Track 1
Special Session: Sustainable marketing for luxury goods: challenges, contradictions and ways forward

Session Editors:
Professor Caroline Tynan, Dr Sally McKechnie and Dr Teresa Heath, University of Nottingham

Panelists:
Dr Ibrahim Abosag, SOAS
Dr Iain Davies, University of Bath
Mr Joe Lockwood, MBA. Frankfurter Akademie für Kommunikation und Design (Academy of Visual Arts, Frankfurt)
Dr Caroline Oates, University of Sheffield

Aim:
To provide a forum to debate the challenges of sustainable luxury from both the managerial and customer perspectives and to explore the potential for harnessing the transformative power of marketing.

Background:
According to Kotler (2011) marketers are now challenged with the need to perform a balancing act between their goals for growth and the pursuit of sustainability. Marketing theory and practice needs to embrace a transformative change to address the degradation caused by consumption (see Varey 2010). This requires both companies and consumers to reconsider their consumption choices and levels of consumption. While many industry sectors have now embraced the sustainability agenda and are proactively responding to it, the luxury sector has lagged behind with the result that sustainability has only relatively recently started to become a concern (Hennigs et al., 2013). This is especially relevant when the luxury goods sector is noted for highlighting social inequality, contributing to social tensions (Kapferer, 2010) and disrespecting the natural environment and animal welfare (Moore, 2011). Equally important is the need to address consumers’ motivations to buy luxury goods and the extent to which they are aware of, or interested in the ethical dimensions of these products. A study conducted by Davies et al. (2012) suggests that ethics have little importance in luxury purchases.
In line with this year’s Academy of Marketing Conference theme, this special session provides a site to share, discuss and disseminate theories, views and novel perspectives to harness the potential of transformative marketing in finding more ethical and sustainable avenues for the luxury industry.

The panellists and editors listed above who comprise both academic experts who have published in the areas of luxury, business ethics and marketing sustainability, and a practitioner in the design industry will make short presentations of theoretical and/or empirical work and then participate in a panel discussion to address the following questions:

- What are the key challenges of sustainable marketing for luxury brands?
- What are the drivers of and barriers to sustainable luxury consumption?
- Which theoretical perspectives have been adopted and which ones could be applied to develop future work on sustainable luxury?
- What are the motivations for buying luxury goods and are these motivations only self-interested?
- Are consumers of luxury goods concerned with the ethical dimensions of these goods?
- Can concern for ethics make luxury goods more special or desirable?

**References**


