

# *Subversion and Persistence*

## *—Analysis of Balenciaga’s Innovation Strategy*

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**Abstract:** Balenciaga is a world-renowned luxury brand, and its unique design style and profound historical background make its position in fashion unshakable. However, like all innovators, Balenciaga’s design style is not always understood and accepted by people. This paper will discuss how Balenciaga maintains its influence in the world fashion through subversive innovation and continuous innovation, and analyze people’s different reactions to its innovative design. The author will deeply analyze and understand the history, design philosophy and specific works of Balenciaga. At the same time, we will combine personal observation and experience to evaluate its innovative way and influence. Balenciaga’s innovation is mainly manifested in subversive innovation and continuous innovation. It redefines fashion by breaking the tradition, while maintaining its unique brand identity and design concept. Although some of Balenciaga’s designs may be regarded as “ugly” in the eyes of the public, it is the embodiment of its innovative spirit and the source of its lasting influence in the fashion world.

**Keywords:** Balenciaga, subversive innovation, sustaining innovation, design, fashion

## 1. Introduction

Balenciaga is undoubtedly a unique existence in the global luxury market. The brand was founded by Spanish designer Cristóbal Balenciaga in 1917 and has a history of more than 100 years. Balenciaga’s design style is deeply influenced by Spanish traditional culture, and at the same time, it actively absorbs and integrates artistic elements from other countries and periods. Its unique design concept and exquisite production technology make it an important participant in the global luxury market.

This paper aims to explore Balenciaga’s innovative ways, including subversive innovation and continuous innovation, and analyze how these innovations affect its position in the global fashion world.

To this end, this paper will review the history of Balenciaga and understand its design concept and characteristics. Then, this paper will analyze some representative works of Balenciaga family to discuss its innovative ways in detail. This paper will evaluate Balenciaga’s innovative influence based on personal observation and experience.

This study is of great value for understanding and evaluating the innovation of fashion brands. It provides a unique perspective to observe and analyze the innovative behavior of luxury brands such as Balenciaga in design and marketing strategy. By digging deep into the design concept behind it,

the innovative way and its influence on the global fashion industry, this study is helpful for this paper to understand the innovative power and path of fashion brands more comprehensively and deeply, which has important reference value for researchers and practitioners in the fashion industry.

This study also provides a new perspective and thinking for the public to understand and evaluate the innovation of fashion brands. The innovation of fashion brands is not only reflected in the surface design of products, but also the deeper innovation comes from the brand's history and culture, design concept and keen insight into the market and consumer demand. By studying Balenciaga's innovation practice, this paper can understand these deep-seated innovation factors more deeply, which has important enlightenment significance for the public's consumption decision-making and taste cultivation.

The conclusion of this study can also provide beneficial enlightenment for other fashion brands. Whether it is subversive innovation or continuous innovation, brands need profound cultural heritage, unique design concepts and keen insight into market and consumer needs. For other fashion brands, understanding and learning the successful experience of Balenciaga can provide useful reference for their own innovation and development.

## **2. The Historical and Cultural Background of Balenciaga**

### **2.1. Cristobal Balenciaga and the Founding of Balenciaga**

Balenciaga, a brand that enjoys a lofty position in the global luxury market, originated from a Spanish designer Cristóbal Balenciaga. He founded this brand in 1917 and injected a unique and far-reaching influence into it in the long river of history. Balenciaga's design style, innovative spirit and brand concept are deeply rooted in its Spanish cultural background and Balenciaga's personal experience. Cristobal Balenciaga was born in a small Spanish town. His mother was a tailor and his father was a fisherman [1]. He has been interested in fashion design since he was a child, and he has learned cutting and sewing techniques under the guidance of his mother. At the age of 17, he opened his own tailor shop in his hometown and started his design career.

Twenty years later, Balenciaga arrived in Paris, known as the "fashion capital", where he opened his own fashion house and began his legendary journey in the global fashion world. His design works immediately attracted a lot of attention, and his talent and unique design style were widely recognized [2]. His design works are known as "exotic customs", which have attracted many artists and fashion lovers [3].

Balenciaga's design concept is deeply rooted in his Spanish ancestry. His works are full of Spanish artistic and historical elements, which not only enrich his design, but also endow his brand with unique charm and personality. His design style is known as an "exotic style", which attracts many artists and fashion lovers [4]. Balenciaga's design works are regarded as works of art, which not only represent Balenciaga's personal talent, but also represent Spanish art and culture.

### **2.2. Balenciaga's Position and Influence in the Fashion World**

Balenciaga enjoys an indisputable position in the international fashion industry, and its outstanding design achievements have won wide acclaim both inside and outside the industry. Both the founder Cristobal Balenciaga and the subsequent designers have created a series of eye-catching works with their unique design concepts and exquisite craftsmanship, shaping the unique and outstanding brand image of Balenciaga.

Balenciaga's works not only aroused widespread concern and heated discussion in the fashion world, but also left a deep imprint in the fields of history and art. His design works often serve as a bridge between fashion and art, from which people can see the perfect integration of art and fashion [5]. In addition, Balenciaga also incorporated Spanish historical, cultural and artistic elements into

the design, making its works not only have a profound artistic sense, but also rich in cultural connotations.

Balenciaga's influence is not only reflected in the guidance of its works to fashion trends, but also in the inspiration of its unique design concept and innovative spirit to the whole fashion industry [6]. Balenciaga always insists on seeking innovation while respecting tradition, and constantly challenges the boundaries of fashion. This spirit inspires more designers to pursue independence and innovation in design.

In addition, Balenciaga's works are deeply loved by celebrities and nobles all over the world. From the Queen of Spain to the Queen of Belgium to the Duchess of Windsor, they are all loyal customers of Balenciaga [7]. They chose Balenciaga not only because of the artistry and uniqueness of their works, but also because Balenciaga represents an independent, elegant and innovative attitude towards life [8].

In the past hundred years, Balenciaga has successfully developed itself from a niche luxury brand to a bright star in the global fashion world. Today's Balenciaga family is not only a fashion brand, but also a symbol representing art, culture and innovative spirit.

### **3. The Subversive Innovation of Balenciaga**

#### **3.1. Balenciaga's Design Concept and Innovation Strategy**

Balenciaga has won wide recognition in the global fashion world for its unique and subversive design concept and innovative strategy. All this stems from the design philosophy of its founder, Cristobal Balenciaga: "An excellent fashion designer must be an architect of patterns, a sculptor of shapes, a painter of design, a harmonious musician and a fit philosopher." This philosophy defines Balenciaga's design concept, that is, on the basis of respecting tradition and driven by innovation, it constantly challenges and changes the rules and boundaries of fashion [9].

Balenciaga's innovative strategy is mainly reflected in the selection of design elements and the innovation of design language. Designers integrate traditional Spanish cultural elements, such as flamenco dance and matador decoration, into the design, breaking the traditional fashion design rules and forming a unique design style. At the same time, they also constantly introduce new design elements, such as modern art, street culture, etc., so that the design works are full of novelty and avant-garde atmosphere.

Balenciaga designers are also good at using modern technology to promote design innovation. They introduce digital technology, 3D printing and other emerging technologies into the design process, so that the design works have both traditional artistic beauty and modern sense of science and technology [10]. This keen insight into new technologies and bold attempts have enabled Balenciaga to maintain a leading position in the fashion world.

Balenciaga's design concept and innovative strategy are also reflected in its keen insight into market trends and deep understanding of consumer demand. They deeply study the market dynamics, accurately grasp the preferences and expectations of consumers, and thus integrate the latest market trends and consumer needs into the design. This market-oriented design concept and innovative strategy not only make Balenciaga's design works always maintain a high degree of market competitiveness, but also deeply win the love and recognition of consumers.

Balenciaga's design concept and innovative strategy are also reflected in its respect for brand tradition and planning for the future of the brand. On the one hand, they inherit and carry forward the brand tradition of Balenciaga, on the other hand, they constantly explore and set the future development direction of the brand [11]. They integrate the brand's history, culture and values into the design, and also integrate the latest design concepts, market trends and consumer demand into the

brand's future planning. This respect for brand tradition and planning for the future of the brand make Balenciaga's design concept and innovation strategy both profound and forward-looking.

On the world fashion stage, Balenciaga has won wide recognition and praise for its unique and subversive design concept and innovative strategy. Behind this success, there is not only an insight into the depth of art and culture, but also a keen understanding of the needs of the market and consumers, and a fearless spirit of innovation and challenge.

The design concept of Balenciaga always adheres to "people-oriented, art first". This concept has been fully embodied in the design practice of brand founder Cristobal Balenciaga. He once said: "A good fashion designer must be an architect of patterns, a sculptor of shapes, a painter of designs, a harmonious musician and a fit philosopher." This philosophical spirit runs through every design work of Balenciaga. Whether it is the control of shape, color and material, or the consideration of the wearer's body, emotion and environment, it reflects the ingenuity and humanistic care of the designers.

The innovation strategy of Balenciaga is dominated by subversive innovation, which is mainly reflected in the challenge and destruction of traditional fashion rules. Balenciaga designers have the courage to experiment with new materials, colors and cutting methods. They introduce emerging technologies such as 3D printing and digital technology into the design process to seek design breakthroughs and innovations. At the same time, Balenciaga designers will also integrate artistic elements into fashion design, such as painting elements of Spanish Golden Age and flamenco dance elements into fashion design, which makes Balenciaga's design works not only have profound artistic connotation, but also have unique visual impact.

In addition, Balenciaga designers also attach great importance to the study of market dynamics and consumer demand. They deeply study the market dynamics, accurately grasp the preferences and expectations of consumers, and thus integrate the latest market trends and consumer needs into the design. This market-oriented design concept and innovative strategy not only make Balenciaga's design works always maintain a high degree of market competitiveness, but also deeply win the love and recognition of consumers.

With the changes of the times and the development of technology, Balenciaga's design concepts and innovative strategies are constantly evolving and upgrading. While respecting tradition and inheriting classics, Balenciaga always maintains sensitivity and openness to new things, actively embraces change and dares to challenge the unknown. This spirit of innovation and courage to challenge makes Balenciaga always maintain a leading position and influence on the global fashion stage.

### **3.2. The Impact and Significance of Subversive Innovation on Balenciaga**

Subversive innovation is undoubtedly of great influence and significance to Balenciaga. From design concept, brand image to commercial value, subversive innovation runs through every development stage of Balenciaga, and has become an important source of brand unique charm and lasting vitality.

Subversive innovation has shaped the unique design concept of Balenciaga. While respecting tradition, Balenciaga designers dare to challenge and break the existing fashion rules, and integrate art, culture, technology and other elements into their designs, making each work full of innovation and unique artistic value. This subversive and innovative concept has made Balenciaga's design works always maintain an avant-garde and novel style, which has won the love and pursuit of fashion lovers all over the world.

Subversive innovation has enhanced the brand influence of Balenciaga. Balenciaga's design works, with their unique artistic style and innovative spirit, have led wave after wave of fashion trends and made people deeply impressed with Balenciaga. At the same time, Balenciaga designers have successfully predicted the market trend and consumer demand with their forward-looking design

vision and keen market insight, making Balenciaga's design works always at the forefront of the market. All these have greatly enhanced the brand influence of Balenciaga and made it occupy an important position in the global fashion world.

Subversive innovation has also promoted the commercial success of Balenciaga. Balenciaga's design works have not only attracted wide attention in the fashion industry, but also won great success in the consumer market. Whether it is high-end fashion, everyday casual wear, or even accessories and perfumes, Balenciaga's design works are deeply loved by consumers. This commercial success has not only brought rich economic benefits to Balenciaga, but also further enhanced its influence and competitiveness in the global market.

Subversive innovation has also opened up new possibilities for the future development of Balenciaga. Balenciaga designers always keep their curiosity and spirit of exploring new things. They constantly try new design elements, new design methods and even new business models in order to seek breakthroughs in design and business. This vision and exploration of the future has kept Balenciaga family full of vitality and provided unlimited possibilities for its future development.

## **4. The Sustaining Innovation of Balenciaga**

### **4.1. Balenciaga's Strategy and Practice of Sustaining Innovation**

Balenciaga has always maintained its leading position in the global luxury market through sustaining innovation. Among them, Balenciaga's continuous innovation strategy and practice played an important role. Balenciaga's sustainable innovation strategy emphasizes the exploration and attempt of new things. Their designers have always maintained their curiosity and spirit of exploring new things. They are willing to try new design elements, new design methods and even new business models in order to seek breakthroughs in design and business [12]. This exploration and attempt of new things makes Balenciaga's design works always at the forefront of fashion.

Balenciaga's sustaining innovation strategy also emphasizes the respect and inheritance of brand tradition. Their designers always adhere to Balenciaga's brand tradition, and they integrate Balenciaga's historical elements and brand values into their designs, which makes Balenciaga's design works have a unique brand style. This respect and inheritance of brand tradition makes Balenciaga's design works both deep and continuous.

In practice, Balenciaga's sustaining innovation is mainly reflected in the diversity and foresight of its design works. Their design works not only respect and inherit the tradition, but also explore and try new things. Their design works are both practical and artistic. Their design works have both depth and continuity. This diversity and foresight make Balenciaga's design works always maintain a novel and avant-garde style.

### **4.2. Long-term Impact of Sustaining Innovation on Balenciaga**

Sustaining innovation keeps Balenciaga's design works in a novel and avant-garde style, and keeps it in a leading position in the global fashion world. Innovation has enabled Balenciaga to maintain its pioneering position in the fashion world. Balenciaga has always been a representative of challenging tradition and breaking away from convention. Its unique design language and forward-looking design concept make it always at the forefront of fashion trends. Balenciaga designers are good at drawing inspiration from diversified fields such as daily life, art and culture, and creating fashion items different from traditional luxury goods, thus shaping Balenciaga's unique brand image.

Innovation has brought stable economic income to Balenciaga. Balenciaga's innovation is not only reflected in product design, but also in its business model and marketing strategy. Balenciaga takes digitalization and technicalization as its strategic key, and uses new technologies to promote product development and sales, such as online sales and AR fitting. These innovative applications make

Balenciaga stand out in the traditional luxury market, attract more young consumers, and thus bring stable economic income.

Innovation has also enhanced the social influence of Balenciaga. Balenciaga's innovative behavior has not only been recognized by the market, but also aroused widespread concern in society, which has enhanced Balenciaga's brand influence. For example, Balenciaga's innovative actions in environmental protection and sustainable development, such as using recyclable materials for design and promoting the development of sustainable fashion, have enhanced the positive image of Balenciaga in society and increased the public's goodwill and trust in Balenciaga.

Innovation has also opened up new possibilities for the future development of Balenciaga. With the development of science and technology and the change of consumer demand, innovation has become a necessary condition for the survival and development of enterprises. Balenciaga is constantly exploring new design concepts and business models with its open thinking and the spirit of trying, which provides unlimited possibilities for the future development of Balenciaga.

The impact of sustaining innovation on Balenciaga is far-reaching. It makes Balenciaga maintain its leading position in the fashion industry, brings stable economic income, enhances its social influence, and creates unlimited possibilities for its future development. In this rapidly changing era, the success of Balenciaga tells us that innovation is an important driving force for the sustainable development of enterprises.

## 5. Conclusions

This paper discusses Balenciaga's innovation strategy and practice from many angles, and deeply analyzes its influence and significance on the long-term development of the brand. We realize that the success of Balenciaga cannot be separated from its deep understanding and effective application of subversive innovation and sustaining innovation.

In terms of design concept and innovation strategy, Balenciaga always insists on subversive innovation, challenges and breaks traditional design rules, and actively explores and tries new design elements and technologies. This in-depth understanding and brave practice make Balenciaga's design works have unique artistic value and market competitiveness.

From a long-term perspective, subversive innovation and continuous innovation have had a far-reaching impact on Balenciaga's brand image, market position and commercial success. They not only shaped Balenciaga's unique brand image, but also enhanced its influence and competitiveness in the global market, further promoting its commercial success.

From a personal point of view, as consumers, we have a deeper understanding of Balenciaga's design concept and innovative strategy, and experienced its innovative value. We expect Balenciaga to continue to innovate, pay attention to social responsibility and further enhance brand value and market influence in the future. Both subversive innovation and continuous innovation are the key factors for Balenciaga's success. Only through continuous innovation can Balenciaga maintain its leading position in the global fashion industry and achieve sustainable development.

However, this paper is mainly based on the analysis of Balenciaga's understanding and perception, and lacks sufficient empirical data to support the argument. In future research, we can collect and analyze more data, such as sales data and consumer survey data, to more objectively and comprehensively evaluate the effect of Balenciaga's innovation strategy and practice. In the future research, we need to study the innovation process of Balenciaga in depth. We can also compare the innovation strategies and practices of Balenciaga and other brands in the same industry, and discuss their differences and similarities in innovation models, effects, etc., in order to obtain more in-depth insights.

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