How Sephora Creates Beauty Across Brand Touchpoints. Sephora, a premium cosmetics retailer, has earned tremendous loyalty by extending their brand across what its customers value—all things beauty. The company understands that its customers want to enjoy and experience their passion for beauty in different ways, and it uses several brand touchpoints to enable this. The first is by providing a sensory-filled in-store experience. As they shop, Sephora customers have the unique opportunity to physically interact and experiment with different lines of products. Such accessibility has resonated especially well among Millennials, who view beauty buying as a “hunt” for their right individual look. The company has introduced numerous customer-facing tools to further facilitate finding a personalized style. For example, InstaScent spritzes raw notes of a perfume to help customers determine which defining scent they identify with the most before exploring specific fragrances with a store consultant. Sephora offers the Color IQ handheld device to aid customers in understanding what products match their skin tones. Sephora’s commitment to the experiential element of shopping for beauty products extends to its web presence. Sephora Virtual Artist allows customers to try on dozens of lipstick color variations in seconds, with add-on features like the ability to compare different shades simultaneously or randomize options to test out. For customers either seeking something specific or hoping to be inspired, the Sephora Beauty Board is a great resource. Along with the option to simply browse through the site, users can post pictures of products to gain feedback from others. Sephora TV provides yet another platform where customers can see “how-to” instructional videos on how to achieve a certain look. Lastly, Sephora views its online community as valuable for connecting customers who share the same passion for beauty. The BeautyTalk forum provides an opportunity to converse with experts about makeup, skin care, fragrances, and more. With 360 stores in North America and nearly 1,800 worldwide, Sephora’s footprint continues to grow. By offering programs that connect its brand to what customers value, Sephora has successfully strengthened customer–brand relationships and improved brand loyalty. One of Sephora's biggest competitors is ULTA Beauty. Since opening its first store in 1990, ULTA has grown to be the largest U.S. beauty retailer and the premier beauty destination for cosmetics, fragrance, skin care products, hair care products and salon services. Questions (You'll want to be sure to do your research in this case--there have been some very recent strategic developments with Sephora and ULTA): Describe how the brand touchpoints for Sephora provide emotional, self-expressive, and social benefits. Be specific, and be sure to not combine these 3 benefits into 1---discuss each in turn. How does ULTA Beauty compare? With COVID-19, many changes have occurred that are affecting both stores. Some examples include fewer people shopping in-person, people working from home more (perhaps less need for makeup?), wearing masks (which cover half of the face), and some customers tightening their budgets. How can the brand touchpoints for Sephora be improved to reflect these COVID-related trends? Who do you feel has adapted best to COVID-related changes? Why? Please be specific here and include your original thoughts as well as outside sources. For instructions on how to upload this assignment through Turnitin, please review this instructional video Submitting a Case Study through Turnitin (Links to an external site.). The page limit for content (excluding references) is 2 pages, double or line and a half spacing, 12 point font. Citations and references to outside sources must be used and formatted properly according to APA or MLA. See OWL (Links to an external site.) for guidelines and examples.