

Marketing in the Digital Age for Business

Digital Marketing Assignment for Detrash

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Introduction

The UK jewellery and watches market is mature and highly competitive, characterised by a rift between heritage luxury brands and newer value-oriented entrants. Although sustainability is a crowded and debated concept, consumer expectations have expanded beyond design and pricing to material origin, environmental effect, and brand transparency (Mintel [2024a](#); Mintel [2025a](#)). Euromonitor says sustainable product quality and design integrity are increasingly essential for credible differentiation (Euromonitor International [2024](#)). Digital transformation has also boosted direct-to-consumer (DTC) models, allowing marketers more control over pricing, data, and communication. Success increasingly relies on integrated digital interaction rather than retail presence or brand legacy (Mintel [2024b](#); Dwivedi et al. [2021](#); Chaffey [2023](#)).

Detrash is a British, digital-first, DTC watch brand for sustainability-conscious consumers. Their dive watches are created from recycled materials, thus environmental responsibility is built in (Detrash [2024](#)). They use their own digital platforms and performance-driven marketing. This supports the idea that digital connections and data-driven partnerships create value (Chaffey [2023](#); Sundararajan [2019](#)).

Detrash sits in the middle, not targeting the bargain-watch market or luxury brands. Instead of opening stores, it connects with customers online through ethical design and transparency. Media coverage and the founders' words show that they focus on communicating their narrative, using social media, and engaging directly with customers rather than brand-building (Financial Times [2023](#); WatchPro [2025](#)). Thus, this paper examines Detrash's digital marketing methods and how to improve consumer interaction to continue UK watch industry growth.

Opportunities, Threats, and Strategic Fit in the Digital Environment

Detrash's digital operations face political and legal concerns. Today, audiences demand data privacy and pay attention to how companies use social media, wanting not just consent and open communication, but real action. When individuals sense their data is being mishandled, trust declines. Appel et al. (2020) highlighted when trust disappears, audiences simply stop paying attention. Concurrently, UK sustainability regulations outlined in Mintel's Fashion and Sustainability reports (Mintel 2023; Mintel 2024c; Mintel 2025b), make it harder for brands to discuss their environmental efforts. In the digital environment, evidence-based sustainability messaging can strengthen trustworthiness, while poorly substantiated claims risk brand damage.

For sustainable brands like Detrash, economic and environmental factors work together. Mintel's 2025 British Consumer Confidence reports suggest that consumers are hesitant to spend, especially online, and increased prices make them contemplate buying unnecessary items (Mintel 2025c). However, caring about the environment is more of a valuation tool than a motive to buy. For Detrash, digital content must justify premium pricing through durability, lifecycle impact and long-term value rather than ethical positioning alone.

AI and digital platforms link social, cultural, and technological advancements in ways that cannot be ignored. Mintel and GWI data show high sustainability awareness in consumers, yet they do not often trust brands to deliver on their promises (Mintel 2024c; Mintel 2025b; GWI n.d.[a]; GWI n.d.[b]). This skepticism grows stronger with the influence of online reviews and peer feedback. Dwivedi et al. (2021) demonstrate that AI-driven, results-oriented marketing is reshaping what consumers anticipate. Euromonitor International (2024) highlights the ongoing turbulence in retail. All these factors increase the pressure and raise expectations around personalisation, relevance and speed, increasing conversion friction when sustainability claims lack clarity or proof.

Detrash distinguishes itself by aligning strongly with DTC and digital strategies focused on sustainability. Adopting a DTC approach gives the brand genuine control over its narrative, customer data, and the entire customer relationship while enabling it to scale engagement (Mintel 2024b). Social and influencer-driven discovery is another significant opportunity. GWI's reports show that product discovery has increased via social platforms (GWI 2025a; GWI 2025b). When combined with targeted, data-driven performance marketing, Detrash can reach and nurture its audience using both POEM and SOSTAC® frameworks (Chaffey 2023), with interactive formats to maintain customer interest continuously (Tuten 2024).

This positioning exposes several structural risks and weaknesses. Sustainability scepticism divides trust. Sustainability matters, but lack of confidence makes consumers lose interest

before committing. The rise of digital competition empowers platforms, raising Detrash's customer acquisition costs and making algorithms unpredictable (Euromonitor International 2024). Economic instability increases these dangers, therefore shoppers should be careful when spending, especially on high-quality, eco-friendly products. Building trust through transparency is prudent and required for survival in this climate (Appel et al. 2020; Dwivedi et al. 2021).

PESTEL and SWOT reveal structure (Sundararajan 2019). Passport evidence of market volatility shows their limitations in fast-changing digital systems. Detrash values them since they assist develop customer-engagement across all digital touchpoints from macro-pressures (Euromonitor International 2024).

Target Market and Customer Persona Profile

Target Segment Identification and Justification

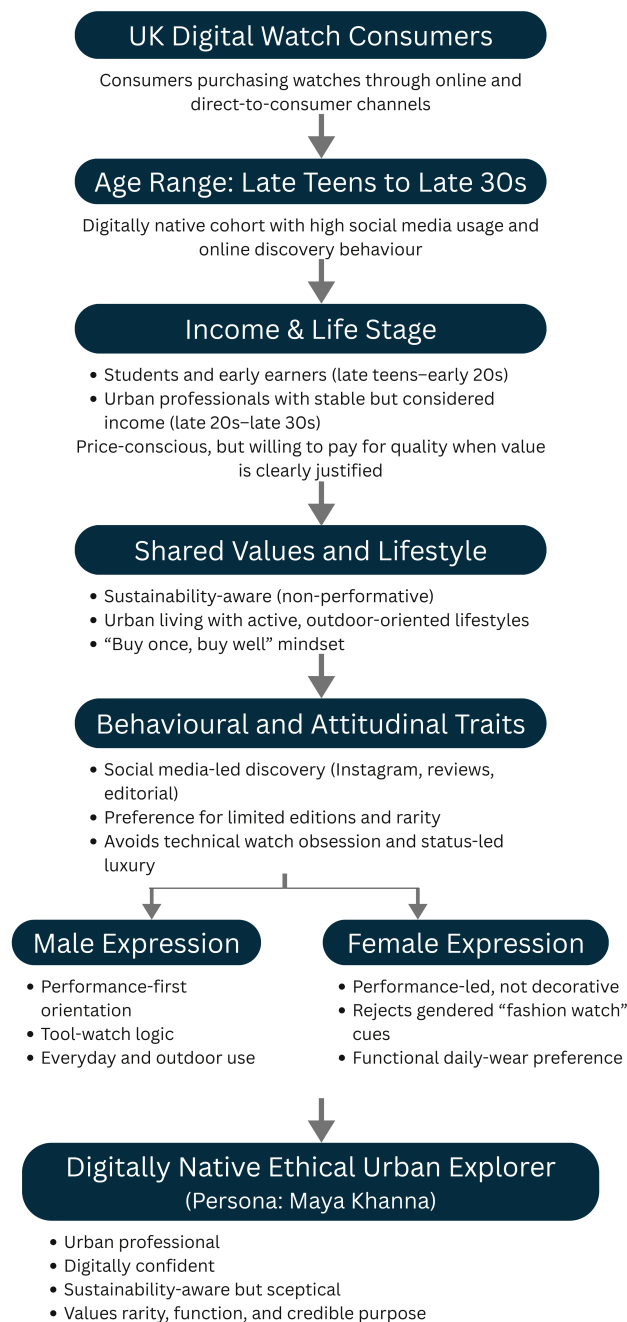


Figure 1: Segment-to-persona bridge showing analytical narrowing from UK digital watch customers to the Digitally Native Ethical Urban Explorer (Author’s own, based on Mintel and GWI data).

In the UK digital market, Detrash targets Digitally Native Ethical Urban Explorers. These consumers value sustainability and want businesses that speak to them. Most are urban professionals in their late 20s and 30s with steady employment and money to spend, but they ponder before they buy.

Mintel reports that younger UK customers are rejecting luxury. They seek durable, practical, and meaningful items, notably watches (Mintel 2025a). This represents value polarisation, where customers choose products that feel worth it.

Values, not prestige, drive the segment psychologically. Sustainability qualifies, not signals. GWI found that Gen Z and younger Millennials care about the environment, but only when ethical statements are authentic, functional, and embedded into everyday use, not as activism (GWI 2024).

Ethical Urban Explorers like limited editions, direct brand partnerships, and Instagram, reviews, and editorial validation for content-led discovery (GWI 2025a; GWI 2025b). This group follows digital STP guidelines (Chaffey 2023) and strategic fit logic (Sundararajan 2019). Detrash's utilitarian and commercially realistic approach doesn't appeal to watch geeks, campaigners, and status-driven luxury customers. As shown in Figure 1, demographic, behavioural, and attitudinal filters were applied sequentially to reduce the UK digital watch market to a defined target segment to minimise assumption-based persona development.

Customer Persona Profile and Engagement Gap Analysis

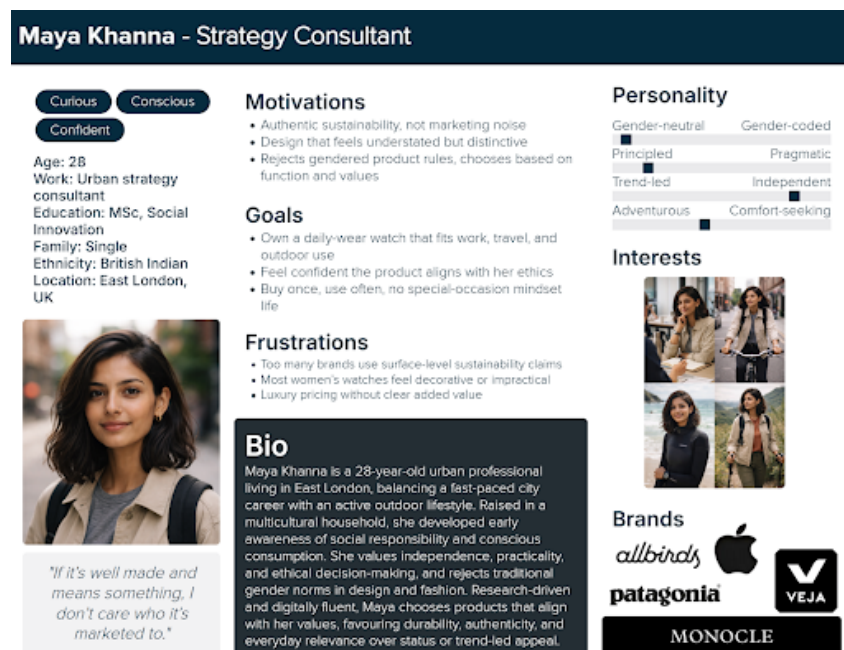


Figure 2: UK Digitally Native Ethical Urban Explorer customer persona profile (Author's own, based on Mintel and GWI data).

Figure 2 shows a synthesised Digitally Native Ethical Urban Explorer customer persona used to evaluate Detrash's engagement techniques across the customer lifecycle. East London's 28-year-old urban strategy specialist Maya Khanna represents this section. Her lifestyle combines a city-based professional role with regular outdoor and travel activity, creating demand for a single daily-wear watch that performs across work, leisure, and active contexts. Her guiding mindset is "buy once, use often", prioritising longevity and ethical reassurance over occasion-led ownership.

Maya's motivations centre on authentic sustainability, understated but distinctive design, and functional credibility. She is sceptical of surface-level ethical messaging and annoyed when women's watches focus more on decoration than actually being useful. This lines up with what Mintel found, young people are questioning old gender design rules (Mintel 2024c). When it comes to shopping online, Maya does her research on Instagram, reviews, and peer discourse to assess trust and real-world performance before she buys anything (GWI 2025a).

Detrash's strong performance stories, credible press, and real stories from the founders align strongly with Maya's cognitive engagement needs at the discovery and consideration stages. But once she buys, the connection fades. Currently, Detrash mainly focuses on getting customers in the door instead of building a lasting relationship. Engagement theory does not call this a simple mismatch instead a bigger problem. Persistent value depends on emotional and behavioural engagement beyond purchase (Lim et al. 2022; Srivastava, Dash, and Mookerjee 2025). Maya therefore represents a strategically ideal but under-served persona, justifying engagement redesign in subsequent sections.

Customer Engagement: Conceptualisation and Evaluation of Strategies

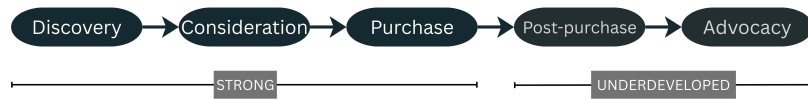


Figure 3: Digital customer journey and engagement intensity for Detrash (Author's own, based on lim2022 and srivastava2025).

Customer engagement is a multidimensional concept that describes how consumers think, feel, and behave about a business across digital touchpoints. Lim et al. (2022) define involvement as three interrelated dimensions. Cognitive engagement measures customer attention, understanding, and meaning of brand messaging. Behavioral engagement includes interaction, advocacy, and repeat activities, while emotional engagement includes trust, identification, and emotional attachment.

Within DTC contexts, engagement is central to marketing effectiveness because value creation increasingly depends on sustained relationships rather than isolated transactions. The literature emphasises that engagement outcomes extend beyond conversion to include loyalty, advocacy, and long-term customer value, particularly where brands rely on owned digital ecosystems to manage ongoing interaction (Srivastava, Dash, and Mookerjee 2025). Engagement therefore unfolds across the customer lifecycle, incorporating post-purchase interaction, relationship continuity, and ongoing meaning construction rather than ending at the point of sale. This lifecycle perspective is used to assess Detrash's engagement intensity across stages of the customer journey, as illustrated in Figure 3.

Within digital environments, engagement is shaped by a set of recurring drivers that determine how consumers interact with brands across platforms. Interactivity and two-way communication enable dialogue rather than passive exposure, while authenticity and trust are critical in contexts characterised by heightened scepticism towards brand claims. Personalisation and relevance reduce cognitive overload by aligning content with individual values, and value co-creation allows consumers to participate in meaning-making rather than merely consume messages. Social media research highlights dialogic and participatory mechanisms as central to engagement development (Tuten 2024), while digital customer experience literature frames engagement as the cumulative outcome of multiple connected touchpoints over time (Chawla 2018). For the Digitally Native Ethical Urban Explorer, these drivers are especially salient due to their research-led behaviour, ethical caution, and preference for functional products that carry credible

meaning rather than overt activism. Within DTC models, owned media environments play a critical role in sustaining these dynamics beyond initial discovery (Chaffey 2023).

Detrash's digital engagement begins with a focus on how content communicates meaning to consumers. The brand places strong emphasis on product-focused storytelling grounded in material innovation, positioning watches made from recycled steel, ocean plastics, and alternative leathers. Instead of treating its watches like luxury showpieces, it shows them as practical, built to last, and functionally oriented. Detrash's limited editions are not about flaunting status rather it's about rarity and collectability, aligning with the persona's preference for uniqueness. The founder's own stories along with third-party coverage from places like the Financial Times, and WatchPro gives the brand some real credibility (Financial Times 2023; WatchPro 2025). Product-in-use content situated in outdoor and adventure contexts helps sell the idea that these watches are not just for looking good, they're meant to be used. This approach clarifies the brand's value proposition and evidences its claims and backs up the brand's claims, supporting understanding and reducing perceived greenwashing risk. Content marketing theory suggests that when you match what your product does with what your customers care about, you create real meaning (Dodson 2016). However, while Detrash nails the facts and logic, they have not quite cracked the code on emotional engagement. There are not many stories to foster ongoing identification beyond the purchase moment.

The distribution and validation of this meaning occur primarily through social media, especially through influencers. Detrash prefers to show up on Instagram and stick to a handful of carefully chosen influencers and some editorial features instead of teaming up with a ton of creators. The posts focus almost entirely on the products showcasing watches, materials, and press coverage, with limited visible prompts for dialogue or participation. Influencers here act more like validators than trendsetters, aligning with the persona's preference for functional validation over selling a lifestyle. Research backs up this credibility-first approach. It helps consumers with discovery and trust-building in high-involvement categories (Pan, Crofts, and Muller 2025). However, behavioural engagement is less developed. Most of Detrash's content feels like a one-way broadcasting. There's barely any user-generated content or community activation. Engagement literature consistently shows that lasting involvement comes from letting customers participate, co-create, and get social feedback (Tuten 2024), which remain underutilised in Detrash's current approach.

Digital customer experience and smart lifecycle design play a big role in shaping engagement. Detrash's website and DTC buying process really focus on making mechanisms clear and efficient, with information-rich product pages, straightforward pricing, and a quick checkout process. This matches the persona's research-oriented decision-making style and the fact that they prefer seamless digital experiences. However, after conversion, there's not much going on to motivate them to come back, or make them feel like they're part of something. Sure, the transaction itself runs smoothly, but there is barely any follow-up. No structured post-purchase

communication or lifecycle content is evident to prolong engagement over time. Digital customer experience research shows that engagement emerges cumulatively across pre-purchase, purchase, and post-purchase stages (Chawla 2018), and that relational value depends on continuity rather than episodic interaction (Srivastava, Dash, and Mookerjee 2025).

As shown in Figure 3, Detrash performs strongly at the acquisition stage, generating high levels of cognitive engagement and trust through credible sustainability narratives, functional clarity, and third-party recognition. However, emotional continuity and behavioural reinforcement weaken significantly after conversion. For the Digitally Native Ethical Urban Explorer, consumers who want more than just efficiency, who want to feel involved and see their values reflected, the current emphasis on efficiency and validation limits longer-term engagement outcomes. Engagement theory suggests that if customers do not feel emotionally connected or cannot take part, they're way less likely to stay loyal or spread the word. These post-conversion engagement gaps, highlighted in Figure 3, provide a clear foundation for the targeted strategic recommendations developed in the next section.

Recommendations

The recommendations proposed respond directly to the post-purchase engagement drop-off identified in Figure 3, where emotional and behavioural engagement decline after conversion.

Redesigning post-purchase engagement and lifecycle continuity

Currently, Detrash sees plenty of customers coming in and strong acquisition-stage trust, but a clear drop-off in engagement after conversion, which limits repeat purchase and retention. Strategically, this gap indicates the need to redesign post-purchase engagement as a lifecycle mechanism that sustains value beyond conversion. A sequenced onboarding journey should begin immediately after purchase, make it personal. Walk customers through what they just bought, how to use it, why it matters, what kind of impact they're actually making. Sharing stories, sending updates about the product's ongoing effects through owned channels such as email, CRM and the website can sustain relevance over time. The whole point is to help Detrash integrate into everyday use patterns, so it's not just a one-off ethical purchase. Engagement literature suggests such continuous conversation is important for long-term value creation, prolonged interaction builds loyalty, advocacy and boosts customer lifetime value (Chawla 2018; Chaffey 2023; Srivastava, Dash, and Mookerjee 2025).

Participation, community and advocacy activation

Detrash's communication remains predominantly broadcast-led rather than dialogic. This broadcast approach constrains behavioural engagement and ties the brand to paid acquisition. User-generated content, celebrating new launches or environmental wins, sharing real owner stories, and encouraging mission-driven referrals allow customers to express identity through affiliation, not promotional influence. For Detrash's core persona, joining in is not about being persuaded, it's about feeling like they belong and their values align. Behavioral engagement theory shows that when customers actively co-create and share, they're more likely to buy again and tell others, while reaching more consumers without extra acquisition cost (Lim et al. 2022; Tuten 2024). The community therefore helps businesses operate better and more effectively.

Expanding the target segment through a women-focused watch line

A further engagement gap lies in the limited relevance of the current range for women who share the same values, lifestyles and functional expectations as Detrash's core segment. Introducing a women-focused line designed around performance, durability and ethical credibility, rather than decorative cues, allows the brand to deepen engagement while expanding its addressable market.

This responds to evidence that many women reject gendered design conventions that prioritise aesthetics over usability. By retaining the same material logic, environmental commitment and functional integrity, the line strengthens identity alignment rather than fragmenting positioning, while encouraging more frequent everyday use. From a segmentation and positioning perspective, this approach extends the existing engagement base, increasing relevance and emotional connection alongside incremental sales growth (Sundararajan 2019; Chaffey 2023).

Umbrella campaign strategy: “Time That Leaves a Mark”

To integrate lifecycle engagement and segment expansion, Detrash should formalise “Time That Leaves a Mark” as a long-term umbrella campaign uniting limited editions, sustainability action and storytelling. The campaign operates as a unified platform, with different environmental causes as its frontlines. Every edition adds a new chapter to the story. The real focus stays on the action, with the watch positioned as a symbol of participation. This setup supports repeat purchase by encouraging customers to return to the brand eager for the next chapter and ready to make an impact again. It does so without relying on transactional incentives. Storytelling research suggests that cumulative narratives deepen emotional attachment and reinforce behavioural commitment over time, strengthening brand equity through repeated, meaningful engagement (Dodson 2016; Lim et al. 2022).

Campaign execution, digital experience and commercial impact

The umbrella campaign should be brought to life digitally by building QR-linked documentary chapters right into the products. Consumers scan, they get the story, and they’re in. Keep them in the loop with ongoing impact updates and mission-led referral framing that rewards advocacy with access and participation, instead of offering discounts. That way, advocacy feels meaningful, not transactional. Third-party amplification via NGOs, aligned institutions and solid media outlets helps to boost its credibility and help cut through doubts about Detrash’s sustainability claims. Executed through a POEM logic, owned channels set the tone and give consumers something real to connect with, earned channels validate credibility and paid media becomes progressively less central. Research links that when consumers advocate for a brand, they stick around longer, increasing repeat purchase and recommendation effects (Srivastava, Dash, and Mookerjee 2025; Tuten 2024; Chaffey 2023). Collectively, this execution model converts engagement into lasting results for the business.

Overall, these recommendations reposition engagement as an ongoing process that keeps creating value rather than a single moment when someone makes a purchase. By strengthening post-purchase continuity, enabling participation, expanding relevance through product design and unifying action-led storytelling, the brand builds real momentum. These mechanisms strengthen retention, stimulate advocacy, and support repeat purchase, while building scalable long-term brand value through digital channels.

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Optional Supporting Materials

<https://ecommercemasterplan.com/detrash-guy-blaskey-podcast/>

<https://www.t3.com/luxury/watches/i-wore-my-detrash-for-an-open-water-swim-it-proved-my-point-about-dive-watches?utm>

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