



UNIVERSIDADE CATÓLICA PORTUGUESA

Customer Experience Benchmarking Analysis, at the Awareness and Prospecting Stage, for Bentley Motors Ltd.

Trabalho Final na modalidade de Dissertação e Projeto apresentado à
Universidade Católica Portuguesa e à Lancaster University para obtenção do
grau de mestre em Gestão (Programa Double Degree)

Ana Filipa Marques e Alexandra Mulrennan

Sob a orientação de:
Professor Bryan Lukas (Marketing Department of Lancaster University)

Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Pólo Regional do Porto, Faculdade de Economia
e Gestão juntamente com a Lancaster University Management School

Outubro de 2015

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	6
Introduction	10
Section 1: Website Analysis	11
1.1 Methodology	11
1.2 Key Findings	14
1.3 Recommendations	17
Section 2: Social Media	19
2.1 Methodology	19
2.2 Key findings	22
2.3 Recommendations	25
Section 3: Contact Centre Benchmark Analysis	26
3.1 Analysis of Contact Centre Footprint	27
3.1.1 Methodology	27
3.1.2 Key Findings	31
3.1.3 Recommendations	31
Section 3.2 Analysis of Contact Centre via Written Enquiries	33
3.2.1 Methodology	33
3.2.2 Key Findings	39
3.2.3 Recommendations	41
Section 3.3 Analysis of Contact Centre via Phone Calls	42
3.3.1 Methodology	42

3.3.3 Key Findings.....	45
3.3.4 Recommendations	45
Conclusion	46
Appendix 1	48
Appendix 2	49
Appendix 3	51
Appendix 4	60

Executive Summary

This executive summary outlines the key findings and recommendations pertaining to our customer experience benchmarking analysis undertaken for Bentley Motors Ltd. Bentley and its competitors within the automotive, and non-automotive, industry were benchmarked according to the customer experience they afford at the awareness and prospecting stages. Our analysis focuses on three distinct touchstones: the official brand website; employment of social media platforms; and contact centre electronic footprint and enquiries.

Benchmarking Aims and Objectives:

The aim of our analysis was to determine 'best practice' in the areas outlined above and compare it to Bentley's and its competitors' actual performance. We were provided with a list of competitors to benchmark Bentley against. These consisted of Rolls-Royce; Aston Martin; Ferrari; Mercedes-Benz; and Range Rover (Land Rover). We also extended our analysis to include the following non-automotive luxury brands: Rolex; Patek Philippe; and Apple. These were identified as the top non-automotive brands regarded by Bentley customers.

In order to conduct a benchmarking analysis, we had to better understand what criteria featured in developing 'best practice'. It was against this criteria that each of the brands were ranked. Our objectives were ultimately to determine:

- i.) How Bentley performed in each benchmarking analysis compared to its competitors?
- ii.) Identify any tangible areas where Bentley's performance could be improved and to develop feasible recommendations that Bentley can choose to employ to achieve this.

Key Findings:

From our analysis, we highlight some key observations below:

i.) Website Benchmarking Analysis:

Whilst performing relatively well in terms of website architecture and usability, as well as visual design, Bentley performed poorly regarding engaging users through calls to action and conversion to social media platforms and other websites.

ii.) Social Media Benchmarking Analysis:

Our findings showed that Bentley, alongside most of the brands analysed, were hesitant in utilizing the one-to-one consumer engagement afforded by social media. Therefore, we concluded that Bentley were not taking advantage of the opportunity to engage with a wider audience and promote brand awareness.

iii.) Contact Centre Benchmarking Analysis:

Bentley ranked highest in the contact-centre electronic footprint benchmarking analysis due to their user-friendly and sophisticated webpage architecture. Regarding written enquiries, however, Bentley failed to follow up their initial automatic email. This immediately alienates potential brand advocates and future customers. Bentley did redeem themselves through the excellent consumer care provided in answering our phone enquiry.

Recommendations:

From our analysis we developed the following recommendations which we believe will improve Bentley's performance in relation to its competitors.

i.) Website Benchmarking Analysis:

As Bentley performed poorly regarding calls to action, we suggest that Bentley render their website easier to 'share' across a multitude of social media platforms. This would simultaneously increase brand content as users share content and images, and also act to magnify brand awareness through different channels.

ii.) Social Media Benchmarking Analysis:

In order to fully utilize the opportunity to facilitate a two-way conversation, we recommend that Bentley engage with users posting comments on different social media platforms. By responding to comments and opening up discussion, Bentley has the opportunity to convey a positive brand image and generate an emotional connection with prospective customers and fans of the brand.

iii.) Contact Centre Benchmarking Analysis:

As well as reviewing their policy for filtering and answering written enquiries, we suggest that Bentley explore the opportunity of creating an online enquiry forum in the form of a 'live chat'. As the majority of brand and product research is now conducted online, this would provide prospective customers with the option of directly communication with Bentley's contact centre in 'real-time' online. Whilst recognizing that this would require considerable resource investment, it would position Bentley as an industry leader in the ever-increasing move to digital.

To conclude:

In this report, we have strived to develop recommendations that are of value to Bentley Motors Limited. As we know you appreciate, however, this is an M.Sc. student-client project. Therefore, the ultimate responsibility for authenticating and validating our recommendations and any decision to implement any part of our work rightly rests with the Bentley Team.

Introduction

This report contains our findings and recommendations developed from undertaking a benchmark analysis of Bentley and its competitors, both within the luxury automotive and non-automotive industry. The purpose of this analysis was to determine 'best practice' in terms of ensuring a luxury customer experience at the awareness and prospecting stages. Brand performance was ranked in relation to criteria developed from comparing performances both with each other and with what we judged to be 'best practice'. Brands benchmarked include: Bentley; Rolls-Royce; Aston Martin; Ferrari; Mercedes-Benz; and Land Rover – within the luxury automotive industry – and Rolex; Patek Philippe; and Apple in the non-automotive industry. These brands were pre-selected by Bentley.

The following report is composed of three sections respectively focusing on a benchmark analysis of every brand's official website; employment of social media platforms; and the consumer experience afforded by their contact centres. The latter section is further divided into analysis of the contact centres' electronic footprint and enquires, both written and oral via phone calls. Each analysis is comprised of: methodology employed; results and key findings; and our recommendations.

Section 1: Website Analysis

1.1 Methodology

To analyse the official websites of Bentley and its competitors in the luxury automotive and non-automotive industry, we developed a weighted ranking system, as we considered certain categories more influential than others in creating a luxury website user experience. To facilitate this analysis, we also undertook an assessment of the common features found in the websites studied which is included in Appendix 1. From our analysis, we selected four distinct criteria with which to benchmark the websites:

- i. Clear information architecture and navigation.
- ii. Calls to action and conversion to social media.
- iii. Visual design and aesthetic appeal.
- iv. Content.

Website content and visual design are weighted lower as we deemed them to be the minimum criteria expected of a luxury brand website. Nearly all of the brands analysed feature attractive visual design in line with the luxury industry's image-based reputation. Similarly, all of the websites analysed contain content beyond that of product information. Themes such as heritage, celebrity and craftsmanship are employed in the creation of a brand 'story'.

In contrast, the point of divergence in terms of a luxury consumer experience is that of navigation and usability. In search of visual interest, many brands use multiple layers of flash technology which can impact functionality. Furthermore, many brand websites do not capitalise on capturing browsers through calls to action and conversion to subsidiary sites and social media platforms.

Therefore, we weighted these criteria higher in terms of contributing to a luxury consumer experience. The table on the following page outlines the respective weights allocated to each criteria, as well as what we deemed best practice for each criteria (see Figure 1). It is against this criteria that the websites are benchmarked. For our benchmark analysis results, please refer to Figure 2.

Criteria	Best Practice	Name	Scale
Clear Information Architecture, Navigation & Usability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Text and top menu are clear and legible. - Landing pages load quickly. - Easy to locate different sections of the website. - Mobile responsive web design. 	Usability	1-8
Calls to Action and Conversion to Social Media.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ready opportunity for customer engagement. - Calls for users to register interest - Ability to share pages via social media. 	Action	1-6
Visual Design and Aesthetic Appeal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Site affords visual interest which is manifested in attractive font and formatting. - Use of photography, graphics and video. - Website is reflective of the brand 'mood' and values. 	Visual	1-4
Content.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Website conveys information on the products offered. - Website contains content other than product-related which focuses on creating a brand 'story'. 	Content	1-2

Figure 1: Table outlining best practice and weight allocated to each criteria for website benchmarking.










Criteria	 BENTLEY	 ROLLS ROYCE	 ASTON MARTIN	 FERRARI	 Mercedes-Benz	 LAND ROVER	 ROLEX	 PATEK PHILIPPE GENEVE	
Usability 1-8 %	6 75%	5 63%	6 75%	6 75%	5 63%	7 88%	7 88%	3 38%	8 100%
Action 1-6 %	3 50%	4 67%	5 83%	6 100%	6 100%	6 100%	6 100%	1 17%	6 100%
Visual 1-4 %	3 75%	2 50%	3 75%	4 100%	3 75%	4 100%	4 100%	1 25%	3 75%
Content 1-2 %	2 100%	2 100%	2 100%	2 100%	2 100%	2 100%	2 100%	1 50%	2 100%
UEX 1-20 %	14 70%	13 65%	16 80%	18 90%	16 80%	19 95%	19 95%	6 30%	19 95%

Figure 2: Table featuring the weighted ranking results for each website according to the criteria – usability, action, visual and content – which contribute to overall User Experience (UEX). To visually compare the results, please refer to the charts in Appendix 2.

1.2 Key Findings

Our results saw Bentley rank 6th out of 9 brands benchmarked. In this section, we will examine Bentley's performance within each category and compare it with that of other brands'.

i.) Usability:

User experience is determined as much by functionality, as it is by visual delight. Regardless of design and visual appeal, our website experience was marred by slow loading times with some pages failing to load at all. For example, Aston Martin, despite ranking highly in the visual category and possessing a user-friendly homepage, was extremely slow to load with several pages failing to load at all. This was also our experience with Ferrari which, along with Land Rover, boasts the highest visual score amongst the automotive brands. In an industry where time itself is a luxury, poor functionality is detrimental to overall user experience.

In terms of website architecture, many of the websites benchmarked have a traditional web layout of logo - navigation bar - advertisement banner - content. Whilst this can appear sedate, it does adhere to the timeless quality promoted by luxury brands. Bentley diverges from this somewhat with an interesting division throughout its website between 'Models' and 'World of Bentley' which impacts visually and is user-friendly.

ii.) Action:

Action was benchmarked in a website's ability to capture and convert site traffic. Bentley performed poorly in this aspect, partly because of a lack of ability to share pages on social media. This is a missed opportunity to engage users and create

additional brand content on social media. For example, the vehicle configurator affords no option for users to share their configured model, however, brands such as Land Rover, Aston Martin and Ferrari do. Aston Martin and Ferrari also enable the user to send their configured vehicle direct to a retailer.

Bentley are wasting an opportunity to capture both brand enthusiasts and potential customers who have already spent a considerable amount of time online using the configurator. A user's relationship with Bentley would be positively impacted if they could share their vehicle with peers and other enthusiasts to provide them with validation and status.

Calls to action were also highlighted on particular websites. Rolex features a 'Find my Rolex' section whereby their collection can be narrowed down by answering a few straightforward questions such as 'gender', 'watch size' and 'materials preferred'. The watch configurator offers the opportunity for further customisation which can be saved to a personal wish list. Similarly, Mercedes-Benz features a 'My Service Portal' whereby a vehicle monetary quote can be garnered in 5 simple steps.

iii.) Visual:

As observed in Section 1.1.1, luxury brands possess the visual and design resources to create an aesthetically appealing website. A good website needs to articulate the overall brand atmosphere. This can be achieved by reflecting the craftsmanship of the actual products and the lifestyle and experiences offered by the brand. Our analysis found that all of the brands devoted a large amount of content and visual resources to promoting the level of design and craftsmanship in their respective collections. However, the degree to which brands capitalise on the events and lifestyle that they offered differed extensively. .

Rolex boasts a particularly effective 'World of Rolex' webpage focusing on their sponsorship of the Arts and sporting tournaments through visually stunning images and videos. Aston Martin succeeds in capturing a sense of the real-life atmosphere at their events by posting actual footage and photographs. Whilst considering some luxury customers' requirement for discretion and privacy, many individuals at these events would welcome the opportunity to be featured on a brand website and associated social media platforms. This would create site traffic and encourage cross-channel penetration through users sharing images of themselves and their friends.

iv.) Content:

A key concern for brands is how to maintain an air of exclusivity in what is essentially a democratic medium. Many of the brands have managed this by inviting the user to create an account, affording them access to additional content. Patek Philippe allows only actual owners to create an account by asking for their personal watch registration number as part of the registration form. The owner is then allowed access to an exclusive owners' page. Despite being ranked last in our benchmark analysis, Patek Philippe's reluctance to invest in their digital infrastructure serves to draw attention to their exclusive brand character.

1.3 Recommendations

The Bentley website is visually attractive and easy to use. It is also features interesting content ranging from vehicle information to brand ambassadors to emphasizing the brand's distinguished heritage. To further improve Bentley's website performance in relation to its competitors we suggest considering the following recommendations.

i.) Multi-Channel Connectivity:

Bentley could rapidly increase site traffic and brand awareness by making their website content easy to share across all the main social media platforms. Consumer-brand collaboration is already visible in Bentley's configurator. We would recommend that Bentley assign resources to render this feature visibly stunning and functional so that users can engage with it by having the option to share their configured vehicle. Bentley could explore the idea of creating a supporting webpage which would serve as an online forum for users to post their configured car and be part of a wider discussion with other enthusiasts who have also used the configurator.

The luxury brand Burberry did something similar in 2009 with their 'The Art of the Trench' campaign whereby customers could post pictures of themselves in Burberry's iconic trench coat on social media or directly to a dedicated webpage (see <http://artofthetrench.burberry.com/>). The emphasis on personal style generated discussion and strengthened consumer-brand relationships. We believe this is feasible and would also serve to provide Bentley with additional brand content and inspiration. As this recommendation requires perfecting the online configurator, we believe it is imperative that Bentley also offer the

opportunity to send a configured vehicle directly to the user's local dealer, either via email in pdf format or through an in-built web feature.

ii) Exclusivity via a user portal:

As exclusivity is perceived to be a defining attribute of a luxury brand, we suggest Bentley explore the option of creating a user portal in line with Apple, Mercedes-Benz and Aston Martin (see Appendix 1). A portal would create another channel with which to engage with potential customers. In exchange for registering, users could be rewarded with benefits including additional content and services and a preview of new models and advertisement campaigns. An online discussion forum could be included to allow brand enthusiasts to connect and engage with one another. This would be more easily monitored as user-traffic would be reduced and users posting harmful or damaging comments could simply be removed from the portal.

Section 2: Social Media

2.1 Methodology

In order to benchmark the use of social media to promote awareness, we first undertook a survey of the different platforms utilised by each brand, the results of which can be viewed in Appendix 4. These were then narrowed down to focus on the four fastest-growing platforms: Facebook; Twitter; Pinterest; and Instagram (Business Insider, 2015). Our analysis led us to develop four key criteria with which to benchmark the platforms. Figure 3 on the following page details the benchmark criteria, determined 'best practice', and scale used, against which the nine brands were ranked.

Patek Philippe actively discourages digital marketing and does not operate official social media accounts, therefore it is not included in this analysis. Similarly Apple does not possess an official Facebook or Twitter account, instead maintaining subsidiary specialised accounts for Apple Store and Apple News. As the benchmark study focused on official brand accounts, Apple did not qualify for inclusion. Ferrari also manage multiple Facebook and Twitter accounts. Our analysis focuses on their official main account and where applicable, the presence of other accounts has been noted. The results of our benchmark analysis is contained in Figure 4.

Criteria	Best Practice	Scale
Content.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Variety of Content including product and lifestyle content. - Control of Negative/Spam Content to ensure a positive consumer experience. - Number of posts/tweets & pins. 	1-5 (1 being very poor and 5 being excellent)
Consumer Engagement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brand Response to posts and comments. - No. of 'Retweets' and 'Repins' by users of brand content. . 	"
Optimised Use of Respective Social Media Platform.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Content and Engagement is suitable for that medium. - Brand fully capitalises on the benefits afforded by the respective social media platform. 	"
Integration Between Platforms.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Content is shared between platforms to generate interest and awareness of other social media accounts and brand website. 	"

Figure 3: Table outlining criteria used for benchmark analysis; the determined 'best practice' for each criteria; and the scale of 1-5 used to rank each of the platforms performance.

Social Media Platforms



		BENTLEY	ROLLS ROYCE	ASTON MARTIN	Ferrari	Mercedes-Benz	LAND ROVER	ROLEX
Facebook Score:	Content (Visual and Written)	4	4	3	3	5	5	5
	Consumer Engagement	3	3	4	3	5	4	4
	Optimised Use of Social Media Platform	3	3	4	3	5	4	4
	Number of Followers	2.2m	3.8m	6.4m	16m	19m	8.9m	4.4m
	Score:	67%	75%	73%	60%	100%	87%	87%
Twitter Score:	Content (Visual and Written)	4	4	3	4	4	4	n/a
	Consumer Engagement	4	4	3	4	4	4	n/a
	Optimised Use of Social Media Platform	4	4	3	4	4	4	n/a
	Number of Followers	565k	405k	803k	116k	1.37m	35.8k	n/a
	Score:	80%	80%	60%	80%	80%	80%	n/a
Pinterest Score:	Content (Visual and Written)	3	4	3		4		3
	Consumer Engagement	2	4	3		4		2
	Optimised Use of Social Media Platform	2	4	3		4		2
	Number of Followers	4.1k	18.2k	332.7k		23.3k		6.8k
	Score:	47%	80%	60%		80%		47%
Instagram Score:	Content (Visual and Written)	4	5	3	3	4	4	
	Consumer Engagement	4	4	4	3	4	4	
	Optimised Use of Social Media Platform	4	4	4	3	4	4	
	Number of Followers	248k	358k	542k	190k/150k	2.8m	265k	
	Score:	80%	87%	73%	60%	80%	80%	
	Integration Between Platforms	4 (80%)	4 (80%)	5 (100%)	4 (80%)	5 (100%)	4 (80%)	n/a

Figure 4: Table illustrating the results for each of the 7 brands. Please note that the number of Instagram followers for Ferrari refers to their Ferrari USA and Scuderia Ferrari Instagram account respectively.

2.2 Key findings

Social Media offers a means by which brands can engage in a two-way dialogue with their fans and customers. Luxury brands are no exception to this. This section highlights some key observations that arose in conducting our benchmark analysis. Before discussing these in more depth it is worth mentioning that even though some brands do not operate official accounts, there are often several unofficial accounts in existence. Managed and updated by brand enthusiasts, they occur across all social media platforms and are often promoted as 'official' and are of high quality. They can also have a large following. Rolex, for example, has an unofficial Pinterest account, in addition to their official one, which boasts 3.77k followers. These accounts are not necessarily negative as they are generally extremely positive and flattering but do require mention.

i) Facebook:

Facebook accounts which featured a mixture of content, including product and event information, were deemed to be most effective. Bentley succeeded in this and therefore ranked higher in content compared to Aston Martin whose Facebook timeline primarily featured their car collection. Facebook, as a platform, affords excellent opportunity for one-to-one brand-user engagement. Mercedes-Benz scored highly in terms of consumer engagement as it directly responds to consumer queries and comments in a consistent and timely manner.

Particular examples included thanking users for their enthusiasm, answering a career query, and responding to a user's negative experience at a dealership by inviting her to privately message them or phone them so they could better

respond to her. Bentley do reply to comments on Facebook, but these are irregular and infrequent.

Whilst encouraging comments does create a positive brand impression, there is a risk of inviting harmful and negative content. Bentley need to ensure better content control as we found several examples of negative and damaging comments, including spam links and advertisements by private individuals. These have the potential to impact consumer experience and should be patrolled.

ii) Twitter:

Twitter provides a unique opportunity to promote excitement and awareness of brand events and product launches. Bentley's Twitter Feed uses a personable and friendly tone which capitalises on the platform's informal and spontaneous quality. Bentley should invest in managing, not just the quantity of retweets they generate, but the type of person who is retweeting. Mercedes-Benz UK, for example, has British celebrities tweeting about the brand and in turn Mercedes retweets these on their own account, ensuring the message is amplified.

iii.) Pinterest and Instagram.

Automotive brands are traditionally male-orientated and this is apparent in the gender of the majority of users engaging with the brands' social media accounts. Women, however, are more active on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Instagram in comparison to men. Furthermore, women dominate visual-type platforms, most notably Pinterest and Instagram (FinanceOnline.com, 2015). As a result, it is worthwhile for brands to invest in making these platforms appealing to their female audience.

Pinterest and Instagram lend themselves to creating a sense of 'brand lifestyle' more than other platforms. Bentley succeed in this by including a diverse range

of images. Rolls-Royce features a particularly stunning Instagram account by thematically matching images so that the account appears like a work of art in itself. Regarding Pinterest, Mercedes-Benz ranked highly as it featured 59 different boards drawing on events, accessories, inspirations, car ranges, among others. It also had a large number of 'repins' by account holders.

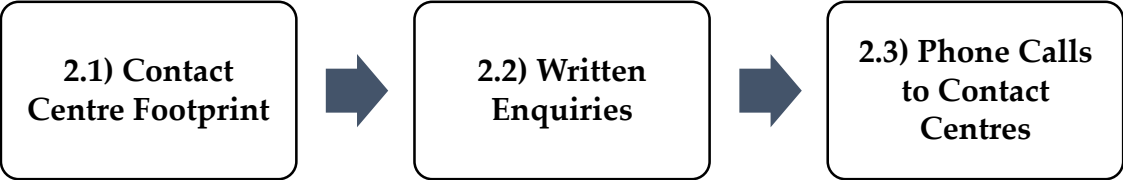
2.3 Recommendations

One overarching theme emerges from our benchmark analysis of Bentley and competitor brands' social media activity and that is the continued lack of consumer engagement. Social media is not a one-way media channel and this concept is still missed by many of the brands analysed, witnessed in their reluctant to invite and respond to comments on Facebook and Twitter.

This hesitancy could be partly due to the aspect of control. Luxury brands need to control their image and product output at every stage to guarantee that what they are offering is indeed a luxury experience. Therefore, the perceived loss of control by brands in encouraging direct consumer engagement may be a way of explaining why it is discouraged. Another reason may be that due to their long heritage, many luxury brands are slower to adapt to new technologies. This is evident in their slow uptake of digital marketing. However, the only way to succeed on social media is by adhering to its purpose which is to facilitate open discussion via online communities. By allowing and partaking in this discussion, luxury brands can organically grow their online communities and in turn grow their pool of brand advocates and future customers.

Section 3: Contact Centre Benchmark Analysis

This section focuses on analysing how Bentley and its named competitors in the luxury automotive industry conduct their respective contact centres. Contact centres act as a vital touch-point between the brand and prospective customers. To better understand the process and service provided by each of the brands, our benchmark analysis will focus on the following:



The objective for each section is to determine best practice in terms of ensuring a luxury customer experience.

3.1 Analysis of Contact Centre Footprint

3.1.1 Methodology

This benchmark analysis focuses on analysing the electronic footprint of the contact centre detailed on each brand's official website. As well as examining the design and structure, we will also analyse the variety and number of touchpoints available to prospective customers. The criteria we developed, against which the contact centre electronic footprint is benchmarked, is detailed on the following page in Figure 5. A full breakdown of results is provided in Figure 6.

Dimensions	Best practice example	Evaluation
1) Design	Should be clean, simple and minimalist but showing exquisite architecture and structure. Should include interactive features on the contact pages so the prospective customer has easy access to valuable information, experiences and details that make the brand unique.	Brands will be scored on a scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent).
2) Ease to find contacts page	The tab that links the customer directly to the contacts page should be very easy to access. Preferably on the top menu and on the second general menu at the bottom of the homepage.	Brands will be scored on a scale from 1 (difficult to find) to 5 (very easy and intuitive).
3) Channels available for engagement: a) How many? b) Which channels?	This dimension is very objective and intends to see which channels are being used by these brands. Brands should be in all channels their target audience uses.	Channels will first be counted as a total number and then we will specify which channels are used by each brand to engage with prospective customers.
4) Completion of online forms: a) Is it compulsory to submit an enquiry? b) How much time does it take to complete? c) How many details requested? d) Degree of disclosure	To make an enquiry brands force customers to fill forms where they have to disclose personal details. Ideally brands should keep these forms short and not too intermissive so they show openness to receive enquiries from any prospective customer.	The first dimension will be measured with a tick for yes or a cross for no. The following will be measured in seconds and for details requested the number of boxes to fill in with information will be counted. Finally, degree of disclosure will be measured on a scale from 1 (not personal) to 5 (too personal).

Figure 5: Table illustrating the criteria and determined best practice to undertake a benchmark analysis of the contact centre electronic footprint.

Automotive luxury brands							
Dimensions	Bentley	Aston Martin	Ferrari	Mercedes	Land Rover	Rolls Royce	Evaluation
1) Design	5	4	3	2	3	4	1 to 5
2) Ease to find contacts page	5	4	4	2	5	4	1 to 5
3) Channels for engagement:							
3.1) How many?	8	11	8	7	6	9	-
3.2) Which?	Written enquiry Phone call Dealer YouTube Facebook Twitter Pinterest Instagram	Written enquiry Phone call Dealer YouTube Facebook Twitter Pinterest Instagram LinkedIn Google+ Vine	Written enquiry Phone call Dealer YouTube Facebook Twitter LinkedIn Google+	Written enquiry Phone call Dealer YouTube Facebook Twitter Email address	Email Phone call Dealer YouTube Facebook Twitter	Written enquiry Phone call Dealer YouTube Facebook Twitter Pinterest LinkedIn Google+	- -
4) Completion of online forms:							
4.1) Is it compulsory?	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	-
4.2) How much time does it takes?	1.31 minutes	2.03 minutes	0.54 minutes	1.02 minutes	N/A	1.42 minutes	Minutes
4.3) How many details requested?	14	20	9	9	N/A	15	-
4.4) Degree of disclosure?	3	5	2	2	N/A	3	1 to 5

Figure 6 a): Table illustrating the benchmarking results for contact centre electronic footprint for automotive brands only.

	Other Luxury Brands			
Dimensions	Patek Philippe	Rolex	Apple	Criteria
1) Design	2	3	5	1 to 5
2) Ease to find contacts page	3	N/A	5	1 to 5
3) Channels for engagement: 3.1) How many? 3.2) Which?	2 Retailers Written enquiry	6 Retailers Facebook YouTube Pinterest Youku Douban	4 Retailers Support communities Scheduled calls Live chat	- -
4) Completion of online forms: 4.1) Is it compulsory? 4.2) How much time does it take? 4.3) How many details requested? 4.4) Degree of disclosure?	Yes 0.43 minutes 7 2	No N/A N/A N/A	No N/A N/A N/A	In minutes - 1 to 5

Figure 6 b): Table illustrating the benchmarking results for contact centre electronic footprint for non-automotive brands only.

3.1.2 Key Findings

i.) Design: Bentley boasts as clean and simple contact centre webpage and therefore, was ranked highest in terms of design. At the opposite end of the scale, Mercedes-Benz ranked the lowest due the complicated nature of their contact page. This was a common feature of their website generally.

ii.) Ease of Accessing Contact Page: Similarly, Bentley facilitates easy registering of interest for the brand, as does Land Rover. Apple also features a support tab on their navigation homepage menu and reiterates this throughout their website.

iii.) Channels Available for Engagement: Aston Martin boasts the widest range of engagement channels advertised on its contact centre webpage. It also differs from many of the brands benchmarked by listing its full range of social media platforms such as Google+, Vine and LinkedIn. Rolex also stands out due to its inclusion of Youku and Douban which are popular online platforms in China.

iv.) Completion of Online Forms: Mercedes and Land Rover are the only brands which do not require the disclosure of any details to submit an enquiry. Aston Martin, on the other hand, requests 20 separate details on its compulsory enquiry form including those which could be deemed as invasive such as profession.

3.1.3 Recommendations

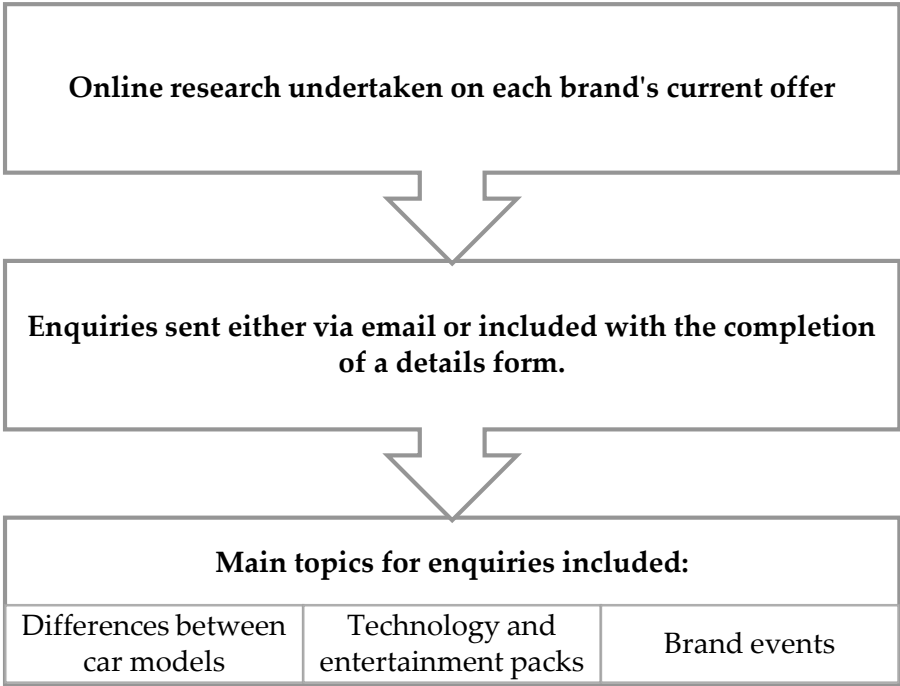
Bentley ranks highly amongst its competitors due to its simple, user-friendly contact webpage. Bentley could consider both using and advertising Asian social media platforms on its website, such as Youkou and Douban which are referred to on Rolex'

website. Youku, for example, is described as the Chinese version of YouTube, and has more than 500 million active users. As Asia forms such a large customer market for Bentley, the brand's official website should reflect this global Euro-Asia outlook.

Section 3.2 Analysis of Contact Centre via Written Enquiries

3.2.1 Methodology

To benchmark Bentley’s and its competitors’ performance in handling written enquiries, we employed a ‘mystery-shopping’ approach. For a full transcript of enquiries sent and responses received, please refer to the support materials. The diagram below outlines the process undertaken to conduct the analysis.



It must be noted however that we used our own names and contact details when conducting enquiries. This impacted our findings as we do not fit any of these brands’ target customer profile. Therefore, some brands may not have responded to us in the same manner that they would to a prospective customer. However, we have undertaken this analysis with the rational that as potential brand advocates and/or

potential future customers, brands should not isolate enquiries based on demographic and psychographic segmentation.

Taking these limitations into consideration, please find our benchmark criteria and results included in the Figures 7 and 8 on the following pages.

Dimensions	Best practice explained	Evaluation
1) Ease to submit a written enquiry	Luxury brands should exploit the opportunity of having a prospective customer interested in getting to know more about the brand and its offer. Therefore, enquiries should be easy to submit, preferably via a direct email address or via the completion of a brief and not too personal details form. The brand should tailor communication and marketing materials based on that information. Most importantly, it should not give submission errors when all details are correctly filled as that might be frustrating for a customer.	From 1 (difficult) to 5 (very easy)
2) Enquiries successfully submitted	N/A	Number of enquiries submitted (intermediate responses upon the same enquiry are not considered on this dimension).
3) Answers received	Brands are expected to answer all information requests on their offer even to prospective customers that might not be on its immediate target audience.	Number of answers received towards enquiry made.
4) Degree of interaction	To what degree the luxury brand kept ongoing communications under the same enquiry topic? Customers expect from luxury brands to show initiative towards a request, to keep communication going and checking up on progress and satisfaction.	From 1 (no interaction) to 5 (high interaction)
5) Average response time	Brands should strive to answer written enquiries within few hours.	Arithmetic average, converted in hours, between when enquiry was sent and respective answer received.
6) Form of response: 6.1) Automatic email? 6.2) Personalised email? 6.3) Direct phone call?	Upon submission of a written enquiry either via compulsory details form or email, the customer should receive a confirmation that his enquiry was sent and soon the brand will contact the customer. Shortly after, a personalised answer should be sent providing useful information to address the topic of enquiry. If the customer prefers to be contacted via phone, the call must be made in a reasonable time and with all information requested ready.	Just factual information on the type of response received.

<p>7) Content of response</p> <p>7.1) Subject line 7.2) Appreciation of interest 7.3) Greetings 7.4) Quality of content 7.5) Politeness 7.6) Adequacy of content 7.7) Direct contact details 7.8) Invitation to get in touch 7.9) Collateral received?</p>	<p>When judging content from answers received both qualitative and quantitative variables will be considered. An appropriate response from a luxury brand should include: personalised subject line, appreciation of interest towards the brand, quality content (actual text with impeccable grammar and rich yet straightforward vocabulary which reveals politeness and luxurious treatment), answer should address all questions made, direct contact details from the employee who answered should be provided plus an invitation to get in touch again.</p>	<p>We will measure as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject line, appreciation of interest, contacts for future communications, invitation to get in touch again and collateral received: is classified with either a tick if it was included/sent or with a cross. • Quality of content, politeness and adequacy of answer are more subjective variables and will be measure on a scale from 1 to 5.
<p>8) Follow-up communications</p> <p>8.1) Via email? 8.2) Invitation for events?</p>	<p>After a prospective customer showed interest towards the brand, he expects further communications and initiatives from the brand to deepen the relationship.</p>	<p>Classified for each brand with either a tick or a cross in case they had the initiative to check up on our enquiries or not.</p>
<p>9) Overall experience</p>	<p>This dimension intends to be the result of each brand's performance on all previous variables under analysis plus our perception on the treatment and care received from brands against a given enquiry. We also considered what a luxury treatment should aim for as we described previously.</p>	<p>We will score each brand on a scale from 1 to 5.</p>

Figure 7: Table illustrating the criteria and determined 'best practice' used to undertake a benchmarking analysis of written enquiries.

Automotive luxury brands							
Dimensions	Bentley	Aston Martin	Ferrari	Mercedes	Land Rover	Rolls Royce	Criteria
1) Ease to submit a written enquiry	2*	3	3	4	5	3	From 1 to 5
2) Enquiries made	2	1	2	2	2	2	Nº enquiries
3) Answers received	0	1	1	2	1	2	Nº answers
4) Degree of interaction	0	2	2	4	3	5	From 1 to 5
5) Average response time:	-	87.23 hours	9.05 hours	34.67 hours	10.3 hours	3.6 hours	In hours
6) Form of response:							
6.1) Automatic email?	✓	✓	X	✓	X	✓	Tick or cross
6.2) Personalised email?	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Tick or cross
6.3) Direct phone call?	X	X	X	X	X	X	Tick or cross
7) Content of response							
7.1) Subject line quality	4	2	3	2	2	5	From 1 to 5
7.2) Appreciation of interest	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Tick or cross
7.3) Greeting	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Tick or cross
7.4) Quality of content	3	4	3	5	5	4	From 1 to 5
7.5) Adequacy of answer	2	4	2	5	5	4	From 1 to 5
7.6) Direct contact details	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	Tick or cross
7.7) Invitation to get in touch again	X	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	Tick or cross
7.8) Collateral received?	X	X	X	E-brochure	E-brochure	✓	
8) Follow-up communication							
8.1) Via email?	X	X	X	X	X	✓	Tick or cross
8.2) Invitation for events?	X	✓	X	✓	X	X	Tick or cross
9) Overall experience	2	3	3	5	5	5	From 1 to 5

Figure 8 a): Table illustrating the benchmarking results for written enquiries for automotive brands only.

Dimensions	Other luxury brands			Criteria
	Patek Philippe	Rolex	Apple	
10) Ease to submit a written enquiry	3	N/A	N/A	1 to 5
11) Enquiries made	1	N/A	N/A	N ^o of enquiries
12) Answers received	0	N/A	N/A	N ^o of answers
13) Degree of interaction	0	N/A	N/A	1 to 5
14) Average response time:	-	N/A	N/A	Arithmetic average
15) Form of response:				
6.1) Automatic email?	✓	N/A	N/A	Tick or cross
6.2) Personalised email?	X	N/A	N/A	Tick or cross
6.3) Direct phone call?	X	N/A	N/A	Tick or cross
16) Content of response				
7.1) Subject line quality	2	N/A	N/A	1 to 5
7.2) Appreciation of interest	X	N/A	N/A	Tick or cross
7.3) Greeting	X	N/A	N/A	Tick or cross
7.4) Quality of content	1	N/A	N/A	1 to 5
7.5) Adequacy of answer	0	N/A	N/A	1 to 5
7.6) Direct contact details	X	N/A	N/A	Tick or cross
7.7) Invitation to get in touch again	X	N/A	N/A	Tick or cross
7.8) Collateral received?	X	N/A	N/A	Tick or cross
17) Follow-up communication				
8.1) Via email?	X	N/A	N/A	Tick or cross
8.2) Invitation for events?	X	N/A	N/A	Tick or cross
18) Overall experience	1	N/A	N/A	1 to 5

Figure 8 b): Table illustrating the benchmarking results for written enquiries for non-automotive brands only.

3.2.2 Key Findings

i.) Ease of submitting written enquiry: Due to the fact that we experienced functional errors both times we attempted to fill out the Bentley enquiry form on different computers, Bentley ranked the lowest in this category. In comparison, Land Rover ranked the highest as its website affords the user to send a direct email. Rolex does not engage with written enquiries as its policy is to direct any enquiries to a retailer. Apple differentiates between sales enquiries and technical product support and information. The latter aspect is dealt with via Apple's website which boasts a number of innovative support-providing features. Sales enquiries however, are directed to Apple's stores.

ii.) Number of Enquiries Made and Answers Received: Mercedes-Benz and Rolls-Royce ranked best as we received both automated and personal-written emails to all enquiries made. Patek Philippe, in line with their reluctance to engage via any digital media, have not replied to any of our queries to date.

iii.) Degree of Interaction: Rolls-Royce performed particularly well in this category because they actively sought to encourage and maintain contact with us. Unprompted, we received collateral from them in the form of print-brochures. They also sent us follow-up emails. .

iv.) Form of response: All written enquiries received an automatic email confirming the successful submission of our enquiry, excepting those to Land Rover and Ferrari. However, they did reply in time with a personalised email, as did all of the brands except Bentley and Patek Philippe.

v.) Content of response: All of the answers received included a subject line and appreciation of interest shown. Rolls-Royce and Land Rover also included links

and e-brochures containing information answering our specific question. Furthermore, answers received by all of the brands, excepting Bentley and Ferrari, contained contact details including a name, telephone number and email for an actual employee which was appreciated. Direct contact details (employee's name, direct phone number and email) were provided by all except Bentley and Ferrari.

vi.) Follow-up communications: As mentioned in section iii.) Rolls Royce was one of the few brands to follow up our initial enquiry of their own accord. Aston Martin extended an invitation to visit their showroom citing it as the most suitable way to answer our enquiry concerning automotive technology options. Similarly, Mercedes-Benz also sent an invitation to an event promoting their new SL model.

v.) Overall experience: Considering their high ranking in the electronic footprint of the contact centre on their website, Bentley did not meet our expectation in terms of managing written enquiries. Their lack of response could be due to our not complying with their 'ideal' target customer as mentioned in previously. Bentley's poor performance is only sharpened when compared to our extremely positive experience of interacting with Rolls-Royce.

3.2.3 Recommendations

Following on from the previous comment, we suggest Bentley maintain an open enquiry policy, whereby all legitimate enquiries are answered to the greatest degree possible, bearing in mind resource management. As stated previously, Bentley could be missing an opportunity to engage with brand advocates and potential future customers. Furthermore, they can ensure a positive brand image via word-of-mouth and online discussion by ensuring that all enquiries are handled in a courteous and timely manner.

Furthermore, we also suggest implementing an option to email Bentley directly rather than filling out an impersonal form which does not provide the user to include any specific details about their enquiry. This would ensure a more luxury experience by emphasising consumer care and relationship-management.

Section 3.3 Analysis of Contact Centre via Phone Calls

3.3.1 Methodology

This section concerns benchmarking how Bentley and its competitors in the luxury automotive industry conduct phone enquires to their contact centres. Ferrari and Mercedes-Benz did not answer several attempts to reach them and therefore are not included in this analysis. Aston Martin does not provide any contact phone number and so is also exempt from analysis. The criteria and determined best practice are included in Figure 9 on the following page. Benchmarking results are detailed in the Figure 10. For full information and call transcripts please refer to the support materials.

Dimensions	Best practice explained	Evaluation
1) Call answered?	All calls from prospective customers, during contact centre opening times, should be answered. Missed calls should be returned by the brand as soon as possible.	A tick will be placed for each call answered and a cross if nobody answered it.
2) Time to answer the call	Calls should be answered as soon as possible.	In seconds
3) Duration of each call	Calls should last enough to provide adequate answers to customer's questions.	In minutes
4) Who have we spoken to?	This dimension has only an information purpose. Have we talked with somebody within the call centre, headquarters or dealer?	
5) Experience 5.1) Tone 5.2) Politeness 5.3) Support provided	Customers expect from luxury brands to be given an impeccable treatment. Employees at the fore front contact with the customer represent the brand and should show the highest level of politeness and support to answer to customer's questions and keep him satisfied. If they cannot answer a given question, they should pass the call to a person who can or call back with the information requested.	All evaluated on a scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent)
6) Content 6.1) Adequacy of information provided 6.2) Initiatives proposed	The content of conversation should provide details to effectively answer customer's requests. We also evaluated if the contact person took any kind of initiative to capture our further interest on the brand.	Adequacy will be measured from 1 to 5 and initiatives will be named, if any.
7) Follow-up communication	After a prospective customer takes the time to actually make a call to the brand requesting information about its current offer, the brand should take advantage of it by keeping in touch with the customer via email, for example. It could even send targeted marketing material to further develop the customer's initial interest.	Either with a tick or a cross.

Figure 9: Criteria and determined 'best practice' to undertake a benchmarking analysis for phone enquiries.

Automotive luxury brands							
Dimensions	Bentley	Aston Martin	Ferrari	Mercedes	Range Rover	Rolls Royce	Evaluation
1) Call answered?	✓	N/A	No	No	✓	✓	Either a tick or a cross
2) Time to answer the call	4 seconds	N/A	-	-	11 seconds	13 seconds	In seconds
3) Duration for each call	5.11 minutes	N/A	-	-	6.46 minutes	5.37 minutes	In minutes
4) Who have we spoken to?	Contact centre and then dealer	N/A	-	-	Contact centre	Contact centre	-
5) Experience							
5.1 Tone	Emphatic	N/A	-	-	Supportive	Direct	Adjectives
5.2 Politeness	5	N/A	-	-	4	4	From 1 to 5
5.3 Degree of support provided	5	N/A	-	-	5	3	From 1 to 5
6) Content							
6.1) Adequacy of information provided	4	N/A	-	-	4	3	From 1 to 5
6.2) Initiatives taken	Brochures sent See showroom	N/A	-	-	X	X	-
7) Follow-up communication	X	N/A	-	-	X	X	Either a tick or a cross

Figure 10: Table illustrating the benchmarking results for phone enquiries for automotive brands only.

3.3.3 Key Findings

Bentley was the easiest brand to contact via phone, answering also immediately. They were also extremely engaging and courteous throughout the conversation and referred us to our local dealer, creating a positive brand image. A similar experience was provided by Land Rover who although also eventually directed us to dealer, also attempted to answer our questions in-house. We identified a clear trend of brands directing customers to dealerships when customers inquire about vehicle information.

3.3.4 Recommendations

In response to the increasing number of people who conduct nearly all purchase and product research online and use dealerships only to test-drive a vehicle (Guardian, 2015), we would suggest that Bentley incorporate some form of online discussion forum. This would facilitate an online conversation in real-time with Bentley's contact centre. Apple's contact centre footprint features something similar in the form of a 'live chat' and is reflective of their consumer-orientated website. Whilst recognising that this would require considerable resources, we view it as an opportunity for Bentley to be an industry leader by embracing the emerging trend whereby websites are elevated as the primary medium for brand information.

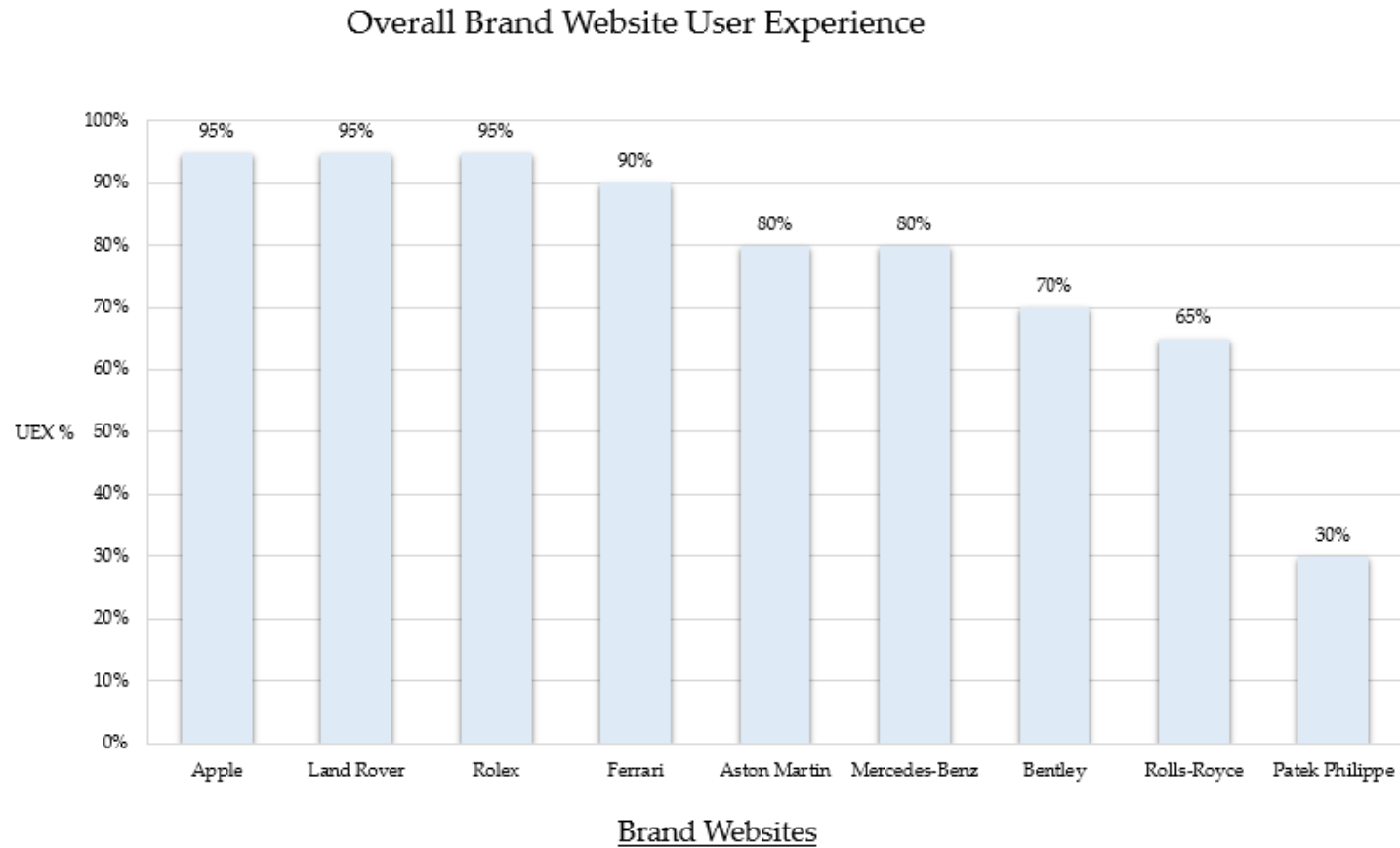
Conclusion

Since its inception, the web has been viewed as a great equaliser, affording a means of democratic access to mass information. Previous academic study and trade literature has been directed at how the luxury industry – and its core values of exclusivity, rarity and status – could reconcile the move to digital. However, as our analysis demonstrates, the question now is not whether luxury brands should engage with customers online but how they can best navigate this engagement to facilitate maximum awareness and conversion to possible economic benefit.

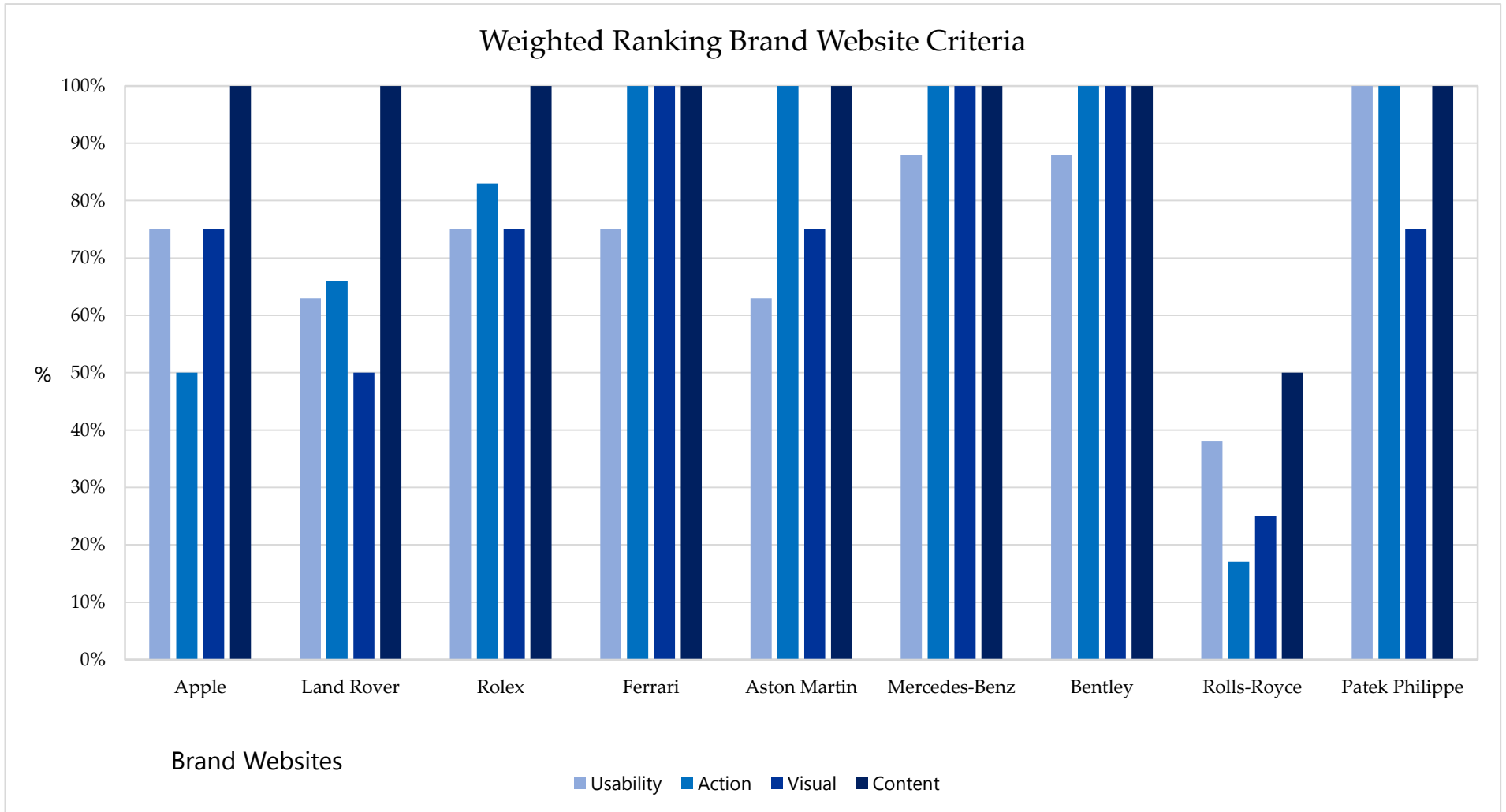
It is imperative, however, that luxury brands ensure a luxury experience via their website and contact centre. These can act as cornerstones of differentiation between luxury and non-luxury brands as traditional means of comparison such as personal selling and atmospheric showrooms cannot be translated online. Instead, these need to be transferred online through visually stunning website design and seamless usability and via contact points that guarantee excellent customer. Bentley succeed in both aspects. Our analysis has shown however, that their performance, when benchmarked against competitors, could be further improved by considering our recommendations detailed in Section 1, 2 and 3.

Appendix 2

Bar Charts comparing the results of the website benchmarking analysis (see *Section 1*)



Bar Chart illustrating the % ranking of overall brand website user experience. See Appendix 3 for a bar chart illustrating the breakdown of results according to each of the four criteria.



Bar Chart comparing the % weighted ranking system attributed to each criteria – usability, action, visual and content – for each brand.

Appendix 3

Breakdown of Brand Websites according to the four criteria used for benchmarking.



Usability

- Homepage clearly divided into 'Models' & 'World of Bentley'.
- Confusion between visualizer and full configurator.
- Configurator is very slow to load and not intuitive in design.

Action

- Easy to locate dealer.
- No ability to share pages on social media.
- No direct e-commerce site for accessories and lack of smooth conversion to partnership sites such as Vertu and Zai.
- No ability on the configurator to share or send to dealer.

Visual

- Attractive homepage. Reflects classic Bentley design.
- Visuals are streamlined and cohesive.
- Mulsanne 'Visionnaires' videos are really interesting and reflective of brand values.
- Configurator is sedate and unimaginative.

Content

- Excellent use of brand heritage to create a brand story.
- Need more information on experiences. Factory tour and CW1 House not emphasised. Lack of photos from actual events to create a sense of atmosphere and generate web and social media content.

As an additional note, the Bentley Collection webpage is not consistent in the conversion to its Licensed Partners' websites with many not linking the user

directly to the Bentley collection. For example, the Zai skis for Bentley links the user to the Zai Official Website, but the German version, not the English one. Tibaldi, on the other hand, refers the user to the general homepage and not to the specific Bentley collection landing page. This may result in a loss in sales and awareness.



Usability

- Easily navigated homepage.
- Delay in pages loading however feedback is provided letting user know that page is loading.
- Configurator is not intuitive and allows for no direct manipulation.

Action

- Share button on most pages.
- Calls to contact dealer throughout.
- Configurator - ability to screenshot model is outdated and complicated. Need to implement ability to share page/pdf and also send to retailer.

Visual

- Visuals throughout are not overly cohesive.
- Text used is not clear and this is even more apparent in the mobile site.
- New 'Dawn' model is advertised by a video only showing a sunrise. Opportunity for social media.

Content

- Factory experience advertised through '60 pairs of hands' video.
- 'Stories' tab on homepage contains experiences, heritage and recent news stories. Needs to be better laid out.
- E-brochures are not easily read as the writing is illegible.



ASTON MARTIN

Usability

- Homepage - very clearly laid out. Distinct style.
- Configurator is easy to use with clear options.
- Problem throughout website with pages loading.
- Conversion to pages that no longer exist.

Action

- Share button on configurator and ability to send directly to retailer.
- Able to create a user-account.
- Great dealer section with google map, contact details and ability to register interest.

Visual

- Sleek website design in black and white.
- Videos and photographs showing actual footage from experiences and events.
- Attractive and intuitive configurator.

Content

- Great heritage section, especially archives with '007' section.
- Distinct owner/enthusiasts registration-only section.
- Aston Martin live - concise display of recent social media posts.
- Experiences section is detailed and inviting.



Usability

- Homepage is simple and uncluttered.
- Good site map.
- Clear divide throughout between Ferrari Auto and Ferrari Scuderia with both having respective websites.

Action

- Share icon throughout.
- Formula 1 website features "Redscreen" which allows people to post comments and is synced with social media.
- Configurator: able to download PDF and directly request and share it.

Visual

- Very interactive, clickable banners, videos and configurator.
- New models have own webpage which is distinct in design.
- Overwhelming variety of visuals and design, needs to be more streamlined.
- Great multimedia section with videos, photos and sounds.

Content

- No dedicated Owner's webpage.
- Heritage section emphasising racing past but is lacklustre.
- PDF Brochures available.



Mercedes-Benz

Usability

- Divide between content on Official International website and countr-specific website.
- Both Homepages are overly cluttered.
- More immediate display of price, discounts and finance.

Action

- Features 'My Service Portal' which gives user a quote in 5 steps.
- Share bar runs on the side of every page.
- Great sense of directly engaging the consumer though the use of language and contact points.

Visual

- Black udes throughout which is cohesive but the use of images and articles on main landing pages is too busy.
- Configurator allows viewing in 360 degrees, there is ability to hand-manipulate image and to see model in night and day modes.

Content

- 'Mercedes Me' page features additional services such as remote online service, finance and assistant.
- Configurator - assigned online code which allows user to recall the vehicle they have chosen for 30 days where they can then refine the design and send to a retailer and friends.



Usability

- No separate website dedicated to Range Rover, it is included in the vehicles section.
- Homepage is very well laid out and easy to use.
- Language used throughout is simple and friendly.

Action

- Calls to action on main page and on a bar which runs alongside every homepage.
- Able to save vehicles in configurator and share on social media.

Visual

- Nice use of visuals and design throughout; simple sophisticated colour scheme.
- Configurator is sleek and features different vehicle models against different real-life backdrops.

Content

- Good brand content and heritage in 'Above and Beyond' section.
- Customer loyalty programme offering a complementary half-day Land Rover Experience.
- Ownership page really emphasises the benefits of owning a Land Rover.



Usability

- Clear divide in homepage and throughout website between the 2 main collections - Oyster and Cellini.
- Watch configurator is intuitive and easy to use with options broken down into 4 simple steps.

Action

- Ability to share every page.
- 'Find my Rolex' - refines model search based on questions such as gender, watch size, materials, etc.
- Ability to add watch made in configurator to a wish list.

Visual

- Very refined design, reflects brand mood.
- Stunning background images used in landing pages. Great attention to detail.
- Beautiful images, especially in 'World of Rolex' section.

Content

- 'World of Rolex' excellent at creating a brand lifestyle through advertising the brand's link to opera, museums and sporting events.
- Section of Rolex mentors and "protégés" in the Arts. Creates a sense of the brand beyond that of its products.



Usability

- Simple, user-friendly layout.
- Watch configurator is used to demonstrate features on the iWatch. Very easy to use and interactive.
- Real sense of how the products look and work in real life.

Action

- Entire website is consumer-oriented. Able to live chat with Apple when you click on a product.
- Ability to find and share solutions with Apple users and section is broken down according to product and problem.
- Able to register for workshops and tutorials.

Visual

- Very simple cohesive design.
- White, black and blue are used throughout with the products acting as a splash of colour.
- Was under-whelming in sections and could do with more visuals.

Content

- Content is directed at learning about and experiencing the products.
- Whole section dedicated to education discounts.
- Employees are described as genius and the website informs users on what to expect from their store visit.



PATEK PHILIPPE GENEVE

Usability

- Site is not user-friendly.
- Tabs and writing not clear.
- Row of untidy articles with no clear theme or purpose on homepage.

Action

- No option to share pages or conversation to other sites.
- A lot of the website content can only be accessed via an owner's web account which requires a watch id. to register
- Sense of exclusivity.

Visual

- Very simple cohesive design.

Content





















- Dull webpage in an unappealing brown. No visual connection to brand overall.
- Webpages are not full screen.
- Watch images are not particularly appealing.

Content

- No prices advertised on watches and no clear conversion to retail network. Not pushing sales.
- Interesting collection library section for brand enthusiasts.
- A lot of content such as brand values is over-complicated and does not provide anything of value to the user.

Appendix 4

Table illustrating the different official social media accounts of each brand.

Social Media Platforms									
Facebook 	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
Twitter 	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓
Pinterest 	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗
Instagram 	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
LinkedIn 	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Google + 	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗
YouTube 	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Vine 	?	✗	✓	✗	✓	?	✗	✗	✗
Tumblr 	?	✓	?	?	?	✓	✗	✗	✗
Douban 	---	---	---	---	---	---	✓	---	---
Youku 	---	---	---	---	---	---	✓	---	---

It must be noted that Apple (red arrows) does not have an Official Apple account in either Facebook or Twitter. Instead their Facebook account is for Apple Store, whereas their Twitter accounts include @iTunesMusic, @AppStore, among others. The cells coloured green highlight the social media platforms advertised directly on the respective brands' official websites. Mercedes Benz green cells refer to the social media platforms advertised on their official international website.

