

Aerie Campaign

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SWOT Analysis- Aerie is a women's clothing store in which the goal is to make girls feel good about who they are. Aerie was founded in 2006, however their sister store, American Eagle is where it all started. American Eagle was founded in 1977 with one store in Novi, Michigan. American Eagle is built on more than 38 years of customer focus, dedication and innovation. Since starting, they have opened over 1,000 stores and have created a global company. American Eagle has established their brand as having casual comfort and relaxed lifestyle (Job Opportunities at American Eagle Outfitters. n.d.). Aerie has also established this as their brand specifically for girls. Aerie has bras, underwear, loungewear, activewear, swimwear, and more. Aerie's goal as a company is to create a place for girls to feel good about themselves and their bodys, at every shape and size. Because of this positivity in the brand, the company has a significant growth.

Aerie has become incredibly important to the American Eagle company. Over the years it has grown significantly and is expected to continue. An article from Forbes states, "Aerie has achieved robust growth in the last few years, with revenues increasing from around \$310 million in 2015 to almost \$650 million in FY 2018 (ending January) at an average annual rate of 27%" (Team, T. 2019). With this revenue growth, there has been a significant increase in the number of Aerie stores. In 2018 the company had planned to open between 60 and 70 new Aerie locations (Hanbury, M. 2018). This reason for this growth is because of Aerie's positive reputation.

At Aerie, their reputation is something they hold very near and dear to them. Their whole brand is built around inclusivity and body positivity. Aerie, American Eagle's lingerie brand, has captured the hearts of young women by using relatable models. It stopped retouching images in 2014. Its #AerieREAL campaign celebrates women as they are (Team, T. 2019). With using real

women of all shapes and sizes, Aerie also left the models beauty marks and tattoos in the photos to show their true selves. Aerie brand representative Jenny Altman said on Good Morning America. “They are still models, they’re still gorgeous, they just look a little more like the rest of us,” He is hoping that Aerie breaks the mold and wants women to feel good about themselves and embrace their own beauty. (Dockterman, E. 2014). Aerie states that part of its mission is to empower all women to love their real selves. “For Fiscal 2019 the company was recognized as an industry leader in sustainability. Its environmental goals include carbon neutrality in its owned and operated facilities by 2030 and a 60% reduction in carbon emissions by 2040. These efforts do not go unnoticed and help build long-term relationships with their loyal customers” (Kohan, S. 2020). Aerie customers love being able to go into the stores or onto their website and see girls who look just like them. Representation is huge and matters much more than many businesses realize.

The brand’s target audience is 21-year-old women, with a broader reach of 15- to 35-year-olds (Beer, J. 2014). Some things that Aerie customers like about the products and the brand begin with the inclusivity of their products. According to Aerie’s website, they carry sizes XXS-XXL. It is also noted that they carry different lengths in their clothing as well, ranging from extra short to extra long. Their customers are able to find sizes that more accurately reflect their body types and include models who look like them. Aerie makes efforts to use models who look like girls you see in everyday life. For example, Aerie has models of all races, sizes, body types, skin tones, and even those who aren’t able bodied. CNBC did an interview with Jennifer Foyle, Aerie’s global brand president, which stated, “Recently, Jennifer Foyle got a two-page, handwritten letter from an Aerie customer. It was complete with photos, and thanks for what the lingerie and apparel company has done for her body image” (Ell, K. 2018). Finally, Aerie also

has a feature on their website where their customers can upload photos, using their hashtag AerieReal, and showcase themselves in their clothing to show off their pride. Something that Aerie customers may not like about the brand/products may include limited sizing availability in stores. For example, Aerie stores often don't carry extra short, short, long, and extra long in stores. They typically only carry the regular or standard length.

Aerie's main competitor would have to be Victoria's Secret or Victoria's Secret Pink. Target could also be a competitor, but they are commonly compared to Victoria's Secret. According to research, it seems as though Aerie is doing much better than their competitor, Victoria's Secret. Aerie has many strengths over their competitor. Business Insider states, "American Eagle reported a 32% increase in same-store sales for its underwear-turned-lifestyle brand, Aerie. This marked its 16th consecutive quarter of double-digit positive growth. Meanwhile, its main competitor, Victoria's Secret, continues to come under pressure...Female empowerment has become Aerie's biggest weapon against brands like Victoria's Secret." (Schlossberg, M. 2016). Another reason Aerie is doing better than competitors is their diverse offering of products. Compared to Victoria's Secret, Aerie is more of a daily clothing store, or lifestyle brand, rather than just intimates and lingerie. As an Aerie shopper, Aerie offers great deals and sales, as well as a rewards program which allows consumers to earn points and get rewards for shopping at their stores. An article from Forbes stated, "Aerie is authentic for real women's bodies and comfort, whereas Victoria's Secret is aspirational, holding regular women up to an unrealistic and unattainable standard" (Danziger, P. 2018). One of the only weaknesses found is that Aerie has less storefront locations than Victoria's Secret, meaning that Victoria's Secret may be more accessible than Aerie. Target has also recently stopped photoshopping their models and using unretouched photos in their ad campaigns. They also use models who look like

everyday people, which can be considered competition for Aerie, especially considering how popular and accessible Target is.

According to research, one of Aerie's biggest areas of opportunity include adding more storefronts. With that being said, Aerie does have plans to expand their brick and mortar presence with plans to open more stores in the next few years. Forbes stated, "Aerie will continue its robust growth as it opens about 60 new stores in the next year and continues to penetrate the market" (Kohan, S. 2020). Another area of opportunity for Aerie could also be adding more size variation in stores, such as different lengths like short and long, and carrying their smallest and largest sizes in stores rather than just online. Aerie's biggest problem or threat is one that is currently being addressed and has been improved over time is being sure to showcase models of all different sizes and backgrounds. Some past complaints about their models have said, "...the overwhelming majority of which showcase non-retouched women who are white, tall, effortlessly thin, and by mainstream (white) beauty standards, are conventionally pretty (Osmaski, S. 2018). What this means is that Aerie has fallen short in the past with diversity in their models on their website and in stores. Femestella stated, "Rarely will you see an Aerie model who is both thick and a minority" (Osmaski, S. 2018). Aerie also has an opportunity to reach an untapped market to them which would be selling boy's clothing that follows Aerie's lifestyle and brand image. This would reach a whole new audience and gain a new following.

Advertising Objectives - Aerie has two main promotions/campaigns that go hand in hand with each other that have been very successful and that they have used over the last few years. The two campaigns are the #AerieReal campaign alongside the #AerieReal Role Model campaign. According to CNBC, The #AerieReal campaign started in 2014 and promotes visibility of

women with a range of shapes and sizes. The ad campaign also uses regular, everyday models with no airbrushing or photoshop done to their ads (Ell, K. 2018). Also, on their website, they encourage shoppers to upload selfies of them in their clothes as a way to celebrate diversity, beauty, and individuality.

Branching off of this campaign, two years later in 2016 Aerie launched the #AerieReal Role Model campaign in which Iskra was their first #AerieReal Role Model (Aerie, 2016). The campaign introduces new role models every year. Aerie uses these role models as “sources of inspiration for their customers and women around the world” (Aerie, 2019). The models they choose embrace the Aerie lifestyle, are influential voices, unique stories, and support inclusivity and empowerment. The girls also have real conversations about body confidence and social causes. The point of the campaign is to “share their stories and create awareness” (Aerie, 2019). The #AerieReal Role Models will have their unretouched photos and videos in stores, online, and in social marketing. In the past, Aerie has spent over \$100 million dollars on ad campaigns and print in the last year (MediaRadar, 2020).

There are a few advertising objectives that we think fit in this campaign. These would be awareness, comprehension, and desire. Starting with awareness, we want people to get acquainted with Aerie. We want people to know what our brand is and what we stand for. We also want to develop comprehension, by giving information about the purpose and reasoning of our brand. We want people to understand our image and why it is important. Our last main objective of this campaign is desire. We want people to believe in this product and want to purchase it. We want them to take action and love our product and want to continuously come into Aerie and purchase our product.

Target Audience Analysis - This campaign's target market will primarily be any women ages 15-25. Although there is this age range, Aerie has said that they hope to keep their customers as they grow older. (Kohan, S. E. 2020). Because it is so important to Aerie to be a diverse company, there is not any more of a specific audience we can describe. Aerie wants anyone of any shape, size, or race to enjoy their products. Aerie also specializes in loungewear so women who like that lounge lifestyle are going to be a target market. Also, because Aerie is primarily advertised on social media, we believe that our audience will primarily be women who use these platforms frequently. We also believe the target market will be women who have the same beliefs and values as the company. They are women who value positivity and diversity in all aspects, as this is what the brand values.

Aerie is one of the first brands to use and represent disabled models in their ads as well. They have models with prosthetic limbs, models who are blind, models in wheelchairs, and models with ostomy bags all being represented through their brand. This helps entire groups of people feel as though they are understood, seen, heard and loved. Aerie also leaves their models tattoos, birthmarks, beauty marks, stretch marks and wrinkles in their advertisements instead of photoshopping them out because it is what makes them unique and beautifully made.

Aerie is a very involved brand with their customers and want their customers to be involved as well. First, Aerie tries to be a sustainable company and shows that to their customers. On their website they have a "Real Good" badge tagged on some of their products. This icon means that this product is made from raw materials and is manufactured in a factory that focuses on water reduction and water recycling. Aerie has had some of their swimsuits made from recycled plastic bottles and has been able to recycle 1.2 million plastic bottles so far (Cash, H., Tragos, A. 2020). It is important to Aerie to show this to their customers that they are involved

with what they say they are. Aerie also wants to involve their customers. When posting your photo to social media with the #AerieReal and Aerie may repost it (Ell, K. 2018). They want to show off their customers and bring positivity in their posts. Aerie wants their customers to be able to feel a connection with their brand and feel involved.

Creative Strategy- In our advertising campaign, we would like to position it to show Aerie's core values, being positivity and diversity for women. We would use real models and people for our products, unphotoshopped and untouched. The unique selling point for this campaign would be showcasing our product in a variety of ways. It would be shown in many different shapes and sizes allowing our customers to find someone with a similar body type as them to get a better understanding of what it would look like. The benefit of our way of advertising would be the inclusivity that we are providing that other brands do not provide. Most brands show their product on one girl, typically of a smaller size, and that is all. This makes it difficult for women of different sizes to get an idea of what it would look like on them, and creates disappointment when they get the product and it is not what they envisioned. With our advertising campaign we are going to eliminate that issue and encompass all women, rather than only catering one specific group of girls.

Another strategy that we plan to do is partnering with organizations and other brands. We believe that when partnering with other brands it is beneficial to both sides as it allows both sides to gain more potential shoppers that were not aware of us before. We could do branding with boys clothing stores which could be a potential way to lead into selling our own boys clothing wear one day. When partnering with organizations, we think it would be a good idea to partner with a nonprofit organization. We plan on doing this partnership during special times of the year,

including but not limited to, back to school time, Black Friday, and Christmas. We believe that partnering with a nonprofit organization during these times of the year is not only us helping organizations and people that are in need, but allows our customers to donate and have some of their purchase go to the organization that is chosen. This also demonstrates the values that Aerie stands by. The brand wants to be shown that they are caring and will help others and partnering with nonprofits shows that. This is something that we think is creative and beneficial and will be one of our mental pictures in our creative concept.

Creative Concept- Our creative concept for an Aerie campaign would follow down the path that they are already going down because we fully support the cause and movement. The big mental picture of our ad/commercial would primarily focus on a few key points which includes, body positivity, happiness, self love, confidence, acceptance, and friendship. Since Aerie typically uses influencers, YouTubers, and celebrity for their ad campaigns we would also do that and use some of our favorite social media influencers who we believe also align with Aerie's core values who are YouTuber Sierra Shultz, TikTok star Brittani Lancaster, YouTuber Carrie Dayton, YouTuber Lindsay Rae, and TikTok star Sienna Mae. The ad/commercial would showcase the girls wearing and modeling Aerie's clothes while looking natural and having fun. We want it to show that you should love and accept yourself for who you are because we are all beautiful and uniquely made.

We decided that our Black Friday/Christmas ad campaign would partner with a non-profit organization called I Support The Girls. I Support The Girls collects and distributes essential items, including bras, underwear, and menstrual hygiene products, allowing women and folx experiencing homelessness, impoverishment, or distress to stand tall with dignity. They help

girls and women experiencing homelessness, victims of domestic violence, victims of sex trafficking, refugees and evacuees affected by natural disasters around the globe (isupportthegirls.org).

For the holiday season our creative concept would feature our #AerieReal Role Models going to I Support The Girl's Los Angeles, California location. The girls would visit and get a firsthand look at what goes on at ISTG. The girls would bring along and donate Aerie clothing, bras, underwear, feminine and hygiene products to help support their efforts. The social media video we would release would go on our Instagram page and have a longer clip on IGTV. The video would give our customers a snippet into what ISTG does and see how we care and are passionate about supporting women. The final scene of the girls would feature a new tagline which states, "When someone believes i'm worth something, I start to feel as though I'm worth something." The video would end and across the screen it would show our logo and say that 25% of our proceeds during the month of December are being donated to ISTG. It would also have a link to our website as well as to ISTG's website so our customers can get more information and learn more about how they can too get involved.

Another creative concept that we thought we could add in was positioning our brand for boys as well. We thought that this would be a good idea as Aerie is doing so well in selling for women. We would plan on adding the same type of clothing that we offer girls. This would include underwear, swimwear, loungewear, and activewear. These clothing items would come in the range of sizes that we offer and we would of course have our male models be diverse and body positive. The clothing pieces would be shown in all shapes and sizes and our models tattoos and beauty marks would be kept. We believe that this would be a good concept to add as some other women's clothing stores have started being more body positivity, but not any male clothing

stores. We think it would be a great idea to add this to our store and be the first store to offer positivity for males as well. We think that this could raise a lot of communication about our brand and believe that other stores might jump on the same boat as us.

The reason we believe that our creative concepts will reach our objective is because they are still showing what Aerie stands for. The first idea is going down the path of what Aerie is already doing, which we know is successful. We want to keep showing positivity and women supporting women, so we will continue to do so in the future. Our second idea was partnering with a nonprofit organization. We believe that this will be successful because during the time of year we are launching it, that being Christmas time, many people are in the holiday spirit and want to give to others in need. Allowing customers to still shop our brand and be able to have a portion being donated we think will make our customers happy. This will show that Aerie values others and helps those that need it. We think that this will make our customers want to come back and shop with our brand, because they want to support a brand that has good values. Our third idea is bringing male clothes into our brand. We believe that this will be successful because it is something that other brands have not done yet. This year there have been many male celebrities that have come out as breaking the male “norms” in fashion. We think that adding male clothing and branding it the same as our women, in a positive way, will bring a lot of attention to our brand and will be successful. We think that the conversations about our change would be in a positive way and could potentially allow us to add even more ideas regarding our male collection in the future and bring potentially to working with male influencers and celebrities.

Media Strategy- Our goal is for our advertisement to reach our target audience, that being 15-25 year old women. The women who we are targeting are women who like comfortable but stylish clothing. Aerie carries a lot of athletic and leisure wear as well. We think the ideal woman who shops at Aerie is someone who enjoys this style.

The advertisement that we will be showing is going to be shown in multiple countries. We want to reach as many people as possible, and because diversity is important to Aerie of course they want to have their stores everywhere they can. Some of the countries Aerie is available in is the United States, Canada, Mexico, China, and Hong Kong. We will be advertising in all of these countries. Aerie is planning to be expanding across Europe as well soon and if that happens we would plan to advertise a ton there as well (Malisani, C. 2020). Advertising across the globe is ideal to reach as many women as possible and to grow our company. We plan on easily doing this with the form of advertising we choose.

We plan on using the internet as well as television to advertise our company. We think that this is the best way to advertise because they are the two most popular forms of media and what we believe will reach our target audience the best. We believe these types of media will work best because our target audience is younger women and these tend to be the forms of media they use. Getting more specific with the internet, social media would be our primary media vehicle to advertise on. We specifically would focus on Instagram and YouTube. On Instagram, we would run ads through Instagram stories as well as paying for sponsored posts to show up on user's feeds. The Instagram story ads would include "swipe up" links for our followers to be linked directly to the products shown. The YouTube ads would play on videos we think our consumers would watch, such as specific YouTubers who promote our brand and clothing as well as certain categories of videos like daily vlogs, GRWM, what I eat in a day, and clothing

hauls. The ads would play at the beginning of a video, or in the middle. We also would use YouTubers to promote our products and do sponsored videos with. The television ads would be the same ads as the YouTube ones and would run on specific channels we think our consumers would watch such as ABC, CBS, HGTV, and TLC, we would also run them on HULU as well. These channels are some of the top rated channels of 2019 and that is another reason we believe putting our advertisement on them would be beneficial (Schneider, M. 2019).

The major ad campaigns we would run would occur during back to school time, during the month of August, Black Friday and Christmas time, late November-mid December, and during our semi annual sales, which would occur in mid-January and mid-June. We chose back to school time because we know how popular it is for parents to take their children back to school shopping for new clothes each new school year. According to spending research, parents of kids in elementary through high school plan to spend an average \$789.49 per family, topping a previous record of \$696.70, the National Retail Federation found in its annual survey... Spending on college students, meantime, is expected to be \$1,059.20 per family, which would top last year's record of \$976.78" (Thomas, L. 2020). We also chose Black Friday and Christmas time because people can choose to shop there and buy gifts for their friends and family, and people typically spend more during this time of year as well. And finally, we chose our semi-annual sales because we want our customers to be informed about the promotions and sales we are having during this time. It is our biggest sale of the year.

Our ads would launch a few times a week to promote our brand, but when we have special ad campaigns we would run our ads more frequently. According to research, "the Radio Advertising Bureau recommends a frequency of 3 to maximize impact while avoiding commercial wearout, which is to say, a potential customer needs to hear your ad 3 times per

week in order for your commercial to influence them without annoying them” (Zimmer, M. 2017). Our social media ads such as YouTube or Instagram would show up more frequently. We would post 3-4 times a week on our Instagram page as well as updating our Instagram story daily. We would interact and engage with our customers on a regular basis, as well. The YouTube ads would run every couple commercials on related YouTube videos as well as other social media sites such as Facebook too.

IMC- Some forms of IMC that Aerie does/will use are direct marketing, product packaging, sales promotions, public relations and sponsorships.

The direct marketing that Aerie does is sending out texts and emails to people who have signed up with their rewards program. These texts and emails contain information about upcoming sales and promotions, new product launches and even coupons. These texts and emails often have links attached to them that the customer can click on and be led directly to the website where they can then purchase the products that they are being marketed. Aerie also does this on social media by paying for sponsored posts to appear on Instagram user’s feeds. This is a way to target one of their audience groups, social media users, to gain a better following and make more sales.

The second IMC is product packaging. Aerie is very proud of their packaging and always has the cutest bags or boxes that their products come in. This even includes shopping bags in their stores. Sometimes Aerie even gives out reusable bags when you make a purchase that they then put your new items into. This way you can use the bag again, and also give them free, walking advertisements out in public, while also being socially responsible and using less plastic.

The bags are always cute and trendy. One thing Aerie could do is use these reusable bags instead of the paper bags that they sometimes use. Aerie's tags and plastic wrap when you order online are also very aesthetically pleasing and accurately represent their brand.

The third IMC is sales promotions. This is one that Aerie often does and excels at. Aerie always has a new sale running on their products, whether it be leggings and joggers, sweats, sweaters and hoodies, bras, underwear or bathing suits. Aerie rotates their sales out about once a week, so if you are ever looking at buying a product and it is full price, just wait for it to go on sale since they frequently rotate out the sale items. Aerie is also very prompt at sending out coupons. These include reward coupons you earn if you are part of their loyalty program such as \$5 or \$10 off. They also send out coupons such as \$15 off \$75 and more. Also, if you have an AE credit card you get 10% off your purchase each time. Aerie sometimes sends out little gifts with purchases if you spend over a certain amount such as a free tote or hat. Finally, Aerie has a lot of little knick-knacks at their registers which increase their point-of-purchase sales such as socks, sunglasses and chapstick.

The fourth IMC is public relations. Aerie will have public relations managers and strategists. These people will be put in place to uphold Aerie's reputation and brand image as well as a crisis team that would communicate with the public and address any matters that occur. We will also have a spokesperson each year that we nominate to represent and uphold our brand and their image. This person would live their life according to the Aerie lifestyle and be someone who supports our brand and what we stand for and believe in. For 2021, YouTuber Sierra Shultz will be our spokesperson. We will also have our #AerieReal Role Models fundraise for different organizations and nonprofits such as the National Eating Disorder Association (NEDA), I Support The Girls, One Tree Planted, Bright Pink, and It Gets Better Project for LGBTQ+ youth.

Our final public relations tactic is of course social media. Aerie already has a huge following through social media, so our plan is to continue to keep up with and grow on social media, staying involved with our followers and customers as well as represent our brand and have fun online.

The fifth IMC is sponsorships. Aerie sponsors multiple different organizations, some including the National Eating Disorder Association and the It Gets Better Project. This project connects LGBTQ+ youth all around the world. An event that we believe would be a good event to sponsor is Los Angeles, California's Pride walk. Aerie would sponsor this event because of their support for the LGBTQ+ community. This shows that they truly value each and everyone of their customers and support them no matter what. Sponsoring events like this shows that Aerie truly does believe these things and are not just saying it to be a “good brand”.

Aerie x I Stand With the Girls concept poster, created in Adobe InDesign

#AerieREAL

Aerie x I Support The Girls

“A woman shouldn’t have to choose between feeding herself and her personal health. Every woman should have the ability to maintain her dignity.”



I S U P P O R T T H E G I R L S

According to their website, I Support The Girls collects and distributes essential items, including bras, underwear, and menstrual hygiene products, allowing women and folx experiencing homelessness, impoverishment, or distress to stand tall with dignity.

Our creative concept would feature our #AerieReal Role Models going to I Support The Girl’s Los Angeles, California location. The girls would visit and get a firsthand look at what goes on at ISTG. The girls would bring along and donate Aerie clothing, bras, underwear, feminine and hygiene products to help support their efforts. The social media video we would release would go on our Instagram page and have a longer clip on IGTV. The video would give our customers a snippet into what ISTG does and see how we care and are passionate about supporting women. The final scene of the girls would feature a new tagline which states, “*When someone believes i’m worth something, I start to feel as though I’m worth something.*” The video would end and across the screen it would show our logo and say that 25% of our proceeds during the month of December are being donated to ISTG. It would also have a link to our website as well as to ISTG’s website so our customers can get more information and learn more about how they can too get involved.

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