PROENZA SCHOULER
# Table of Content

## I - The Marketplace

1. Political Environment  
2. Social and Cultural Environment  
3. Technological Trends and Influences

## II - The Brand - Proenza Schouler

1. A Success Story  
2. Vision and Values  
3. Promotional Strategy

## III - The Products

1. Collections and Prices  
2. Manufacturing and Distribution

## IV - Customers

1. The Target Audience  
2. Purchase Behaviour  
3. Brand Communication

## V - Competitors

1. Christopher Kane  
2. Alexander Wang

## Conclusion

## References
The Marketplace

1. Political Environment

Created and sold mainly in the United States, Proenza Schouler is a young brand that was born just a bit more than ten years ago and quickly became important on the fashion scene. In its country of origin, the political environment hasn’t changed for decades and is unlikely to impact its business negatively. The United States are a liberal and capitalist country, therefore, laws and regulations for fashion are not hard. Fashion is seen as a very lucrative business and designers who succeed are admired and become celebrities themselves. Politicians even give awards to designers and wear their designs for official ceremonies. Concerning Proenza Schouler, as they are only sold in the USA and Europe for now, the political environment is unlikely to impact their business negatively.
2. Social and Cultural Environment

In 2008, the financial crisis hit the USA and Europe pretty hard. Following this recession, a new fashion movement emerged, the ‘recessionistas’, as opposed to the ‘fashionistas’. The recessionistas are those girls who found new ways of dressing fashionably without spending much, using new means of shopping (thrift shops, exchanges, DIY...) and often customising their own clothes to make them unique. The word also defines celebrities who wear their clothes more than once and several years in a row, even buying designer clothes for red carpet events (Keira Knightley, Hayden Panettiere, Sien-na Miller...).

On a cultural level, New York has also become the ‘hipster city’, with people creating innovative businesses, healthy food spots and restaurants. The city is also very artistic and some neighbourhoods function as communities (Brooklyn, Williamsburg...), helping each others and trying to be as green and eco-friendly as possible. This ‘healthy andarty’ movement, coupled with environmental concerns and the influence of PETA in the US, can have a huge impact on Proenza Schouler’s business, specifically on manufacture and use of fabrics, reputation and image and the purchase decision process.
3. Technological Trends and Influences

The first major technological trend of this past decade is of course the rise of social media and social networks (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest...). All of these new platforms influence the promotional strategies of fashion brands. The rise of online retailers such as ASOS or Net-a-porter who sell luxury brands at a better price might impact the prices and sales of the brand. Indeed, the target audience of Proenza Schouler is always looking for useful websites to shop their favourite brands. Finally, bloggers, the new generation of fashion influencers with their tablets and smartphones, can have a huge impact on the brand. They can document the runway shows instantly and post their opinion online, impacting the reputation and image of the brand. Today, more than fashion editors of print magazines, they probably are the ones who have the biggest influence on a brand’s success, alongside celebrities.
The Brand - Proenza Schouler

1. A Success Story

Proenza Schouler was created in 2002 by Jack McCoullough and Lazaro Hernandez, two former classmates of the famous Parsons School of Design in New York. Even before the official creation of their brand, the two young men caught the attention of Barneys New York who bought their entire senior thesis collection, which became their first collection under the name Proenza Schouler (the combination of their mothers’ maiden names).

Ever since, the brand has established itself as a revigorating American fashion house, and gained the admiration of the whole industry. They were awarded with the inaugural CFDA Vogue Fashion Fund award in 2004, followed by five other CFDA awards, including three Womenswear Designer of the Year awards in 2007, 2011 and 2013. In 2008, they launched their first handbag collection, including the now iconic PS1 satchel. In September 2012, they opened their first flagship store in New York, a two-floor boutique situated on Madison Avenue, followed by a second store opened in October 2013 in Soho and designed by Adjaye Associates.
2. Vision and Values

In their own words, Proenza Schouler define their vision as a ‘fusion of craftsmanship and attention to detail with a sense of refined ease. Inspiration drawn from contemporary art and youth culture is combined with an emphasis on tailoring and the use of custom developed fabrics.’ Indeed, the duo of designers plays with the fabrics to reinvent the fashion codes and create powerful and sophisticated looks. Their collections often feature modernised classic pieces, many looks convey a sense of strength, the woman is strong and powerful but also very feminine and chic with a lot of skirts and dresses. The Proenza Schouler woman is portrayed as an urban and confident businesswoman, who is daring, creative and even a bit boyish but who always stays classy and feminine.

The brand takes a great pride in their excellent tailoring and use of quality fabrics.
3. Promotional Strategy

Proenza Schouler is a relatively young brand that has become iconic very quickly thanks to an excellent promotional strategy. As part of the Y Generation, Jack McCoullough and Lazaro Hernandez have embraced the digital tools at their disposal and decline most of their promotional activity on social media, with their newly refurbished official website used as the hub displaying all of their highly innovative and creative promotional material, which consists of various promotional videos such as avatars, a short film directed by Harmony Korine, a photo exhibition, which can be seen on the Special Projects section of their website. The company produces ad campaigns and ad campaign videos each season. The videos created for the labels can be seen on its website as well as on the Proenza Schouler YouTube channel. The company also creates posters each season by the likes of Harmony Korine and the company’s art director Peter Miles.
The brand has also developed a great relationship with celebrities and trend-setters, including Chloë Sevigny, Kristen Stewart, Emma Watson, Keira Knightley or Leighton Meester, among many others. Their designs can be seen regularly on red carpets, celebrity endorsement being one of their most efficient promotional tactic. The rest of their promotional strategy consists of print media and advertisements, runway shows and street advertisements.

With Kristen Stewart

With Chloë Sevigny

With Leighton Meester
The Products

1. Collections and Price Range

The brand produces 2 ready-to-wear collections a year, Spring/Summer and Autumn/Winter consisting of an average of 35 looks with a pre-collection of 15 looks for each collection. Their product range is composed of women’s RTW, bags, jewelry, shoes, scarves, wallets, sunglasses, keychains, makeup bags, tech cases, and clutches.
2. Manufacturing and Distribution

Proenza Schouler makes all its clothing in the USA and the handbags are manufactured in Italy. The brand uses many noble fabrics such as leather, satin, silk, wool that are modified and/or coloured with a great attention to detail. The items are sold on the brand’s e-shop (www.proenzaschouler.com/shop), in the two New York flagship stores and in over 100 of the most exclusive retail outlets worldwide such as Barneys, Bergdorf Goodman, Harvey Nichols or Colette. This retail environment is very sophisticated and high-end.

Concerning the flagship stores, the designers hired architect David Adjaye for their two boutiques and they said that the first store was meant to be ‘the antithesis of a slick, high-gloss Madison Avenue store.’ (source: http://thelast-magazine.com/proenza-schouler-store/).
Customers

1. The target audience

The Proenza Schouler target market are women aged 25-39 that have an above average disposable income and live in urban areas. They are fashion-forward consumers that tend to hold creative jobs and are tech-savvy. According to Last Magazine, ‘Fans of the designers lean more toward the youthful perplexity of southern Manhattan, but north, they say, is where the buying power lies.’

The target audience is very active on social media and the brand has developed an important online fanbase thanks to its very engaging social media strategy.

“For the fashion conscious urbanista who wants an elegant product that displays her excellent taste and distinctive fashion sense.”
As Proenza Schouler opened its first retail space ten years after its creation, the customers had to go to the retail outlets to purchase their products. But, as mentioned above, the brand really embraced the digital environment and opened an e-shop on its website at the same time, targeting tech-savvy women. The duo spent a long time building their brand and image through online promotion and celebrity endorsement, keeping their products at a distance from the crowd, creating an important buzz in the fashion industry. After several years of nurturing their fanbase, they finally opened their own flagship stores, which immediately found their audience. The customers of Proenza Schoulers are fans of the brand first, they engage with the brand, follow them on social media, and care about the creative process of the designers. They buy an outfit as if they were buying a piece of art, in order to be part of the success story that is Proenza Schouler.
3. Brand Communication

Proenza Schouler is very successful and innovative in its communication with the target audience. They use various tactics, many of them are digital, even though they still use more ‘classic’ tactics and platforms to communicate.

The brand is present on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Youtube and Google +, the main social media channels, and the most used by their customers. The brand engages a lot with its audience and keeps a very busy online presence.

- Facebook: 333,465 likes.
- Twitter: 358,000 followers
- Instagram: 151,184 followers
- Youtube: 1578 subscribers
- Pinterest: 14,616 followers
- Google+: 1543 followers
On Facebook, the brand posts almost every day, especially during weeks preceding the fashion week. They post news concerning the brand, pictures of celebrities wearing their designs and links to media coverage. The reactions from the fans are very positive, most comments express the love of the author for the products or the brand.

On Twitter, the content is similar to the Facebook account but the brand also posts ‘behind the scenes’ pictures of the fashion shows. The same pictures are also featured on the Instagram account in addition to Instagram videos promoting the products. The Pinterest account is entirely about the products with pictures from the shows, red carpets or ad campaigns. The YouTube account features all of the promotional videos but also the runway shows, interviews and their projects’ videos. The Google + account is not very active and features mostly promotional pictures.

Overall, each post is widely shared, liked and commented, especially on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest. The brand nurtures its interaction and engagement with the audience, who really favours social media as a way of getting information.
The brand also uses celebrity endorsement and red carpet appearances to put their designs in the spotlight. Leighton Meester is known for owning several PS1 bags and Chloë Sevigny and Keira Knightley often wear the brand in public appearances. In addition to all that, they also use traditional print advertisement for their collections. But it is their important online presence and use of social media that allow them to get media coverage, as the angles chosen by the press are often about how the brand is digitally innovative and tech-savvy.
Competitors

1. Christopher Kane

The british label was established in 2006 and is a women’s ready-to-wear label based in London. The brand appeals to a similar target audience and their core ready-to-wear collections are priced at a comparable price point. Following Kering’s investment in the label, it is set to introduce an accessories line, store in London and website, which will align the brands as even closer competitors. The label surprisingly does not have a website and this, coupled with the fact that it is yet to erect a stand-alone store has meant that the label has not been successful in clearly establishing its brand image in the mind of the consumer.
2. Alexander Wang

Alexander Wang produces a RTW line and a diffusion line, entitled T by Alexander Wang. Wang has described his own design aesthetic as “model off-duty.” Alexander Wang is the main competitor of Proenza Schouler, with an online presence almost as important and a website that features videos and pictures, as well as the e-shop. The brand is younger than Proenza Schouler but really benefited from Anna Wintour’s support and is now established as an iconic American fashion brand. Alexander Wang mainly uses social media and print ads for its promotion.
Conclusion

Proenza Schouler has become an iconic brand in ten years of existence, thanks to a smart use of social media and engagement with their audience. The duo of designers have established themselves as innovative, tech-savvy and creative, and their reputation is now excellent in the fashion industry. They are expanding quickly and are not afraid of taking risks, which should reinforce their position as the new american fashion brand that counts.
Sources

http://international.proenzaschouler.com
https://www.facebook.com/proenzaschouler?fref=ts
https://twitter.com/proenzaschouler
http://www.youtube.com/user/proenzaschoulerny
http://instagram.com/proenzaschouler
http://www.pinterest.com/proenzaschouler/
https://plus.google.com/+proenzaschouler/posts
http://fr.slideshare.net/kristenhendy/proenza-schouler-6month-social-media-plan
http://www.businessoffashion.com/2013/03/armed-with-new-site-proenza-schouler-is-building-a-luxury-brand-for-today.html
http://www.telegram.com/article/20130728/NEWS/307289947/0
http://www.vogue.com/voguepedia/Proenza_Schouler#cite_note-2

Examples of Media Coverage
