Advertising Strategies in the Interwar British Printed Textile Industry

Aims:

▪ compare differences in the promotion strategy of dress and furnishing textiles sectors

▪ compare consumer and B2B/ trade advertising approaches

▪ examine the communication strategies of particular case study companies

▪ to analyse the impact on market communication strategy of different types of industrial competitive structure and product type

Methodology:

• consumer and trade journals

• British Industries Fair catalogues

• case study companies: business history and advertising records

• governmental (Board of Trade) and industry (JCCTO and FCP) sources

• oral history

• contextual industrial, economic and design history sources
Structural Context

Dress Textiles sector:

- increasingly Schumpeterian industry – speedy product development, high turnover, low prices; intensive technical and design innovation

- under pressure from export displacement due to price competition in high volume, low price, standardised product markets

Furnishing Textiles sector:

- structurally separate from dress sector

- mature industry - low volume, high price, durable goods, dominated by traditional design styles; some process innovation

- under pressure from fall in demand for quality goods/price cutting in home market due to macroeconomic context
Industry Economic Context

Export of British Printed Cotton

Fiscal Blue Book: BT70/ 28/ s1322/ 30

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Home</th>
<th>Trade</th>
<th>Print</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tr>
<td>1927-32</td>
<td>Varied between 210 and 225 million yards; 1928 was a 'print' year.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>281 million yards</td>
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<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>266 million yards</td>
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<td>1935</td>
<td>226 million yards</td>
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<td>1936</td>
<td>220 million yards</td>
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<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>242 million yards; 'print' year</td>
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<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>228 million yards</td>
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Turnbull, G. (1951): data from FCP reports
Rayon Production

The steep growth in rayon production had displaced many other textiles by the early 1930s, as the quality and range of fabrics improved and cheaper artificial fibre alternatives with brand names were promoted.

Value of Total British Finished Rayon and Rayon Mix Piece Goods Production

JCCTO (1939) *Cotton Trade Statistics*, Table 98D
The Value Structure

Most of textiles industry was not vertically integrated, although there was substantial horizontal integration: the CPA dominated the printed textile industry.

The entrepreneurial role varied between manufacturers, merchants and some printers and dyers. Many textile printing firms were commission-processors, dependant on orders from merchants, manufacturers and retailers. This sector was severely cut with the fall in exports. There was increasing competition in the dress sector from large primary manufacturers with strong technical competencies. Design ownership is indicated by the register of textile designs:

![Source of Registered Designs in January Samples](image-url)
Textile Industry IMC practice

Mainly promotion within the value structure:

• trade shows, especially the British Industries Fair
• B2B personal selling
• occasional use of advertising by most firms:

- in response to economic or competitive threat.

There was a sharp change in buying patterns from the 1930-onwards Depression - the loss of income for the upper and upper middle class market segment and unemployment – made a very price competitive market ‘style-snobbish, not price-snobbish’ consumers

Fashion trends affected the furnishing textiles industry, with a sudden switch to Modernist, abstract design during the early 1930s. Many furnishing textile firms advertised the artistic quality of their products and publicised Modern designs in 1933-5.

- to promote new products: technically innovative new fabrics promoted to consumers, new design ranges promoted within the trade.
Dress Textile Sector: consumer advertisement

- mainly fabric manufacturers.
- frequent reminders for new product brands, emphasising the brand identity. The products are described in poetic text but not illustrated individually.
- mass market strategy: minimal segmentation.

Coming Fashions, January 1931
Sublation process of consumer identification with end product: fashion clothing not textiles shown. Strong couture fashion references. Signifiers connoting style, elegance.

Vogue, 18th February 1931
Dress Textile Sector:
B2B advertisement

**B2B advertising:** mainly print companies, not fabric manufacturers.

Cost leader, high turnover ranges promoted with emphasis on low prices.

*The Drapers’ Record*, 10th Jan. 1931
Specific print designs emphasised: any supporting figures indicate the end-product context or brand, not a sublation effect.
A delightful range of fabrics to greet the Autumn

Clearly, women's preference for Printed Fabrics is not abating. But for the Autumn and Winter seasons you will do well to sell from the ranges women know to offer the most novel colourings and designs. The new patterns in "SAN-TOY" PRINTED FABRICS—woven by COURTAULDS—will score heavily, and each sale will have the support of the COURTAULD quality—guarantee. See these patterns promptly, at your usual Wholesale House.

San-Toy
Printed Fabrics

COURTAULDS, LTD.
16, St. Martin’s-le-Grand,
LONDON, E.C.I.

The Drapers’ Record, 25th July 1931
Furnishing Textile Sector: consumer advertisement

• Very few consumer advertisements as more durable, lower turnover products.

• Direct mail booklets to consumers.

• Mainly corporate identity branding

• Some product brands promoted by companies differentiating through fast dyes

• Some sublation effects used with images of upholstered chairs, curtains or interiors

Coming Fashions, Jan. 1928
Furnishing Textile Sector:

A common approach in both consumer and B2B advertising of furnishing sector textiles is to illustrate single fabrics.

The Cabinet Maker and Complete House Furnisher, 27th January 1923
Furnishing Textile Sector:
B2B advertisement

Segmentation by taste and social group

BRITISH TEXTILES EXHIBITION

STAND 281

WARNER FABRICS
FOR EVERY DECORATIVE PURPOSE

To re-create historic fabrics stitch by stitch; to design the liveliest interpretations of the modern trend. These two delightful extremes indicate the variety of our activities in the weaving and printing of fine fabrics. Warner Fabrics comprise hand and power, woven and printed materials of all kinds, ranging from Brocades, Damasks, Tapestries and Velvets to the simpler Cretonnes, Printed Linens and Chintzes.

WARNER & SONS LTD
10-13 Newgate St., London
E.C.I. Tel. City 1712 (5 lines)
Cables: Warram, Cent.London
Factories: Braintree, Essex
and Dartford, Kent

British Industries Fair catalogue, 1935
Corporate branding: craft skills and artistic creativity competencies emphasised.

BRITISH TEXTILES EXHIBITION

STAND 265
HALL J

PRINTED AND WOVEN
FURNISHING FABRICS
OF ALL PERIODS
FOR ALL PURPOSES

W. FOXTON, LTD
1 PATERNOSTER SQUARE and 1 & 2 ROSE STREET
LONDON, E.C.4

Telegrams: SEARCHLIGHT, CENT, LONDON
Telephone: CITY 2384 2385

British Industries Fair catalogue, 1935

Text in illustrations: ‘The Inspired Block Cutter’ and ‘The Joyful Weaver’
Case study: Turnbull & Stockdale Ltd.: furnishing print

No consumer advertising found, but direct mail and point of purchase retail publicity
Case study: Turnbull & Stockdale Ltd.: B2B advertisement, furnishing print

B2B sales force and trade fairs

"ROSEBANK" FABRICS
Regd.

As English as the Rose.
Hand Block Printed Linens, Cretonnes, Fadeless Reversibles, Plain and Printed Glazed Chintzes, Shadow Tissues.
DISTINCTIVE DESIGNS and COLOUR COMBINATIONS for the FURNISHER and DECORATOR,
Dyed Casement Cloths, Repps, Poplins, Satins, Bolton Sheetings.
also Damask Moirés, and "Raycraft" Silk Fabrics, etc.
GUARANTEED FADELESS.
"ROSEBANK FABRICS" are BRITISH and are our own Productions.
We do not Factor any Foreign Goods.

TURNBULL & STOCKDALE LIMITED,
Textile Printers, Dyers, Manufacturers.

WORKS— LONDON HOUSE—
RAMSBOTTOM ROXBURGHE HOUSE


Also at

MANCHESTER: 55 Brown Street. BERLIN: Schützenstr. 79 S.W.68.
GLASGOW: 50 Wellington Street. VIENNA: Rotenturmstrasse 9.
PARIS: 5 Villa Dupont, 48 Rue Pergolese. GENOA: via Luccoli, 19-21
Rossi. Melbourne, Toronto, Capetown, Johannesburg, Bucharest, Oslo,
Sydney, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Zürich, Prague, Budapest, Cologne, Siam,
Rio de Janeiro, Straits Settlements, Shanghai, Japan, Cairo, Buenos Aires.

(White City) Stand No. 254.

British Industries Fair catalogue, 1933
Coming Fashions, 1921 back covers

Case study: Morton Sundour Fabrics Ltd.: consumer advertisement, furnishing print

Single brand message through all consumer advertisements: unfadability.

The enormous difference in value between a fabric which fades and one which is fadeless is obvious.

The colour element in Sundour Unfadable Fabrics is indestructible, thus ensuring lasting harmony in home furnishings.

Sundour is made in a great variety of fabrics including Casement Cloths, Damasks, Tapestries, Reps, Chenilles, Madras Muslins, etc; also

Sundour Washable Rugs for Bathroom, Bedroom or Nursery.

Of all the best furnishers

Morton Sundour Fabrics Ltd. (Trade Mark) Carlisle
Case study: Morton Sundour Fabrics Ltd.:
B2B advertisement, furnishing print

The Chinese Dragon Design

“Distinction” the keynote of Cumberland Prints.

MORTON SUNDOUR FABRICS LTD
CARLISLE (England) and 89 NEWGATE STREET, LONDON, E.C.1

The Drapers’ Record, 10th September 1921
Case study: Calico Printers’ Association: dress & furnishing print

Few advertisements: similar text-based approach for consumer and B2B channels, with some sublation imagery added to the consumer advertisements.

For every woman for every wear

This range of Fabrics has secured popularity because of the wonderful worth and practical adaptability of the several ranges so far introduced.

Cepea Serge. This singularly useful Cotton Fabric with the serge-like finish has now been available for several seasons, and garments made of Cepea Serge have proved their value and kept their colour and delicate finish. Cepea Serge cannot shrink. Its wonderful variety of patterns are all colour fast, and include smart stripes, checks, and plain shades. Made in two widths – 39 inches and double width 38-39 inches – the ideal material for bright, smart everyday wear – for shopping, sports, holidays, and useful house frocks – for children and grown-ups.

Sheenore. The twin colour scheme and soft texture of this cepea-like material make Sheenore an ideal fabric for summer frocks, jumpers, blouses, &c. For evening wear and smartest frocks, Sheenore, at a very modest price, is unsurpassed in effect by the most sumptuous and most costly fabrics. The width is 37 inches.

Cepea Undevoile. For daintiest lingerie, morning blouses, youngster’s frocks, &c., this special Cepea Fabric is unequalled. Softness of finish, ease in washing, and guarantee of fast colour make this Voile the best for all uses. In favourite chints and stripe patterns, lovely plain tints and a bright range of newest ideas for modern taste. Width 38-39 inches.

Note: The colour schemes of Cepea Serge and Cepea Undevoile are guaranteed absolutely faultless.

British Textiles Exhibition

STAND Nos. 1484/89

CEPEA DRESS FABRICS

Woven and printed silks, rayons, spun rayons and cottons – as piece goods from all leading wholesalers. Included in their products are those bearing the “Six Line Fast Colour Guarantee.” Fabrics bearing the sign of this guarantee on the selvage will be replaced free if colours fade through wash or wear within two years of purchase.

Grafton Furnishings

Printed Linens, Glazed Chintzes, Shadow Pepps, Rotary Block Cretonnes, Fadeless Casemats and Woven Fabrics. In addition, this year sees the birth of the first Sanforized Shrunken Printed Casement—Merriecolour. Guaranteed Maximum Shrinkage 0.5% Merriecolour also bears the “Six Line Fast Colour Guarantee.” Grafton Furnishings are “Cepea Fabrics” and the Cepea Seal is on all ranges.

Amazon & Mayfield Overalls

Obtainable from all leading wholesalers in a large variety of styles and designs. Light grounds, dark grounds for matron or maid. Hard wearing, cheerful and washable. “Amazon” and “Mayfield” are “Cepea Fabrics.”

Cepea Fabrics Limited

ST. JAMES BUILDINGS OXFORD STREET MANCHESTER.

British Industries Fair catalogue, 1937
Case study: Ferguson Brothers Ltd.: consumer advertisement, dress print

Vertically integrated company; technical innovation; large sales staff

AUTUMN FABRICS

FERGUSON'S new productions include two exquisitely rich and soft artificial satins, "EDEN" and "SOLENT," which you will want for your prettiest evening frocks and lingerie. As lovely as true satin.... just as the new "FERGPOCHENÉ," an artificial silk and cotton fabric, approaches in beauty a really expensive crepe-de-chine. These are in self colours, but for printed artificial silk fabrics, Ferguson "JULIETTE" and Ferguson "SUZETTE" still enjoy a tremendous vogue.

Lovely fabrics to sew .... lovely to wear .... really beautiful textures in ranges of delicate, entrancing shades and printed effects. The newest fabrics in the shops to-day .... and all at sensible prices.

FERGUSON

Artificial Silks

FERGUSON "EDEN" SATIN
FERGUSON "SOLENT" SATIN
FERGUSON "FERGPOCHENÉ" "JULIETTE"
FERGUSON "SUZETTE"

A beautiful artificial lower priced than silk SATIN in self colours 39/40'w. (EDEN) and in the same colours 36'6" w. (SOLENT) and "SUZETTE"

Prices—Ferguson Artificial Silk Fabrics are sold at 2/11 to 5/11 per yard.

Write for sample patterns and list of Ferguson Fabric Stockists to Ferguson Brothers, Ltd., Holme Head Works, Carlisle.

Obtainable from Leading Drapers all over Great Britain

Coming Fashions, October 1928
Case study: Ferguson Brothers Ltd.: B2B advertisement, dress print

Heavy investment in B2B advertising

October 1931; probably *The Drapers’ Organiser*
Case study: Ferguson Brothers Ltd.: B2B advertisement, dress print

British Industries Fair catalogue: back cover, 1935
Conclusion

Advertising approach was influenced by the structural industry type:

Schumpeterian dress industry needed intensive advertising to promote new products by manufacturers.

Sublation effect in consumer advertising to encourage imaginative identification with fashion image.

Main marketing of printed textiles industry directed to B2B channels: personal selling, trade fairs and advertising. Focus on specific designs in trade advertising. Success of Ferguson Bros. in affective + specific B2B advertising.

Furnishing sector minimal advertising in 1920s, as a mature, stable industry: heavier advertising in uncertain 1930s with threat to luxury market.

Advertising focused on reinforcing the corporate brand identity (especially craft skills and artistic value) and design details of the individual textile product.

In the British home market, textile consumption rose during the Depression, though prices fell and the luxury furnishing market had to adapt to cheaper, more Modern designs. The most successful firms were those with limited exports, an entrepreneurial not commission-processing role, innovation in product development with price reduction and investment in affective advertising.