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WAYS TO COLLABORATE WITH FASHION HOUSES AND DESIGNERS IN INCREASING BRAND AWARENESS OF WEDDING FASHION

***Summary.** The article conducts a comprehensive theoretical and methodological analysis and presents a classification of the most effective forms of collaboration among specialized bridal brands, established fashion houses, and independent designers. Such partnerships are regarded as strategic tools for strengthening the competitive advantages of market participants and expanding their presence within target consumer segments. The relevance of this topic stems from the rapid transformation of tastes and preferences among contemporary clients, the growing influence of digital communication channels, and the urgent need to revise traditional marketing paradigms in favor of adopting innovative practices. The objective of the article is to systematize and critically evaluate various models of collaboration, to identify in detail their synergistic effects, and to analyze the potential threats and limitations associated with each. The results offer practical value to owners and managers of wedding enterprises, marketing and brand management specialists, professional couturiers, and researchers in the fields of strategic marketing, brand communications, and the evolutionary processes of the modern fashion industry. The conclusions indicate that collaboration founded on thoroughly developed strategies, a creative approach to execution, and strict adherence to the principle of congruence between brand values and the expectations of the target audience can not only increase brand recognition but also facilitate entry into new consumer segments and strengthen the loyalty of existing clients.*

Key words: *wedding fashion, brand awareness, collaborations, fashion houses, designers, fashion marketing, branding, influencer marketing, co-branding, digital marketing.*

Introduction. The global bridal fashion industry, as an integral part of the world’s fashion sector, demonstrates robust growth and is characterized by intense competitive pressure coupled with continually shifting consumer preferences [1; 2]. The worldwide wedding apparel market, valued at USD 65.18 billion in 2023, is projected to reach USD 118.03 billion by 2032, expanding at a compound annual growth rate of 6.82 percent over the forecast period from 2024 to 2032. The wedding apparel sector offers a broad range of products that reflect diverse regional, religious, and cultural traditions. Traditional wedding ensembles can vary significantly across countries and cultures, providing purchasers with a wide array of choices. Bridal gowns account for a substantial portion of the wedding apparel market [3]. According to The Knot’s 2023 Real Weddings Study, average expenditure on a wedding in the United States amounts to USD 35 000, with the majority of the allocated budget devoted to the acquisition of the bridal gown and related accessories, underscoring the high importance of these categories for consumers [4]. Attention is increasingly directed toward the intangible asset of brand awareness, as it directly influences consumer preferences and, consequently, a company’s market share [5]. For businesses operating in the bridal segment—whose offerings inherently carry significant symbolic and emotional weight—generating emotional resonance and effectively positioning the uniqueness of their proposition become essential strategic objectives. These tendencies are corroborated by industry reports [1; 2]. Between 2023 and 2024, a marked increase in collaborative strategies was observed across both luxury labels and more accessible lines. In the bridal fashion domain, where each purchase is associated with a high degree of emotional involvement, such partnerships can serve as catalysts for consumer engagement

and strengthening of brand positioning. Experts forecast that, during 2025 and beyond, the trend toward expanding networks of strategic alliances within the broader fashion industry will only accelerate [2].

However, despite the clear practical significance and deep theoretical interest in the subject, the academic community notes a lack of specialized models tailored specifically to the characteristics of the bridal attire and accessories market. Existing publications primarily focus either on general principles of brand building within the fashion industry [5; 9] or on individual aspects of collaborations without detailed consideration of the unique properties of the bridal segment [10].

The aim of the article is to systematize and critically assess various collaboration models, to identify an algorithm detailing their synergistic effects, and to analyze the potential threats and limitations associated with each

The scholarly novelty of the work lies in the creation of a comprehensive methodology for classifying and evaluating multi-tiered collaboration models that takes into account current digital, sociocultural, and consumer trends of the specific bridal fashion market.

The author’s hypothesis posits that carefully planned and executed partnership projects between bridal brands and fashion houses or designers, which effectively leverage the synergy of brand-image assets and the target audience, provide significant and sustainable increases in brand recognition compared to traditional marketing tactics, while achieving comparable or optimized resource expenditures.

Materials and methods. Scientific publications in this field and industry reports were used as methodological foundations for the article, and their analysis enabled a comprehensive methodology and review of existing collaboration methods with fashion houses and designers as a means of enhancing recognition of bridal fashion brands. The existing literature can be conventionally divided into several groups.

The first literature block is dedicated to the analysis of macrotrends and the market context in which the characteristics of collaboration between wedding brands and fashion houses or designers are examined. The McKinsey reports “The State of Fashion 2024: Finding Pockets of Growth as Uncertainty Reigns” and “The State of Fashion 2025: Challenges at Every Turn” emphasize that, under conditions of global economic instability and digital transformation, strategic partnerships enable brands to maintain competitiveness and expand their audience reach by combining resources, technologies, and brand image [1; 2]. Similarly, “Global Wedding Wear Market – Global Size & Upcoming Industry Trends” demonstrates that the premium and luxury segments of wedding attire are growing due to increased demand for exclusivity and unique solutions, thereby creating favorable conditions for cooperation with well-known fashion houses [3]. Additional context is provided by The Knot’s “Wedding Guests Take Center Stage...,” which underlines the heightened role of the guest experience at weddings; as a result, incorporating elements of show formats and guest-oriented approaches into collaborative projects enhances the value of the branded offering [4]. Finally, the “2023 Sprout Social Index” indicates that maximal engagement on social media is achieved through co-created content with renowned designers and fashion houses, thereby increasing brand recognition via live-stream formats and interactive demonstrations [15].

The second thematic unit focuses on the theoretical foundations of brand management and the concept of the experience economy. De Silva V. W. and Hettiarachchi W. N. [5] emphasize that co-branding with well-known names in the industry enables the accumulation of brand equity through the partner’s associative strength and quality attributes that consumers transfer to the emerging wedding brand. Pine B. J. and Gilmore J. H. [6] introduce the idea that successful brands sell not a product but an emotion and an experience; consequently, joint events and showcases become tools for creating a unique user experience. Sepulcri L. M. C. B., Mainardes E. W., and Marchiori D. M. [9], in their

systematic review “Brand Orientation,” argue that collaborations should be regarded as part of an integrated, brand-oriented strategy, wherein the values, visual style, and cultural context of partners enhance the positioning of the wedding brand. Gupta V., Hushain J., and Mathur A. [10] highlight the importance of new technologies (CRM systems, virtual fitting rooms) and relationship marketing when establishing collaborations that precisely meet the target audience’s expectations. Diwanji V. S. and Cortese J. [12] assert that successful joint projects require co-creation of value simultaneously with internal stakeholders (designers, marketers) and external stakeholders (influencer agencies, end consumers), thereby enabling the establishment of strong emotional connections and the generation of user-generated content.

The third section is devoted to the role of digital tools and social media as ways for promoting the outcomes of collaborations. The study by Tajvidi R. and Karami A. [7] demonstrates that social media presence directly influences financial performance, and collaborations with fashion houses amplify the word-of-mouth effect, increasing organic reach and audience trust. Appel G. et al. [8] develop platforms for presenting joint capsule collections and virtual shows, where the brand and designer interact with the audience in real time. Influencer Marketing Hub [13], in the Influencer Marketing Benchmark Report 2025, provides data on influencer effectiveness in the fashion industry and emphasizes that content created in partnership with renowned designers enhances brand credibility and drives conversions. Singh S. and Pandoi D. [14] indicate that trust in branded content is largely determined by perceived value and message authenticity; therefore, in collaborations, it is essential that the message is relevant to local cultural contexts and representatives of the target audience. Sprout Social [15] also notes that campaign effectiveness depends on frequency and engagement level with followers, not solely on one or two high-profile announcements.

The fourth aspect of the literature pertains to empirical studies of consumer perception and engagement. Singh P. et al. [11] demonstrate that brand awareness and customer engagement directly influence the success of an alliance between two brands: the higher the brand equity of both parties, the greater the loyalty and purchase intention resulting from the collaboration. Meanwhile, Introspective Market Research [3] indicates growing segmentation of the wedding attire market by geography, demographics, and consumer behavior, necessitating careful selection of a collaboration partner based on the specific characteristics of the target audience. The Knot [4] report contains data showing that many couples, when planning weddings, pay attention to the guest experience, confirming the need for collaborations capable of offering new solutions for decoration and fashion, thereby increasing engagement among brides, grooms, and guests.

Thus, empirical research emphasizes that the success of collaborations is determined not only by the partner’s prominent name but also by a deep understanding of consumer characteristics and their engagement in the process. However, contradictions exist among researchers’ opinions. On one hand, reports by McKinsey and Introspective Market Research [1; 2; 3] assert that collaborations with major fashion houses almost guarantee increased brand awareness and a strengthened image. On the other hand, Singh P. et al. [11] and Singh S., Pandoi D. [14] indicate that, without synergy between the level of consumer engagement and the partners’ brand equity, such collaborations may fail to meet expectations. Furthermore, Diwanji V. S., Cortese J. [12] emphasize value co-creation, whereas Gupta V. et al. [10] focus primarily on technological and CRM solutions, creating a gap between the “human factor” and “digital tools.” The literature also pays insufficient attention to the legal aspects of collaborations, empirical assessments of ROI and long-term effects, the impact of cultural differences, and sustainable practices (environmental and social consequences of joint projects). These gaps indicate the need for further research

to develop comprehensive methodologies for evaluating effectiveness and implementing collaboration strategies in the bridal fashion sector.

Results and discussions. The analysis of contemporary mechanisms of interaction within the international fashion industry allows for the identification of several strategic vectors which, when adapted and implemented, can significantly increase the visibility of brands specializing in bridal fashion. The first such vector is the creation of exclusive capsule collections in collaboration with renowned trendsetters. In this context, the concept of producing limited-edition capsule lines in partnership with established fashion houses, leading designers, or media figures whose values and stylistic approaches harmonize with the positioning of a bridal brand [10] demonstrates considerable potential to capture the attention of the target audience and reinforce brand image. Firstly, such a collaboration generates a “buzz effect”: the announcement of a limited-edition line inevitably arouses heightened interest from fashion publications, bloggers, and end consumers, resulting in amplified external media activity. Secondly, joint efforts enable the testing of new price segments and stylistic concepts without posing a risk to the core product portfolio.

A critical condition for the success of these collaborations is the careful selection of a partner based on the compatibility of aesthetic codes, value systems, and the emotional tone they convey. Mutual “on-wave” understanding prevents cognitive dissonance among consumers [11]: when the identity of the initiating brand and that of the engaged partner meld seamlessly, it fosters a sense of product coherence and authenticity. Conversely, even if the design is attractive, a collaboration perceived as “inauthentic” or merely hype-driven will undermine its effectiveness and dilute both brands. Research within the luxury segment indicates that the quantity and quality of touchpoints between value platforms constitute a determining factor in the commercial success of such projects [12]. With strategically precise positioning and strict adherence to the principle of limited production, a capsule line not only strengthens the flagship brand but also

broadens the perception among potential clients, thereby enabling outreach to new audience strata.

The next strategic vector involves integration with opinion leaders and the establishment of long-term ambassador programs. This direction has emerged because, in a rapidly evolving media environment and amid increasingly differentiated user behavior, influencer marketing remains one of the most effective tools for enhancing brand recognition. According to the 2025 report from Influencer Marketing Hub, the global influencer marketing market was valued at USD 24 billion in 2024 and is projected to continue growing (see Fig. 1) [13]. Moreover, effectiveness depends less on reach metrics and more on the depth of audience engagement and the influencer’s ability to convey the brand’s value proposition. For bridal labels, it is essential to foster not merely single promotional posts but to cultivate enduring partnership relationships.

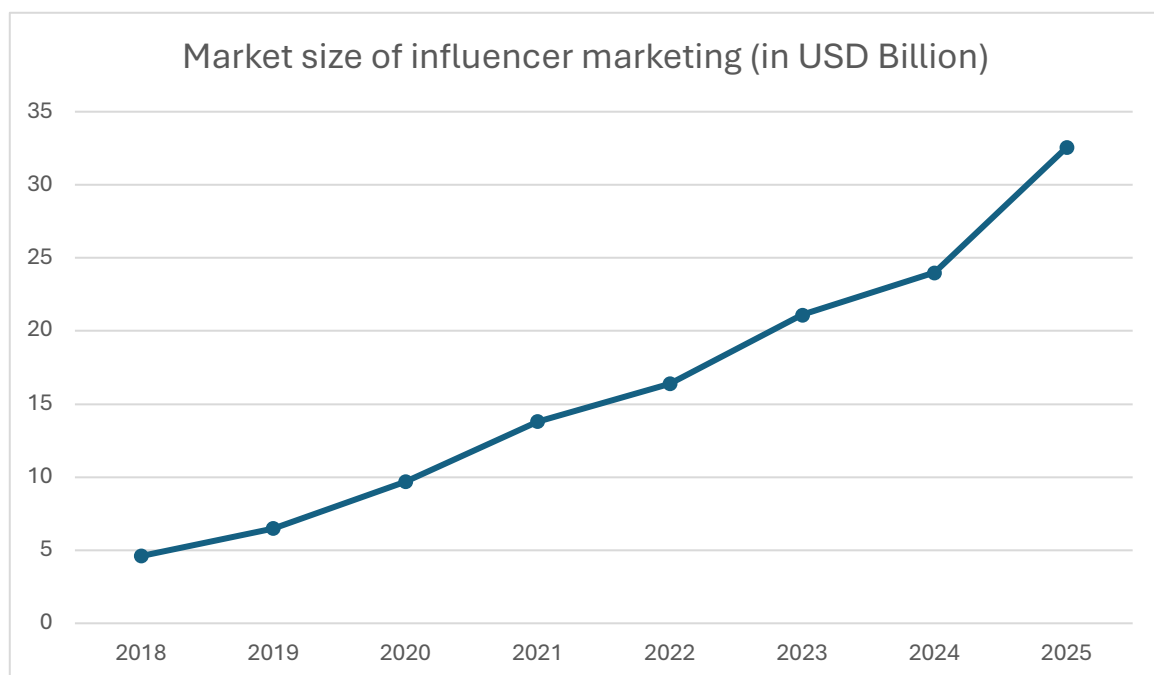


Fig. 1. The growth dynamics of the global influencer marketing market

Source: compiled by the author based on the analysis [13]

It is critical to conduct a meticulous selection of an influencer based on the audience’s qualitative characteristics: a high engagement rate and alignment of the influencer’s image with the brand’s values [14], as well as the ability to inspire trust among followers. Only under these conditions will potential clients perceive recommendations not as intrusive advertising but as genuine advice from an individual whose opinion they consider significant.

Furthermore, an analysis of recent trends demonstrates that content native to the platform is especially important: posts in which the influencer integrates product elements (for example, showcasing a wedding gown or sharing personal anecdotes related to wedding preparations) prove to be far more effective than overtly promotional posts [15].

Table 1 presents a comparative characterization of the existing types of influencers.

Table 1

Comparative characteristics of the types of influencers

Influencer Type	Follower Count	Collaboration Cost	Benefits for the Wedding Brand	Drawbacks
Mega	Over 1 million	Very high	Maximum reach, enhancement of brand prestige, broad PR effect	Low engagement rate, weak personalization, high cost
Macro	100 thousand – 1 million	High	Significant reach, high-quality content, professional approach	Reduced perception of authenticity, possible “ad blindness”
Micro	10 thousand – 100 thousand	Medium	High engagement, niche/targeted audience, strong trust, flexibility	Limited reach per influencer, requires managing a pool
Nano	1 thousand – 10 thousand	Low / barter	Maximum trust, hyperlocal focus, high authenticity, cost-effectiveness	Very small individual reach, labor-intensive to scale

Source: compiled by the author based on the analysis [13-15]

Virtual platforms are becoming a key space and ways for forming innovative alliances aimed at strengthening market participants’ positions through mutually beneficial exchanges of resources and competencies [7]. One

promising direction of development is the organization of joint interactive online contests with integrated incentive systems, which contributes not only to increased engagement of the target audience but also to expanded reach through cross-promotion, whereby brands exchange affiliated audiences and jointly reinforce brand recognition; at the same time, cooperative content placement on corporate channels and the integration of unified storytelling principles create a synergistic effect, bolstering each participant’s image and facilitating exponential growth of organic traffic [4; 7]. In addition, the development of joint digital products—such as virtual fitting rooms using augmented reality technologies—allows for the standardization of the online customer experience and the organization of an interactive “try-on” process without physical contact, which “State of Fashion” reports confirm as an effective tool for increasing conversion [1, 2]. Strategic partnerships with online platforms specializing in wedding goods and services open an additional channel for comprehensive integration of offerings into a single digital ecosystem and provide access to expanded segments of potential customers [4]. In this context, the growing share of online sales in the luxury fashion segment underscores the urgent need for active digitalization of presence and innovative adoption of online channels in order to maintain and strengthen positions amid rapidly changing demand [2].

Below, Table 2 presents the performance indicators used to evaluate the impact on wedding brand awareness.

Table 2

Key performance indicators (KPIs) for assessing the impact of collaborations on wedding brand recognition

KPI Category	KPI Examples	Measurement Tools / Data Sources (Examples)
Media Reach and PR Value	Number and quality of media mentions, total media reach (impressions), Advertising Value Equivalent (AVE), Share of Voice (SOV)	Media monitoring services (Brandwatch, Meltwater, Talkwalker), Google News
Social Media Engagement	Growth in follower count, engagement rate (ER) of posts, reach and impressions, number of brand/campaign/hashtag	Built-in social media analytics (Meta Business Suite, TikTok Analytics),

	mentions, user-generated content (UGC) volume and sentiment	Sprout Social, Hootsuite, BrandMentions
Website Traffic and SEO Metrics	Increase in total and referral website traffic, improvement in search engine rankings for branded and thematic queries, time on site, bounce rate	Google Analytics 4, Google Search Console, SEMrush, Ahrefs
Direct Engagement and Lead Generation	Number of inquiries or leads mentioning the collaboration, growth in direct branded search queries, lookbook or catalog downloads	CRM systems, call tracking data, website analytics, contact forms, new customer surveys
Brand Perception and Awareness	Level of unaided and aided brand recall/recognition before and after the campaign, change in brand associations, brand sentiment	Online surveys (SurveyMonkey, Qualtrics), brand lift studies (via advertising platforms), social listening (Talkwalker)
Impact on Business Metrics	Increase in sales of associated products or collections, rise in average order value (AOV), increase in conversion rate, customer lifetime value (CLV)	Sales recording systems, CRM, ERP systems, A/B testing of promotional campaigns

Source: compiled by the author based on the analysis of [5; 8; 15]

It should be noted that the effectiveness of any joint initiative is determined by an algorithm encompassing the thorough development of the strategic concept, the clarity of task formulation, and the scrupulous selection of partners [1; 11]. In the context of the wedding industry, where the reputational component is critically important, cooperation with counterparties that could call into question or dilute the brand identity is excluded. Conducting comprehensive due diligence of potential partners is not merely a desirable procedure but a necessary one to minimize risks. Modern consumers, primarily representatives of the millennial and Generation Z cohorts, place increased demands on authenticity, transparency, and corporate social responsibility [2]. Collaborative projects based on a shared set of values—whether environmental sustainability or ethical production standards—not only contribute to expanding brand recognition but also strengthen the emotional attachment of the audience to the offered products and services [6].

However, it is impossible to rely on a single blueprint for success. Each company operating in the wedding goods and services market must develop its

own partner collaboration model, tailored to its unique characteristics. The most critical components of such a model are strategic flexibility, creativity in implementing initiatives, and openness to experimentation. All innovative actions must be based on a systematic market analysis and continuous monitoring of results, applying appropriate methods and approaches. It is precisely the combination of these factors that enables a synergistic effect, whereby the alliance of two (or more) brands generates qualitatively new competitive advantages that exceed the simple sum of individual efforts.

Conclusion. The analysis of interaction models between wedding brands and leading fashion houses and designers demonstrates the high effectiveness of such partnerships in strengthening a brand’s position in the market. In an environment of intense competitive pressure, collaborations function as a strategic tool capable of expanding the reach of the target audience, generating media coverage opportunities, and refreshing brand perception. At the same time, it is crucial to define strategic objectives clearly and attain a deep understanding of the target audience: the choice of collaboration format (for example, a capsule collection or an alliance with an opinion leader) directly affects the ultimate outcome and must be aligned with the principles, values, and aesthetic codes of all parties involved.

The key determinants of successful collaboration are meticulous partner selection (based on shared values and reputation), proper legal structuring of the project (regulation of intellectual property rights, allocation of responsibilities and profits), a creative approach to the conceptualization of the joint product, and integrated communications that ensure a consistent message across all promotional channels. For contemporary wedding brands, collaborations represent a strategic development direction: they contribute to expanding the customer base, strengthening loyalty, and achieving differentiation relative to competitors. Particular attention should be paid to focusing on shared values, authenticity, and the creation of additional consumer value—whether through

product exclusivity or a unique brand experience—which forms the foundation for long-term success.

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