



INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS PLAN



More saving. More doing.®

March 16, 2015
Brian Bibler



Integrated Marketing Communications Plan

IMC 610, Prof. Nevin
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Executive Summary

The Home Depot was founded in 1978 by Bernie Marcus, Arthur Blank, Ken Langone and Pat Farrah with a goal to provide a home-improvement superstore for the Do-It-Yourself customer. Its mission is to provide the highest level of service, the broadest selection of products, and the most competitive prices. Today, The Home Depot is the world's largest home improvement retailer with 2014 revenue of \$78.8 billion. It is a Fortune 500 company with a 2014 ranking of #33, and rank #43 on Forbes *2014 World's Most Valuable Brands* with a brand value of \$11.8 billion. The Home Depot partners with industry-leading manufacturers to provide building materials and services; home improvement products and services; and lawn and garden products and services to Professional customers, Do-It-Yourself (DIY) customers, and Do-It-For-Me (DIFM) customers.

The Home Depot's current marcom mix is impressive: The Home Depot website offers 700,000 products, attracts more than 9.6 million (U.S.) monthly visitors, and generates 2% (or \$1.5 billion) in annual sales. The Home Depot Mobile App offers an Augmented Reality experience to virtually view The Home Depot products in your home. Promotions and tips are delivered via email. Weekly promotions are delivered via circulars, and press releases are distributed to media outlets. Social Marketing includes 1.8 million Facebook likes, 273,000 Twitter followers, 252,000 Pinterest followers, 81,000 YouTube subscribers, as well as many devoted blog followers. The Home Depot is also heavily involved in Sports Marketing, philanthropic, and community initiatives. Obviously, this marcom mix is working, but based on a SWOT Study included in this plan, I believe The Home Depot needs to do more to focus on its target demographics.

The following Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) Plan includes a set of objectives and strategies that incorporate a marcom mix of creative, media, public relations, direct marketing, and sales promotion tactics to reach key demographics. The theme that permeates these strategies: In every home maintenance scenario, The Home Depot, "has your back" and is ready to help with any size project. This IMC Plan proposes:

- > A **15% increase in Pro Xtra memberships/business** by providing benefits to Pro customers that will help them become Pro business owners.
- > A **15% increase in online sales** by connecting with the millennial DIY market through interconnected online/in-store experiences and, "simple, seamless and self-confident" messaging.
- > A **25% increase in in-home installation and repair business** by assisting DIFM Baby Boomers with their routine and seasonal home maintenance responsibilities.

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A person is wearing a red Home Depot apron over a plaid shirt. The apron features several logos and text elements: a circular 'CUSTOMERS FIRST' logo on the left chest, a '10 YEARS' anniversary logo on the right chest, the name 'Hi, I'm DAVE' printed in the center, the slogan 'I put customers first' below it, the Home Depot logo (a diamond-shaped checkerboard pattern with 'THE HOME DEPOT' text) in the middle, and the slogan 'More saving. More doing.' at the bottom. A white, torn-edge paper strip is overlaid on the right side of the apron, containing the word 'BACKGROUND' in bold black capital letters. The entire image has a semi-transparent orange overlay.

BACKGROUND

The Home Depot is the world's largest home improvement retailer with 2014 revenue of \$78.8 billion, (Fortune, 2014). It is the fourth largest retailer in the United States, and the fifth largest retailer in the world, (The Home Depot: Did You Know, 2015). It is a Fortune 500 company with a 2014 ranking of #33, (Fortune, 2014), and rank #43 on Forbes 2014 *World's Most Valuable Brands* with a brand value of \$11.8 billion, (Forbes, 2014). It offers building materials and services; home improvement products and services, and lawn and garden products and services. The Home Depot partners with industry-leading manufacturers, including: Ryobi, RIDGID, BEHR, LG, Toro, Cub Cadet, Martha Stewart Living, American Woodmark, Thomasville, Hampton Bay, Home Decorators Collection, and Commercial Electric to provide exclusive assortments for their customers, (The Home Depot: Our History, 2015). The Home Depot headquarters is in Atlanta, Georgia.

The Home Depot Store



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As of 3rd Quarter, 2014, The Home Depot was operating 2,266 retail stores with more than 365,000 associates. 1,977 stores in the United States (including Puerto Rico, Guam and the Virgin Islands), 180 stores in Canada, and 109 stores in Mexico, (The Home Depot: Corporate and Financial Overview, 2014). The average store carries between 30,000 and 40,000 products annually within 105,000 square feet of floor space (inside) and 23,000 square feet of garden space (outside), (The Home Depot: Stores, Products and Services, 2015). Store hours are typically Monday-Saturday: 6am or 7am-9pm and Sunday: 8am-7pm.

The Home Depot History

The Home Depot was founded on June 29, 1978 by Bernie Marcus, Arthur Blank, Ken Langone and Pat Farrah with a goal to provide a home-improvement superstore for the Do-It-Yourself customer. The first two 60,000 square foot stores were opened in Atlanta, Georgia on June 22, 1979, and stocked 25,000 products. In Canada, the first store opened in 1994 with the acquisition of Aikenhead's Home Improvement Centers. In Mexico, the first store opened in 2001 with the acquisition of Total HOME. In 2006 The Home Depot acquired The Home Way, a 12-store chain in China.

The Home Depot's rigorous product knowledge and training redefined how customers received help and information and transformed the home improvement industry into what it is today, (The Home Depot: Our History, 2015). Although market position was initially achieved by focusing on "Everyday Low Prices", The Home Depot is now differentiated by superior customer service, cultivating relationships, and offering the right product assortment, quantities and price.

The Home Depot (HD) went public on NASDAQ in 1981, and moved to the New York Stock Exchange in 1984, (The Home Depot: Our History, 2015).

The Home Depot Mission Statement

The Home Depot is in the home improvement business with the goal to provide the highest level of service, the broadest selection of products, and the most competitive prices, (The Home Depot: Investor Q&A, 2015).

The Home Depot Values

The Home Depot website states that its culture is comprised of “orange-blooded” associates that are guided by the following values:

- > **Taking care of our people:** The key to our success is treating people well. We do this by encouraging associates to speak up and take risks, by recognizing and rewarding good performance and by leading and developing people so they may grow.
- > **Giving back to our communities:** An important part of the fabric of The Home Depot is giving our time, talents, energy and resources to worthwhile causes in our communities and society.
- > **Doing the right thing:** We exercise good judgment by “doing the right thing” instead of just “doing things right.” We strive to understand the impact of our decisions, and we accept responsibility for our actions.
- > **Excellent customer service:** Along with our quality products, service, price and selection, we must go the extra mile to give customers knowledgeable advice about merchandise and to help them use those products to their maximum benefit.
- > **Creating shareholder value:** The investors who provide the capital necessary to allow our company to grow need and expect a return on their investment. We are committed to providing it.
- > **Building strong relationships:** Strong relationships are built on trust, honesty and integrity. We listen and respond to the needs of customers, associates, communities and vendors, treating them as partners.
- > **Entrepreneurial spirit:** The Home Depot associates are encouraged to initiate creative and innovative ways of serving our customers and improving the business and to spread best practices throughout the company.
- > **Respect for all people:** In order to remain successful, our associates must work in an environment of mutual respect, free of discrimination and harassment where each associate is regarded as a part of The Home Depot team, (The Home Depot: The Home Depot Values, 2015).

The Home Depot Products

- > **Bath, Lighting and Ceiling Fans:** The Home Depot offers bath, shower, whirlpool and hot tub faucets, hardware and accessories; lighting fixtures, hardware, bulbs and accessories; and ceiling fan fixtures, hardware, parts and accessories.

- > **Doors, Windows, Blinds and Decor:** The Home Depot offers blinds, drapes, curtains, and window treatments, shelving, wall decor, wallpaper and borders, as well as home and office decor and furniture.
- > **Plumbing, Electrical and Kitchen:** The Home Depot offers dishwashers, freezers, ovens, refrigerators; heating and cooling, fireplaces, cooking and small appliances; home security, pool and spa care, and voice/data communications products; electrical parts, supplies and accessories; kitchen faucets, cabinets and sinks.
- > **Hardware, Storage and Seasonal:** The Home Depot offers hardware, tools, outdoor power equipment, gardening tools, grills, lawn mowers and lawn care, landscaping, outdoor furniture, sheds and storage, play sets and swings.
- > **Lumber and Building Materials:** The Home Depot offers builders' hardware, concrete, drywall, plywood, molding, decking, insulation, siding, landscaping, roofing, guttering and fencing.
- > **Paint and Flooring:** The Home Depot offers adhesives, tapes, interior paint, exterior paint, stains, sealants, caulking, rugs, carpets, laminate, hardwood, vinyl, tile and stone.

The Home Depot Services

- > **Home Installation and Repair:** The Home Depot offers national installation services through pre-screened independent contractors for all set-up and/or installable products and appliances.
- > **Tool, Equipment, and Truck Rental:** From hand tools to tractor loader backhoes, The Home Depot offers tool and truck rental services to DIY and Pro customers for the day, week or month, that's easy to operate and easy to maneuver, at a price that's easy to handle. It also offers moving supplies, tools and rental equipment.
- > **For the Professional Customer:** Through dedicated service desks, The Home Depot offers loyalty programs, volume discounts, direct ship programs, credit programs and other specialty sales initiatives to professional customers and repair/remodel contractors.
- > **Free How-To-Clinics:** The Home Depot offers free hands-on demos and workshops to the public every Saturday and Sunday at local stores.
- > **Kids Workshops:** The Home Depot offers free hands-on demos and workshops for kids and their parents at local stores, (The Home Depot: Stores, Products and Services, 2015).

The Home Depot Financials

According to their 2014 Proxy Statement, “strong execution of our strategic initiatives allowed The Home Depot to be well-positioned to capitalize on the improving housing market. 2013 fiscal highlights included: Increased net sales by 5.4% to \$78.8 billion; increased operating income by 18.0% to \$9.2 billion; increased inventory turns from 4.5 turns to 4.6 turns; increased diluted earnings per share by 25.3% to \$3.76; increased return on invested capital from 17.0% to 20.9%; returned value to shareholders through a 14% increase in our stock price, \$2.2 billion in dividends, and \$8.5 billion in share repurchases during Fiscal 2013”; (The Home Depot: Current Reports, 2014).

In the second quarter of 2014, customer transactions increased by 4.2% to 409.7 million, leading with big-ticket purchases of appliances, windows and laminate flooring. It has also spent heavily on home-installation services, like counter tops and windows, where the average buyer spends \$1,500. Transactions for tickets over \$900, which represent about 20% of The Home Depot’s U.S. sales, rose by 8.4% in the retailer’s second quarter. The average ticket size increased 1.8% to \$58.43. The company said its profit for the quarter was \$2.1 billion, up from \$1.8 billion a year earlier. Net sales rose 5.7% to \$23.8 billion. Online sales rose by more than 38% in the quarter and accounted for 4.2% of total sales. A third of all items ordered online at The Home Depot are picked up in stores, (Banjo, S. and Calia, M., 2014).

Q3 2014 Earnings (In Millions)

	Q3 2014	Q3 2013	% Change
Net sales	\$20,516	\$19,470	5.4%
Cost of sales	\$13,331	\$12,672	5.2%
Gross profit	\$7,185	\$6,798	5.7%
Total operating expenses	\$4,632	\$4,505	2.8%
Operating income	\$2,553	\$2,293	11.3%
Net earnings	\$1,537	\$1,351	13.8%
EPS	\$1.16	\$0.96	20.8%

Source: The Home Depot: Quarterly Earnings Archive, 2014.

The Home Depot Marcom Strategies

The Home Depot’s slogan, “More saving. More doing.” was introduced in 2009, (Parekh, 2009). The Home Depot website offers 700,000 products, (The Home Depot: Mobile, 2015), attracts more than 9.6 million (U.S.) monthly

visitors, (Quantcast, 2015), and generates 2% (or 1.5 billion) in annual sales, (Cheng, 2013). The Home Depot Mobile App offers an Augmented Reality experience to virtually view The Home Depot products in your home, (The Home Depot: Mobile, 2015). Promotions and tips are delivered via email. Weekly promotions are delivered via circulars, and press releases are distributed to media outlets. Home Depot's latest campaign was the "Let's do this" campaign with the "All Kind of Color" television spot, (May 16, 2014).



Social Marketing includes a Facebook page (www.facebook.com/homedepot), Twitter feed (twitter.com/HomeDepot), Pinterest board (pinterest.com/homedepot), DIY projects and product videos on their YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/user/homedepot), the latest products, project tips and ideas on their blog (ext.homedepot.com/community/blog).

In terms of Sports Marketing, The Home Depot is in its ninth year as presenting sponsor of ESPN's leading college football franchise show with fan favorites Lee Corso, Kirk Herbstreit, Chris Fowler, and Desmond Howard. "ESPN College GameDay, Built By The Home Depot." (www.collegeday.com) provides The Home Depot national television exposure through on-air and on-site branding. This partnership extends to other ESPN properties, including ESPN.com, ESPN Radio, ESPN Wireless, ESPN Podcenter, and ESPN The Magazine as well as The Home Depot College Football Awards Show, (The Home Depot: ESPN College Game Day, 2015). The Home Depot has also been the "Official Home Improvement Sponsor" of the Mexican National Team (MNT) since 2003 and proudly serves as the "Official Home Improvement Retailer" of Major League Soccer (MLS). Additionally,

The Home Depot sponsors five MLS teams – New York Red Bulls, Los Angeles Galaxy, Seattle Sounders FC, Houston Dynamo and Chivas USA. In 2011, The Home Depot will become the “Official Home Improvement Sponsor” of the CONCACAF Gold Cup Tournament, (The Home Depot: Soccer, 2015). The Home Depot first entered into NASCAR in 1999 through a multi-year deal with Joe Gibbs Racing and driver Tony Stewart. Beginning in 2013, former “Rookie of the Year” and 2003 NASCAR Cup Series Champion, Matt Kenseth has guided the #20 Home Depot Toyota in the NASCAR Sprint Cup Series (www.homedepotracing.com). Lastly, The Home Depot has sponsorships with the Atlanta Braves (MLB) and Atlanta Falcons (NFL), as well as a founding partner of the Georgia Aquarium, the largest aquarium in North America. The Home Depot also sponsors the Peachtree Road Race, the largest 10K race in the world, in which nearly 1000 Associates participate annually. The Home Depot also sponsors the Chick-fil-A-Bowl and the College Football Hall of Fame scheduled to open in the Fall of 2014, (The Home Depot: Sports Sponsorships, 2015).

Other community endeavors include The Home Depot Foundation, whose mission is, “to improve homes and improve lives.” It accomplishes this through partnerships with local nonprofits, grants and the efforts of Team Depot, their associate volunteers, by repairing and refurbishing homes and facilities that serve disadvantaged families and individuals. In 2011, the Foundation made a three year, \$30 million pledge to veterans’ housing initiatives, which was completed more than a year ahead of schedule. In September 2012, the Foundation announced an additional \$50 million commitment to veterans’ nonprofits over the next three years to ensure every veteran has a safe place to call home, (www.homedepotfoundation.org). The Foundation also awards Community Impact Grants year around (The Home Depot: Foundation, 2015). Their Green Initiatives offer 7,000+ Eco Options products that save energy overnight, money overtime, and the planet for years to come, (The Home Depot: Environment, 2015).

The Home Depot Marcom Examples

MESSAGE TO OUR CUSTOMERS – UPDATE ON DATA BREACH

Your State: **San Jose, CA** (Change)

Local Ad | Store Finder | Credit Center | Specials & Offers

Search Ad: **DIY Projects & More**

UPDATE & DESIGN ON ANY BUDGET

CABINET & BATH SAVINGS TO-GO

SHOP CABINET & BATH SAVINGS

SHOP THIS VANITY

20% Off Select Vanities

Up to 20% Off Bath Faucets

Up to 20% Off Tub

Up to 20% Off Hampton Bay Kitchen Cabinets

Up to 20% Off Kitchen Sinks

UP TO 50% OFF TODAY ONLY! While supplies last. Shop the Special Buy of the Day.

10% OFF APPLIANCES \$396 or more. Shop Appliance Savings.

More saving.

5 DAYS ONLY THURSDAY, MAY 14 TO MONDAY, MAY 20, 2019

BUY 3 GET THE 4TH FREE

AFTER MAIL-IN REBATE WHEN YOU BUY 4 CANS (3 QT OR PALS) OF BEHR, CIL, CIL SMART, OR RALPH LAUREN INTERIOR PAINT

\$29⁹⁷ **\$34⁹⁷** **\$39⁹⁹**

Small text at the bottom of the ad provides details on the offer, including the requirement to buy 4 cans and the 5-day duration.

PRO

SAVE ON LUMBER PROJECTS

INDOOR WEATHER PROTECTANT

YOUR WEEKLY AD IS 25% OFF

GET MORE OUT OF YOUR JULY 4TH WEEKEND

Special Buy of the Day: Appliances \$396 or more

Look for the Special Buy of the Day

2019 Catalog and Special Buy Book

HASSLE-FREE SHOPPING FREE ship to store or home on over 700,000 items. Learn More

10% OFF APPLIANCES \$396 or more. **SPECIAL BUY OF THE DAY**

TODAY ONLY SAVINGS Save up to 50%. WHILE SUPPLIES LAST

UP TO 25% OFF Kitchen Sinks

UP TO 30% OFF Kitchen and Bath

CABINET & BATH SAVINGS TO-GO

SHOP ALL SAVINGS Save on thousands of featured items.

SAVE TIME & MONEY When you Buy Online & Pick-Up In-Store

SHOP LOCAL SAVINGS Shop your Local Ad

SAVE UP TO 20% OFF Great values on Overstock Items. **OVER STOCK**

Left sidebar: SAVINGS CENTER (Appliances, Bath, Building Materials, etc.), MORE WAYS TO SHOP (Credit, Curbside, etc.).

THE HOME DEPOT

11 DAYS OF SAVINGS START THURSDAY, 5-7-19

SPECIAL BUY YOUR CHOICE **5 FOR \$10**

SPRING BLACK FRIDAY

IN-STORE EXCLUSIVE WHILE SUPPLIES LAST

Examples of items: Garden of Eatin' produce, Suncoast fertilizer, and other garden supplies.

Small text at the bottom of the ad provides details on the 5-for-\$10 offer.

The Home Depot Competitors

In the home improvement industry, competition is based primarily on customer service, price, store location and appearance, and quality, availability and assortment of merchandise. Minor competitors include Walmart, Sears, JCPenny Home Store, Amazon.com, Sutherlands, 84 Lumber, Tractor Supply Company, Sherwin Williams, Benjamin Moore, PPG Industries and local home improvement and hardware stores. Major competitors include:



The Home Depot's main competitor is Lowe's, a Fortune 100 home improvement and hardware company founded in 1946 and headquartered in Mooresville, NC. In 2013, Lowe's revenues totaled \$53.4 billion. Lowe's operates 1,835 stores across North America, including 70 Orchard Supply Stores. Approximately 145,000 full- and part-time associates serve approximately 15 million retail and professional customers each week. Typical Lowe's stores stock approximately 40,000 items, including 10 private brands like allen + roth, Kobalt and Utilitech. Lowe's offers more than 50 interior and exterior installation and repair services, including: appliances, flooring and blinds. (Lowe's Companies: Company Snapshot", 2015).

Lowe's key marcom strategies spawned from the 2011 rebrand strategy, "Never Stop Improving", (Hoffer, G., 2011). The MyLowe's rewards card tracks purchasing behavior to generate targeted email ads. In addition to the Lowe's website (www.lowes.com), additional vehicles include the "Fresh Start, Fresh Savings" email offers, The Lowe's App and Lowe's Creative Ideas App (Lowe's Companies: Lowe's Mobile", 2015), the 2014 "Make your football self happy" ad campaign that aired during a Ravens/Steelers game (McCarthy, M., 2014), magazine ads, weekly advertising circulars, direct mail and press releases.

Lowe's NASCAR racing reaches audiences (including sports social media, license musical talent for their advertising, and lead in-store engagements with key products) (www.lowesracing.com), as well as. Social marketing includes a vast YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/user/Lowes) with home update ideas, how-to's, commercials, and advice. A "Lowe's in the Community" Tumblr roll (lowesinthecommunity.tumblr.com/), Facebook page (www.facebook.com/lowes), Twitter feed (twitter.com/lowes), Pinterest board (pinterest.com/follow/lowes), Instagram roll (instagram.com/loweshomeimprovement), and google+ community (plus.google.com/+lowes/posts).

Lowe's Community Involvement also plays a huge roll in its marcom positioning and strategy. It includes: ***Lowe's Charitable and Educational Foundation***, founded in 1957 and dedicated to supporting K-12 public education and community improvement projects in the local communities. Since 2007, Lowe's and the Lowe's Charitable and Educational Foundation have contributed nearly \$200 million to improve communities in the United States, Canada and Mexico (Lowe's Companies: Lowe's Foundation, 2015).

Lowe's Toolbox for Education is Lowe's signature education grant program. Since 2006, Lowe's Toolbox for Education has provided \$38 million in grants to improve more than 8,000 schools and benefit more than five million schoolchildren, (Lowe's Companies: Lowe's Toolbox for Education, 2015).

Lowe's Heroes lends a hand in times of need. In 2013. Lowe's Heroes completed more than 1,200 community improvement projects across North America, including:

- > Joining Habitat for Humanity and Rebuilding Together to revitalize neighborhoods in 15 states from California to Connecticut.
- > Repairing and renovating Boys & Girls Clubs in Alabama, California, Florida, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania and Washington.
- > Refurbishing rinks in Ontario in partnership with Hockey Canada to revitalize the infrastructure of youth hockey in Canada.
- > Making critical improvements at schools to support Lowe's Toolbox for Education grants awarded in 49 states.
- > Completing environmental cleanup and improvement projects with Keep America Beautiful in Alabama, California, Florida, Michigan, Louisiana, Nevada, North Carolina, Ohio, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Pennsylvania.

Lowe's Heroes also came together to answer the call for help in the aftermath of several natural disasters in Arizona, Colorado, Illinois, Oklahoma, Texas and other states impacted by destructive fires, floods and tornadoes, (Lowe's Companies: Lowe's Heroes, 2015).

Lowe's Scholarship Programs and Partnerships support their commitment to building better opportunities today for the leaders of tomorrow. These include The United Negro College Fund (UNCF), the Thurgood Marshall College Fund, and the Lowe's Scholarship Program, (Lowe's Companies: Lowe's Scholarship Partners, 2015).



Ace Hardware is known as, "the helpful hardware store". With \$1.13 billion in revenue, a *Franchise Times* ranking of 7th in 2014, and a 2014 J.D. Power ranking as "Highest in Customer Satisfaction with Home Improvement Retail Stores, Eight Years in a Row," Ace recorded its best 3rd quarter in its 90-year history, (Ace Hardware: Overview, 2015). Headquartered in Oak Brook, Ill., Ace and its subsidiaries operate 4,903 cooperative stores, 14 distribution centers in the U.S. and also have distribution capabilities in Shanghai, China; Panama City, Panama; and Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Its retailers' stores are located in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and approximately 60 countries, (Ace Hardware: Overview, 2015). Top product brands include: Weber, Craftsman, Clark+Kensington, DeWalt, Scotts, Black & Decker, Valspar and Rubbermaid, (Ace Hardware: Featured Brands, 2015).

Ace marcom strategies include weekly advertising circulars, press releases, the Ace Hardware website (www.acehardware.com), Ace Rewards loyalty program, email offers and improvement tips, and it's latest "Meet the Aces" radio and television spots, (Vaughan, R., 2013). The Ace mobile website and App is weather-triggered with The Weather Channel app to deliver relevant ads based on current temperature or weather conditions, (Miles, S., 2014). Sports marketing include Michael Self and the Ace Hardware NASCAR. Social marketing includes a Facebook page (www.facebook.com/acehardware), Twitter feed (twitter.com/AceHardware), YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/user/acehardware), Instagram roll ([instagram.com/acehardware](https://www.instagram.com/acehardware)), Pinterest board (www.pinterest.com/acehardware), and google+ community (plus.google.com/+AceHardware).

The Ace Foundation has raised over \$58 million since 1991 to help sick and injured kids through their partnership with Children's Miracle Network (CMN) Hospitals. It also supports the American Red Cross Natural Disaster Relief Fund through volunteer hours and donations of products needed when a disaster strikes, (Ace Hardware: Community Involvement, 2015).



Founded in 1948, True Value is one of the world's largest retailer-owned hardware cooperatives. Headquartered in Chicago, Ill, True Value represents independent retailer locations in over 60 countries with retail sales in their communities totaling about \$5.5 billion with 13 regional distribution centers and approximately 2,500 True Value Associates, (True Value: True Value Story, 2015).

True Value marcom strategies include local television and radio spots, weekly advertising circulars, press releases, email special offers and project ideas, the True Value Rewards program, the True Value website (www.truevalue.com), the True Value Projects website, (which includes a DIY Project Library, DIY Video Gallery, DIY Blog Squad and DIY Project Box) (www.truevalueprojects.com), and the True Value Paint website (which allows customers to explore Color, Products and a Project Center) (www.truevaluepaint.com). Sports marketing include the True Value IROC NASCAR. Social Marketing includes a Facebook page (www.facebook.com/TrueValue), Twitter feed (www.twitter.com/truevalue), Pinterest board (pinterest.com/truevalue), and YouTube channel (www.youtube.com/user/TrueValueHardware) where customers can view inspiration, commercials, home improvement tips, how-to's and product usage.

Through the True Value Foundation, True Value also sponsors Boys & Girls Club of America, the Paint a Brighter Future Grant to help local schools, and the True Value Charity Golf Classic to help disadvantaged kids succeed, (True Value: True Value Foundation, 2015).



Menards, a family-owned company started in 1960, is headquartered in Eau Claire, Wisconsin and has more than 43,000 employees in 280 home improvement stores located in 13 states across the midwest. Menards is #43 on Forbes, America's Largest Private Companies list with \$8.3 billion in revenue, (Forbes, 2014). It's known throughout the home improvement industry as "the low price leader", (Menards: About Us, 2015).

Menards marcom strategies spawn from the "Save Big money at Menards" campaign and jingle in the late 1990's. Television spots, the Save BIG Money Center and How-to Center on their website, weekly email ads, specials, reminders and how-to alerts, a Menards mobile app, and Menards NASCAR Racing sponsorship.



TARGET AUDIENCES

The Home Depot Target Audiences

The Home Depot's target audiences are Do-It-Yourself (DIY) customers, Do-It-For-Me (DIFM) customers, and Professional customers. DIY customers are home owners who purchase products and complete their own projects and installations. Associates assist these customers with specific product and installation questions both in stores and through online resources and other media designed to provide product and project knowledge. DIFM customers are home owners who purchase materials themselves and hire third parties to complete the project or installation. The Home Depot's stores offers a variety of installation services targeted at DIFM customers who select and purchase products and installation of those products from it in the store. Professional are primarily professional remodelers, general contractors, repairmen, small business owners and tradesmen, (Reuters, 2015).

The Home Depot Psychographic Profiles

DIY Tom: Tom is a sales rep in the telecom industry. He's in his mid-thirties; makes \$60,000 annually; is a college graduate; married for three years; and recently purchased his first home. He has an incomplete myriad of tools he's borrowed, purchased or inherited since college. He prides himself on assembling his furniture, mowing his lawn, and changing his furnace filter. He asks for help to borrow a tool, or when he needs someone to, "grab the other end" when he's assembling something heavier than he can manage. He refers to pieces leftover after assembly as, "extras"; and he loves to save money by "taking on the easier projects." The last commercial he saw was during the Super Bowl because he only watches Hulu and Netflix. Tom's favorite retail experiences are Amazon and Best Buy because, "I can get in, get what i need, and get out."

Tom's secret weapon is YouTube. Before he takes on a project he watches a how-to video on his smart phone, then Googles local promotions for discounts on the supplies he'll need. As a savvy shopper, he shops at stores who are willing to price-match and is subscribed to the local big-box retail email lists.

DIY Julie: Julie is a freelance writer in her mid-forties. She's married, has three kids, and makes \$45,000 annually. She's been in her home for six years, and is, "ready for an update." She's independent, adventurous, self-motivated, and loves a challenge. She's frugal, an avid reader, blogger and gardener, and enjoys the

accomplishment of seeing a project through to completion. As an environmental advocate, Julie only purchases and patronizes from organizations that share her environmentally-friendly beliefs. She loves Facebook and Pinterest, and relies on friends and social networking for advice, input and feedback about products and services.

Julie values informed, helpful, and friendly customer service. She appreciates those who, “take the extra time,” and feels disrespected when she’s patronized or treated in a condescending manner. She’s value-conscious, but will spend more if it means better, long-lasting quality.

DIFM David: David is in his late-sixties. He’s a Vietnam veteran, and recently retired from a 25 year management position at an electrical plant. He has two grown children, living in different states. He has owned his home for 35 years, and has always taken care of routine and seasonal maintenance around the house. Recently, he’s been struggling with knee pain, so it’s harder for him to do any climbing or labor-intensive projects. David uses the Internet to keep up on news, weather and occasionally watch a movie on Netflix. He actively uses email, and, since he is on a fixed-income, David takes advantage of discounts and promotions offered online and through the mail.

Pro Bill: Bill is in his mid-fifties. He and his wife own a construction business and take on 5 major, and 20 minor projects a year. He hires 15 contractors and makes \$250,000 a year after expenses. Although Bill has been in the industry for 25 years, he’s only been a business-owner for 5 years. He’s very knowledgeable about managing a project and crew, but knows very little about running a small-business. Bill values strong work ethic, loyalty and integrity. He looks for partnerships with like-minded professionals who are experienced, honest, and intrinsically go the extra mile.

Bill appreciates suppliers who value loyalty and greet him by name when making purchases. He welcomes informative and knowledgeable input, especially when it comes to making his job more cost-effective and efficient, but doesn’t like to feel pitched to or taken advantage of. Bill inspects all the materials himself because he prides himself on quality and craftsmanship, and believes his reputation goes into every job.



SWOT ANALYSIS

The Home Depot Strengths

- > Above-market wage rates for associates (THD, I&A Conference, 2013)
- > Paid \$135 million in bonuses to hourly associates (THD, I&A Conference, 2013)
- > Provided stock grants over and above salary and cash bonuses to assistant store managers (THD, I&A Conference, 2013)
- > \$86 million spent in individual customer service Homer Recognition Awards (THD, I&A Conference, 2013)
- > 60% of hourly payroll dedicated to customer-facing service (THD, I&A Conference, 2013)
- > Strong community presence with more than 25,000 volunteered hours for over 900 community projects. And \$80 million committed to ensure that each veteran has a safe place to call home (THD, I&A Conference, 2013)
- > Speed to market (THD, I&A Conference, 2013)
- > State-of-the-art inventory forecasting and replenishment (THD, I&A Conference, 2013)
- > Consistent in-store and online pricing (THD, I&A Conference, 2013)
- > Price-match guarantees (THD, 2015)
- > Ten consecutive quarters of growth in transactions of \$900 or more (THD, I&A Conference, 2013)
- > World's largest home improvement retailer, and industry leader in home improvement (THD, 2015)
- > Partnerships with Best-In-Class reputations (THD, 2015)
- > Diverse product portfolio that consists of over 600,000 SKUs (THD, I&A Conference, 2013)
- > Convenience: one-stop shopping for all home improvement needs
- > Online Sales Up 50% (THD, I&A Conference, 2013)
- > Double-digit Pro growth (THD, I&A Conference, 2013)
- > Visits originating from a mobile phone tripled in 2012, mobile sales more than quadrupled (Google, 2012)
- > Established Social media presence
- > Environmental dedication with 7,000+ Eco Options products (THD, 2015)

The Home Depot Weaknesses

- > Stores can seem complex and overwhelming
- > Managing and utilizing Big Data: (600,000 SKUs, 300,000 associates across 2,200 stores, 1.3 billion annual transactions, and 15 million weekly website visits) (THD, I&A Conference, 2013)
- > Lack of FIRST phone/online interconnectivity (THD, I&A Conference, 2013)
- > Managing fulfillment and customer expectations for Buy Online, Pickup In-Store (BOPIS) and Buy Online, Ship to Store (BOSS) (THD, I&A Conference, 2013)
- > The Home Depot's recent data breach of 56 million credit/debit card numbers in the United States and Canada resulting in \$43 million in recovery costs (Fisher, 2014)
- > Making products more engaging, that provides knowledge and confidence to the customer
- > No online scheduling (THD, I&A Conference, 2013)
- > Rigid delivery hours. And, no real-time delivery information/updates (THD, I&A Conference, 2013)
- > Inability for online ordering to locate most efficient store for home deliveries (THD, I&A Conference, 2013)
- > In-Store and online interconnectivity still in early stages (THD, I&A Conference, 2013)
- > With 1.2 million annual store deliveries, delivery processes (primarily to Pro customers), is inefficient (THD, I&A Conference, 2013)
- > Matching in-store customer service expectations with online customers (THD, I&A Conference, 2013)
- > Providing special/custom order tracking visibility to associates and customers (THD, I&A Conference, 2013)
- > Lack of visibility into the customers' order, regardless of where or how they purchase the product (THD, I&A Conference, 2013)
- > The technology required to support multichannel efforts (THD, I&A Conference, 2013)

The Home Depot Opportunities

- > Recovering housing market (Mutikani, 2014)
- > Recession recovery (Desilver, 2014)
- > Customers' shift to mobile technology (Mahoney, 2104)
- > Integration of in-store and online customer experiences
- > Unique customer experiences such as kiosks, virtual services, and new functionalities on apps and the mobile website (THD, I&A Conference, 2013)
- > Simple and engaging online and in-store customer experiences (THD, I&A Conference, 2013)
- > Distinguishing from pure online competitors (THD, I&A Conference, 2013)
- > Broader FIRST Phone (Generation 2) CS integration and uses (Bostic, 2013)
- > Aging/Retiring Boomer population electing for Do-It-For-Me (DIFM) (THD, I&A Conference, 2013)
- > Emerging millennials at the early stages of DIY (THD, I&A Conference, 2013)
- > Broaden purchases and conversions on a mobile devices (THD, I&A Conference, 2013)
- > Empowering the ideal mobile customer, the Pro customer through Pro Xtra (Rieves, 2014)
- > Providing robust/engaging tablet experiences. (Currently 10% of THD traffic, projections are 30 million more tablets sold in the US in the next few months) (THD, I&A Conference, 2013)
- > Providing same-day shipping through three new direct fulfillment centers (THD, I&A Conference, 2013)
- > US GDP is expected to grow 3% over the next several years (THD, I&A Conference, 2013)
- > First-to-Market advantages (THD, I&A Conference, 2013)
- > Optimizing product customization and coordination (THD, I&A Conference, 2013)
- > Print is less than 10% of advertising budget, while digital is 36% and trending higher (Mahoney, 2104)

The Home Depot Threats

- > Upgrades, updates and relevant improvements to web and mobile experiences
- > Demand for better personalization and connectedness of online experiences
- > No intent to build stores outside of U.S. (THD, I&A Conference, 2013)
- > Pricing transparency and analytics (Howard, 2014)
- > Complexity: (600,000 SKUs, 2.8 million job applicants, 145,000 new associates, which led to staffing 300,000 associates, creating 3.8 million schedule changes. 2.4 million installs, 1.4 million measures and 1.2 million store deliveries, 7 million hours of training, 600,000 home awards, 190,000 associates anniversaries, and recycled 29 million pallets.) (THD, I&A Conference, 2013)
- > Integrated online and in-store customer experiences.
- > Bifurcation of U.S. income causing a shrinking middle class (Schwartz, 2014)
- > Tight lending standards following the recent housing crisis (NAHB, 2014)
- > Slow recession recovery (Desilver, 2014)
- > Slow housing recovery (Mutikani, 2014)
- > Dependence on delivery vendors (60% of large purchases and less strategic deliveries) (THD, I&A Conference, 2013)
- > In-store associates seeing online as competition, rather than co-offering (THD, I&A Conference, 2013)
- > Consumers driven by their perspective on home price value
- > Highly competitive industry
- > Keeping up with changing trends and consumer preferences
- > Dependency on suppliers (THD, I&A Conference, 2013)
- > Migration of Pro customers (Skariachan, 2013)
- > Product recalls (THD, 2015)
- > Zillow's entry into the home improvement space (RetailingToday, 2013)

Key SWOT Analysis

Internal	Strengths <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Industry leader in home improvement2. Convenience: one-stop online/in-store shopping3. Online Sales Up 50%4. Double-digit Pro growth	Weaknesses <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Stores can seem complex and overwhelming2. In-store/online integration3. Rigid delivery hours4. Fulfillment and expectations with BOPIS and BOSS
	External	Opportunities <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Simple/engaging online and in-store experiences2. Same-day shipping through new direct fulfillment centers3. Aging/Retiring DIFM Boomers4. Expanding Pro Xtra program

Key Internal Strengths & Weaknesses

The Home Depot is the industry leader in home improvement. Convenient, online and in-store access make The Home Depot a one-stop shop for the DIY and DIFM customers. However, complex processes and overwhelming store environments can hinder positive customer perceptions and experiences. Online sales have increased by 50%, even though in-store/online integration, and fulfillment expectations with Buy Online, Pickup In Store (BOPIS) and Buy Online Ship to Store (BOSS) have been dilatory. Also noteworthy is The Home Depot's professional business, an area that has experienced double-digit growth in the past year.

Key External Opportunities & Threats

Home improvement is a highly competitive industry. Changing trends and customer preferences creates opportunities for The Home Depot to focus its efforts on simple and engaging online and in-store experiences. A massive swell of millennials and the aging/retiring Baby Boomers open incredible opportunities for DIY and DIFM home improvement products and services. These demographics, coupled with professional customers searching for loyal partnerships with convenient, cost-effective suppliers position The Home Depot as the source for all home improvement needs, supplies and services.



A person is wearing a red Home Depot apron. The apron features several logos and text elements: a circular 'CUSTOMER FIRST' logo at the top left, a '10 YEARS' anniversary logo at the top right, the name 'Hi, I'm DAVE' in a handwritten font, the slogan 'I put customer first', the Home Depot logo (a diamond shape with 'THE HOME DEPOT' text), and the slogan 'More saving. More doing.' at the bottom. The background is a solid orange color.

IMC OBJECTIVES & STRATEGIES

IMC Objectives & Strategies

1. **Objective:** Increase Pro customer business by 15%.

Strategy: The Home Depot's Pro customer is approximately 5% of its customer base, and accounts for approximately 35% of sales, (THD, I&A Conference, 2013). In an effort to target this segment, The Home Depot launched the PRO App and the Pro Xtra Loyalty Program in 2013. The Pro Xtra program offers email promotions, eReceipts, tracking tools for all purchases for easy bookkeeping, and free estimator tools to help create fast and accurate sales proposals with real-time pricing and images. It also offers access to discounted business tools such as EagleView, an aerial photography tool that provides accurate roofing and wall measurements that can be converted into a materials list, as well as access to Pro Xtra reloadable cards that can be shared among employees for business purchases, (THD, 2015).

According to The Home Depot, 93% of general contractors and 87% of sub-contractors use a mobile device of some sort at jobsites. Of the construction professionals that were polled, 58.9% said that mobility is important when considering IT solutions, (Stuart, 2013). I believe there is a great opportunity to cultivate deeper relationships and establish life-long partnerships with this segment.

I propose engaging campaigns to the Professional segment highlighting the Pro App and Pro Xtra Loyalty Program. With these tools, I believe The Home Depot is in a key position to convince the Pro customer its objective: to make the Pro customer a Pro business owner.

2. **Objective:** Increase online sales by 15%.

Strategy: Online sales increased 50% in the third and fourth quarters of 2013. In the third quarter, online sales represented 3% of The Home Depot's \$19.5 billion in sales — about \$585 million. If that trend were to hold for a full year, The Home Depot would have more than \$2 billion in online revenue, (Cassidy, 2014).

Mark Holifield, senior vice president of supply chain observes, "Today, half the retailer's customers go to HomeDepot.com to research products before making an in-store purchase, and one-third of online orders are picked up by customers at a physical store. About 35% of online sales traffic this year will come through mobile phones and tablets." (Cassidy, 2014)

Online retail sales in the U.S. alone are expected to grow to \$370 billion in 2017 from \$262 billion last year, increasing at a 10 percent compound annual growth rate over the next five years, according to Forrester Research, (Cassidy, 2014).

The Home Depot spent \$300 million in 2014 on the first of three new direct fulfillment centers, mobile technology, facility enhancements and a warehouse management system, (Cassidy, 2014).

I propose general, awareness campaigns highlighting the integration of in-store, website, mobile site and mobile app experiences. I believe The Home Depot can emotionally connect with the millennial DIY and young families with interconnected online/in-store experiences and, “simple, seamless and self-confident” messages. The Home Depot can highlight the ease of integrated virtual and in-store experiences with more selection, personalization, and inspiration. And, ultimately, enable the DIY customers to shop when, where and how they want to bring their projects to life.

3. **Objective:** Increase in-home installation and repair business by 25%.

Strategy: In 2013, installation and repair business was roughly 4% of The Home Depot’s total sales, (THD, I&A Conference, 2013). Currently, The Home Depot offers six Bathroom services, three Decor services, three Door & Window services, ten Exterior Home services, seven Flooring services, seven Heating, Cooling & Electrical services, and six Kitchen services, (THD, 2015).

According to a recent article, “Every month, more than a quarter-million Americans turn 65, and these prospective and/or committed retirees are much more likely to depend on others.” (Casselman, 2014).

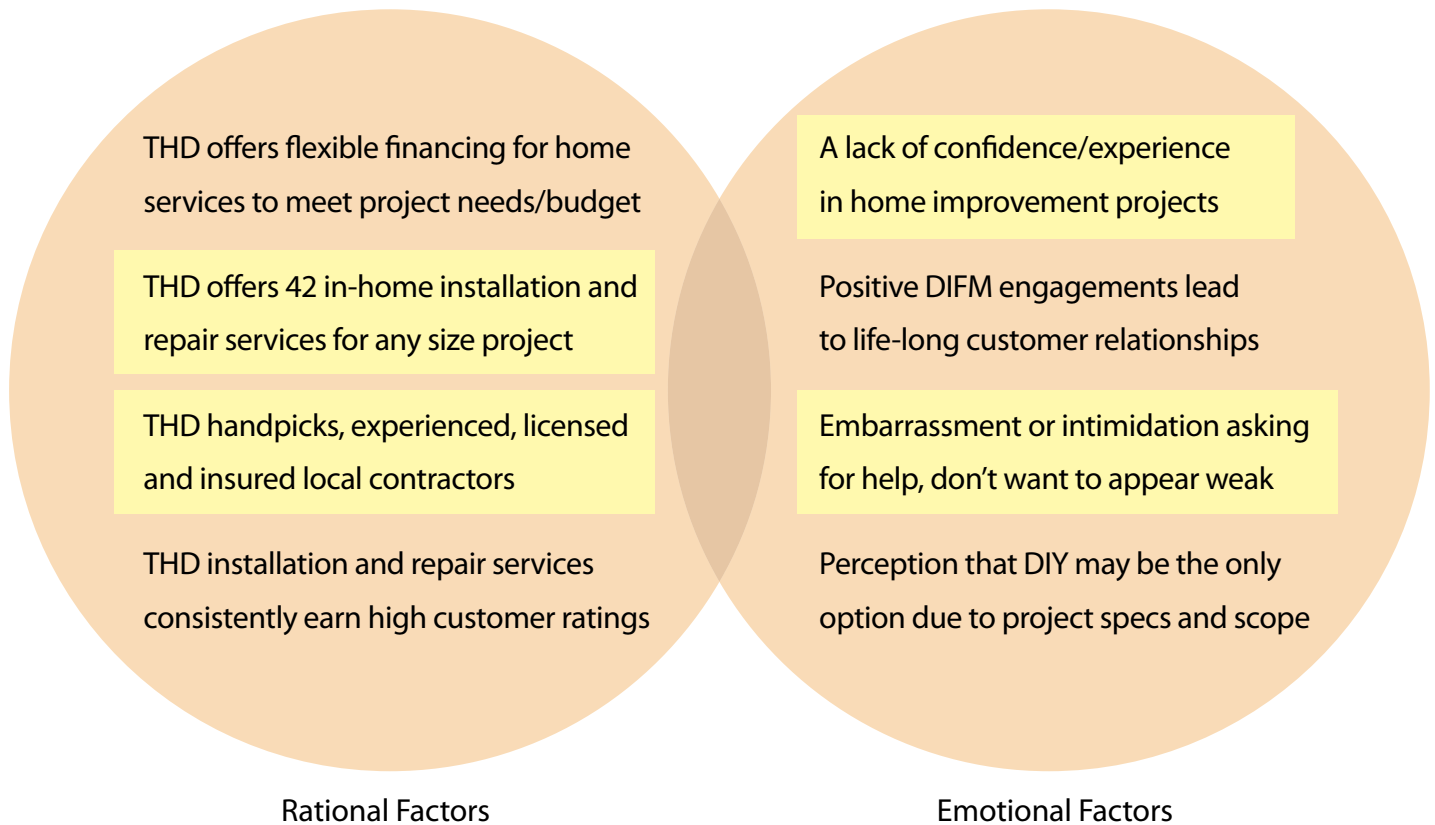
I believe there is a great opportunity for The Home Depot to honor and assist this DIFM segment.

I propose engaging campaigns to the Baby Boomer segment highlighting the benefits of (relevant) in-home installation and repair services. The campaign will mention professional services with high customer ratings, licensed and insured local contractors, quality products and materials with a minimum one-year warranty on labor, complete project support and access to step-by-step project tracking via MyInstall, and flexible financing, (THD 2015). Although The Home Depot doesn’t offer a senior discount, I believe a promotional discount would not only be a compelling advantage to the customer, it would also be a differentiator, since Lowe’s also doesn’t offer a senior discount.



CREATIVE MESSAGE

Integrated Creative Strategy Statement



Integrated Creative Strategy Statement

The Home Depot's qualified contractors are ready to help with any size project.

Tagline

"We have your back."

Rejected Creative Strategy Statements

- > The Home Depot offers installation and repair services for any size project.
- > The Home Depot uses experienced, licensed and insured local contractors.
- > The Home Depot contractors consistently earn high customer ratings.
- > You can rely on The Home Depot's licensed professionals.
- > We understand home improvement isn't for everyone.
- > We specialize in home improvement projects.
- > The Home Depot can help you get things done.

Creative Brief

Client: The Home Depot

Date: 02/09/15

Type: Magazine Ad (4-color, full page)

Ad Pages: 1

Why are we advertising?

To increase Installation and Repair service sales.

Whom are we talking to?

Millennials; unconfident, insecure, and/or inexperienced DIYers; apprehensive partners of home improvement DIYers.

What do they currently think?

They lack confidence in home improvement projects. They feel embarrassed or intimidated to ask for help. They care what others think of them, and don't want to appear weak.

What would we like them to think?

The Home Depot understands DIY limitations and has qualified contractors ready to help with any size project.

What is the single most persuasive idea we can convey?

The Home Depot has your back.

Why should they believe it?

Home improvement is what The Home Depot specializes in, and The Home Depot's contractors consistently earn high customer ratings.

Are there any creative guidelines?

Following The Home Depot brand standards, this campaign will include four-color magazine ads, :30 TV spot, Facebook ads, mobile ads, Twitter posts/hashtag, Instagram images/hashtag, website ads, YouTube spots, and campaign t-shirts.

Sample Creative Execution



**WE
DON'T
JUDGE.**



WE KNOW YOU'RE CAPABLE OF DOING IT YOURSELF.

But, if you need help, our licensed contractors are affordable, experienced, insured and ready to help with any size project.

#wehaveyourback

More saving.
More doing.



Sample four-color magazine ad

(image credits © Skarbakka, 2013, © Shutterstock, 2015)



MEDIA

Media Objectives, Strategies & Tactics

1. **Objective:** Obtain a reach of 75 of the Pro market, six times a year, through print, online, mobile, and social media.

Strategy: Six full-page, full-color ads in two popular trade magazines; three rotating banner ads on THD's Pro website and Pro mobile app that change every other month (18 total); a monthly email campaign (12 total); three Google ads, on professional builder, remodeler, and contractor websites that change every other month; Search Engine Optimization (SEO), Pay Per Click (PPC), and a THD GoProXtra Twitter account that posts weekly tweets (52 total).

Tactics: Six, bimonthly, full-page, full-color print ads will run in *Professional Builder* and *Professional Remodeler* magazines. Each print ad will feature a full-page image of an actual THD Pro Xtra member, on location, highlighting a Pro Xtra benefit that contributes to the success of their business, (i.e. eReceipts, tracking tools for easy bookkeeping, estimator tools for fast and accurate sales proposals, etc.). Key messaging focuses on THD's position: Make Pro Customers Pro Business Owners. All ads will reference the Pro Xtra Program, Pro website and Pro mobile app, as well as a #GoProXtra Twitter hashtag. Call to action will encourage viewers to visit the Pro website, download the Pro mobile app and consider becoming a Pro Xtra member.

Rotating banner ads on THD's Pro website and Pro mobile app will reiterate THD's Pro Customer/Pro Business Owner message along with the #GoProXtra hashtag. Ads will include time-saving hints, customer service tips, and small business tax advantages, as well as direct them to a homedepot.com/professional_contractor/goproxtra landing page where visitors can sign up for emails and/or Pro Xtra membership.

Monthly email campaigns will also offer cross-sales, small business insights, time-saving hints, customer service tips, small business tax advantages and opportunities, as well as promotional offers on THD products and services.

Three Google/Pay Per Click (PPC) ads with the same Pro Customer/Pro Business Owner message will run every other month and be targeted toward professional builder, professional remodeler, and professional contractor websites directing them to a homedepot.com/professional_contractor/goproxtra landing page. THD will also incorporate Search Engine Optimization (SEO) with "builder", "contractor", "remodeler", and similar keywords.

A GoProXtra Twitter account will post weekly tweets throughout the year with cross-sales, small business insights, time-saving hints, customer service tips, small business tax advantages and opportunities, as well as promotional offers on THD products and services.

Rationale: THD's Pro customer is approximately 5% of its customer base, and accounts for approximately 35% of sales, (THD, I&A Conference, 2013). According to THD, 93% of general contractors and 87% of sub-contractors use a mobile device of some sort at jobsites. Of the construction professionals that were polled, 59% said that mobility is important when considering IT solutions, (Stuart, 2013).

In an effort to cultivate deeper relationships and establish life-long partnerships with this segment, I believe it's important to solidify THD's objective in the minds of their Pro market: Make Pro Customers Pro Business Owners. I believe six media pushes throughout the year through print, online, mobile, and social media outlets promoting this message and highlighting the Pro Xtra Program, the Pro website, and the Pro mobile App will accomplish this.

Effectiveness: Increase Pro website visits by 35%, Twitter tweets by 25%, Pro mobile app downloads by 25%, and Pro Xtra Program memberships by 15% in one year.

2. **Objective:** Obtain a reach of 75 of the millennial DIY market; four times a year through broadcast; and 60 of the millennial DIY market; weekly through online, mobile, and social media outlets.

Strategy: A weekly :30 television spot on Netflix, Hulu Plus, and Amazon Instant, for one month, per season (four total); weekly Facebook and Twitter posts (52 total); monthly Pinterest topics (12 total); a monthly email campaign (12 total); ten how-to YouTube videos per season (40 total); monthly mobile app alerts/notifications (12 total); and three rotating banner ads for the THD website and THD mobile app that change every other month (18 total).

Tactics: A :30 television spot will run weekly, for one month, on Netflix, Hulu Plus, and Amazon Instant, prior to each season, (spring, summer, fall, winter). Each spot will feature THD reminding millennial DIYers of seasonal home maintenance responsibilities, (i.e. yard/landscaping, decking, windows, paint, caulking, gutters, air/furnace filters, etc.). Reminders in the :30 spots will come from THD associates (in their orange apron) engaging DIYers in their everyday life, reminding them to consider important home maintenance

responsibilities, (i.e. "...a furnace filter should be changed every three months."). Spots will include a reference to the homedepot.com/wehaveyourback landing page, the THD website, the THD mobile app, the THD YouTube channel, and the #WeHaveYourBack hashtag.

The #WeHaveYourBack campaign will push audiences to a homedepot.com/wehaveyourback landing page, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. Further home maintenance reminders, checklists, time-saving hints, and money-saving promotional offers on THD products and services will be posted weekly for six months on Facebook and Twitter. Monthly "We Have Your Back" topics/pictures will be posted on Pinterest, and "The Top 10 Seasonal Home Maintenance how-to" videos will be posted on THD's YouTube channel for each season. The THD mobile app will offer an option for seasonal maintenance reminders to alert/notify directly to the mobile device. Alerts will include a seasonal maintenance checklist, links to relevant products on THD website and YouTube how-to videos.

Rotating banner ads on the THD website and THD mobile app will reiterate the importance of seasonal maintenance along with the #WeHaveYourBack hashtag. Ads will include seasonal reminders, time-saving hints, promotional offers on THD products and services, and direct them to a homedepot.com/wehaveyourback landing page where DIYers can review seasonal maintenance checklists, sign up for emails, and watch relevant how-to YouTube videos.

Monthly email campaigns will also offer seasonal checklists, reminders, cross-sales, insights, time-saving tips, how-to video links, as well as promotional offers on THD products and services.

Rationale: A recent article titled, *Why More People Are Performing DIY Home Renovations*, cited a 2013 GfK survey conducted for MainStreet.com. It found 70% of home renovation projects involve DIY and/or some help from family or friends. 35% of respondents said they had planned to spend between \$1,000 and \$5,000, whereas almost a quarter had planned to spend under \$500, and almost another quarter between \$500 and \$900. Only 12% would be spending more than \$5,000. As the weather warmed up, 22% of respondents were looking to their garden or landscaping for their next home improvement project, while 14% had their eye on bathrooms, with 12% looking at the kitchen and 12% the family/living room. And, because the Internet has become as integral a tool in home renovations as a hammer, nails and spackle, all of them had planned on doing it themselves, (Urken, 2013).

Although the typical millennial DIYer doesn't keep home maintenance responsibilities on their calendar, when reminded, they prefer to utilize the Internet, social media, and YouTube videos for insights, how-to tips, and techniques. I believe THD can empower the DIYer with confidence by providing both. THD can offer DIYers seasonal reminders for home maintenance responsibilities and provide them with the tools and expertise to carry them out.

Effectiveness: Increase THD website visits by 35%, Facebook visits by 35%, Twitter tweets by 35%, YouTube views by 35%, and mobile app downloads/visits by 35% in one year.

3. **Objective:** Obtain a reach of 65 of the Baby Boomer DIFM market, four times a year, through broadcast, print, online, mobile, and social media.

Strategy: A weekly :30 television spot, primetime daypart, on ABC, NBC, CBS and Fox, for one month per season (four total); four full-page, full-color magazine ads in three popular home decor magazines, a monthly email campaign (12 total); and weekly Facebook and Twitter posts (52 total).

Tactics: A :30 television spot will run weekly, for one month, on primetime daypart, on ABC, NBC, CBS and Fox, prior to each season, (spring, summer, fall, winter). Each spot will feature THD reminding Baby Boomer DIFMs of seasonal home maintenance responsibilities, (i.e. yard/landscaping, decking, windows, paint, caulking, gutters, air/furnace filters, etc.). Reminders in the :30 spots will be THD Home Service contractors (in their THD Home Service shirts/hats) engaging DIFMs in their everyday life, reminding them to consider important home maintenance responsibilities, (i.e. "...clean gutters and downspouts prevent interior water damage and ensure that your home is protected from the elements."). Later in the spot, Boomers will be seen "taking it easy" while THD Home Service contractors are engaged in their seasonal maintenance projects on location. Spots will include a reference to the homedepot.com/doitforme landing page, as well as the #doitforme hashtag. Other THD Home Service, Installation and Repair services, as well as an opportunity to schedule a consultation through the Installation Services and Repair page on the THD website will also be mentioned in the spot.

Four full-page, full-color print ads will run in *House Beautiful*, *HGTV*, and *Better Homes & Gardens* magazines. Ads will feature Baby Boomers "taking it easy" while THD Home Service contractors are seen

engaged in their seasonal maintenance projects on location. All ads will reference Home Services on the THD website, the THD mobile app, as well as a #doitforme Twitter hashtag, and will encourage viewers to visit the Installation Services and Repair page on the THD website, download the THD mobile app and consider scheduling a consultation with a THD Home Service representative.

For six months, Weekly #doitforme posts on Facebook and Twitter will include home maintenance reminders as well as cost- and energy-effective savings tips, and promotional offers on THD products and services.

Monthly email campaigns will also offer seasonal checklists, reminders, cross-sales, insights, time-saving tips, promotional offers on THD products and services, as well as opportunities to schedule a consultation with a THD Home Service representative.

Rationale: In 2013, Installation and Repair business was roughly 4% of The Home Depot's total sales, (THD, I&A Conference, 2013). Currently, The Home Depot offers six Bathroom services, three Decor services, three Door & Window services, ten Exterior Home services, seven Flooring services, seven Heating, Cooling & Electrical services, and six Kitchen services, (THD, 2015).

According to a recent article, "Every month, more than a quarter-million Americans turn 65, and these prospective and/or committed retirees are much more likely to depend on others." (Casselman, 2014).

I believe there is a great opportunity for The Home Depot to assist this DIFM segment with their seasonal home maintenance responsibilities.

Effectiveness: Increase DIFM website visits by 35% and Installation and Repair sales by 25% in one year.

Media Flow Chart

	1Q 2016			2Q 2016			3Q 2016			4Q 2016		
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
BROADCAST												
NBC			:30 :30 :30 :30		:30 :30 :30 :30			:30 :30 :30 :30		:30 :30 :30 :30		
ABC			:30 :30 :30 :30		:30 :30 :30 :30			:30 :30 :30 :30		:30 :30 :30 :30		
CBS			:30 :30 :30 :30		:30 :30 :30 :30			:30 :30 :30 :30		:30 :30 :30 :30		
Netflix			:30 :30 :30 :30		:30 :30 :30 :30			:30 :30 :30 :30		:30 :30 :30 :30		
Hulu Plus			:30 :30 :30 :30		:30 :30 :30 :30			:30 :30 :30 :30		:30 :30 :30 :30		
Amazon Instant			:30 :30 :30 :30		:30 :30 :30 :30			:30 :30 :30 :30		:30 :30 :30 :30		
MAGAZINES												
Professional Builder			FP4C		FP4C		FP4C		FP4C		FP4C	
Professional Remodeler			FP4C		FP4C				FP4C		FP4C	FP4C
House Beautiful			FP4C		FP4C				FP4C		FP4C	
HGTV			FP4C		FP4C				FP4C		FP4C	
Better Home & Gardens			FP4C		FP4C				FP4C		FP4C	
ONLINE/DIGITAL												
THD Website Banner Ads			x6		x6				x6		x6	x6
THD Pro Website Banner Ads			x3		x3				x3		x3	x3
Email Campaigns			x3		x3				x3		x3	x3
Google Ads			x3		x3				x3		x3	
SEO/PPC			x3		x3				x3		x3	
MOBILE												
THD Mobile App			x6		x6				x6		x6	x6
THD Pro Mobile App			x3		x3				x3		x3	x3
SOCIAL MEDIA												
Facebook	x2	x2	x2	x2	x2	x2	x2	x2	x2	x2	x2	x2
Twitter	x2	x2	x2	x2	x2	x2	x2	x2	x2	x2	x2	x2
Pinterest	x1	x1	x1	x1	x1	x1	x1	x1	x1	x1	x1	x1
YouTube			x10		x10				x10		x10	



PUBLIC RELATIONS

Public Relations Objectives, Strategies & Tactics

1. **Objective:** Generate THD Pro Xtra Program publicity while increasing memberships by 15% in one year.

Strategy: Launch a bi-monthly, #myProXtraHomeOffice promotion to THD Pro Xtra members, culminating in six, 2015 Ford F-450 giveaways by THD Chairman, CEO and President, Craig Menear at THD Pro Xtra spotlight events around the country.

Tactics: In an effort to increase THD and Pro Xtra publicity, THD will launch the #myProXtraHomeOffice promotion to THD Pro Xtra Program members. The bi-monthly promotion will launch in January, and continue throughout the year, culminating in six spotlight events at THD stores. Key messaging will focus on THD's position: Make Pro Customers Pro Business Owners. Entries will require Pro Xtra members to submit an Entry Form and an inspiring Pro Business Owner story, (one per member). THD Executive Leadership will select a winning entry, from different states, every other month (six total). THD Chairman, CEO and President, Craig Menear will present each Pro Xtra winner with a 2015 Ford F-450 "Pro Xtra Home Office" at publicized THD Pro Xtra spotlight events.

A promotional banner ad will be created and posted on THD's Pro website, along with Search Engine Optimized (SEO) keywords, monthly emails, and weekly social media posts throughout the promotion. Posters will be created and hung at THD in-store Pro Desks, and fliers will be created and distributed during in-store Pro Desk checkouts.

Prior to each spotlight event, a press release will be sent to national and local broadcast and print media outlets, trade bloggers, trade magazines like *Professional Builder* and *Professional Remodeler*, and posted in the Media Center of THD's website. During the event, photo opportunities and brief interviews with Craig Menear and the #myProXtraHomeOffice winner will take place. After each event, pictures and briefs of winners will be posted on social media and featured on THD's Pro website.

Effectiveness: Increase favorable opinion of the THD brand, and general awareness of the Pro Xtra Program. Increase Pro Xtra memberships by 15%. Generate positive publicity through at least 25 earned media articles and 25,000 social media impressions. Increase Pro customer sales by 15%.

2. **Objective:** Increase favorable opinion by engaging 75% of the millennial DIY market in one year.

Strategy: Launch an environmentally-conscious, #THDBreatheEasier promotion targeting the millennial DIY market. Run a limited time, "Furnace Filter 4-pack" online promotion to current and new website account holders.

Tactics: In an effort to educate the millennial DIY market of THD's environmental commitments, and remind them of the importance of seasonal home maintenance responsibilities, (i.e. yard/landscaping, decking, windows, paint, caulking, gutters, air/furnace filters, etc.), THD will launch a #THDBreatheEasier online promotion. The three-month promotion will launch in March, and include a one-year supply of furnace filters, (four-pack), to current and new THD website account holders, (1 pack per household). The key promotional message: "You can 'breathe easier' knowing THD is thinking about the environment, (including your own), and ready to help you take on seasonal home maintenance projects." The DIYer will go to the website; login or create an account; and select the **Let Me Breathe Easier** icon. This will add the free Furnace Filter 4-pack to their cart. They can either continue shopping or checkout. Unless the user is purchasing other items, the Furnace Filter 4-pack can only be picked up in stores.

A press release will be posted in the Media Center of the website and sent to key DIY bloggers. SEO keywords will be utilized, monthly emails, and weekly social media posts will occur during the three-month promotion. The promotion is expected to earn at least one million shared social media impressions.

Effectiveness: Increase favorable opinion of the THD brand and THD environmental awareness in the DIY millennial market. Increase THD website visits by 35%. Increase website accounts by 35%. Earn positive publicity through at least one million social media impressions. Increase online sales by 15%.

3. **Objective:** Promote goodwill while increasing employee community involvement by 25% in one year.

Strategy: Launch an internal, #THDWelcomesYouHome promotion for employees to nominate an American veteran for a \$10,000 home improvement makeover. The Home Depot Foundation and Team Home Depot will carry out 100 home makeovers to veterans of all 50 states, throughout the year.

Tactics: In an effort to increase employee community involvement through The Home Depot

Foundation and Team Home Depot, as well as publicize THD cause-related community contributions, THD will launch an internal #THDWelcomesYouHome promotion for 100 American veterans.

At the beginning of the year, pitch decks will be created and distributed to all THD stores, and posters will be created and hung in THD break-rooms. Employees will be encouraged to submit an Entry Form and inspiring story about their nominated veteran that coincide with THD's values, (one per employee). THD Foundation Board members will select two winning entries (male/female), from each of the 50 states, (100 total). Key promotional messaging: "THD appreciates your service to our country and community. Like you, our THD culture is guided by the following values: Taking care of our people; Giving back to our communities; Doing the right thing; Going the extra mile for our customers; Building strong relationships; Nurturing an entrepreneurial spirit; and Respect for all people."

At spotlight events, THD Foundation Executive Director, Gaven Gregory will present and congratulate the winners and their nominators. Winners will schedule the makeover with local Team Home Depot Coordinators. THD will donate supplies, and local Team Home Depot volunteers will carry out the \$10,000 home improvement makeovers.

Prior to each spotlight event, a press release will be sent to national and local broadcast and print media outlets, American veteran bloggers, and posted in the Media Center of THD's website. SEO keywords will also be utilized. During the event, photo opportunities and brief interviews with THD Foundation Executive Director, Gaven Gregory, and the #THDWelcomesYouHome winner will take place. After each event, pictures and briefs of winners will be posted on social media and featured on THD's website.

Effectiveness: Increase employee community involvement by 25%. Increase favorable opinion of the THD brand and awareness of The Home Depot Foundation's community involvement. Generate positive publicity through at least 25 earned media articles and 100,000 social media impressions. Position THD as a rewarding place to work, and a positive contributor to the community.

A person wearing a red Home Depot apron. The apron features several logos and text elements: a circular logo on the left that says "CUSTOMER FIRST", a circular logo on the right that says "10 YEARS OF SERVICE", the name "Hi, I'm DAVE" in a handwritten style, the slogan "I put customers first", the Home Depot logo (a diamond shape with "THE HOME DEPOT" text), and the slogan "More saving. More doing." at the bottom. The background is a solid orange color.

DIRECT MARKETING & SALES PROMOTIONS

Direct Marketing & Sales Promotion Objectives & Tactics

1. **Objective:** Target professional builders, remodelers and general contractors for a 10% response rate of Pro Xtra membership sign ups; and, of those, a 35% redemption rate of the promotion offer.

Tactics: THD will mail a postcard and send an email to professional builders, remodelers and general construction contractors. Both deliverables will have an image of an actual THD Pro Xtra member, on location, and highlight Pro Xtra benefits that can contribute to the success of their business, (i.e. eReceipts, tracking tools for easy bookkeeping, estimator tools for fast and accurate sales proposals, etc.). Key messaging focuses on THD's position: Make Pro Customers Pro Business Owners. Postcard and email will also include an offer to receive 10% off their first purchase, after becoming a Pro Xtra member.

THD will purchase mailing/email databases of builders, remodelers and construction contractors from third party sources such as National Association of Home Builders (NAHB), and/or other top builders/construction companies databases, (i.e. ConstructionLists, HomeAdvisor, Construction Market Data, etc.). With these databases, THD will cull and compile one targeted mail and email database for Pro Xtra prospects. This final list will be pre-tested for target focus. Mailing fulfillment will be handled by a third party.

Prospects will go to THD's Pro website and sign up for Pro Xtra membership. After becoming a Pro Xtra member, a confirmation email will be sent containing a unique code with the 10% discount. The discount will also appear in their online account. The discount can only be used once, and will be applied during online check-out or scanned/applied at the Pro Desk register check-out. This offer will be tested for optimal customer response. The promotion will be redeemable for one year.

Effectiveness: Generate a 10% response of Pro Xtra membership sign ups; and, of those, a 35% redemption rate of the promotion offer. Increase Pro Xtra memberships by 15%.

2. **Objective:** Target current millennial DIY customers with a 50% click through rate; and, of those, a 25% redemption rate of online Savings Center sales.

Tactics: THD will compile an email list from current millennial, (ages 23-35), DIY online account holders. This list will be pre-tested for target focus. THD will send an online offer via email, mobile app, and

through THD's Facebook, Pinterest and Twitter accounts. The offer will include product shots and discounted prices of select online Savings Center items, as well as a link to the Savings Center page on THD's website. The offer will also include a coupon and code, (GIMME30%), for an additional 30% off online Savings Center items. The code will be entered by the customer during check-out, and will only apply to online Savings Center items. This offer will be tested for optimal customer response. The promotion will run twice during the year, and be redeemable during the month of each promotion.

Effectiveness: Generate a 50% click through rate; and, of those, a 25% redemption rate of online Savings Center sales. Increase online sales by 15% in one year.

3. **Objective:** Target DIFM Baby Boomers for a 15% response rate of in-home consultations scheduled; and, of those, a 75% redemption rate of the promotion offer.

Tactics: THD will mail a postcard to residential home owners, ages 50-70. The postcard will feature a Baby Boomer "taking it easy" while a THD Home Service contractor is seen engaged in a seasonal maintenance project on location. The postcard will also include an offer to schedule a free in-home consultation and receive 15% off their in-home service.

THD will purchase mailing databases targeting home owners, ages 50-70, from third party sources. With these databases, THD will cull and compile one targeted mailing database for prospective DIFM Baby Boomer home owners. This final list will be pre-tested for target focus. Mailing fulfillment will be handled by a third party.

Prospects will call THD (1-800-557-5221) or visit THD's website and schedule a free in-home consultation. Prospects will then present the postcard to the representative at the appointment for their discount. Postcards will include a redemption code that the Home Services representative will itemize with a 15% discount on the quote. This offer will be tested for optimal customer response. The promotion will be redeemable for one year.

Effectiveness: Generate a 15% response rate of in-home consultations scheduled; and, of those, a 75% redemption rate of the promotion offer. Increase Installation and Repair business by 25%.



MEASUREMENT & EVALUATION

Measuring and evaluating the effectiveness of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) campaigns is an essential component of the plan. Ongoing measurement and evaluation is crucial to avoid costly marketing errors, increase positive brand awareness and determine if objectives are successful. To determine the success of the proposed IMC plan, THD will measure consumer's brand awareness, the growth of THD's Pro Xtra Program, increases in online sales and services, and the effectiveness of THD's promotions. Unless otherwise indicated, it is recommended that proposed IMC campaigns be launched in January and run for one calendar year.

1. **Measurable Objective:** Increase Pro Xtra membership and business by 15% in one year.

Tactics: Prior to launching IMC campaigns, THD will determine the total number of Pro Xtra members, as well as revenue generated through the Pro App and Pro Desk from the previous year. Social media tracking tools will gather beginning numbers and track responses for each campaign. Concept testing will be conducted through focus groups consisting of current Pro Xtra members, professional builders, remodelers and general contractors. Groups will be tested for each campaign's overall message, relatability, and validity, as well as brand recognition, association and loyalty. Lickert scale surveys will measure reaction, retention and response to concept messages and marcom materials. Copy testing will assess for comprehension and reaction using the Flesch formula.

Media effectiveness will be measured by an increase in Pro website visits by 35%, Twitter tweets by 25%, Pro mobile app downloads by 25%, and Pro Xtra Program memberships by 15%.

Public Relations effectiveness will be measured by an increase in favorable opinion of the THD brand, and general awareness of the Pro Xtra Program; an increase in Pro Xtra memberships by 15%; positive publicity generated through at least 25 earned media articles and 25,000 social media impressions; and an increase in Pro customer sales by 15%.

Direct Marketing and Sales Promotions will be measured by a 10% response of Pro Xtra membership sign ups; and, of those, a 35% redemption rate of the promotion offer; as well as an increase in Pro Xtra memberships by 15%.

2. **Measurable Objective:** Increase online sales by 15% in one year.

Tactics: Prior to launching IMC campaigns, THD will use web analytics to determine beginning numbers for THD website and THD mobile activity and sales. Social media tracking tools will gather beginning numbers and track responses for each campaign. Concept testing will be conducted through focus groups consisting of millennials, (ages 23-35), with DIY motivations and preferences. Groups will be tested for each campaign's overall message, relatability, and validity, as well as brand recognition, association and loyalty. Lickert scale surveys will measure reaction, retention and response to concept messages and marcom materials. Copy testing will assess for comprehension and reaction using the Flesch formula.

Media effectiveness will be measured by an increase in THD website visits by 35%, Facebook visits by 35%, Twitter tweets by 35%, YouTube views by 35%, and mobile app downloads/visits by 35% in one year.

Public Relations effectiveness will be measured by an increase in favorable opinion of the THD brand and THD environmental awareness in the DIY millennial market; an increase in THD website visits by 35%; an increase in website accounts by 35%; positive publicity through at least one million social media impressions; and an increase in online sales by 15%.

Direct Marketing and Sales Promotions will be measured by a 50% click through rate; and, of those, a 25% redemption rate of online Savings Center sales; as well as an increase in online sales by 15% in one year.

3. **Measurable Objective:** Increase in-home installation and repair business by 25% in one year.

Tactics: Prior to launching IMC campaigns, THD will determine beginning numbers for in-home installation and repair sales. Social media tracking tools will gather beginning numbers and track repairs for each campaign. Concept testing will be conducted through focus groups consisting of residential home owners, ages 50-70, with DIFM motivations and preferences. Groups will be tested for each campaign's overall message, relatability, and validity, as well as brand recognition, association and loyalty. Lickert scale surveys will measure reaction, retention and response to concept messages and marcom materials. Copy testing will assess for comprehension and reaction using the Flesch formula.

Media effectiveness will be measured by an increase in DIFM website visits by 35% and in-home installation and repair sales by 25% in one year.

Public Relations effectiveness will be measured by an increase in employee community involvement by 25%; an increase in favorable opinion of the THD brand and awareness of The Home Depot Foundation's community involvement; positive publicity generated through at least 25 earned media articles and 100,000 social media impressions; and THD positioned as a rewarding place to work, and a positive contributor to the community.

Direct Marketing and Sales Promotions will be measured by a 15% response rate of in-home consultations scheduled; and, of those, a 75% redemption rate of the promotion offer; as well as an increase in installation and repair business by 25%.





CONCLUSION

The Home Depot is the world's largest home improvement retailer, and THD's marcom mix is impressive: The Home Depot website offers 700,000 products, (The Home Depot: Mobile, 2015), attracts more than 9.6 million (U.S.) monthly visitors, (Quantcast, 2015), and generates 2% (or \$1.5 billion) in annual sales, (Cheng, 2013). The Home Depot Mobile App offers an Augmented Reality experience to virtually view THD products in your home, (The Home Depot: Mobile, 2015). Promotions and tips are delivered via email. Weekly promotions are delivered via circulars, and press releases are distributed to media outlets. Social Marketing includes 1.8 million Facebook likes, 273,000 Twitter followers, 252,000 Pinterest followers, 81,000 YouTube subscribers, as well as many blog followers. THD is also heavily involved in Sports Marketing, philanthropic and community initiatives. Obviously, this marcom mix is working, but I believe THD needs to do more to focus on its target demographics.

THD's Pro customer is 5% of its customer base, yet accounts for approximately 35% of sales, (THD, I&A Conference, 2013). These are repeat customers, with primarily large/bulk purchases averaging \$10,000+. I believe THD has tremendous bilateral opportunities with the professional market. THD must align itself with this valuable partner with a purpose to make Pro customers Pro business owners. And, as potential THD Ambassadors, IMC campaigns and strategies should be built after current Pro Xtra members have been consulted, respected, and utilized in focus groups.

With the swell of the millennial DIY market and explosive growth of online retail sales, I believe THD can emotionally connect with the millennial DIY and young families with interconnected online/in-store experiences and, "simple, seamless and self-confident" messages. THD must highlight the ease of integrated virtual and in-store experiences with more selection, personalization, and inspiration. And, ultimately, THD must enable the DIY customers to shop when, where and how they want to bring their projects to life.

In 2013, installation and repair business was roughly 4% of The Home Depot's total sales, (THD, I&A Conference, 2013). According to a recent article, "Every month, more than a quarter-million Americans turn 65, and these prospective and/or committed retirees are much more likely to depend on others." (Casselmann, 2014). I believe there is a great opportunity for THD to honor and assist this valuable DIFM segment with their routine and seasonal home maintenance responsibilities.



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