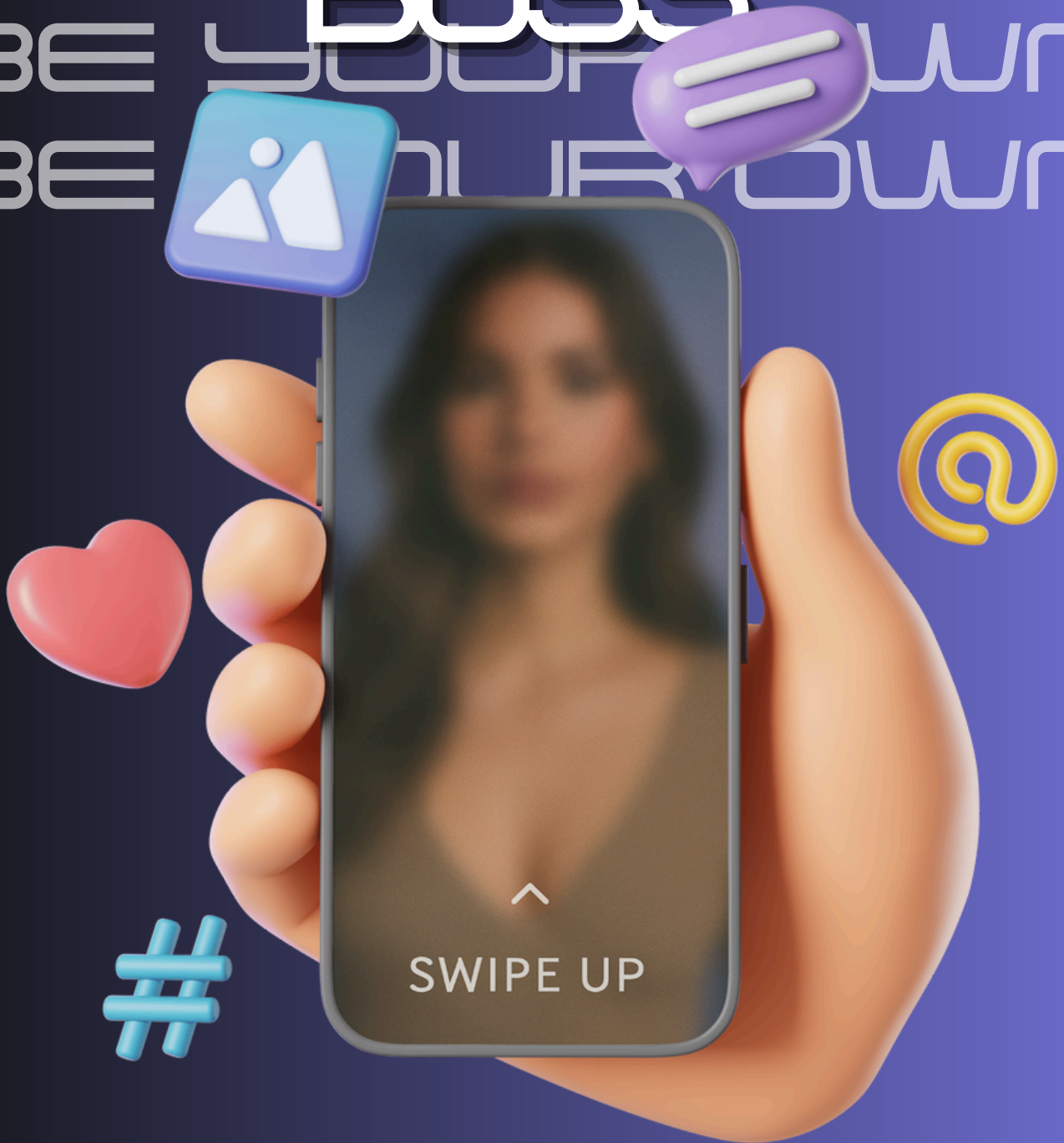


BE YOUR OWN
BE YOUR OWN
BE YOUR OWN
BE YOUR OWN

BOSS



THE SOFT SELL ERA

CALL-TO-ACTION IN CELEBRITY-DRIVEN VIDEO MARKETING

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Letter from author

“The best marketing doesn't feel like marketing”

Tom Fishburne

Dear Reader,

This single quote by Tom Fishburne has lingered in my mind ever since I first came across it while researching consumer psychology for one of my university projects. I believe the quote summarizes a paradox: where marketing is most effective when we barely notice it's happening.

Therefore, it led me to explore seamless marketing campaigns for my final thesis. Over the past 6 months, I have analysed hundreds of branded videos but chose to pick 4 that I am going to use for the project. My research is concentrated on the Hugo Boss brand. Their recent video campaigns, featuring David Beckham, Naomi Campbell, Lee Min-ho, and Alica Schmidt, offered a rich and compelling case study for understanding how brands work. I want to express gratitude to Hugo Boss for creating such thoughtful, well-produced campaigns that not only helped me in the investigation but also helped improve the academic exploration of hidden marketing campaigns.

This magazine unveils my findings: the questions that guided me, the methods I employed, and the insight that emerged from this research.

Whether you are a marketer, a psychology enthusiast, or simply curious about how influence works in the modern world, I hope this project inspires you to look a little closer next time you swipe, click, or follow.

Thank you for taking the time to read this magazine.

Sincerely,

Yuliya Kim

BSc Psychology of Fashion, 2025

HUGO

Hugo Boss

Timeless tailoring. Modern identity. Cultural relevance.

Founded in 1924 in Metzingen, Germany, Hugo Boss has evolved into a global fashion house known for precision tailoring, refined aesthetics, and a sharp eye on contemporary culture. While traditionally associated with classic menswear, the brand has since expanded its universe, balancing heritage with reinvention through diverse lines such as BOSS and HUGO, catering to both timeless elegance and youthful edge.

In recent years, Hugo Boss has taken bold steps into digital-first marketing, embracing the power of celebrity-driven storytelling and video-based campaigns. With ambassadors ranging from athletes and actors to TikTok stars and content creators, the brand has positioned itself at the intersection of fashion, identity, and influence.

BOSS

LONG STORY SHORT

In today's fashion world, the best marketing doesn't shout—it whispers. This study explores how hidden Calls-to-Action (CTAs) in celebrity-driven video campaigns influence what we feel, click, and buy.

Emotional appeal, product placement, and behind-the-scenes content—using branded videos watched by 90 people aged 18 to 45. Each group saw a different approach, then shared how they felt and whether they'd buy the product.

THE VERDICT? SUBTLE WINS.

Hidden CTAs outperformed overt ones in driving engagement and purchase intent. Surprisingly, emotional appeal didn't stand out more than the others—all three hidden styles worked equally well.

What it means:
Modern consumers respond better to marketing that doesn't feel like marketing. Subtlety builds trust, curiosity, and connection—without the hard sell.

Hugo Boss Campaign

SETTING THE SCENE

In the world of fashion marketing, bold slogans and loud promotions are no longer the only way to sell.

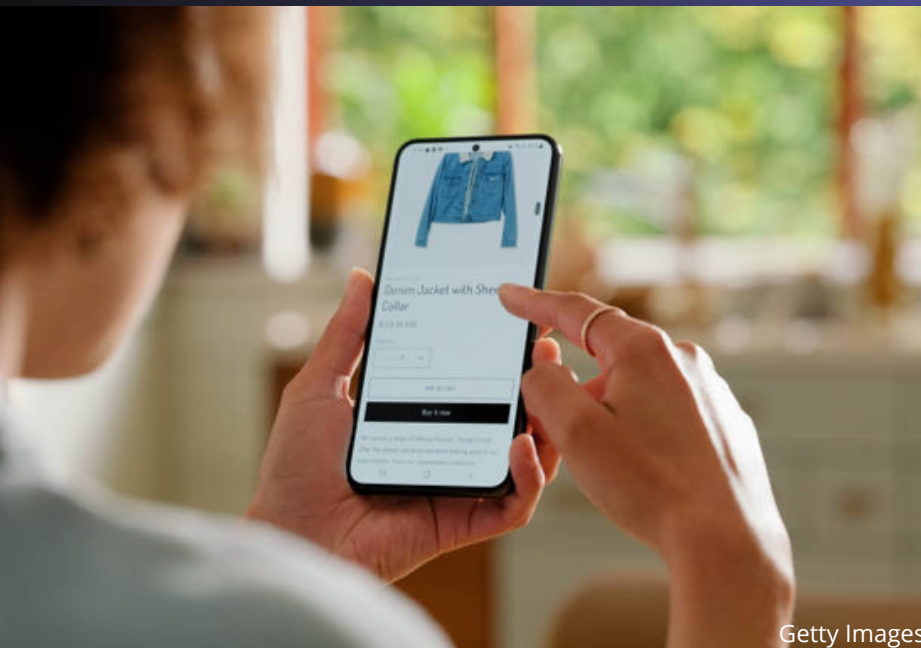
That's where subtle marketing techniques come in.

This study investigates how celebrity-driven video campaigns are evolving. Rather than pushing products, brands now invite viewers into curated experiences that subtly guide them toward a desired action

OR what marketers call a **Call-to-Action (CTA)**.



Hugo Boss Campaign



Getty Images

TODAY'S CONSUMERS ARE
SAVVY, SKEPTICAL, AND
CONSTANTLY SCROLLING

In the next pages, you will explore various types of hidden CTAs, including emotional appeal, product placement, and behind-the-scenes content, as well as their impact on consumer engagement and willingness to purchase.

The study focuses specifically on Hugo Boss, whose recent campaigns have leaned into cinematic, emotionally charged storytelling featuring global celebrities.

This project sits at the mix of fashion, psychology, and media looking at the invisible techniques that shape **what we buy, and why.**

IT DOESN'T LOOK LIKE AN AD. THAT'S WHY IT WORKS.



This research addresses a gap in the current marketing literature by exploring how hidden call-to-actions (CTAs) in celebrity-driven video campaigns influence consumer behaviour.

To investigate this, the study states the following three hypotheses:

- 1. Hidden CTAs in celebrity-driven marketing campaigns significantly influence consumer purchase behaviour more than overt CTAs.*
- 2. Among hidden CTAs, emotional appeal generates the highest consumer engagement and purchase intent compared to product placement and behind-the-scenes content.*
- 3. Consumer engagement levels vary significantly depending on the type of hidden CTA used.*

To explore these hypotheses, a quantitative research design was employed, supported by statistical analysis across 4 campaign conditions.

BEHIND THE CLICKS

To investigate the impact of different hidden call-to-action (CTA) types on consumer engagement, a controlled quantitative study was conducted with 90 participants aged 18–45, representing diverse backgrounds and demographics.

Participants were divided into three equal groups (30 each). Each group was exposed to one type of hidden CTA in a professionally edited video ad based on a real Hugo Boss celebrity campaign.

The CTA types were:

Emotional Appeal

Product Placement

Exclusive (Behind-the-Scenes) Access

Each video was designed to reflect only one CTA type while maintaining consistent production quality and celebrity presence.

After watching their assigned video, participants completed a structured survey measuring:

- Engagement
- Purchase Intent

Statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS to determine the significance of differences between responses across CTA types.



90 participants



4 videos



1 survey



**Engagement
Purchase intent**

CRAFTING THE EXPERIMENT

Alica Schmidt
Product Placement



David Beckham
Exclusive Content



Lee Min-Ho
Emotional Appeal



Naomi Campbell
Explicit CTA



So, What Happened?

Across all groups, people reacted pretty similarly. Here's how they scored (out of 5) on things like liking the ad, sharing it, or buying the product:

Most scores hovered around 3–3.5, with the exclusive content group getting slightly higher marks for things like commenting and visiting the brand's site.

Was the Data Normal?

Not exactly. Some outliers and uneven data meant we had to use non-parametric tests for certain parts, but nothing too wild. We double-checked with visuals and tests like Shapiro-Wilk and Levene's.

Hypotheses

1. Are hidden CTAs better than obvious ones?

Yes! People who saw hidden CTAs were more likely to want to buy the product than those who saw obvious messaging.

Hypothesis 1: Accepted

2. Does the type of hidden CTA matter?

Nope. Whether it was emotional, product-focused, or exclusive content, there was no major difference in how much people liked, shared, or acted on the campaign.

Hypothesis 2: Rejected

3. Is emotional appeal the strongest hidden CTA?

Still no. Emotional CTAs didn't stand out as more powerful than the other types.

Hypothesis 3: Rejected

Hidden CTAs work better than in-your-face ones

But it doesn't really matter which hidden tactic you use all three types performed equally well.

IN A NUTSHELL...

Hidden CTAs = Smart Marketing

Turns out, being subtle actually works. When CTAs are hidden in cool content—like a behind-the-scenes clip or a personal story—people respond better than when brands are like, “Buy this now!” It feels more authentic and less pushy.

But... the type doesn't matter much

It was thought emotional stories might tug at heartstrings more, or that exclusive access would be extra persuasive but nope. All three hidden CTA styles performed about the same. So, good news for marketers: you've got creative freedom! Focus on what fits the brand vibe rather than chasing one “magic formula.”

People don't like to feel sold to

This study backs up what we already kinda knew—audiences today are pretty smart. They can spot ads a mile away. But when messaging feels natural and genuine, it lands way better.

Take a note:
Make it feel real, not rehearsed.
Keep the CTA hidden in a good story or moment.
Don't stress too much about the format just make it engaging.

BECKHAM x BOSS

New In

Men

Women

Sports



HUGO

BOSS

ALL BRANDS

Hugo Boss Website

MEN WOMEN



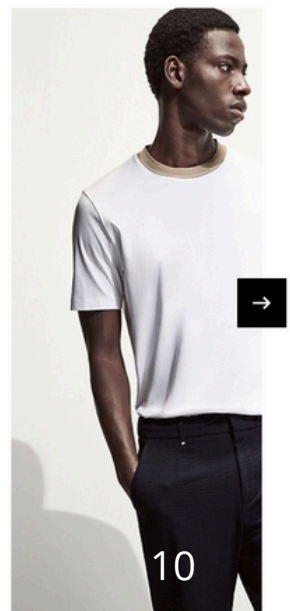
SUITS



SNEAKERS



SHOES



T-SHIRTS

This project started with curiosity and ended with so much more: confidence,
clarity, and a new way of seeing marketing.
Thank you to everyone who supported me on this journey.
— Yuliya Kim

WANT TO CONNECT?
Email: yulya.kim.15@gmail.com

LINKEDIN

