What does your role at Lands’ End entail?

Natalie Crain: I lead our digital marketing team and focus on new customer acquisition. I also manage our broad reach media and campaign strategy, our shopping engines, all of our social media strategies and product reviews on the website. I manage the mass media efforts—TV, radio, print, and so forth.

About what percentage of your paid media budget is digital?

Crain: Lands’ End started as a catalog company in 1963, and the catalog is still an important vehicle for Lands’ End today. We’ve been increasing our digital spend every year and are continuing to invest. Digital is currently a top priority in connecting with new customers.

“What measurability continues to be an issue because consumers aren’t necessarily converting on the mobile phone.”

What digital tactic is growing the fastest within your media mix?

Crain: Paid search is the primary growth vehicle at the moment. We are also investing in digital display and digital video. Mobile is growing as well, but at a smaller rate. Mobile is successful with executing location-based strategies and driving retail foot traffic. Measurability continues to be an issue because consumers aren’t necessarily converting on the mobile phone. For a direct marketer, it’s a challenge to invest heavily in mobile at this moment.

The social advertising space is also growing. As properties like Facebook have made changes to their platforms, it has required us to adjust our strategy to garner maximum engagement with our customers.
We're definitely shifting more into video. What I love about video is that you can see engagement and where you have the opportunity to improve. It asks consumers to do a little bit more with us vs. standard display ads that can be more easily ignored. Hopefully, we will lean more toward video ads as we develop content in the future.

You mentioned the challenges around mobile marketing. How are you using mobile?

Crain: Mobile is important for us to drive retail traffic; it’s just a smaller portion of our business. We have Lands’ End Shops within Sears stores so we need to have mobile as part of our mix, but it’s a much smaller focus for us compared with traditional retailers. Mobile is important for brand awareness, and branded search ads are also important. In addition, if we have large promotions, we want to make sure our customers are aware of them in the mobile space.

Has your search marketing strategy changed as a result of Google’s new AdWords Enhanced Campaigns and other developments?

Crain: Yes, absolutely. It requires us to get more granular within our campaigns. We are looking at how we invest in true mobile vs. tablet. We want to continue to evolve and make it a better customer experience.

You have a large portfolio of responsibilities. What are your top business priorities?

Crain: We’re always focused on reaching new customers in the way they best like to interact, whether it’s online, through social media, in-store, through the catalog, and so forth. We continue to look at how we leverage digital to grow our business. And from a marketing perspective, we want to be everywhere the customers are no matter their platform or location choice. Digital is much more comprehensive and, I would say, intense at times. The customer is constantly evolving, and there are many more interruptions in the shopping process, so we need to keep Lands’ End top of mind.

Customer acquisition is a key priority for Lands’ End. Many people may not realize that we are an international brand and have business units in the UK, Germany and Japan. We will also be launching in Canada in September.

What tactics are you using to drive media efficiencies and create scale?

Crain: We are always working to be more targeted and relevant. For example, in the display area, it’s about being more hypertextargeted and using data to better inform our media buy. We want to reach customers who have behaviors that are similar to existing customers, build localized models and target them based on actions they’ve made on the web that would infer they were a potential customer.

Another area we’re focusing on is gaining more efficiency within paid search. Enhanced brand campaigns will allow us to get more efficient over time, and we will continue to get more specific and granular around the ad copy we’re serving up against the search terms. We want to make sure we improve the customer experience when people do arrive on the website.

How important is retargeting or remarketing?

Crain: Retargeting to further engage visitors who have come to the site is important. Once customers come and browse, we want to keep the brand top of mind and remind them that, “Hey, don’t forget, you had interest in this product, and you might want to come back and check it out.” And when we have promotions running, we want to let them know there’s an opportunity to get a better price on the products they looked at previously.

“Consumers are checking out three or four retail sites before they make a final purchase, and that’s on the conservative side.”

What are the biggest challenges you’re facing in the business and in the retail space overall?

Crain: Within my area specifically, it’s media saturation and the disruptive nature of how consumers are making purchase decisions today. Consumers are checking out three or four retail sites before they make a final purchase, and that’s on the conservative side. It’s difficult to measure and know how each marketing channel is delivering.

The acquisition process is more complex, and the measurement of success has become quite complicated. The growth of mobile is really challenging from a marketing perspective because we know people are using multiple devices. For example, people are on a mobile
phone checking something out, and maybe they come home later at night and jump on their laptop or tablet while watching TV. Having said all this, we’re in good company. Creating mobile success metrics and making sure that the mobile messaging is relevant to the customer is a challenge for any business.

From the retail perspective, there is less brand loyalty. The internet has created the ability to see and buy so many products with different levels of quality. The key is to differentiate your brand and provide exceptional customer service.

**“eMarketer data on consumer media behavior helps us build better integrated campaigns—it breaks through multiple channels but is respectful of the nuances within those channels.”**

How do you differentiate the brand online?

**Crain:** As online platforms become increasingly relevant, our goal is to engage with our customers and maximize their digital shopping experience. Social and mobile are becoming an increasingly important part of how we communicate with our customers. One of our biggest initiatives is called “paper to digital”—a way to provide the historical catalog experience online.

What trends are you keeping your eye on?

**Crain:** I am always keeping an eye on what’s trending in the industry and how it can apply to our work at Lands’ End. There’s always room for improvements, to get smarter and use more data and analytics.

How are you using eMarketer to help you stay on top and ahead of trends?

**Crain:** I love the daily newsletter and find the content to be relevant. I especially enjoyed the report on user behavior for social media in the UK. I shared the article with my counterparts in the UK to see how we can do a better job leveraging social platforms there.

The datapoints in eMarketer are helpful to understand how fast something’s growing, the direction it’s going and how fast we need to get there. eMarketer data on consumer media behavior helps us build better integrated campaigns—it breaks through multiple channels but is respectful of the nuances within those channels.

How often do you access the database?

**Crain:** I utilize the site a couple of times a month. The site is helpful when we’re working on long-term strategies, but it just depends on what the business demands are at the time. I also use eMarketer for presentations and internal education. It’s a great resource to pull in graphs and charts that eMarketer provides on trends and what’s happening in the marketplace.

What do you like best about the product as a whole?

**Crain:** eMarketer is a great resource for broad, global content, as well as very specific content. I appreciate that eMarketer is very consumer-focused. I like to read and self-educate so I can feel confident in the decisions I’m making. My entire team embraces eMarketer as a helpful tool.

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