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- **Executive Summary** – The major points of the Target case study are that Target has identified themselves as the chic and personalized alternative to generic products found at discount retailers.

- Target has been consistently gaining ground on their competitors such as Wal-Mart by creating the feeling that consumers should expect more and pay less, that they can be unique and save money at the same time.

- The major issue is that Target is now considered to be more expensive than their competitors even though their prices are nearly the same (within 3%), plus they have to ease in a new CEO.

- The solution that I propose is that Target should go after the environment niche. They should create campaigns promoting a “green” movement by offering organic and eco-friendly products as well as community improvements and environmental donations.

This seems like a logical solution because it allows them to keep their status of being chic and unique/individual plus they can bring in new customers who want to help the environment which is a huge market right now and it fits into Target’s personality.

- **Problem Statement** – Will the economy play a major factor in Target’s immediate future? The economy is declining and consumers are looking for cheap solutions for their everyday needs and purchases. Target has a brand that is clear and sustainable without a clear presence of the people behind the brand, nevertheless, when the CEO changes, the decision-making choices will be different. People perceive Target to be expensive and therefore feel like Wal-Mart is the better choice in a declining economy.

- **Alternatives** – A major alternative would be to run a campaign based on price.

They could compete with Wal-Mart on the basis that they are as cheap as Wal-Mart and in turn it would attract customers to Target after they realize their perceptions of Target being more expensive were false. The downside to this is that Target has created a brand that is viewed as chic and unique/individualistic. By competing with Wal-Mart on a price basis would undermine the entire brand of Target because once the declining economy fixes itself and moves back into healthier times, there is a possibility that people will always view Target as a cheap discount store from that point on.

- **Conclusion** – My analysis is that Target attacks the eco-friendly segments of consumers by launching campaigns ranging from environmental programs and donations, charity work and a percentage of sales of certain products to get people to buy the “green” products. This fits with Target’s personality by selling the same products they already sell but the products are eco-friendly versions of those products and it will make people feel like they are doing something great for the environment and their perception of Target being more expensive will be rationalized because they will perceive the “extra cost” will be going to the environmental donations. I rejected the option of a pricing solution because I felt that it was a much better solution for the short-term fix but that it would ultimately cripple the Target brand in the long-term.

- **Implementation** – I would take all products that can be turned “green” for instance, bleach, and I would sell a majority of the bleach products as the eco-friendly bleach causing people to be exposed to the campaign. I would advertise on T.V. and create contests to see who can create the best activity for improving their community

environmentally and then I would establish volunteers, both from Target and otherwise, to carry out the winner's idea. A percentage of all "green" products would be donated to funding these events and other nation-wide agendas. It would create a personality for Target that would make people ignore their false perception of Target being more expensive by replacing it with people's desire to feel like they make a difference, and with our programs they would get that feeling and they would realize that it wasn't more expensive than Wal-Mart anyway.

## Six Interactive Branding Techniques

I would brand myself as a logical and efficient decision-maker. Here are six integrated interactive techniques for branding myself as a logical and efficient decision-maker.

- I have joined an internet community, LinkedIn, which is essentially “facebook” for professionals. It’s a place where you are able to network through certain industries and find positions available suited for your specialties.
- I would create a blog specifically based on giving/getting advice on problem-solving and decision-making situations. This would be a good way to enhance my position through feedback and real situations.
- I joined the social network, North Texas Advertising on [www.ning.com](http://www.ning.com) so I have a commonplace with my peers and am able to bounce ideas off of them and learn what has worked for them.
- I joined a facebook group of advertising students which allows me to collaborate with other people seeking careers in the same professions as myself.
- I would create a professional myspace profile that is designed to illustrate my qualities and potential qualities as a decision-maker.
- I would join Twitter, which is a social network designed to keep you updated on the activities and the status of your peers or colleagues. This would enable me to be able to understand what kinds of activities people do regularly and it would allow me to better understand the best decision to make.

## What I Learned from my Shadow Project

The five most important things I learned from my shadow in order to get a job in this profession would be organization, punctuality, clarity, common sense and patience. The professional I shadowed emphasized organization above all because it allows you to access information efficiently and show your competency at your job. She also said to be punctual in everything you do such as paying bills or mailing invoices immediately so that clients will trust you to do the job quickly and skillfully. The last three, clarity, common sense and patience go together but in that order. If you present your information in a clear voice so that it isn't overly technical unless it needs to be, then it will be easily understood and you eliminate confusion from the equation. This is where common sense plays because it's obvious that the less confusion there is, then the better the message will be delivered but you need to know how to present your information in a clear message to accomplish this. Lastly, you need patience because you need to understand that not everyone is going to understand what your information is talking about or how you went about gathering that information and those people need to feel comfortable knowing that you aren't angry because you have to repeat everything to them differently so they understand your message. The professional I shadowed listed the five most important skills needed to perform her job well as basic bookkeeping principles, organization, time management, attention to detail and initiative. I asked my shadow what parts of Planning, IMC, and Branding that she uses in her job but she said that those qualities don't really factor into what she needs to do to accomplish her job as an accountant.