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The Project Shop

Lindsey Sullivan

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THE PROJECT SHOP

by

LINDSEY SULLIVAN

(Under the Direction of Santanu Majumdar)

ABSTRACT

The Project Shop is a Do-It-Yourself (DIY) brand designed to promote a value-creating activity that impacts the lives and personal development for those who participate. The strategic culmination of research, marketing, and graphic design generated during the creation of this brand is intended to attract a target demographic of 18-24 year olds. This target market is identified as a transient population often typified by being civic-minded and pragmatically idealist.

The Project Shop caters to the needs of its target market by concentrating on habits and particular styles of living. This demographic often seeks DIY projects that are customizable due to time, money, space and an overarching demand for personalization.

The Project Shop's brand tagline is "because we know you." This tagline is reinforced throughout the brand's touch points to foster a kindred connection between consumer and company. *The Project Shop* intends to create a partnership based on a shared vision that DIY activity can advance a sense of empowerment and community. When customers support *The Project Shop* they buy into a brand designed to encourage participation in a value-creating activity that can impact lives and personal development.

INDEX WORDS: BRANDING, MARKETING, GRAPHIC DESIGN, DO-IT-YOURSLEF, CORPORATE IDENTITY, ADVERTISING, MFA, GRADUATE DEGREE

The Project Shop

by

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B.A., Lynchburg College, 2012

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of Georgia Southern University in

Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF FINE ART

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Electronic Version Approved:
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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my father, Gary Sullivan. Thank you for forbidding me to quit graduate school.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| ACKNOWLEDGMENTS | 6 |
| LIST OF FIGURES | 8 |
| CHAPTER 1 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY | 9 |
| CHAPTER 2 TARGET MARKET | 10 |
| CHAPTER 3 WHY DIY? | 16 |
| CHAPTER 4 BRANDING | 18 |
| CHAPTER 5 MARKETING AND ADVERTISING..... | 23 |
| CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION..... | 34 |
| WORKS CITED | 36 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| | |
|---|----|
| Figure 2 – Infograph | 14 |
| Figure 3 – <i>The Project Shop</i> Logo | 19 |
| Figure 4 – Excerpt from Brand Manual | 20 |
| Figure 5 – Video Still..... | 24 |
| Figure 6 – Spiderman Title Sequence | 25 |
| Figure 7 – We Know the Tools 1..... | 26 |
| Figure 8 – We Know the Tools 2..... | 26 |
| Figure 9 – We Know the Tools 3..... | 27 |
| Figure 10 – We Know Possibilities 1..... | 28 |
| Figure 11 – We Know Possibilities 2..... | 28 |
| Figure 12 – “Desert” | 29 |
| Figure 13 – “Quick Fix” | 30 |
| Figure 14 – We Know Organization 1 | 31 |
| Figure 15 – We Know Organization 2 | 31 |
| Figure 16 – We Know Organization 3 | 32 |

CHAPTER 1

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Altering the target market of a company or product changes the overall marketing and advertising for that company or product. A heightened personal interest in Do-It-Yourself projects and companies combined with target market alteration were the motivating factors that inspired the creation of *The Project Shop*. Upon researching existing DIY companies, via observation and secondary sources, none were discovered that concentrated their target market(s) towards young adults. From this discovered gap in the market, the idea for *The Project Shop* was born to create a solution to this deficiency.

The Project Shop a hypothetical company, was created to grow my personal understanding within the graphic design concepts of corporate identity, branding, and marketing. *The Project Shop* is a DIY company focused on providing tools, products and projects to the Millennial and rising generations. *The Project Shop* consists of several graphic artifacts within the corporate identity, branding, and marketing; however, the underlying concept is to provide an avenue for the Millennial and rising generations to increase their level of hands-on participation in DIY projects. Such projects add value and empowerment to Millennials' lives, helping to dispel the current lackadaisical reputation they have acquired.

CHAPTER 2

TARGET MARKET

One tremendously important factor in marketing is to understand the intended target market. Marketing to a segment based on their chronological age is often referred to as “generational marketing,” and these generations are defined by a person’s year of birth (Schewe 4). The intended market for *The Project Shop* is 18-24 year olds, which are placed in the general classification of the Millennial generation (1981-2000) or, as yet to be fully defined, --Generation Z (post-Millennials). Regardless of what the classificatory term is for this group of people, there are several behavioral and demographic aspects to this market segment that have played a part in the overall decision-making process in the creation of *The Project Shop*. *The Project Shop* markets its products and services to 18-24 year olds, and there are several points about this market that I focused on in the creation of this brand and marketing campaign. This age group is a transient population, seeking Do-It- Yourself (DIY) projects that can be customized and generally are on a smaller scale due to time, money, and space constraints.

Understanding the transient nature of 18-24 year olds allows for a marketing theme to be specifically tailored toward a target market. According to “If You’ve Seen One, You’ve Seen Them All!-Are Young Millennials the Same Worldwide?” a 2013 article published in the *Journal of International Consumer Marketing*, “...a significant number of 22-29 year olds moved back in with their parents because of the recession or moved in with a roommate to cut costs” (Shewel 6). Similarly, the article, “Understanding the Millennial Consumer,” featured in *Trends Magazine* in 2012, states that “88% of Millennials express a desire to live in an urban setting and they are 50% more likely to live in a three- or four-person household than the nation as a whole...

These households are not necessarily comprised of traditional families. These choices are affecting what and how they buy” (“Understanding the Millennial Generation” 5-9).

The current statistics are showing that the products of the traditional home improvement store do not fit the current needs of Millennials. For example, stores like Home Depot, the largest home improvement specialty retailer in the United States, offers brands and products within home improvement, such as home décor, lawn and garden, building materials and their related services. However, their three primary customers are: homeowners, and professional customers, and small business owners and tradesmen (“Company Summary”). Retailers like these are not catering to the fact that the majority of 18-24 year olds are generally not homeowners and their DIY needs are on a smaller, more individualized scale. Likewise, there are retailers like Michaels whose specialty is art, crafts, framing, floral supplies and home décor for the hobbyist and do-it-yourself home decorator (“Company Overview of Michaels Inc.”). Though there are some DIY products that an 18-24 year can find at these retailers the retailers are not specifically targeting the 18-24 year old demographic. *The Project Shop* attracts this demographic because it offers products that could be utilized in a dormitory, apartment or rented home - these being the more likely residences of this age group (“The State of Young America: The Databook”).

In the investigation of the Millennial demographic, one of the consistent qualities of this group was their desire for customization. DIY projects allow for different levels of customization. Mentioned in “Understanding the Millennial Consumer,” Millennials are adopting a new interesting philosophy about ‘things’ and ‘ownership’. Now it is not about just owning something, but acquiring it (“Understanding the Millennial Consumer”). This philosophy speaks to the ability of DIY projects to be customized to their needs and wants. American Millennials are

“depicted as entrepreneurial, self-reliant, confident, and self-expressive” (Schewe 6). It is these personality traits that confirm the success of targeting DIY projects and products toward 18-24 year olds. This demographic would find satisfaction in the accomplishment and personalization found in DIY.

Beyond the academic research conducted to better understand the target market, I also created a survey and polled 100 random college students at Georgia Southern University to better confirm my hypothesis. This allowed for a firsthand glimpse at the current 18-24 year olds behaviors and needs. 10 questions were asked (see figure 1); these questions gave a general overview of the surveyor's level of involvement or potential involvement with DIY projects, using small tools, and their living arrangements.

Figure 1 – Survey

DIY Advertising Thesis Survey

I, _____, voluntarily agree to answer the following survey for Lindsey Sullivan's MFA Thesis. I understand that these questions are for academic purposes and this information will not be shared with others.

Year in school: _____

Email: _____@georgiasouthern.edu

Major: _____

Age: _____

Gender: _____

Home Type: _____ Apartment _____ Dorm _____ Rental House

1. Where do you see the most advertisements? (Circle all that apply)

- TV
- Radio (Pandora, FM/AM, Spotify)
- Internet Ads
- Print Ads (newspaper, magazines)
- Public Advertisements (billboards, bus ads, etc)

2. What keeps you engaged in an advertisement? (Circle all that apply)

- Humor
- Emotional connection
- Product being advertised
- Information learned
- Visual appeal

3. Do you participate in DIY projects? **Yes or No?**

If yes, please circle projects that would apply

- Large wood based projects
- Simple quick fix projects
- Storage/organization projects
- Craft/decoration projects

If other

If not, please briefly state why

4. Do you feel comfortable using small power tools? **Yes or No?**

5. Would you want to learn more about DIY projects? **Yes or No?**

6. What would motivate you to participate in DIY projects? (Please circle all that apply)

- a. Knowing different DIY projects
- b. Know how to do a DIY project
- c. Affordability of DIY projects
- d. Not interested in DIY projects
- e. Other

If other, please briefly explain _____

7. Do you feel like you would need guided instructions for DIY projects? **Yes or No?**

If yes, what type of video instruction would you prefer?

- a. Video instruction/ tutorial
- b. Printed step by step manual with illustrations
- c. Audio instructions
- d. Both A and B

8. Do you feel a sense of connectedness to hand made objects? **Yes or No?**

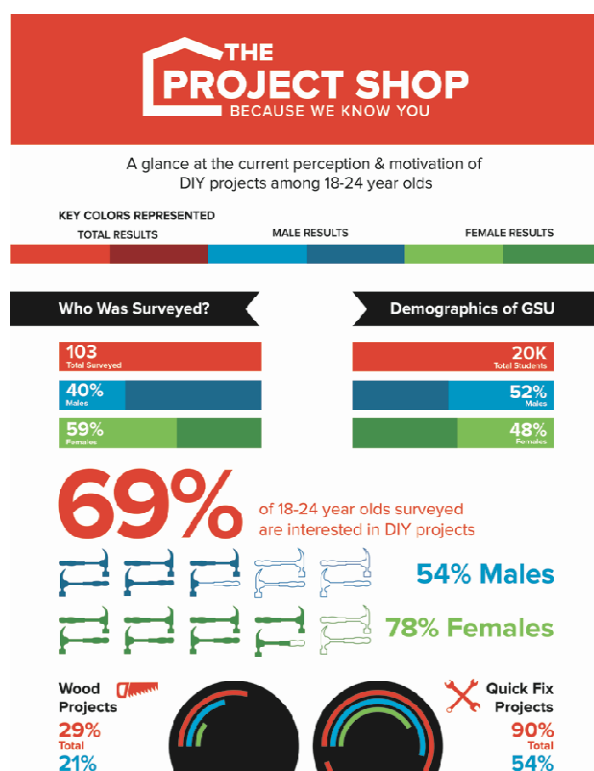
9. Do you think DIY are sustainable solutions? **Yes or no?**

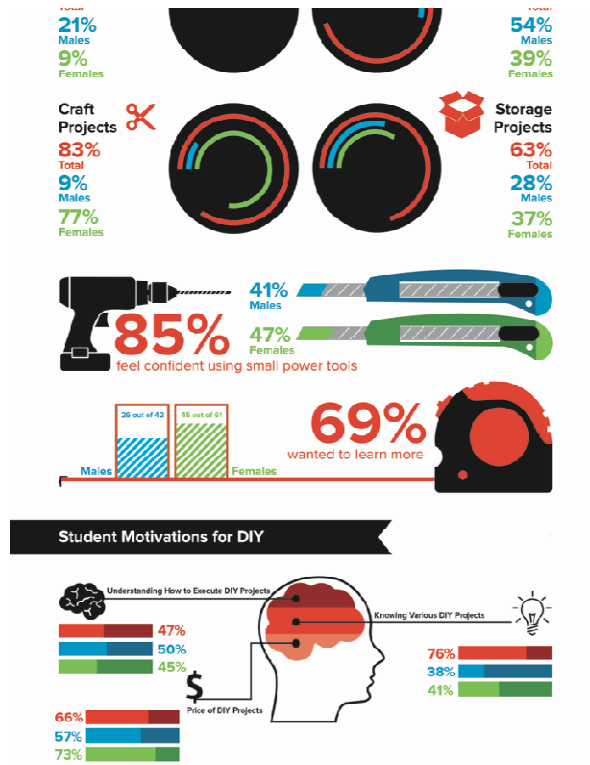
10. Do you think DIY projects could save you money? **Yes or No?**

Further questions revealed the surveyor's preferences on specific advertising channels and the frequency of their viewing these advertisements, discussed in the chapter on advertising. From this study, a total of 103 students were surveyed, 41 were male and 62 were female. The most relevant statistic from this study was that 69% are currently interested in DIY projects. This overall statistic validates why a DIY company for this demographic would be successful. The survey placed the DIY projects into four categories: small wood projects, quick fix projects, storage and organization, and craft projects. In relation to housing, it was found that 47% surveyed

lived in apartments, 7% lived in residence halls, and 40% lived in rented homes. The gender breakdown of these questions can be seen in Figure 2.

Figure 2 – Infograph





This survey and other secondary sources, were the basis for most of the decision made during the creation of *The Project Shop*. Because 18-24 year olds do not generally own their own homes, they would have no need for products and services like appliance installation or renovation supplies, but a desk organizer or portable wine rack were projects that would be more likely to interest them. I looked to create a DIY brand that not only provided products and services that understood this generation on a personal level, but on a practical level as well. After understanding the reasoning behind choosing the 18-24 year old target market, the next aspect of this brand should be to understand more about DIY as a whole.

CHAPTER 3

WHY DIY?

Do-it-yourself, often shortened to DIY, has been associated with consumers since at least 1912, however, there is little literature on the motivations behind why people engage in DIY projects (Wolf and McQuitty 195). Dr. Marco Wolf, a professor within the Department of Marketing and Merchandising at the University of Southern Mississippi Gulf Coast, and Dr. Shaun McQuitty, a professor at Athabasca University in Canada conducted an impactful study empirical study. The two professors have written two papers on the DIY field: *Circumventing Traditional Markets: an Empirical Study of the Marketplace Motivations and Outcomes of Customers' Do-It-Yourself Behaviors* and *Do-It-Yourself Projects as Path toward Female Empowerment in a Gendered Marketplace*. Studies like these reveal more understanding of the DIY process and I was able to take these findings and translate them into useful points in my brand and marketing.

First, there are several different variations of the do-it-yourself definition, but for the branding and marketing of *The Project Shop*, DIY is defined similarly as self-serving, by means of building or constructing something without the use of professional help from assembled parts. When looking at what Wolf and McQuitty studied about DIY, I found their marketplace motivations for DIY behavior most beneficial. To put it simply, there are different reasons to engage in DIY projects such as leisure and recreation, satisfaction of completing a project, or to enhance one's identity (Wolf and McQuitty 196-197). The motivations, found by Wolf and McQuitty's study, for an 18-24 year old to engage in DIY fall under the framework of the economic benefit of DIY and the lack of product availability. Both of these factors complement

the findings discussed in the previous chapter about 18-24 year olds' behavior and demographics. Wolf and McQuitty's research validated the broader meaning behind bringing a DIY retailer to 18-24 year olds; they stated, "value is created as the consumer learns how to use, maintain, repair, and adapt these goods to his or her unique needs, usage situation, and behavior" (Wolf and McQuitty 197). DIY behavior is a value-creating activity and impacts the lives and personal development of those who participate. This point coincides with breaking the stereotype that 18-24 year olds are lazy, entitled, and fickle because DIY projects give them an opportunity to prove the value in being hands-on (Lublin 72-74).

CHAPTER 4

BRANDING

The basic elements of branding developed naturally in this project. An actual retail store in the DIY field, geared solely to the transient 18-24 year, old does not exist.

This hole in the marketplace allowed for the creation of a brand that differentiates itself from other brands and to create an image for that band that stands out in the mind of the prospective customer; thus *The Project Shop* was born.

According to Alina Wheeler, author of *Designing Brand Identity*, “branding is the promise, the big idea, the reputation, and expectations that reside in each customer’s mind about the product and/or the company” (Wheeler 2). Since *The Project Shop* is a hypothetical company, a model of what could be, if given the right investors, these designs fall under the category within the brand identity: the visual and verbal expression of a brand and the tangible creations of the brand (Wheeler 4).

The first element that builds the awareness and recognition of *The Project Shop* is the logo. Wheeler dissects a logo into three basic elements: shape, color, and content. Each of these elements triggers an interpretation with the viewer, i.e. potential customer. *The Project Shop* logo (Figure 3) consists of both symbol and text that is short and memorable. This combination makes it a combination mark.

Figure 3 – *The Project Shop* Logo



The symbol is a stylized, geometric figure of a house - symbiotically signifying the viewer to conceptualize his or her own place of residence. Simultaneously the viewer is able to read the name of the company. *The Project Shop* is a descriptive name and conveys the nature of the business. According to Wheeler, the benefit of a descriptive name is that it clearly communicates the intent of the company (Wheeler 41).

Lastly, color can be used to evoke emotion, express personality, and stimulate brand association; therefore, the color of the logo is white, but as delineated in the brand guidelines, the logo should always be presented on a red-orange (appropriately named The Project Shop Orange, PMS 172) or black background (Figure 4) (Wheeler 84).

Figure 4 – Excerpt from Brand Manual

COLOR LOGO**BLACK & WHITE LOGO**

The Project Shop logo is the visual heart of our company. It is the cornerstone for the best communication of our brand and it should appear on all materials to continue to build brand awareness.

10

There are elements of both red and orange that *The Project Shop* utilizes in appealing to their audience. According to Kate Smith, who independently helps many companies, such as InStyle, MSNBC, and Yahoo! News, to understand, predict, and capitalize on color, states that red is recognized as a stimulant, and is inherently exciting (Smith). The intent of the color orange is used to communicate energy, life, motivation, and activity. The Project Shop's ultimate goal is to motivate 18-24 year olds to participate in DIY projects. Moreover, in 1985, Angela Wright founded the European company Colour Affects to help individuals and organizations harness the profound psychological influence of color on human response and behavior (Wright). According to Wright, for the creation of a new brand, the creator needs to identify the brand's characteristics, values, and aspirations. Then they decide on the most appropriate color/color group to communicate the brand personality, and the desired message. Finally, the creator needs to ensure that the hue, shade, or tone used across all brand communications is drawn from that color/color group (Wright).

Wright's analysis of orange, being a combination of red and yellow is stimulating and reaction to it is a combination of the physical and the emotional (Wright). Red/Orange holds a vibrancy and energy that evokes creativity and attracts attention without being overpowering and therefore makes my decision to use the red/orange combination the appropriate color choice. The Project Shop Orange (PMS 172) is a fully saturated and vibrant shade, which is easily seen and identified.

Before the touch-points for *The Project Shop* brand could be created, the brand guidelines needed to be established. Brand guidelines not only safeguard the integrity of the design and designer, but brand guidelines ensure the consistency of the brand. The brand guidelines for *The Project Shop* include more elements than just basic designation of the logo do's and don'ts, the appropriate colors, and the correct font family. The main visual aspects of this identity are addressed as well, ensuring that readers understand why branding is an essential element of design.

And lastly, the personality of the brand is defined. The brand personality specifies how *The Project Shop* should be perceived and sets the overall tone. The four concepts of the brand personality are: empowerment, service, customization and relevance. The Brand personality supports Wolf and McQuitty's findings for DIY consumer behaviors and value outcomes. They state, "these findings suggest that managers in the DIY industry should attend carefully to strategies for managing the perceptions of success associated with whether or not these customers view DIY as a value-creating activities (Wolf and McQuitty 205). Defining and maintaining the tone of *The Project Shop* helps to manage the perception associated with the customers' potential DIY projects.

The brand manual also addresses touch points such as the stationary. Creating these elements such as stationery, employee uniforms, and showcasing the vehicle

signage are important reinforcements of the touch points. Moreover, these are great opportunities to strengthen a brand and to communicate its essence (Wheeler 3).

A branding technique employed throughout the work is emotional branding. Marc Gobe, author of *Emotional Branding: the new paradigm for connecting brands to people*, elaborates on emotional branding in that “people want to deal with corporations that are responsive and sensitive to their unique needs. They want a relationship with the brand” (Gobé 30). I believed that the use of emotional branding throughout the development of *The Project Shop* would yield success if this ever became something beyond a fictitious company, because of the characteristics of the 18-24 year old target market. This target marketing would respond to a sense of community, new ideas, and companies with a philosophy (Gobé 27). *The Project Shop’s* tagline, “because we know you,” is the departure point where potential customers can connect with the brand. “Because we know you” captures the company’s brand essence, personality, and positioning (Wheeler 42). By proclaiming that *The Project Shop* “knows” you as a potential customer reinforces that the company understands you as a person, along with the DIY needs that you are facing. This brand position was the cornerstone of all the marketing and advertising efforts created after establishing the brand.

The objective of the advertising campaign was to increase brand awareness. *The Project Shop* would be hitting the market as a new brand, and would be in the introductory phase of the product life cycle. In this time period, *The Project Shop* marketing would be focusing on gaining customer awareness and informing these potential customers what *The Project Shop* offers and what it is all about.

CHAPTER 5

MARKETING AND ADVERTISING

The marketing strategy emulates the fundamental principles described by Kenneth E. Clow and Donald Baack in *Integrated Advertising, Promotion, and Marketing Communications*. Referring back to Figure 2, the informational graphic created from the survey of 18-24 year olds, the survey asked for participants to rate their most viewed advertising **channels**. 75% mostly viewed television ads, seconded by 57% viewing Internet ads, 27% audio ads, 24% public ads, and lastly 8% viewing print ads. These results catalyzed my decision to create two video commercial ads, which could either be broadcasted television advertisements or be viewed on the Internet. In my thesis show, I presented these as television advertisements, along with created print advertisements. Even though print ads were viewed least I felt the elements of print design could easily be transferred to either online advertisements or public advertisements. The print ads gave a great illustration of how the message theme could be translated from one marketing channel, video, to a two-dimensional platform, such as direct mail.

My video advertisements also set the stage for the theoretical approach of the means-end chain. The means-end chain suggests that an advertisement should contain a message, or means, that leads the consumer to a desired end state. These end states are personal values. Means-end chains should start a thought process, which leads the consumer to believe using the product will help achieve one of their personal values (Clow and Baack 150). The video advertisements also use an emotional appeal, connecting back to the idea of emotional branding: the

advertisement can capture a viewer's attention and create an attachment between the consumer and the brand (Clow and Baach 126). Utilizing an affective message strategy to elicit an emotion of empowerment, the commercial displays a scene that a typical 18-24 year might encounter, including their interests, goals, and limitations. These scenes are juxtaposed with someone building a DIY project. As they are building this project, there is text stating what *The Project Shop* has to offer them, with the end scene depicting a finished product and the phrase "We know you can, because we know you." This story enhances the values of self-expression and self-achievement, eliciting a sense of empowerment. Formally, for the title sequence, as seen from a frame still in Figure 5, I contrasted the white and orange text, separating the consistent phrase "we know" in white with what was known in orange, i.e. "relationships, goals, tools, limitations, you can, you..."

Figure 5 – Video Still



I referenced several current commercials, specifically the Android commercial, And You. This Android commercial juxtaposed the contrasting color of the font (green and white) to add emphasis to the changing words. I emulated this type of color contrast in

my work. I looked at the title sequence work by designer Kyle Cooper, who designs title sequences for major motion pictures, such as *Seven* and *Spiderman*. Cooper's style, as seen in Figure 6, uses a more intricate use of type. I was able to learn how typography could be used in a title sequence; however, my type is extremely simple.

Figure 6 – Spiderman Title Sequence



The next form of advertisements presented, in this thesis show, was a series of three sets of print ads. Each series consisted of three 8.5" X 11" prints that can be used in either print form or online. The message of "we know" from the video commercial was continued throughout these print advertisements. In the first series, Figure 7,8,and 9, the phrase "we know tools" is utilized.

Figure 7 – We Know the Tools 1

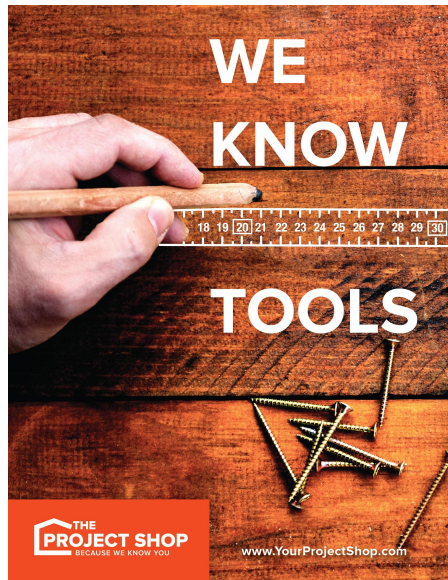


Figure 8 – We Know the Tools 2



Figure 9 – We Know the Tools 3



The Project Shop showcased a range of tools for customers in this series that are very generic and do not identify a specific brand. These advertisements do not indicate a specific brand because the intent is to sell *The Project Shop* as a brand itself; future advertisements could include brand recognition if *The Project Shop* were ever established as a viable company.

The next series of advertisements, Figures 10, 11, emphasized the phrase “we know possibilities.”

Figure 10 – We Know Possibilities 1



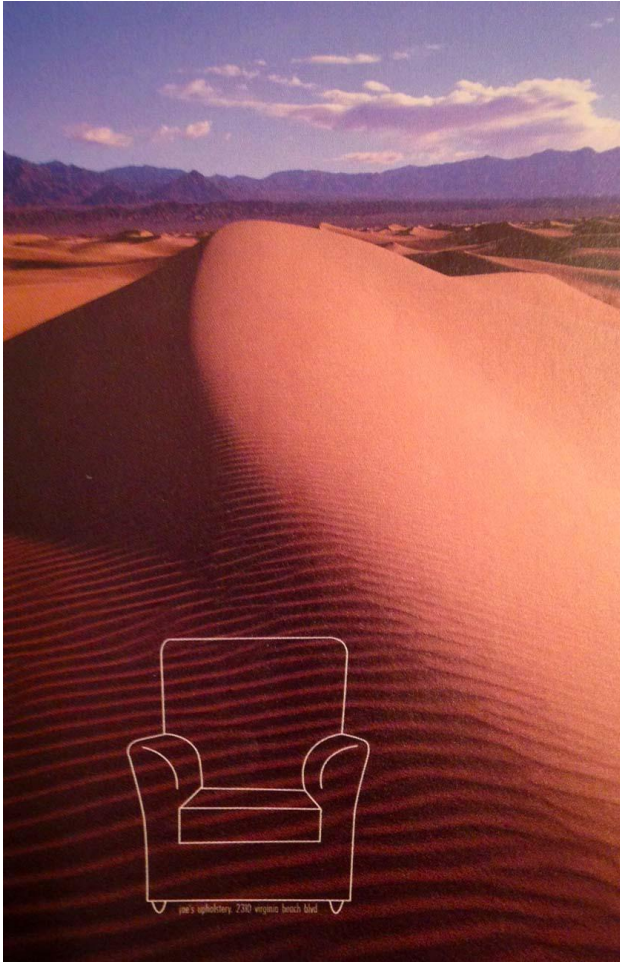
Figure 11 – We Know Possibilities 2



This phrase is indicative of *The Project Shops*' extensive knowledge of DIY projects.

This design choice was inspired by an advertisement series, under the art direction of Michael Ashley and Diana Tung, called "Desert", for their client Joe's Upholstery in Virginia Beach (Figure 12).

Figure 12 – “Desert”



The illustration work gives the viewer the ability to use their imagination to see what they need or want the project to look like. I also found the simplicity of Ashley and Tung's design to be powerful because the viewer only had to process three pieces of information: the image, the illustration, and the text. There were several other advertisements, such as "Quick Fix with IKEA", Figure 13 that also only had three pieces of information: the image the text, and the logo. I emulated this theme in my designs and each of the series of print ads is a combination of illustration and image.

Figure 13 – “Quick Fix”



Lastly, Figures 14, 15, and 16, use the phrase, “we know organization.” These three do not use illustrations, however they showcase an actual DIY project. Using the image of an actual DIY project shows the viewer exactly how they could solve an organizational problem. Whereas, in the previous advertisements, Figures 10,11, and 12, the message depicted was about the potential not the finite. All three sets of advertisements have the same goal: brand awareness. The message is to make viewers aware of the business *The Project Shop*, what it has to offer, and its specialty or niche.

Figure 14 – We Know Organization 1



Figure 15 – We Know Organization 2



Figure 16 – We Know Organization 3



As technology continues to advance, branding, marketing, and advertising must advance, too. As a result of society's growth, a social media campaign was created. Social media, according to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, is defined as forms of electronic communication (Web sites for social networking and micro blogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos). The top three social networking sites were utilized: Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. For businesses and brands, social media allows for a direct two-way conversation between the business and the consumer. According to Maria Vernuccio, author of, "Communicating Corporate Brands Through Social Media: An Exploratory Study," communicating corporate brands through social media implies a new collaborative strategy based on two fundamental approaches: interactivity and openness (Vernuccio 212 - 233). For *The Project Shop*, social media interaction consists of *The Project Shop* disseminating information, such as project ideas, companywide sales, articles, company news or

contests, and consumer's responses. Their response can be on social media, or an action, such as visiting the store, or the website. Within social media, there is the use of a hashtag, which is a word or a phrase that begins with a hash (pound sign #) to identify messages on a specific topic. Hashtags should be original, so content that is marked by a specific hashtag will localize a specific topic, brand, or event. I chose the hashtag, #youcanDIY, to reinforce the sense of empowerment a DIY project can afford.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The Project Shop is an exploration of branding, marketing, advertising, and the research into 18-24 year olds lifestyles'. Fundamentally, a DIY company can offer more to this target market than just service. DIY projects, as a whole, allow for 18-24 year olds to engage in hands-on activities, which, leads to a sense of value and empowerment. The overall branding movement of this company is geared toward portraying these ideals. However, for the underlying principle of value and empowerment to be portrayed, this brand needed a visual solution. Visuals ensure that a customers could first identify with the brand via the corporate identity, then connect with the brand on a personal level via the marketing, and finally be drawn into the products and ideals that the brand has to offer via the advertisements. Each of the visual and virtual touch points created - the commercials, the print advertisements, the social campaign - incorporate the theme that *The Project Shop* knows its clientele's needs and also how DIY projects can affect their lives with both significance and practicality.

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