

MDIA2011 - Assessment 1 Communications Audit

COMPANY: AESOP SKIN&BODY CARE

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Introduction

Aesop is a skin and body care brand founded in 1987 in Melbourne, Australia. It's privately owned and now operating globally under the L'Oréal group. Aesop is a brand known for its minimal and aesthetic themes, packaging and store architecture, who falls under the niche luxury skincare and fragrance sector. Aesop's objective as a brand is to formulate skin, hair and body care products of the finest quality. They research broadly to provide plant-based and laboratory-made ingredients -- not to mention, Aesop as a brand has a sincere interest in intelligent and sustainable design which they implement into all aspects of their workings. (Aesop, n.d.). This communication Audit analyses the earned and owned media of Aesop as a brand, dates ranging from January 2025 – June 2025, this period shows how the brand has continued to expand globally even further than before and showed its symbolic identity through design and architectural-led messaging.

This audit will scope channels such as Instagram, LinkedIn, Aesop's official website, as well as earned publications from Vogue, GQ articles, to show if the communications posted and presented aligns with the company's cultural aspects and values – as well as if it is reflected back through actual consumer experiences.

Owned media

<i>WHO</i>	<i>WHERE</i>	<i>WHAT</i>	<i>WHEN</i>	<i>WHY</i>
<i>COMPANY (AESOP)</i>	Instagram • Photos • Text • links	Mostly posting store layout aesthetics, new product launches	4-5 posts per week	Drive attention to website • Frequent visits (more than 1k likes per post) • No unique visitors • No unique comments, only general
	Official Aesop Website • Text • Links	Aesop's "The Athenaeum" blog style section where they post their brand stories, articles, collected writings	No fixed posting schedule – shared when there is brand-aligned meaningful material to share	Drive attention to meaning behind Aesop as a brand and what they represent • No indicator on how many visits
	LinkedIn • Photos • Text • links	New product launches, store aesthetics, new store openings, Job openings & people who work for Aesop	1 post every month	Drive attention to Aesop as a brand and potential job opportunities to work at Aesop • moderate visits -- more than 15 reposts every post • more than 200 likes each post • around 5-10 comments on every post

Earned media

<i>WHO</i>	<i>WHAT</i>	<i>PUBLISHED</i>	<i>OUTCOME</i>
Retail News Asia	- International Store Expansion - Aesop opens new boutique in Bangkok blending elements of Australian and Thai design	June 2025	Builds brand legitimacy in Southeast Asia, strengthens the chance of cultural integration
GQ Australia	GQ Australia features Aesop as one of the best men's skincare brands for anti-aging	May 2025	Increases product legitimacy and reputation for Aesop, especially in a niche sector such as men's skincare
Salone del Moblie.Milano	Installation at Salone del Mobile – an artistic brand showcase	March 2025	Builds social and symbolic capital
Vouge Singapore	Features Aesop's new 'Aurner Edu de Parfum' launch as an non-conforming Floral fragrance	February 2025	Strengthens Aesops brand aesthetic and reputation as an unconventional luxury skin-body care and fragrance brand
Dao insights	Showcases Aesop's collaboration with American youth culture magazine 'Nylon' and Chinese literary journal 'Mengya' to release a zine celebrating graduation season in china	May 2025	Builds social capital with the Chinese market, reflects the brands narrative on memorable transitional life moments

Analysis

These tables presenting Aesop's communications output with the public ranging from January 2025 to June 2025 show a consistent and sincere brand identity for the company. Through both owned and earned media, Aesop was able to show strong legitimacy, symbolic capital and seemingly earn consumer's trust. Through the data which was collected, it can be seen that from the company's internal communications, they reflect a legitimate order and organization through a fairly consistent image of a minimalist, artistic, and all-natural material-based company. We see this as well through outside recognition from channels such as Vouge Singapore, Dao Insights, and GQ Australia, all channels collectively gave a noteworthy review on Aesop to have a certified standing in the luxury skin-body-fragrance market. For a start, here it can be concluded that the internal communications quality in Aesop as a company is principled and satisfactory, which is crucial to uphold just as Fitzpatrick (2023) states "if there were no communication in a workplace one might argue that organizations would cease to exist, let alone operate efficiently".

To get into more intricate detail on the data collected, starting off with Aesop's production of owned media. Aesop has mostly output their communications to the public about their brand narratives and product launches through Instagram, LinkedIn and their official website. They have a unique way of strategizing how they post on their media feed – rather than filling the entire page with obvious sale promotions, they focus on producing visually appealing and meaning-filled imagery. This reflects extremely well with Aesop's theme as a brand and matches the architectural minimalism of their physical store. Their "Athenaeum" page on their official website does this as well, the decision to dedicate a page on a curated archive of the brand's narratives and art collaborations, along with philosophical quotes and literacy references strengthens and builds Aesop's cultural capital, just as Bordieu (1986) speaks on. Through this, Aesop will be able to communicate with audiences who appreciate a brand with a sincere and deep narrative. They don't just communicate through their products but through stories that show the meaning of certain lifestyles and emotion.

In terms of earned media, from the zine collaboration with Mengya and Nylon, to the non-conformist perfume review by Vouge Singapore, these articles produced don't just present usual product reviews, but they are able to frame Aesop inside a cultural and emotional factor. tying the brand to an transitional life moment (the Chinese graduation season collab) makes stronger the

brands legitimacy and charismatic context. Diving a little deeper on the topic of legitimacy – it's clear that Aesop through these ways of communication has earned a high portion of charismatic legitimacy. This isn't just through the minimalistic and creative spaces produced in store and through their products, but from the way they tell an show-stopping narrative when communicating with the public. Not to mention the most recent Bangkok store launch, where they blended their Australian aesthetics with Thailand cultures – another smart way for them to build social and symbolic capital. Overall, Aesops communications show not only an aesthetic cleverness but also a strong knowledge of becoming a legitimate and socially symbolic brand, sustaining their responsibilities as a corporate communicator.

Recommendation

In terms of Recommendations on what Aesop could do to interact better with the public, I recommend that they could communicate through booming; or active apps like TikTok to reach the younger or teenage audiences. Audiences on TikTok could make video reviews on the store aesthetics and the connection that they have with the brand – this would make the brand seem even more authentic. They could post short slide videos to showcase their physical store aesthetics on TikTok, and explain what their store represents since a lot of TikTok trends at the moment are using this feature for video content. Through this Aesop will be able to achieve an even higher reputation and will be able to expand to further audience demographics.

Reference List

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