

CREATIVE BRIEF

CLIENT: Victoria's Secret and Co.

PROJECT: 2021 Brand Strategy

DATE: October 10, 2021

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Why are we advertising?

For more than four decades, the Victoria's Secret (VS) brand has been synonymous with lingerie. The first two decades saw VS rise quickly into mainstream popularity thanks to our luxury appeal at affordable prices and aspirational marketing popularized by the Victoria's Secret Angels.

But for the past decade, the VS brand has been steadily losing market share. As our society has shifted, particularly in the wake of the #MeToo movement, women have embraced a larger narrative of inclusion and body positivity, increasingly rejecting overt sexualization of women and outdated ideas of beauty. Victoria's Secret has struggled to meet this moment while our competitors have moved into the lingerie space that we once dominated.

We recognize that the history of the Victoria's Secret brand is problematic – that the messages we sent throughout the past four decades contributed to a toxic view of women, body shaming, eating disorder culture, sexism, transphobia, racism, and misogyny. It is a legacy we can't erase. But moving forward, we want our new and intermittently engaged customers to encounter a Victoria's Secret brand that is so much more than sexy lingerie. While we have already begun this brand shift in the third quarter of 2021, we want to refine our strategy, continuing to listen to our customers while meeting them where they are with messaging that builds trust and shifts the focus from what we haven't done to what we are offering now.

We want to forge a new path focusing on the diverse range of products that fall under the Victoria's Secret brand umbrella. Our goals are to reinforce the depth of our product lines, position ourselves as a true ally for the voices of existing leaders in the women's empowerment space, and increase sales by 2% across our three flagship brands (VS Beauty, Pink by VS, and VS Lingerie) with a significant but believable shift in our brand messaging and focus.

Who are we talking to?

Our Pink by VS brand has traditionally been targeted to teens and young adults from 13-29 years old while our VS Lingerie brand appeals to middle-class women aged 30-49. Sales of accessories, and the

returning bathing suit product lines, have found common ground among these age demographics with a significant overlap between those who are 25-45 years old. This is who we will focus on.

Our target audience are younger women who have not had a lot of exposure to VS in the past and those who have previously had intermittent contact with our brand. They are women who value the functionality of undergarments but want both style and comfort.

Our target audience is someone like Sarah. Sarah is a 38-year-old real estate agent who is recently back on the dating scene after a divorce. She fondly remembers buying her first VS push-up bra at 17 and the confidence she felt the first time she wore it and all the looks she used to get in the clubs. Since becoming a mom and getting married though, she's traded those fancy bras for something less showy but now that she's back in the dating game, she is re-evaluating her undergarments anew. She hasn't kept up with Victoria's Secret over the years, but she has come across a few critical articles during the last 2 years that put a bad taste in her mouth for the VS brand. She may not be a hardcore liberal feminist, after all, but she doesn't want to support bad brand behaviour either. Sarah remembers loving VS but wants to feel good about her shopping choices, and these days, she would rather support businesses that feel more authentic and relatable.

What do they think now?

Our reputation has been marred by mistakes we've made. From the beginning, the VS brand was targeted toward men purchasing lingerie for women in their lives. We did not create a space that positively impacted women in their own journey with their bodies and their sexuality. Many think that we have contributed to a culture that objectifies women and values only a certain type of beauty. Some have been deeply offended and hurt by former VS representatives and affiliates and the abusive and toxic male culture around them. Our target audience may have heard some (but not likely all) of the criticisms lobbied against us. Regardless of what they may or may not have seen or heard, our audience still may see us as outdated and misaligned with today's women.

Further, Victoria's Secret is almost exclusively seen as a lingerie brand. There is low awareness of our diverse product lines.

What do we want them to think/do?

We want our customers to see that we are evolving and expanding. We want them to feel seen and heard, and, above all, we want this new era of Victoria's Secret to feel believable. We want our audience to engage with us more positively across social media platforms, taking note of the changes we are already making to our brand so that they can feel good about purchasing items from us and cheering on our progression towards a brand they can be proud to get behind. By showing up consistently with an integrated marketing campaign that delivers on the promises we are making, we hope to reposition ourselves in the minds of consumers and build back brand affinity.

As of October 2021, we have updated our website to reflect a more diverse range of body sizes. We have created marketing pieces that showcase our commitment to racial and body diversity, however, some may still see our efforts as self-serving, inauthentic, or inconsistent.

Why should they?

We might be late to the women's empowerment party, but we are here showing up in our imperfections. We don't claim to be perfect, but we are not the same company we have been. Today's VS is committed to doing the hard work required to earn the respect of the women around the world who have inspired us to change. The new Victoria's Secret may still offer the gorgeous lingerie products that made us famous, but we can now offer our target audience more than the male fantasy world we previously built. Today's VS offers a positive reflection of the very real, diverse, and beautiful humans we once excluded.

Compelling truths:

- When your bra matches your underwear, you feel like the best version of yourself.
- Thanks to the pandemic, we now value comfortable clothing on the same level as food and shelter.
- Women choose their underwear based on the day's events - this includes who will see them.
- Only men think being called a "Bombshell" is a compliment.
- People make assumptions about personality based on underwear style and preference.
- Change room mirrors lie. It's a fact.
- For no reason at all, swimsuits are never as flattering as underwear.
- Everyone has a favourite pair of underwear - the one pair that is just comfier than all others.
- Swimsuit bottoms are like burgers - because your butt wants to eat them.
- Buying lingerie for herself is one of the most indulgent and brave acts of self-love a woman can do.

Mandatories:

Website: www.victoriasecret.com

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