

An Independent Comparative Case Study of 17 Global Luxury Brands in Mumbai

Self-funded. Uncommissioned. March - July 2026.

*Dior | Louis Vuitton | Tiffany & Co. | Bvlgari | Saint Laurent | Gucci | Bottega Veneta | Cartier |
Hermès | Burberry | Chanel | Tod's | Valentino | Tory Burch | Versace | Ferragamo | Jimmy Choo*

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This report documents how one self-funded customer moved through 17 luxury brands in Mumbai over four-and-a-half months, across digital inquiry, boutique visits, genuine purchase intent, purchases, after-sales service, returns, escalation, and repeat engagement. It then compares the operational friction, stronger execution, and movement of demand observed across those journeys.

Executive Overview

Across four-and-a-half months of documented engagement with 17 global luxury brands in Mumbai, one pattern became difficult to ignore: purchase intent was rarely the principal constraint.

Across many of the journeys in this study, I had already researched products, identified preferred styles, contacted the brand or boutique, travelled to a location, expressed interest across multiple categories, or arrived prepared to purchase. In several cases, I completed purchases and continued exploring additional categories afterward. The recurring friction often emerged after demand already existed.

Following the same self-funded customer over time revealed recurring patterns in demand movement, advisor continuity, digital limitations, service recovery, product availability, and cross-market expectations.

What Brands May Not See in Their Own Data

Many of the commercially significant outcomes documented in this study would be difficult to reconstruct from transaction data, CRM, Customer Care reporting, or other isolated operational records.

A purchase record shows what was bought. It does not necessarily show what the customer wanted but could not obtain, what remained commercially active after a non-purchase, or where that demand ultimately moved. Likewise, a non-purchase does not distinguish between delayed demand, competitor conversion, third-party purchase, secondary-market sourcing, future purchase elsewhere, or genuine loss of interest.

Examples from this study include:

Recorded Event	What Happened Next
Louis Vuitton scarf inquiry	Dior silk scarf purchase
Cartier eyewear friction	Future jewelry consideration shifted closer to Bvlgari
Chanel eyewear orders; card holder and bag inquiries	Continuing handbag interest but weakening willingness to purchase through the primary full-price relationship
Bvlgari fragrance inquiry	Purchase through a third-party retailer
Burberry handbag purchase	Future purchase interest ended

Customer Care, CRM, and wishlist records may similarly show activity without showing whether the commercial relationship actually progressed. A case may be closed, an advisor assigned, or a preference recorded while the customer continues rebuilding context, losing confidence, or redirecting future spend.

The gap is therefore not between accurate and inaccurate data, but between **what the organization records and what the customer actually does over time.**

This study does not replace CRM systems, transaction reporting, clienteling, Customer Care analytics, mystery shopping, or internal operational review. It identifies customer-side signals that those systems may not fully reveal and establishes a basis for testing whether similar patterns recur across additional customers.

Why This May Matter Beyond India

Although this study documents customer journeys in Mumbai, the commercial outcome of those journeys is not necessarily local.

Luxury customers compare markets, travel internationally, and decide where to spend. A non-purchase in one market may become a purchase in another, move to a competing Maison, shift to third-party retail or the secondary market, or disappear altogether. These outcomes are commercially different, yet may initially appear identical within local reporting: **no transaction**.

This study identifies a testable possibility: that meaningful customer demand can move across markets, Maisons, channels, and time in ways that are difficult to reconstruct from transaction, CRM, or other isolated operational records.

How This Report Was Conducted

I began this journey with genuine purchase intent. I was not conducting mystery shopping, an audit, or commissioned research - I was researching and purchasing luxury products for my own use.

After several unexpectedly poor experiences, I deliberately continued engaging beyond the point at which I would ordinarily have abandoned a purchase. Rather than disengaging, I revisited boutiques, pursued unanswered inquiries, followed promised actions, explored additional categories, and, where relevant, escalated unresolved matters.

This approach allowed me to observe what happened after the initial interaction - whether follow-up occurred, preferences were retained, service recovery worked, escalation changed outcomes, relationships developed, or demand moved elsewhere.

The work was independently conceived, self-funded, and conducted without access to internal company data, CRM systems, operational reporting, employee interviews, or management reporting. No brand, retailer, ownership group, or third party commissioned the study.

Physical Retail Scope

Unless otherwise stated, in-person interactions documented in this report took place at boutiques within Jio World Plaza, Mumbai. The Chanel journey included interactions at Phoenix Palladium and Jio World Drive. References to each Maison relate only to the documented customer journey and touchpoints encountered in this study. They do not imply observation of every boutique, employee, or customer journey associated with that Maison in Mumbai or India.

LVMH

Maisons Included : Dior | Louis Vuitton | Tiffany & Co. | Bvlgari

Dior

Customer Journey

Digital Inquiry and Initial Purchase

My Dior journey began through the website appointment process, which connected me with a sales associate. Before visiting, I expressed interest across multiple categories, including handbags, jewelry, and sunglasses.

Responses regarding my wider inquiries were incomplete, with confirmation focused primarily on selected handbags. Dior's India digital journey was comparatively useful, however, because it allowed me to view local pricing and identify boutique availability for products I was considering.

I visited the boutique with genuine purchase intent and purchased a handbag. The consultation remained largely limited to products I had already identified, and the sales associate appeared to be in a hurry to finish her shift. There was little proactive recommendation across my broader stated interests and limited discussion of craftsmanship or Maison heritage.

I had to ask for care guidance. Given the pace of the interaction and the limited conversational engagement, I did not continue pressing for broader product recommendations.

Return-Policy Dispute and Escalation

After the rushed purchase, I sought to return the handbag. My understanding of the return position had been influenced by Dior's policies outside India and by my digital journey: the India website also indicated a 30-day refund policy, which influenced my purchase decision.

I was subsequently informed that the local Mumbai boutique policy, contrary to what I had understood from the website, was to provide store credit rather than a monetary refund. The relevant restriction appeared on the receipt generated only after payment had been completed. I had not relied on that post-payment receipt language because the website had presented contradictory information that I had taken at face value.

During subsequent correspondence, I provided evidence of the digital-policy inconsistency. I was also told during the resolution process that teams were being trained not to proactively state the no-refund position before purchase because doing so could negatively affect the transaction.

I was advised to seek boutique discretion, but the manager was unavailable when I returned. During the in-store dispute, a senior staff member threatened me that escalation could result in the item being treated as showing wear to prevent the exchange route, too.

Exchange, Additional Spend, and Consumer Escalation

I ultimately proceeded through the store-credit route. Using the remaining credit required me to add further money, and I acquired sunglasses as part of that process.

After repeated unsuccessful attempts to resolve the underlying dispute, I filed a Consumer Forum grievance. Approximately two months later, Dior reversed its earlier position and agreed to accept the sunglasses for a monetary refund. At the return appointment, the condition of the sunglasses was questioned even though the pair had originally been purchased as a floor-display piece and two months had lapsed. The refund was ultimately processed.

Repeat Purchase and Wider Interest

Despite the earlier dispute, I later returned to Dior and purchased a silk scarf. My issue had been with the inconsistent and insufficiently transparent return-policy journey, not with the desirability of the brand's products.

Across my documented Dior interactions, a beverage was offered only during this final interaction, when I purchased the silk scarf. The senior staff member involved in the earlier dispute behaved much more politely during this visit and proactively reminded me of the store-credit-only policy within 30 days. I considered that clearer pre-purchase communication a positive step.

There was still limited discussion of craftsmanship or Maison heritage and little proactive recommendation based on my prior purchase history. My documented interest also extended across sunglasses, jewelry, passport holders, and wallets, but these broader cross-category interests were not systematically developed into an ongoing client relationship.

Executive Observation

The Dior journey combined strong product desirability and repeat purchase behaviour with significant friction around regional policy transparency, post-purchase resolution, and continued client development.

The digital journey performed comparatively well in making India pricing and boutique availability visible. The principal breakdown emerged after purchase, when the applicable local return position differed from the expectation created through the digital journey and resolution ultimately progressed to Consumer Forum escalation.

Most notably, I returned and purchased again after that dispute. The journey therefore combined relatively strong pre-purchase digital visibility with substantial post-purchase friction and limited development of continued cross-category demand.

Louis Vuitton

Customer Journey

Initial Handbag Exploration

My Louis Vuitton journey began with handbag exploration. Although I was assigned SA1 on Whatsapp, when I visited the boutique I met SA2, who showed me several bags and made recommendations. One recommendation interested me but was out of stock at the time. When I later returned to check whether that recommended bag had become available, I met SA1 who did not display enthusiasm to make product recommendations.

Passport Holder Interest and Purchase

I later contacted SA1 regarding passport holder availability. When I returned to purchase the passport holder, SA1 was again unavailable, and SA3 completed the transaction on her behalf. This interaction stood out positively. SA3 discussed the brand more broadly, shared aspects of the Maison, and gave me a wider tour of the boutique. This was one of the few interactions across the study in which an advisor made a more active effort to introduce the brand beyond the immediate transaction.

SA3 also placed fragrance samples in my purchase bag. Until that moment, I had not realized Louis Vuitton made fragrances. The sampling therefore created awareness of an entirely new category and generated genuine future fragrance interest.

Card Holder Inquiry and Fragmented Availability Information

I later contacted SA1 regarding card holders and was told that the items I wanted were not available. I followed up regarding availability but did not receive a response.

I subsequently visited the boutique in person and again encountered SA2. SA2 informed me that relevant card holder options were in fact available in store, showed them to me, and recommended another, higher-priced card holder that I liked. That recommendation successfully expanded my consideration beyond the product I had initially identified.

Because the recommended piece was not locally available at that moment, I placed a preorder so it could be sourced from another boutique. The interaction demonstrated genuine willingness to spend at a higher price point when a relevant recommendation was made. It also exposed a continuity problem: a product journey that appeared blocked through one advisor became active again only because I visited in person and encountered another.

Fragrance Interest and Sampling Contradiction

During the card holder journey, I also explored Louis Vuitton fragrances. I already had perfume on at the time and was uncertain how the fragrances would perform over time in Mumbai's heat and humidity.

SA2 explained that fragrance testers were placed into purchases and that the team tried not to repeat them so customers could experience different scents. When my preordered card holder later arrived, I

asked SA2 for samples of specific fragrances I wanted to test before potentially buying a full bottle - prior to asking SA2 for the samples, Customer Care had already confirmed this request was possible to meet.

However, SA2 then said that samples were not provided, but they would make an exception. The samples they ultimately included were not the ones I had specifically requested. This created a contradiction between the earlier explanation of fragrance sampling and the later handling of my request. The issue mattered commercially because I was not seeking samples casually; I was trying to test performance in Mumbai's climate before considering a full-size purchase.

Delayed Delivery and Unanswered Scarf Interest

The delivery of my preordered card holder occurred later than the time originally promised. Separately, I repeatedly asked SA2 about silk scarf availability. This was not a one-off casual question. I raised the interest multiple times, but the scarf inquiry remained unanswered even while other information was being communicated. I ultimately purchased a silk scarf from Dior instead. The demand for the category did not disappear. It converted with another Maison.

Executive Escalation and Service Recovery

I later raised concerns by email at senior LVMH level. I did not receive a direct response from the executives contacted; however, a General Manager in Delhi subsequently reached out. The response indicated that the journey had been reviewed, including the time taken for information to be provided by sales associates.

I was told that the delays observed were not considered acceptable. I also received clarification that fragrance samples were part of the normal purchase experience rather than the exceptional accommodation the earlier interaction had suggested, and an apology was provided. SA3 was then assigned to me as my new advisor. I was also offered a complimentary full-size bottle of a fragrance I preferred after testing samples.

Fragrance Recovery and Further Customer Effort

SA3 sent samples of the fragrances I had wanted to try, allowing me to test performance more meaningfully. My experience suggested that the fragrances did not last particularly long in Mumbai's climate, something SA3 later also acknowledged during a subsequent boutique interaction.

The complimentary full-size bottle offered during the recovery process was not proactively progressed after the samples were sent. I eventually had to state that, if the offered bottle was going to be sent, it would need to arrive before a particular date because I was traveling. Only then was I contacted at short notice regarding delivery, creating an awkward dynamic. I had not requested a free bottle - it had been offered as part of the recovery. However, once offered, I still had to help move the fulfillment forward.

Later Handbag Exploration

My interest in Louis Vuitton handbags remained active despite the earlier friction. I later contacted SA3 regarding several bags. Some were available and others were not, and I visited the boutique to evaluate options. During the visit, one bag I was interested in could not be located. I was told by SA3 that

photographs would be sent later, but I did not receive them. I also did not receive a later explanation clarifying whether the bag had been found, remained misplaced, or was otherwise unavailable.

This occurred after I had communicated that I was genuinely considering a purchase for my upcoming birthday during July. The lack of follow-up from SA3 despite a near-term sales window being explicitly communicated therefore affected an active opportunity - I am now questioning why I should pay full primary-market price when the relationship surrounding the product has repeatedly required disproportionate effort from me. I am now considering whether I source the bag through the secondary market. And, I am no longer making a purchase for my birthday, though interest was initially sincere.

Bum Bag Fit and After-Sales Tension

During the same later handbag exploration outlined above, I also considered a bum bag. The product was substantially too large around my waist to function as intended for my frame, so I explored whether additional holes could be added to tighten the fit.

I was informed by SA3 that Louis Vuitton could not make that alteration. I was also advised that having the product modified by a third party could affect its future eligibility for Louis Vuitton repair or after-sales support.

The bag therefore remained unsuitable despite genuine purchase interest. This created a practical tension between product fit and after-sales protection - the modification that might have made the bag wearable could also weaken access to future Maison support.

Hospitality

Across my documented Louis Vuitton interactions, I was not offered a beverage.

Executive Observation

The Louis Vuitton journey contained clear evidence of both successful selling and fragmented client continuity. Relevant recommendations converted. SA3's early boutique interaction expanded my understanding of the Maison, fragrance sampling created genuine new-category demand, and a higher-priced card holder recommendation successfully increased my spend.

At the same time, advisor continuity repeatedly broke down. Availability information differed depending on whom I encountered. A repeated scarf inquiry remained unanswered and converted at Dior. Fragrance sampling was described inconsistently. A recovery offer required further customer effort to progress. A later handbag could not be located during a viewing, and promised follow-up photographs never arrived.

Product fit created an additional constraint when a bum bag was too large for my waist, Louis Vuitton could not make the required alteration, and third-party modification could potentially affect future repair eligibility.

The central issue was not absence of demand. I purchased twice, explored multiple additional categories, and remained interested in handbags after escalation. The commercial risk emerged because repeated fragmentation weakened the value of the full-price primary relationship even while product desire remained active.

Tiffany & Co.

Customer Journey

After-Sales Entry Point

My Tiffany & Co. journey began through after-sales service rather than a new purchase.

The customer care team in India did not provide any details if resizing services were available in Mumbai.

Upon not receiving any response from customer care, I went to the Mumbai boutique directly with the ring I had purchased from Chevy Chase, Maryland, which I need resized and initially interacted with SA1, who assisted with the service request.

The ring was accepted, and I received a receipt for the work. After that initial intake process had been completed, I was informed that the ring was slightly damaged. This changed the scope and cost of the service. Because Tiffany & Co. would resize the ring only after the damage had been addressed, the ring first required repair and then resizing, increasing the amount I was required to pay. The sequence was notable because the damage had not been identified during the initial intake before the receipt was issued. The revised condition assessment and higher service cost therefore emerged only after the ring had already entered the servicing journey.

Repair, Resizing, and Collection Experience

The ring was ultimately repaired and resized.

At collection, I interacted with SA2, who had not handled the original repair and resizing process. SA2 asked whether I wanted a box for the ring, and I said yes. She then framed the provision of the box as a significant accommodation.

The interaction felt disproportionate to the item involved and weakened what could otherwise have been a positive conclusion to the after-sales journey. I had not demanded special packaging; the box had been offered to me. Once offered, emphasizing it as an exceptional accommodation made a relatively minor item feel unnecessarily transactional.

New Ring Interest and Lack of Follow-Through

My relationship with Tiffany & Co. was not limited to repair. During the collection interaction, I expressed interest in solitaire rings to SA2. I later also communicated ring interest to SA1, who had initially assisted with the repair and resizing journey.

My interest included a diamond ring and the possibility of exploring additional silver options. I also expressed interest in understanding whether particular earrings could be sourced to match the ring I already had. These were genuine new-purchase signals following a completed paid after-sales journey. However, no meaningful follow-up developed around the ring interest, the diamond ring consideration, the broader silver options, or the possibility of sourcing suitable sizes.

Cross-Market Pricing Inquiry

My later interest in additional products was also influenced by social-media reels discussing the possibility that some Tiffany & Co. jewelry could be priced more favorably in India than in the United States. That content prompted me to seek product-level pricing information so I could understand the comparison for myself.

The information I received was contradictory. I recognize that some Tiffany & Co. products can appear visually similar while differing by size, diamond configuration, or exact reference, so product confusion may have contributed to the inconsistency.

However, the inquiry did not develop into a clear, reliable comparison or a later sales conversation. This is relevant because the interest was not abstract. Publicly visible cross-market customer content had created a reason for me to investigate purchasing from Tiffany & Co. in India, but the resulting information journey did not convert that curiosity into a developed opportunity.

Hospitality

Across my documented Tiffany & Co. interactions, I was not offered a beverage.

Executive Observation

The Tiffany & Co. journey illustrates both the commercial potential of after-sales service as an entry point into future purchasing and the risk of treating servicing as an isolated transaction.

The initial intake process did not identify the slight damage that was communicated only after the ring had been accepted and a receipt issued. Because the ring then required repair before resizing, the scope and cost of the service increased after intake.

The collection experience introduced a smaller but still notable point of friction when a box offered by SA2 was subsequently framed as a significant accommodation. More importantly, explicit interest in a diamond ring, additional silver options, and size sourcing did not develop into meaningful follow-up.

The later cross-market pricing inquiry represented another potential sales opportunity. Social-media content had created genuine curiosity about purchasing Tiffany & Co. jewelry in India, yet contradictory product information did not develop into a clear comparison or sustained sales conversation.

The central missed opportunity was not the repair journey alone. A customer who entered through after-sales service subsequently expressed genuine interest in new jewelry purchases, including a diamond ring, but that interest was not meaningfully developed into an ongoing client relationship.

Bvlgari

Customer Journey

Initial Handbag Interest and Advisor Follow-Up

My Bvlgari journey began with interest in handbags and jewelry. I was connected with a sales associate who followed up on the items I had expressed interest in, even though our paths did not initially cross in the boutique.

When I visited in person, the sales associates I encountered were helpful and willing to show products. The interactions were polite, and I was able to explore the categories that had prompted my interest.

My handbag interest did not convert during the documented period, but the initial sales associate's follow-up was a positive part of the journey. It demonstrated that expressed interest had been retained even though the advisor and I had not yet met in person.

Jewelry Exploration and Craftsmanship Interest

My interest extended meaningfully into jewelry. I explored pieces in person and developed genuine appreciation for the craftsmanship of the products I was considering. However, that appreciation came primarily from my own response to the pieces rather than from active storytelling by the boutique team. I did not experience comparable enthusiasm from the sales interaction around Bvlgari's own craftsmanship, design process, heritage, or the significance of the products within the Maison.

This was a missed opportunity because I was receptive to that conversation. The products had already created interest, and stronger discussion of craftsmanship or brand history could have deepened the relationship beyond product evaluation alone.

Bracelet Consideration and Competitive Movement

At one stage, I was actively considering a Bvlgari bracelet alongside a Cartier bracelet. Although I preferred the Cartier bracelet's product story, the Bvlgari option offered a better fit for my wrist. The decision therefore involved a genuine trade-off between design preference and physical suitability.

My later Cartier journey introduced additional friction around resizing, product information, and broader confidence in the retail experience. As a result, despite initially preferring the Cartier bracelet aesthetically, I became more inclined toward making a future jewelry purchase from Bvlgari. This shift is commercially important because the Bvlgari opportunity was influenced not only by Bvlgari's own product appeal, but also by friction encountered with a competing Maison.

Fragrance Interest and Gift-Set Availability

My interest later expanded into fragrance - I specifically expressed interest in fragrance gift sets visible on the India site of Bvlgari. These were not available through the boutique, and I was redirected to a third-party retailer. However, that route did not fully address what I was seeking - the official boutique experience. The issue was therefore not simply whether some Bvlgari fragrance could be purchased

elsewhere. The specific format and direct-brand journey that had generated my interest were not available to me through the local boutique experience.

Third-Party Fragrance Conversion

My fragrance interest ultimately converted outside the boutique relationship. I purchased Bvlgari fragrance through a third-party retailer. The demand therefore did not disappear. It moved channels.

This distinction matters because a brand may retain the end customer at product level while losing the direct retail relationship and the opportunity to connect that purchase with wider jewelry or handbag interest already expressed through the boutique journey.

Hospitality

Across my documented Bvlgari interactions, I was only offered a beverage once - the tea cup had a lipstick stain, hence I sent it back. It raised questions regarding cleanliness and hygiene.

Executive Observation

The Bvlgari journey was comparatively positive in interpersonal terms. The assigned sales associate followed up on expressed interest even before we met in person, and the advisors I encountered in the boutique were helpful.

The larger missed opportunity concerned development of meaning around products I was already inclined to appreciate. I responded positively to the craftsmanship, but the boutique team did not show comparable excitement in explaining the Maison's own story, process, or product significance.

The journey also demonstrates how competitive friction can redirect future demand. I initially preferred a Cartier bracelet aesthetically, but the cumulative Cartier experience has moved me closer to considering a future Bvlgari jewelry purchase.

Fragrance provides a separate channel example. Interest in gift sets could not be fulfilled through the direct boutique journey, and the eventual fragrance purchase occurred through a third-party retailer.

The Bvlgari relationship therefore retained future potential across jewelry and other categories, but some of that potential remains undeveloped. The strongest future opportunity lies in converting existing product appreciation into a deeper direct relationship.

Kering

Houses Included: Saint Laurent | Gucci | Bottega Veneta

Saint Laurent

Customer Journey

Initial Purchase and Handbag Exploration

My Saint Laurent journey began with the purchase of sunglasses alongside active exploration of handbags. I later returned and purchased a handbag.

My interest continued beyond those completed purchases across additional handbags, footwear, and other categories. I used wishlist links to communicate and retain products I was considering for future purchase.

Digital Product Information and Wishlist Continuity

The India website did not provide sufficiently clear visibility into local pricing, color options, and boutique availability for the products I was considering. I therefore depended on the sales associate to manually communicate available products, colors, and prices.

Wishlist updates were significantly delayed despite my continuing purchase interest. Products I had expressed interest in were not added or updated promptly, weakening the usefulness of the wishlist as a continuing purchase tool.

For example, several weeks after I had expressed interest in a particular handbag and hardware configuration, the sales associate contacted me when it became available. This was a positive example of product memory and follow-up, and the information revived a genuine opportunity around a bag I had previously wanted. However, when I later decided I wanted to visit the boutique and evaluate that bag in person, I returned to the wishlist link and found that it no longer worked. As a result, the digital record intended to preserve my interest no longer provided continuity back to products I had once actively considered purchasing.

The timing was particularly significant because the failure occurred not when my interest was hypothetical, but after a relevant product had finally become available and I was considering returning to the boutique to see it. After the cumulative delays and continuity problems across the wider journey, I was by then mentally disengaging from the brand.

The broken wishlist became a final point of friction in a relationship where I had already purchased twice and continued to express further interest.

Communication and Customer Care Escalation

Communication with the assigned sales associate was extremely delayed. I contacted Customer Care multiple times asking to be assigned to someone else, but I did not receive a response to those requests.

The sales associate's responsiveness later improved materially. However, because Customer Care never acknowledged my reassignment requests, I could not establish whether the improvement resulted from internal intervention or occurred independently.

Color-Exchange Inquiry

One interaction demonstrated more effective support. I considered whether a recently purchased product might require a color exchange after discovering that apparently equivalent colors could be described differently across country markets.

The team responded promptly and was willing to assist with the potential exchange. The issue was ultimately clarified - the color was correct, but naming differed across markets. No exchange was required. This was a positive example of responsive support once a specific post-purchase concern had been identified. However, the confusion could have been avoided altogether through consistency in color names across regions.

Wider Category Interest

Beyond the sunglasses and handbags, I also expressed interest in shoes, makeup and fragrances.

Makeup and fragrances were not available through the boutique journey, and I was directed to Tira. I chose not to pursue that route because consumer reports I had encountered concerning product condition and my limited confidence in available customer-service recourse reduced my willingness to purchase through that third-party channel. My beauty and fragrance interest therefore did not convert during the documented period.

Hospitality

Across my documented Saint Laurent interactions, I was not offered a beverage.

Executive Observation

The Saint Laurent journey combined completed purchases with continuing interest across handbags, footwear, beauty, and fragrance. The strongest moments came when the team responded promptly to a potential color-exchange inquiry and when a sales associate remembered a specific handbag preference, contacting me after my preferred hardware configuration became available. These interactions showed how retained customer preferences and timely follow-up can revive genuine purchase intent.

However, the broader journey required substantial customer effort. Limited digital visibility increased dependence on manual advisor support, wishlist updates were heavily delayed, and Customer Care did not respond to repeated reassignment requests. Although advisor responsiveness later improved, the reason for that change remained unclear.

When I eventually wanted to revisit the newly available handbag, the wishlist link no longer worked. By then, repeated breakdowns in continuity had weakened my willingness to continue the relationship, even though the product itself remained desirable.

Gucci

Customer Journey

Initial Product Inquiry and First Advisor Handoff

My Gucci journey began through Customer Care, which connected me with a sales associate after I expressed interest in a product. The assigned sales associate did not respond to the inquiry, so the handoff created a point of contact without progressing the purchase journey.

I later contacted Customer Care again regarding handbag interest. Rather than being connected directly with the most relevant Mumbai boutique - which I had specified - I was still routed to Delhi.

Mumbai Advisor Handoff and Loss of Continuity

After another follow-up, Customer Care subsequently connected me with a Mumbai sales associate. That advisor initially engaged but later stopped responding when the conversation progressed to setting up an in-boutique viewing appointment.

I then visited the boutique in person as a walk-in. The products available during the visit did not align with what an earlier sales associate had indicated would be available over Whatsapp, creating further uncertainty around stock information and the reliability of the journey across touchpoints.

One bag I was genuinely interested in purchasing was not available in Mumbai and as per the Sales Associate in the boutique during that visit it would not be restocked so she encouraged me to make a full advance payment to source it from the Delhi boutique. When I contacted the earlier Sales Associate, she, however, said the bag would be restocked.

Weeks afterward, when I contacted two Mumbai sales associates about the same bag, both confirmed that it was now available. When I asked why I had not been informed despite previously expressing clear interest, one advisor initially explained that no new stock had arrived because the bag had been on hold for another customer. After further questioning, she said it had been released following a deposit hold. A second advisor, however, confirmed that the bag was newly arrived stock.

No advisor or channel consistently carried the opportunity forward. Even after the bag became available, conflicting explanations about how it had reached stock reinforced the absence of reliable continuity.

Cross-City Routing and Customer Care Friction

The journey became more complicated when Customer Care appeared not to understand the practical geography and distance involved in routing an India-based customer between Mumbai and Delhi.

When speaking with Customer Care regarding the bag I was interested in, I was told by them that the Delhi boutique could not conduct a video call and could provide only photographs. This limited my ability to evaluate a product remotely before considering a full purchase from another city.

For a customer already dealing with inconsistent availability information, the inability to establish a more effective remote viewing route increased the risk and effort involved in progressing the purchase.

Digital Information Limitations

The India website did not provide the local price and availability visibility I needed for the products I was considering. As a result, I depended on Customer Care and individual sales associates to establish basic information about price, stock, and location. That dependency amplified the effect of the fragmented handoffs. Where digital information could not independently resolve the question, contradictory or incomplete human communication became the journey itself.

Missed Opportunity

My interest was not limited to one isolated inquiry. I was genuinely exploring handbags and remained open to purchase if I could identify the right product and a reliable route to obtain it. However, the journey repeatedly required me to restart context across Customer Care, Delhi, Mumbai, WhatsApp, and the physical boutique. No advisor or channel consistently carried the opportunity forward.

After so much friction in this journey, I no longer wish to purchase this bag at full-price and am considering the secondary market as the value I associated with the brand has diminished following poor experiences.

Hospitality

Across my documented Gucci interactions, I was not offered a beverage.

Executive Observation

The Gucci journey demonstrates the commercial risk created when limited digital visibility and fragmented human handoffs occur together. Customer Care created points of contact but not continuity, advisor ownership repeatedly broke down, and product information differed across channels.

Most importantly, contradictory information about availability continued throughout the journey. I was variously told that the bag would not be restocked, that it would be restocked, and later that it was available, accompanied by conflicting explanations of how it had reached stock. By then, the issue was no longer product availability. The cumulative experience had reduced the value I associated with purchasing the bag itself, even though it had originally been a product I genuinely wanted.

The central issue was not lack of demand. I was actively trying to purchase a handbag. The journey failed to provide a consistent path from inquiry to purchase across Customer Care, advisors, boutiques, and cities.

Bottega Veneta

Customer Journey

Initial Handbag Exploration and Advisor Support

My Bottega Veneta journey began with handbag interest. The sales associate was helpful in showing me options and supporting product exploration.

The India website did not provide the pricing and local availability visibility I needed for the products I was considering. As a result, I depended on the sales associate to share product and price information directly.

In this journey, the advisor made a practical effort to reduce that friction. She provided pricing details and used her WhatsApp Business account to display selected products and prices through a catalog. This was a simple but effective use of an existing communication tool to make product information easier to access.

Local Operating Context and Fragrance Interest

During the relationship, the sales associate also explained the local Reliance franchise arrangement. This became relevant when I explored whether fragrance might be available through the boutique journey.

My understanding from the interaction was that fragrance was unlikely to be sourced through the local boutique arrangement. My interest therefore did not develop into a direct fragrance purchase opportunity.

The point was not simply that one category was unavailable. It illustrated how local operating or distribution arrangements could affect the breadth of the customer relationship even when interest extended beyond the category that initiated contact.

Follow-Up on Handbag Interest

The sales associate later checked in regarding my continuing interest in handbags. This was a positive example of follow-up. The interaction did not depend entirely on me restarting the conversation, and the advisor demonstrated awareness that my earlier exploration represented continuing purchase potential rather than a closed visit.

I remain interested in purchasing a bag from Bottega Veneta. The principal constraint is currently product configuration rather than loss of interest: I am waiting for a style I like to become available in a color I want.

Digital Information and Advisor Dependency

The wider journey still depended heavily on manual advisor communication because the website did not provide the local price and availability information I needed. That dependency could have created substantial friction. In this case, however, the sales associate partly compensated for the digital limitation by sharing prices directly and making selected information accessible through the WhatsApp Business

catalog. The distinction is important. The digital gap remained, but the human touchpoint reduced some of the resulting customer effort rather than adding to it.

Hospitality

Across my documented Bottega Veneta interactions, I was not offered a beverage.

Executive Observation

The Bottega Veneta journey provides one of the clearer examples in this study of an individual advisor partially compensating for limitations in the local digital journey.

The website did not provide the pricing and availability visibility I needed, but the sales associate reduced customer effort by sharing information directly and using a WhatsApp Business catalog to make selected products and prices easier to access. She also later followed up on my handbag interest rather than leaving the entire burden of re-engagement with me.

The journey did not convert during the documented period, but that outcome should not be read as absence of demand. I remain interested in purchasing a Bottega Veneta bag and am waiting for a suitable color.

The central distinction in this journey is that product availability, rather than accumulated relationship failure, remains the primary constraint. The advisor's practical use of communication tools and later follow-up helped preserve future purchase potential even where the official digital journey did not independently provide the information I needed.

Richemont

Maison Included : Cartier

Cartier

Customer Journey

Initial Bracelet Exploration

My Cartier journey began with a boutique visit to see a bracelet I had identified online. In person, the piece looked materially different from how I had understood it through the website, and I did not proceed with the purchase.

The interaction nevertheless reflected genuine product interest and introduced me to the boutique journey. My later engagement expanded into eyewear, additional bracelets, and handbags.

Eyewear Interest and Incorrect Availability Guidance

I later noticed sunglasses on the Cartier website and returned to explore specific options. The sales associate I encountered told me that the styles I wanted were not available through the boutique and suggested that I visit another non-Cartier retailer that carried Cartier eyewear.

I followed that guidance, but the recommended store did not carry Cartier eyewear. On the same day, Cartier Customer Care confirmed that the pieces I had asked about were already available in the same Cartier boutique I had visited.

The issue was therefore not simply a stock gap. I had been redirected away from the boutique despite the relevant products already being available there.

Following the escalation, I was assigned another sales associate to assist me.

Sunglasses Evaluation and Fit

I subsequently viewed the sunglasses I had originally wanted to explore. The products did not suit my face shape, so I did not purchase them. This non-purchase reflected product fit rather than a failure of demand or unwillingness to engage. Once the correct availability information was established, I evaluated the products and made a decision based on physical suitability.

Bracelet Consideration and Resizing Uncertainty

My interest later returned to jewelry, once more. I was actively considering two bracelets - one from Bvlgari and one from Cartier. I preferred the Cartier bracelet aesthetically, while the Bvlgari option fit my wrist better. I was therefore genuinely weighing design preference against physical fit.

I had encountered customer-created videos from other markets indicating that the same Cartier piece could be resized. However, when I asked the boutique whether resizing was possible, the team was uncertain and needed to speak with senior executives.

The question remained unresolved for several days and required follow-up from me. I was eventually told that the bracelet could not be resized.

This materially affected the purchase decision. The Cartier piece was the bracelet I preferred aesthetically, but fit was a practical constraint, and the journey did not provide prompt certainty about whether the issue could be resolved. Inability to resize the bracelet in Mumbai - despite information by customers outside of India indicating this is possible - has ended my interest in purchasing from the brand.

Explicit Interest in Heritage

During the bracelet exploration, I explained that part of my interest lay in the heritage and story behind the Cartier design I was considering. This was a clear invitation to discuss the Maison beyond price and product availability. However, the sales interaction did not meaningfully develop that interest through discussion of the bracelet's history, design significance, craftsmanship, or place within Cartier's wider legacy.

This was particularly notable because my affinity for Cartier's heritage was already strong. The boutique did not need to create that interest from nothing; it had an opportunity to deepen an existing connection.

Handbag Exploration and Pricing Discrepancy

During the same broader visit, I also explored handbags and identified one that I liked - I noticed a price tag in the bag, which I made a mental note of. However, when I later reconfirmed the price over Whatsapp before returning to purchase, the amount communicated to me did not match the price tag I had seen inside the bag. The newly communicated price was substantially higher.

I was glad I reconfirmed the amount before traveling to the boutique with the intention of purchasing, because the total difference was significant. Regardless of the reason for the discrepancy, a price tag visible on the product should not create a materially different expectation from the price later communicated to the customer.

Hospitality

During the visit in which I explored bracelets and handbags (my final visit), I was offered a beverage for the first time in my documented Cartier journey. The beverage took long enough to arrive that I had finished viewing not only the bracelets but also the handbags by the time it was served. The offer itself was a positive gesture. The timing, however, limited its practical contribution to the interaction.

Executive Observation

The Cartier journey demonstrates how strong brand affinity can coexist with weakening confidence in the primary retail relationship. Incorrect availability information disrupted the eyewear journey, while prolonged uncertainty around bracelet resizing and limited discussion of the Maison's heritage weakened confidence in a product I preferred aesthetically. A separate handbag opportunity was also affected by a substantial discrepancy between the price displayed on the product and the price later communicated before purchase.

The commercial consequence was not loss of interest in Cartier's products, but a shift in future jewelry consideration toward Bvlgari despite my initial preference for the Cartier bracelet.

Other Global Luxury Houses

**Brands Included: Hermès | Burberry | Chanel | Tod's | Valentino | Tory
Burch | Versace | Ferragamo | Jimmy Choo**

Hermès

Customer Journey

Social Discovery and Initial Product Interest

My Hermès journey began with product interest sparked by social-media content created by people outside the Maison's own channels. I became specifically interested in an Evelyne TPM in Gold with Gold Hardware, alongside interest in a Twilly and a Glenan bracelet.

The brand also held personal resonance for me beyond the immediate products. I had previously enrolled in horseback riding classes, so Hermès' equestrian heritage connected with an area of genuine personal experience and interest.

First Boutique Visit and Relationship-Building Guidance

I visited the boutique in person and initially interacted with SA1. I explained my interest in an Evelyne TPM in Gold with Gold Hardware (a non-quota bag), as well as the Twilly and Glenan bracelet I had come to see.

The specific Glenan bracelet I wanted was not available. Other bracelets I tried were too large for my wrist and bulged outward, so they were not suitable despite genuine interest.

During the conversation, SA1 suggested that it could still be useful to build a relationship with the boutique even for the non-quota Evelyne TPM I wanted. I was also encouraged to consider the Fort boutique in addition to Jio World Plaza because the collection there might be larger and to communicate my broader interest in products such as the Twilly and bracelet.

I subsequently attempted to engage with the Fort boutique, but the store manager did not respond.

Jio World Plaza Contact and Ethical Product Guidance

I then contacted Jio World Plaza and asked for a Hermès contact number. Through that route, I was automatically connected with SA2, who became the principal advisor in the later journey.

SA2 was kind and responsive. She initially explained that the display Evelyne TPM in Gold I had seen was not available for purchase. A day later, she offered me an Evelyne TPM in the same color with palladium hardware.

At that point, I was willing to buy the palladium-hardware version largely because I feared losing access to the bag altogether. SA2 did not exploit that urgency. Instead, she assured me that the Gold-hardware version I genuinely preferred was expected to become available soon and that she would contact me.

I considered this one of the strongest examples of ethical selling in the wider study. An immediate transaction was possible, but the advisor encouraged me to wait for the configuration I actually wanted.

Twilly Purchase and Wider Category Exploration

I later purchased a Twilly with the understanding that it would complement the Evelyne TPM I hoped to acquire.

During the broader journey, I also explored lip oils and lipsticks. The colors I wanted were not available. The Glenan bracelet I wanted remained unavailable, and an additional black Twilly that interested me was also not in stock.

My interest therefore extended across handbags, silk, jewelry, beauty, and later fragrance, but several of those categories encountered local assortment constraints.

Digital Product Information and Advisor Dependency

The India website did not provide the local pricing and boutique availability visibility I needed for the products I was considering, nor did it offer a direct online shopping route for those products. As a result, I depended on the boutique and sales associate to establish basic information about what was available locally and whether a desired product could actually be purchased.

This dependency became particularly relevant because my interest extended across handbags, silk, jewelry, beauty, and fragrance. Where the desired bracelet, beauty shade, Twilly, or other product was unavailable, I could not independently use the official India digital journey to view local stock, compare available options, confirm pricing, or complete the purchase online.

In this case, the strength of the advisor relationship partly compensated for the digital limitation. SA2 remembered specific preferences, followed through when my preferred Evelyne TPM configuration became available, and later recalled my interest in black Twillies. However, the broader structure still made the human relationship unusually important because the official digital journey did not provide an independent route to local price, availability, or online purchase.

Evelyne TPM Purchase and Follow-Through

SA2 later contacted me when the Evelyne TPM in my preferred configuration became available.

She explicitly indicated that she would not gatekeep access to the bag simply because several of the other products I had shown interest in had not been available for me to purchase. She recognized that the boutique had not been able to fulfill my interest in the desired lipstick and lip-oil colors, the Glenan bracelet, or the additional black Twilly.

This was a strong example of follow-through. The advisor had asked me to wait for the configuration I genuinely preferred and then contacted me when it became available.

Fragrance Discovery Through Sampling

Fragrance samples were included with my purchase. Until then, I had not realized that Hermès made fragrances. Sampling created awareness of an entirely new category and generated genuine future interest. I later visited the boutique to explore fragrances more deliberately. I also continued to inquire about the Glenan bracelet, lipstick, and lip oil.

Continuing Availability Gaps and Third-Party Redirection

The products I wanted across these categories repeatedly remained unavailable through the boutique journey.

SA2 remembered my interest in black Twillies and later showed me one when a black option became available. However, I did not prefer the pattern, and by that stage I had already purchased a black-and-white silk scarf from Dior.

For beauty and fragrance exploration, I was encouraged to consider Galeries Lafayette in Fort because the desired options were not available through the Hermès boutique.

I found this commercially unusual. Hermès is a Maison in which purchase history and boutique relationships can carry particular significance, especially if a customer may one day express interest in a quota bag. Redirecting genuine cross-category demand outside the boutique may provide product access, but it does not necessarily preserve that demand within the direct Hermès relationship.

Fragrance Sampling and Travel-Size Interest

I later contacted Customer Care to ask whether fragrance samples could be arranged so I could test options before ordering a travel-size set. Customer Care was unable to facilitate that request - hence the interest remained active without a practical direct-brand route.

Hospitality

Across my documented Hermès interactions, I was not offered a beverage.

Executive Observation

The Hermès journey contained one of the strongest examples of advisor conduct in the study. When I was prepared to accept an Evelyne TPM with palladium hardware out of fear that I might otherwise lose access to the bag, SA2 instead encouraged me to wait for the Gold-hardware configuration I genuinely preferred and later contacted me when it became available.

That approach built trust and converted into a purchase. She also remembered later product preferences, including my interest in black Twillies, and did not treat unavailable beauty, jewelry, or silk products as evidence that my broader demand had ended.

At the same time, local assortment and limited digital visibility constrained the wider relationship. The India website did not provide local pricing, boutique availability, or a direct online shopping route, while several desired products, colours, and testing pathways remained unavailable through the boutique. In some cases, I was redirected to a third-party retailer, while Customer Care could not support fragrance sampling for a potential travel-size purchase.

The central strength of the Hermès journey was the advisor relationship. The principal constraint was local access. My interest expanded across multiple categories, but several opportunities remained unrealized because the products or pathways I needed were unavailable through the direct boutique journey.

Burberry

Customer Journey

Initial Product Interest and Pre-Visit Support

My Burberry journey began with interest in handbags. The sales associate assigned to me was helpful before my visit, confirming availability and keeping relevant products ready for me to see when I arrived. This reduced uncertainty before the boutique visit and supported a more efficient evaluation process. I ultimately purchased a handbag. During this initial visit, I was offered a beverage.

Packaging and Post-Purchase Friction

The experience became more difficult after the transaction. The handbag was not provided with a box, and a security sensor was left inside the dust bag. I followed up regarding the absence of a box, but no practical solution was arranged through the original purchase journey. I ultimately traveled across Mumbai to the Burberry boutique at Phoenix Palladium to obtain a box myself.

The issue was not the box in isolation. A completed luxury purchase was followed by a packaging omission, a sensor left in the dust bag, and additional customer effort to resolve the presentation issue through another boutique.

Wider Category Interest and Limited Follow-Through

My interest extended beyond the handbag purchase. I expressed interest in passport holders, fragrances, scarves, and other areas of the brand. Obtaining timely information on those categories proved difficult. Despite demonstrated purchase history and broader interest, the inquiries did not develop into sustained recommendations or reliable follow-up. When responsiveness remained limited, I was not proactively reassigned to another sales associate who might have been able to support the wider relationship.

Passport Holder Inquiry and In-Store Discouragement

After a gap, I returned to the boutique to see what was new and again explored passport holders. The sales associate I encountered at that time did not appear interested in progressing the inquiry and told me that the passport holders were part of the men's collection. This was inconsistent with the website, where the products were presented as unisex. The interaction weakened an already fragile relationship because I had entered the boutique with continuing interest, but the product framing discouraged exploration rather than supporting it. At this point, my interest in purchasing further products from Burberry has ended.

Digital Information and Local Availability

The wider journey also raised questions about the role of the India digital experience. Product availability should be easier to establish through a locally relevant official site rather than requiring repeated dependence on individual sales associates for basic information.

My interest in fragrance also extended to travel-size formats. These were not available through the boutique or a direct online route and instead required consideration of third-party channels. For a

customer seeking an official brand relationship, third-party availability is not necessarily equivalent to being able to discover and purchase through Burberry directly.

Executive Observation

The Burberry journey began with effective pre-visit support and converted into a handbag purchase. The assigned sales associate confirmed availability, prepared products in advance, and helped reduce uncertainty before the boutique visit.

The relationship weakened after purchase. A missing box, a security sensor left in the dust bag, and the need to travel across Mumbai to another boutique to obtain packaging created avoidable customer effort. Wider interest across passport holders, fragrances, and scarves did not receive timely or sustained follow-up, and no proactive advisor reassignment occurred when responsiveness remained limited.

The later passport holder interaction further weakened the relationship because a product presented online as unisex was framed in store as part of the men's collection in a way that discouraged exploration. Limited local digital visibility and the absence of direct access to desired fragrance formats added to the wider friction.

Unlike several other journeys in this study, cumulative friction ultimately ended - not merely redirected - my interest in purchasing further products from Burberry.

Chanel

Customer Journey

Initial Eyewear Interest and Local Assortment Gap

My Chanel journey began with specific interest in black cat-eye sunglasses. My wider interest also extended to card holders, wallets, and handbags.

After poor Whatsapp communication with multiple Sales Associates, I personally visited two Chanel Beauty boutiques in Mumbai to explore eyewear. Neither boutique had the black cat-eye sunglasses I was seeking.

I was advised that I could order sunglasses through the website and return them if unsuitable. However, repeated online ordering and returning did not feel like a sustainable substitute for being able to try relevant eyewear locally, particularly given my concern that repeated returns could potentially affect future account access.

Online Orders and Fit Failure

I ultimately ordered two different pairs of sunglasses - one for myself and one for my cousin - so that they could be evaluated in person. Neither pair proved wearable for us. The fit was unsuitable, and one pair left red marks on my nose. I explored whether the fit could be adjusted, but I was unable to resolve the issue through resizing or a suitable nose-bridge adjustment. The products were therefore returned because of physical fit rather than lack of genuine purchase interest.

Return-System Error

During the return process, Customer Care accidentally merged the two separate products into a single item record. I identified and flagged the error. The issue added further customer effort to a journey already shaped by the inability to evaluate suitable eyewear locally before ordering.

Wallet and Card Holder Inquiries

I later pursued my interest in wallets and card holders. Progress required numerous follow-ups. I was eventually connected through WhatsApp with a sales associate from the Delhi boutique. The sales associate did not continue the conversation and stopped responding. The handoff therefore created a point of contact without progressing the purchase journey.

Customer Care Escalation Without Recovery

I subsequently emailed Chanel Customer Care. The message clearly communicated the extent of my dissatisfaction with the experience. I did not receive a response or apology. No effective service-recovery pathway followed.

Handbag Interest and Shift to the Secondary Market

My interest also extended to Chanel handbags. However, the cumulative experience changed how I now view a potential purchase. I no longer wish to pay full retail price for a Chanel handbag, wallet, or card holder through the primary retail relationship. I am more likely to explore the secondary market in Tokyo when traveling. The products themselves remain desirable to me. What has weakened is my willingness to reward the direct retail relationship with full-price spend.

Continuing Eyewear Demand

My interest in black cat-eye Chanel sunglasses remains active, and I would still consider purchasing a suitable pair. The principal constraint is that the Mumbai Chanel Beauty boutiques with limited eyewear have not stocked the style I am seeking.

I have repeatedly been directed to Sunglass Hut as an alternative. However, when I visited Sunglasses Hut, Chanel sunglasses were not available there. The proposed alternative therefore did not resolve the purchase journey. In addition, despite my repeatedly specifying that I am interested specifically in black cat-eye sunglasses, the Mumbai Chanel Beauty boutiques continue to send me information about other sunglasses that do not match that stated preference.

The issue is therefore not only limited local assortment. The continuing communication also does not consistently reflect a clearly expressed product requirement. Information about non-relevant eyewear does not progress my purchase journey when my desired color and silhouette have already been repeatedly specified.

Executive Observation

The Chanel journey demonstrates a clear separation between product demand and willingness to purchase through the primary retail relationship. Demand for black cat-eye sunglasses remained active, but repeated follow-up, a non-responsive advisor handoff, a return-system error, and an unanswered Customer Care escalation weakened confidence in the relationship. The desired eyewear also remained unavailable for meaningful local evaluation despite repeated inquiries.

The commercial consequence differed by category. Eyewear demand remains active but unrealized. For handbags, wallets, and card holders, product desirability remains, but I am now more likely to purchase through the secondary market than the primary retail relationship.

Tod's

Customer Journey

Initial Handbag Exploration

My Tod's journey began with a boutique visit to explore several handbags I had previously seen online. Once I evaluated them in person, I found that the options I had considered were too large for my frame and did not suit me as expected.

I therefore did not proceed with a handbag purchase. The non-purchase reflected physical scale and suitability rather than a lack of genuine initial interest.

Preview Sale and Footwear Exploration

The sales associate was warm and helpful during the visit and informed me that a preview sale was taking place. I also explored footwear and tried an option that interested me.

The shoe did not fit securely and was falling off my foot. I asked whether another hole could be added to tighten it, but the sales associate was transparent that doing so could damage the shoe. I therefore did not purchase it.

This was a positive example of an advisor not forcing conversion where the product was unsuitable. Rather than encouraging an alteration that could compromise the footwear, she gave practical guidance that protected the customer from a poor purchase decision.

Wider Footwear Interest and Local Assortment

My interest in Tod's footwear remained active beyond that visit. However, several styles I had seen through the United States website were not available locally. The one relevant option I was able to evaluate could not be safely adjusted to fit. The issue was therefore not absence of category interest, but a combination of local assortment and physical suitability.

Advisor Follow-Up

The sales associate later followed up with me through WhatsApp. I appreciated this because the interaction did not end simply because the initial handbag and footwear exploration had not converted. The follow-up preserved the possibility of future engagement if a more suitable product became available.

Hospitality

Across my documented Tod's interaction, I was not offered a beverage.

Executive Observation

The Tod's journey demonstrates that non-conversion does not necessarily indicate weak demand. I entered with genuine interest in both handbags and footwear, but physical suitability prevented purchase.

The sales associate handled that constraint well. She did not encourage an alteration that might damage the shoe and later followed up through WhatsApp, preserving the relationship despite no immediate transaction.

At the same time, local assortment limited the wider opportunity because several footwear styles I had seen through the United States website were not available for local evaluation.

The central constraint in the Tod's journey was product suitability and local assortment rather than relationship failure. The advisor's transparent guidance and later follow-up preserved future interest even though the documented journey did not convert into a purchase.

Valentino

Customer Journey

Initial Product Curiosity

My Valentino journey began with curiosity about several products I had seen online. I did not enter the journey with particularly strong pre-existing affinity for the brand, but I was open to exploring whether the products might become more compelling in person.

Not everything I wanted to evaluate was available through the boutique. Because my initial brand interest was moderate rather than strong, the absence of the relevant products reduced the likelihood of conversion.

WhatsApp Advisor Support

The sales associate I was connected with through WhatsApp was proactive and responsive in providing information. This was a positive part of the journey. My questions did not require repeated chasing, and the advisor supported product exploration even though my interest had not yet developed into a purchase. For a customer who begins with curiosity rather than established loyalty, prompt communication can be particularly important because the brand is still competing for attention against alternatives with stronger existing relevance.

In-Store Experience

I later visited the boutique as a walk-in while I was at the mall and interacted with a different sales associate. She was polite and willing to engage.

However, the interaction remained primarily product-focused. There was no meaningful discussion of Valentino's heritage, design identity, craftsmanship, or other aspects of the Maison that might have increased my connection to the brand.

This mattered because I was not already highly committed to Valentino. The boutique therefore had an opportunity not only to show products, but to give me a stronger reason to care about the brand.

Hospitality

Across my documented Valentino interaction, I was not offered a beverage.

Executive Observation

The Valentino journey provides a useful comparison with brands where I entered with stronger pre-existing affinity. In this case, I was curious about specific products but was not already highly invested in the Maison.

The WhatsApp sales associate handled that early-stage interest well through proactive and responsive communication. However, limited availability reduced the opportunity to evaluate the products that had prompted my curiosity, while the in-store interaction remained largely transactional and did not develop a stronger connection through heritage, craftsmanship, or design storytelling.

The central issue was not a major service failure. It was that a customer with moderate initial curiosity was given little reason to become more invested in the brand. Prompt WhatsApp communication was a clear positive, but the wider journey did not materially increase Valentino's relevance to me or convert curiosity into stronger purchase intent.

Tory Burch

Customer Journey

Initial Handbag Exploration

My Tory Burch journey began with interest in several handbags. I was connected with a sales associate through WhatsApp, who provided information about which options were available locally and which were not.

I visited the boutique to evaluate the available products but did not like the handbags I saw enough to purchase them. One option I had been interested in was not available in India in the size I wanted. The non-purchase therefore reflected a combination of product preference and local assortment rather than absence of genuine initial interest.

Jewelry Discovery and Purchase

During the wider journey, I explored Tory Burch jewelry and found pieces I liked. This interest converted into a purchase.

I later ordered additional jewelry through my sales associate, and the products were delivered to my home. The convenience of completing the purchase through the existing advisor relationship was a positive part of the journey and demonstrated effective continuity beyond the initial boutique visit.

Fragrance Interest and Travel-Size Availability

My interest also extended to fragrance. I identified a fragrance I liked but was particularly interested in the travel-size format listed on the United States website. That format was not available to me through the India journey. I expressed interest in sourcing the travel size, but a route to obtain it could not be provided. The demand therefore remained active without converting. The issue was not lack of interest in the fragrance itself, but the absence of the specific format I wanted.

Cross-Market Promotional Difference

I also asked about a first-purchase discount promoted through the United States website and learned that the offer was not available in India. I recognize that promotions can differ by market. However, the inquiry illustrates how global digital discovery shapes expectations before a local purchase journey begins, particularly when customers move across international brand websites and encounter different commercial propositions.

Continuing Handbag Exploration

The sales associate later shared another color in a handbag style I had previously liked. I appreciated that the earlier product preference had been remembered. However, the available color was not the one I wanted, so the interest did not convert. This was nevertheless a positive example of the advisor attempting to reconnect a customer with a previously expressed product preference.

Additional Jewelry Interest and Missed Follow-Through

I later expressed interest in another jewelry piece I saw at the boutique a few months later that coordinated with items I had previously purchased. Given my existing jewelry purchase history, this represented a relatively clear opportunity to extend an established category relationship. However, the interest was not meaningfully followed up or developed into a later purchase conversation.

Hospitality

Across my documented Tory Burch interactions, I was not offered a beverage.

Executive Observation

The Tory Burch journey demonstrates how customer demand can move across categories when the product that initially prompts interest does not convert. I began with handbag exploration but ultimately purchased jewelry, later ordering additional pieces through the same sales associate for home delivery.

The advisor relationship created several positive moments through responsive communication, convenient home delivery, and remembering an earlier handbag preference when another color became available.

At the same time, local assortment constrained opportunities across handbags and fragrance, while a later jewelry inquiry did not receive meaningful follow-up despite demonstrated purchase history in that category.

The central opportunity lies in developing known category behaviour more consistently. Jewelry demand converted successfully more than once, but later opportunities across jewelry, handbags, and fragrance were not fully developed.

Versace

Customer Journey

Initial Handbag Interest

My Versace journey began with interest in several handbags. I did not enter the journey with particularly strong pre-existing affinity for the brand, but I had identified specific products and colors that I wanted to explore.

I connected with a sales associate who was prompt in answering my inquiries and later followed up. This was a positive part of the journey because obtaining information did not require repeated chasing.

Local Color Availability

The principal constraint was local assortment. The handbag colors I wanted were not available through the boutique.

This mattered because the colors themselves were a significant part of my interest. Some of the shades I was considering were not commonly available in comparable products from other brands, creating a potential point of differentiation for Versace.

Had I been able to evaluate the desired bags in those colors, the journey might have developed into a purchase. The absence of the relevant configurations meant that the products that had generated my interest could not be meaningfully assessed in person.

Boutique Experience

I later visited the boutique as a walk-in. The space felt relatively small to me, which affected the experience of browsing and product exploration. This did not amount to a specific service failure. However, because my initial affinity for Versace was moderate rather than strong, the physical environment and available assortment had a greater role to play in increasing my interest.

Advisor Responsiveness

The sales associate remained a positive part of the journey. She was prompt in responding to inquiries and followed up regarding my interest. This distinguished the Versace experience from journeys in which limited product availability was compounded by weak communication. Here, the desired products were unavailable in the colors I wanted, but the advisor did not create additional friction around obtaining information.

Hospitality

Across my documented Versace interaction, I was not offered a beverage.

Executive Observation

The Versace journey demonstrates the importance of local assortment when customer interest is driven by a specific product configuration rather than strong pre-existing brand affinity.

I was interested in several handbags, particularly in colors that were not widely available across competing brands. Those colors represented a potential point of differentiation and could have created a meaningful reason to purchase from Versace.

The desired configurations were not available locally, so that opportunity could not be fully tested. The boutique also felt relatively small, which limited the experience of browsing and discovery.

At the same time, the sales associate was prompt, responsive, and willing to follow up. The central constraint was therefore local product availability rather than communication or advisor performance.

Ferragamo

Customer Journey

Initial Handbag Exploration

My Ferragamo journey began with a boutique visit to explore several handbags I had previously seen online. Some of the colors I was interested in were available locally, while others were not.

The principal sales associate was helpful throughout the exploration. A second sales associate also offered practical and transparent guidance when discussing whether one of the bags would work for my needs, pointing out that my laptop might protrude from the sides rather than encouraging a purchase without acknowledging the fit issue.

This was a positive example of commercially useful transparency. I was able to evaluate the product against how I would actually use it rather than only how it looked in isolation.

Craftsmanship and Category Storytelling

The principal sales associate also discussed Ferragamo's craftsmanship, with particular emphasis on the footwear category. This stood out because discussion of craftsmanship and brand strengths was relatively limited across many of the other journeys in the study. The interaction gave me a clearer reason to consider Ferragamo beyond the immediate products I had initially identified.

The conversation also aligned with independent information I had encountered through social media and other customer commentary regarding Ferragamo's quality. The advisor did not create that perception alone, but the boutique interaction reinforced an existing reason for me to consider the brand.

Wider Product Interest and Advisor Responsiveness

My interest expanded beyond the initial handbag exploration into additional product categories. The sales associate remained responsive when I made further inquiries. This helped preserve the relationship even though the initial handbag visit did not convert into a purchase. I did not need to repeatedly re-establish my interest or chase basic responses in order to continue exploring the brand.

Local Assortment and Continuing Footwear Interest

My interest in Ferragamo footwear remains active. Based on independent customer commentary and wider information I have encountered about the brand's quality, I would like to add Ferragamo footwear to my collection when I find a style suited to my needs.

The boutique conversation around craftsmanship reinforced that interest. However, the local assortment available to me was narrower than the range I had encountered through the United States website, limiting the number of relevant styles I could evaluate in person.

My future purchase interest therefore remains active but dependent on finding a suitable product within the available local assortment.

Hospitality

Across my documented Ferragamo interactions, I was not offered a beverage.

Executive Observation

The Ferragamo journey was comparatively positive despite not converting into a purchase. The sales associates supported product evaluation with practical transparency, including acknowledging when a bag might not accommodate my laptop rather than encouraging a poorly suited purchase.

The principal sales associate also discussed craftsmanship and highlighted the Maison's strength in footwear, reinforcing quality perceptions I had already developed through independent research.

Local assortment remained the principal constraint, particularly because fewer footwear styles were available than I had seen through the United States website.

The central outcome is preserved future demand rather than immediate conversion. Responsive communication, transparent advice, and meaningful product discussion strengthened my interest even without a completed purchase.

Jimmy Choo

Customer Journey

Initial Handbag Interest

My Jimmy Choo journey began with interest in handbags. I connected with a sales associate through WhatsApp before visiting the boutique and later evaluated products in person.

The bags I saw were not available in the size I wanted, so the initial interest did not convert into a purchase. The sales associate nevertheless remained engaged and attempted to progress the opportunity by recommending alternatives.

This was a positive part of the journey. Rather than ending the interaction when the original products were unsuitable, she tried to identify other options that might work for me.

Wider Category Interest

During the broader exploration, I made a mental note of Jimmy Choo sunglasses and footwear as categories I might consider in the future.

My interest in footwear remains active, but I have not yet identified a style that suits my needs. I would consider purchasing from the brand when I find an appropriate option.

Preview Sale and Eyewear Interest

During the preview sale period, I asked whether black cat-eye sunglasses would be included.

The relevant options were not part of the sale. At that stage, my affinity for Jimmy Choo eyewear was not strong enough for me to pursue the category more aggressively, particularly because I remained more inclined toward purchasing black cat-eye sunglasses from Chanel.

The non-conversion therefore reflected both product availability and competitive preference. I was open to considering Jimmy Choo eyewear, but the category had not yet developed enough relevance to displace my stronger interest in eyewear from Chanel.

Advisor Responsiveness

The sales associate remained prompt in responding to my inquiries. This was a positive aspect of the journey and distinguished it from several other brand experiences in which obtaining information required repeated follow-up. Even where the desired product or configuration was unavailable, communication itself did not create additional friction.

Brand Storytelling

Despite the helpful recommendations and prompt communication, I did not encounter meaningful discussion of Jimmy Choo's heritage, craftsmanship, design identity, or category expertise. This

represented a missed opportunity because my initial interest was product-led rather than based on strong loyalty to the brand. Relevant storytelling could potentially have increased my understanding of why I should choose Jimmy Choo over competing options in handbags, footwear, or eyewear.

Hospitality

Across my documented Jimmy Choo interaction, I was not offered a beverage.

Executive Observation

The Jimmy Choo journey was comparatively positive in terms of advisor responsiveness. The sales associate answered inquiries promptly and attempted to preserve the initial handbag opportunity by recommending alternatives when my preferred size was unavailable.

The journey also expanded my awareness of sunglasses and footwear, although neither category ultimately converted into a purchase.

For a customer without strong pre-existing loyalty, the boutique had an opportunity to build greater relevance through discussion of heritage, craftsmanship, or design identity. That dimension did not meaningfully emerge.

The central outcome is preserved future interest. Good communication prevented the relationship from becoming negative, but limited product availability and minimal storytelling meant curiosity never developed into deeper affinity or a purchase.

Key Findings Across 17 Brand Journeys

Taken together, the completed journeys revealed nine recurring patterns.

1. Demand Moved Rather Than Disappeared

Demand did not necessarily disappear when a purchase failed. Instead, it often moved - to another category, another Maison, another channel, another market, the secondary market, or a later point in time. These outcomes are commercially different, yet may initially appear identical within conventional reporting - no transaction.

2. Demand Could Survive a Failed Transaction - but Not Repeated Friction

A failed transaction did not necessarily end my interest in a product. More often, cumulative friction changed where, how, or whether I was willing to spend. Product desire frequently survived even as confidence in the primary retail relationship weakened.

3. Individual Advisors Could Materially Change the Outcome

Knowledgeable, transparent, and commercially engaged advisors often preserved trust, reduced uncertainty, and maintained future demand despite wider operational constraints. However, the quality of the journey frequently changed when another advisor, boutique, Customer Care representative, or organizational handoff became involved. The recurring issue was not individual capability but organizational consistency.

4. Unavailable Products Often Represented Active Demand

Across several journeys, the issue was not simply that products were unavailable, but that established demand had no reliable route to evaluation, sourcing, or follow-up. Stronger journeys preserved known demand until suitable products became available. Weaker journeys allowed that demand to stall or disappear from view.

5. Digital Limitations Increased Dependence on Human Relationships

Where official digital channels did not provide sufficient pricing, availability, assortment visibility, or online purchasing functionality, customers depended heavily on individual advisors to progress the journey. When those relationships weakened, genuine demand often had no reliable alternative route forward.

6. Relationship Continuity Was Not Reliably Preserved

Completed purchases did not consistently strengthen the wider customer relationship. Purchase history, stated preferences, unresolved inquiries, and future category interest did not always survive advisor changes, handoffs, or time. A transaction established that a customer had bought once; it did not necessarily make the next purchase easier.

7. The Customer Benchmark Was Global Even When the Journey Was Local

My benchmark was not other Indian retailers - it was the same luxury brands operating in other markets. International websites, travel, customer-created content, and globally visible customer experiences shaped my expectations before I entered a boutique.

The differences I encountered extended beyond product availability to hospitality, after-sales support, policy interpretation, digital functionality, and sourcing. Experiences such as being offered champagne or chocolates in boutiques abroad, differences in repair and resizing options, or refunds being returned to the original payment method in other markets became part of how I interpreted the local journey.

The issue was not that every market should operate identically, but that where visible differences were unexplained or inconsistent, they could create the impression that the India customer experience was being held to a different standard.

8. Customer Care Did Not Consistently Restore the Commercial Relationship

Customer Care became involved only after the original relationship had already weakened. The relevant question was therefore not whether a case was opened, answered, or closed, but whether ownership, continuity, and confidence in the relationship were actually restored.

Across several journeys, responses, reassignments, or case closures did not consistently result in meaningful progress. A complaint could be acknowledged without restoring the purchase journey, preserving future demand, or reducing customer effort.

The commercial measure of service recovery is not whether activity occurred, but whether the customer can realistically continue the relationship afterward.

9. Brand Storytelling and Product Discovery Were Not Consistently Developed

Luxury retail extends beyond completing a transaction. Across several journeys, I expressed curiosity about craftsmanship, heritage, design significance, or products beyond my original inquiry. Those opportunities did not consistently develop into richer conversations, meaningful storytelling, or relevant product recommendations beyond the immediate request.

Where advisors spoke confidently about craftsmanship, explained why a product was significant, or recommended pieces that genuinely suited my interests, the interaction strengthened future purchase intent and confidence in the Maison. Those interactions were the exception rather than the norm.

Priorities for Executive Attention

The findings suggest several practical opportunities to strengthen customer journeys, preserve demand, and improve commercial continuity.

1. Measure Movement, Not Only Conversion

A non-purchase is not a single outcome. Demand may convert later, move to another Maison or competitor, shift to third-party retail or the secondary market, remain active while waiting for availability, weaken, or disappear. These outcomes are commercially different and should not be treated as one generic "non-conversion."

2. Treat Unavailable Products as Active Demand Signals

Requests for unavailable colors, sizes, configurations, beauty shades, fragrance formats, jewelry fits, and footwear styles should remain commercially visible even when immediate conversion is impossible. The objective is not to stock every product locally, but to retain and revisit known demand when circumstances change.

3. Build Continuity Beyond the Individual Advisor

Purchase history, stated preferences, unresolved inquiries, fit requirements, and future category interest should remain usable across advisor changes and organizational handoffs. Repeated contact is not the same as preserving a relationship.

4. Make Customer Care Accountable for Commercial Recovery

Customer Care should be evaluated not only on whether a case was logged or answered, but on whether ownership, continuity, and a viable purchase journey were restored.

5. Strengthen Locally Relevant Digital Visibility

Where possible, customers should be able to establish basic local information without depending entirely on an individual advisor. Depending on the Maison, this may include clearer local pricing, assortment visibility, sourcing pathways, policy information, boutique availability, and direct online purchasing where applicable.

6. Develop Brand Meaning Where Customer Interest Invites It

Where a customer expresses curiosity about craftsmanship, heritage, design significance, or related categories, relevant discussion can deepen product meaning, strengthen differentiation, and encourage future consideration.

7. Deliver a More Consistent Luxury Experience Across Touchpoints

Customers should not receive materially different standards of hospitality, policy interpretation, after-sales support, or relationship continuity depending on the advisor, boutique, city, or channel handling the interaction. The objective is not identical execution in every market, but consistent, transparent execution that reflects the Maison's brand promise and reduces unnecessary customer effort.

8. Explain Local Differences Clearly

Where local execution differs from globally visible brand practices - whether in hospitality, product availability, repairs, resizing, return handling, refund processes, sourcing, or digital functionality - the difference itself becomes part of the customer experience. Customers are more likely to accept market-specific differences when they are explained clearly and accompanied by a credible route forward.

Researcher Background

Amanda Sodhi is an Indian-American communications consultant, independent researcher, and the Founder of Pen Paper Dreams.