

CAREERS IN BRAND MANAGEMENT



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INSIDER GUIDE

Careers in
Brand Management

2011 EDITION

WETFEET

1518 Walnut St.
Suite 1800
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Phone: (215) 546-4900
Fax: (215) 546-9921
Website: www.wetfeet.com

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Brand Management at a Glance

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AT A GLANCE

Opportunity Overview

- **Undergrads** enter as marketing assistants or analysts, positions that in many companies lead to a promotion in two to three years.
- **MBAs** compete to be one of the 5 to 30 assistant brand managers hired each year by leading companies.
- **Brand management companies** value people with varied work experiences; many MBA hires come from banking and consulting.
- **Top-tier students** are giving less attention to careers in investment banking, consulting, and startups in recent years, while interest in brand management opportunities has skyrocketed—so expect some fierce competition for these jobs.

Major Pluses

- Two words: leadership development.
- Work involves detailed quantitative analysis, big-picture strategy, and creativity.
- Schedule allows a life outside of work (but less so as companies become increasingly understaffed).
- Corporate headhunters call all the time.
- Unparalleled training in marketing and general management.

Major Minuses

- Traditional packaged goods companies tend to have conservative and often slow-moving cultures.
- If you are assigned to work on the Cheez Whiz brand, expect to catch some serious grief from friends and family.
- Many corporate headquarters are located in very cold Midwestern cities.
- As you advance in your career, salaries don't compete with those offered by investment banks and consulting companies.

Recruiting Overview

- Leading brand management companies traditionally recruit at a select group of undergraduate and business schools.
- Recruiters look for leadership, analytics, problem solving, teamwork, and creativity.
- Interviews combine personal and behavioral questions with mini case studies.



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OVERVIEW

› **IF YOU YEARN** to create *real* things—things people will see, touch, and eat; enjoy business analysis but want to do something creative along with it; and are looking for a lifestyle in which you'll have a great work/life balance; brand management might be just the career for you.

It's also a slightly more robust opportunity area than many. Brand managers have more choices now than they did five years ago because more industries are recognizing the utility of an effective manager, and demand has increased. The proliferation of media—namely social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube in addition to the tried-and-true media of brand campaigns in years past such as television and radio—has correspondingly created new opportunities, new metrics, and new branding strategies. It's more important than ever that a product stands out, and it's the brand manager who's tasked with making it happen.

Most brand managers work at consumer products companies (also known as consumer packaged goods, or CPG)—places like Procter & Gamble and General Mills. They assume a marketing function, and are responsible for promoting and managing a brand. It's a multidimensional role that requires diverse talents, overseeing everything from package design to customer satisfaction to digital marketing strategies. Other opportunities for brand managers are at agencies, which have increasingly taken on strategic roles formerly staffed by the companies. These jobs can be harder to get right out of school and offer a different experience than working at a CPG company, which we'll talk about more below.

Brand management is a great way to learn to run a business—with zero risk.

WHAT BRAND MANAGERS DO

› **A FORMAL DEFINITION** of brand management is tough to pin down because the actual job description varies widely across the vast universe of consumer products companies. Many CPG companies have at least one thing in common, though: They're part of huge conglomerates that produce many name-brand products. Size gives them economies of scale, and a diversity of products gives them protection against down cycles. That is not to say small mom-and-pop, mail-order pickle-and-jam companies don't crop up every now and then and make a serious go of it. They do. However, they aren't where the majority of the jobs are—at least not until Unilever or Nestlé takes them over.

INSIDER SCOOP

"Finding qualified brand managers has become more difficult for employers in the past year as more industries jump on the branding bandwagon."

The basic analogy for brand management is that brands are treated like businesses within the company, and brand managers are essentially small-business owners. The job involves:

- Monitoring the competitive landscape of the category in which your brand resides.
- Developing strategies to exploit market opportunities.
- Executing those strategies with the help of a cross-functional team.
- Delivering the sales volume, market share, and profit projections for the business.

Brand managers craft elegant business plans and submit them to senior management. Then, if the price of the key ingredient in their product goes through the roof because of locust plagues, they rewrite the business plan from scratch with many more contingencies. They focus on the minutiae of a daily sales-volume report,

and they dream big dreams when it's time to update the vision for the brand. They approach upper-level management for capital to fund a new product launch or a line extension in much the same way that small-business owners go to venture capitalists or banks to fund expansion. They often coordinate among multiple third-party agencies tasked with things such as package design, advertising, and web development.

HOW IT STACKS UP

AN IMPROVING JOB MARKET

Industry professionals report an uptick in the number of jobs in branding. The economy is rebounding and so are profits. Meanwhile, companies are becoming increasingly reliant on branding to distinguish themselves in a crowded marketplace. More and more industries are learning what companies such as Coca-Cola and Campbell's soup figured out long ago: Cultivating brands can lead to a competitive advantage. Increasingly, financial service firms, insurance companies, high-tech manufacturers, schools, and even non-profits are investing in their brands. The result is a little more opportunity for prospective brand managers in an otherwise tight job market.

A WORK/LIFE BALANCE

Compared to consulting and investment banking, consumer products companies offer a much better work/life balance. However there's a catch. During the one-to two-month annual planning season, it's all hands on deck until the branding execution plan is done and approved by senior management. Those who join branding agencies can expect longer hours and more travel. Don't get too comfortable or set in your ways, though—effective brand management requires constant innovation and reinvention, and you'll need to stay on top of industry developments if you want to move up in the world.

GREAT TRAINING

Even if you don't think you want to devote the rest of your life to Campbell's soup or Kibbles 'n Bits, keep in mind that brand management experience is highly valued in the job market. Because brand managers typically divide their time between market research and creative development, they tend to have a broader range of highly marketable analytical and creative skills than their more specialized counterparts in the financial or high-tech industries. Leading CPG companies and top-tier branding agencies are comparable to Ivy League universities in their rigorous admission standards and strong training programs. Those with experience at these companies are coveted by smaller companies and by major players in other industries, including high-tech.

INSIDER SCOOP

"I was never forced to work long hours—I just get caught up in the excitement and the momentum. It's not like having to be a corporate lackey with no life."

A MIDWESTERN TILT

Just as high-tech has Silicon Valley and investment banks flock to New York City, consumer products companies tend to congregate in a geographic area—the Midwest. Many are large, stable, conservative organizations in cities with fewer cultural attractions and longer winters than coastal cities. If your goal is to change the world, or you have a work hard/play harder ethic, you might find your work environment a bit conservative and your coworkers a little too fond of prime-time TV. (You'll also discover they watch the commercials more intently than the shows.)

Of course, there are exceptions. And once you have some solid product victories and a few years of corporate brand management experience under your belt, you may have a competitive edge over ad-agency types when it comes to landing a coveted brand consulting position with a major ad agency or consulting firm in New York, Los Angeles, Miami, Seattle, or San Francisco.

Careers in Brand Management

HIRING OUTLOOK

➤ **ACCORDING TO A** report by Moody's Investor Service, the outlook for the consumer products industry was stable as of mid-2010. While high unemployment, fluctuating consumer confidence, and unimpressive growth in developed markets are drags on the industry overall, growth in emerging markets and new product innovation are providing steady opportunities for near-term growth. In addition, companies are trying to gain market share rather than cutting costs, which they were doing a few years ago—good news for those looking for jobs in brand management.

➤ TIP



In your interviews, be prepared to talk about the multifaceted aspects of a brand—not just the logo and slogan, but the design scheme associated with the product or service, its symbols, its implied values, and its personality.

In some key ways, the tight economy is good news for those working at brand management firms. Brand management was once an exotic practice known only to the consumer products industry. Now, companies in a wide array of industries are finding value in well-managed brands, and looking to brand management as a revenue booster. Companies also are finding branding useful in more corporate functions. Human resources departments are fretting over the internal branding needed to attract employees and keep them loyal. The boom in new ways to reach consumers—viral videos, blogs, and social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter—also require brand managers to keep pumping branded messages through the endless capillaries of media. And thanks to these increased venues for marketing, as well as more uses for branding within companies and in more industries, job opportunities for brand managers have expanded.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics doesn't track brand management specifically, but it does track marketing, and expects a 13 percent increase in employment through 2018. That is on par with most fields. The BLS expects this sustained job growth will be supported by increasingly intense domestic and global competition in consumer products and services. However, it cautions budding marketers to expect increased competition for full-time corporate marketing positions as marketing projects (including brand management) are increasingly outsourced to ad agencies and contract specialists.

THE BOTTOM LINE

➤ **THE COMBINATION OF** strong general-management training, a healthy work/life balance, and plenty of career options helps make brand management a desirable occupation. Leading brand management companies recruit at a select group of undergraduate and business schools. If you don't attend a target school, or if you're making a career change without going to business school, you'll have to work hard to find a job at a CPG company. Recruiters look for leadership, analytical skills, problem solving, teamwork, and creativity. Philosophy majors and engineers alike are welcome to apply if they can demonstrate skills in these five areas. Psychology degrees can provide useful insight into what makes people tick—the fundamental consideration when building a brand. That said, having a background in marketing or business is often a plus.

If you're interested in developing your leadership skills, brand management is the place to be. Sure, there may be layers of decision makers above you, but how many other settings allow a 30-year-old to own and operate a \$60 million business after five years of work experience and an MBA? For many aspiring entrepreneurs, brand management looks like the perfect training ground—a way to learn the business without any risk.

Sound too good to be true? It is. Brand management offers you an opportunity to run a business, but not your business. You inherit the brand's history and

the last brand manager's strategy for moving the brand forward. By the time you have executed the old strategy and devised your own, it may be time to move on to another assignment. This is not Silicon Valley, where entrepreneurs have built empires by following their personal vision from their garages. This is big-time corporate America, where managers add value to existing businesses and then move on. In terms of bureaucracy and career advancement, brand management is a lot like a stint in the foreign service: Your first few assignments may stick you with third-tier brands in far-flung branches of the company. But, once you've racked up some product turnarounds and brand breakthroughs with those assignments, you'll start getting assigned to bigger brands closer to the heart of the company.

INSIDER SCOOP

"Nike doesn't sell shoes. Nike sells achievement. That difference is the difference branding makes."

WHAT ARE BRANDS?

› **BRANDS ARE COMPANIES'** attempts to differentiate their products and services by establishing a relationship with the consumer. Brand management is an organizational design model that assigns marketing professionals the responsibility for managing all aspects of a brand's relationship with the consumers in the marketplace. Companies don't want customers to think of their products only as better tasting or cheaper or bigger. They want their brands to tap into the things consumers value most—home, hearth, health, love, and family. Campbell's soup isn't just an easy meal—it's a little bit of childhood; it's America in a can. That's why advertising "spokescharacters" follow book-length rule lists. The Pillsbury Doughboy, for example, must always be "a teacher, a friend, or a helper." The Jolly Green Giant may never shake his fist. Mr. Peanut will always remain a swinging bachelor.

In a world without brands, product features and price would be the dominant buying criteria. Despite the success of private labels and generics, we live in a branded world. Much of the relationship-building between brands and consumers is done through advertising that's carefully designed to make a consumer's purchase decision a personal one—brands are supposed to have personalities, just like the people who buy them. Some experts estimate the value of the almighty Coke brand and its relationship with consumers at nearly \$70 billion. That brand equity, built over a century, has survived even disastrous product introductions such as New Coke and OK Soda. Most brands, of course, are not as resilient or dominant as Coke. And even Coke requires constant attention to maintain its relationship with consumers in the face of relentless threats from the competition.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

› **CONSUMER PRODUCTS COMPANIES** that compete in the food, beverage, pharmaceuticals, and soap and cosmetics sectors provide the majority of the traditional brand management opportunities, but more are opening up in financial services firms, high-tech companies, and health-care companies. The common denominator is an organizational structure that puts marketing in charge of all aspects of a brand, from research and product development through packaging and promotion. At a high-tech company, the engineering department might drive product development, but marketing calls the shots in brand management.

Brand management offers very similar challenges across industries—the brand management model is not radically different in most companies that market consumer goods, including those in the apparel, high-tech, toy, automotive, entertainment, and financial services industries. Given the similarities in brand management roles and responsibilities across industries, a promising brand manager may be in the enviable position of having his or her choice of industries.

Careers in Brand Management

So how do you determine which brand management position is right for you and your career? Before you leap in, take all of these factors into account: the brand, the team, the company, and the industry.

INSIDER SCOOP

“Look at the business side as well as the consumer side. Once you start gaining experience you’ll become known for your expertise—but remember, the longer you’re in a discipline, the harder it is to go back.”

THE BRAND

Long before you ever sign on for a brand management position, you need to know your brand inside and out. Your career depends on it—so be sure to do your research!

Too often, brand managers make the mistake of signing on to a brand based on their gut feeling about it, or idle hearsay about its potential in the market. They may take on a food product that’s largely unknown and untested because they tried and liked it themselves. Or maybe they feel the brand has potential because they saw a newspaper article touting it as the next big thing.

Now think about this logic for a minute: Are you really willing to place your faith and your career in a company because they were successful in getting you to try a free sample, or their PR department managed to place a single article about their product? If you made stock investments this way, you’d surely be broke by now. You should commit to at least as much due diligence before investing two years of your life in a brand as you would before making a stock purchase. Check the company’s annual reports for earnings from that brand, bone up on the category and major competitors by reading trade magazines, and do online searches to track emerging trends in the category and find out how the brand is responding to them.

Don’t be a sucker for household-name brands, either. If you managed to land Gillette razors, many brand managers would congratulate you: It’s a flagship brand for

Procter & Gamble, one of the largest and most successful CPG companies in the world. But even though you may be familiar with the name and the product, what do you really know about the brand? Is Procter & Gamble getting ready to retire the brand in favor of a new brand? Is it being outpaced by an upstart competitor that’s identified and exploited a demand in a specific razor market segment, such as blue-collar men? Are popular waxing treatments or new developments in laser removal making razors increasingly obsolete? Find out before you sign on to a losing brand proposition, or at least go in knowing you’ve got your work cut out for you.

Commit to at least as much due diligence before investing two years of your life in a brand as you would before making a stock purchase.

On the other hand, you may choose to go with a fledgling brand in the hope that you’ll make a name for yourself as the brand takes off—but you should recognize that this strategy is a gamble. Hedge your bets by doing your research on the category, competitors, and industry. If this brand really has proven potential to be cheaper, better, or faster than its competitors, you may be able to create a breakthrough brand—and a career breakthrough at the same time.

Find out about the product and how it’s being marketed. Getting stuck working on a well-known national cereal brand that relies on billboards and ads on Saturday morning cartoons may deprive you of exposure to a wider range of tactics and more cutting-edge marketing strategies. Working on a new woman’s health product, on the other hand, may require learning how to market through online ads, blogging, sponsoring charity marathons, and product placement at fash-

ion shows. “We’ve been mass marketers for a really long time,” says one insider, “but as consumers continue to fragment, we really need to expand our toolkit to have multiple ways to connect.” As more money is shifted into interactive advertising, your skills designing for Web 2.0 platforms, creating friendly user experiences, adding embedded video, and integrating RSS feeds will grow increasingly valuable.

TEAM

You’ve probably heard it before, and maybe even said it yourself: “Oh, I can get along with anyone if I have to.” Of course you can handle a variety of personality types—you’re a professional, right? But the real question is not whether you can all get along well enough to function, but what you stand to gain from joining this particular team. Given the skills, resources, experience, and capacity of the team working on the brand, would you categorize it as likely to succeed? If they’re short-staffed or chronically underfunded, frazzled, or lazy, you should think twice before signing on—or at least come in prepared with your own plan of action to turn things around. If the brand fails on your watch, you can’t blame it all on the team.

Branding teams are often a hodgepodge of imaginative creative types from the advertising world and button-down bottom-line types from the business world. The result can be explosive—whether that’s explosive-good or explosive-bad often depends on how well you get along with your teammates.

You certainly can’t expect good camaraderie everywhere you go. The industry is not without its share of “prima donnas,” some with big enough egos to argue for hours over which shade of pink to use. Rather than get bogged down in contentious debates with your team, think about the specialized knowledge the team members bring to the table, and the skills you might learn from them. Need to hone your market research skills? Then it will be good to work alongside some top-notch researchers. Want to learn more about manufacturing? The R&D engineer might just be your new best friend.

Hoping to segue into software marketing? You’ll want to hang out with IT types and learn their language. If there are people on the team who have skills or background you lack, don’t be intimidated or shy around them—these are the people you’ll want to get to know so you can expand your brand management repertoire.

What’s more, all the people on your team can put you in touch with professional contacts in their fields. So when you’re considering joining a team, think it over at least as carefully as you would your decision to attend a networking mixer: Are there going to be people here who will be interesting and informative, good to know, or useful contacts in your career?

COMPANY

You’re going to be spending a lot of time inside the walls of any company that hires you as a brand manager, so you need to know what you’re getting yourself into. It’s a lot like picking a college: You want to know about its strengths, faults, culture, reputation, size, and location before you sign away years of your life. You should gain a sense of the strengths and faults from your background research and interviews (see the Grilling Your Interviewer section for more).

CHOOSE YOUR BRAND WISELY

Before you go on an interview, remember that you need to be comfortable with the product you’ll be branding and, in effect, selling. Are there brands you like, respect, or admire? It’s much easier to get behind a brand when you understand and appreciate its value proposition (the value the company believes the

brand offers consumers). If it makes you cringe to think of a toddler throwing a tantrum over that ultra-sweet cereal you’ve marketed to him so effectively, look elsewhere. Sure, the brand may be making money hand over tiny fist, but you have to live with yourself. Don’t waste your time or the company’s.

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Culture

Learning about a company's culture may take a little more snooping. You may have some hints about the culture based on its products, but don't assume that toy companies are all fun and games or medical products companies are all about long white coats and lonely laboratories. Take a look around when you're on the premises. How are the desks arranged? Where do people eat lunch? Ask employees you meet one-on-one what they like most and least about working there. You may not get a straight answer, but it should tell you something if an employee is evasive or has to think hard before coming up with something nice to say about the place.

INSIDER SCOOP

"One person may design the most beautiful ad you've ever seen, but the research-side person will say it won't reach the right demographic, or the business-side person will say it's too expensive to produce. As a brand manager, you need to keep your team together."

If you are a woman or a member of a minority group, you'll also want to do some research into whether the company has a glass ceiling. Find out who the executives are and who's on the board, and ask recruiters about recruitment and retention programs for minorities and women. Check *Fortune*, *DiversityInc*, and *Working Mother*, all available online, to see whether the company is on their lists of the best places for advancement for women and minorities.

Reputation

Most people choose their food and clothing labels carefully, but these labels are even more important when they're applied to your career as a brand manager. Learn to manage your own career as if it were a brand. What you do and where you work can say a lot about your "brand." Before you take a job with a company, ask yourself: Is this a business that will inspire you to move

to Ohio and get up every morning to do your utmost to advance it? Will you proudly pass out your business cards, or will you try to avoid casual questions about your job at cocktail parties and business conventions? Last but not least, how will this name look on your resume?

Size

If you enjoy life as a big fish in a small pond, you may not naturally take to a corporate monolith with multiple subsidiaries—but it could be better for your career in the long run. There's no guarantee of job security—big companies shut down faltering operations and brands just as smaller startups do—but you may have more options in terms of location and career advancement within the company. Larger CPG companies tend to offer more on-the-job training, whereas smaller companies often enable you to develop a greater range of skills and move up the management ladder more quickly. Larger, more prestigious advertising agencies will work on larger, more prestigious brands and have bigger budgets for innovative marketing, travel, and design. Even so, don't get sucked in by a company's name. Often, smaller companies can provide greater opportunities to learn and grow professionally. One industry insider points to advantages of working at a smaller organization: You can take on responsibilities outside of your job description and make a first-hand difference in the company's success. It can be a toss-up, so you really have to examine what you believe will work best for you.

Location

Location is also an important factor. Most of the jobs in brand management are in CPG companies and subsidiaries in the Midwest, where companies can keep their costs lower. Manufacturers are often located in the Rust Belt of the Northeast, and technology companies are often on the West Coast, but for the most part, brand managers should expect to have a Midwestern home address at least for several years. You may think

that to land your first brand management assistant job you can hack a couple of years in St. Louis, away from your friends and family back in Hawaii. But you should be willing to spend the better part of a decade in these middle-American companies and their subsidiaries to get the experience and leverage you need to land a position in a subsidiary or headquarters located in a coastal city or at a hot ad agency. Truth be told, you may not find a position in brand management that requires you to be in an expensive place like Hawaii, unless you start the company yourself. Starting off at an advertising agency may expand your geographic horizons beyond the heartland, but don't let a glamorous locale get you stuck in a small firm designing logos if you want to move up the brand management ranks.

Industry

Overall, you want to be sure that the industry you're entering is on track for expansion, and not bound for the dustbin of history. Consider the brand managers who once tied their careers to dotcoms: They're now hard-pressed to explain how once-crucial brand strategies, such as rethinking product offerings with each new venture capital pitch, relate to actual profit-and-loss balance sheets. Some brand managers have successfully made the leap to software marketing, but many have had to reinvent themselves and their careers.

TIP



Keep building your list of contacts, even after you land a job. People get satisfaction out of helping others build their careers, and they'll often make introductions to others who can be helpful in your search, now or perhaps years down the road.

How can you avoid a similar fate? Take a look through that dustbin of history, and see if you note any familiar features among the industries you find there.

Dotcoms are not so different from the Ford Edsel—or even the Pony Express—in that all these bygone businesses were precariously poised on the latest trends and technologies that were soon surpassed by newer trends (muscle cars and compact cars) or newer technologies (the telegraph and telephone). Look for numbers behind the headlines that show sustainable growth, and technologies that actually change and improve manufacturing instead of just thrilling consumers for a fleeting moment.

Agency or In-House

Back in the olden days, brand managers worked downtown in large consumer products companies where they would mastermind marketing strategies and farm out creative tasks—such as creating logos, writing copy, and producing TV and radio spots—to advertising folks who worked for smaller advertising firms uptown. But today, CPG companies are following the trend toward outsourcing, pairing down their marketing departments, and relying more on agencies to develop their brand strategies. The result is more opportunities for brand managers to work outside of the consumer products corporation.

CPG companies have traditionally been thought of as the best place for branding newcomers to get a foot in the door. By working on one brand year in and year out, you get a depth of experience and learn the branding cycle from strategy to design to execution.

However, other brand management professionals caution against limiting yourself to this tried-and-true career path and point to the breadth of experience that agencies, which generally pay comparable wages, can offer. Agencies offer opportunities to work with new clients on different kinds of products and market to different kinds of consumers, and you are always being challenged and learning. You can take all the best practices from the range of companies you work with and add them to your repertoire. In addition, having a range of experience allows you to discover what you're passionate about. Working with a wide range of clients

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also creates a much larger network of professional contacts—people who might give you jobs in the future.

Working with a dynamic set of clients also means you never know what you'll be working on next. One year you could be working with Elizabeth Arden and trying out services at salons, and the next you could be in Florida spending time with cockroaches for an insecticide company.

Larger CPG companies tend to offer more on-the-job training, whereas smaller companies often enable you to develop a greater range of skills and move up the management ladder more quickly.

There is no consensus about whether agencies or CPG companies provide better long-term prospects. While some insist that working for a firm will make transition into a large company easy, others say the opposite is true. The chances of taking on an executive position after several years at a CPG company, although slim, are better than the nearly impossible odds of becoming partner at an agency. However, those who aspire to be their own boss should keep in mind that after years of establishing relationships with clients at an agency, many agency employees jump ship, taking those clients with them when they start their own firms.

When deciding between an in-house position and an agency job, make sure you're comparing apples to apples. Agencies, like companies, vary in size and prestige. Working for your uncle's copywriting agency on ads for the local drugstore won't get you very far; neither will doing brand management at the drugstore itself. However, a large, prestigious firm with *Fortune*

500 and international clients will give you experience with some of the world's top brands, just as working at a *Fortune* 500 or top-tier professional services firm would. Be sure to find out what kinds of clients an agency has, and check out its position in the field. *Advertising Age* (www.adage.com) provides free annual rankings of agencies. Omnicom, WPP, Interpublic Group, and Publicis—each made of several dozen smaller firms—have cornered the U.S. marketing industry; together, they have more than 250,000 employees worldwide and, as of 2009, accounted for more than \$37 billion in combined revenues.

INSIDER SCOOP

"If you start off at a company like Procter & Gamble, it's like putting a Good Housekeeping seal of approval on your resume."

Nonprofit Options

Nonprofit organizations, such as charities, social service organizations, schools, and hospitals are learning that business practices that bring returns on investments can be adapted to raise awareness and money for the causes they serve. Insiders who have experience at nonprofits and *Fortune* 500 companies say brand management jobs are similar no matter which sector you're in, though many brand management professionals say that life at a nonprofit can be a bit slower. Budgets are typically smaller, and many in the nonprofit sector tend to rely on donated ad space, public service announcements, and partnerships. Much of a brand manager's time also can be taken up building consensus with is or her team and board of directors.

But, um, do nonprofits have the budget to pay you? The answer is yes: There are paying jobs in the nonprofit sector. In well-run organizations, salaries can be competitive when candidates' qualifications are there. The emphasis is on *well run*. Check out a potential employer's history and its funding status. Is the majority of its revenue from a two-year grant or from an estab-

lished foundation? *Forbes* (www.forbes.com) publishes an annual ranking of the largest U.S. charities; it is available free online.

Note that although starting salaries can be competitive, the higher up a nonprofit ladder you climb, the smaller your salary will seem compared to similarly experienced branding professionals in large companies. Hours will be just as long, if not longer, than in similar for-profit work. To work in this sector, you will have to ask if the sacrifice is worth it.

INSIDER SCOOP

"You have to ask yourself if you are comfortable with the sacrifice. For me, it was worth it. I'm not just selling widgets; I'm changing society."

Although nearly all large national or international nonprofits have some marketing and communications positions, a definite minority emphasize branding. Some insiders at nonprofits say that branding is an expensive luxury their organizations can't afford; their marketing functions limit them to basic advertising. However, other nonprofits have caught on to the importance of having a recognizable brand, and because they often lack the funding of a backed company, it could prove an exciting opportunity to prove your creativity.

One major nonprofit geared toward girls is in the midst of a major brand revamp, and it's providing a fruitful experience for the brand management team. "It's constantly beating the pavement to see what new shows are out there, potential spokespeople, or maybe a credit card company that's looking to do something grassroots with girls, and just coming up with the right promotion and tactical plan," says an insider.

Job titles at both companies may sound similar—director of marketing, communications assistant. But depending on the organization, some may have branding functions and others may not. One way to tell the difference is to find out what they know about their

target audiences. Organizations that are clear about who is likely to support it, such as through volunteering or donations, are in a much stronger position to make strategic branding decisions. If they are not clear, they're putting their message out there for everyone—which is advertising, not branding.

Many brand management professionals predict that brand management opportunities in the nonprofit sector will continue to grow as more nonprofits realize the value of their brands. A word of caution, however: The road between nonprofit and corporate jobs does not run both ways. It will likely be easier to get a job in the corporate world and then transition to a nonprofit, rather than go the other way. Experience in the nonprofit sector may not carry quite the same relevance in the corporate world.

LIFESTYLE: AGENCY VS. COMPANY

When weighing the depth of experience you'd gain at a consumer packaged goods company against the breadth of experience at an agency, keep in mind that key lifestyle differences may tip the scale. The client-centric culture of agencies means that hours tend to be lon-

ger and more erratic. Hardly anyone works an eight-hour day, and you are always at the beck and call of your clients. Travel between the agencies and clients' headquarters is usually a must. Sometimes consultants are required to spend a week or more in their clients' offices.

MAJOR TRENDS

TECHNOLOGY AND THE INTERNET

As in most industries these days, technology has become a significant factor in doing business. Perhaps the most significant technological development for brand managers is the rise in importance of customer relationship management (CRM) applications. CRM software collects information about customers, their behavior, and all aspects of their relationship with a company, allowing the company to better understand the marketplace for its products and how to increase sales and market presence. If you go into brand management, expect to use data collected by CRM applications to tailor your efforts to sell into the marketplace.

The Internet is another area of technology that has had a big impact on brand management and marketing. Using behavioral marketing, an online ad targeting technique that tracks a consumer's behavior on a website to determine what ads to serve, marketers can target each consumer individually. Google allows advertisers to flash ads to Web surfers who enter specific search terms. Amazon.com creates personalized recommendations based on the consumer's previous purchases and browsing behaviors. Behavioral marketing enables marketers to pinpoint the consumers they want to attract. Brand managers are responsible for determining who these consumers are and how to match their behaviors with brand messages.

Although the Internet is no longer considered the next big thing, brand managers are challenged to stay current with new uses of information technology. The most successful companies are using the interactive and viral nature of the Web to strengthen the relationship between consumers and their brands. Old Spice, a major brand for Procter & Gamble, has taken on social engagement through comedic, personalized YouTube video responses to tweets and Facebook posts (they're funny, and a great way to see what's possible when you

pair brand savvy with social media: <http://www.youtube.com/user/OldSpice>).

Marketing departments have long developed campaigns, but new digital tools are creating new opportunities for communicating brand messages. Today, the weedlike proliferation of blogs and rapid word-of-mouth dissemination via Twitter are changing the way information about products spreads online. Corporate blogging, as an outlet for a company to promote its views and spread its own information, has undergone considerable growth in recent years. In 2010, 22 percent of the *Fortune* 500 had corporate blogs, up from just fewer than 6 percent in 2006.

INSIDER SCOOP

"[The nonprofit and for-profit sectors] are essentially the same. You may need to be a little more resourceful in a nonprofit, and that requires greater creativity."

OPTING OUT

While media and communications are ubiquitous, advertising is becoming more optional. TiVo makes it possible to eliminate commercials on TV. Podcasting and satellite radio give listeners audio content with fewer ads. Blogs create grassroots, noncommercial forums for reading and sharing opinions. Software allows Internet users to avoid the obnoxious intrusion of pop-up advertisements. And many online video consumers will not put up with pre-roll advertising. So what's an advertiser to do? Marketers are placing ads in places that can't be avoided—plastering city buses with advertisements, sponsoring more sporting events, and paying for more product placement in film. Will this be enough to counter the trend of opting out of advertising? Stay tuned to find out.

METRICS

Is marketing an art or a science? Traditionally, it's been considered more of an art, especially when compared

to business functions whose efforts are easier to understand in terms of bottom-line results. Increasingly, however, it's being treated as a science. Today, an increasing number of companies are looking for ways to link traditional marketing metrics, such as market presence, to metrics that are more meaningful and tangible to investors and the marketing department, such as return on investment and click-through rates on websites. If you go into brand management at a big, sophisticated company, expect to be involved in this effort. If you can accurately predict and quantify the effect of your marketing efforts on the bottom line, your initiatives are more likely to get the green light.

WALMART

Walmart's size and success have affected CPG companies significantly. Prospective brand managers need to do more than make sure their products look good sitting on Walmart's shelves; they need to understand how the retailer has changed the consumer products industry.

INSIDER SCOOP

"People can Google your product, find out everything they want to know, and then buy it online without ever seeing it on the shelf or looking at the package. If you go into a company where you are learning how to make a package look good on a shelf, your skill set may not be relevant in the future."

Because it accounts for a significant portion of so many CPG companies' sales, Walmart has significant influence on everything from prices to packaging. Walmart's low-cost mind-set puts downward pressure on pricing, and has led to pressure on CPG companies to sell their products at lower-than-sustainable prices. Walmart also has been making a well-publicized effort to offer its wares more sustainability, and brand managers have to meet certain requirements on Walmart's sustainability scorecard to keep selling to the megaretailer.

To gain leverage, some consumer products companies have ganged up, merging with competitors. Brand managers need to know the dynamics of their companies' relationship with Walmart and other mass global retailers (England-based Tesco and France's Carrefour are two others), because these megachains play such a key role in their brands' success.

CATEGORY MANAGEMENT

CPG companies sell their products to grocery stores and other stores, which sort them into categories, such as juices, carbonated beverages, bread, canned soups, and the like. In the new, consolidated world of consumer products, leading manufacturers can no longer dictate to retailers, who have more purchasing power than ever before. Instead, they try to partner with them in ways that will guarantee coveted shelf space. Leading manufacturers compete with each other to help retailers manage the categories in their stores. The basic idea behind category management is that for each category in the store there exists a portfolio of brands that offers consumers the products they want at the prices they are willing to pay. Imagine a leading salad dressing manufacturer working to develop a category management plan for a supermarket chain such as Safeway. The plan would combine the salad dressing company's data on consumer trends in the category with sales data from Safeway to determine the optimal portfolio of brands for Safeway's customers. Would the salad dressing maker include its brands in the portfolio? Absolutely. But to maintain its credibility, it must be willing to drop its own slow-moving brands and include competing brands and store brands/private labels.

In theory, category management sounds like a great way for consumer products companies and major retail chains to work together. In practice, it can be a frustrating, expensive process. Culture clash can be a serious problem when a manufacturer's team of MBAs, armed with spreadsheets and Nielsen data, tries to tell the management team of a retail chain how to run its business.

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PRIVATE LABEL/STORE BRANDS

Private label or store brands are labels under which stores make and sell their own products. The basic concept is simple: Offer the consumer the same product as the national brand, only with the store's label on it, and charge considerably less. In the past, a consumer might doubt the quality of a store brand compared to that of a well-known one, but now that grocery chains are building their own brand equity through advertising and service, the value of store labels has increased. The store brands of today differ from the old black-and-white-labeled generic products of the past. They're specialized and sophisticated, not just nearly-as-good products at a lower price. For instance, Safeway sells upscale sal-sas, soups, artisan breads, and other products under its Safeway Select label.

According to business school researchers and others, when brand companies stop investing in building brands, value-conscious consumers see less of a difference between national brands and store brands. In the absence of a clear difference, they often choose the lower-priced store brand. In late 2009, Coca-Cola, with the most valuable brand in the world, was pulled from Costco's shelves due to a pricing dispute. Costco cited Coca-Cola's lack of cooperation in offering "competitive pricing," and though the dispute lasted only a month, it illustrated much of the fears that CPG companies have in dealing with megaretailers and their competing bottom lines.

SPECIALIZATION

There is definitely a Darwinian element to brand management at leading companies. Brands that are either first or second in their category receive support; those that fall out of the top two slots are often sold or discontinued. (The one exception is the fabled cash cow: A big, mature brand in a big, mature category often has operational efficiencies that make it profitable regardless of whether it is a top-two brand.)

For companies with brands in a variety of categories, the mantra these days is focus, focus, focus. Craig

Sullivan, the enormously successful CEO at Clorox, revitalized the company in the early '90s by focusing its resources on a core set of closely related product lines and categories. Brands that didn't fit into the portfolio were sold to fund internal growth and the acquisition of brands that did. Unilever has eliminated 1,200 of its 1,600 or so brands, putting most of its resources behind just 400 so-called power brands. The load shedding continues, and with these brands has gone a fair amount of the cachet Unilever once derived from innovation. Earnings have held more or less steady, so the jury is still out on the efficacy of the move.

INSIDER SCOOP

"More companies are seeking to leverage what they already have, and are seeing their brands as assets. Companies now more than ever are seeking to squeeze every drop of value they can get from their brands."

GLOBAL BRANDING

Consumer products companies are always looking for new markets, and the obvious choice is foreign countries. American companies are snapping up smaller foreign regional brands at a record pace, and a few European companies have made remarkable inroads by acquiring American brands. Coca-Cola, for example, offers specialized products in several foreign markets. The company sells Maaza ("a noncarbonated mango soft drink with a rich, juicy, natural mango taste") in India and an herbal soft drink called Real Gold in Japan. And Unilever's acquisition of U.S.-based Bestfoods, which has a strong presence in Europe, has enhanced Unilever's global reach. Brand managers must now think globally and act locally. Companies may have redundant brands throughout the world, and it makes financial sense to kill the ones that aren't doing as well and replace them with their counterparts from different countries.

Companies have to consider how new products,

new packaging, or new advertisements will play in foreign countries. Some of brand management's most notorious fiascos were the result of global marketing attempts. In order to avoid such a faux pas, companies are keen to recruit people who will bring cultural sensitivity and cross-cultural experiences to brand management positions.

INSIDER SCOOP

"International experience is important. Spending a year abroad in college, working in Asia for a couple of years, or speaking a different language are huge advantages when trying to get a job."

CONSOLIDATION

As retail chains merge and acquire one another, grow in size (think megastores and category killers such as Target or Walmart), and increase their private-label offerings, consumer products companies lose their ability to demand shelf space while the retailers get more and more purchasing power. The CPG companies' main defense in this situation is the power of the brand. The retail stores know they won't survive without the brands consumers have come to know and love. Brand managers just have to make sure this never changes.

ETHNIC BRANDING

Each year, the percentage of people of color in the U.S. inches up; according to 2010 Census estimates, minorities make up 35 percent of the country's population, up from 31 percent in 2000. Some projections have the minority population eclipsing that of non-Hispanic whites by 2050. As that population increases, so does its influence in the market, even for the most basic commodities. Though it has been claimed since 1992 that Americans consume more salsa than ketchup, both sales and volume in recent years increasingly bear this out.

Branding for ethnically specific audiences is important, not only because the populations are growing, but also because American consumers who are people of color

tend to connect more strongly to brands. Companies in all industries are appealing to minorities and their cultural preferences to keep their place in the market. *Qué Rica Vida*, originally launched by General Mills in 2006 as a magazine to reach Hispanic consumers, has been retooled as an online-only source for coupons, recipes, expert tips on food preparations, and lifestyle articles geared toward the Hispanic market. Advertising on Univision, the United States' leading Spanish-language broadcaster, continues to grow each year, and a large push was made in 2010 to reach Hispanic viewers of the network's World Cup broadcasts.

Although ethnic marketing is a specialized department in many major consumer products companies, it is becoming an important element in all brand strategies. The acknowledgement of consumer diversity has led to a greater appreciation for diversity among staff, and opened opportunities for people of color, especially those who speak foreign languages. However, be wary of the risk of stereotyping that can result in diversity marketing efforts.

INSIDER SCOOP

"When we started looking at advertising for African Americans, the department head thought we would have to start advertising during basketball games. I had to explain that not every black person is a basketball fan."

SEGMENTATION

CPG companies often offer one-size-fits-all products; Clorox bleach, for example, is sold in the same bottle to men and women, rich people and poor people, athletic and nonathletic people, young adults and the elderly. Brand strategists can use market segmentation to find different methods to reach out to various target populations. Clorox might, for example, modify its message to tell parents that its bleach helps remove stains from their children's clothing; let the elderly know that Clorox is an affordable, high-quality brand; and tell

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athletes that it works well on sports socks.

Although segmentation has been around for a while, the diversification of media channels has enabled a greater specificity in target audiences. No longer is advertising confined to newspapers and the major broadcast networks. As one insider says, “We used to eat dinner at around the same time and then tune into one of four networks. Now we eat dinner on the go, have hundreds of cable channels to choose from, video games to play, and an Internet to surf.” Need to sell an athlete a sports drink? Advertise on ESPN.com. Want children to beg their parents for Lucky Charms? Buy a spot on Nickelodeon’s games site. Trying to tempt health nuts to try a new whole-grain cereal? Advertise in *Yoga Journal*.

Because brand managers are responsible for analyzing consumer habits and market trends, and choosing among the cornucopia of media options, they must have sophisticated cultural, ethnic, gender, and generational sensitivities in order to bring relevant information to specific consumers. Many brand managers can feel more like anthropologists than industry professionals because of how much they must learn about different groups of people, cultures, and habits.

INTERNAL BRANDING

Who doesn’t want to work at Google? It has a hot brand and is constantly coming up with cutting-edge applications for Web use. It’s also an employer that offers scooters for employees to ride to meetings, a pet-friendly office, multiple gourmet cafeterias, onsite car washes, and massages. According to *Fortune*, it’s the most sought-after place to work for MBAs. The result of Google’s innovative employment practices is that it can recruit top talent and retain its best workers, who will keep the company buzzing with creativity, producing new products, and pushing its stock price higher and higher.

What Google has is an incredible internal brand; the day-to-day activities, business processes, and employee attitudes reflect the values the brand represents to its

consumers. Even its unusual IPO, which was conducted Dutch-auction style with investors bidding down the initial stock price, sent the message to consumers and investors that Google was challenging the status quo.

To build an internal brand, brand managers and brand management consultants are working with human resources and management to ensure consistency whenever the company’s reputation is invoked. They are helping to write company mission statements, job descriptions, and annual reports, and getting involved in company events, career fairs, and shareholder meetings.

Many companies are recognizing that work life, culture, and their employees are integral elements of a thriving internal brand. One branding veteran says: “Five years ago, internal branding was a nice-to-have. Today it’s a necessity. Companies are making sure that their employees represent the company’s values and will deliver on its brand promise.”

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Films like *Super Size Me* and *Fast Food Nation* prompted raised awareness of the health and consumption of Americans and the way they’re advertised to by large food companies. Those companies began to fear lawsuits regarding the effects of consuming their products. As obesity has reached epidemic proportions in this country, health-conscious consumers have begun to shy

away from the sugary sodas and high-calorie snacks that have been staples of the American diet. These trends have shrunk waistlines, but they have also shrunk profits for companies that have been peddling corn syrup for decades.

Most food and beverage companies have had to adjust their brand messages to account for new health trends, and several have introduced new products. Today, all General Mills breakfast cereals are “good” or “excellent” sources of whole grains according to the USDA, and Baked Lay’s potato chips have become a staple of PepsiCo’s snack offerings. Kellogg has diversified its offerings to the health-food market through acquisitions of Morningstar Farms, which offers a range of meat-alternative products, and Kashi, known for its ready-to-eat cereals and seven whole grain pilaf.

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Companies are touting corporate social responsibility (CSR) and their accountability to local and global communities, in addition to their shareholders, as they consider the local and global impacts their businesses have economically, legally, ethically, environmentally, and philanthropically. Food safety and the traceability of food sources are of particular importance to CPG companies, especially in the event of a recall. An insider sums up the dilemma (and solution): “How do we let consumers know that a company is responsible and smart when it has never cared about being environmental before? It starts from the ground up.”

INSIDER SCOOP

“Low-carb diets were a fad, but the attention consumers are paying to nutrition labels is not a fad. It’s here to stay.”

INDUSTRY RANKINGS

› **ALTHOUGH THERE'S A** lot of overlap, most CPG companies fall into the following categories: food, beverages, pharmaceuticals, soap and cosmetics, household products, and paper products. Few companies compete in only one of these segments; Coke, in the beverages sector, is an exception. The following tables will show you the major consumer packaged goods players by their brands and by size.

Key U.S. Consumer Products Companies by 2009 Revenue

COMPANY	2009 REVENUE (\$M)	1-YR. REVENUE GROWTH (%)	EMPLOYEES	1-YR. EMPLOYEE GROWTH (%)
Procter & Gamble	79,029	-5.4	135,000	-2.2
PepsiCo	43,232	0.0	203,000	2.5
Kraft Foods	40,386	-4.3	97,000	-1.0
Anheuser-Busch InBev	36,758	56.4	116,000	-3.2
Coca-Cola	30,990	-3.0	92,800	0.4
Coca-Cola Enterprises	21,645	-0.7	70,000	-2.8
Kimberly-Clark	19,115	-1.5	56,000	5.7
Colgate-Palmolive	15,327	0.0	38,100	4.1
General Mills	14,797	0.7	30,000	1.7
Sara Lee	12,881	-2.5	41,000	-6.8
Kellogg	12,575	-1.9	30,900	-4.6
ConAgra Foods*	12,079	-5.1	25,600	2.4
Land O'Lakes	12,039	34.9	9,100	4.6
Dean Foods	11,158	-10.4	27,157	5.2
H.J. Heinz*	10,495	3.4	29,600	-8.9
Avon Products	10,329	-2.9	41,000	-2.4
Campbell Soup	7,586	-5.2	18,700	-3.6
Dole Food**	7,620	9.9	75,800	-12.9

Estée Lauder	7,324	-7.4	31,300	-2.2
Hormel Foods	6,534	-3.3	18,600	-2.6
Dr. Pepper Snapple	5,531	-3.1	19,000	-5.0
Clorox	5,450	3.4	8,300	6.4
Hershey	5,299	3.2	13,700	-4.9
J.M. Smucker*	4,605	22.5	4,850	3.2
Energizer Holdings	3,999	-7.6	15,500	-5.5
Ralcorp Holdings	3,892	37.8	9,350	3.9
Del Monte Foods*	3,740	3.1	14,700	-0.7
Stanley Black & Decker	3,737	-15.6	16,700	-8.4
Constellation Brands*	3,365	-7.9	6,000	-9.1
McCormick	3,192	0.5	7,500	NA
Molson Coors Brewing	3,032	-36.5	14,540	2.5
Flowers Foods	2,601	7.7	8,800	12.8
Church & Dwight	2,521	4.1	3,700	5.7
Brown-Forman*	2,469	-0.5	3,900	-4.9
Spectrum Brands	2,231	-17.0	5,700	-18.6
Solo Cup**	1,847	-12.3	7,100	-18.4
Alberto-Culver	1,434	-0.7	2,500	-7.4

*2010 figures

**2008 figures

Sources: Hoovers, WetFeet analysis

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100 Biggest Brands in the World by 2009 Brand Value

2009 RANK	2008 RANK	NAME	COUNTRY	2009 BRAND VALUE (\$M)	% CHANGE
1	1	Coca-Cola	U.S.	68,734	3
2	2	IBM	U.S.	60,211	2
3	3	Microsoft	U.S.	56,647	-4
4	4	GE	U.S.	47,777	-10
5	5	Nokia	Finland	34,864	-3
6	8	McDonald's	U.S.	32,275	4
7	10	Google	U.S.	31,980	25
8	6	Toyota	Japan	31,330	-8
9	7	Intel	U.S.	30,636	-2
10	9	Disney	U.S.	28,447	-3
11	12	Hewlett-Packard	U.S.	24,096	2
12	11	Mercedes-Benz	Germany	23,867	-7
13	14	Gillette	U.S.	22,841	4
14	17	Cisco	U.S.	22,030	3
15	13	BMW	Germany	21,671	-7
16	16	Louis Vuitton	France	21,120	-2
17	18	Marlboro	U.S.	19,010	-11
18	20	Honda	Japan	17,803	-7
19	21	Samsung	S. Korea	17,518	-1
20	24	Apple	U.S.	15,433	12
21	22	H&M	Sweden	15,375	11
22	15	American Express	U.S.	14,971	-32
23	26	Pepsi	U.S.	13,706	3
24	23	Oracle	U.S.	13,699	-1

25	28	Nescafe	Switzerland	13,317	2
26	29	Nike	U.S.	13,179	4
27	31	SAP	Germany	12,106	1
28	35	Ikea	Sweden	12,004	10
29	25	Sony	Japan	11,953	-12
30	33	Budweiser	U.S.	11,833	3
31	30	UPS	U.S.	11,594	-8
32	27	HSBC	U.K.	10,510	-20
33	36	Canon	Japan	10,441	-4
34	39	Kellogg's	U.S.	10,428	7
35	32	Dell	U.S.	10,291	-12
36	19	Citi	U.S.	10,254	-49
37	37	J.P. Morgan	U.S.	9,550	-11
38	38	Goldman Sachs	U.S.	9,248	-10
39	40	Nintendo	Japan	9,210	5
40	44	Thomson Reuters	Canada	8,434	1
41	45	Gucci	Italy	8,182	-1
42	43	Philips	Netherlands	8,121	-2
43	58	Amazon.com	U.S.	7,858	22
44	51	L'Oreal	France	7,748	3
45	47	Accenture	U.S.	7,710	-3
46	46	eBay	U.S.	7,350	-8
47	48	Siemens	Germany	7,308	-8
48	56	Heinz	U.S.	7,244	9
49	49	Ford	U.S.	7,005	-11
50	62	Zara	Spain	6,789	14
51	61	Wrigley	U.S.	6,731	10
52	57	Colgate	U.S.	6,550	2

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53	55	AXA	France	6,525	-7
54	52	MTV	U.S.	6,523	-9
55	53	Volkswagen	Germany	6,484	-8
56	59	Xerox	U.S.	6,431	1
57	42	Morgan Stanley	U.S.	6,399	-26
58	63	Nestle	Switzerland	6,319	13
59	60	Chanel	France	6,040	-5
60	66	Damone	France	5,960	10
61	64	KFC	U.S.	5,722	3
62	70	Adidas	Germany	5,397	6
63	73	Blackberry	Canada	5,138	7
64	65	Yahoo	U.S.	5,111	-7
65	67	Audi	Germany	5,010	-7
66	68	Caterpillar	U.S.	5,004	-5
67	69	Avon	U.S.	4,917	-7
68	71	Rolex	Switzerland	4,609	-7
69	72	Hyundai	S. Korea	4,604	-5
70	76	Hermes	France	4,598	1
71	74	Kleenex	U.S.	4,404	-5
72	41	UBS	Switzerland	4,370	-50
73	50	Harley-Davidson	U.S.	4,337	-43
74	75	Porsche	Germany	4,234	-8
75	78	Panasonic	Japan	4,225	-1
76	80	Tiffany & Co.	U.S.	4,000	-5
77	79	Cartier	Switzerland	3,968	-6
78	77	Gap	U.S.	3,922	-10
79	81	Pizza Hut	U.S.	3,876	-5
80	92	Johnson & Johnson	U.S.	3,847	7

81	82	Allianz	Germany	3,831	-5
82	83	Moët & Chandon	France	3,754	-5
83	84	BP	U.K.	3,716	-5
84	89	Smirnoff	U.K.	3,698	3
85	88	Duracell	U.S.	3,563	-3
86	98	Nivea	Germany	3,557	5
87	91	Prada	Italy	3,530	-2
88	93	Ferrari	Italy	3,527	0
89	94	Giorgio Armani	Italy	3,303	-6
90	85	Starbucks	U.S.	3,263	-16
91	Na	Lancôme	France	3,235	Na
92	97	Shell	Netherlands	3,228	-7
93	Na	Burger King	U.S.	3,223	Na
94	100	Visa	U.S.	3,170	-5
95	Na	Adobe	U.S.	3,161	Na
96	90	Lexus	Japan	3,158	-12
97	Na	Puma	Germany	3,154	Na
98	Na	Burberry	Britain	3,095	Na
99	Na	Polo Ralph Lauren	U.S.	3,094	Na
100	Na	Campbell's	U.S.	3,081	Na

Source: Business Week/Interbrand

Careers in Brand Management

TOP 75 BIGGEST ADVERTISING SPENDERS

The following table ranks companies by the amount of money they spent on advertising in 2009, which is

a pretty good measure of how important building or maintaining their brands is to them. Many of these companies have brand management opportunities; all of them have an abiding interest in marketing functions.

Largest Advertising Spenders in the U.S., 2009

2009 RANK	2008 RANK	COMPANY	HEADQUARTERS	SPENDING (\$M)	1-YR. CHANGE (%)
1	1	Procter & Gamble	Cincinnati, Ohio	4,189	-13.4
2	2	Verizon	New York City	3,020	-18.4
3	3	AT&T	San Antonio, Texas	2,797	-8.9
4	4	General Motors	Detroit	2,215	-23.7
5	24	Pfizer	New York City	2,097	62.3
6	5	Johnson & Johnson	New Brunswick, N.J.	2,061	-18.5
7	7	Walt Disney	Burbank, Calif.	2,004	-9.6
8	8	Time Warner	New York City	1,848	-16.3
9	14	L'Oréal	Clichy, France	1,834	9.6
10	25	Kraft Foods	Northfield, Ill.	1,748	37.4
11	15	Walmart Stores	Bentonville, Ark.	1,729	4.2
12	10	Sears Holdings	Hoffman Estates, Ill.	1,700	-8.8
13	16	Bank Of America	Charlotte, N.C.	1,588	-3.8
14	9	General Electric	Fairfield, Conn.	1,576	-22
15	11	Ford Motor Company	Detroit	1,517	-18.3
16	18	Sprint Nextel	Reston, Va.	1,500	0.0
17	17	Anheuser-Busch Inbev	Leuven, Belgium	1,467	-7.6
18	12	GlaxoSmithKline	Brentford, U.K.	1,395	-23.7
19	20	JPMorgan Chase	New York City	1,341	-1.1
20	35	Nestlé	Vevey, Switzerland	1,333	17.0

21	6	Unilever	London	1,294	-46.6
22	37	American Express	New York City	1,294	22.5
23	62	Merck	Whitehouse Station, N.J.	1,286	108.3
24	13	Toyota	Toyota City, Japan	1,286	-19.1
25	29	McDonald's	Oak Brook, Ill.	1,236	2.9
26	19	Sony	Tokyo	1,219	-16.8
27	28	Target	Minneapolis	1,167	-5.4
28	22	J.C. Penney	Plano, Texas	1,167	-11.2
29	32	Berkshire Hathaway	Omaha, Neb.	1,154	-2.7
30	21	News Corp.	New York City	1,117	-16.5
31	27	Macy's	Cincinnati, Ohio	1,087	-12.3
32	49	Microsoft	Redmond, Wash.	1,059	31.9
33	31	U.S. Government	Washington, D.C.	1,034	-13.5
34	34	General Mills	Minneapolis	993	-15.4
35	23	PepsiCo	Purchase, N.Y.	958	-25.9
36	26	Honda Motor	Tokyo	936	-25.4
37	33	Viacom	New York City	932	-20.9
38	43	SABMiller	London	927	-0.8
39	41	Yum Brands	Louisville, Ky.	882	-8.2
40	48	Kellogg	Battle Creek, Mich.	857	4.4
41	45	Kohl's	Menomonee Falls, Wisc.	846	-4.9
42	42	Deutsche Telekom	Bonn, Germany	834	-11.3
43	36	Chrysler	Auburn Hills, Mich.	825	-27.0
44	38	Mars	McLean, Va.	779w	-24.9
45	66	AstraZeneca	London	760	32.0
46	51	Lowe's	Mooresville, N.C.	750	-4.9
47	46	Eli Lilly	Indianapolis	748	-11.7
48	55	Coca-Cola	Atlanta	721	-4.1

Careers in Brand Management

49	44	Bristol-Myers Squibb	New York City	719	-20.6
50	59	Clorox	Oakland, Calif.	711	3.6
51	39	Home Depot	Atlanta	708	-29.2
52	57	Estée Lauder	New York City	707	-8.2
53	57	Campbell Soup	Camden, N.J.	699	-1.7
54	30	Nissan Motor	Tokyo	691	-42.4
55	47	Bayer	Leverkusen, Germany	678	-19.3
56	60	Comcast	Philadelphia	653	-2.5
57	50	Nike	Beaverton, Ore.	593	-25.0
58	56	Reckitt Benckiser	Slough, U.K.	584	-19.5
59	72	Wells Fargo	San Francisco	572	9.0
60	58	LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton	Paris	568	-17.3
61	40	Citigroup	New York City	560	-42.3
62	64	Best Buy	Richfield, Minn.	556	-6.8
63	65	State Farm	Bloomington, Ill.	550	-4.5
64	67	Visa	San Francisco	532	-3.0
65	52	SC Johnson	Racine, Wisc.	529	-31.7
66	70	Kroger	Cincinnati, Ohio	529	-0.1
67	79	Progressive Corp.	Mayfield Village, Ohio	517	9.9
68	75	Novartis	Basel, Switzerland	516	4.4
69	69	Diageo	London	509	-5.1
70	80	Wendy's/Arby's Group	Sandy Springs, Ga.	497	-8.5
71	86	Sanofi-Aventis	Paris	487	15.2
72	NA	Abbott Laboratories	Abbott Park, Ill.	465	NA
73	84	Doctor's Associates	Milford, Conn.	450	4.2
74	81	IBM	Armonk, N.Y.	446	0.2
75	96	Fortune Brands	Deerfield, Ill.	432	12.0

Note: Total ad spending figures by company do not include expenditures for local radio, national spot radio, and FSLs (see Industry Jargon section for a definition of this term). Source: Advertising Age



The Companies

3

ANHEUSER-BUSCH INBEV

BROUWERIJPLEIN, 1
3000 LEUVEN, BELGIUM

TEL +32 16 27 61 11

FAX +32 16 50 61 11

www.ab-inbev.com

U.S. HEADQUARTERS:

1 BUSCH PLACE

ST. LOUIS, MO 63118

PHONE: 314-577-2000

FAX: 314-577-2900

Formed through a series of mergers and acquisitions during the past decade, Anheuser-Busch InBev is now the world's leading producer of beer by volume;

KEY NUMBERS

FINANCIALS

2009 revenue:

\$36,758 million

1-year change:

56.4 percent

PERSONNEL

Number of employees: 116,000

1-year change:

-3.2 percent

a headquarters in St. Louis since the Anheuser-Busch purchase, but New York City has become the company's true foothold in North America while maintaining its European headquarters in Belgium.

[BRANDS]

Beck's, Budweiser, Bud Light, Hoegaarden, Leffe, Michelob, Stella Artois

[HIGHLIGHTS]

- Ranked second among beverage manufacturers (after Coca-Cola) in *Fortune's* 2010 Most Admired Companies. Individually, Anheuser-Busch and InBev were ranked first and second, respectively, in 2009, based on data from before the merger.
- Ranked 196 on the *Fortune's* 2010 Global 500, up from 387 in 2009 as a result of the Anheuser-Busch purchase.
- The company has a large stake in other segments of the North American beer market; it owns 35 percent of the U.S.'s Craft Brewers Alliance, manufacturers of a variety of microbrewed beers, as well as 50.2 percent of Mexico's Grupo Modelo, maker of Corona.

CAMPBELL SOUP COMPANY

1 CAMPBELL PLACE

CAMDEN, NJ 08103

PHONE: 856-342-4800 OR 800-257-8443

FAX: 856-342-3878

www.campbellsoup.com

Campbell Soup Company, which was incorporated in 1922, makes soups, sauces, beverages, cookies and crackers, and chocolates. It created the packaged soup

➡ KEY NUMBERS

FINANCIALS

2009 revenue:

\$7,586 million

1-year change:

-5.2 percent

PERSONNEL

Number of

employees: 18,700

1-year change:

-3.6 percent

category more than a century ago, and descendants of condensed soup inventor John Dorrance still own 45 percent of the company. President and CEO Douglas Conant called 2009 the company's best year for soup in nine years. The company has been revamping its brand through healthful versions of its classics—for example, reducing the fat, sodium and calorie content of mushroom soup into Healthy Request Cream of Mushroom. Unfortunately, soup sales have not continued the 2009 trend; during the first nine months of fiscal 2010, soup sales were down 4 percent. Although customers want healthier soup, the recession has limited their willingness to spend for it—they want cheaper soup, too.

[BRANDS]

Campbell's, Erasco, Godiva, Oxo, Pace, Pepperidge Farm, Prego, Royco, Swanson, V8

[HIGHLIGHTS]

- In early 2010, Campbell's announced plans to update packaging for many of its soups while maintaining the iconic red-and-white color scheme. The packaging for some varieties, though—namely, chicken noodle, cream of mushroom, and tomato—will remain unchanged.
- As a sponsor of the National Football League, Campbell's Chunky Soup brand has long had a series of popular ads featuring NFL players and their "moms." In announcing a re-staging of the product for 2010, Conant specifically linked the brand with male consumers and their "need for more nutritious ways to satisfy their appetites."

THE CLOROX COMPANY

1221 BROADWAY
OAKLAND, CA 94612
PHONE: 510-271-7000
FAX: 510-832-1463

www.clorox.com

Clorox is very popular among many of those interested in careers in brand management because of its strong leadership programs, but its location in sunny

➔ KEY NUMBERS

FINANCIALS

2009 revenue:

\$5,450 million

1-year change:

3.4 percent

PERSONNEL

Number of

employees: 8,300

1-year change:

6.4 percent

California certainly doesn't hurt. The company has been located in Oakland since its founding and is one of the cornerstones of the city. In addition to its namesake bleach, the company makes nondurable household products, such as cleaning and water-filtration products. It also produces insecticides, auto-care products, charcoal briquettes, and cat litter, as

well as food products.

[BRANDS]

Armor All, Brita, Burt's Bees, Clorox, Hidden Valley Ranch, Pine-Sol

[HIGHLIGHTS]

- chlorine—a toxic gas—to safer chemical processes.
- Starting with the introduction, in 2008, of its Green Works product line, Clorox has been at the forefront of increased disclosure of ingredients in its products, and other CPG companies have followed the company's example.
- Liquid bleach, trash bags and charcoal have long been the company's leading sellers, but the company has tapped into growth in natural products through its Burt's Bees personal care line.
- Because of national security concerns, the company has grown increasingly sensitive to the security of chemicals used in its products and announced, in 2009, that it would convert its plants that use

THE COCA-COLA COMPANY

1 COCA-COLA PLAZA
ATLANTA, GA 30313
PHONE: 404-676-2121
FAX: 404-676-6792

www.cocacola.com

Coke is the big daddy of the beverages category, and ranks number one on BusinessWeek's 2010 list of global brands. Coke Classic is the number-one-selling nonalcoholic drink.

KEY NUMBERS

FINANCIALS

2010 revenue:
\$12,079.4 million

1-year change:
-5.1 percent

PERSONNEL

Number of employees: 25,600

1-year change:
2.4 percent

The company, which was incorporated in 1919, owns half of the market globally, and has about 400 brands in approximately 200 markets worldwide; Coke, Diet Coke, and Fanta are three of the top five soft drink brands in terms of brand value, according to Millward Brown (Pepsi and Red Bull are the others).

The company has come under fire by environmentalists and socially responsible investors because of its high water usage. Under the watch of CEO Muhtar Kent, who took on the role in 2008, the Coca-Cola Company has pledged to become water-neutral by 2020.

[BRANDS]

Barq's, Coke, Dasani, Fanta, Fruitopia, Minute Maid, Odwalla, Powerade, Sprite

[HIGHLIGHTS]

- In early 2010, Coca-Cola reached an agreement with the Dr Pepper Snapple group valued at \$715 billion to distribute some Dr Pepper brands in the U.S.
- Coca-Cola is number one on *Fortune's* 2010 list of "America's Most Admired Companies" in the beverage category, up from number three in 2009, and tenth overall.
- The company was number 19 on *Fortune's* 2009 list of "100 Most Desirable MBA Employers."

COLGATE-PALMOLIVE COMPANY

300 PARK AVENUE
NEW YORK, NY 10022
PHONE: 212-310-2000
FAX: 212-310-2475

www.colgate.com

One of the few major CPG companies headquartered in a coastal U.S. city rather than somewhere in the heartland (Oakland's Clorox and Southern

California's Nestlé USA are others), Colgate-Palmolive is the owner of the number-one U.S. toothpaste brand, with 36.2% market share in 2009, and number-two overall oral-care brand, Colgate. The company also competes in the household cleaner, personal care, and pet food categories. Colgate operates in more than 200 countries and earns 70 percent of its revenue abroad,

making it one of the most internationally focused in its industry.

➔ KEY NUMBERS

FINANCIALS

2009 revenue:
\$15,327 million
1-year change:
0.0 percent

PERSONNEL

Number of employees: 38,100
1-year change:
4.1 percent

and 14th on *DiversityInc's* 2010 list of "Best Companies for Diversity."

- Roughly 80% of the company's sales come from outside North America, but the company has looked south of the border for several U.S. product launches: Suavitel fabric softener, Fabuloso household-cleaner brands and, most recently, Caprice hair-care brands all were first marketed in Mexico.
- *Working Mother* named Colgate-Palmolive one of its 100 Best Companies in 2009, citing the company's support for telecommuting, part-time hours and compressed workweeks.

[BRANDS]

Ajax, Colgate, Irish Spring, Palmolive, Speed Stick

[HIGHLIGHTS]

- Colgate-Palmolive was ranked second among soap and cosmetics products companies on *Fortune's* 2010 list of "America's Most Admired Companies,"

CONAGRA FOODS INC.

1 CONAGRA DRIVE
OMAHA, NE 68102
PHONE: 402-595-4000
FAX: 402-595-4707

www.conagrafoods.com

ConAgra started out as a commodity producer of grains and flours before making an impact in the packaged and frozen food industries. At one point, it trailed

KEY NUMBERS

FINANCIALS

2009 revenue:

\$5,450 million

1-year change:

3.4 percent

PERSONNEL

Number of

employees: 8,300

1-year change:

6.4 percent

only Nestlé and Kraft in size among food companies. It has pared down its non-food operations in recent years to focus on core brands, though it recently purchased American Pie, producer of desserts for ConAgra's Marie Callender's line. Also in 2010, ConAgra sold its Gilroy Foods & Flavors business-to-business unit to Olam International. The

company has had to contend with image and public relations difficulties stemming from a 2009 fire at a plant in North Carolina and the 2007 closing of a plant in Georgia after a recall of salmonella-tainted peanut butter sold in Walmart stores.

[BRANDS]

Banquet, Crunch 'n Munch, Egg Beaters, Hunt's, Orville Redenbacher's, Slim Jim

[HIGHLIGHTS]

- ConAgra bought American Pie in summer 2010, which will be moved under the Marie Callender's brand.
- Mega-retailer Walmart accounted for 18 percent of ConAgra's 2009 sales.
- Ranked number 178 in the 2010 *Fortune* 500.

GENERAL MILLS INC.

1 GENERAL MILLS BOULEVARD

MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55426

PHONE: 763-764-7600

FAX: 763-764-7384

www.generalmills.com

General Mills operates in three areas of business: U.S. retail, which develops and markets retail-shelf products in areas such as frozen foods, cereals, bak-

➔ KEY NUMBERS

FINANCIALS

2009 revenue:

\$14,797 million

1-year change:

0.7 percent

PERSONNEL

Number of

employees: 30,000

1-year change:

1.7 percent

ing products, and snacks; bakeries and food service, which sells products to retail and wholesale bakeries; and international, comprising the retail business outside the U.S. and the bakeries and food-service business outside the U.S. and Canada. It's the number one cereal maker in the U.S. with megabrands such as Chex, Wheaties, Cheerios, and Trix. The

company works closely with two advertising agencies: Saatchi & Saatchi in New York and Campbell Mithun in Minneapolis.

[BRANDS]

Betty Crocker, Cheerios, Häagen-Dazs, Hamburger Helper, Nature Valley, Pillsbury, Yoplait

[HIGHLIGHTS]

- General Mills was ranked third among consumer food products companies on Fortune's 2010 list of

"America's Most Admired Companies" and number 47 overall.

- General Mills was ranked among the top 50 companies for diversity in 2010 according to DiversityInc; and was awarded one of the best employers for healthy lifestyle by the National Business Group on Health.
- General Mills ranked first on Working Mother's 2010 "Best Companies for Women of Color." The company was also named one of the top companies for female executives by the National Association for Female Executives in 2008.

H.J. HEINZ COMPANY

1 PPG PLACE
PITTSBURGH, PA 15222
PHONE: 412-456-5700
FAX: 412-456-6128

www.heinz.com

The key segments for H.J. Heinz include ketchup, baby food, seafood products, lower-calorie products, pet food, frozen potato products, pasta sauces, beans, condiments, and pickles.

KEY NUMBERS

FINANCIALS

2010 revenue:
\$10,495 million
1-year change:
3.4 percent

PERSONNEL

Number of employees: 29,600
1-year change:
-8.9 percent

Heinz, which has been selling condiments since 1869, has a 60 percent share of the ketchup market. Through the addition of sugar-free, salt-free, and hot and spicy ketchup, the company has boosted sales of the essential condiment by 7 percent. But don't mistake it for a one-trick company: While ketchup and sauces accounted for 42 percent of 2010 sales, frozen food and snack products made up 41 percent of sales. The company continues to innovate. Heinz's Innovation Center employs more than 200 chefs, food technologists, researchers, and nutrition experts dedicated to churning out new brands.

[BRANDS]

Boston Market, Classico, Heinz, Lea & Perrins, Ore-Ida, Skippy, Weight Watchers

[HIGHLIGHTS]

- Heinz is number one in the U.S. market for ketchup with 60 percent of the market.
- Ranked 233rd on the 2010 Fortune 500 and ninth among food companies.

KELLOGG COMPANY

1 KELLOGG SQUARE

BATTLE CREEK, MI 49016

PHONE: 269-961-2000 OR 800-962-1413

FAX: 269-961-2871

www.kelloggs.com

Kellogg's, home of Corn Flakes and Frosted Flakes, is in a constant battle for cereal dominance with General Mills, and ended up in the number two spot in 2009 after a brief period

➤ KEY NUMBERS

FINANCIALS

2009 revenue:

12,575 million

1-year change:

-1.9 percent

PERSONNEL

Number of

employees: 30,900

1-year change:

-4.6 percent

on top. Kellogg's marketing efforts increasingly rely on co-marketing with popular movies, toys, TV shows and books. While trying to tempt kids with movie-character endorsements, Kellogg's is also aiming to please mom and dad by introducing cereals with greater nutritional value, such as Tiger Power cereal, a whole grain version of Frosted Flakes, and the 2010 introduction of FiberPlus antioxidants cereals. However, in June 2010, Kellogg's recalled 28 million boxes of cereal because of elevated levels of hydrocarbons in their package linings that were creating unusual odor and taste.

[BRANDS]

Cheez-It, Eggo, Froot Loops, Frosted Flakes, Frosted Mini-Wheats, Keebler, Pop-Tarts

[HIGHLIGHTS]

- Kellogg's has manufacturing operations in 19 countries and distributes products in about 180 countries.
- Kellogg's ranked fifth among consumer food products companies on *Fortune's* 2010 list of "America's Most Admired Companies."
- Walmart is Kellogg's top customer, accounting for 21 percent of its sales in 2009.

KRAFT FOODS INC.

3 LAKES DRIVE
NORTHFIELD, IL 60093
PHONE: 847-646-2000
FAX: 847-646-6005

www.kraft.com

Kraft Foods, spun off by Philip Morris in 2001, is the largest food company in the U.S. and the second largest in the world behind Nestlé. Philip Morris's parent

KEY NUMBERS

FINANCIALS

2009 revenue:
\$40,386 million
1-year change:
-4.3 percent

PERSONNEL

Number of employees: 97,000
1-year change:
-1.0 percent

company, Altria, still retains a majority stake in Kraft. In recent years, Kraft has been updating its image to meet the needs of health-conscious consumers and unveiled a new corporate logo and brand identity in 2009. The company has made several major moves in recent years: selling off its Post Cereal brand to Ralcorp in 2008 and its frozen pizza business to Nestlé

in early 2010, taking over British candy maker Cadbury in February 2010, tripling the company's share of global chocolate and candy sales.

[BRANDS]

A.1. Steak Sauce, Cheez Whiz, Chips Ahoy, Kool-Aid, Oreo, Oscar Mayer, Ritz, Velveeta

[HIGHLIGHTS]

- The 2010 takeover of U.K.'s Cadbury elevates Kraft to the largest candy company in the world, above

Nestlé, Hershey and previous number one, Mars.

- *Working Mother* named Kraft one of its 100 Best Companies in 2009, citing workplace health initiatives and a strong female presence on the company's board of directors and in executive positions.
- Kraft was number 45 on *Fortune's* 2009 list of "100 Most Desirable MBA Employers" and number 35 on *DiversityInc's* 2010 list of "50 Best Companies for Diversity."

L'ORÉAL USA INC.

575 FIFTH AVENUE
NEW YORK, NY 10017
PHONE: 212-818-1500
FAX: 212-984-4999

www.lorealusa.com

L'Oréal USA is the largest subsidiary of the French company L'Oréal, the biggest cosmetics company in the world. The company traces its roots back

➤ KEY NUMBERS

FINANCIALS

2009 revenue:
\$3,700 million
1-year change:
5.3 percent

PERSONNEL

Number of employees: 15,305
1-year change:
84.4 percent

nail polishes. Nestlé owns approximately 30 percent of L'Oréal.

[BRANDS]

Giorgio Armani Parfums and Cosmetics, Lancôme Paris, Maybelline, Ralph Lauren Fragrances

[HIGHLIGHTS]

- Worldwide, nearly half of L'Oréal's managers are women.
- The company recruits at about 350 schools, and ranks 40th on *Fortune's* 2010 list of the "100 Most

Desirable MBA Employers."

- L'Oréal was number 44 in *Fortune's* 2009 "100 Most Admired Companies."

NESTLÉ USA INC.

800 NORTH BRAND BOULEVARD
GLENDALE, CA 91203
PHONE: 818-549-6000
FAX: 818-549-6952

www.nestleusa.com

Nestlé USA is a subsidiary of Swiss giant Nestlé S.A., the world's largest food manufacturer. The company has struggled to contain sharp increases in ingredient

➔ KEY NUMBERS

FINANCIALS (parent company)

2009 revenue:
\$103,679 million

1-year change:
-.04 percent

PERSONNEL

**Number of
employees:** 278,000

1-year change:
-1.8 percent

costs by moving operations to cheaper areas and raising prices on some of its products.

Based on sales, Nestlé's is the world's top dairy company. However, its baby milk division has a controversial history. In Europe, the company's reputation was tainted by a decade-long boycott; activists allege that it uses unethical marketing practices to discourage African women from

breast-feeding and thus create dependence on its baby foods. In 2008, officials in Hong Kong and Taiwan discovered melamine, a toxic organic compound, in a Chinese-made Nestlé milk product, and the company recalled milk products produced in China.

[BRANDS]

Butterfinger, DiGiorno, Lean Cuisine, Nestea, PowerBar, Stouffer's, Taster's Choice

[HIGHLIGHTS]

- The powerhouse behind three of the top five brands in the frozen dinners and entrées category, Nestlé ranked 44th on the *Fortune* Global 500 in 2010.
- Nestlé is on the top spot on *Fortune*'s 2010 list of the "America's Most Admired Companies" in the consumer food products category.
- In 2007, Nestlé completed its acquisition of Novartis Medical Nutrition, gaining 2,000 employees and more space in the lucrative health-care nutrition market.

PEPSICO INC.

700 ANDERSON HILL ROAD

PURCHASE, NY 10577

PHONE: 914-253-2000

FAX: 914-253-2070

www.pepsico.com

Pepsi is perennially in a battle with Coca-Cola for the top spot in the beverages category. But PepsiCo seems to be ahead of Coke in ownership of top brands in

■ KEY NUMBERS

FINANCIALS

2009 revenue:

\$43,232 million

1-year change:

0.0 percent

PERSONNEL

Number of employees:

203,000

1-year change:

2.5 percent

a variety of beverage categories other than cola; Tropicana, for example, is the number-one orange juice brand. In 2007, the company acquired Naked Juice Company from North Castle Partners, a private equity firm. It was just one of several wellness-focused companies PepsiCo snatched up that year: IZZE Beverages and Stacy's Pita Chips also joined

Pepsi. Interestingly, Pepsi has greater snack sales than beverage sales; the company has successfully diversified into foods via its Frito-Lay subsidiary. It's a heavyweight in the snacks category with brands that include Lay's, Doritos, Ruffles, and Cheetos.

[BRANDS]

Aquafina, Doritos, Fritos, Gatorade, Mountain Dew, Pepsi, Quaker Oats, Tropicana

[HIGHLIGHTS]

- Pepsi has the snacks category locked up, owning all of the top five brands.
- Number 50 on the 2010 *Fortune* 500, number 171 on its 2010 Global 500 list, and 25 on its 2010 list of "Global Most Admired Companies."
- Chairman and CEO Indra Nooyi is the first woman and first Indian to lead the company in its history.

THE PROCTER & GAMBLE COMPANY

1 PROCTER & GAMBLE PLAZA
CINCINNATI, OH 45202
PHONE: 513-983-1100
FAX: 513-983-9369

www.pg.com

Founded in 1837, Procter & Gamble, the number-one household products company in the U.S., attributes consumers' time-tested loyalty to its brands

➔ KEY NUMBERS

FINANCIALS

2009 revenue:
\$79,029 million

1-year change:
-5.4 percent

PERSONNEL

Number of employees: 135,000

1-year change:
-2.2 percent

or more. Its impressive portfolio includes the number-one brands in categories that include toilet tissue, shampoo, and laundry detergent. It also owns top-five brands in categories of cosmetics, bar soap, toothpaste, household cleaners, diapers, facial tissues, and stomach remedies. In 2010, Procter & Gamble introduced "Welcome to Parenthood," a webisode available at pampers.com.

[BRANDS]

Charmin, Clairol, Crest, Gillette, Pepto-Bismol, Pringles, Secret, Tide

[HIGHLIGHTS]

- The company is renowned for its brand management training programs. It was ranked 22nd in the 2010 *Fortune* 500 and 17th on *Fortune's* 2009 list of the "100 Most Desirable MBA Employers"—number one among CPG companies.
- Procter & Gamble was listed among *Working Mother's* "100 Best Companies" in 2009. The magazine cited the company's support for flexible and compressed schedules, telecommuting, and full benefits for all employees starting the first day of employment.
- P&G's Dawn brand won the approval of the International Bird Rescue Research Center as the best detergent for cleaning wildlife, and the company has responded to damage from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico with 12,400 bottles of dishwashing liquid.

SARA LEE CORPORATION

3500 LACEY ROAD
DOWNERS GROVE, IL 60515
PHONE: 630-598-6000
FAX: 630-598-8220

www.saralee.com

After building up a diverse bundle of products that spanned consumer food products, intimates and underwear, and household products, in 2005 Sara Lee decided

➔ KEY NUMBERS

FINANCIALS

2009 revenue:
\$12,881 million
1-year change:
-2.5 percent

PERSONNEL

Number of employees: 41,000
1-year change:
-6.8 percent

to focus on its core businesses—namely, food, beverage, and household and personal care. The company spun off its branded apparel businesses into Hanesbrands and has continued to dispose of other brands, particularly those with primarily European markets. The company still has operations in 55 countries and sells its products in some 200 countries.

- CEO Brenda Barnes took a medical leave of absence in May 2010. Marcel Smits, chief financial officer, is acting interim CEO.

[BRANDS]

Ball Park, Butter-Krust, Hillshire Farm, Jimmy Dean, Sara Lee

[HIGHLIGHTS]

- The company ranked number 180 on the 2010 *Fortune* 500.
- Sara Lee was number 11 among consumer food products companies on *Fortune's* 2010 list of “America’s Most Admired Companies.”

S.C. JOHNSON & SON INC.

1525 HOWE STREET
RACINE, WI 53403
PHONE: 262-260-2000 OR 800-494-4855
FAX: 262-260-6004

www.scjohnson.com

S.C. Johnson & Son is unique among big consumer products companies because it's not publicly traded: The Johnson family owns about 60 percent of the company, and Dr. Herbert Fisk Johnson III, great-great-grandson of the company's founder, is currently chairman and CEO. S.C. Johnson has deep roots in Racine, Wisconsin, tracing its lineage back to 1866, when it began as a parquet flooring company. Employees have the unusual benefit of working in a renowned building designed by Frank Lloyd Wright.

➔ KEY NUMBERS

FINANCIALS

2009 revenue:
not available
1-year change:
not available

PERSONNEL

Number of employees: 12,000
1-year change:
0 percent

[BRANDS]

Drano, Off, Pledge, Shout, Windex, Ziploc

[HIGHLIGHTS]

- The company made *Working Mother's* 2009 list of the "100 Best Companies for Working Mothers," one of only three CPG companies to make the list.
- S.C. Johnson came in at number 83 on *Fortune's* 2010 list of the "100 Best Companies to Work For."

Though the company didn't issue any profit-sharing checks in 2009, it maintained a "no-layoffs" policy that has been in effect for 123 years.

- In Harris Interactive's 2010 "Reputation Rankings," S.C. Johnson came up big: in the top 10 for best reputation overall, and one of the top five in both "best products and services" and "emotional appeal."

Careers in Brand Management

UNILEVER

Unilever House, Blackfriars

LONDON EC4P 4BQ

UNITED KINGDOM

PHONE: +44-20-7822-5252

FAX: +44-20-7822-6191

U.S. Headquarters:

700 SYLVAN AVENUE

ENGLEWOOD CLIFFS, NJ 07632

PHONE: 201-894-4000 OR 877-995-4483

FAX: 201-871-8257

www.unilever.com

Owned by Unilever NV (based in the Netherlands) and Unilever plc (based in London), Unilever is the second-largest packaged goods company in the world, after

➔ KEY NUMBERS

FINANCIALS

2009 revenue:

\$57,074.3 million

1-year change:

-0.1 percent

PERSONNEL

Number of

employees: 163,000

1-year change:

-6.3 percent

Nestlé. Like many other CPG companies, Unilever's strategy consists of focusing on core brands and paring away noncore brands. The company has reduced its number of brands from 1,200 to 400 in the past five years, and has been struggling on the stock market though its shares have recovered since bottoming out in early 2009.

After losing its position as largest consumer products company following Procter & Gamble's acquisition of Gillette, Unilever has reorganized much of its North American operations to focus on its holdings in Europe, including the sale of its North American laundry division to Vestar Capital Partners.

[HIGHLIGHTS]

- The prime mover behind top-five brands in the toothpaste, shampoo, laundry detergent, and bar soap categories, Unilever ranks 121st on the 2010 *Fortune* Global 500.
- The company came in at number four among consumer food products companies on *Fortune's* 2010 list of "America's Most Admired Companies," but missed out on a top 50 ranking overall.

[BRANDS]

Axe, Ben & Jerry's, Bertolli, Breyers, Dove, Lipton, Ragú, Slim-Fast



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Careers in Brand Management

THE CAREER TRACK

› **THE CAREER TRACK** at most companies features plenty of opportunities for cross-functional experience and varied work assignments. At some companies, experience in functions other than marketing has become a prerequisite for advancement. One brand management professional reports that in her 25-year career at Procter & Gamble, she has held seven jobs in departments ranging from marketing to cost accounting to corporate recruiting.

Despite flexibility in career path development, there are clearly defined entry-level positions: marketing analyst (undergraduates), assistant brand manager (MBAs), and sales representative (undergraduates).

The path from marketing analyst to assistant brand manager to brand manager is a progression from executing to developing strategy. Continuing along the path involves a shift from participating in cross-functional teams to leading them, and from monitoring a business budget to assuming profit and loss responsibility. At some point along this path, most companies send aspiring managers into the field for extensive sales training, aka the “reality check.” The annals of brand management are full of tales of “brilliant” strategy that the sales force couldn’t execute in a store. In general, marketing analysts support multiple small businesses or one big one; assistant brand managers run a small business; and brand managers manage one large business or a portfolio of two or three smaller ones. Marketing directors, a catchall term for the levels beyond brand manager, oversee a major portfolio of brands.

MARKETING ANALYST OR ASSISTANT

› **THE MARKETING ANALYST** or assistant position is the entry level for recent college graduates. Supporting a few brand managers or assistant brand managers, a marketing analyst must balance tasks to keep everybody smiling. You may work on one major brand (say, Diet Coke) or a group of smaller brands. Most of your work will involve poring through reams of data. Yes, you will have the opportunity to sit in on divisional meetings and strategy sessions, but the bulk of your work will be more “tactical,” a euphemism for number crunching. Know how to balance a budget? Yearn to construct a competitive analysis? Ever wonder who tracks how many premiums consumers order? Duties such as these will soon consume your life. Successful marketing analysts execute assignments efficiently and accurately. Big-picture strategy work comes later.

Marketing analysts support multiple small businesses or one big one; assistant brand managers run a small business; and brand managers manage one large business or a portfolio of two or three smaller ones.

TYPICAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- Assist in business reviews, including competitive analysis
- Benchmark competitors
- Manage budgets
- Proofread advertising copy
- Run errands
- Get signatures
- Inventory the supply closet
- Teach the divisional VP how to make PowerPoint slides

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A MARKETING ANALYST

8:30 A.M. Check voicemail in hopes of hearing that the legal department has signed off on the details of the soft drink promotion.

8:45 A.M. Retrieve legal's signature and hand-deliver to operations. Wait impatiently and then run over to promotions.

9:30 A.M. Return to your cubicle to discover a new pile of bills from outside vendors. Time to log in actual costs and compare them to planned expenditures.

10:00 A.M. Remind one of the assistant brand managers ever so gently that the second quarter promotion for the personalized pencils is over budget by \$25,000.

11:00 A.M. Marvel at your discovery that the premium fulfillment rate is actually twice the expected rate, thus explaining the higher costs.

12:00 P.M. Report your findings to the brand team during the monthly budget review. Receive kudos for your investigative work.

1:00 P.M. Find just enough time for a quick workout and shower in the company gym on the fourth floor. For 45 minutes, all of your worries disappear.

2:15 P.M. Grab a slice at a local pizzeria with a couple of other analysts, then run to make the brand group forecast meeting.

2:30 P.M. Snap out of your lovely daydream at the forecast meeting when the marketing director asks you to estimate category growth in the last six months. Watch in amazement as the marketing director nods appreciatively in response to your educated guess.

3:00 P.M. Listen attentively when another assistant brand manager from your group stops by to ask for your help on a request from upper management.

4:30 P.M. Finish pulling the latest sales figures and merchandising info from the Nielsen database.

4:45 P.M. Carpool out to a local mall to watch focus groups react to a new advertising campaign. Position yourself next to the big bowl of M&Ms.

7:00 P.M. Stop at the only Chinese restaurant in the area for a postmortem dinner with your associates. Resist the temptation to complain that you can't get any really good dim sum around here.

Careers in Brand Management

ASSISTANT BRAND MANAGER

› **WITH MBA IN** hand, you're ready to conquer the world. Sorry, but you'll have to postpone those grandiose plans. For now, you'll spend anywhere from two to four years discovering the wonderful world of consumer product marketing and learning the way business is done at your chosen company. As an assistant brand manager, it's your job to coordinate the various marketing functions—including packaging, advertising, promotions, and public relations—to execute the marketing plan.

Most analysts spend two to three years honing their skills, then accept a promotion to assistant brand manager or head off to business school.

The good news is you are the one person at the company ultimately responsible for that one product. The bad news is that the buck stops at your desk. In the course of executing the marketing plan, you will head up a number of cross-functional teams that work on various parts of your business. For example, a product improvement project may bring together R&D, marketing research, packaging, finance, and operations. A change in your consumer promotion plan might require a coordinated effort between representatives from promotions and operations. Operations? You don't want to change the dates on a coupon drop without checking with operations to ensure that the factory is producing enough product to cover the increased demand.

Don't worry, you will have an opportunity to develop marketing plans of your own, but a tremendous amount of your time is spent carrying out the

previous manager's "big ideas" and responding to directives from upper management. You'll understand your place in a big company very clearly after your marketing director slashes your carefully crafted consumer promotion plan in the back half of the year to cover the costs of a coupon redemption overrun on another brand in her portfolio.

Assistant brand managers shift gears all day long. One minute they're brainstorming new promotion ideas, the next they're wading through monthly volume projections

TYPICAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- Lead cross-functional teams that carry out the daily work on the business
- Manage marketing analysts and administrative assistants
- Develop marketing plan to review brand performance and meet volume and profit projections
- Participate in the life of the company by interviewing prospective candidates, attending recruiting functions, sitting on planning committees, and volunteering in corporate outreach programs
- Demonstrate leadership and analytical skills to senior management
- Manage qualitative and quantitative market research projects

› TIP



To do well in brand management, you have to be able to think more broadly than marketing. You have to think about the entire business and how each issue impacts it.

PROFILE OF AN ASSISTANT BRAND MANAGER

Age: 30

Years in business: 1

Education: MBA

Hours per week: usually around 55; up to 85 during planning season and as few as 45 during the off season

Size of company: 110,000 employees

Annual salary: about \$80,000

What do you do?

I have several responsibilities, including managing the marketing budget; forecasting demand; managing daily business knowledge in terms of understanding our share and basic business fundamentals, such as distribution, merchandising, and pricing; and working on initiatives. I work on a baby-care brand—and initiatives, or new-to-the-world products, are the key to driving our business growth. Working on an initiative involves leading cross-functional teams and developing a marketing plan from television copy to print copy to e-commerce and any Web-based marketing strategies.

What did you do before?

Before I went to business school I worked in operations management for a large insurance company. It had nothing to do with marketing. I think that's one of the distinctions my company has: They look for people who have a demonstrated track record of leadership, not necessarily a marketing background.

How did you get your job?

I was an intern here. At the end of your internship, they make a decision about whether to hire you on a permanent basis. I had a great summer, and they gave me an offer that I accepted after I looked at several other brand companies.

What are your career aspirations?

Before I retire, I'd like to teach business in a high school. Five years from now, I'd like to be a brand man-

ager on my second assignment (they rotate every 1½ to 2 years) for a current brand, as opposed to being a brand manager on new business development. I'd like to get the opportunity to manage and grow a billion-dollar business.

What kinds of people do well in this business?

People who do well are people who are able to develop a vision for their projects and lead their cross-functional counterparts to accomplish that vision.

What do you really like about your job?

The thing I like most might just be specific to my category. In baby care, there's a very defined set of competitors. I enjoy the idea of working on a project that will cause pain for the competition. I like the competitive aspects of branding. And I like how, at the end of each week, you can look at your market share and see how well you're doing and how far you still have to go.

What do you dislike?

The bottom line is the bureaucracy that comes with working at a large company. The key issue is that a large company like this one has so many people who are impacted by a project that it takes a long time to get alignment, and achieving speed to market can be difficult.

What is the biggest misconception about your job?

The biggest misconception is that my company is really straitlaced and that we all walk around spewing the company line. The people I work with in brand are a very diverse group, demographically and otherwise. They all think very independently—everyone has his or her own point of view. We don't just limit our discussions to business issues. We have games in the cubes, like an electric car racetrack, that we can play when the bureaucracy gets stressful. We have a lot of fun.

Careers in Brand Management

Looking back on your career or job search, what do you wish you had done differently?

I don't know that I would have done anything differently. I ended up with the job that I wanted, and I think that regardless of the way this job turns out, it was a good decision. If I decide to stay here, and I make it to general manager, that's great, but the bottom line is that with this company on my resume, I'll always attract attention from headhunters.

How can someone get a job like yours?

Have a demonstrated track record of leadership. That's it. Just because you didn't go to the best undergrad school or you don't have tons of marketing experience, you shouldn't think your options are limited.

Describe a typical day.

7:30 A.M. Get to work and check my email and voicemail. Most of it is related to the projects that I'm working on. I might get an email from our demand planner with questions about our shipments. There will be a couple of questions from the brand manager on business issues or follow-up questions on projects I'm working on. I also get messages from people wondering where we're sitting with our budget.

10:00 A.M. I have a meeting on a project I'm working on. Right now I'm working on a special merchandising SKU (see the Industry Jargon section). The meeting involves people from product supply, product development, sales, market research, and finance. Brand leads the discussion about what it's going to take to deliver the SKUs to market by the time the customer wants them, and about what issues are stopping us—issues like the way we're asking the product-supply people to put

the products in a box, or issues with how we've designed the box and how it fits on a pallet—and how those issues will impact the total cost of the project. We don't focus solely on marketing, but also on heading projects and on profitably developing the business.

11:30 A.M. After we (hopefully) resolve those issues, it's time to come back and check my voicemail for any urgent issues.

12:00 P.M. Get lunch from the cafeteria and eat it at my desk. I wouldn't benchmark my behavior against anybody else's: Most of my coworkers like to eat out, but I don't.

1:30 P.M. Work on a document to try to establish one of my projects as a key initiative for the business team. I try to dimensionalize key initiatives the team is facing, and show how this project will resolve those issues. I base my document on research I've done in IRI, a barcode scanner database. I might pick up the phone and call someone in sales to get some more information.

4:00 P.M. Meet with an intern or a new hire to talk about how things are going with their project list. In my company, one of the ways to prove that you're promotable is by coaching people.

5:00 P.M. Talk to some other ABMs about the projects they're working on. Then I finish out some email and answer some more voice messages.

7:00 P.M. Head home.

BRAND MANAGER

› **CONGRATULATIONS! YOU'RE NOW** responsible for the performance of a major brand or a portfolio of two to three smaller brands. You also take on responsibilities at the business unit, division, or corporate level. These responsibilities might range from serving on a companywide task force that is reviewing trade spending across different brands to leading the recruiting team at your alma mater. You are also responsible for the performance of the marketing analysts and assistant brand managers who work on your business.

In fact, at some companies, up to 50 percent of managers' performance evaluations can be devoted to assessing their contribution to their subordinates' development. In addition to an increase in salary, freshly minted brand managers often receive attractive performance incentives that tie year-end bonuses to a combination of their brand's performance and the company's performance. Critics argue that these performance incentives lead managers to sacrifice long-term brand-building initiatives in favor of short-term profit-taking, but no one predicts a change any time soon.

■ DON'T GO DOWN WITH THE SHIP

Many insiders liken the brand manager role to that of a ship captain, guiding the cross-functional crew through such treacherous waters as annual plans, new product launches, competitive analyses, promotional strategies, and capacity

planning at production facilities. The safe port you're steering toward consists of the volume, market share, and profit targets for your brand—you now own the bottom line on the profit and loss statement for your business.

TYPICAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- Assume leadership of the cross-functional team working on a major brand or group of smaller brands, and accept profit and loss responsibility for the business
- Segue from executing tactics to developing strategy to selling it to senior management
- Participate in companywide initiatives, such as steering committees and policy review boards
- Manage assistant brand managers, analysts, and administrative assistants

INSIDER SCOOP

"You have to be willing to take risks, but they must be taken wisely."

PROFILE OF A BRAND MANAGER

Age: 25

Years in business: 3

Education: BA in economics

Hours per week: 50 to 60; occasionally as few as 45

Size of company: 110,000 employees

Annual salary: \$90,000 to \$100,000

What do you do?

I'm responsible for all profit and balance on a global brand that does \$300 million in sales. This company, like most other brand management companies, divides its brands into separate companies. I run all aspects of this business: pricing, sizing, sales strategy, planning and executing new initiatives, developing and executing a marketing plan, and all advertising. That's not to say I do it all myself—I work with a lot of people to get it all done—but as brand manager, I lead all of it.

What did you do before?

I was an assistant brand manager. I worked on a brand as part of a team. Assistant brand managers work on a series of projects, including leading a specific initiative. Initiatives include line extensions, product upgrades, and flankers (see the Industry Jargon section).

Careers in Brand Management

How did you get your job?

I interviewed for a summer internship. The internship gave me the chance to explore the company for the summer and to figure out if I'd like working here. The work is very real; you do the same things you would do if you were an assistant brand manager. You get a really accurate feel of what an entry-level position would be like.

What are your career aspirations?

I want to move on to a marketing director role in this company and then either run a business here or be involved at a senior level elsewhere.

What kinds of people do well in this business?

Natural leaders who take strong initiative and get going quickly do well. People who know what their resources are and whom they can go to for help do well, and people who don't just wait around for help but get going themselves do really well.

Since we have such a team environment, being able to work in cross-functional teams is extraordinarily important.

What do you really like about your job?

I love the autonomy and the responsibility. For all intents and purposes, I'm running the business. I have profit and sales numbers that I'm responsible for delivering to the company at the end of the year, but that's it. People above me do have veto power, but I'm responsible for the entire planning process. I have a lot of freedom. I know what my workload is, and I'm able to make my own time to get everything done. If I have to go do something for a personal reason, I can do that.

What do you dislike?

In any company this size, you're going to dislike the structure and the red tape and the layers of management, but I think we've become a lot better about that. And after a while, you realize that the bureaucracy is there for a reason. Upper management is responsible to shareholders. I'm paid to deliver profit and sales growth,

and sometimes those two things don't mesh. Sometimes there are things that are out of my control, and that's frustrating. What's best for my business might not be best for the company as a whole.

> TIP



Activities are important on your resume as you apply for internships, but it's quality, not quantity, that counts. Employers look for the depth of your involvement in the activities you choose.

What is the biggest misconception about your job?

People doubt that a brand manager in this company can have much autonomy. They think we're wheels in a machine, and that we don't make decisions. People think that everything moves really slowly, that true speed in a company of this size is impossible, and that no decision is made without years and years of research. All that doesn't sound like much fun, but the reality is that we've shifted to where, most of the time, the brand managers are trusted to make the right decisions. In the last 12 months, my brand has launched three initiatives, and our plans for the future are even more aggressive. Some of my friends work at high-tech companies, and our rate of speed is not much different from theirs.

Looking back on your career or job search, what do you wish you had done differently?

In hindsight, during my job search, I probably looked at way too broad a field, both in the range of industries I looked at and the number of companies in those industries. There was even one industry I really wasn't interested in at all, but I interviewed in it just because everyone else I knew did. I interviewed with 35 different companies after I got the offer from this company, the one I ended up accepting. Part of it was an ego

thing, wanting to see how many offers I could get, and part was applying to a lot of places because I honestly didn't know how many interviews I'd have, but I didn't really think through what I'd take away in the end.

How can someone get a job like yours?

The best way to get a glimpse of a company is to take a summer internship. At my company, we look for examples—from both in and out of school and work—of times you've shown the ability to set a vision and lead a group to make that vision a reality. We also look for people who show initiative. You will get an internship if you demonstrate those characteristics.

Describe a typical day.

8:00 A.M. Come in and check my email and voice-mail. My messages are primarily from assistant brand managers or someone cross-functionally, such as people in sales or product development. They might be updating me on the status of various projects or wanting me to make a decision on something that they're recommending. As brand manager, I have the final decision on any recommendations before they get to upper management. I also get email announcements of meetings or brainstorming sessions I need to attend. There might also be messages from our advertising agency—I'm their primary contact at our business—talking about the status of our print and television executions. Email is the number one method of communication here. It's easy to get detail in it that you can't get with the telephone.

9:00 A.M. Have a meeting where we discuss our business strategy for our club business—Sam's and Costco and the other club stores—for the next fiscal year. We dis-

cuss what we're going to do specifically for them to make sure we maintain the great growth we've seen there. By the end of the meeting, we've come up with some options to take to upper management.

10:30 A.M. Have a two-hour meeting with my assistant brand managers—there are five people in all on my brand—to run through all of the marketing elements we'll be executing in the next year. We walk out of the meeting with a fairly good draft of our ideas for moving forward.

12:30 P.M. Go out to lunch. I take an hour or an hour and 15 minutes.

1:30 P.M. Have one-on-ones with my assistant brand managers each week. We discuss the status of their projects, and I give them any help, opinions, suggestions, or decisions that they need. I meet with at least one of them every day.

2:30 P.M. Meet with the advertising agency. They present new ads to us, and we go over the strategy we're working on together. We might work on putting together a media plan for all the elements—print, television, and interactive media.

4:00 P.M. The rest of my day, I just flow to the work. I might have an impromptu conference call with engineering to brainstorm what's happening from a product standpoint in terms of cost savings and improvements. Once a week, I have a meeting with the cross-functional heads of sales, product development, product supply, finance, and market research.

Careers in Brand Management

MARKETING DIRECTOR

› **READY TO RUN** a business? Then you're right on track to become a marketing director. In this role, you'll be responsible for a whole business unit, guiding overall strategy by coordinating the efforts of brand managers and assistant brand managers and ensuring that the brand teams remain focused on the key strategic issues. It's your job to communicate with the executive wing, and to ensure that your brands receive the resources and capital they need to grow. Because you're responsible for the business unit's P&L (that's profit and loss), the workload can be heavy at times, but your generous compensation package justifies the effort.

You'll be expected to make big-picture entrepreneurial decisions as a marketing director, and your company will hold you responsible for the outcomes of those decisions. As a marketing director, you'll make key contacts in ad agencies, the media, consulting firms, your industry, and the marketing field in general, and these contacts will serve you well as an entrepreneur or consultant. Through them you'll gain access to the services, people, research, ideas, and exposure you need to make your own company or consulting ventures successful. A marketing director position is one of the best paid, most rewarding opportunities for on-the-job training you'll find in the business world.

TYPICAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- Strategy development for entire business unit and/or product division
- Managing portfolio of brands, and shouldering profit and loss responsibility for the business
- Budget allocation and oversight, with responsibility to reallocate resources as necessary to track financial goals across a brand portfolio
- Managing a team of brand managers and assistants responsible for cross-functional teams that develop and implement appropriate brand strategies
- Determining acceptable business unit profit and loss,

and making course corrections to track financial and strategic corporate positioning goals

PROFILE OF A MARKETING DIRECTOR

Age: 43

Years in business: 8

Education: MBA

Hours per week: 50 to 70

Size of company: 25,000 employees

Annual salary: \$130,000

What do you do?

I am in charge of a women's athletic apparel brand portfolio for a major athletic outfitter, and I'm responsible for developing strategies for this portfolio to support and advance corporate goals, both short-term and long-term. This means balancing profit and loss against longer-term gains in corporate reputation and positioning, which is a constant juggling act. I need to deliver product wins with established brands, but I am also constantly pursuing brand extension and promising new products to grow the business. So on any given day, I meet with several brand managers and key people on their teams to ensure we are on track to meet expectations for this quarter and this year, but that we're also building a foundation of new successes to ensure the company's future. This is how we managed to exceed our profit projections last year, when comparable brands across the industry were hurting from lack of consumer confidence.

What did you do before?

I worked as a brand manager for a subsidiary of the company that produces premium lifestyle accessories for teens. There I helped launch a line of casual athletic gear aimed at young women in their late teens and early 20s—we identified a gap in the market between workout gear and street clothes, and went after it aggressively. I like to say I owe my career to hoodies! From there, the company moved me into a marketing director position at headquarters, which is great except for the fact that it

meant uprooting my family for my career—we'd settled into small-town life, and I'd gotten used to feeling like a big fish in a small pond at the subsidiary headquarters.

How did you get your job?

I was working at a street apparel company that was losing its edge, and I knew it. So I went to an American Marketing Association event about brand redevelopment, and struck up a fascinating conversation with the person sitting next to me about new ways to use research to find new market opportunities. We exchanged cards and emails, and she forwarded me an email sent to her by a fellow alum about this position. So I invited that contact out for lunch to find out a little more about the position. We talked about the challenges facing the industry, and by the end of lunch I had an invite to come by to meet some of the team over drinks. By the time we got around to the actual interview, it was pretty much a done deal. They knew my reputation and track record, and I in turn knew the company's, and had a pretty good idea what I'd be getting myself into and a good feeling about the people on my team.

What are your career aspirations?

I'm thinking that in a couple years I might be ready to start up my own apparel company. I already have the market niche identified—I just hope that it still exists and no one fills it before I get myself in a position to make it happen!

What kinds of people do well in this business?

You have to have a head for numbers and a keen nose for a breakout idea. Sometimes brand managers have a "not invented here" attitude about a great product extension—if they didn't come up with it, they don't want to hear about it. Marketing directors can't afford to have that kind of ego, because we have short- and long-term projections to meet. I don't care where an idea comes from, I care about the research that shows me there's a market for this product and the cost/benefit

analysis that shows me it's worth pursuing. You need to keep your right brain and your left brain firing at all times, and be able to listen as well as lead.

What do you really like about your job?

It's the ultimate challenge, I think. I compare it to a giant jigsaw puzzle where the pieces keep changing shape all the time. You need to make sure your brand managers are keeping you apprised of every major development so that you're making sound strategic moves. You should know targets and attributes for every brand in your portfolio to the point that, when you're watching a movie, you are automatically thinking about what Brand X customer would make of the plot line, and whether there might be an opportunity for product placement in this type of film for Brand Y. It's nonstop stimulation.

What do you dislike?

The danger of handling an entire portfolio is that you need to keep on top of multiple brands. You can't afford to get too focused on your obvious winners, when there could be losing propositions or potential sleeper hits elsewhere in your portfolio. You constantly have to manage senior management's expectations, or you're going to set yourself up for failure with promises that can't be met. There are a lot of people counting on your ability to make reasonable promises that don't leave them scrambling to meet impossible quarterly projections.

INSIDER SCOOP

"There's a lot of stress involved (being a marketing director), because you're expected to do the impossible and make that portfolio deliver sales growth, cost savings, reputational benefits, and better-than-projected profit all at the same time."

Careers in Brand Management

What is the biggest misconception about your job?

Marketing directors are sometimes viewed as the people who mostly wield the carrot and stick in front of brand managers to make them meet senior management's goals, and who don't actually do much brand development themselves. That's just not true—if anything, I think we have to do more big-picture thinking about brand development to make sure we're not missing the forest for the trees and missing out on growth in favor of short-term wins. The trick is not to become a micromanager of all the brands in your portfolio—for one thing, there just aren't enough hours in the day. You need to give brand managers a sense of autonomy, so that they'll continue to innovate and feel a sense of pride and ownership in their brands.

Looking back on your career or job search, what do you wish you had done differently?

I wish I had more of a background in supply chain management, because outsourcing is an increasingly big issue for our industry. Knowing your supply chain down to the fabric mills gives you a better sense for possible efficiencies in product innovations. And now that outsourcing is such a hot-button issue, it's becoming a reputation and brand concern as well. It's hard at this stage to backtrack and get a grounding in that field, but I try to learn as much as I can from the people who work for me.

How can someone get a job like yours?

Be a brand manager who isn't afraid to take risks, but who is savvy enough to calculate those risks very carefully. Build a strong team of people who really know their brand, and bring specialized expertise, solid research, and great ideas to the table. Then listen to them, and find the overlap between what senior management wants and what your team can deliver at its best. Give people a chance to rise to the occasion, but hold them to their financial commitments.

Describe a typical day.

8:00 A.M.

Check email; check schedule and progress reports on project management timeline; look over yoga-wear extension plan.

9:30 A.M.

Begin SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunities, threats) analysis on track-suit separates. Pull down public sales data from competitors; notice track-suit bottoms are making a comeback, while jackets are holding static due to new entries in the market.

10:30 A.M.

Meeting with brand manager to discuss struggling athletic caps brand extension. Agree to schedule conference call to determine whether to discontinue.

11:35 A.M.

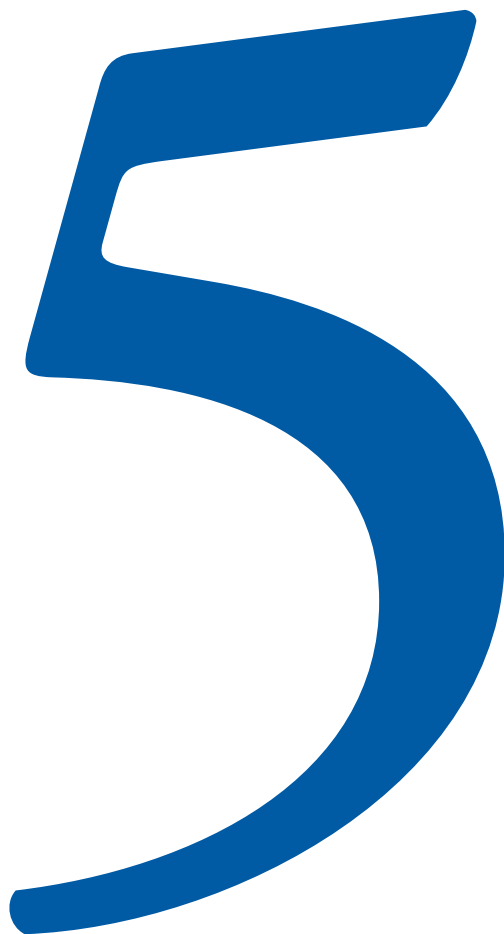
Run across news article about bait-and-switch strategies in overseas outsourcing, where the subcontractor shows the company a model factory, then once the ink is dry on the contract, sends out work piecemeal in unsupervised working conditions. Bad for quality control, bad for media exposure, bad for company's reputation, bad for business. Forward article to VP of marketing and head of PR, along with note recommending conference call with supply chain managers to assess need for audit in key overseas operations. VP agrees; call is scheduled.

1:45 A.M.

Back to track-suit separates; analyze company's profit and loss areas for the past three years and compare to findings for coordinates in nonathletic ladies apparel. Here's an idea: Shoot email to brand manager to compare findings to trend for pajama bottom separates.

- 1:00 P.M.** Meeting over lunch with VPs of marketing and sales to track progress toward quarterly projections and re-examine strategic priorities.
- 3:15 P.M.** Review research on market for tanks with built-in running bras and new developments in stretch fabric provided by brand manager in support of a proposed brand extension.
- 3:45 P.M.** Review agency creative for upcoming campaign for flagship workout-wear brand, and discuss with brand manager.
- 4:30 P.M.** Brand manager back for sign-off on prototype development for tanks.
- 6:45 P.M.** Check over schedule, respond to emails from managers and ad agency requesting follow-up and strategy planning meetings.
- 7:30 P.M.** Remember those athletic caps; fire off email to market research to run cost/benefit of offering discontinued caps as giveaway with purchase to drive sales of new product extension.
- 8:00 P.M.** Home at last. Review best practice case study on outsourcing from Businesses for Social Responsibility in between watching commercials on TV.

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HOURS

› **A TYPICAL WORKDAY** at a CPG company is 8:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. In other words, you could have a pet or a significant other and actually see them on a regular basis. Insiders report that working nights and weekends is a given during planning season, but at other times of the year it is the exception, not the rule. You probably won't be taking a whole lot of work home at night, especially if you are reading your *Brandweek* on the bus to and from the suburbs. Some companies offer every other Friday off; at others, employees work half days on summer Fridays. This is not an industrywide phenomenon, but many companies are trying to implement a bit more flexibility into what can be a fairly rigid routine.

However, it might be a different story should you opt to join a startup company. For many who want to build their resumes and gain a larger breadth of experience, life at a startup can mean significantly longer hours. Be prepared to spend a lot of time at work and with your coworkers.

Brand managers at agencies and consultancies are typically at the beck and call of their clients. Although CPG companies on the East Coast may be working from 8:00 to 6:00, consultants on the West Coast will be answering their phones starting at 5:00 a.m. and working late to make sure their clients will have what they need when they get to the office in the morning.

INSIDER SCOOP

"Working at any startup is hard. When I decided to move across country [for my job], I made a commitment to build my resume and expected the long hours. It's just the nature of the environment."

TRAVEL

› **INSIDERS SAY THEY** average three or four days of travel per month. Reasons for travel include visiting a manufacturing plant, meeting with the advertising

agency, going to an advertising shoot, attending focus groups, or recruiting. Preference for overseas positions is usually given to citizens of the country, rather than expatriates. Consultants and brand managers at ad agencies have to travel considerably more than their in-house counterparts, and often spend a week or more at a time at their clients' offices.

VACATION

› **IF YOU CAN** manage to convince your marketing director that you are the best candidate for an overseas posting, *Godspeed!* Otherwise, you'll probably have to see the world on your own time. Most companies offer new hires two to three weeks of vacation annually. You shouldn't have a problem finding time during the year to take it, except of course during planning season.

CULTURE

› **THE CULTURE AT** a given company depends on the category in which it competes and the style of the individuals running the business. Brand managers at large consumer products companies must be prepared to fit into a conservative, process-oriented, bureaucratic culture. One brand manager said he was required to wear a blazer whenever he was away from his desk during his first job at Campbell's in the '80s. Although such strict policies have faded into the past, the dress code and workplace traditions at major consumer products companies are still somewhat buttoned up, especially when compared to the creative environments within smaller companies and marketing-centric firms.

There is a significant difference between working on a small brand in a small brand group and being a member of a larger team on the company's flagship brand, where almost all decisions are scrutinized intensely. Within large companies, you'll find conservative, traditional businesses and more entrepreneurial ones. For example, the cereal division at General Mills is a hugely profitable business that is managed quite conservatively,

while the snacks division is allowed to be more aggressive to compete in a more dynamic category.

The culture at branding firms and ad agencies is similar to that of other professional services firms. Although image is important, the professional attitude isn't only skin-deep: Most people who work in branding are smart, creative, dynamic, and energetic.

All companies value teamwork, but they also value individual initiative and accountability. Expect to work hard and pull your weight. The "up or out" mentality still exists in some companies, but the competition isn't nearly as ruthless as it is in industries such as investment banking. People who love the job and work hard at it are almost always successful.

INSIDER SCOOP

"You have to look professional. Expect that at any time a client will walk in. You don't want any spinach in your teeth."

OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN

Like most industries, the upper echelon of consumer packaged goods is composed mostly of white males. This could change in the next decade or so as midlevel women advance and upper-level men retire. Numbers of female general managers, brand managers, and marketing directors are greatly increasing, and soon women will have a strong presence in the upper levels of management. Brand management does offer a pretty good environment for women: The ranks are filling with working mothers, and CPG companies are famous for their family-oriented outlook. Many companies offer onsite day care, scholarship plans for employees' children and, in some cases, flexible schedules and part-time work plans.

WORKPLACE DIVERSITY

Diversity at CPG companies falls short of reflecting the U.S. population at large, but companies are making an effort. Procter & Gamble boasts that the number of women and U.S. minorities at the vice president and

general manager level has doubled during the past five years. General Mills supports 17 employee networks and diversity councils, including the Black Champions Network, American Indian Council, and South Asian American Network. Kraft's diversity vision calls for creating a workforce "that reflects the diversity of our consumers and the population at large." Most companies actively recruit from minority student groups, holding special summer programs for minority recruits and the like, but there's still a long way to go. One factor hindering diversity efforts, of course, is that many companies with brand management opportunities are located in white-bread Midwestern cities and suburbs. At the same time, the global reach of most CPG companies makes it essential that they understand cross-cultural issues: Increasingly, diversity is a business imperative.

INSIDER SCOOP

The abundance of working moms in positions of authority "keeps everyone focused on the importance of balancing work and family."

Branding firms tend to be welcoming environments for LGBT professionals and people from foreign countries, though minority representation falls short of reflecting the U.S. population as well.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

› **UNDERGRADS CAN EXPECT** a starting salary in the range of \$35,000 to \$55,000. MBAs from top-tier schools going to large CPG companies routinely start with salaries between \$80,000 to \$90,000 and signing bonuses of \$15,000 or more. Marketing directors can expect a six-figure salary that exceeds \$125,000 (sometimes significantly). Most companies have end-of-year bonus programs. Bonuses can be generous, depending on individual and companywide performance. Stock

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options programs vary, but they are often offered to undergrads and MBAs.

Most brand management companies offer a generous 401(k) plan, match charitable contributions, and support volunteer activities. Many of the large companies have cafeterias, health clubs, and other amenities in-house. In addition, the cost of living in the Midwest can be significantly lower than for your business peers who joined Wall Street.

CAREER PATH UNDERGRADUATES

If you want to learn the ins and outs of a consumer products company and learn marketing from the pros, the marketing analyst position is a great place to start. If business school is in your future, brand experience is great on the resume, and some companies will pay for your business school if you show promise and make a post-school work commitment. If you choose not to attend business school, you will certainly not be punished, but most aspiring marketing executives see an MBA as a necessary part of their career development plans.

As part of their effort to retain employees, companies are adding such services as a personal concierge who will get you tickets to the theater or send flowers to your mother for her birthday. VIP coupons from your brand offer the bearer free products at the grocery store; they make fine gifts and stocking stuffers, especially if you work on a brand such as Häagen-Dazs.

MBAS

Some of the large consumer products companies bring in 20 or more assistant brand managers each year. After approximately three years, a few see their way to promotion as brand manager, although the wait can be longer. Even if you have brand management experience before going to business school, count on spending some time as an assistant brand manager before being promoted to brand manager. You'll receive intensive managerial training each year in preparation for jobs even higher up in the company.

> TIP



Not all firms hire people straight out of college; some rely more heavily on MBA grads and experienced hires.

MIDCAREER CANDIDATES

Midcareer professionals who are not already brand managers are often frustrated that they have to start at the beginning just like everyone else. Many feel there's a big adjustment from careers in which they had numerous subordinates to brand management, in which it's more about motivating those around you. The good news is that midcareer professionals from other industries are valued for their varied experience, and they tend to command a good deal of respect from coworkers, even though they may take a pay cut from their original jobs for a few years.

If you are a seasoned brand manager already, you'll be hired at the same level or higher, particularly if you come from a place like Procter & Gamble.

THE INSIDE SCOOP

WHAT EMPLOYEES REALLY LIKE

Manage a Business

Industry professionals tell us this is the number-one reason to work in brand management. It's almost as if you get to be the CEO of your own little company. Even if your manager or your manager's manager controls the decision-making process, the day-to-day responsibility is yours. That means a lot of autonomy and responsibility even at the entry level.

See the Results

As a general rule, brand management allows you to see the fruits of your labor. Some insiders voice frustration about devising a marketing plan, then rotating onto another assignment before they can execute it, but everyone manages a series of smaller projects from start to finish. It is easy to feel a strong sense of ownership in the particular brand(s) people work on, regardless of whether those brands are category leaders or rising stars.

INSIDER SCOOP

"The difference between what I do and what consultants do is that I run a business while they provide a service to a client."

Career Development

Working in brand management at a large consumer products company provides significant opportunities to develop your career. Smaller, more entrepreneurial companies value marketers with significant brand management experience. Working as a direct employee of a client can be a very beneficial way to learn how to please a client, and the experience is an invaluable asset if one decides to pursue a career with a marketing agency. Venture capitalists report that the most critical functional position in startup companies is the director of marketing. There are also opportunities for mobility within companies; in fact, some companies consider a

rotation in at least one other functional area a prerequisite for senior marketing managers.

Team Environment

Being a successful brand manager is about being a willing team player and an assertive team leader. Teams, not individuals, move products out the door. Managing a team consisting of representatives from major departments such as manufacturing, R&D, and finance requires great tact and diplomacy. Most of these folks have responsibilities that extend beyond your individual brand; motivating them to make your project a priority requires strong, sensitive leadership.

Working in brand management at a large consumer products company provides significant opportunities to develop your career.

Broad Experience

By the time they're promoted to the next level, most brand managers have worked on at least three brands across multiple categories. This exposure to different businesses in different stages of growth and competing in different categories is a major benefit of working for a large consumer products company with a portfolio of brands.

Have a Life

For most of the calendar year, you'll have shorter working hours than your friends in consulting. However, during planning season, when each brand reviews its performance, and plans for the coming year, you will work consulting hours. In general, brand management is family friendly. Plenty of working mothers hold positions of authority. The relatively low cost of living in

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the cities where many firms are headquartered makes it easier to pay off student loans or buy a house. Many companies also offer generous loan programs to help employees buy a home in the area.

INSIDER SCOOP

"I am never bored because I am always working on something new, and always learning new things even though I have valuable expertise in my brand category."

Challenging, Rewarding Work

Time and again, professionals say the thing they like most about brand management is the work itself. It allows people to be involved in all aspects of business, from financial and operational aspects to new products and offering development to creation of marketing and advertising programs and media plan development.

WATCH OUT!

Bureaucracy

Large consumer products companies are large bureaucracies; even at branding agencies you must deal with the convoluted nature of your clients. Internal marketing, the process of selling your ideas to upper management, can be time-consuming and frustrating. "To pass an idea around, the product manager has to write a memo to the brand manager, who has to write a memo to the group manager," says an insider. "After all that, the whole exchange has to be analyzed." Many insiders say they spend too much time pushing ideas through layers of bureaucracy and not enough time focusing on consumers and competing in the marketplace. However, following the lead of Procter & Gamble, which has been aggressively streamlining its corporate organization, the CPG industry has begun reforming its bureaucratic ways.

On the flip side, smaller and startup companies may not have layers of bureaucracy to deal with, but more often than not, they don't have the cash to toss around

either. It can be frustrating not to be able to carry out great ideas because you don't have the cash or manpower, but in many cases those circumstances can challenge creativity in how to get things done.

Follow the Leader

Some of the consumer packaged goods companies and divisions within companies are known as *fast followers*—companies that imitate rather than innovate. These companies grow by acquisition rather than by invention. Other than a few line extensions here and there, they rarely introduce revolutionary new products. This isn't an industrywide trend, of course, but the CPG industry as a whole is known to be slow-moving and risk-averse.

The Profundity of Cheez Whiz?

How excited can you really get about a breakfast cereal or a line of detergents? If you need to feel like the products you're pushing are critical to the future of civilization, you're in the wrong business.

Still, it's much easier to get excited about a brand, regardless of the category, when you're responsible for its performance.

Executing Other People's Ideas

Upper management may make a decision about your brand that contradicts the strategy you and your manager have presented. Occasionally they're looking for pushback—to see whether you're willing to stand up for your convictions. But management consists of seasoned veterans who are under tremendous pressure to meet short-term profitability goals. Your recommendations are just that: recommendations. The ultimate responsibility for your brand's performance rests on their shoulders, not yours—which can leave people feeling they carry all the responsibility and none of the control.

You're Going to Live Where?

Most consumer products companies are not headquartered in glamorous cities. Urban types may find it tough

to adjust to Cincinnati or Minneapolis. Though the cost of living is often very attractive, the cultural cost can be high. Weather can also be a factor. Brand management meccas such as Minneapolis, Chicago, and Cincinnati don't have mild climates. If you're looking for geographic variety, your best bet is to line up an international assignment; most marketing work is done at corporate headquarters.

The Career Ladder

Some insiders at brand companies express frustration at how long it takes to move up. Quick ascension to management is rare. One insider tells us that a business school classmate of his who worked for McKinsey had frequent meetings with McKinsey's top management, but he had seen the president of his company only from afar.

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GETTING IN THE DOOR

› **BRAND MANAGEMENT IS** considered part of the marketing function, and most aspiring brand managers have had some experience in advertising, promotions, or sales. However, CPG companies are very interested in candidates who've honed their analytical and leadership skills in other disciplines, including consulting, investment banking, or strategic planning. If you have no previous experience in marketing, a summer internship can be enormously helpful. Many companies offer summer internships that often result in a job offer after graduation.

No matter what stage of the game you're in, remember that brevity is key. Think, "If I had to say five things about myself that I could do to move the business forward, what are they?"

› TIP



"Long resumes do a disservice. Don't get down to the minutiae. If it's too long-winded or detailed, the noise you create doesn't let the shining examples of your experience come through."

UNDERGRADS

Successful undergraduate applicants should have a degree in business, liberal arts, or a related field. Most companies look for candidates with at least a 3.5 GPA. The more work, leadership, and teamwork experience (in a school club, sports team, or volunteer activity, for example) you can demonstrate, the better.

MBAS

Leading companies target top business schools for their intense recruiting efforts. If your desired company does not recruit at your school, contact the human resources department to inquire about interview possibilities.

Often the best strategy is to ask alumni from your school who work at the company to help you get past the front door. Without an inside connection, it can be very difficult to attract the attention of the recruiting coordinator.

MIDCAREER CANDIDATES

Headhunters can alert you to openings, but many of these positions are midlevel jobs inappropriate for career changers. The best time to look for entry-level positions is during the fall, when formal on-campus recruiting hasn't yet begun. Like students from schools where companies don't recruit, most midcareer candidates without brand management experience will need to find a company insider to champion their cause.

THE RECRUITING PROCESS

› **THE RECRUITING PROCESS** varies by company and career stage. You probably won't see smaller CPG companies on campus, but you will see the big ones. Most offer internships for MBAs going into brand management, and many have internships for undergrads. These are a great way to learn more about the career, get experience, and give yourself an advantage when you're looking for a full-time gig: Intern programs provide a direct pipeline into full-time hiring.

Most initial interviewing is done on campus, followed by a full day at the company headquarters. Although some companies focus their recruiting efforts locally, most conduct national searches to find the best talent.

The recruiting process is typically a series of interviews made up of two parts. The first phase involves behavioral questions referred to as "Tell me about a time" questions: Tell me about a time you led a team. Tell me about a time you convinced someone to do something. Tell me about a time you analyzed a problem. The rest of the interview consists of mini-case

studies: How many manhole covers are there in San Francisco? What would you think about Hidden Valley Ranch creating an Italian dressing?

Those vying for brand management positions should know that most aspiring brand managers have had some experience in advertising, promotions, or sales. However, CPG companies are interested in candidates who have honed their analytical and leadership skills in other disciplines including consulting, investment banking, or strategic planning. Whatever your background, think about ways that it applies to the diverse things you'll do in brand management, and prepare specific examples that highlight those skills for your interview.

Think about what you represent as a brand, too. One insider reports that her preparation involved seeing herself as a product: "I took stock of my skills and experience, I bundled them into an attractive package that clearly differentiated me from the other candidates, and I sold my product to recruiters."

TIP



Prepare your personal stories ahead of time. Practice applying marketing frameworks (the four Ps—product, price, placement, and promotion) to hypothetical situations, and research your target companies by visiting websites and retail stores.

INTERVIEWING TIPS

PREPARE, PREPARE, PREPARE

In a first-round interview, you may have only 30 minutes to tell your story. At minimum, you should have 15 stories ready to go: three examples each of leadership, teamwork, analysis, problem solving, and creativity. Be sure that the analysis and problem-solving examples involve data analysis whenever possible. At least one example should focus on how you've dealt with a dif-

ficult person, and one should illustrate how you persuaded a person or a group to act in a situation in which they didn't agree with you. You should also be prepared to discuss how you learned from a mistake you made.

LISTEN CAREFULLY

Repeat the question at the beginning of your response to confirm that you heard it correctly. You can't afford to spend three minutes telling a story, only to have the interviewer say, "That's interesting, but can you answer my question?"

To help you focus on issues that are important to interviewers, frame your answers according to the following outline:

1. Situation
2. Conflict/challenge
3. Action steps
4. Results

Using this format will also help you remember your stories!

PROMOTE YOURSELF

Interviews are not the place to be humble. It may be awkward for you to tell stories that focus more on "I" than on "we," but it's essential that you articulate your specific role in an activity, event, or decision. If all of your examples describe the good work that "we" did, the recruiter will have no idea what "you" did.

CHOOSE YOUR WEAKNESS CAREFULLY

One of the classic interview questions is, "Describe a weakness." This is not the time to confess that you're disorganized or prone to procrastination. Sometimes the safest answers to this question are either, "I have a tendency to overcommit," or "I have struggled at times with being a workaholic." In both instances, these observations are followed by some variation on "...but I'm making progress in that area."

Interviewers, of course, have heard this before, so you may be prodded to name another weakness.

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> TIP



When asked if you have a weakness, don't offer anything directly related to skills required to be an effective brand manager, such as organizing, prioritizing, leading, or collaborating.

TAKE THE INITIATIVE

In a brand management company, you have to be assertive to survive. Some interviewers test candidates by remaining silent and waiting to see how the candidate responds. Others turn the interview around and ask candidates to take charge. If the interviewer asks an off-the-wall question such as, "If you were a brand, what kind of brand would you be, and why?" smile first, then dive right into your answer. Whatever the situation, fortune favors the bold. And don't forget to ask questions of your own.

INSIDER SCOOP

"Interview the person who's interviewing you. By asking questions you'll get a good feel for what that job is really going to be."

BE ENTHUSIASTIC

Leave your pom-poms at home, but be relentlessly upbeat and positive throughout the course of your interview, even if your interviewer seems tired or disinterested. The stone-faced interviewer may be testing you to see how easily you're discouraged.

COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY

Brand managers must be able to communicate effectively with team members, executives, vendors, and the media, so expect to demonstrate your communication abilities in the interview. If you have experience making presentations, be sure to mention it.

READ UP

Reading up on brand management, marketing, and the CPG industry in your spare time can teach you the vocabulary and familiarize you with trends. Companies look for people who are educated—though not just people who have degrees, but people who spend their time reading and thinking about branding because they have a passion for it. And, with the ever-increasing amount of information available on the Internet, you can find nearly anything you want about what's going on with a brand.

INSIDER SCOOP

"At every interview I ask the prospective employee, 'What is a brand?' I am amazed at how often people answer incorrectly. A brand is not a logo. I can't hire someone who doesn't get that."

STUDY WHAT'S HAPPENING ONLINE

Study what brands are doing online. Many brands have Twitter accounts, Facebook pages, Microsites, YouTube channels, and they're launching creative campaigns designed to build brand awareness every day. Skittles harnesses the "mob" to vote on goofy promotions such as delivering Valentine's Day cards to a meter maid or sending somebody to bowling college, then creates videos designed for viral sharing—an interactive way to engage its audiences and promote its quirky candy. Absolut Vodka has an iPhone app that lets you see what people are drinking in other parts of the world—and recommends an adult beverage to suit your mood. Think about innovative ways to use new media channels to reach audiences, and come with some ideas for digital marketing. Brands know they have to do it, but many are still trying to figure out how to extend online, especially with the rapid changes in online tools. You could be the one to figure it out for them.

WATCH COMMERCIALS

Record soap operas and prime-time shows so you can fast-forward to the commercials. At minimum you should be prepared to discuss at least one effective and one ineffective advertising campaign. Some insiders advise that your examples should be from companies other than the one at which you are interviewing. Companies in general, and brand managers in particular, can be very sensitive to criticism of their work.

INSIDER SCOOP

“When someone clearly speaks of a passion they believe in, it comes off better to me during the interview. That’s a really big point to someone who’s about to hire you. So if Cheez Whiz is something you don’t prefer, then no matter how well you know the brand, the passion won’t be there.”

When preparing your advertising critiques, be sure to discuss the brand’s target audience and positioning, and whether the ads effectively communicate the positioning to the target audience.

CRUISE THOSE SUPERMARKET AISLES

It’s essential that you see the company’s products in their competitive environment. Check out the products in more than one retail setting—a grocery store and a drugstore, for example. Be sure to note how the company’s products are positioned against the competition. Pay special attention to price points, packaging, shelf position, and new products. Chances are that if a brand manager has flown into town to do interviews, she will do store checks at some point during the visit. One applicant was surprised to discover that he and the interviewer had visited the same store the night before the interview. They ended up spending most of the interview comparing notes on what they saw in the store.

INTERVIEW COMPANY INSIDERS

Not surprisingly, insiders tell us that the best sources of information about a company are people who work there. If you can find a colleague who interned at the company, or an alum from your school who works there now, an informational interview can be enormously useful.

EXPECT MINI-CASE QUESTIONS

Case interviews are designed to test your analytical skills, not necessarily your creative skills. An example of a typical question might be, “Look into your refrigerator, your shower, or your closet. Imagine a new product. Walk me through the steps of launching that new product.” The first step is to choose a product. Whatever the product is, the interviewer wants to see whether you can apply standard marketing analytical frameworks, not whether you can design new products under pressure. Pace yourself to make sure that you touch on all the variables in the course of your answer.

GETTING GRILLED

› THE FOLLOWING ARE some specific questions you can expect to be asked in the course of an interview for a brand management position. Come prepared to answer these as well as a few pointed questions designed to test your broad knowledge of the company’s industry and any specific areas of expertise required for the job.

- What appeals to you most about this position?
- In this position, you would be expected to help position Brand X as a market leader in its category. What do you think are Brand X’s strongest assets, as compared to its main competitors?
- What are some areas in which you think Brand X could learn from its competitors to become a stronger brand?
- What would you say are the three consumer trends shaping this category today that are most likely to affect demand for Brand X in the near term—that is, in the next year or two?

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- What would you say are the three consumer trends shaping this category today that are most likely to affect demand for Brand X in the longer term, say five years from now?
- In working on Brand X, you would be working closely with a team of product specialists, researchers, technology experts, and creative specialists with a range of skills and strengths. What special skills do you feel you would contribute to this team?
- Can you tell me about a time when you worked on a team with people whose skill sets were markedly different from your own?
- This job entails a lot of meetings. What do you do to stay engaged and on task in meetings? What do you do to make sure other people stay engaged and on task?
- Let's say you're trying to convince me we should launch a brand extension of Brand X. How would you go about doing that?
- What personality type would you say you have the least in common with? Can you tell me about a time when you worked with such a person?
- Describe for me how you have resolved a misunderstanding with a coworker in the past.
- Can you describe an ambitious goal you set for yourself and the steps you took to reach it?
- Give me an example of a time you didn't meet your goal for a project. What went wrong?
- Tell me about a time when you took a leadership role on a project.
- Have you ever had to finish a project that someone else started? How did you handle that?
- How would you describe your leadership style?
- How do you prefer to receive direction from superiors?
- Let's say the printer made an error and you need my help to fix it before it goes out tomorrow morning, but it's already 8 p.m. How would you convince me to stay and help you?
- What skills would you expect to hone in this position?
- Where do you see yourself in 5, 10, or 15 years? How do you plan to get there?

GRILLING YOUR INTERVIEWER

› **THE QUESTION PERIOD** at the end of the interview can be very important. You can leave a favorable impression by asking tough but thoughtful questions. Failing to ask questions suggests either that you're not seriously interested in the position or that you're not a very critical thinker.

You'll need to prepare some questions of your own, but we've drawn up some sample questions. Those in the "rare" section are meant to be innocuous, whereas the "well done" questions will put a fire to your interviewer's feet.^t Use the "well done" questions at your own risk.

RARE

- What CPG companies do you consider the most innovative, and why?
- Will I have a chance to get into the field for sales training experience?
- How often are assignments rotated? Will I get experience across divisions?
- What specific bonus incentives exist?
- What kinds of changes have you seen since you've been with the company?
- What types of community service and philanthropic activities does the company participate in?

MEDIUM

- What, if any, international opportunities are available?
- How have you personally made a difference at the company?
- What is the most common reason people give for leaving the company?
- If given your choice of division or brand group, which would you choose?
- What does the company do really well?
- What does the company need to work on?
- If you could change three things in your business, what would they be?

- How active can I expect human resources to be in making sure I gain a variety of work experiences?

WELL DONE

- How do you reconcile long-term brand building with short-term profit pressures?
- A lot is made of the “up or out” reality of brand management. Is anything being done to address this issue or is it survival of the fittest?
- Given that you’re running the business, do you believe that all functions, including manufacturing and distribution, should report directly to brand managers?
- Can I turn down a product assignment if I have an ethical problem with the product?

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INDUSTRY LINGO

› **TO HELP YOU** walk the walk and talk the talk in your brand management interviews, we've compiled this list of terms that brand managers use and hear regularly. We don't recommend that you use any you don't fully understand yourself, but a careful review of this glossary may save you from staring blankly at the interviewer who sprinkles his questions with industry jargon.

Alternative channels

In business, a channel is a way to get a product from the factory floor to the marketplace. Much of the growth in the grocery business is in alternative channels such as drugstores, mass merchandisers, convenience stores, and, increasingly, the Internet.

Bias for action

Many companies favor marketers with a *bias for action* as opposed to those who succumb to *analysis paralysis*. Their mantra is "better to act now and ask for forgiveness later."

Big idea

The holy grail of marketers. The salvation of the brand and the business. Before you use "big" to describe your idea, read the last five annual plans for your business. Chances are your big idea once belonged to someone else.

Blocking and tackling

Legendary Green Bay Packers football coach Vince Lombardi once said that blocking and tackling—the basic grunt work—wins football games. It also impresses managers.

Brand architecture

Branding teamwork. How the different brands owned by the same company work together and affect individual brands and a company's overall reputation.

Brand earnings

The amount of a company's revenues that can be attributed solely to its brand.

Brand equity

A brand's price tag or value. How much money it is worth to the company.

Brand extension

Why did Jeep start making baby toys? The values of one brand (durability) were used in a brand extension to push the company into a new industry.

Brand parity

Think Pepsi vs. Coke: two similar products that rely on their branding to differentiate themselves. In order to minimize the brand parity, both have sought to market a lifestyle around their products.

Brand proposition

The central promise that a brand makes to a consumer. The brand proposition of Allstate insurance is that the company will protect you and care for you in times of need, hence its slogan, "You're in good hands."

Buy-in

The art of convincing upper management to buy into one of your big ideas and free up capital to execute it. Marketing to decision makers in your company can take up more time than marketing to consumers.

Chivas Regal effect

It's the reason consumers shell out more for Evian water. It's what happens when well-known companies are able to raise their prices just because they are well known.

Cobranding

When two or more companies team up to offer products or services that bear both of their brands simultaneously.

Consumer engagement

Advertisers are no longer content to have consumers watch or read an ad; they strive to achieve consumer engagement, active interaction between the consumer and the brand. That is why nearly every children's cereal now has an online video game and club nights are sponsored by alcoholic beverage makers.

Cross-functional team

At many companies, marketing is the integrative function that leads the team. Other functions represented on a team may include R&D, finance, market research, and sales. Brand managers don't manage brands; they manage cross-functional teams.

Differentiation

Making your brand stand out or stand alone among competing brands by pointing out its unique characteristics (or at least by claiming uniqueness for its characteristics).

EDLP and hi/lo

Some retailers are "everyday low price;" others are "hi/lo," which means they run deals and discounts.

Flanker brands

Like many brand management terms, this one has a military history. You protect the flanks of your flagship brand by creating flanker brands with different positions, and price points to tie up shelf space and shut out competitors.

FMCGs

Fast-moving consumer goods, such as packaged foods or toiletries.

Focus group

Gathering of people from whom your branded product or service can collect feedback to be applied to advance product development and marketing strategies.

FSIs

Freestanding inserts are the newspaper inserts that offer coupons and speed deforestation. The average redemption on FSI coupons is 2 percent, but they are tried and true volume drivers on many brands.

GRPs

Gross-rating points. An important measure of advertising impact.

Ideate/ideation

Fancy terms for *brainstorm* and *brainstorm session*.

Integrated branding

A 360-degree approach. A strategy to improve reputation by coordinating all advertising messages a company sends about all of its products or services to employees, consumers, and investors.

Market share

A measure of how your company's sales volume compares to its competitors' volume. In brand management, losing market share is never a good thing.

Mind share

One measure of the success of branding efforts, share of mind attempts to quantify how likely consumers are to think of your brand rather than of competitors in your brand's category.

Market position

Market share multiplied by mind share; this is another measure of a brand's strength.

Niche marketing

Marketing carefully targeted to a very specific demographic—Asian-American teenagers or middle-aged African-American consumers, for instance.

Careers in Brand Management

Nielsen and IRI

The data people. How many 12.4-ounce cans of Crust of the Sea tuna were sold last month at H.E. Butts? Who knows? Nielsen and IRI. Who cares? You will, deeply, especially if you sold more during the same period a year ago and it's your job to explain the change.

P&L

Profit and loss. How much money a company brings in and how much a company spends, on advertising, manufacturing, and other items, in order to bring it in. Can also refer to a financial statement.

Positioning

Attempting to make a brand seem unique in the marketplace, and the most desirable choice among products or services in its category among its target market. Involves everything from PR and advertising to product features, pricing, and packaging.

Premium or in-pack

In-pack is short for *in-package*—that little prize or premium inside the cereal package that you and your siblings used to fight over at the breakfast table.

Pulling numbers or pulling data

Extracting data from Nielsen or IRI databases. The databases are updated on a weekly or monthly basis as new scanner data is processed. It's brand management's version of the report card.

Reach versus frequency

The age-old advertising debate: Should we try to reach a ton of people a few times or reach a few people very frequently? The answer to this and all other marketing questions: "It depends."

Rebranding

Revamping a brand after an earlier branding attempt has failed, the demographics of the market for the brand have changed, or there's been some change in the situ-

ation around the brand (e.g., a merger or acquisition).

SKU (stock keeping unit)

Pronounced *skew*. Each individual package size and/or product variety is considered a separate SKU. Nielsen and IRI track sales down to the SKU.

Slotting

The price paid to the trade to *slot* your product into a space on the shelf. In the grocery business, slotting fees are still a significant cost of doing business.

The trade

The retailers and vendors who sell your products. Ever since Walmart leveled the playing field with manufacturers, cultivating relationships with the trade has become essential for brand managers.

Volume

Sales volume is the name of the game. Often used in conjunction with the verb *to drive*, as in the following VP-level analysis: "This campaign looks spiffy, but I'm not convinced it will drive volume."

WETFEET RESOURCES

ONLINE

A number of resources are available to you at www.wetfeet.com, including:

- Profiles of consumer products companies
- A profile of the CPG industry
- Real People Profiles of individuals working in brand management and marketing positions, and employees in the consumer products industry
- A host of articles on interviewing, resume prep, networking, switching careers and many more career-related subjects
- Job and internship listings

INSIDER GUIDES

Ace Your Interview!

Once you've decided to pursue a career in brand management, you'll need to polish your interviewing skills to help you land the job. *Ace Your Interview!* will help you prepare to keep hiring conversations focused, productive, and pleasant, so that you can keep your wits about you even when the stakes seem alarmingly high. You'll learn how to figure out what employers are looking for and how to give it to them, the art of interview Q&A, what employers *really* want to know when they make those seemingly innocuous queries, key points to cover in your pre-interview research, how to handle common interview types and questions, how to conclude the interview gracefully and follow up effectively, and where to find additional resources for your interview preparation and job search.

Careers in Marketing

Turn to this Insider Guide to learn about the difference between marketing and marcom; the opportunities that exist beyond marketing and brand building for the consumer packaged goods industry; what it takes to succeed as a market researcher, marketer, or creative specialist; the kind of lifestyle you can expect and the hours you'll keep; the income you'll likely earn as you work your way up the corporate ladder; the most typical career paths for marketers; and much more.

Getting Your Ideal Internship

Internships are a terrific way to get your foot in the door at a CPG company. Turn to *Getting Your Ideal Internship* to get the best insight and advice on landing a plum internship and then turning it to your best advantage. You'll find out what questions to ask yourself to help you focus your search for an ideal internship, whether you're an undergraduate, career professional, or MBA; whether the on- or off-campus internship recruiting track is for you; how to create and structure an internship at a company that doesn't already have a formal internship program; how to make cold calls to

prospective summer employers; how to maximize your chances of getting an offer for permanent work while working as an intern; and what you can do to make yourself more attractive to prospective employers.

Networking Works!

You probably know that most job vacancies are filled well before a job description is even posted. But how do people know about these secret openings? That's right—networking. This Insider Guide will teach you the skills necessary to stay in the loop. So when that perfect job opportunity comes along, you'll be miles ahead of the pack. You'll learn how to tap your existing network and expand it even further; how to overcome obstacles to successful networking, such as shyness or embarrassment; alternative means of networking using online and community resources; tips on mastering the subtle art of small talk; how to invite someone to lunch when you only know them through a mutual acquaintance; how to maintain an active network of contacts—so they'll think of you and only you when they hear of that perfect job opening; and how to repay the favor when you land the job they told you about.



ONLINE RESOURCES

› **NATURALLY, YOU'LL WANT** to check out the websites of the top consumer packaged goods companies, and you already know you'll need to study carefully the websites of any companies with which you interview.

But that's just the tip of the iceberg. There are many excellent online resources for your brand management research. Here are some of our favorites:

Brandweek magazine is the bible of brand management. Its website (www.brandweek.com) features industry tables, rankings, and the latest branding news.

Advertising Age (www.adage.com) is one of the most respected ad industry publications. The website offers rankings of companies based on their ad spending, lists of the top agencies, salary surveys, and up-to-date advertising news.

The **Fortune 500** list (<http://money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/fortune500/>) ranks the 500 biggest American companies, including consumer goods companies, and provides information about revenues and employees for each.

Knowledge @ Wharton, the online publication of the renowned business school, includes a section devoted to marketing issues and news (<http://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/>).

The McKinsey Quarterly, a publication of the top strategy consulting firm, contains a section focused on marketing-related issues (<http://www.mckinseyquarterly.com/Marketing>).

MarketingPower.com, produced by the American Marketing Association, includes tutorials on marketing topics.

Interbrand's BrandChannel.com provides information on industry conferences, learning opportunities, and careers in marketing.

FURTHER READING

Designing Brand Identity

This full-color paperback maps out the branding process and gives readers turn-by-turn directions on how to arrive at a great brand.

Alina Wheeler (Wiley, 2006)

The Brand Gap: How to Bridge the Distance Between Business Strategy and Design

Full of examples, simple charts, and punchy visuals, this branding primer teaches how to align strategy, design, and execution to create effective brands.

Marty Neumeier (New Riders Press, 2005)

Kellogg on Branding

Although you may want to keep your dictionary handy when reading this collection of mostly academic articles, the chapters written by top executives at Kraft, UPS, and other companies provide a rare glimpse into marketing minds of the major leagues.

Tim Calkins, Philip Kotler and Alice Tybout (Wiley, 2005)

The 22 Immutable Laws of Branding

Uses lots of examples to illustrate what to do—and what not to do—to build a strong brand.

Laura Ries and Al Ries (HarperBusiness, 2002)

The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference

Contains provocative ideas relating to how brands become popular and an introduction to viral marketing, the process by which hipsters determine what's cool, and how those ideas spread through key people with vast networks of contacts.

Malcolm Gladwell (Back Bay Books, 2002)



>> The WetFeet Story

WetFeet was founded in 1994 by Stanford MBAs Gary Alpert and Steve Pollock. While exploring their next career moves, they needed products like the *WetFeet Insider Guides* to guide them through their research and interviews. But these resources didn't exist yet—so they started writing! Since then, millions of job seekers have used the *WetFeet Insider Guides* and WetFeet.com to research their next career move.

In 2007 WetFeet became part of Universum Communications, the global leader in employer branding. Thanks to the integration of WetFeet into the Universum group, WetFeet products are now used by job seekers all over the world. In addition to our *Insider Guides* and WetFeet.com, we produce *WetFeet* magazine, which features career advice tailored to undergraduate students.

>> The WetFeet Name

The inspiration for our name comes from a popular business school case study about L.L. Bean, the successful mail-order company. Leon Leonwood Bean got his start because he literally got his feet wet: Every time he went hunting in the Maine woods, his shoes leaked. One day he set out to make a better hunting shoe, doing such a good job that his friends lined up to buy pairs of the boots. And so L.L. Bean was born.

The lesson we took from the Bean case? Well, it shows that getting your feet wet is the first step toward achieving success. And that's what WetFeet is here for: To help you get your feet wet and take the right steps toward ever-greater career goals, whatever they may be.



»» From Milk-Bone to Cocoa Puffs to Colgate, there are more brands in the marketplace today than ever before, and all of them need individuals who can manage them and make them stand out from the rest. And though consumer products companies have traditionally been the natural habitat for brand managers, companies of all kinds have learned the importance of developing and sustaining strong brands. That means there are more brand management positions than ever before. If you're a marketing whiz hoping for a challenging, well-paid career that also allows you to have a life outside of work, brand management might just be for you.



Illustration by mckibillo

TURN TO THIS WETFEET INSIDER GUIDE TO EXPLORE

- ★ WHAT MAKES A BRAND, AND WHAT MAKES A BRAND SUCCESSFUL
- ★ THE FIELD'S LATEST TRENDS AND THEIR EFFECTS ON THE WORKPLACE
- ★ INDUSTRY RANKINGS AND PROFILES OF MAJOR PLAYERS, INCLUDING THEIR FLAGSHIP BRANDS
- ★ DETAILED DESCRIPTIONS OF CAREER PATHS FROM PEOPLE CURRENTLY WORKING IN BRAND MANAGEMENT
- ★ CRUCIAL FACTORS TO CONSIDER IN PLANNING YOUR CAREER IN BRAND MANAGEMENT
- ★ WHAT TO EXPECT IN TERMS OF SALARY, BENEFITS, PERKS, AND CULTURE
- ★ INTERVIEWING TIPS AND EXAMPLES OF POINTED QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR INTERVIEWER
- ★ INDUSTRY LINGO AND ONLINE RESOURCES TO AID IN YOUR JOB SEARCH

WetFeet has earned a strong reputation among college graduates and career professionals for its series of highly credible, no-holds-barred Insider Guides. WetFeet's investigative writers get behind the annual reports and corporate PR to tell the real story of what it's like to work at specific companies and in different industries. www.WetFeet.com

