

Cavender's Boot City

The University of Texas at Tyler

Solutions for Effective
Marketing

March 27, 2013

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	3
The In-Store Experience	4
Improving the atmosphere with lighting	4
Enhancing the fitting room experience	5
Effective space management	6
Powerful product placement	7
Managing Markdown Merchandise	8
Simple signage techniques	9
Highlighting product assortment	10
Competitor's Corner: Baskins Western & Work Wear	11
Competitor's Corner: Sheplers	11
The Social Media Experience: Facebook	12
The Ultimate Goal	12
Campaigns and Contests	13
Timely Feedback	13
Competitor's Corner: Baskins, Sheplers, and Country Outfitter	14
The Website Experience	14
Homepage	15
Fit Chart	16
Payment Options	17
Wish List	17
Works Cited	18

Executive Summary

Goal: The goal of this marketing project is to provide Cavender's Boot City with cost effective suggestions on how to enhance the in-store shopping experience, as well as further their social media relationship with the core market.

Background: Cavender's Boot City informed us that both in-store and online suggestions would be valuable. The target market includes female customers primarily between twenty-five and forty-five years of age. Since that represents Cavender's core market, especially in the online community, a focus on relationship building and long-term value was mandated, rather than a strategy focused on price reductions. With that in mind, data was gathered from several sources.

Data Gathering: Data was gathered from several different mediums including: Facebook, websites, store visits, phone calls, and personal interviews. In addition to gathering data on Cavender's, data was gathered on several of Cavender's leading competitors including: Baskins, Sheplers, and Country Outfitter. When the data was reviewed we were able to create several suggestions on techniques to improve the Cavender's experience.

Suggestions: With the goal of furthering the relationship with the core customer while avoiding a discount strategy, we believe that there are several opportunities for Cavender's to capitalize on. The main areas for improvement in the Tyler, Texas brick and mortar store are: merchandise lighting, optimal product placement, and signage. We also offer suggestions for improving Cavender's online relationship with its core customers through Facebook. Finally, we give suggestions for improving the website experience, which includes: additional payment options and suggestions to facilitate an easier online shopping experience.



The In-Store Experience

This section will examine some aspects of the techniques currently implemented in the Tyler, Texas brick-and-mortar store and suggestions for improvement in key areas including:

- **Improving the atmosphere with lighting**
- **Enhancing the fitting room experience**
- **Effective space management**
- **Powerful product placement**
- **Managing Markdown Merchandise**
- **Simple signage techniques**
- **Highlighting product assortment**

Additionally, research on two competitors is included in the Competitor's Corner at the end of this section. Valuable insight may be gained from the comparisons made between the stores.

Improving the atmosphere with lighting

It is well known that store atmospherics affect customer purchases. Lighting is especially important, as it is used to highlight merchandise and create a mood that fits with the store image. These positive attributes of lighting can be implemented in the store as follows:

- **“Popping the Merchandise”** by adding spotlights in certain product areas to illuminate higher-end merchandise. The core customer is more likely to be drawn into an area that is highlighted within the store, where item detail can be fully noticed and appreciated. An area of the Tyler store location that would benefit greatly from spotlighting is within the women's boots to showcase popular brands, such as Old Gringo.



Enhancing the fitting room experience

The fitting room is a place where decisions are made, so it should be presented to the customer in the best possible way. We have observed areas where improvements can be made to enhance the customer's experience when trying on clothes.

- **Improved lighting:** Currently, the fitting rooms at the Cavender's in Tyler do not utilize the space directly above for lighting, but instead rely on the floor lighting. We recommend adding lighting that is dedicated to the fitting rooms in order to more effectively display the product as the customer tries it on.
- **Maintenance:** A very effective and cost-efficient way to improve the fitting room experience is to ensure that the store employees regularly inspect and clean the fitting rooms. Regular maintenance can include removing items left by prior shoppers, as well as cleaning the mirrors, vacuuming, and dusting on a daily basis. The cleanliness of the fitting room can be especially important to early shoppers, as they are more likely to be affected by a fitting room whose maintenance does not meet their expectations.



(Cavender's Tyler 3/25/13 11A.M.)



Effective space management

In terms of presentation techniques, the image of the store is greatly affected by the placement of the items on the shelves and racks. The core customer does not generally have time to spend searching for that perfect top through deep racks of product. Many women who fall into this category have little time to spend shopping, so presenting the merchandise in a favorable way becomes a key to making the sale. We have made the following observations in the Tyler store:

- A variety of ladies apparel is packed very tightly onto the racks. This technique is more of a "tonnage merchandising" presentation, which customers associate with a lower price point.
- The merchandise at Cavender's carries a higher price point and is associated with quality and brand recognition. To more effectively utilize the space within the ladies department in particular, we suggest minimizing duplicate sizes on the racks. Additional stock may be kept in the back of the store. Employees working the floor will be able to retrieve and restock merchandise as it sells or as it is requested.

The benefits of keeping fewer items on the racks include:

1. Ease of shopping for the core customer.
2. Implying a sense of urgency if duplicate sizes are minimized on the rack and the racks themselves are less densely stocked.
3. Engaging the customer with the store employee if a size is unavailable on the rack. The employee can then check the back room and retrieve the item requested, leading to a higher level of customer service, commission, and customer satisfaction.



Powerful product placement

It is our observation that the boots and shoes department in particular could benefit from a more powerful product placement technique. High value items would capture more attention and generate more sales if placed in a highlighted and more heavily trafficked portion of the footwear section of the store. For example:

- The Old Gringo boots, which are currently located in the back section of the boot area, would better capture the core customer's eye if moved to the front and center of the ladies boot section.
- The seasonal shoes, including flip-flops and hiking boots, would be easier for the core customer to find if moved closer to the front of the shoe section.
- The addition of several spotlighted displays with graphic signage would increase the visibility of seasonal and high value items.



Managing markdown merchandise

While clearance items and markdowns are a useful way to move seasonal merchandise out as the season is ending, having an extensive amount of highly visible clearance items does not fit with the image that Cavender's is known to portray. In order to more effectively market the clearance items to the core customer without jeopardizing the store image, we suggest the following:

- **Clearance Consolidation:** While a portion of the clearance merchandise is in a single location, there are many other displays with clearance items located all around the store. To help facilitate an easier shopping experience, we recommend locating all clearance clothing in one specific location in the store. This helps customers who are looking specifically for clearance items find what they need faster, and facilitates a full price sale to the less price sensitive customer.
- **Clearance Location:** In order to maximize revenues we want to allocate our best floor space to those items that sell the most and offer the largest returns. Large amounts of clearance items can give customers the idea of "tonnage merchandise" and inadvertently train them to always be looking for a sale. Since Cavender's strives to maintain a consistent image of service and quality we recommend moving all clearance clothing to the rear corner of the store.



Simple signage techniques

Signage is a very important tool that is used to assist customers in finding the products they are looking for. It also conveys information about the product, such as brand, price, or promotion. We observed that the Tyler store is significantly lacking signage on the ladies apparel fixtures. This can be very frustrating to customers, as they must look at individual item labels to determine brand and price. The following suggestions can alleviate this problem:

- **Category signage:** This would highlight the different popular brands carried within the store so that the core customers can quickly and easily identify the brands they are shopping for. To effectively achieve this, the merchandise would need to be sorted and placed on the racks by brand name. Category signage can also indicate a specific *type* of product, such as skirts, dresses, or casual tops.
- **Promotional signage:** This would illustrate special offers or promotional sales, making it less stressful for the core customer to decide whether to buy an item or not. Since we recognize that discretionary income is the largest competitor to store sales, making promotions easier to identify would offer the core customer an incentive to buy more. Additionally, promotional signage places a sense of urgency on the customer to buy now rather than later. Making this information visible to the core customer will empower her to shop within her budget, thus increasing overall sales.



Highlighting product assortment

Our research included talking with various women in our demographic area about where they shop for certain items. Three of the five ladies who were interviewed shared the same concern. If they need a trendy, cute party outfit or footwear, then they shop at Cavender's. However, if they need riding or work clothes, then they shop with one of Cavender's competitors (in each case, the competitor named was Baskins). To increase sales in the more practical genres of apparel, we suggest:

- **Separate the work from the play:** Place the more practical western attire in a prominent location within the ladies department, and provide appropriate signage.
- **Show it off:** Use mannequins to display a work or riding outfit in the area the clothing is placed to draw the core customer to that location.
- **Rodeo it up:** Highlighting the riding apparel in particular will help promote an image of a rodeo lifestyle and lead to increased sales in this genre of apparel during the rodeo season.



Competitor's Corner: Baskins Western & Work Wear

While both Cavender's and Baskins carry many of the same brands at similar price points, Baskins continues to carry traditional work wear for both men and women. The majority of Cavender's ladies apparel seems to be geared toward the more fashionable and trendy side of the western-wear market. The disadvantage for Cavender's in this situation is that a significant portion of the market shops a competitor for their apparel needs in this department. We recommend slightly increasing the ladies traditional western-wear and highlighting it during appropriate seasons.

Another difference noted between the stores is the store layout. The flow of the Baskins store is more open than that of Cavender's. The racks of clothing are spaced further apart, allowing women to easily peruse the merchandise without having to squeeze between fixtures or while pushing a stroller. Cavender's should consider moving fixtures to allow more room for the core customer to shop.

Competitor's Corner: Sheplers

Cavender's and Sheplers are very similar in the brands and styles that are carried. There are major differences in price and promotion between the two, with Sheplers offering more coupons and discounts than Cavender's. However, we understand this is not the desired strategy for Cavender's to implement. We recommend increasing visibility of promotions by highlighting the promotions available using signage as mentioned above.

Again, the layout of the stores is different. Sheplers has more effective lighting, which creates a favorable shopping atmosphere, and they have a more spacious layout. Their store is easier to maneuver through, with more space between racks. This further emphasizes the importance of moving fixtures to allow more room for the core customer in order to effectively compete



The Social Media Experience: Facebook (Referenced from “The Zen of Social Media Marketing” by Shama Hyder Kabani)

This section will examine the Cavender's Facebook page and address the following areas:

- The Ultimate Goal
- Campaigns and Contests
- Timely Feedback

Online competitors' Facebook pages were also examined and a comparison between their sites and Cavender's is included in the Competitor's Corner at the end of this section.

The Ultimate Goal

Company Facebook accounts are the equivalent of a fan page. Utilizing a Facebook fan page allows a company to connect and communicate with their audience, including existing and prospective customers. The focus of the Facebook fan page should include:

- **Building the fan base through “likes”:** This can be accomplished in several ways. We recommend *daily* status updates/posts which are helpful or humorous to the core customer. The more helpful or appropriately humorous the update is, the more “likes” and “shares” it will receive. We also recommend suggesting the fan to respond to a post by writing something to the effect of “Like if you agree” or “Like and enter” (a contest).
- **Consistently interacting with fans:** This regular interaction will cause Cavender's to show up in their fan's newsfeed. Responding to fan comments is considered interaction and will increase visibility to fans. We recommend more interaction, as it appears the Cavender's Facebook page is somewhat lacking in this area.
- **Leading traffic to the Cavender's website:** This is currently effectively accomplished through links to the website included in posts.



Campaigns and Contests

Through launching campaigns and contests relating to the brands offered at Cavender's, new fans will be drawn in and current fans will keep coming back to the page. Our suggestions include:

- Offer all fans a discount that is appropriate, considering Cavender's does not want to train their customers to expect discounts and coupons. This does not have to be a regular event, and we recommend offering discounts only on seasonal merchandise that is not selling well either in the store or online.
- Create contests, such as the Ariat Boot Giveaway which Cavender's is currently engaged in, where fans "like and enter" to determine which item is given away. Again, the item does not necessarily have to be a high value item. We recommend the fashionable seasonal items to encourage interaction due to the sense of urgency.

Timely Feedback

Responding to fans is crucial to keeping them happy and showing that you are a company that cares about their needs and concerns. When a customer has an issue, a timely response should be made in order to satisfy (and keep!) this customer. For example, on March 24, 2013 we observed the following interaction:

A timely response was given to the first comment, posted by Kevin Provost regarding where the discount code could be used (notice the response was within 2 minutes). However, the negative comment posted by Kristy Aucoin Smith exactly one hour later on Wednesday, March 20 has yet to receive a response. We recommend that in the future issues such as this be addressed immediately upon notice.

The screenshot shows a Facebook post from 'Cavender's Boot City' on Wednesday. The post text reads: 'Spring It On! Celebrate the first day of spring with \$15 off your entire online purchase of \$75 or more. Use code SPRING3 at checkout. Offer expires Monday, March 25th.' Below the post, there are 25 comments. The first comment is from Kevin Provost, asking 'Online only or in store purchases as well?' and is timestamped 'Wednesday at 9:31am via mobile'. The page's response is from Cavender's Boot City, replying 'Kevin, our stores will honor the discount.' and timestamped 'Wednesday at 9:33am'. The second comment is from Kristy Aucoin Smith, stating 'it wouldn't let me placed my order full price.' and timestamped 'Wednesday at 10:33pm'. At the bottom, there is a text input field for writing a comment.

Competitor's Corner: Baskins, Sheplers, and Country Outfitter

With regards to Country Outfitter generating over 5.3 million "likes", this is accomplished through a spamming technique with their boot giveaways. We do not recommend Cavender's to follow suit, but use the advice above to generate more likes.

Baskins effectively generates "likes" through posts such as the ones below. We recommend Cavender's engage in more social updates and posts that will engage their fans, many of which fall within the core customer's demographics.



Sheplers also effectively engages fans through the use of social questions such "Friday Fun: What is your favorite song to sing when no one is listening?!? Don't be shy!" This post generated 125 "Likes" and 158 comments. Again, it is crucial to interact with fans to show up in their newsfeed, so we recommend Cavender's post more socially interactive questions in order to achieve this goal.

The Website Experience

This section will highlight some technical aspects of the Cavender's website with regards to ease of use and compatibility in the following areas:

- Homepage
- Fit Chart
- Payment Options
- Wish List

Homepage

The Cavender's homepage identifies well with the company image and is effectively oriented towards marketing to the core customer, of which two-thirds are women. We feel that there are two areas where the homepage could be slightly improved:

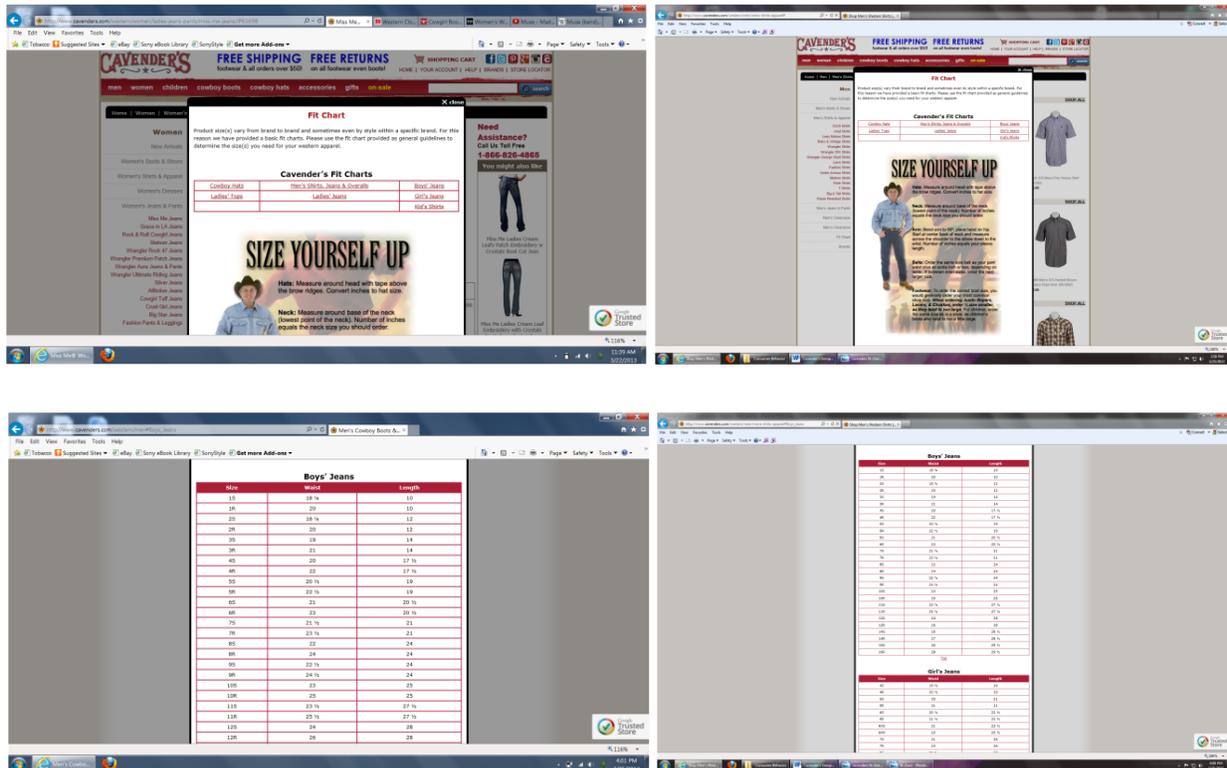
- **Create contrast between the ribbon pictures and the cover picture:** As seen in the image below, it can be difficult to see the thumbnails in the ribbon when the background picture is the same color or pattern. This issue can be made worse when viewed on a laptop with the screen brightness settings set to medium or low. We recommend separating the ribbon pictures from the background picture and placing a light neutral background behind the ribbon in order to show these options more clearly.
- **More effective space utilization of the ribbon:** The homepage ribbon only has three thumbnails, which either automatically show on the screen or can be manually clicked on to show the picture. We recommend filling this ribbon space with at least three more thumbnails.



Fit Chart

While Cavender's has a very extensive and helpful size chart, it is difficult to navigate on some screens. The following issue arose when we examined the size chart:

- The fit chart is set up as a long list with categories at the top. When a category is clicked, the webpage scrolls the user to the appropriate section. The user then has no ability to manually scroll through the list, which creates problems on some smaller screens. As can be seen in the pictures below, on the thirteen inch laptop screen, only part of the explanations can be seen. However, on the larger screen the entire explanation is visible. This creates difficulty in navigation for small screen devices. We recommend that a manual scroll feature be added to allow the user to navigate up and down the screen as needed.



Payment Options

Giving customers a variety of payment options while shopping online is a key to creating a competitive advantage. We have made the following observation regarding online payments:

- Currently, both Country Outfitter and Baskins accept PayPal as a form of payment, while Sheplers and Cavender's do not. We recommend adding PayPal as an accepted form of payment to make the checkout process more efficient and appealing to customers who prefer this method.

Wish List

The current Cavender's Wish List has many desirable features, including comments and the ability to share a Wish List with friends. However, we see an opportunity for Cavender's to improve the current system by offering the following additional features:

- Email alert when there is a price change to an item on the Wish List.
- Email alert when an item on the Wish List is low in stock.



WORKS CITED

Kabani, Shama Hyder. *The Zen of Social Media Marketing: An Easier Way to Build Credibility, Generate Buzz, and Increase Revenue*. Dallas, TX: Benbella, 2010. Print.

Levy, Michael, and Barton Wetiz. *Retailing Management*. 7th ed. Boston: McGraw Hill, 2009. Print.