

APRIL L. LEONARD

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Qualifications Summary

Broad based background in all aspects of **Marketing, Branding, and Communications**. Proven success increasing revenues, market share, company and brand awareness. Recognized for building productive teams, developing positive relationships and cultivating valuable strategic alliances. Manage multiple tasks to completion and resolve complex issues in a timely cost efficient manner. Highly developed communications, negotiations, and organizational skills.

Marketing & Brand Management
Corporate Communications
Public & Community Liaison
Advertising & Promotions
Continuous Improvements

Project Planning & Management
Product & Market Development
Market Research & Analysis
Pricing & Forecasting
Strategic & Operational Planning

Social Media Campaigns
Budget & Cost Controls
Merchandising & Displays
Performance Improvements
Organizational Development

Selected Career Highlights

- **Led cross functional team to determine how to simplify the packaging process for new products.** Reviewed all existing brands and determined there were many pieces of packaging that were duplication. Removed duplicate items and worked with new supplies and current suppliers to determine how to save costs on the packaging items. Analyzed new technologies and new systems and vendors. **Reduced costs \$1.2 Million on new materials going forward.**
- **Conducted in-depth analysis and competitive review of branding photography and display.** Developed a 360 degree view of brands. Determined that in many cases company was shooting the same model samples in up to 6 different methods. Work with teams to take the photography process to one simple method to use artwork across all channels. **Achieved process consistency across entire company while saving \$800,000.**
- **Delivered Mango launch presentation to 600 marketing associates with only 1 day notice.** Requested to present to the entire marketing department the launch of a new brand. With 1 days notice, developed facts, figures, and graphics to mold into an outstanding presentation that **earned great respect from our senior vice president of the division.**
- **Facilitated in-store training and updated systems to improve store signage accuracy.** Reversed previous record of low scores on state audits and reduced the amount of fines by state governments. **Led task force that ensured 1100 stores improved their accuracy rates.**
- **Revamped New Store Opening Process.** As part of opening of new stores, each division is judged on its execution and accuracy. Leading the store signing team, moved from the worst rated store process to the #1 process in opening a new store. Working hands on with associates and management, trained stores on how to execute the new store process. **Opening store survey results were #1 with a - 97% survey approval rating.**
- **Improved Associate retention to #1 in company.** Through new training and Q&A sessions, reduced division turnover rate to the lowest in the company. **Improved associate engagement scores and achieved savings millions of dollars in new hire training costs.**
- **Generating Customer and Associate engagement.** Launching the largest brand launch in company history and charged with getting both customer and our own internal associate excited and knowledgeable about the brand categories. I lead the internal communications team to develop the brand execution plan. **Sales exceed plan by 40%.** Magazine contest entries exceed over 12,000 entries and text only contest entries were over 10,000.
- **Improved Social media engagement growth.** Given the challenge to improve scores. Reviewed and analyzed competition and worked with new agencies to develop a new cadence and strategy on how to attract new customers via social media. Engagement scores saw immediate growth and we were able to develop the strategy with more exciting new methods. **Achieved 25% improvement in Facebook likes.**
- **Positioned Puerto Rico Region – the number one volume market – against a new competitor.** With zero budget, developed a marketing strategy to help off-set this new competitor. Worked with local vendors store team, developed a marketing plan that **achieved a significant sales gain during the first month of the competitors opening.**

Professional Experience

JC PENNEY COMPANY, Plano, Texas, 2002-Present

SENIOR MARKETING MANAGER (8/09 - present)

Plan, coordinate and oversee the promotional marketing cadence for women's apparel and accessories ... Review annual sales peaks and natural shopping patterns to build brand awareness for JCPenney women's apparel ... Evaluate marketing placement for Magazine, Television, Radio, and Pre-Print/Newspaper ... Review competitive landscape to identify market share opportunities and new business development ... Monitor and analyze business performance reports, recommend action for future development.

- Built the marketing strategy for all social channels – Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Social Shopping, and Blog Outreach.
- Created and executed contests, sweepstakes, and messaging to drive engagement and “likes” thru social media. Facebook “likes” have increased by 25% overall fan base increased from \$600,000 to \$1 Million.
- Successfully led the brand launches of the newest women's apparel/accessory brands at JCPenney.
- Led the launch of the first international partnership “MNG by Mango” Aug. 2011.
- Developed MNG by Mango Introducing direct mail campaign won an “2011 American Graphic Design Award”
- Developed the Fall/Holiday brand campaign for “Liz Claiborne Week”. Sept. 2011. Resulted in double-digit sales increases.
- Coordinated Redbook Magazine contest sweeps in conjunction with in store appearances by Tim Gunn
- Led the brand launch committee of 20 internal marketing stakeholders and external agencies to build the largest brand launch in company history. Liz Claiborne/Claiborne Sept. 2010
- Liz Claiborne “Now” direct mail campaign won an “2011 American Graphic Design Award” Teen brand “Olsenboye”
- Led the internal and external marketing launch of celebrity brand “Olsenboye” Nov 2009
- NYC Cup Cake Truck and Pop-up Store PR event for brand awareness and “buzz”

BRAND MANAGER (3/08 - 8/09)

Developed messaging strategy for women's and men's private brand apparel business. Re-launched #1 Career Apparel brands for women's and men's apparel ... Evaluated and updated existing brand logos, packaging and products ...

- Worked with cross-divisional team to redesign current brand logo and implement new packaging that coincided with new product designs.
- Brand launch packaging committee saved \$1.2M in packaging costs.
- Implemented companywide brand photography process to create brand image synergy for all media touch points.
- Researched merchandise and marketing trends and monitored direct competitors, as well as collaborated with buyers and product brand managers to build brand campaigns.
- Developed brand launch tool kit, utilized in the launch of all new brands. Implemented brand design concept that included a detailed 9 Ps Branding "Analysis" - Positioning, Product, Promotion, Projection Pricing, Place, People, Performance, Patterning

STORE OPERATIONS PRICING MANAGER (9/04 - 3/08)

Implemented and executed pricing in 1100 retail stores.

- Developed an internal communication method for pricing associates that improved store communications and execution by 92%.
- Reduced pricing associates employment turnover rates to the #1 lowest retention rate of all store associates in the Company.
- Improved retail stores signing accuracy by 5% within the first two years
- Opened 30 new stores during tenure. Improved new store opening process from last place to #1 in company; 97% approval rating

STORE MANAGER Henderson, Nevada, (1/02 - 9/04)

Managed a \$25M volume store, which hosted 250 employees.

- Increased sales by 7% during tenure
- Decreased operating expenses by 1.5% in three years

Education & Training

Brand Management Certification, KELLOGG GRADUATE SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT, Chicago, Illinois

Bachelor of Science in Marketing, EMPORIA STATE UNIVERSITY, Emporia, Kansas

Collaboration: Candid Conversations/ Hammond & Mayfield - Developing Internet Reporting/ JC Penney, In-house - Proof Reading Business Documents/ Booher Consultants - Business Writing/ Booher Consultants - Strategic Negotiations/ Information Work

Critical Thinking: Problem Solving & Decision Making/Action Management