – Transparency, Trust, Transformation

Introduction

Victoria's Secret has long been a cultural icon in the fashion industry, known for its hyper-glamorized image of femininity and sensuality. The brand's legacy is closely tied to its famous "Victoria's Secret Angels," a group of tall, thin, predominantly white supermodels who epitomized the company's narrow standard of beauty. For decades, Victoria's Secret built its marketing strategy around this exclusive image, reinforcing limited representation in its advertising and runway shows.

However, as cultural values began shifting toward body positivity and inclusivity in the mid-2010s, the brand's outdated image and resistance to change drew increasing criticism from both media and consumers. Competitors such as Aerie and Savage X Fenty gained market share by promoting authentic representations of diverse body types, races, and gender identities. Meanwhile, Victoria's Secret's reluctance to evolve damaged its reputation and led to significant declines in sales and market presence.

Purpose of This Section

This case study analyzes Victoria's Secret's evolution in branding, public relations, and cultural relevance by exploring its transformation efforts, consumer response, financial outcomes, and comparison to rising competitors in the intimate apparel market. This analysis aims to identify key lessons for brands navigating similar challenges and offer insights into how PR messaging can drive genuine cultural change and rebuild consumer trust.

I. Brand Rise and Legacy (1990s–2010s)

To understand the challenges that Victoria's Secret faced and the significance of its rebranding journey, it is important to examine the rise and dominance of the company during its heyday. Since the late 1990s, Victoria's Secret dominated the lingerie market with a 60% U.S. market share, fueled by its glamorous annual fashion show, the "Angels," and its aspirational brand image. The brand's popularity peaked in the early 2000s, with the 2001 broadcast of the show attracting 12 million viewers (Murray, 2024). Marketing featuring iconic supermodels and extravagant performances cemented the brand's image of idealized and objectified femininity.

II. Early Warning Signs and Decline

While the early 2000s marked a peak in cultural visibility and market dominance, signs of discontent and misalignment with evolving social values began to emerge soon after. By the early 2010s, Victoria's Secret began to experience a shift in both media perception and consumer sentiment. The brand was increasingly criticized for its lack of body diversity and hyper-sexualized portrayal of women. In 2014, the launch of the "Perfect Body" campaign, which featured ten thin models with visible ribs, sparked outrage and a Change.org petition that received over 30,000 signatures demanding a more inclusive standard of beauty (ABC, 2014).

The brand eventually renamed the campaign, but the damage to its image was already done.

As public backlash mounted, internal cracks within the brand became visible. High-profile models and employees began distancing themselves from Victoria's Secret. In 2015, Karlie Kloss—one of the brand's most recognizable Angels—departed. She later explained in *Nylon* magazine, "I didn't feel it was an image that was truly reflective of who I am and the kind of

message I want to send to young women around the world about what it means to be beautiful” (Calfee, 2019).

In 2018, model Robyn Lawley called for a boycott of Victoria’s Secret, accusing the brand of reinforcing the notion that only one body type was beautiful. This protest highlighted growing consumer frustration and emphasized the disconnect between the brand’s messaging and the values of modern audiences. Lawley shared to Instagram, “Until Victoria’s Secret commits to representing ALL women on stage, I am calling for a complete boycott of this year’s Victoria’s Secret Fashion Show,” she wrote, directing attention to a link to a Change.org petition. That same year, Ed Razek, then-chief marketing officer for parent company L Brands, made highly controversial remarks in a *Vogue* interview. He claimed that the Victoria’s Secret Fashion Show was a “42-minute fantasy” and that transgender and plus-size models did not belong in the show. Although Razek issued a public apology in 2018 and stated that the brand would be open to casting transgender models in the future, the backlash was swift and intense, reinforcing perceptions that the brand was out of touch (Cardenas, 2021).

These comments coincided with a 55% drop in L Brands’ stock value, making 2018 a turning point in Victoria’s Secret’s decline (Forbes, 2019). The company’s refusal to adapt to evolving standards of inclusivity had alienated its consumer base. In August 2019, Razek stepped down from his position just days after the company hired Valentina Sampaio, its first transgender model. While her hiring was largely well-received, it was interpreted as a reactive PR tactic rather than a sincere step forward (Murray, 2024).

In February 2020, The New York Times published a damning investigation into the brand's internal culture, revealing allegations of sexual harassment, bullying, and misconduct. Razek was accused of making inappropriate comments, making unwanted advances, and making inappropriate physical contact with models. He denied the allegations, calling them “categorically untrue” or “taken out of context.” Nevertheless, the exposé intensified scrutiny of the brand's toxic culture and leadership practices. In response, Victoria's Secret stated it was committed to improving its workplace culture and holding its leadership accountable (Murray, 2024).

Adding to the controversy, former L Brands CEO Les Wexner faced public scrutiny for his longstanding ties to Jeffrey Epstein, who managed Wexner's finances until 2007. Although Wexner publicly apologized and emphasized that he had severed ties with Epstein more than a decade earlier, the connection further tarnished the brand's reputation during a period of intense public criticism (Murray, 2024).

By the end of the decade, Victoria's Secret had come to symbolize exclusivity, outdated beauty norms, cultural tone-deafness, and corporate irresponsibility. As CEO Martin Waters later admitted, “We were marketing the brand in a way that, frankly, was tone deaf and starting to become, if not already, culturally irrelevant” (TrendSource, 2021). The brand's eventual acknowledgment of its failings marked a turning point—but also underscored just how far it had fallen behind.

III. Growing Competition in an Inclusive Market

As Victoria's Secret's brand image faltered under public scrutiny, a new generation of competitors emerged—brands that embraced the values of inclusivity and representation that Victoria's Secret had long ignored. Victoria's Secret's market decline coincided with the rise of competitors that centered inclusivity and representation from the outset. Brands such as Savage X Fenty, SKIMS, Aerie, Yitty, and Neiwai prioritized diverse body types, gender identities, and comfort-focused products, aligning with shifting consumer expectations for authenticity and social responsibility. These companies integrated inclusivity into their core brand strategies—across product development, advertising, and public relations—establishing strong relationships with Gen Z and Millennial audiences.

Aerie introduced unretouched photo campaigns and extended sizing in 2014, setting an early industry precedent for transparency and diversity. Savage X Fenty's fashion shows featured models across a wide range of identities, while SKIMS emphasized inclusive sizing and minimal, comfort-driven designs. These strategies addressed consumer demands more effectively than traditional branding models.

IV. The Rebrand Era: Inclusivity and Image Repair

The Victoria's Secret Fashion Show was officially canceled in 2019 after a five-year decline in viewership, culminating in just 3.3 million viewers in 2018—a stark drop from its 10 million peak in 2011. Its cancellation followed public controversies, including Ed Razek's infamous 2018 remarks, growing backlash against the brand's lack of inclusivity, and the broader cultural

shift prompted by the #MeToo movement and the rising success of inclusive competitors like Savage X Fenty (Stylehistoria, 2024).

Faced with mounting competition and a dramatic loss in consumer trust, Victoria's Secret initiated a series of rebranding efforts aimed at repositioning the brand in a more inclusive and culturally relevant light. Victoria's Secret's rebrand was driven by strategic leadership changes and a renewed public relations approach. In November 2020, Martin Waters replaced John Mehas as CEO, launching early efforts to modernize the brand. In 2024, Hillary Super succeeded Waters as CEO—a calculated move, as she was credited with revitalizing Savage X Fenty, one of Victoria's Secret's most successful and inclusive competitors. Her appointment signaled a bold shift toward brand reinvention. Alongside these leadership changes, Victoria's Secret strengthened its PR efforts by combining its in-house communications team with the expertise of KCD Worldwide, one of the fashion industry's top public relations firms. Together, they crafted campaigns centered on inclusivity, empowerment, and cultural relevance—marking a pivotal moment in the brand's transformation.

To distance itself from its problematic legacy, Victoria's Secret launched a comprehensive rebrand. In 2021, the company retired its Angels and introduced the “VS Collective,” featuring activists, athletes, and advocates such as Megan Rapinoe, Valentina Sampaio, and Priyanka Chopra (Stylehistoria, 2024). The brand also severed ties with L Brands, forming a new corporate identity—Victoria's Secret & Co.—and began prioritizing inclusivity across its messaging and marketing strategies.

Storefronts were redesigned to reflect body diversity, incorporating size-inclusive mannequins and updated imagery featuring models of various ethnicities and body types. Campaigns emphasized empowerment, real stories, and emotional connection over fantasy and spectacle. Marcyes (2022) noted that these changes aimed to present a more relatable and inclusive definition of beauty to resonate with the modern consumer.

One of the most ambitious moves came in 2023 with Victoria's Secret: The Tour '23—an Amazon Prime documentary-style fashion show featuring 20 women creatives from around the world. According to Chief Creative Director Raul Martinez, “We haven't forgotten our past, but we're also speaking to the present” (Stylehistoria, 2024). The show attempted to blend fashion, storytelling, and global artistry in a modern reimagining of the brand's legacy event. While it showcased diverse voices and attempted a deeper cultural narrative, it received mixed reviews and a 2.6 rating on IMDB, leading the brand to reevaluate its strategy.

In 2024, Victoria's Secret announced it would bring back the iconic fashion show, this time promising a radically different version. The new format emphasized diversity, body positivity, and inclusion on an unprecedented scale. Unlike past shows that featured mostly thin, white models in overtly sexualized garments, the rebooted production embraced models of different sizes, races, and gender identities. According to Stylehistoria (2024), the show aimed to maintain the spectacle that made it famous while reframing sexiness as inclusive, confident, and personal. Early previews highlighted segments celebrating motherhood, queerness, and cultural heritage—signaling a conscious break from the brand's traditionally narrow lens.

V. Strategic Messaging and Brand Repositioning

Beyond visual changes and leadership shifts, the brand's success would hinge on how effectively it could communicate its transformation through strategic messaging that resonated with its evolving audience. To support the rebooted fashion show and broader rebrand, Victoria's Secret launched a series of emotionally resonant campaigns that directly acknowledged its past and repositioned its values. New messaging included statements like "We've changed," "We now know beauty was always yours to define," and "We see you. We promise to advocate for you" (Marcyes, 2022; Friedman, 2022). These slogans represented a stark departure from the brand's historically narrow and exclusive definition of beauty. As one Victoria's Secret spokeswoman put it, the campaign aimed to "celebrate the Victoria's Secret of today," offering a more inclusive and affirming message to modern consumers. These public relations efforts were complemented with cohesive and inclusive attention-grabbing messaging and clothing that catered to a broader range of sizes and comfort needs. Digital-first campaigns further helped connect with Gen Z and Millennial audiences through storytelling on social platforms.

Despite this evolution, consumer skepticism lingers. The Harris Poll (Rosanwo, 2021) revealed that while 78% of surveyed consumers now consider the brand authentic, only 36% of women said the rebrand made them more likely to shop at Victoria's Secret. Additionally, 46% still saw the brand as outdated (Lewis, 2021; Rosanwo, 2021; Chen, 2023).

VI. Consumer Response and Cultural Critique

Despite bold messaging and rebranding efforts, Victoria's Secret faced the ultimate test: how consumers, particularly younger generations, would respond to its attempt at reinvention.

Victoria's Secret's rebranding efforts have been met with mixed reactions from Gen Z and Millennial consumers—many of whom grew up watching the brand's iconic fashion shows. For some, the company's newer campaigns feel like a necessary correction but not a cultural breakthrough. Several women interviewed in Adigun (2023) shared complex emotional responses to the brand's transformation. A 25-year-old Gen Z content creator described loving the fashion show as a teen, yet now views it with critical awareness, acknowledging the harm it caused to her generation's body image. She explained how what once felt aspirational now represents a system that promotes unhealthy ideals and excludes most women.

Others, like a 26-year-old model born with a limb difference, reflected on her childhood dreams of walking the Victoria's Secret runway. As she matured, she realized those aspirations were shaped by an industry that had never truly welcomed bodies like hers. Her shift in perspective underscores how the brand's lack of visible diversity contributed to feelings of exclusion. Similarly, a 25-year-old woman shared how growing up as a plus-size teen, seeing only thin, idealized bodies on stage distorted how she saw her own. The lack of representation left lasting impressions during her formative years, and her loyalty has since shifted to more inclusive brands.

Even younger women, such as a 19-year-old college student, commented on how newer brands like Savage X Fenty have raised the bar by showcasing genuine diversity and body positivity. She noted the “heat is definitely on” for brands like Victoria's Secret to live up to those evolving expectations. Across interviews, the common thread was clear: while many appreciate Victoria's Secret's attempts to change, they remain cautious. For this generation, authenticity isn't

optional—it's a baseline expectation for earning back trust and relevance in a market where inclusivity is no longer a trend but a requirement (Adigun, 2023).

VII. Financial Performance and Brand Momentum

Public perception is one aspect of brand recovery, but equally critical is whether these shifts translate into financial stability and regained market momentum. In the case of Victoria's Secret, revenue declined from \$8.1 billion in 2019 to \$6.2 billion in 2025. Following a low point in 2020, where revenue hit \$5.41 billion, income has since begun to rebound. Net income increased from \$109 million in 2023 to \$165 million in 2024, and operating income rose from \$246 million to \$310 million during the same period (Victoria's Secret & Co., 2024). While the brand is not yet at its former peak, signs point to a slow upward trend.

This recovery is modest but promising. Strategic messaging and campaigns around inclusivity are beginning to resonate financially, but the gap between brand perception and loyalty remains significant. While the rebrand has helped restore some authenticity and modernize its appeal, sales and trust continue to lag behind that of long-standing inclusive competitors.

Findings: Reclaiming Relevance Through Inclusive Rebranding

Taken together, these strategic changes and their results offer key insights into what it takes for a legacy brand to rebuild trust and reclaim relevance in a rapidly evolving marketplace. Victoria's Secret's transformation has been fraught with controversy, delayed action, and cultural misalignment. However, recent efforts to repair its image reflect meaningful progress. The brand

is slowly redefining its place in a competitive market by confronting past missteps and evolving toward more inclusive ideals.

Through deliberate PR efforts—such as launching the VS Collective, reforming executive leadership, investing in diverse campaigns, and using market research to recalibrate brand messaging—Victoria’s Secret is attempting to reclaim its relevance. While its recovery is far from complete, Victoria’s Secret offers a valuable case study in how rebranding, when paired with genuine change and strategic PR, can pave the way for redemption and long-term relevance.

Case Study: Brandy Melville – Exclusivity vs. Inclusivity in Modern Fashion PR

Introduction

Brandy Melville's early rise to popularity was defined by its exclusivity. Founded in Italy and expanding to the U.S. in 2009, the brand quickly built an image of the "Malibu beach babe"—thin, young, and white. Their "one size fits all" sizing and selective marketing appealed to a niche but influential teenage demographic. However, as the fashion industry shifted toward diversity and inclusivity, Brandy Melville's refusal to adapt has made it a focal point for criticism.

Purpose of This Section

This case study explores how Brandy Melville's lack of public relations infrastructure, media backlash, and failure to adopt inclusive strategies have created long-term reputational risks despite short-term financial growth.

I. Brand Identity and Marketing Model

Brandy Melville's early success stemmed from cultivating an aspirational, minimalist aesthetic that dominated Tumblr and Instagram feeds in the 2010s. The brand reposted user-generated content—but only when it fit its idealized model of beauty. Social media influencers, especially thin white girls, helped create a self-reinforcing cycle of desirability (Lang, 2024). Despite its popularity, the company's "one size fits all" label was misleading, with most garments designed for XS/S frames (Oh, 2023).

A former executive featured in the 2024 HBO documentary *Brandy Hellville & The Cult of Fast Fashion* explained that the sizing policy was a deliberate branding tactic aimed at preserving a specific aesthetic (Lang, 2024). While this approach supported a controlled brand identity, it increasingly alienated consumers seeking representation and diversity.

II. Unconventional PR: “The Country Club Approach to Brand Promotion”

This rigid brand identity is mirrored in Brandy Melville’s unique communication model. Unlike most fashion brands, Brandy Melville does not employ an external public relations agency or visible PR team. Instead, it operates through an insular, internally controlled structure often described as “The Country Club Approach to Brand Promotion”—intentionally limiting access and visibility, creating an air of exclusivity around the brand (Center for Public Relations at USC Annenberg, 2024).

Rather than engaging in proactive media outreach or building transparent consumer relationships, Brandy Melville has leaned into strategic silence and a tightly curated digital presence. The brand amplifies content only from select influencers who match its aesthetic ideals, reinforcing an exclusive visual narrative. While this tactic preserves brand mystique and cohesion, it limits adaptability and distances the brand from evolving cultural and ethical expectations.

III. Cultural Context and Consumer Evolution

Brandy Melville’s stagnant PR model contrasts sharply with the industry’s broader evolution. In the early 2010s, mainstream fashion paid little attention to diversity, and body positivity had yet

to become a movement. The brand flourished in this climate, comfortably aligning with dominant beauty standards of thinness and whiteness.

However, by the 2020s, expectations shifted dramatically. Mintel (2022) reports that 41% of Gen Z consumers prefer brands that represent their identity. Platforms like TikTok and Instagram amplified consumer voices, placing pressure on brands to showcase genuine diversity. As the industry began to reward transparency and inclusion, Brandy Melville remained largely unresponsive—clinging to its established tradition of engaging the same type of young person with the same body type.

IV. Consumers: The Buyer's Perception

This lack of adaptation affects not only Brandy Melville's image among tweens and teens but also the purchasing decisions of parents. As primary financial gatekeepers, parents and guardians began to scrutinize brand values, often initiating concerns about representation and inclusivity.

Perry (2024), a mother of a tween and teen, explains: "While the sizing might be perfect for your nine- or 10-year-old daughter... it can be catastrophic for your older, taller, or wider daughter... I won't be buying her anything from the shop out of principle." Her statement underscores how ethical considerations are increasingly shaping brand loyalty across generations.

V. The Target Audience Perception: Teenage Girls

While parents act as brand gatekeepers, teenage girls are the core consumers—and the most directly impacted by Brandy Melville's exclusionary messaging. Lang (2024) notes that the

brand's rise was driven by reposting content that reinforced a narrow beauty ideal. Oh (2023) highlights that its clothing, labeled "one size fits all," was designed for XS/S body types.

These marketing decisions have real psychological consequences. Liu (2023) found that Brandy Melville's aesthetic promotes body dissatisfaction and anxiety. Many young consumers reported feeling inadequate when they did not match the brand's image. By "manufacturing both desire and insecurity," Brandy reinforces a harmful loop of exclusion while commodifying beauty standards.

VI. Public Backlash and Missed Opportunities

These internal perceptions mirror broader public backlash. Perry (2024) emphasizes how parental concern over Brandy Melville's messaging has translated into resistance. Liu (2023) supports this, noting that the brand's social media content actively reinforces unattainable ideals.

Yet, despite mounting criticism, Brandy Melville has responded with only superficial adjustments. Cho (2024) documents the company's shift from "one size fits all" to "one size fits most," a change made without launching a campaign emphasizing inclusion and diversity or issuing public acknowledgment.

In contrast, brands like Aerie have embraced inclusive PR with transparent messaging, diverse representation, and authentic campaigns. Brandy Melville's silence represents a significant missed opportunity to align with evolving consumer values.

VII. Reputational Risk

The cumulative effect of parental disapproval, audience distress, and weak crisis response places Brandy Melville in a precarious position. As Lang (2024) and Oh (2023) reveal, its identity hinges on a rigid, idealized image—one increasingly out of step with current norms.

Although financial performance has remained strong (Lewis, 2024), the brand's refusal to engage publicly or adjust meaningfully leaves it vulnerable to reputational decline. Its communication failures are not incidental; they are strategic omissions that may erode long-term trust.

VIII. The HBO Documentary and Corporate Accountability

The fragility of Brandy Melville's reputation was further exposed by the 2024 HBO documentary *Brandy Hellville & The Cult of Fast Fashion*. Directed by Eva Orner, the film revealed internal misconduct, including exploitative labor, racial discrimination, and toxic workplace culture.

Allegations included hiring based on physical appearance, demands for full-body employee photos, and the closure of stores in racially diverse neighborhoods. Despite the severity of these claims, Brandy Melville issued no public response—a striking omission in the face of widespread media coverage.

The Guardian condemned the brand's "very odd and ugly worldview," while Vogue highlighted allegations such as the circulation of Hitler memes among executives and racially biased hiring practices. These reports amplified the public's call for accountability—yet Brandy remained silent, deepening the crisis and widening the trust gap.

IX. Financial Paradox and Brand Longevity

Despite escalating controversies, Brandy Melville's revenue rose from \$169.6 million in 2019 to \$212.5 million in 2023 (Lewis, 2024). This disconnect between image and income reflects a broader paradox: brands can remain profitable even while enduring ethical scrutiny.

However, this model is unlikely to be sustainable. Gen Z and Gen Alpha are increasingly values-driven, favoring brands that demonstrate ethical consistency and inclusivity. Without meaningful change, Brandy Melville risks losing cultural relevance and long-term consumer trust.

Findings: A Cautionary Tale in Modern PR

Brandy Melville's exclusivity-driven strategy, once a competitive advantage, now jeopardizes its future. The brand's refusal to evolve—amid growing media scrutiny, consumer resistance, and internal controversy—has exposed fundamental weaknesses in its public relations approach.

This case underscores how silence in modern PR is not neutral—it is a decision with consequences. By failing to communicate, engage, and adapt, Brandy Melville has positioned itself as a cautionary tale in a landscape where credibility, inclusivity, and transparency are essential for survival.

Case Study: Abercrombie & Fitch – Crisis, Reinvention, and Redemption

Introduction

Abercrombie & Fitch, once a dominant force in American youth fashion, rose to prominence in the late 1990s and early 2000s by cultivating a hyper-curated, aspirational brand identity.

Originally founded as an outfitter for outdoor enthusiasts, the company transformed under CEO Mike Jeffries into a mall-era powerhouse with provocative advertising, dimly lit stores, and a rigid focus on physical appearance (LeTrent, 2023). Its infamous “Look Policy” and hiring practices promoted whiteness, thinness, and conventional attractiveness while actively excluding customers who did not fit its narrow aesthetic (Ainsworth, 2022).

Purpose of This Section

This case study analyzes how Abercrombie & Fitch’s exclusionary image led to cultural backlash, legal controversy, and reputational collapse. It then explores the company’s transformation under CEO Fran Horowitz, examining how public relations, inclusive marketing, and internal reform enabled a full-scale brand reinvention. Through close examination of consumer response, financial recovery, and PR strategy, this study evaluates Abercrombie’s shift from a symbol of elitism to one of modern inclusivity.

I. Branding, Marketing, and Internal Culture (1990s–2010s)

To understand Abercrombie’s fall, it is essential to first examine the very culture and branding that defined its rise. Abercrombie’s branding was designed to project an image of exclusivity. Advertising campaigns led by photographer Bruce Weber leaned heavily on whiteness and

sexually charged imagery. His black-and-white portraits featured shirtless, athletic models in curated preppy settings—suggesting that Abercrombie was a brand reserved for the “cool, good-looking people” Jeffries famously spoke of (Walker, 2013). Stores mimicked this elite image with nightclub-style lighting, loud music, and employees hired primarily for appearance (Polsinelli, 2015).

Abercrombie’s “Look Policy” institutionalized these preferences, dictating grooming standards and promoting racially homogeneous, slim-bodied staff. By refusing to carry XL or XXL sizes for women and enforcing narrow aesthetic standards, the brand systematically excluded broader demographics (LeTrent, 2013). These choices were not incidental but central to the brand’s identity and aspirational messaging.

II. Public Backlash and Legal Challenges

However, what once attracted consumers began to repel them as societal values evolved. As public sentiment shifted in the 2010s toward body positivity and diversity, Abercrombie’s image began to unravel. In 2003, a class-action lawsuit accused the company of discriminatory hiring practices against Black, Latinx, and Asian applicants. The case was settled for \$40 million, but more allegations soon followed, from religious discrimination to the mistreatment of disabled employees (French; Horton, 2022).

Public outrage escalated in 2013 when Mike Jeffries's comments resurfaced, prompting 18-year-old Benjamin O’Keefe to launch a Change.org petition demanding inclusive sizing and accountability. The petition garnered over 68,000 signatures (Chen, 2016). Though the company

apologized, critics viewed the response as performative. This backlash wasn't just cultural—it was financial. Between 2011 and 2014, the brand reported eleven consecutive quarters of same-store sales losses. By Q3 2014, global net sales fell 12% to \$911.4 million, and share prices hit a one-year low of \$30.31 (French; Johari, 2025). Jeffries stepped down in December 2014, marking a pivotal turning point.

III. Cultural Reckoning: White Hot and the Public Lens

Years later, a new wave of public scrutiny revived the conversation about Abercrombie's past. The 2022 Netflix documentary *White Hot: The Rise & Fall of Abercrombie & Fitch* exposed systemic racism in hiring, the weaponization of sex appeal, and discriminatory "look" standards, serving as both exposé and cultural critique. The film reframed what had once been aspirational as exclusionary and damaging, especially in an era of Gen Z consumer consciousness (Johari, 2025).

Anticipating backlash, Abercrombie proactively addressed the film's release on Instagram, distancing itself from the Jeffries era and signaling a new chapter rooted in transparency. (Danziger, 2024).

IV. Strategic Overhaul: Key Changes Implemented Under Horowitz's Leadership

With the past laid bare, Abercrombie's revival depended on real, systemic change. Under Fran Horowitz, who became CEO in 2017, the company launched a top-to-bottom transformation on inclusion, equity, and accountability.

Eliminating the “Look Policy”

In 2015, Abercrombie officially retired its infamous “Look Policy,” which had dictated strict employee appearance standards and disproportionately affected applicants based on race, religion, and body type (Polsinelli, 2015). The removal of this policy addressed long-standing accusations of discrimination and set the stage for more equitable hiring and workplace practices.

Redesigning the In-Store Experience

Abercrombie also transformed the physical shopping experience, replacing the brand’s dark, overly sexualized stores with open, airy spaces modeled after boutique hotel lobbies. The redesign was aimed at improving accessibility and comfort while supporting an omnichannel shopping strategy described as “an immersive interpretation of the Abercrombie experience of today” (Wightman-Stone, 2022).

Extending Size Range and Inclusive Fit Innovation

To address decades of criticism regarding body exclusivity, Abercrombie expanded its size offerings to include XXS–XXXL in tops and 23W–37W in bottoms (Johari, 2025). The “Denim Your Way” initiative included Curve Love fits and extra-short to extra-long inseams, accommodating a broader range of body shapes (Sommer, 2021). These changes helped reclaim consumers previously alienated by the brand’s limited size range.

Ending Sexualized Branding and Cutting Ties with Bruce Weber

By 2015, the brand discontinued its overtly sexual advertising—eliminating shirtless greeters and provocative imagery from its marketing. Employees were rebranded from “models” to “brand

representatives,” emphasizing professionalism over appearance (Reuters, 2015). In 2018, Abercrombie severed ties with longtime photographer Bruce Weber following multiple allegations, formally distancing itself from its controversial past (Felbin, 2019).

Internal Culture Revamp and DEI Recognition

Abercrombie launched robust internal DEI programs, established associate resource groups, and instituted regular training on inclusive practices. These initiatives helped reshape the workplace, earning the company a place on the list of Fortune’s Best Workplaces in Retail by 2021 (Johari, 2025).

Inclusive Campaigns and Representation

The brand’s Face Your Fierce campaign, launched in 2020, marked a turning point in visual storytelling. Featuring figures like Megan Rapinoe, Leyna Bloom, Scout Bassett, and Kyle Kuzma, the campaign centered themes of empowerment, diversity, and LGBTQ+ visibility (Ritschel, 2020; Abad, 2020). Ads showcased models of various races, sizes, and gender identities, replacing the brand’s prior focus on thin, white, cisgender aesthetics.

Partnerships with Impact: The Trevor Project

Abercrombie partnered with The Trevor Project to co-create Pride collections and raise awareness around LGBTQ+ youth suicide prevention. The “Hello, My Pronoun Is” campaign and related donations have raised over \$2 million to date, with the brand integrating year-round LGBTQ+ support into its marketing strategy (Trevor Project, 2022).

Differentiation from Competitors

Unlike competitors such as GAP or Old Navy—whose offerings tend to skew female—Abercrombie maintained a gender-balanced assortment and pushed boundaries with gender-inclusive design (Lectra, 2022). These efforts, aligned across marketing, operations, and partnerships, established a clear point of differentiation in an increasingly values-driven marketplace.

These initiatives were not isolated efforts but components of a broader strategic overhaul. Abercrombie’s transformation was anchored in authenticity, driven by a long-term vision to realign the brand with the values of modern consumers.

V. PR Strategy: From Damage Control to Brand Alignment

A pivotal move in strengthening this new communications direction came in 2022 when Abercrombie & Fitch Co. appointed Kate Wagner as Vice President of Corporate Communications. Wagner’s hiring marked a commitment to rebuilding the brand’s reputation through experienced, values-driven leadership in public relations. Under her direction, the in-house PR team focused on aligning external messaging with internal reforms, prioritizing transparency, accountability, and storytelling rooted in belonging. This leadership shift reinforced Abercrombie’s evolution from reactive damage control to proactive, purposeful engagement with its consumer base (PRWeek, 2022).

Behind the scenes, a reimagined public relations strategy was pivotal. The brand no longer aimed to “spin” stories but to engage in honest storytelling. As Creative Director Joanna Ewing noted, the goal was to foster belonging rather than promote conformity (Ritschel, 2020).

From influencer partnerships rooted in relatability to diverse casting in advertisements, Abercrombie’s PR team built a narrative that mirrored its internal changes—one grounded in authenticity.

VI. Financial Impact: Measurable Growth Post-Rebrand

Between 2015 and 2023, the company’s annual revenue remained stagnant, fluctuating between \$3.1 billion and \$3.7 billion (Macrotrends LLC, 2010–2025). For example, revenue declined from \$3.74 billion in 2015 to \$3.32 billion by 2017, a reflection of growing consumer detachment during its cultural reckoning.

A noticeable shift began in 2023 when revenue totaled \$3.70 billion. In 2024, the brand experienced a sharp rebound, reaching \$4.28 billion—representing over 15% year-over-year growth. This momentum continued in 2025, with revenue climbing to \$4.95 billion, surpassing its 2012–2013 peak of \$4.51 billion and marking the highest annual revenue in the company’s history (Macrotrends LLC, 2025; StockAnalysis, 2025).

This financial recovery coincided with the execution of Abercrombie’s internal reforms, inclusive messaging, and realignment with Gen Z and Millennial consumer values. The data

validates that ethical and inclusive branding, when backed by operational change, can be a long-term driver of profitability and market reentry.

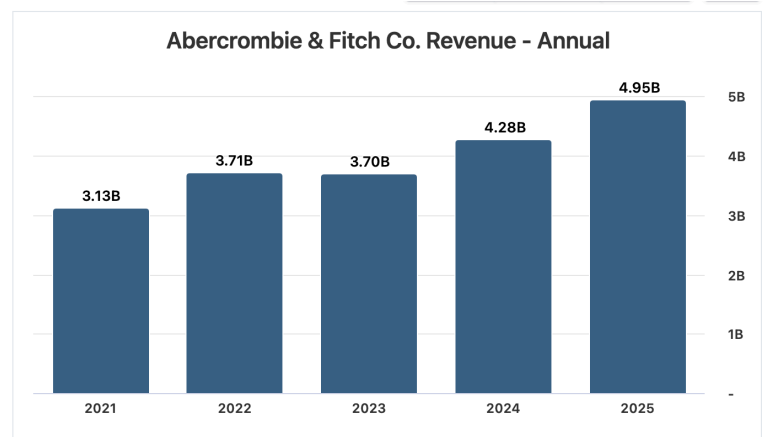
Exhibit 1: Abercrombie & Fitch Annual Revenue, 2015–2025 (Macrotrends LLC, 2025)

Exhibit 2: Abercrombie & Fitch Co. Revenue – Annual, 2021–2025

Exhibit 1 (Macrotrends LLC, 2025)

Abercrombie & Fitch Annual Revenue (Millions of US \$)	
2025	\$4,949
2024	\$4,281
2023	\$3,698
2022	\$3,713
2021	\$3,125
2020	\$3,623
2019	\$3,590
2018	\$3,493
2017	\$3,327
2016	\$3,519
2015	\$3,744
2014	\$4,117
2013	\$4,511
2012	\$4,158

Exhibit 2 (StockAnalysis, 2025)



VII. Lessons from Crisis and Recovery

Abercrombie’s story isn’t just one of redemption—it’s a case study in brand resilience. The key takeaways include:

1. **Listen and Adapt:** Consumer values are fluid. Brands must evolve or risk irrelevance.
2. **Authenticity Matters:** Surface-level change is not enough. Consumers recognize—and reward—genuine reform that stems from an internal cultural shift, not just external rebranding.

3. **PR is Strategic, Not Cosmetic:** Abercrombie's case shows that PR, when aligned with leadership, operations, and brand values, can drive not only image recovery but also sustained business growth.

Findings: From Exclusivity to Accountability

Abercrombie & Fitch's journey from cultural icon to cautionary tale—and ultimately, redemption—demonstrates the power of strategic communication, ethical leadership, and cultural alignment. Where it once embodied elitism, the brand now champions inclusivity and self-expression. Under Fran Horowitz, Abercrombie has not only rebuilt its image but has done so through tangible, structural change. In today's consumer landscape, where accountability is currency, Abercrombie's rebrand is a model of how to turn crisis into opportunity through thoughtful PR and authentic reform.

Discussion

The case studies of Victoria's Secret, Brandy Melville, and Abercrombie & Fitch demonstrate that inclusivity in fashion is not merely a matter of aesthetics—it is a strategic imperative that shapes consumer trust, cultural relevance, and long-term viability. These brands reveal a spectrum of PR approaches, ranging from proactive reinvention to outright silence. Abercrombie's transformation illustrates the power of authenticity and structural reform, reinforcing that public relations must work in tandem with internal change to achieve credibility. Victoria's Secret, though making strides toward inclusivity, has encountered lingering skepticism due to years of tone-deaf messaging and a delayed pivot, revealing how the timing and sincerity of PR responses shape public judgment. In contrast, Brandy Melville's deliberate non-engagement presents a paradox: financial growth in the face of ethical controversy but mounting reputational fragility. Together, these examples highlight a crucial truth for PR professionals—effective messaging alone is not enough. Today's consumers are discerning, holding brands accountable not just for what they say but for how they operate. PR, therefore, must function as a bridge between corporate values and public expectation, rooted in transparency, responsiveness, and cultural awareness. In an era where brand loyalty is tied to perceived authenticity, the most successful fashion labels are those that view inclusivity as a lived value—not a marketing trend.

Conclusion

The fashion industry's shift toward inclusivity has created both opportunity and risk for brands—especially as consumer expectations become increasingly values-based. As this thesis has demonstrated through the comparative case studies of Victoria's Secret, Brandy Melville, and Abercrombie & Fitch, public relations strategy is not just a supporting tool but a central driver of how inclusivity is perceived and whether it leads to brand revitalization or reputational decline.

This research set out to explore several key questions: What best practices can PR professionals adopt to foster an inclusive brand image that resonates as authentic? Which strategies contribute to success or failure? And what are the reputational and financial impacts of inclusive PR strategies versus performative efforts?

The first question: Do consumers still support exclusionary fashion brands despite the backlash?—is most clearly answered in the case of Brandy Melville. Despite lacking a formal PR infrastructure and maintaining a narrow, exclusionary image, Brandy Melville continues to grow financially. This illustrates that a lack of PR engagement does not always equate to immediate financial loss, especially when a brand cultivates exclusivity as part of its allure. However, the brand's refusal to adapt and communicate openly represents a reputational time bomb. As this thesis argues, short-term profits do not guarantee long-term brand sustainability in a culture increasingly driven by social accountability and ethical alignment.

The second research question: How do consumers respond to inclusivity initiatives in fashion, and what factors, such as the nature of the initiative, the scale of the response, timing, and the online media response, influence whether these efforts are perceived as authentic or performative?—finds contrasting answers in Victoria’s Secret and Abercrombie & Fitch. While both brands continue to make efforts to rebrand around inclusivity, their outcomes differ. Abercrombie & Fitch’s PR team implemented a fully integrated strategy rooted in internal reform, diverse casting, transparent messaging, and long-term partnerships, leading to renewed cultural relevance and record-breaking revenue. This case underscores that authenticity in PR is established when communication aligns with real, structural change.

Victoria’s Secret, meanwhile, illustrates how a delayed or reactive PR approach can limit credibility. Despite retiring its iconic Angels and launching more inclusive campaigns, its past branding is so entrenched in exclusivity that many consumers interpret its shift as performative. While recent campaigns show effort, skepticism persists—highlighting the importance of timing, tone, and consistency in PR messaging. Brands that wait too long or fail to own their past missteps risk undermining the very trust they hope to rebuild.

Finally, this thesis addressed the broader question: What role does public relations play in ethically helping fashion brands rebuild trust, reshape their image, and achieve long-term success following reputational damage related to exclusivity or lack of diversity? The evidence is clear: PR strategy is the linchpin that connects internal change to public perception. Abercrombie’s success hinged on a coordinated PR campaign that emphasized transparency and accountability. Brandy Melville’s silence has left it culturally vulnerable, despite economic gains. Victoria’s

Secret continues to navigate the tension between rebranding and regaining trust. These cases confirm the hypothesis: brands that implement genuinely inclusive public relations strategies not only improve their reputation but also unlock measurable business advantages—including increased engagement, customer loyalty, and renewed market positioning.

The broader implication of this research is that inclusivity in fashion is no longer optional—it is essential. As PR professionals work to guide their brands through an era of heightened cultural awareness, the path forward lies in genuine, sustained, and transparent communication that reflects internal reform, not just external image. Those who embrace this reality will lead the next generation of brand storytelling. Those who don't may find themselves not only out of touch but out of business.

References

Abad, M. (2020, June 15). *Abercrombie is looking very different*. PAPER Magazine.

<https://www.papermag.com/abercrombie-and-fitch-diverse-campaign#rebelltitem7>

ABC News Network. (2014, November 26). *Victoria's Secret Changes Controversial "Perfect Body" Slogan*. ABC News.

<https://abcnews.go.com/Lifestyle/victorias-secret-controversial-perfect-body-slogan/story?id=26735138>

Abercrombie & Fitch. (2025, February 11). *Inclusion & Diversity: Abercrombie & Fitch*.

Abercrombie. <https://corporate.abercrombie.com/our-commitment/>

Adigun, T. (2023, August 3). *The Victoria's Secret Fashion Show is coming back. Will Gen Z Watch?* Yahoo!

<https://www.yahoo.com/lifestyle/victorias-secret-fashion-show-coming-225017108.html>

Ainsworth, S. (2022, April 20). *White hot: The legacy of Abercrombie and fitch*. Hello.

<https://www.samainsworth.com/post/white-hot-the-legacy-of-abercrombie-and-fitch>

Annabella. (2024, February 29). *A&F Co. receives top score on the Human Rights Campaign's 2023-2024 corporate equality index*. Abercrombie.

<https://corporate.abercrombie.com/blog/af-co-receives-top-score-on-the-human-rights-campaigns-2023-2024-corporate-equality-index/>

Barron's. (2019, February 27). *L Brands stock tumbles after Victoria's Secret woes continue.*

Barron's.

<https://www.barrons.com/articles/l-brands-stock-drop-earnings-victorias-secret-51551374898>

Bradley, D. (2022, September 15). *Abercrombie & Fitch's parent hires Kate Wagner as Global Comms Head.* PR Week.

<https://www.prweek.com/article/1798986/abercrombie-fitch-parent-hires-kate-wagner-global-comms-head>

Calfee, B. (2019, July 2). *Karlie Kloss thinks Victoria's Secret is toxic, too.* Nylon.

<https://www.nylon.com/karlie-kloss-victorias-secret-response>

Cardenas, E. (2021, August 3). *Victoria's secret's rebrand: Genuine inclusivity or performative activism?* La Tonique.

<https://www.latonique.news/articles/victorias-secrets-rebrand-genuine-inclusivity-or-performative-activism>

Cho, A. (2024, October 1). *Not for everyone: Brandy Melville's stance on body positivity.* The State News.

https://statenews.com/article/2024/10/not-for-everyone-brandy-melvilles-stance-on-body-positivity?ct=content_open&cv=cbox_latest

Danziger, P. N. (2024, June 27). *How Abercrombie & Fitch engineered its dramatic turnaround and will keep moving forward.* Forbes.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/pamdanziger/2024/06/27/how-abercrombie--fitch-engineered-its-dramatic-turnaround-and-will-keep-moving-forward/?sh=78b3796f7112>

Ellen, B. (2023, October 22). *Sorry, Victoria's secret, your "woke" rebrand failed because it was just performative pants* | Barbara Ellen. The Guardian.

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/oct/22/sorry-victorias-secret-your-woke-rebrand-failed-because-it-was-performative-pants>

Felbin, S. (2022, April 19). *How Bruce Weber's book "Bear pond" changed "Abercrombie & Fitch."* Women's Health.

<https://www.womenshealthmag.com/life/a39763552/bruce-weber-bear-pond-book-bercrombie-fitch/>

Forbes. (2019, August 9). *Can L Brands' stock reverse the declining trend seen since early 2018?*

Forbes.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/greatspeculations/2019/08/09/can-l-brands-stock-reverse-the-declining-trend-seen-since-early-2018>

Friedman, V. (2022, July 13). *Victoria's Secret and what's Sexy now.* The New York Times.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/13/style/victorias-secret-rebrand.html>

Jensen, E. (2024, June 11). *Victoria's Secret attempts to revitalize brand. Too little, too late?* Jing

Daily. <https://jingdaily.com/posts/victorias-secret-bid-to-revitalize-brand>

Johari, S. (2025, January 29). *Comeback Kid: The fall and rise of Abercrombie & fitch.*

American Century.

<https://www.americancentury.com/insights/comeback-kid-the-fall-and-rise-of-bercrombie-and-fitch/>

Lang, C. (2024, April 12). *HBO's Brandy Melville Doc reveals fast fashion's Dark Side*. Time.

<https://time.com/6965880/brandy-hellville-documentary-true-story/>

Lanzano, L. (2023, October 17). *"It's not been enough to carry the day": Why the Victoria's Secret rebrand is over*. KTVZ.

<https://ktvz.com/news/2023/10/17/why-victorias-secret-is-bringing-sexy-back/>

Lawrence, K. (2020). *Can a stumbling Victoria's Secret pick itself back up?* SagePub.

<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781529741155>

Lectra. (2022, June 17). *Rebuilding Abercrombie & Fitch: From exclusion to inclusivity*. Lectra.

<https://www.lectra.com/en/library/rebuilding-bercrombie-fitch-from-exclusion-to-inclusivity>

Lewis, R. (2021, July 5). *Victoria's secret: Too little too late*. The Robin Report.

<https://therobinreport.com/victorias-secret-too-little-too-late/>

Lewis, R. (2024, April 15). *Brandy Melville, or Hellville?*. The Robin Report.

<https://therobinreport.com/brandy-melville-or-hellville/>

Liu, Z. (2022). *Research on the Use of Social Media to Grasp Consumers' Psychology and Create Traffic: A Case Study of Brandy Melville*. SHS Conferences.

https://www.shs-conferences.org/articles/shsconf/pdf/2023/04/shsconf_sdmc2022_02017.pdf

Macro Trends. (2025). *Abercrombie & Fitch Revenue 2010-2025: ANF*. Macrotrends.

<https://www.macrotrends.net/stocks/charts/ANF/abercrombie-fitch/revenue#:~:text=Abercrombie%20%26%20Fitch%20annual%20revenue%20for,a%200.4%25%20decline%20from%202022.>

Madame Vision. (2025, September 29). *The Transformation of Victoria's Secret*. Madame Vision.

<https://medium.com/@madamevision/the-transformation-of-victorias-secret-f0ad1cd2e98e>

Manning, C. (2016, August 1). *9 signs Abercrombie & Fitch isn't what it used to be*. Yahoo!

<https://www.yahoo.com/lifestyle/>

Marcy, C. (2022, October 19). *Victoria's secret rebrand: What can we learn?* School of

Performing Arts | Virginia Tech.

<https://sopa.vt.edu/creative-connections/2022/sopa-blog2022carolinemarcy.html#:~:text=%E2%80%9CWe%27ve%20changed%2C%E2%80%9D,to%20keep%20it%20that%20way.>

Mintel. (2024, September 16). *Diversity in fashion*. Mintel.

<https://www.mintel.com/insights/retail/diversity-in-fashion/>

Murray, C. (2024, October 16). *Victoria's Secret Fashion Show Returns- after controversies spurred brand to overhaul image*. Forbes Australia.

<https://www.forbes.com.au/life/fashion/victorias-secret-fashion-show-returns/>

Nguyen, H. (2020, July 20). *How Victoria's Secret Revolutionized Lingerie and Then Fell*

Behind? EnvZine.

envzone.com/how-victorias-secret-revolutionized-lingerie-and-then-fell-behind/

Oh, J. (2023, January 12). *Opinion: Exposing the dangerous world of Brandy Melville's one-size-fits-all*. Los Angeles Times.

<https://highschool.latimes.com/opinion/opinion-exposing-the-dangerous-world-of-brandy-melville-one-size-fits-all/>

Perry, A. (2024, September 3). *“Why I won’t let my daughter shop in Brandy Melville – where everything comes in size xs.”* Netmums.

<https://www.netmums.com/child/why-i-wont-let-my-daughter-shop-in-brandy-melville-where-everything-comes-in-size-xs>

Person. (2024, November 22). *The return of Abercrombie & Fitch and the marketing lessons it teaches us: Brand vision.* RSS. <https://www.brandvm.com/post/abercrombie-marketing>

Polsinelli. (2015, April 29). *Abercrombie & Fitch drops controversial “Look Policy”, still faces SCOTUS decision.* Polsinelli.

<https://www.polsinelli.com/management-labor-relations/polsinelli-at-work-blog/podcast-abercrombie-fitch-drops-controversial-look-policy-still-faces-scotus-decision>

Reuters. (2015, April 25). *Abercrombie & Fitch to ditch “sexualized marketing”:* Washington Post. Reuters. <https://www.reuters.com/article/idUSKBN0NG0V5/>

Ritschel, C. (2020, February 6). *Abercrombie features plus-size models in ad campaign after history of exclusion.* The Independent.

<https://www.the-independent.com/life-style/abercrombie-and-fitch-plus-size-inclusivity-ad-campaign-jeans-a9322031.html>

Rodgers, D. (2024, April 12). *The 5 most harrowing revelations from HBO’s Brandy Melville Documentary.* Vogue.

<https://www.vogue.com/article/the-5-most-harrowing-charges-from-hbos-brandy-melville-documentary>

Ryan, A. (2024, November 2). *The faults of teenage girls' favorite clothing brand*. The Mirador.

<https://mhsmirador.com/opinion/2024/11/02/the-faults-of-teenage-girls-favorite-clothing-brand/>

Sommer, S. (2021, August 16). *The brands: Why Abercrombie & Fitch Co. is now about inclusivity*. The Spin Off.

<https://www.the-spin-off.com/news/stories/The-Brands-Abercrombie--Fitch-Co.-becomes-more-inclusive-16054>

Statistica. (2025). *Net sales of Victoria's Secret worldwide from 2010 to 2023*. Statistica.

<https://www-statista-com.colorado.idm.oclc.org/statistics/255806/net-sales-of-victorias-secret-worldwide/>

Stock Analysis. (2025). *Abercrombie & Fitch Co. (ANF) revenue 2016-2025*. StockAnalysis.

<https://stockanalysis.com/stocks/anf/revenue/>

The Trevor Project. (n.d.). *Abercrombie-Fitch-case-study-1.pdf*. The Trevor Project.

<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Abercrombie-Fitch-Case-Study-1.pdf>

TrendSource. (2021, July 29). *Victoria's Secret lost touch with its consumers: How market research methodologies can help*. Trend Source.

<https://trustedinsight.trendsource.com/trendsource-trending/victorias-secret-lost-touch-with-its-consumers-how-market-research-methodologies-can-help>

Victoria's Secret. (2025). *Income statement*. Victoria's Secret & Co.

<https://www.victoriasssecretandco.com>

Wikimedia Foundation. (2025, March 7). *Brandy Melville*. Wikipedia.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brandy_Melville

Zeraat, C. (2024, April 24). "*Brandy Melville*": *What about the CEO?* The Fordham Ram.

<https://thefordhamram.com/culture/brandy-melville-and-the-cult-of-fast-fashion-slams-popular-clothing-brand/>

