Title: UN-BIASED CURATION SYSTEM FOR LUXURY PRODUCT OR SERVICE CERTIFICATION

Abstract: A process of certification of products and services as having a combination of characteristics identifying those products and services as deserving to be certified as being "beyond luxury" products and services is described. Luxury products and services are proposed by providers for certification. The proposed products and services are then voted upon by qualified consumers who have voting rights. Certification is granted if the voting process results in the proposed product or service receiving a sufficient score, which may be weighted in accordance with various factors related to the product or service and voting consumer.
UN-BIASED CURATION SYSTEM FOR LUXURY PRODUCT OR SERVICE CERTIFICATION

PRIORITY

[0001] This application claims the benefit of and priority to U.S. Provisional Application, entitled "UN-BIASED CURATION SYSTEM FOR LUXURY PRODUCT OR SERVICE CERTIFICATION," filed on October 2, 2014 having application serial number 62/059,018.

FIELD

[0002] This invention relates to a system and method for certification of products as having reached a certain level of quality and status. More particularly, the invention is related to an unbiased self-curating system for certifying that a particular luxury product or service has reached a level of quality and status deserving of carrying a selected luxury certification.

BACKGROUND

[0003] The word "curator" derives from the Latin curare meaning "take care," and is commonly used in the context of cultural institutions; galleries, museums and the like. The term is increasingly used in conjunction with digital marketing, particularly social media-based campaigns. Moreover, the rise of social media and other forms of digital marketing have created an entire industry of bloggers, fashionistas, and other "-istas" that act as curators for certain products and/or services, deciding what content, stories, reactions, conversations and touch points are important, fashionable, or otherwise worth of an approbation of quality or status.

[0004] One problem with the current systems of ascribing approbations of quality or status to products and services is that the approbation is often merely a reflection of the personal tastes of the person or persons granting the approbation. While many of these approbation grantors have achieved a cult-like following, a decision concerning the quality or status of the product or service is often subjective in nature, and there is no certification that the approbation granted is one that is based on objective criteria, or at least, is the result of the subjective opinions of more than one "curator." Additionally, there is always the chance that "curation" has been influenced by some economic interest of the curator. Furthermore, such curation is often short-lived as the person or
persons granting approbation experience a change of taste, or a trend moves on leaving previously curated products and services behind as the curators seek for the "next big thing."

[0005] According to industry experts, luxury and prestige brands such as Harry Winston®, Rolex® and Cartier® represent the highest form of craftsmanship and have power over a consumer's loyalty that is not affected by trends. While global luxury brands exist, however, there is no certitude that all products produced by the purveyors of those luxury brands are actually deserving of being labeled as luxury products of the highest degree.

[0006] As luxury increasingly has become attainable for more and more people, products and services that claim the luxury label have proliferated. For example, the term "boutique hotel" once stood for a small, client driven hotel where visitors to the hotel were afforded the utmost in service and accommodation. Today, however, the approbation "boutique hotel" is virtually worthless, as its use has been expanded and abused by various hoteliers to attract lower levels of customers, simply because there are only so many people in the world that can truly afford the type of accommodation and service that "boutique" once stood for. Because no purveyor wanted to be left out of the super luxury market, the boutique approbation lost value over time.

[0007] Indeed, not all products of luxury brands are of equal level of quality and status, and until now, there has been no un-biased process for differentiating products that truly deserve to be certified as having reached the highest level of quality, status and other components of supreme luxury, from all the rest. The expansion of luxury categories has actually increased consumer confusion about just what constitutes a truly luxury item or service.

[0008] What has been needed, and heretofore unavailable, is an un-biased system for determining what products and/or services are worthy of being certified as having a combination of characteristics that indicate those products and services deserve to be categorized as "beyond luxury," that only the most discerning and financially elite consumer covets. Such a system would provide for such certification by providing candidate products or services to a universe of pre-qualified voting consumers whose vote, in conjunction with the curating process used by the suppliers of the candidate products and service in proposing those products and service for candidacy, would determine the level of quality and/or status to be ascribed to the product or service. The present invention satisfies these, and other needs.
SUMMARY

[0009] In a most general aspect, the invention provides a process for an un-biased curation of products and services to award selected products and services with an approbation indicating that the product or service possesses a bundle of characteristics and components that indicate the product or service has attained a supreme level that is beyond a mere luxury or boutique label.

[0010] In another general aspect, the invention provides a process for certifying luxury products and services by a certification organization in an un-biased manner, comprising: receiving a proposal for certification of a product or service from a luxury brand; associating a scoring weight with the proposed product or service; presenting the proposed product or service to a qualified member of the certification organization; receiving a voting value from the qualified member; associating a scoring weight with the voting value; combining the scoring weight of the proposed product or service with the scoring weight of the voting value; and certifying the proposed product or service if the combined scoring weight exceeds a selected threshold. In one alternative aspect, certifying includes marking the proposed product or service with a LUXUTIQUE® certification mark. In still another alternative aspect, voting values from a selected number of qualified members must be received before the combining and certifying steps are carried out.

[0011] In yet another aspect, the invention includes a system and method wherein certification of a product or service as having characteristics distinguishing the product or service as being beyond luxury includes two steps, each of which is self-curated. In a first step, luxury brands select a limited number of products or services that the luxury brand wishes to be certified. The curation of the first step is thus performed by the luxury brand in that the luxury brand selects a limited number of products from all of its products, thus identifying those products as products the luxury brand believes have the characteristics that it believes characterize the product or service as being "beyond luxury." In the second step, the products or services are presented to consumers who have been designated as qualified to vote on whether a product or service is truly deserving of being certified as "beyond luxury." To be certified, a product or service must exceed two thresholds: 1) it must receive a selected minimum number of votes; and 2) of the votes cast, at least 70% of all of the votes cast for the product or service must be votes indicating that the product or service should receive certification.
[0012] In still another aspect, the invention includes a system and method for qualifying voters as having a bundle of selected characteristics distinguishing those voters from mere consumers of products. In other words, to be qualified, a voter must exhibit, for example, that he or she possess characteristics such as extreme financial wherewithal, a predilection for "the best of the best" and/or other characteristics that indicate that the voter is qualified to assess whether a product is "beyond luxury."

[0013] In yet another aspect, the invention includes a process for certifying luxury products and services in an un-biased manner, comprising: receiving a proposal for certification of a product or service from a luxury brand; presenting the proposed product or service to a qualified member of a certification organization; receiving a voting value from the qualified member; and certifying the proposed product or service an accumulation of received voting values exceeds a selected threshold.

[0014] Other features and advantages of the invention will become apparent from the following detailed description, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, which illustrate, by way of example, the features of the invention.

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

[0015] The drawings refer to embodiments of the present disclosure in which:

[0016] FIG. 1 is a graphical representation illustrating industry categories/platforms that identify proposed products and services for candidacy for certification as having the highest level of luxury;

[0017] FIG. 2 is a graphical representation of sub-categories/platforms within one of the categories/platforms depicted in FIG. 1;

[0018] FIG. 3 is a graphical representation of a process in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention for qualifying luxury brands for inclusion in a certification system;

[0019] FIG. 4 is a graphical representation of a process in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention describing how consumers may be segmented and qualified to vote for candidate products or services to be certified;
FIG. 5 is a block diagram illustrating an embodiment depicting a process for qualifying consumers to vote for certification of candidate products and services;

FIG. 6 is a graphical representation of components and processes of a server system used to carry out various processes of the present invention; and

FIG. 7 is a graphical representation of a system incorporating various embodiments of the present invention that depicts various computers, terminals, servers and networks on which the various embodiments of the present invention are carried out.

While the present disclosure is subject to various modifications and alternative forms, specific embodiments thereof have been shown by way of example in the drawings and will herein be described in detail. The invention should be understood to not be limited to the particular forms disclosed, but on the contrary, the intention is to cover all modifications, equivalents, and alternatives falling within the spirit and scope of the present disclosure.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

In the following description, numerous specific details are set forth in order to provide a thorough understanding of the present disclosure. It will be apparent, however, to one of ordinary skill in the art that the invention disclosed herein may be practiced without these specific details. In other instances, specific numeric references such as a "first segment," may be made. However, the specific numeric reference should not be interpreted as a literal sequential order but rather interpreted that the "first segment" is different than a "second segment." Thus, the specific details set forth are merely exemplary. The specific details may be varied from and still be contemplated to be within the spirit and scope of the present disclosure. The term "coupled" is defined as meaning connected either directly to the component or indirectly to the component through another component. Further, as used herein, the terms "about," "approximately," or "substantially" for any numerical values or ranges indicate a suitable dimensional tolerance that allows the part or collection of components to function for its intended purpose as described herein.

The various embodiments of the present invention provide an un-biased process for identifying products and services and then certifying them as having the highest quality and status. For example, products and services that are selected using the un-biased process of the present
invention may be certified by allowing those products and services to bear the LUXUTIQUE® certification mark.

[0026] A key distinguishing factor of the present invention is that, unlike current "luxury" branding systems, there are no "beyond luxury" or "LUXUTIQUE" brands per se, that is, there are no brands that are labeled with a certification mark such as the LUXUTIQUE certification mark that identifies those brands as being "beyond luxury." Rather, only individual products and services, which may be provided by known "luxury" brands, such as, for example, Rolex or Cartier, will be certified as having the highest quality and status, and thus worthy of bearing the LUXUTIQUE certification mark.

[0027] Such a process as embodied in the present invention is needed because there are many luxury brands associated with various established luxury categories of products and services. These brands are segmented according to luxury level, awareness and business volume.

[0028] Based on the diverse consumer perceptions of luxury, not all luxury products of a given luxury brand are of equal quality and status. For example, Four Seasons® hotels are perceived as a luxury brand, but not all Four Seasons hotels are of equal quality and/or status. In fact, their quality and status vary depending on their location and the services offered by each individual hotel.

[0029] The various embodiments of the present invention identify those products and services that are offered by luxury brands that are truly worthy of being characterized as having the highest quality and status in an un-biased manner. This is accomplished in a two-fold manner: first, the luxury brands themselves curate their own products and/or services and propose a limited number of those products and/or services to a panel of qualified voters. Second, the panel of qualified voters, who have themselves been curated to ensure that they are qualified to pronounce a product or service as having the highest quality and status, vote on the proposed product or service. Only if a scoring system based upon both a brand's proposal and the votes by the qualified consumers produces a score that exceeds a selected threshold is a product or service then awarded an indication that that product or service is of the highest quality and/or status. In one embodiment of the present invention, that award signifying the highest quality and/or status may be a right to bear the LUXUTIQUE certification mark.
[0030] Referring now to the drawings in detail, in which like reference numerals indicate like or corresponding elements among the several figures, there is shown in FIG. 1 a graphical representation of a plurality of industry platforms that provide various luxury products and services to consumers. For example only, and not by way of limitation, FIG. 1 shows industry platforms A-F, identified for this exemplary purpose as Fashion 15, Travel 20, Cosmetics 25, Automobiles 30, Jewelry 35 and Watches 40.

[0031] For the purposes of this description, the groups described above refer to top level categories or platforms that have been identified in the luxury trade. It will be understood that the top level categories and/or platforms may also be combination categories/platforms, such as, for example, but not limited to, fashion and style, travel and leisure, beauty and style, cars and boats, jewelry and watches, food and dining, pipes and cigars, spirits and wines, fine art, and the like.

[0032] In determining luxury categories/platforms, it should be understood that these categories/platforms are more restricted than categories/platforms that merely evoke "prestige." As luxury increasingly has becomes attainable for more and more people, no matter how ordinary the product category, suppliers have marketed a premium or super premium brand of that product. For example, the Evian® brand of bottled water is advertised as if it were champagne. Products claiming premium or super premium branding even include dish detergent and diapers.

[0033] FIG. 2 illustrates how one category/platform, the Fashion industry category/platform 15 of FIG. 1, may include a plurality of sub-categories or sub-platforms. As shown, Fashion industry 15 may have a designers 45 sub-category. It will be apparent that this sub-category may be further sub-divided by individual designer. Fashion industry 15 may also have a clothing category 50, a handbag category 55, a shoe category 60, an accessories category 65, a lingerie category 70, a brands category 75, and a proposed item category 80 for items that are being proposed for certification as worthy of bearing the LUXUTIQUE certification mark.

[0034] FIG. 3 illustrates factors that are used to determine which luxury brands are selected to propose products or services to be voted upon by qualified consumers using the certification system of the present invention. A luxury brand 100 is curated to determine if it is worthy of taking part in the certification process by assessing a perceived luxury level 120 of the brands products. The volume of business 110 done by the luxury brand 100 is also assessed because
brands that have diluted their luxury connotation by engaging in mass merchandising cannot be considered as having the highest level of characteristics worthy of a "beyond luxury" certification. Consumer awareness of the perceived level of quality of the brand is also considered; brands that are not considered "elite" or "beyond prestigious" by qualified consumers should not be considered in the certification process. A list of proprietary criteria may also be developed by the certification organization and used to identify those companies which, for one reason or another, should not be considered in the certification process. Companies or brands not meeting the criteria may be excluded from access to the categories/platforms.

[0035] Brands that are identified for inclusion in the certification process are then invited to propose products and services for certification as having a bundle of characteristics signifying that those products and services are of the group of products and services that deserve to be certified as being "beyond luxury" products or services. In this manner, the various brands may participate in one or more categories or platforms, and also curate the products and services that are positioned as "beyond luxury."

[0036] Each luxury brand in each industry platform may nominate a selected number of products or services to be proposed for certification as having the highest quality and/or status to selection/identification process. For example, a luxury brand may be allowed to nominate just three of all of its products for consideration by voters to determine if those selected products deserve to be considered "beyond luxury" products and services and to be awarded the right to mark those products with an approbation, such as the LUXUTIQUE certification mark. This approbation may be awarded for a limited period of time, ensuring that the certification does not become stagnant as the "beyond luxury" market changes with time. The brands will also be able to remove certified products and services from certification, and propose other products and services to replace them.

[0037] It will be clear to those skilled in the art that the selection process used by the luxury brand to identify proposed products and/or services in a category or platform is not entirely unbiased, because it relies, to at least a partial extent, on the luxury brand identifying or proposing items or services that it provides. Thus, the level of quality or status is curated by the luxury brand itself.
The various embodiments of the present invention provide an additional step that mitigates the bias of the luxury provider by allowing selected qualified consumers of luxury products to vote on the proposed products or services. This voting process decouples the certification of the proposed products and services from the recommendations of the suppliers of those products and services. It is only when a proposed product or service attains a sufficient score from the voting process that the product or service will be granted the right to be labeled as certified as having achieved a combination of quality, status and other characteristics that signify that the product or service is deserving of certification as being "beyond luxury" and receiving recognition of its LUXUTIQUE status.

FIG. 4 is a graphical overview of one embodiment of a process that may be used to identify and qualify consumers as having a type of sensibility, financial status, and desire to purchase products and services that have achieved a status that is characterized as "beyond luxury." As shown, consumers that wish to participate in the certification process may be divided into three segments, segments 152, 154 and 156.

Those consumers that are considered as falling into segment 152 are those consumers that typically participate in luxury commerce 158, purchasing products and services offered by luxury brands. These consumers are not initially qualified to participate in higher levels of the certification process, and are offered access to luxury and proposed "beyond luxury" products and services by accessing a web site operated by the certification organization. At this level, access is provided without fee.

A segment 152 consumer can qualify to move to segment 154 by purchasing a proposed "beyond luxury" product or service. Such a purchase proves that the consumer possesses a financial ability and discernment that are hall marks of a "beyond luxury" or LUXUTIQUE consumer. After the purchase of the proposed product or service is completed, the web site notifies the consumer, either through an on screen message or some other communication means, such as, for example, an email, SMS text message, and the like, that he/she has achieved recognition as being a LUXUTIQUE consumer, and is being given the right to vote on whether proposed products and services should be certified as being "beyond luxury." Note that simply purchasing the proposed product or service is not a vote on its proposed LUXUTIQUE certification.
Additionally, once a consumer has been promoted to segment 154, the consumer is then allowed entry into a "beyond luxury" commerce section 164 of the web site product and service offerings. It is only in this segment that a qualified consumer is provided an opportunity to purchase products and services that are already certified as having the bundle of characteristics identifying them as being "beyond luxury," and thus qualified to bear the LUXUTIQUE certification mark, along with proposed products and services, as indicated by box 166.

Segment 156 allows access to a social lounge 170. Access to the social lounge is by way of invitation and requires payment of a membership. The social lounge may be considered the eBay® for the elite connoisseur, as indicated in box 172. The products and services presented to qualified consumers in segment 156 include all of the products and services offered in segment 152 and segment 154, with an addition of products and services that are submitted by individuals rather than luxury brands, as indicated in box 174.

FIG. 5 illustrates another embodiment of a process for qualifying a consumer so that he/she can vote for proposed products or services. As shown by the work of luxury expert Jean Noel Kapferer, different luxury consumer groups differ in their expectations for their ideal luxury product or server. In essence, there may be different levels of "luxury" items or services, and a luxury brand may actually produce different products or services that are targeted to the different "luxury" consumer groups. Thus, a filter may be used to identify those consumers who have characteristics or behaviors that are indicative of belonging to the group of consumers who are interested in only products and services having a combination of characteristics that signify those products or services as being "beyond luxury" and certified as such.

In one embodiment, consumers are screened on the basis of suggestive consumer behavior. Preferable consumers will also be interested in belonging to an exclusive group whose behavior and cultural needs are similar to their own. In such an embodiment, a consumer may be vetted for a demonstrated ability to afford the highest quality and status products and services. In other words, such a consumer generally would be insensitive to the price of a product and service, and would only seek out "the best" regardless of cost. As shown in FIG. 5 at box 205, a consumer could achieve voting rights 215 to determine what products or services are deserving of being certified as having the highest quality and status by purchases demonstrating that he/she had
purchased a product or service that was certified as having the bundle of characteristics certifying
the product or service as being "beyond luxury." Alternatively, as shown in box 210, voting rights
215 may be acquired through a purchase of a product or service that has been proposed as a
candidate for certification.

[0046] In another embodiment of the present invention, a consumer may achieve voting rights
215 through a process of recommending a product or service for certification, as shown in box
220. If the recommendation is accepted by the certification authority, and thus the product or
service is placed on a list of proposed products and services that are presented to qualified
consumers for voting, the recommender is given voting rights 215 by the certification service. If
the recommendation is not accepted, then voting rights are not awarded to the consumer.

[0047] Alternatively, a consumer may be invited to join the process by an existing member, as
indicated by box 230. The invited consumer may be vetted by the certification organization, and
then, upon payment of fee at box 235, given voting rights 215.

[0048] To begin the voting process, a member having voting rights logs onto a web based
system running on a server operated by the certification organization. Once the members
credentials have been verified, one or more candidate products or services proposed for
certification are displayed to the member, and the member may be asked to vote as to whether the
member believes the product or service is worthy of certification. Such a vote may be a simple
yes or no.

[0049] In another embodiment, the candidate products displayed may be chosen for display
based upon the member's prior purchases or votes, or the member may be provided with a listing
of categories or platforms from which to pick from, with each platform or category displaying
different candidate products or services. Alternatively, the member may be asked if he/she wants
to vote on candidates, and only if the member answers in the affirmative will the member be
presented with candidate products or services on which to vote.

[0050] Other voting methods may be used to directly or indirectly determine which candidate
products or services deserve certification. For example, the voting process may be weighted in a
manner that provides a certain amount of weight to a proposed product or service when that product
or service is accepted as a candidate. The members vote may also be weighted, depending on factors such as whether the member also purchased the product or service, or whether the member then clicked through the web site display to obtain additional information about the product or service, or shared or recommended the candidate product or service to other members or non-members. Additionally, the vote may be weighted by analyzing information related to the particular voter, such as, for example, a length of time the voter has been qualified, the voter's purchasing history, or other information that may be derived or mined from the voter's purchasing history or personal profile.

[0051] The voting process may be time limited, and other statistics may be used to determine whether a product or service is of the highest quality and status. For example, in a time limited voting process, the rate of votes or other indicators that a product or service is worthy of certification may be recorded and analyzed to determine if a selected threshold has been met.

[0052] In one exemplary embodiment, a product or service nominated for certification may be presented to qualified buyers. The voting statistics accumulated from the actual votes are then used to determine if certification should be awarded. For example, to become certified, and to maintain certification, 75% or all votes cast for the proposed product must be votes to certify the product or service. A product or service not achieving a positive indication, as signified by obtaining less than 75% of all votes cast for certification would not achieve LUXUTIQUE status. In the case where a product or service that is certified begins to accumulate enough negative votes that the ratio of positive to negative votes falls below 75%, the product or service may be considered as no longer qualifying for certification, and may be removed from the list of certified products and services.

[0053] It will be apparent that other ratios of positive to negative votes may be used as the threshold for awarding certification without departing from the intended scope of the invention. For example, the ratio could be 80%, 90%, or higher, or it could be only 70%. In no case, however, would the selected threshold ratio be less than 70%, as that would dilute the value of the certification. Moreover, the scoring system may be configured so that a proposed product or service would need to receive a selected minimum number of votes before certification would be considered. For example, a proposed product or service may need to receive at least five positive
votes to trigger the certification process. In rare instances, however, such as where a product or service is priced at a level where only a small number of consumers could afford the product, the minimum could be waived.

[0054] Once the voting process indicates that a product or service is worthy of certification, the certification organization certifies the product or service by allowing the product or service to bear a certification mark, such as the LUXUTIQUE certification mark. In some embodiments, a time frame during which the certification mark may be used may be limited to a selected time, such as, for example, one year. Limiting the use of the mark in such a manner ensures that the certification does not go stale, and that only products and services currently perceived as being "beyond luxury" are certified as such.

[0055] In alternative embodiments, the luxury brands that propose the products and services for certification are provided with direct access to the categories/platforms and may replace the products and services according to a time frame to be determined by the luxury brand. For example, a clothing luxury brand may change the proposed and/or certified products on a seasonal basis. This direct access to the category/platform also provides the luxury brand with real-time information about the purchasing preference of consumers who are qualified to vote and those who are not qualified to vote.

[0056] Certification of the products and services provides for product segmentation, and also provides a process for engaging a consumer in the certification process. This process is also advantageous to the luxury brand because it receives real-time data and consumer feedback regarding its product or service offerings.

[0057] FIG. 6 illustrates an exemplary computer system 300 which may be used with some embodiments of the present invention. Computer system 300 may take any suitable form, including but not limited to, an embedded computer system, a system-on-chip (SOC), a single-board computer system (SBC) (such as, for example, a computer-on-module (COM) or system-on-module (SOM)), a laptop or notebook computer system, a smart phone, a personal digital assistant (PDA), a server, a tablet computer system, a kiosk, a terminal, a mainframe, a mesh of computer systems, and the like. Computer system 300 may be a combination of multiple forms. Computer system 300 may include one or more computer systems 300, be unitary or distributed,
span multiple locations, span multiple systems, or reside in a cloud (which may include one or more cloud components in one or more networks).

[0058] In one embodiment, computer system 300 may include one or more processors 301, a memory 302, a storage 303, an input/output (I/O) interface 304, a communication interface 305, and a bus 306. Although this disclosure describes and illustrates a particular computer system having a particular number of particular components in a particular arrangement, this disclosure contemplates other forms of computer systems having any suitable number of components in any suitable arrangement.

[0059] In one embodiment, processor 301 includes hardware for executing instructions, such as those making up software. Herein, reference to software may encompass one or more applications, byte code, one or more computer programs, one or more executable module or API, one or more instructions, logic, machine code, one or more scripts, or source code, and/or the like, where appropriate. As an example and not by way of limitation, to execute instructions, processor 301 may retrieve the instructions from an internal register, an internal cache, memory 302 or storage 303; decode and execute them; and then write one or more results to an internal register, an internal cache, the memory 302, or the storage 303. In one embodiment, processor 301 may include one or more internal caches for data, instructions, or addresses. Memory 303 may be random access memory (RAM), static RAM, dynamic RAM or any other suitable memory. Storage 305 may be a hard drive, a floppy disk drive, flash memory, an optical disk, magnetic tape, or any other form of storage device that can store data (including instructions for execution by a processor).

[0060] In one embodiment, storage 303 may be mass storage for data or instructions which may include, but not limited to, a HDD, solid state drive, disk drive, flash memory, optical disc (such as a DVD, CD, Blu-ray, and the like), magneto optical disc, magnetic tape, or any other hardware device which stores computer readable media, data and/or combinations thereof. Storage 303 may be internal or external to computer system 300.

[0061] In one embodiment, input/output (I/O) interface 304 includes hardware, software, or both for providing one or more interfaces for communication between computer system 300 and one or more I/O devices. Computer system 300 may have one or more of these I/O devices, where
appropriate. As an example, but not by way of limitation, an I/O device may include one or more
mouses, keyboards, keypads, cameras, microphones, monitors, displays, printers, scanners,
speakers, cameras, touch screens, trackball, trackpad, biometric input device or sensor, or the like.

[0062] In still another embodiment, a communication interface 305 includes hardware,
software, or both providing one or more interfaces for communication between one or more
computer systems or one or more networks. Communication interface 305 may include a network
interface controller (NIC) or a network adapter for communicating with an Ethernet or other wired-
based network or a wireless NIC or wireless adapter for communications with a wireless network,
such as a Wi-Fi network. In one embodiment, bus 306 includes any hardware, software, or both,
coupling components of a computer system 300 to each other.

[0063] FIG. 7 is a graphical representation of an exemplary network 600 that may be used to
facilitate the various embodiments of the present invention. Server 605 is operated by a
certification organization, and typically includes at least one processor, input and output equipment
or devices, memory, storage, and a communication interface as discussed above with respect to
FIG. 6. The server also operates under the control of specialized software programming
commands that are designed to carry out the various processes described above. It should be
understood that while the exemplary network 600 is described in terms of a server operated by a
certification organization, the server could be operated by a third party hired by the certification
organization or under the control of the certification organization. The server could also be
operated by a third party independent of the certification organization, which then provides
information and/or data to the certification organization from which the certification organization
may make a decision regarding certification.

[0064] A data storage device 610, which may be separate from the server, but not necessarily,
may be accessible to the server 605, and may be used for storing data related to luxury products
and/or services, members, proposals, voting information and any other data related to operation of
the various embodiments of the certification system and process described above.

[0065] Server 605 may communicate with a network 615, which may be, for example, a local
area network (LAN) or a wide area network (WAN) or the Internet and the World Wide Web. The
server may communicate through the network 615 with devices 620 associated with luxury brand
companies or suppliers, such as, for example, computers or other suitable devices such as tablets, laptops or smart phones and the like. The server may also communicate with members through member device 625. The luxury brand and member devices will include processors and other ancillary equipment, as described above with reference to FIG. 6.

[0066] As described above, luxury brands propose products or services for certification by communicating with server 605 through the network 615. If the proposed products or services are accepted by the certification organization, data related to the proposed products or services, such as, for example, images, text, audio, video, or links related to the product or server, may be stored in an area of the server 605 or data storage 610 that is accessible by a member using member device 625 to access a web site on which the data related to the proposed product or service will be presented to the member on member device 625. Once the data is presented, the member can operate member device 625 to communicate a vote related to the quality and status of the proposed product or service to server 605 through network 615.

[0067] It should also be understood that while FIG. 7 depicts a member device 625 as communicating with the server 605, devices used or accessed by non-members may also be used to communicate with the server. For example, as discussed above, non-members may access the server 605 and be presented with items and/or proposed "beyond luxury" items for purchase, but would not be able to access products or services already certified as "beyond luxury."

[0068] Server 605 may also be programmed to accumulate the votes and other information communicated to it by member device 625, and provide reports to the certification organization as well as data and feedback related to consumer preference for the proposed product or service to the luxury brand who proposed the product or service for certification. This data may be supplied to the luxury brand in real-time, or it may be supplied at periodic intervals, or as requested by the luxury brand.

[0069] Those skilled in the art will understand that the connections between server 605, data storage 610, network 615, luxury brand device 620 and member device 625 may be hard wired, or they may be wireless. As stated above, the luxury brand device 620 and member device 625 may be any device capable of operably connecting to the network and accessing a web page or an account hosted by server 605.
While the invention has been described in terms of particular variations and illustrative figures, those of ordinary skill in the art will recognize that the invention is not limited to the variations or figures described. In addition, where methods and steps described above indicate certain events occurring in certain order, those of ordinary skill in the art will recognize that the ordering of certain steps may be modified and that such modifications are in accordance with the variations of the invention. Additionally, certain of the steps may be performed concurrently in a parallel process when possible, as well as performed sequentially as described above. To the extent there are variations of the invention, which are within the spirit of the disclosure or equivalent to the inventions found in the claims, it is the intent that this patent will cover those variations as well. Therefore, the present disclosure is to be understood as not limited by the specific embodiments described herein, but only by scope of the appended claims.
CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A process for certifying luxury products and services in an un-biased manner, comprising:
   receiving a proposal for certification of a product or service from a luxury brand;
   associating a scoring weight with the proposed product or service;
   presenting the proposed product or service to a qualified member of a certification organization;
   receiving a voting value from the qualified member;
   associating a scoring weight with the voting value;
   combining the scoring weight of the proposed product or service with the scoring weight of the voting value; and
   certifying the proposed product or service of the combined scoring weight exceeds a selected threshold.

2. The process of claim 1, wherein certifying includes marking the proposed product or service with a LUXUTIQUE certification mark.

3. The process of claim 1, wherein voting values from a selected number of qualified members must be received before the combining and certifying steps are earned out.

4. The process of claim 1, further comprising identifying the qualified member from among a group of consumers of luxury products and services.

5. The process of claim 1, wherein presenting comprises displaying the proposed product or service to the qualified member and asking the qualified member to vote as to whether the proposed product or service is worthy of being marked with a LUXUTIQUE certification mark.

6. A process for certifying luxury products and services in an un-biased manner, comprising:
   receiving a proposal for certification of a product or service from a luxury brand;
   presenting the proposed product or service to a qualified member of a certification organization;
receiving a voting value from the qualified member; and
certifying the proposed product or service an accumulation of received voting
values exceeds a selected threshold.

7. The process of claim 6, wherein certifying includes marking the proposed product or
service with a LUXUTIQUE certification mark.

8. The process of claim 6, further comprising identifying the qualified member among a group
of consumers of luxury products and services.

9. The process of claim 8, wherein identifying comprises screening consumers on a basis of
suggestive consumer behavior including purchasing a certified product or service or
purchasing a product or service that has been proposed as a candidate for certification.

10. The process of claim 8, wherein identifying comprises awarding voting rights to a
consumer that purchases a certified product or service or purchases a product or service
that has been proposed as a candidate for certification.

11. The process of claim 8, wherein identifying comprises receiving a recommendation of a
product or service for certification from a consumer and then awarding voting rights to the
consumer if the product or service is accepted for certification.

12. The process of claim 8, wherein identifying comprises awarding voting rights to a
consumer that is invited to join the process by an existing qualified member, and wherein
the consumer pays a predetermined fee.

13. The process of claim 6, wherein presenting comprises providing a web based system to the
qualified member, the web based system running on a server operated by the certification
organization, verifying credentials of the qualified member, displaying one or more
candidate products or services proposed for certification to the qualified member, and
asking the qualified member to vote as to whether the one or more candidate products or
services are worthy of certification.

14. The process of claim 13, wherein displaying comprises choosing candidate products or
services based upon previous purchases or votes by the qualified member.
15. The process of claim 14, wherein displaying comprises providing one or more categories or platforms from which the qualified member may pick, each of the one or more categories or platforms comprising different candidate products or services.
Segment One

Luxury Commerce

Free access to luxury and luxutique proposed entities

Segment Two

Luxutique Commerce

Access to proposed luxury and luxutique certified entities

Segment Three

Social Lounge

Access by invitation and membership fee. The eBay for the elite connoisseur.

Same as Segment Two plus rare entities submitted by individuals.

FIG. 4

Purchase of a luxutique proposed item grants voting right and access to luxutique commerce segment.
FIG. 5
**FIG. 6**

- Processor (301)
- Memory (302)
- Storage (303)
- I/O Interface (304)
- Communication Interface (305)

**FIG. 7**

- Internet/Web (615)
  - Server (605)
  - Luxury Brand Device (620)
  - Member Device (625)
- Data Storage (610)
INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.
PCT/US 15/53703

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC(8) - G06Q30/02, G06Q30/08, G07C13/02 (2015.01)
CPC - G06Q30/18, G06Q30/08, G07C13/02

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC(8) Classifications: G06Q30/02, G06Q30/06, G06Q30/08, G07C13/02 (2015.01)
CPC Classifications: G06Q20/0018, G06Q20/00, G06Q30/06, G06Q30/08, G07C13/02

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

PatSeer (US, EP, WO, JP, DE, GB, CN, FR, KR, ES, AU, IN, CA, Other Countries (INPADOC), RU, AT, CH, TH, BR, PH), ProQuest, Google/Google Scholar, IP.com; certify, certification, luxury, product, service, merchandise, goods, point, score, threshold, standard, minimum, member, customer, user, shopper, buyer

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category*</th>
<th>Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages</th>
<th>Relevant to claim No.</th>
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