

Richard Mendell

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Overview

Successful consumer branding innovator with broad experience and a solid track record in classical marketing, market strategy, research, branding, analytics, brewing, product development and project management.

Professional Experience

Crocs Inc., Niwot, CO

October 2013 – May 2014

Retail Marketing Manager, Americas Retail

Returning to Colorado, joined the Crocs brand to lead the Retail Marketing team for North America, a team tasked with planning, executing and analyzing marketing programs and promotions for the shoe brand's retail stores.

- Identified areas of cost opportunity, where ROI was not being achieved.
 - Aligned online and traditional marketing calendars, as well as promotions and buys.
 - Created marketing programs focused on increasing traffic count and driving profitability.
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Fazoli's Restaurants, Lexington, KY

July 2013 – October 2013

Director of Catering and Local Restaurant Marketing Systems

In a newly created role provided direction, innovation and structure to both the catering and trade area marketing programs of the resurgent Italian food fast casual concept. Tasked with driving innovation in both marketing and operations functions to grow the brand's catering profits, enhancing CRM and marketing tools, and improving the ways in which local trade area marketing programs are executed by restaurant level staff.

- Identified long standing areas of opportunity in both catering operations and marketing, including inconsistent promotions and operational procedures between company and franchisee owned restaurants.
 - Conducted a process and performance review that resulted in stepping away from more than 20 money losing captive kiosk events monthly, resulting in nearly \$100k in avoided losses annually.
 - Introduced an internal sales building tool that rewarded stores and employees for growing catering sales volumes.
 - Created the business case and RFP for the brand's first ever customer relationship management (CRM) tool.
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Customer Innovation Factory, Edmond, OK & Longmont, CO

September 2009 – June 2013

Marketing Strategy Consultant

Provided both strategic and tactical marketing innovation for small and mid-sized businesses, as well as non-profits, in Colorado, Oklahoma, Kansas and Texas.

- Created and executed a first ever marketing plan for a training software startup that specifically targeted the needs of companies in the hospitality industry.
- Unbundled a multi-concept restaurant operator's web presence by establishing unique consumer sites for each of their brands and ensuring that consumers were able to quickly find these sites by using SEO tools such as site mapping and adjacent domain redirects.
- Contributed, pro bono, to both a significant net increase in donations and a measurable increase in local media exposure for a local charitable organization by conducting a "start doing/stop doing" analysis of their marketing efforts, including the creation of a social media presence that deepened donors' connection to the charity's activities.
- Delivered a 20% year over year improvement in sales, paired with a 15% jump in traffic and a net decrease in advertising expenses for an Oklahoma City area multi-unit, multi-brand operator. Conducted consumer and market research that resulted in both their first ever brand strategy and marketing calendar which, combined, led to nearly \$1 million in system sales growth.

**Sonic Corp. (Sonic Drive-Ins), Oklahoma City, OK
October 2007 – July 2009*****Director of Consumer Engagement***

Appointed to newly created role leading cross-functional groups focused on engagement and innovation in both national and local marketing programs. Led efforts in both qualitative research and quantitative research which focused on the realities of how both current and lapsed customers perceived the brand and how those perceptions impacted sales, transactions and profitability.

- Redefined the organization's view of how consumers experience the brand on site by leading a series of qualitative and quantitative shopper marketing research projects in concert with Paco Underhill's Envirosell group. The learnings from which have been used to transform the entire brand's on and off site messaging strategy and reinforce key brand consumer touch points.
- Led the team that "re-launched" Tots, a side item that is part of the brand identity, with product improvements, new packaging, a new market positioning and a multi-channel ad.
- Championed and then led the gathering and disseminating of syndicated data within the organization including NPD-CREST, Technomic, Phoenix, Sandelman and others, so as to bring outside perspective to the decision making process.
- Conducted focus groups that directly led to the adoption of entirely new packaging for the brands popular shakes and malts; packaging that appeared more premium than the previously used foam cups, but which kept the foam interior that consumers said they loved.
- Worked with franchisees on a stalled digital message board program to understand the obstacles to their adoption of the program and then developed and executed programs that led to their investing more \$30 million in that same program.

Director of Marketing Channels

Led both the development of and execution of national and on site advertising and marketing efforts while working with individual product and segment managers to allocate products and promotions across both the marketing calendar and available marketing channels.

- In tandem with the Brand and Sr Management Teams, delivered Strategic Marketing and Promo Calendars with tiered both broadcast and digital media, on-lot collateral, social media and local store messaging.
- Strategic development of and execution of a network of more than 1200 digital message boards, including real-time changes to on-screen messages customized on the corporate, local and franchisee levels while maintaining brand continuity, identity and standards across all messages and boards.
- Introduced more than \$100,000 a year in cost savings by completely redesigning store level marketing communications, moving most materials to digital distribution.

**Subway Franchisee Advertising Fund Trust (Subway Restaurants), Milford, CT
January 2006 – October 2007*****Senior Manager, In-Store (On Premise) Experience***

Recruited for a newly created role with the global brand and tasked with leading innovation in the arena of customer experience. Work included advertising, communications, digital, branding and product development.

- Led both the traditional and Hispanic consumer research that resulted in the move to add new, healthier, line extensions and add-on products (including apple slices, raisins, yogurt and milk), and then led the project team that executed the successful global launch of the Subway Fresh Fit menu in 2006, which added more than 5% to sales gains for the year.
- Planned and executed ground breaking customer research in partnership with Envirosell to understand how guests interacted with the signage, hardware, staff and unique flow of Subway Restaurants. This research fundamentally changed where and how marketing messages were communicated in restaurants.
- Delivered both record growth in same-store sales and in beverage and side unit volumes while leading the, both multi-organizational and cross functional, 2007 Subway Menu Team. The team created and deployed new menu boards and customer information flow patterns for more than 23,000 locations in 5 countries (US, Canada, UK, Australia and New Zealand).
- As project team leader, initiated and led the market and consumer studies that resulted in both the testing of and the UK launch of breakfast at Subway.
- Launched dynamic mobile marketing initiative using a combination of mobile web, WAP, and SMS to create real time customer interactions with POP and dynamic couponing tied to inventory, weather and other external metrics.

CKE Restaurants, Inc. (Carl's Jr.), Carpinteria, CA
June 2001 – December 2005***Manager, Brand Merchandising***

Moving with the company to the Santa Barbara area, took on wider responsibilities in a new role focused on all aspects of brand marketing and national advertising, with a special focus on bringing new products to market and delivering a cohesive experience across all customer points of contact. Within this role developed and launched well known products such as The Six Dollar Burger and created, from scratch, an entirely new coffee brand called Channel Islands Roasting Co.

- Led product life cycle teams from research, through innovation, and then to launch for more than 20 new product tests and launches in five years, delivering well in excess of \$100 million in total sales growth. Products launched included:
 - Hand Scooped Ice Cream Shakes and Malts – Drove shake volume from 20/day to nearly 100/day.
 - The Six Dollar Burger Line – Transitioned the core of the menu from burgers with an average price of \$2.50 to burgers with an average price of \$4.25, increasing average check by nearly 30% overall.
 - The Pastrami Burger – Leveraging a regional favorite found in select Southern California independent burger stands, created a product that prompted Jay Leno to proclaim the burger featured “meat as a condiment”.
 - Chicken Strips – Replacing a sub-par chicken nugget sold only in kid’s meals with premium chicken strips created an entirely new category for the brand.
- Tasked with stemming and reversing declines in the breakfast daypart, conducted focus groups and online research to understand reasons behind lapsed customer behavior.
- Created entirely new coffee brand, Channel Islands Roasting Company, in response to consumer and market research on coffee trends, including custom coffee blends, improved brewing procedures, all new packaging, retail coffee sales and an entirely new brand identity. In doing so, both successfully quintupled coffee sales, grew profitability and grow the overall breakfast daypart by 20% (all over previous year).
- Conducted consumer research that led to re-organizing and streamlining the chain’s legacy menu and completely changing the physical layout and appearance of the menu boards to complement the overall brand strategy, optimize menu mix and drive highly profitable beverage sales to increase store level profitability by more than \$10,000 per store, per year, ongoing.
- Re-launched the carlsjr.com and hardees.com websites with complete redesigns featuring immersive content and leveraging relationships with Hollywood studios, video game producers and technology companies to create cross-promotional content, all of which drove site visits and increased view time, helping to deepen consumers' relationship with the brands.
- As architect of the brand’s strategic marketing calendar, led cross-functional teams, including Operations, Product Development, Finance, Logistics and Training staff, in addition to marketing, to drive new menu items through their life cycle, from ideation and planning, onto product development, testing and, finally, system wide launch.
- Used social media, rich content web advertising and public relations to create “buzz” around new product news, including the infamous Paris Hilton campaign supporting The Six Dollar Burger line and the Webby nominated Chili Burger launch campaign.

Merchandising Manager

Recruited to join the iconic burger brand and leveraged experience in national agency management, creative oversight, calendar planning and print production to deliver immediate savings while improving the brand’s “go to market” ability.

- Delivered \$2 million in cost savings to both franchisees and the corporation while improving service to operators in the field by creating and implementing new systems for the production, fulfillment and billing of Point of Purchase materials.

**Pepsico/Yum Brands (Taco Bell Corp.), Irvine, CA
March 1996 – June 2001**

Marketing Services Analyst

Promoted within existing role to better represent the scope of projects being handled, including new efforts to streamline POP procedures and continuing efforts to successfully deploy a multi-million dollar menu board system.

- Saved more than \$3 million in lost time, wasted production and vendor lawsuits by successfully rescuing a troubled new menu system through the creation of a system to identify and correct manufacturer defects before hardware was delivered to stores.
- Facilitated ground breaking consumer research in concert with King-Casey group to understand how customers interacted with the physical design of Taco Bell restaurants.
- Managed the process and systems integration during a change of both national and local agencies after a account review which led to both groups changing.
- Recognized with a “Taco Bell Way” award for creating and implementing a completely new franchise POP subscription system that successfully decreased costs while improving order accuracy.

Marketing Services Coordinator

Joined the Marketing Services team to ensure store level marketing needs were being met.

- Traveled throughout the system to troubleshoot franchisee challenges in POP.
- Led a strategic analysis of POP usage & efficacy which changed the way the brand used POP in promotional modules.

Marketing Assistant

Joined the brand to act as liaison between field staff and the rest of the corporate marketing team.

- Put together new communications procedures to ensure timely flow of information to and from field team members, ensuring that corporate staff had a better understanding of franchisee needs/concerns, enabling more efficient sell-in of marketing programs.

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Arts in Political Science – California State University, Long Beach – 1996