

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Client Firm:

Francesca's Collections is one of the fastest growing specialty retailers in the United States. It is a women's clothing, fashion jewelry, accessories and gifts boutique. It sets itself apart from other women's retailers because it offers gifts, apparel, home accessories, and jewelry that reflect the most fashionable styles from all over the world. Its URL is www.francescascollections.com. Francesca's is known as having a moderate price range with some items like jewelry as low as \$4.98, to designer jeans that are priced at \$88.00.

Evaluations:

Francesca's Collections has a very inviting and easily navigable web site. Its vibrant color use and uniformity of their signature font help visitors to identify that it is their web site, however they could use more recognizable factors in order to pass a "smash test."

E-mail contact with those who sign up for their e-mailing list is excellent. The e-mails that are sent out are very timely and do not overwhelm the customer. Offering rich photographs paired with informative writing retain and engage the customer's attention. Differing the reason for e-mail contact ranges from sales Francesca's is having to encouraging visitors to check out their fashion blog.

Rather than spending a lot of money on paid advertising, Francesca's relies on spending their time creating word-of-mouth or word-of-mouse to inform people about their store. With an increase in their social media tactics, on web sites such as Pinterest, more people will be easily informed about special sales and events associated with Francesca's. Because they are not spending money on advertising, their dollars could be put to use in other areas.

Recommendations:

- Focus on social media web sites such as Twitter, Facebook and Pinterest to advertise to prospective visitors.
- Pay Google and Yahoo to appear on page 1 of keyword searches.
- Create an e-mail newsletter to promote their presence on social media sites such as Pinterest, Twitter and Facebook.

PROJECT REPORT ON FRANCESCA'S COLLECTIONS

CLIENT FIRM:

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styles from all over the world. Its URL is www.francescascollections.com. Francesca's is known as having a moderate price range with some items like jewelry as low as \$4.98, to designer jeans that are priced at \$88.00.

The target market for Francesca's Collections is Caucasian women primarily ages 18 to 35. These women probably come from the lower-middle to cost-conscious middle class as they have a disposable income. Francesca's tailors its assortment of items to fashion-conscious females who are attracted to their eclectic and sophisticated merchandise. Their unique items can meet the needs of women for any event or occasion, from dresses for parties to gifts for birthdays. They offer a compelling value with a diverse and uniquely balanced mix of items at attractive prices.

EVALUATIONS:

Web Site

Upon arrival at the Francesca's web site, it is filled with spring and summer colors and is very inviting. The background color of the web site is a classic brown look with the font that they use on all of their materials including bags and signage. On the home page, it features 5 different looks on models that could be created using their newly arrived apparel and merchandise. The front section rotates with different situations in which these looks could be worn, and they are all photographed outside while doing something. This entire section is the main focus of the page, and then people can go to different tabs to access different materials. In the upper right hand corner it shows a shopping cart along with the total amount of dollars of what is in the cart, which can help shoppers control what they have and what they are spending.

The web site also allows the option of creating a wish list, finding a boutique, or accessing your own account. If someone already has an account set up with Francesca's, after signing in you are directed to a page of all your information including a personalized address book, wish lists and an entire list of your order history. This makes it very personal for returning visitors and the detail included is very helpful.

The web site can be easily navigated. The tabs it has include: new arrivals, outfits, apparel, bags, shoes, jewelry & accessories, gifts, sale, and then a special tab – spring color. Near the bottom of the home page it always includes Francesca's "pick of the week," which ranges from dresses to tops that are always 20% off for the chosen week. If someone were to click on the pick of the week, they would be redirected to the item including multiple views of it as well as a very descriptive section featuring what it is made out of, fit and sizing, the shipping information and information on returns and exchanges. Something unique about their product descriptions is that

they offer what type of instances the clothing item could be worn, and then they match it up with events happening around the states. For example, this week's pick of the week is called "Sun Child Dress" and the description encourages someone to buy this if they are attending the popular musical festival in California, called Coachella.

With every item searched on the Francesca's web site, it offers 3 different suggestions of possible options to pair with the current item the person is looking at. This is very helpful for people looking to purchase an entire outfit, or for some suggestions of things that they might like.

Because this web site is a boutique/clothing web site, anybody who has visited a clothing store’s web site will be able to successfully navigate around it. A very helpful tool on the web site is the bottom toolbar, which includes a site map. The site map provides a quick overview of all the different aspects of the web site and it contains links to what someone might be looking for.

As far as the “smash test” Francesca’s is not well known enough to pass this type of test. For those people who have visited the store or web site, the background colors and font used are definitely recognizable with Francesca’s overall image, however for those people who are unfamiliar with what Francesca’s is, they would not be able to identify it right away. Because I am a loyal customer of this chain of boutiques, I am able to easily identify it, but that might not be the case for everyone.

Prospecting Activities

Francesca’s Collections has a very different presence on Google (www.google.com) and Yahoo (www.yahoo.com) search engines. On Google, 2 out of the 6 different keyword searches were successful at finding Francesca’s web site. On Yahoo, with the same key word searches, Francesca’s web site did not show up in any of the search results. This table shows that the only way to find Francesca’s Collections on Yahoo was to actually type in the store’s name. When you look at Google, 2 out of the 6 worked, but many of the other key words should have pulled up Francesca’s as a result.

Keyword Search	Google	Yahoo
Women’s clothing	Page 19	Not found after searching 35 pages of results
Women’s accessories	Not found after looking through 27 pages of results	Not found after looking through 15 pages of results
Women’s handbags	Not found after looking through 15 pages of results	Not found after looking through 15 pages of results
Women’s gifts	Not found after looking through 15 pages of results	Not found after looking through 15 pages of results
Women’s boutique	Not found after looking through 15 pages of results	Not found after looking through 15 pages of results
Women’s clothing boutique	Page 1	Not found after looking through 15 pages of results

Francesca’s Collections has many advertisements on fashion blogs. They also have a few video advertisements on YouTube. They are mentioned in fashion magazines and tell you in the store which magazine their item was mentioned. Francesca’s does not advertise very much, they depend on word-of-mouth, social media and referrals. Francesca’s has a loyal following of repeat customers. They should make sure they are on the first couple of pages on search engine results for those keywords because they do not advertise as much as other women’s clothing stores.

Conversion Activities

Francesca’s Collections sends approximately 1 e-mail per week, unless they are running some kind of sale or discount. When opting-in to receive e-mails, they are very respectful and appreciative of you opting-in. This was a good amount to receive because you were not overwhelmed with e-mails, it was more of a friendly reminder to visit their web site or store.

The content and quality of the e-mails are not your typical e-mails. They are informative without being overbearing and pushy. They show approximately 10 different items in the body of their e-mail, which are popular right now. When showing these 10 or so items, they also include the prices underneath each picture. This shows they are not hiding any content, and the potential customer does not have to go to their web site to find prices, they are all right there. Once in awhile Francesca’s also shows fun, do-it-yourself projects such as headbands and also fashion how-to tips. They also include new locations of their stores and different sale items. The “Pick of the Week” was a great additive to the e-mail because it showed the different ways to wear the clothes that they currently have in the store. Overall the content was impressive and inviting.

Customer Contact Activities

For the past 3 months (January 19 – April 19), the current customer (Kari Kaelin) has received many e-mails from Francesca’s Collections. Each e-mail piece was sent on a regular basis provided that certain deals were going on.

A weekly e-mail that was received would include Francesca’s “pick of the week.” These e-mails contained a piece of clothing that would be 20% off either online or in the store for the entire week. Also, any sale that was going on either online or in the store was always sent out in an e- newsletter format. This helped to keep customers up to date and to encourage them to not miss the sale. New arrivals in the store would also be sent out in an e-mail to customers and every single e-mail had eye-catching images of the items with bright colors and beautiful photography.

Just the right amount of e-mails were sent. This amounted to about 10 e-mails per month. A unique e-mail that was received in the middle of the tracking included one encouraging customers to check out the new blog that they started to incorporate into their web site. This blog contains a few bloggers who share wonderful stories and display their unique style. Utilizing actual customers and their inspirations provides a unique experience that Francesca’s can offer to their customers.

Comparing the e-mails the current customer received with those received by the prospects, they are generally the same. Special sales along with new arrivals are sent to both groups of customers. The last special feature of every e-mail sent out is that it contains a section at the bottom with a list of new boutiques that have either just opened up or that are coming soon. Francesca’s is growing at a rapid pace so it is exciting to see where the new stores are opening up around the nation.

Customer Service

Francesca’s Collections provides its customers with superior customer service information on its web site. The homepage contains all of the information a customer may need to find in an organized and efficient way. On the top of the page, Francesca’s toll free 1-800 number can be easily found along with the links: my account, wish lists, and find a boutique. On the bottom of the page, there is an easy to find, direct link labeled customer service. Areas that are listed under the “Customer Service” section include the following:

Careers	Shipping Information	Privacy & Security	Responsibility	Gift Cards
Find A Boutique	FAQ	Returns & Exchanges	Contact Us	
Sizing Chart	Mobile Device	Ordering & Payment	Terms of Use	

Each page includes detailed information on the topic. Francesca's does a great job of providing all its information in an organized way. This makes it easy for the customer to navigate their way around the pages and find what they are looking for. A great example of this is how Francesca's provides screen shots for easy step-by-step directions of how to shop on a mobile device.

Francesca's has a great "Contact Us" page, which provides its customers a number of efficient ways to contact them. The page has an online form for the customers to write Francesca's an e-mail message directly. The page also provides a customer service e-mail address, phone number, mailing address, marketing e-mail address, image request e-mail address, social networks e-mail address, real state inquiries e-mail address, product ideas e-mail address, and human resources e-mail address. Francesca's does a great job providing ways to contact them about all sorts of different matters. The separate e-mails for different areas of concern is a great idea because then the customer knows that their message will get to the right department.

Francesca's return policy can be easily found, as there is a direct link on the bottom of the homepage. The policy is clearly stated and lays out the different circumstances of returns such as, in store and online returns, exchanges, and refunds. Francesca's customers can return or exchange any regular priced item at any Francesca's Collections store within 45 days of purchase. Francesca's just needs the original invoice, and the unwashed, unworn, or defective merchandise with tags in place to return, exchange, or refund the items (sale items can only be processed at their online stores). Francesca's provides return labels for online orders and accepts regular priced merchandise at any store no matter where it was purchased. Francesca's makes it easy for its customers to return, exchange, or refund purchases.

Overall, Francesca's online customer service is at a superior level. The link to the customer service page is easy to find and the page itself provides all of the information that a person may need, but if a customer needs further information or help there are several ways to contact them about those needs.

Social Networking Activities

Francesca's does a good job using social media networks. Facebook and Twitter are among the top networks they use. Currently, Francesca's has 3,310 followers and is following 120 accounts. The number of followers is relatively weak compared to its competitors, Anthropologie and Ruche with 240,000 and 24,102 respectively. Even though they do not have as many followers as their competitors, they are very active on Twitter. Francesca's consistently tweets about 4 times every day. Francesca's Facebook page has 63,664 likes and contains similar content as their Twitter account. The content of the tweets and Facebook posts pertain to announcements of sales, special promotions, new products, and questions to their followers about their experiences with Francesca's.

Francesca's also does a great job of replying to those who tweet at them about various topics whether they are good or bad. For example, an upset customer tweeted at them about one of their stores not honoring her gift card. Francesca's immediately replied with "@cj_usa Hi Carol, I'm really sorry about that! I'll forward it to our customer service rep. Can you DM a number we can call you at?" It was very important that they replied to the message and offered a way to help because this shows that they appreciate their customers and are willing to help them anyway they can. This is the best practice when it comes to businesses and social media networks.

In regards to their blog, Francesca’s allows anyone to post comments under every blog post, whether it is a current or prospective customer. As for the web site, they do not allow customer reviews or comments on their products.

Francesca’s recently incorporated Pinterest to their social media networks. They currently have only 261 followers and 157 pins. They are way behind compared to their competitors and need to catch up if they want to continue to be competitive. Anthropologie has 42,640 followers and 336 pins. Ruche has 6,793 followers and 1,156 pins. Francesca’s uses Pinterest as a way to showcase their products.

According to Tweet Level, Francesca’s has done an excellent job influencing their followers on Twitter. The web site ranked Francesca’s according to 4 basic categories: influence, popularity, engagement, and trust. They received the scores of: Influence: 67.8, Popularity: 61, Engagement

54, and Trust: 37.3. Their scores of influence and popularity are excellent, but they need to work on engagement and trust, which were a little lower than expected. Their competitors, Anthropologie and Ruche scored higher in all categories. Ruche had the highest influence score of 80.8 and Anthropologie with the highest popularity score of 86.6. This can be related to the fact that Francesca’s doesn't have as large of following as Ruche and Anthropologie.

Klout, where influence is given a score from 1 to 100 is based on 3 different categories: true reach, amplification probability, and network influence. Measured across Facebook and Twitter, Francesca’s received an influence score of 43. Francesca’s is considered a Networker, which is described as knowing how to connect to the right people, sharing what's important to its audience, and having a high level of engagement and an influential audience. In 90 days, they have had 86 retweets from followers and 528 mentions. Once again, Anthropologie and Ruche had higher scores in overall Klout influence score, true reach, and network impact. However, all three companies had the same amplification score of 7, which indicates how likely your audience is to respond and how close you are to your entire network.

Overall, Francesca’s relies heavily on their social networking web sites to interact with their customers and prospects. Even though they do not surpass Anthropologie or Ruche according Klout and Tweet Level, they are very influential for the followers they do have. As they increase their following they will become more competitive.

	Categories	Francesca’s	Anthropologie	Ruche	
Klout	Influence	43	61	54	
	True Reach	686	13,000	4,000	
	Amplification	7	7	7	
	Network Impact	22	43	35	
Tweet Level	Influence	63	73.4	79	
	Popularity	56.4	86.6	70	
	Engagement	54	63.3	69	
	Trust	38.5	53	55	
Facebook	Likes	63,678	534,919	91,679	
Twitter	Followers	1,977	247,315	24,180	
	90 day Activity	Mentions	566	8K	2.7K
	90 day Activity	Retweets	88	1.6K	1.6K
Pinterest	Followers	261	42,640	6,793	
	Pins	157	336	1,157	

Public Relations Activities

After searching Francesca's Collections web site, blog, press releases, and other news sources, it was evident that all the comments about the company were positive. Complaint boards such as www.complaintboards.com, www.measuredup.com, and www.customerservicescoreboard.com revealed no complaints or bad ratings about the company. Most of the sites did not reveal anything (positive or negative) when 'Francesca's Collections' was typed in the search box. The only comments that somewhat resembled a complaint were customers on Facebook and Twitter asking why a lot of the items on the web site sold out so quickly. These comments resembled inquiries more than complaints and Francesca's Collections always responded quickly.

Francesca's Collections does aggregate its press release articles in the investor relations section of its web site, dating only back to July of 2011. There are a total of 16 press releases listed. It was somewhat difficult to find the press releases as the web site does not have a media center section. It does not seem logical to only place press releases in the investor relations section. The newest article pertains to the fact that Francesca's Collections announced pricing of its follow-on offering and waiver of lock-up restriction. It states that the 9,000,000 shares of common stock are being offered at a public offering price of \$27.60 per share. Other releases talk about financial results for numerous fiscal quarters as well as Francesca's participation in different retailing conferences. In all, Francesca's Collections press releases focus on the company's services and functions, in terms of how they are growing and developing.

Privacy Policy

When searching for Francesca's Collections privacy policy, it may not jump out right away. It is located in the bottom right-hand corner of each page on the web site. Although it appears in rather small font, it is not too difficult to locate because that is where most companies also place their privacy policies. After reading and reviewing Francesca's Collections privacy policy, it is apparent that they have an easy to understand and "good" policy.

Francesca's Collections privacy policy states that they do not, "disclose any Personal Information to third parties. However, Francesca's Collections reserves the right to make exceptions, such as when we believe that an emergency, illegal activity or some other reasonable basis exists for notifying or providing such information to the appropriate authorities." This means that Francesca's Collections won't release customer's personal information to other companies for marketing purposes.

The reason they do collect personal information is for completing the purchase transaction, shipping the product, and to better serve customers when they return to the site. Their policy states that, "If you choose to provide Francesca's Collections with your Personal Information, it will permit us to make your use of our site and services more enjoyable. Francesca's Collections uses your Personal Information to help you quickly find goods, services, or information on the site." They state in the policy that they send "cookies" to customer's browsers in order to provide them with tailored information from a web site. If customers set their browsers to notify then when they receive a cookie, they can choose to accept or decline it. Besides using the cookies to better serve customers, "Francesca's Collections may also track the domains from which this site is visited and use that data to analyze for trends and statistics for our own internal business purposes."

SUMMARY:

Francesca's web site is very simple and inviting. It is very well organized and easy for visitors to navigate their way around. They offer a variety of unique products which makes it easy for their customers to find something they love. As a boutique, the number of products they stock are limited, which allows women to own something that few other women have.

Francesca's focuses their time on creating word-of-mouth or word-of-mouth to inform people about their stores. Rather than spending a lot of money on paid advertising. This will only improve as their following of social networks increases. One area they should consider is their presence on search engines when it comes to keyword searches.

The e-mails Francesca's sends to their customers are excellent. They typically send out 1 e-mail a week and more if they were promoting a special sale. The information is provided in a simple to the point fashion, without being overwhelming. They are strongly involved in Facebook and Twitter where they post or tweet about announcements of sales, special promotions, new products, and ask questions. They also have just started a Pinterest, but have a lot of work to do. If they can utilize Pinterest to its full potential, it will be a very helpful with their word-of-mouth efforts.

Francesca's customer service and privacy policy is very good. They provide excellent information on their web site for all things concerning customer service. Their privacy policy is very easy to understand and is well written policy.

Overall, Francesca's Collections is a company that is doing a lot of the "right" things to be successful in the industry. With a few improvements they could increase their customer base and ultimately become more competitive with Anthropologie and Ruche.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Make sure that the web site has a distinct look so that it can pass the SMASH test.
- Consider paying Google and Yahoo to appear on the first page of keyword searches.
- Consider advertising on different social media web sites such as Pinterest, Twitter and Facebook.
- Social media icons should be more prominent on their web site and have them be the social media's colors.
- Create event on Facebook that invites their fans to exclusive sale events.
- Create an e-mail newsletter to advertise Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest.
- Have an event once a year that 10% of the sales goes toward a foundation, or a charity.
- On the web site, make the tabs bigger on bottom of the web site so when they scroll over them, they appear in a drop-down menu.

- Become more prominent on Pinterest by pinning more and also having a “pin it” option on all items that they have on their web site.
- Use same user name for all social media websites, such as “Francesca’s Collections.”

WORKS CITED:

www.klout.com

www.tweetlevel.edelman.com

www.google.com

www.yahoo.com