

How to sell ugly

 By Jonathan Cherry

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So the news from the 'fashion' industry is that Crocs are making a very strong comeback.



Source: Crocs

Demand for 'the ugliest thing that money can buy' since lockdown has been very strong.

"The chunky shoe-maker reported record sales of \$640m (£465m) in the three months to 30 June – nearly double the same period last year. And the trend shows no sign of slowing down – the firm raised its revenue outlook for the rest of the year.

The company's boss said there was strong demand for the shoes globally. Net income before tax grew to \$190,5m between April and the end of June from a previous \$54,7m. Its chief executive, Andrew Rees, now expects revenue for 2021 to rise by as much as 65%, compared to an increase of up to 50% the company forecast in April." - via [BBC](#)

Why?

Why do people buy Crocs?

The answer, well at least some part of it, lies in the surprising cultural allure of kitch.

In a world so besotted with conformity and a global culture bristling with judgement and impossible aesthetics-standards; adorning yourself in 'kitchness' is an excellent tactic if subtly flipping the bird at the world is your thing, which is perhaps easier than showing your displeasure with the status quo by looting a bottle store, or walking the streets with a Kill the Rich banner.

Kitch is irony objectified, it's about saying 'Look at me, look how counter-culture I can be' with a smirk and a knowing nod.



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Selling kitch is not for your everyday brand manager, it takes a special kind of talent to appeal to a market's sense of silliness and build a massive business on the back of it.

Supreme is a great example of this – so is Crocs.

Selling ugly is not about selling a product; it's offering people the opportunity to become the focus of conversation, a statement, a form of living art.

The joke is really on those who *don't* get it.

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ABOUT JONATHAN CHERRY

Jonathan Cherry is a futurist and business strategist who works with organisations to design better strategies that effectively create a significant competitive advantage. Over the past 20 years he's worked with retailers such as Yuppiechef, Woolworths and Kitchen Warehouse (Australia), has an MPhil Futures Studies from Stellenbosch University and is a member of the Association of Professional Futurists. .

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