There are many reasons why ZARA has sustained a competitive advantage over its competitors. Of them are the short lead time, more than half the production completed by ZARA, the speed in which the products are produced and distributed, the popularity of the styles of products they produce, and the little money allocated towards advertising. They are also very successful at utilizing their consumers’ self-concept to their advantage.

**Short Lead Time:** ZARA can have new styles of clothing ‘from design to rack’ in 15 days. This is about 12 times faster than the majority of their competitors, at about 6 months. By continually having new styles, ZARA entices the customers to purchase more merchandise more often. Instead of having new styles of clothing just four times a year, with the different seasons, ZARA has new clothing styles out in their stores about every two weeks.

**Production Completed by ZARA:** Over half of ZARA’s production of their clothing is completed themselves. While most of their competitors outsource their production labor to Asian countries, ZARA likes to keep most of the production duties to themselves, and have had much success in doing so. By doing this ZARA has more control over the quality of the products they are selling. This control is also put over the way their garments are developed and manufactured. This is important because ZARA imitates a lot of the clothing it produces and calls for that imitation to be virtually flawless in the consumers’ eyes. For consumers to continually purchase and think of ZARA has having quality items, ZARA has to put out s consistent quality product on a consistent basis.

**Rapidness of Production:** ZARA’s customers are accustomed to seeing new styles in ZARA stores every 2-3 weeks. ZARA delivers this by the above mentioned production that is completed by them. Without the lag time of getting products that comes with outsourcing, ZARA can consistently put out new products. By having a quick turnover the customers and continually seeking and purchasing new merchandise.
Matthew Gellene  
R108546761

**No Advertising Cost:** ZARA spends little to nothing on advertising. The money saved can be spent on re-investing in the company. These investments can be in the form of technology, new stores, production facilities, or human capital.

**Popularity of Products:** ZARA produces clothes to match those worn by celebrities. People in Europe and the United States idolize celebrities. Knowing this, ZARA puts the clothing they produce and offer into a symbolic interactionism perspective. This makes the clothing part of the customers' self-concept. Utilizing the customers' self-concept is another big factor in why ZARA is so successful.

**Consumers' Self Concept:** One of ZARA’s biggest competitive advantages is taking advantage and playing to their customers' self-concept; more specifically the customers' social self and ideal self. ZARA’s release of celebrity inspired clothing ignites customers' ideal social self.

People usually associate celebrities as someone they aspire to be. This also plays on the extended self. A person owning celebrity inspired attire helps that customer form a better more positive perception of his/her self. This also plays on the customers' self-esteem, more specifically the customers' body esteem. ZARA exploits this concern people have about their self-image by putting out new styles on a consistent basis. This drives the customers need to obtain the new style.

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**Excellent !**