

- ▶ CRM
  - Database
  - Custom Content
- ▶ Media 360°
  - Magazines
  - Broadcast/Cable
- ▶ Online Marketing
  - Search Engine
  - Email
- ▶ Multi-Channel
  - Catalogs
  - Direct
- ▶ Presence Marketing
  - Trade Shows
  - Events
  - Promotion & PR

Related Publications

**DIRECT**  
Multichannel Merchant  
PROMO

**JOBZone**  
For Search Partners

Please click here to complete a very brief survey and enter a drawing to win one of five \$50 Amazon.com gift certificates

Thank you!

## Experiential Makeover, BrandAnimation Edition: Part 2

By Erik Hauser



I got some great feedback from my [previous column](#). As it turns out, I actually do have a few readers who aren't my parents, clients, or associates. Thank you to everyone who responded, including my mom. Although she just likes to point out the dozens of grammatical gaffes and usage blunders in every column—to be expected from someone who has read [William Safire](#) in "The New York Times Magazine" every week for 25 years. Plus, when compared to my sister-in-law, [Wendy](#), who just published her second book (plug below) and writes for the "New York Post," I should definitely keep my day (and night) job.

Anyway, in the previous column, I briefly reviewed some of [Gap's](#) missteps in recent years. To turn the ship around, I believe the retailer needs to do a relevancy and experience analysis of its entire brand and overhaul everything from its stores to its clothes to its marketing.

So where do we start? How about the store experience. First, has anyone ever noticed the lighting in a Gap? It's worse than an airport bathroom. Let's do something about that. Next, its merchandising hasn't seemed to change in 15 years.

I think a complete redesign of their store environment is a must. Make Gap stores inviting and pleasant to the consumer while connecting on an emotional level far beyond their current state, no matter who the customer is. Both of Gap's sister brands, [Banana Republic](#) and [Old Navy](#) have done a much better job with their retail environments.

"Jeans for Everyone." That is a sign my friend recently saw outside her local Gap. Is this what people want? To be wearing jeans made for the masses? The old Volkswagen of clothes? There is nothing wrong with making a solid product for mainstream America. Only when it comes to clothes, I would stay away from statements such as these. There is no "everyone." People don't think of themselves as "everyone". Gap has lost its audience and now needs to find its customers again. Be it redefining itself for a younger generation or maturing with its former customer base, it needs to find its niche and make its clothes accordingly. We all need wardrobe basics, but with more and more consumer choices in the clothing industry, there is much less of a need for those basics to be so...basic.

SAVE THIS   
 EMAIL THIS   
 PRINT THIS   
 MOST POPULAR  
 RSS   
 Bloglines   
 MY YAHOO!   
 newsgator

### Sponsored Content

**COMING JULY 17: NEW WEBINAR--ELECTION 2008: E-mail Tips from a Political Insider**

**ON DEMAND WEBINAR--How Cleaning Your Circ Files Can Cut Your Postal Rates**

**ON DEMAND WEBINAR--ACQUISITION 2.0: Acquiring Customers that "Stick"**

**ON DEMAND WEBINAR--Leverage Your Database for Many Happy Returns**

### Recent Articles from CHIEF Marketer

- **COLLOQUY Corner: Building Loyalty, Building a Database**
- **x+1 promo**
- **E-commerce: Meet the New Boss**
- **Three Trends That Will Transform Your Loyalty Strategy**
- **Unleash the Power of Events, Gift Bags, and Celebrities**
- **Analytics in Perspective: Keep It Simple and Relevant**

Lastly, Gap needs to do something about its advertising. Although someone in my office jokingly called me the Mo Rocca of marketing and advertising, I always prefer constructive commentary when it comes to the work of other agencies. And in Gap's case, I can't blame its choice in 2004 to go with Crispin Porter. However, I haven't seen anything up to the quality of work Crispin has done for Burger King or others, and I thought its watchmechange.com concept was a desperate attempt to re-create old magic. I strongly believe Gap needs to use more creative media and messaging to communicate with consumers, and it has left a lot of potential opportunities on the table and has not truly used a "world as our canvas" marketing approach.

Well, without going on any further, I wanted to leave some space for a few of the responses I received last week.

Matt, UConn class of '95, who I previously mentioned and also happens to be a CHIEF MARKETER subscriber/loyal reader, "couldn't agree more about how Gap has misfired on many occasions." However, he does add one positive move the company has made in a previously untapped market: maternity clothes. Matt (and I assume his wife, Daina) felt that Gap Maternity provides pregnant women with a great selection of professional and casual clothes. He also went on a long diatribe about our beloved Huskies, their recent loss in the Big East tournament, and their chances in the NCAA tournament. Let's hope they are still around in the tourney when this is published.

Stephanie from California felt that "Gap needs to attach themselves to a relevant designer and completely revamp their entire product line. While some guys may still be okay with Gap jeans and clothes, I can't think of one girl I know who shops there. In the world of 7 for All Mankind and Chip and Pepper, let's face it, wearing Gap jeans is just not cool."

Andrea from Chicago adds, "If Gap is supposed carry the basics, and Old Navy has all the basics, but cheaper, what again is the Gap's brand position?"

Dan in San Francisco: "I think Gap, Inc. needs to either buy or create a more fashionable property, morph Gap and Old Navy stores into one, and leave Banana Republic alone. That would leave the company with three primary retail clothing stores: one for the cheap basics, one for urban fashion to compete with and Urban Outfitters, and one for higher-end apparel."

Last, I've always said "They need to ditch the boring blue square and go to Brand = Experience and away from Brand = ID model. If your brand doesn't stand for anything anymore, why not completely reinvent everything, including the logo."

Let's hope Gap is able to turn things around this year. I would love to see this hometown company return to its former glory.

So that's it for this week. And if you're still looking for something to read, why not pick up Wendy Straker's new book, "Men At Work." You can get it at Amazon.com.

*Erik Hauser is creative director/founder of San Francisco-based marketing firm Swivel Media and founder of IXMA, the International Experiential Marketing Association. He also moderates the Experiential Marketing Forum and pens the biweekly BrandAnimation column for CHIEF MARKETER.*

#### RSS Newsfeeds from Chief Marketer



Ads by Google

**[Old Navy - Official Site](#)**  
Take cover from the cold in chic maternity coats, sweaters & more.  
[www.oldnavy.com](http://www.oldnavy.com)

---

**[Consumer Behavior](#)**  
Analyze Your Customer's Behavior Find Possible Defectors & Spenders.  
[www.LoyaltyBuilders.com](http://www.LoyaltyBuilders.com)

---

**[Plus Size Maternity Wear](#)**  
Great Expectations! Shop Plus Size Maternity Wear for the Mom to Be.  
[www.OneStopPlus.com](http://www.OneStopPlus.com)

Want to use this article? [Click here for options!](#)



[Back to Top](#)