Competitive Advantage

Mottainai’s product line develops a competitive advantage through the use of its rectangular-cut panels and integration of boro. Mottainai is one of few labels that allow for the convenient reclamation of the clothing by the user, in a way that helps to close the label’s product loop. Further, by employing the option for personalization through boro patchwork, the wearer is able to develop a unique garment and integrate their personal taste, all while expanding the lifespan of their garments. This stands in contrast to Uniqlo’s competitors, whose product of fering lacks the digital combination of quality fabric and sustainability, setting Mottainai apart. Along with this, the use of rectangular-panelled construction creates a highly unique, boxy shape, further expanding Uniqlo’s market share of elevated basics.

About

Existing as a private label under the clothing retail giant Uniqlo, Mottainai gains its name from the Japanese word for wastef ulness. More accurate to the translation though, mottainai is a word that expresses the regret of unnecessary waste, and the sentiment that nothing should be taken for granted. Inspired by this expression, Mottainai is a label that seeks to appeal to apparel holistically, acting with thoughtful intention from the harvesting of fiber, to the repurposing of damaged garments. Combined with the clothing line offered by Uniqlo, Mottainai creates goods in neutral, unvarnished earth tones, featuring loose silhouettes, and soft, breathable materials. Drawing lessons of sustainability from the techniques utilized by Japanese garment makers for centuries, Mottainai is a company that looks to treat any form of a way forward.

The most timesless of these techniques is boro, the origin of which comes from the Japanese word, bombon, translating to something that is tattered or repaired. In practice, the term refers to the process of restoring damaged textiles through patching and seaming. Sustainability “Lessons From Tradition”

Contributing to the sustainability of Mottainai’s product line, there are three techniques the label integrates. First, the line employs a mix of hemp and preferred cotton fiber, as hemp requires roughly 15% of the water needed by cotton (Chadwick et al. 2018). Second, the amount of overall production fabric will be reduced by using rectangular-cut panels for garment construction: A technique common in Sashiko period Japan (800 to 886), this method allows for significantly greater utilisation of each fabric run due to the uniform shape of the panels. Drawing more influence from Japan, the final feature is that of Boro, the act of hand-patch damaging textiles using pieces of scrapped fabric. To increase the lifespan of the clothing, each piece will be sold with a “Boro Patch Kit,” consisting of pieces of leftover fabric from past products, as well as needles and thread.

SWOT

Muti

- Strong reputation for elevated basics with high-quality fabric
- Extensive product line featuring unique garment designs
- Limited product movement due to small production runs
- Limited presence within Japanese retail market

Opportunities:
- Expansion into Western and South Asian markets
- Introduce the Boro patching technique to修理 damaged garments

Threats:
- Intense competition from brands with similar value propositions
- Supply chain disruptions brought on by trade deals and climate change

Zara

- High degree of competition from fast fashion companies
- Increased scrutiny regarding environmental concerns

Merchandising the Product

Customers will be able to purchase Mottainai’s product line via Uniqlo’s online website. Mottainai will also have its own website but to introduce the brand’s association with Uniqlo, the label will initially be based on the Uniqlo website and then direct consumers to Mottainai’s own website. Aside from online shopping, consumers will also be able to purchase the product line via social media hyperlinks and in person at Uniqlo flagship stores.

The visual merchandising display will include displays of Boro patchwork examples and four gender-neutral mannequins wearing the product line. There will also be an exhibit of Mottainai’s Haori jacket on a T-frame clothing rack, which will emphasize the rectangle-cut manufacturing technique and a boxy silhouette. Additionally, Mottainai will have a floor in all Uniqlo stores to showcase the entire product line, along with a sectioned space for the Boro workshops.

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For this product line, Mottainai is focused on the sustainability aspects of retaining both shape and color. As the Boro technique allows for any abrasion on Mottainai’s goods to be easily repaired, these test methods ensure the original shape of the garment will not be compromised with time, nor the original colors.

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