

Big Lots trying to go viral

Discount retailer produces videos in attempt to generate buzz

Paid Talk. Big Lots isn't counting on consumers to promote its brand. Rather, the discount retailer has created four viral videos and expects its 38,000 store associates to pass it along to their friends and family members to help spark buzz.

Health Delivery. UPS recently opened 36 healthcare-compliant field stocking locations to reduce delivery time for medical device shipments. These sites will provide customers the ability to reach over 80% of U.S. hospital beds within four hours.

Party's Over. Women's retailer bebe is undergoing a makeover. Its previous 9 p.m. to 5 a.m. campaign and imagery was too focused on clubbing and party messaging, which reinforced a narrow brand positioning that turned away most shoppers. Now, the retailer wants to be glamorous, feminine, and



Larissa Faw
The Business Roundup

sophisticated. It says the ideal bebe shopper is "powerful and ageless and wants to stand out in the crowd."

Global Thirst. Half the world's population have not had a Coke in the last 30 days, and there are 600 million teenagers who have not had a Coke in the last week.

P&G News. Ten percent of laundry detergent sales are Tide and Gain; 75% of U.S. razor sales and nearly 90% of cartridge sales in the month of July were of the Gillette brand.

Mail Woes? Perhaps online bill pay isn't the reason the U.S. Postal Service is struggling financially. Only 55% of the USPS costs are actually attributable to products. The rest of those costs are institutional costs, like pension plans, employee compensation, and real estate.

Payment Pressure. It looks like consumers are still struggling since they can't even pay for their mattresses. Home and appliance retailer Conn's says the company's credit segment performance unexpectedly deteriorated this summer. Delinquency over 60 days increased 70 basis points in the quarter and was up another 50 basis points in

August. And these are accounts from people with reasonable credit scores. In fact, the percentage of originations with FICO scores below 525 is virtually zero. "Customers are under pressure from the number of directions. Inflation of rents is one example, increased subprime issuance for vehicle purchases, and also the pressure in customer's ability to pay Conn's. Car loans and rent will generally rank ahead of Conn's in customer's priority to pay," says Conn's Theodore Wright.

Closed Toes. Women did not buy sandals this year, according to Shoe Carnival. After the unusually cold and wet first quarter, the shoe retailer was looking forward to a second quarter of strong sandal sales. However, within the first few weeks of May, it became evident that the customer was not

responding to this category as they did in 2013. Sales of boat shoes were also weak this summer.

Gorilla Glass. Corning previously developed a special glass for mobile phones and now, the company is turning its focus to automobiles. The company is very interested in the auto laminate market and believes there is some 5.5 billion to 6 billion square feet of total opportunity out there. This includes the interior piece of glass, windscreen, side window, sunroof, moon roof, as well as interior touch panels for navigation systems and driver consoles. They expect the first cars with its special glass will roll out in 2015.

Larissa Faw covers business trends for Forbes, The Motley Fool and other outlets. Contact her at larissafaw@gmail.com.

SPONSORSHIP AD

Big Lots trying to go viral

Discount retailer produces videos in attempt to generate buzz

Paid Talk. Big Lots isn't counting on consumers to promote its brand. Rather, the discount retailer has created four viral videos and expects its 38,000 store associates to pass it along to their friends and family members to help spark buzz.

Health Delivery. UPS recently opened 36 healthcare-compliant field stocking locations to reduce delivery time for medical device shipments. These sites will provide customers the ability to reach over 80% of U.S. hospital beds within four hours.



Larissa Faw

The Business Roundup

Party's Over. Women's retailer bebe is undergoing a make-over. Its previous 9 p.m. to 5 a.m. campaign and imagery was too focused on clubbing and party messaging, which reinforced a narrow brand positioning that turned away most shoppers. Now, the retailer wants to be glamorous, feminine, and sophisticated. It says the ideal bebe shopper is "powerful and ageless and wants to stand out in the crowd."

Global Thirst. Half the world's population have not had a Coke in the last 30 days, and there are 600 million teenagers who have not had a Coke in the last week.

P&G News. Ten percent of laundry detergent sales are Tide and Gain; 75% of U.S. razor sales and nearly 90% of cartridge sales in the month of July were of the Gillette brand.

Mail Woes? Perhaps online bill pay isn't the reason the U.S. Postal Service is struggling financially. Only 55% of the USPS costs are actually attributable to products. The rest of those costs are institutional costs, like pension plans, employee compensation, and real estate.

Payment Pressure. It looks like consumers are still struggling since they can't even pay for their mattresses. Home and appliance retailer Conn's says the company's credit segment performance unexpectedly deteriorated this summer. Delinquency over 60 days increased 70 basis points in the quarter and was up another 50 basis points in August. And these are accounts from people with reasonable credit scores. In fact, the percentage of originations with FICO scores below 525 is virtually zero. "Customers are under pressure from the number of directions. Inflation of rents is one example, increased sub-prime issuance for vehicle purchases, and also the pressure in customer's ability to pay Conn's. Car loans and rent will generally rank ahead of Conn's in customers priority to pay," says Conn's Theodore Wright.

Closed Toes. Women did not buy sandals this year, according to Shoe Carnival. After the unusually cold and wet first quarter, the shoe retailer was looking forward to a second quarter of strong sandal sales. However, within the first few weeks of May, it became evident that the customer was not responding to this category as they did in 2013. Sales of boat shoes were also weak this summer.

Gorilla Glass. Corning previously developed a special glass for mobile phones and now, the company is turning its focus to automobiles. The company is very interested in the auto laminate market and believes there is some 5.5 billion to 6 billion square feet of total opportunity out there. This includes the interior piece of glass, windscreen, side window, sunroof, moon roof, as well as interior touch panels for navigation systems and driver consoles. They expect the first cars with its special glass will roll out in 2015.

Larissa Faw covers business trends for Forbes, The Motley Fool and other outlets. Contact her at larissafaw@gmail.com.

SPONSORSHIP

AD