

Apricot Lane Creative Brief



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Introduction

We chose Apricot Lane, a fashion boutique located in Uptown Normal. They sell trendy and unique fashion apparel, jewelry, handbags, accessories, and gifts. In August of 1991, the founders of Country Visions retailing gift stores, Ken Peterson, Tom Brady, and Scott Jacobs, opened their first retail store in Vacaville, California. After instant success, they started planning to franchise their stores and expanding their products. In 2007, the first Apricot Lane store was opened, and soon after more franchises sprouted up all over the country. The Apricot Lane Boutique in Normal, IL was opened by Renee and Jena, a mother and a daughter with a dream to open and run a high end fashion boutique. Currently they advertise online through social media and social networking through email. They also have representatives and sponsor house shows.

The Creative Brief

Background/Situation Analysis/Overview:

Apricot Lane is a high end fashion boutique that sells women's fashion apparel, jewelry, handbags, accessories, and gifts. They are located in Uptown Normal, IL, which is directly across from Illinois State University. They advertise mostly online through multiple social media accounts and email. They have a few competitors in the Uptown Normal area, but there are a few secondary competitors.

One of their strengths is their location, which is next to a large university, which is walking distance for all students. Another strength is their high social media presence, through multiple platforms. We believe that they are a well known brand since they have been around for 23 years, so the awareness is there. Another strength is that they are the only kind of boutique in

the Uptown Normal area. They do have similar competitors though, which adds to their weaknesses. Their competitors in the area are OhmFit Activewear, Uptown Gifts and Accessories, Campustown Supply, and Whimsy. Another weakness that we would consider more of a downfall are their prices. They are relatively high for clothing for a college student, which leads to less sales from that **demographic**.

There is always opportunities to increase sales and awareness, which is our main objective. To increase sales we have to persuade our **target audience** that the clothing and other products bought at the boutique are worth the price because of their quality and unique shopping experience. By creating a stronger and more active social media presence, Apricot Lane is able to strengthen their **brand awareness** within the market. The big picture is to provide a unique and high quality shopping experience and showcase the local area's fashion trends. Our advertising campaign will target local university female students, and try to persuade them to reconsider purchasing the pricier clothing items because of their high quality and unique shopping experience provided in the store.

Currently, the market has grown in the popularity of fashion boutiques. Many house parties are being thrown, and **word of mouth** is being spread about boutiques that give women a unique wardrobe to help them stand out in a crowd. In the surrounding area, there are few fashion boutiques of this kind, which gives Apricot Lane the upper hand when women need to find an outfit for an upcoming event.

Apricot Lane already does some advertising through social media and emailing lists. They have a big presence on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Youtube, Instagram, and LinkedIn. This is important to reach the **target market** of young

women who see most advertisements through social media. Apricot Lane also offers fashion blogs online. They are also e-commerce friendly and you can purchase their products online which is a huge advantage for the **target market**. This franchise of stores also gives back to the community through various organizations, but mainly through 3 Strands, a non-profit organization to help stop human trafficking.

There are lots of opportunities to reach the enormous target market of college students due to the close location. Social media has also brought many opportunities to the boutique. The **target market** spends a decent amount of time scrolling through social media. **Brand awareness** is being presented on a daily basis through social media platforms, which in return will help increase sales. Some problems that the boutique has is their target market's price range. Most women who fall between the ages of 18-22 are part of the college target market. These women do not have the money to spend on the higher priced clothes offered in a boutique. This problem is important because it decreases sales, but we can easily combat this problem through persuasion of the target audience through an efficient marketing campaign.

Target Market

The **target market** for this campaign is women ranging from the ages of 15-27. The **demographics** of our target market include women who are between the ages of 15-27. The **lifestyle** of our women reflects a positive attitude towards fashion. We are targeting women who love to look their best, and want to find that one special outfit for every event and season. These women wear the clothes that express their personality and are always trying to keep up with the fashion trends. We are targeting women that want to have a unique style of the way they dress in

their wardrobe. The **geographics** of our target market lies in the location of Bloomington-Normal, Illinois. For our campaign, we are focusing on the two universities located in the area, Illinois Wesleyan University and Illinois State University, because they hold a large amount of current and future customers. The current audience can see how trendy this style of clothing is, but may have concerns with the price of the clothing. This would make the audience hesitant in having further interest for the product.

The exact **target audience** for the campaign would be towards college students who attend Illinois State University and Illinois Wesleyan University. The audience would also include high school juniors and seniors from the nearby high schools, who would be transitioning into college students. The age group then would be from 15-27 year old women. Overall, our creative pieces will try to attract as many 15-27 year old women as possible. They will express a desire for the type of clothing Apricot Lane consist of.

Objective

Our objective is to increase sales by providing a better understanding of the product prices and quality of the shopping experience the boutique is able to provide. By **repositioning** the clothing and other products offered at Apricot Lane as an investment in one's wardrobe rather than over priced clothing, the store is able to increase sales amounts as well as build a stronger consumer foundation and following. Apricot Lane also brags about their unique shopping experience and the customer service offered to customers while in the stores as well as shopping online. By providing high quality service and advice from fashion consultants, it is easier to justify spending larger amounts of money. From a **psychological** point of view, when a

customer receives top notch service, the customer's **self-worth** is increased, and they can feel like they are entitled to the higher quality products and therefore are more willing to spend the money.

The most important course objective for our **target market** would be to persuade the consumers. As stated above, we have to persuade the **target market** to reconsider the pricing of the products sold at Apricot Lane and to justify purchasing these items. We have to build an efficient campaign in order to persuade the female students.

Take-a-way

Our main goal is to persuade the customers who may have been thinking about purchasing from the store, but felt the prices were too high to make a purchase because the products are not worth the price. A compelling statement would be "Spring Into Fashion!". The thought or demand of "Spring Into Fashion" is a call to action for consumers to purchase the clothes they had been thinking about due to previous brand interest. This statement will help them realize that the clothes offered at Apricot Lane are worth spending the money. This compelling statement is to help women instigate their spending habits at Apricot Lane. Persuading women to justify their spending will help us to achieve our objective of increasing sales for the boutique. The single statement " Spring Into Fashion" is relevant to our **target market** of college students due to the seasonal needs for new clothing, and letting them realize that they can spend their money on Apricot Lane clothing.

Mood/Tone

Shoppers are excited about the clothes Apricot Lane has to offer. Justification for that is that they are excited specifically about the quality of the clothes. We feel that Apricot Lane does not currently have any marketing, so potential customers are missing out because they do not know about it. Customers that might be knowledgeable about the company have a certain idea that prices are too high, so they tend to shy away. We are hoping that with this marketing campaign to bring excitement when individuals buy upscale/quality clothes from Apricot Lane.

The Creative Strategy & Execution

Method to Achieve Message Strategy

Our message is to persuade customers to make a purchase by letting them know that the prices for the store are worthwhile. A method to achieve this objective would be social media posts showcasing the quality of the clothes. The **strategic implications** that would go along with this would be increased customer satisfaction, as they would have reduced **post-purchase dissonance** about higher priced purchases from the store. The justification for this method would be using the method of **image advertising**. This would create a perception of the brand in whatever way the advertisement wants to express. In this case it would be promoting the quality of products offered and the experience of shopping in the store while putting slightly less focus on the price.

Execution

Our thoughts regarding the four creative pieces is that social media would be the preferred medium for reaching our target audience of women aged 15-27. In this **demographic** the vast majority are connected on various social media platforms, making this the perfect way to reach the college segment. This is also the most personal method of reaching customers and allows for personal interaction and **feedback** from them. It also allows for the best measurement of the reach of the advertisements. Following social media, the next best method would be a print advertisement in a school paper, for example the Vidette. The majority of readers of the paper are students at the university, which is the **demographic** the store aims to reach. Following that would be television or internet ads. While they can be effective, it is possible to skip them entirely making it more difficult to reach the consumer. Our least preferred method of advertising would be a billboard. In a college town like this, there are very few billboards that can be seen other than while commuting to and from school. They can also be easy to miss or ignore if they are only seen while driving.

We have decided to use an ad in a local newspaper such as the Vidette as our print media. The local ad will have a **headline** of the company's name, Apricot Lane Boutique. The **subhead** includes the call the action for our consumers, which is "Spring Into Action". The **body copy** for the ad includes information about where the boutique is located. The billboard has a similar look as the ad, giving the consumers a consistent message. The headline is bold and large with the company name, Apricot Lane Boutique, posted in the middle of the billboard. The **subhead** is in a unique font slanted above the headline stating "Spring Into Fashion". Located to the left,

there is a model wearing Apricot Lane's clothes, to show women the great and unique style they have. At the bottom right of the billboard, the **body copy** is present, stating the location of the boutique.

The next creative piece we have planned is an internet video. The video consists of attractive women being interviewed on the quad of Illinois State University. They are asked simple questions like "Where did you get your outfit?" The obvious answer is Apricot Lane. The music is trendy and upbeat in order to grab and keep our audiences' attention. In this short video, we do not have a spokesperson but the college girls are our attraction and models to showcase the brand. This internet video shows that college girls are purchasing the higher end fashion clothing items from the boutique, even though it is costing them a little extra money. This is persuading our **target market** to "Spring Into Action" and purchase the higher end clothing items they have always wanted.

Lastly, our social media piece will be presented through Instagram. This will be a promotional piece for Spring Cleaning. This is a little different than the other advertisements but it still involves the new season change of spring that is driving our customers to come to the boutique and purchase new clothing. Some of the approaches we chose to include in our creative brief include social ads and social listening. With social ads we hope to increase **brand awareness** to pull customers into our store, while showing that Apricot Lane has quality clothing for women, ultimately producing a sale. Also with social listening, Apricot Lane can establish communications between the customers to increase satisfaction and customer service, as well as gaining **feedback** from opinions given online.

Conclusion

Overall we planned this campaign in hopes of changing the minds of our target audience as well as to gain brand awareness throughout the community. We decided to lead our campaign with the saying “Spring into Fashion!” This statement shows that Apricot Lane is a fresh, new, trendy store that sells clothing and accessories that are “must-haves.” Our main objective of this campaign was to change the mindset of our target audience, young females (18-22 years old) in the Bloomington-Normal area (specifically on Illinois State and Illinois Wesleyan University's campuses). We wanted these consumers to not look at our products as overpriced clothing, but as high quality, trendy investments in their wardrobe that come with a one of a kind shopping experience. By creating advertisements and promotions that are fluid through every type of platform, we were able to create a solid foundation for our campaign. We used bright poppy colors to convey the season of spring and always used “Spring into Fashion!” somewhere within our creative piece to allow all the pieces to flow together. In conclusion, by analyzing Apricot Lane Boutique and the surrounding market we were able to distinguish our target market for our campaign. Then we had to create advertisements and promotional pieces that appealed to our audience as well as to convey our overall objective. After executing our campaign, we would hope that Apricot Lane Boutique has a new wave of consumers that will hopefully become loyal customers and follow our brand on all our social media platforms in order to continue our customer brand relationship. This project has been a great experience because we have learned how to listen to our client and match their voice in past advertisements, create an message and execute it through creative pieces that are appealing and effective.



Spring into Fashion

ApricotLane
BOU**TIQUE**

EXIT 165

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apricotlanenorm

3h



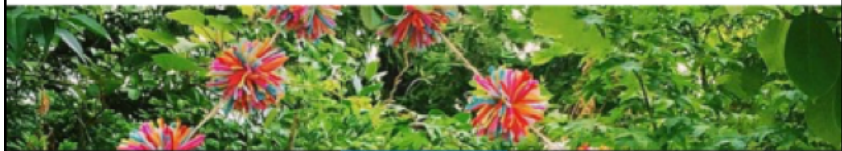
75 likes

apricotlanenormal SPRING IS HERE! Have you started Spring Cleaning yet? Help us clean out our store with a 15% OFF YOUR ENTIRE PURCHASE!!! Hurry in before the seasons change! #apricotlane #SpringIntoFashion #shopalbNormal



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Spring into Fashion

ApricotLane
BOU**TIQUE**

*Come check us out
in Uptown Normal*



Video Advertisement posted on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.



Fun upbeat music is playing in the back-ground.
Videos and candid photos of young female students sitting and walking on the Quad and through Uptown Normal, while laughing and smiling start rolling.
VOICE OVER (female): "The season and trends are changing"



Continued music and scenes.



Continued music.
Now showing this season's latest fashion trends and must haves.
VOICE OVER: "Is your closet ready for the warmer weather and hotter trends?"



Continued music.
Slow zoom in of Apricot Lane in Uptown Normal store front.
VOICE OVER: "Spring into Fashion at Apricot Lane Boutique in Uptown Normal!"



Continued music.

Panoramas and pictures of inside the boutique.

VOICE OVER: "At Apricot Lane you will receive a one-of-a-kind shopping experience, uniquely designed and merchandised with Fashion Apparel, Jewelry, Handbags, Accessories and Gifts in the latest styles and trends."



Music gets a bit louder.

Final picture/logo fades in as voice over starts.

VOICE OVER: "Visit us in Uptown Normal next CVS and the Post Office or online. And follow us on social media to keep up with the local trends and fashions. (slight pause) Apricot Lane Boutique, a unique boutique."

Reference Page

http://business.illinoisstate.edu/downloads/marketing/guidelines_preparation_of_written_assignments1.pdf

Arens, William F. and Michael F. Weigold (2017), *Contemporary Advertising and Integrated Marketing Communications, 15th edition*. New York: McGraw-Hill Education.