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Part I: Case Study

Executive Summary

The continued success of Target is a direct result of this empire's greatest strengths, mainly the people behind the brand and their loyalty to it. With continued efforts, such as the creative cabinet, the ULab, the status room and sponsorships of young designers, Target has perfected keeping their promise to the consumer that at any Target they can "Expect More" and "Pay Less." What differentiates Target from other low price competitors is clearly the quality and trendiness of the products they carry which is a result of CEO Robert Ulrich's nontraditional process of outsourcing creativity.

Target now faces an unusual challenge. Ulrich is retiring and his successor and current Target President, Gregg Steinhafel will face this already trying transition with the added pressure of a crumbling economy. In addition to that pressure, is the push from important investor, William Ackman, for change in reaction to a drop in stock while competitor, Wal-Mart stock is rising.

The next step for Steinhafel is implementing a creative strategy that generates the same excitement that was produced when Ulrich started the trend department and brought an expanded color palette for T-shirts to the Grocery sections of every Target.

Consumables and commodities sales have risen 4% since last year and will undoubtedly continue to rise. This is a logical step for Target who has already established itself as a trendy and high-quality bargain store. With the weakening economy, families will be looking for inexpensive, high-quality stores where they can purchase everything from computer paper to toilet paper, a blue sweater to blue cheese. It's no secret that trendy market-like grocers are emerging as Americans become more aware of living a healthy lifestyle. Target already offers a great quality private label food line they can leverage to gain consumer trust that the promise to "Expect More" can be carried on to the Grocery section.

Problem Statement

The problem Target is facing is the transition from CEO Robert Ulrich, who has lead Target to success since 1994 to his successor and current Target President, Gregg Steinhafel during a rocky and worsening economic environment. Target is also facing a push to change from important investors like William Ackman, and a drop in stock while competitor Wal-Mart stock is rising.

Alternatives

One option for Target as they go through this transition is to take a different marketing approach that places all emphasis on low prices to the guests. This alternative will allow Target to send a message that really hits home with consumers dealing with such tumultuous economic times. Putting the focus on low prices will also eliminate inaccurate ideas consumers have when

comparing Target prices to its competitors. Consumer perceptions of Target having higher prices than grocery stores and Wal-Mart will shift to recognizing Target's low prices.

However, this alternative would undoubtedly put Target in a scary position as a more direct competitor with the low price giant Wal-Mart. Wal-Mart has mastered the art of low price marketing, and if Target put itself exclusively in that category it may not be able to compete at the level necessary to win over Wal-Mart customers. This tactic might also alienate Target's loyal customers who appreciate that they can "Expect More" from Target, and diminish the value of goods bought at Target. The value of Target's products has been what has differentiated Target from its competitors. To focus on low prices would take away differentiation and put Target in the same sinking boat as others who have tried to go head to head with discount giant Wal-Mart.

There's always the option for Steinhafel to keep everything exactly the same as Ulrich has been running things. This would create stability and trust not only within the company, but with their consumers as well during a time when most consumers are hesitant to trust any company.

On the other hand, the economy is on its way to what could be a recession, and Wal-Mart and their low price strategy have proven to be more successful during the past two recessions. If Steinhafel chooses to keep everything as it is there will be no room for the company to grow. Ulrich himself didn't keep things exactly the same over time. A big part of Target's success is the creative cabinet keeping products they focus on relevant and trendy. If the company isn't modern and ever-changing to fit the guests' needs, what's to make the guests think the products are?

Conclusion

Rather than change their image or devalue their products, Target has the advantage of working off their existing strengths. Established as the place where guests can "Expect More, Pay Less", Target can keep that promise in all aspects of their business, including food. The successes of The Food Network and high-end grocers like Central Market and Whole Foods, combined with public awareness to issues surrounding consumables and commodities, like child obesity and recyclable products, are clear indicators that this is the perfect time for Target to bring focus to the quality of their grocery departments. Target has already produced private label food products that have great quality. The sales of consumables and commodities are rising. Even in economic struggle people want to provide healthy food for themselves and their families. Target offers a way to do so without paying too much, and the consumer doesn't really know about it. Target has to implement a creative strategy that emphasizes food, and the promise Target has always keep to its consumers, that they can "Expect More, Pay Less." This strategy also will satisfy the desires of investors for change without changing the expectations of Target to the consumer. The strength that Ulrich found in his successor is Steinhafel's passion and focus on the brand, not on himself, and this strategy will give him the opportunity to let consumers do just that.

Implementation Plan

Implementing this strategy will be cost effective and successful. Several steps should be taken. Private label food items and packaging should be reevaluated and perfected at the Ulab. The Status Room should rotate through the entire grocery layout and test changes that will make the grocery section feel more like a specialty market. Change of layout should be considered to create emphasis on the quality of food, and the Grocery section should instead be referred to as the "Market". Much like the creative cabinet, Steinhafel should assemble and facilitate a food cabinet. One of Target's strengths is the many outside influences on what should be on the shelves. Those

influences should also affect consumables. Target should know what the trends are in cooking, dining and everything food. In addition to playing a role in young new fashion designers, Target should also consider avenues assisting young new chefs. Advertising and marketing strategies should all emphasize the slogan "Expect More, Pay Less" and relate this slogan to the Market. These implementations expand and enhance the reputation that Target is known for, creative quality and controlled prices.

Part II: Brand Yourself

There are many things that I would like to be branded as, but when comes down to it there are some important traits the professionals I shadowed taught me. To be successful in any business it is important to be flexible, to learn the art of networking, and to be an excellent at multi-tasking. These are qualities I not only possess, but traits at which I excel. The following six integrated interactive tactics support and exhibit my capabilities to deliver those qualities in any situation.

One tactic that I used to brand myself was joining Ning.com. This website of social networks allowed me to position myself as flexible and successful at multi-tasking by enabling me to join both the North Texas Advertising Group and the North Texas Advertising Copywriters Group. Through these groups I'm also positioning myself as someone who is successful at networking with my peers whom are entering the Advertising world after college. The North Texas Advertising Group is at untadvertising.ning.com and the North Texas Advertising Copywriters Group is at untadvertising.ning.com/group/copywriters. I was also able to create a personalized page on ning.com to promote myself as a brand at untadvertising.ning.com/profile/MelAnderson.

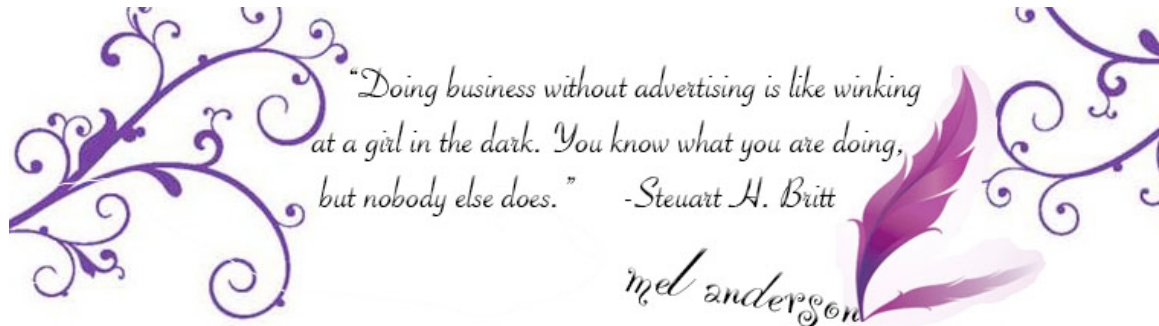
Another tactic I used to demonstrate my brand's ability to multi-task and network is creating an account on a professional networking website. My profile at linkedin.com/in/melianderson exhibits my ability to multi-task successfully by showing my sites and previous experience, which involves extreme amounts of multi-tasking. It also displays my ability to find ways to network with other professionals.

Facebook is a well-known social networking website. I utilized it as a tactic by joining the group "What's Your Problem?" which not only brands me as someone who can network well, but also as someone who is capable of multi-tasking by assisting professionals and businesses retrieve solutions for IMC questions, problems, and needs. The site is located at facebook.com/group.php?gid=38739321751.

Media Post is a website that allows professionals in the Advertising, Marketing and Media industries to collaborate and share news, research, events, jobs, directories, and serves as an exclusive social network for those professionals. I've created a profile at my.mediapost.com/melianderson, to use as an interactive integrated tactic that once again shows my ability to network with professionals and multi-task within the numerous applications.

I've created a blog as an interactive tactic to represent my brand by showcasing my flexibility to leap into the industry with no reservations or expectations. Through this blog at melandersonreadytorun.blogspot.com, I will share my journey through Advertising and hopefully spark interest and maybe even opportunity.

The final integrated interactive tactic I used to brand myself as flexible and successful at multi-tasking and networking is a banner ad to be placed on different advertising networking sites like Mediapost.com and LinkedIn.com. When clicked on, this ad will take you to my page on ning.com and immediately associate me with all the other tactics used. The ad will look as follows:



Part III: Shadowed Professionals

Whitney Sprague, Account Executive,
Publicis Mid America.

The five most important things, in priority order, learned about how to get the job in the career you want:

1. Be flexible and available.
2. Network.
3. Be assertive without being aggressive.
4. Learn a lot about the place you want to work and ask a lot of questions.
5. Make sure ANY experience is on your resume.

The five things, in priority order, Ms. Sprague does to be successful in her job:

1. Loves her job.
2. Successfully multi-tasks.
3. Organizes everything.
4. Is considerate and respectful of her co-workers.
5. Keeps a positive attitude.

The five most important skills, in priority order, she has to have to do well in what she does:

1. Understand your co-workers responsibilities, so you can best leverage them and respect their time.
2. Must be organized when trying to juggle multiple projects.
3. Ask Questions!
4. Understand the history of your brands. What worked? What didn't? Then you know how to help them grow.
5. Know digital! Online media is becoming a traditional medium, so you need to understand the many socials networks, banner ads, flash/rich media, you tube, etc.

Parts of Planning, IMC, and Branding, in priority order, used in her job:

1. Test among consumers (qualitative research to ensure creative resonates with consumers and quantitative research to ensure purchase interest among a larger group of people).
2. Can't produce any broadcast unless score within the top quartile in quantitative research.

Michelle Vanderburg, Marketing Manager,
Texas Health Resources, Presbyterian Hospital of Plano.

The five most important things, in priority order, learned about how to get the job in the career you want:

1. Be willing to take a job that may not be exactly what you want with a company that interests you – getting in the door and showing your value is extremely important.
2. Network, network, network!
3. Have professionals review your resume and provide feedback – your resume is important to get you in the door for an interview.
4. If offered a position, the salary may not be what you originally have in mind but if you find that the position has growth potential and benefits, take it to get that first job under your belt.
5. After you find a position, be sure to get connected with professional organizations in your field to continue your networking.

The five things, in priority order, Mrs. Vanderburg does to be successful in her job:

1. Listen closely to the client/company you work for – know their key priorities and tackle those first. There will always be a lot to do, but at the end of the day, if you're getting done what they value most (and what adds most to the bottom line), that is what will help you succeed.
2. Think outside the box and look outside your industry for ideas to promote your company.
3. Make sure you're organized – in this industry there a lot of tight deadlines and multi-tasking and keeping your eye on the deadlines are key.
4. Plan for the unexpected – there will always be hot projects that come up that are not in your schedule or marketing plan. Learn to juggle.
5. Remember to have fun! You will be most refreshed and give your best when you enjoy your job and not take yourself too seriously.

The five most important skills, in priority order, she has to have to do well in what she does:

1. Organizational Skills
2. Multi-tasking
3. Nimbleness
4. Good listener
5. Good communicator

Parts of Planning, IMC, and Branding, in priority order, used in her job:

1. Strategic planning is a large part of what we do as communications professionals to make sure that we hit the right target audience with our message.
2. Branding is key to make sure that we're presenting a consistent image to further leverage our marketing mix.