

Abercrombie & Fitch

Marketing Research Project

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Executive Summary

Our research team was contracted by Abercrombie and Fitch to examine consumer attitudes about the brand, specifically regarding the brand's recent efforts to become more inclusive. The team used descriptive techniques to understand consumer thoughts and attitudes about the brand along with exploratory research to help determine how Abercrombie and Fitch might attract consumers more effectively.

About the Research

Our team focused on targeting college-aged people and younger millennials. We also included some outliers aged from seventeen to twenty-seven with the purpose of showing the difference in how the brand is perceived based on age. We started gathering research with in-depth interviews and focus groups. We were able to gain significant insights into thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes of the interviewees to apply to our objective. This initial research process also included gathering secondary research through both past and recent online sources. Since the initial qualitative research led to additional questions and gaps, we then implemented a survey questionnaire using Qualtrics to answer some of them. We conducted this survey using a convenience sample and sending the survey link to peers and other readily available contacts, reaching a total of 99 responses.

Key Findings

Within our research, our team discovered that most consumers are unaware of Abercrombie's current brand image. While Abercrombie has taken many steps toward establishing an inclusive, diverse, and body positive brand, most consumers still associate the brand with its previous brand image. After analyzing our data, we found that a majority of our participants reported that they are unfamiliar with Abercrombie's new advertising campaigns, brand values, and product lines. Thus, we can conclude that the brand is struggling with brand awareness and missing out on the opportunity to resonate with consumers who resonate with the brand's new values.

Results

After analyzing our survey data, we found that a majority of consumers are unaware of the brand's current image. Our t-test and descriptive analyses both revealed that consumers neither find the brand to be inclusive or non-inclusive. Similarly, our frequency analysis informed us how a majority of consumers do not associate Abercrombie with body positivity. Our survey data also revealed that a majority of consumers are more familiar with the values, branding, and products of Abercrombie's old image versus their new one. While our data suggests that Abercrombie is struggling with consumer awareness, it also suggests that there are opportunities for the brand to implement to fix this problem. Our regression analysis suggested that social

media viewership can predict whether or not consumers perceive Abercrombie as an inclusive brand. This is just one of many ways the brand can begin to educate consumers of their new image and grow their customer base.

Conclusions

The rebrand of Abercrombie & Fitch has not altered consumer attitudes significantly enough in terms of inclusivity. Abercrombie & Fitch has certainly taken initiatives to become more inclusive, including more diverse models, sizing options, etc. However, consumers either still have associations of past branding, or are indifferent. They have no opinion on inclusivity, and do not find the brand to be body positive. They expect to see ads similar to those in the past instead of current ones. From our research, our team believes Abercrombie & Fitch needs to promote its rebranding effort more effectively through implementing new promotional strategies.

Recommendations

From our research we were able to come up with four recommendations for the brand in order to alter consumer attitudes and be more successful in terms of promoting their new brand image. Our first recommendation is to focus on increasing brand awareness through brand-specific, unique advertising. The second recommendation is to publicly address their controversial past image in order to educate consumers on the brand's growth. The third recommendation is to establish a body positivity campaign to diminish popular consumer attitudes that associate Abercrombie with unrealistic, model-like body standards. And the final recommendation we came up with was to implement in-store advertising that reflects Abercrombie's new values of diversity, inclusivity, and body positivity.

Introduction & Research Objective

In recent years, many brands have been making the transition to becoming more inclusive to coincide with societal efforts of acceptance and equality. This is especially important for older members of Gen Z and younger Millennials, who are affected every day by news and social media updates. Since the end of an old generation and the beginning of a new generation is not marked by exact science, opinions from both groups can be helpful in our analysis. Abercrombie & Fitch has followed in other brand's footsteps making strides toward inclusivity, but we were interested in consumer attitudes about the brand due to its both popular and controversial presence in the late 90s and early 2000s. During this time, the retail brand was easily recognizable by dim-lit stores with loud music, slim, attractive models, and the brand's distinct A&F moose logo. We decided to implement secondary research to expand on this, finding information about negative attitudes toward the brand as it used to be, with some information about the new more inclusive rebrand. After analyzing this secondary data and pairing it with preliminary data, the team still could not find a clear answer as to how consumer attitudes have changed, if at all.

Before creating our survey, our team conducted interviews, a focus group, and also collected secondary research. While we were able to gather an abundance of relevant information in correlation with our research objective, this information was not enough to make conclusions or brainstorm recommendations for the brand. Thus, we created our survey with the purpose of better understanding consumer attitudes toward Abercrombie's Inclusivity Initiatives, Digital Media Presence, Sizing, Competitors, and Genuinity. In order to cater to Abercrombie's target demographic, we sent our survey to older members of Generation Z (18-23) and young Millennials (27-35). By only surveying those who fit within the brand's desired age demographic, we believed we could make the strongest business recommendations for Abercrombie. All of our recorded responses were then used to run analyses to answer our research questions. Once all of our survey data was analyzed, we were able to reject or accept our hypotheses and make strong recommendations for the brand, moving forward.

Research Objective

How has the rebrand of Abercrombie & Fitch helped to promote inclusivity and alter consumer attitudes about the brand?

Research Questions

1. How has Abercrombie's rebrand impacted their consumer attitudes?
2. What more can A&F be doing to establish themselves as an "inclusive brand"?
3. How can Abercrombie best communicate its rebrand to its target market?
4. What is the best way to remove Abercrombie from their old brand image?

5. How can Abercrombie differentiate itself amongst its competitors within the retail industry?

While the brand has done a lot to grow from its problematic brand image to a more inclusive and accepted image today, the question still exists as to if these changes are enough to change negative perceptions about the brand. Thus, through our objective, we hope to better understand consumer attitudes both before and after the rebrand and develop some common themes about the issue. Our research objective is extremely relevant and valuable for clients and research purposes today, due to the influence of consumer attitudes in connection with brand loyalty, today. Consumers today are more invested in supporting brands that align with their own values. Not only are consumers looking to shop with brands that resonate with themselves, but with others, as well. For example, inclusivity and diversity are two prominent qualities that consumers are looking for within their brands, right now. According to eMarketer, 62% of Americans think that diversity within advertising has at least some impact on the way they perceive a brand's products and services" (Petrock 2020). Thus, our research will provide clients with a look into questions such as how consumer attitudes impact brand success, if rebranding is enough to alter consumer attitudes, and what actions can be done by companies to establish themselves as "inclusive brands."

Background

Secondary Research

When gathering secondary research from databases and external sources, we looked at both recent and slightly dated findings to gain a better understanding of Abercrombie as a brand and how it has changed—or not changed—throughout recent years and decades while attempting to introduce new branding. We also looked into recent consumer trends in order to better understand what consumers are looking for in their brands.

Past Abercrombie (2005-2014)

One article from 2005 titled “Style & Substance: Abercrombie & Fitch Tries to Be Less Haughty, More Nice,” mentions a personal and transitional experience someone had with the brand. Specifically, a woman was surprised when her experience shopping in an Abercrombie store involved a friendly interaction with a salesperson rather than being ignored as she expected. This is evidence that Abercrombie was trying to adopt a new persona in its retail stores, creating a more welcoming environment as opposed to a “sexy and snobby” one (Kang). Moving to 2012, we discovered another article titled “At Abercrombie and Fitch, Sex No Longer Sells.” The contents of this piece detail the rapid fall in revenue due to the brand failing to appeal to a new generation of teens who valued individuality. The article reads, “Today’s teens are underwhelmed by the half-naked models and blaring, dimly lit stores. They’re also less inclined to wear Abercrombie’s longtime uniform of pricey denim and graphic T-shirts” (Maheshwari). This demonstrates the lessening in interest of the brand, specifically the exclusive environment created by the models and mood-lit stores.

In 2008, an article titled “Abercrombie has XXL-sized problem” described how the brand was positioned “around youth and sex with a targeting strategy that explicitly communicated that the brand was only for the young, the thin and the beautiful.” Therefore, in the early 2000s, Abercrombie & Fitch surrounded their brand image around exclusivity and wanted people to feel as though they would be popular, attractive, or cool if they were seen wearing their apparel. Creating a strong stereotype and brand image worked for the time, but has now stuck with the brand for over a decade later. Still today, some people associate Abercrombie & Fitch with that same exclusivity that the brand promoted in the early 2000s, today in 2021.

Although inclusivity of sizing was not as widely accepted a decade ago, we discovered in our research that there was talk about the idea. In an article from 2013 called “On Plus Side: New Fashion Choices for Size 18,” we learn that entering into the plus sized market was an opportunity that hadn’t yet been capitalized on by many brands. Additionally, we found it interesting to learn in this article that the average woman was larger than the biggest size offered by a lot of brands at that time. This information leads one to question why brands like Abercrombie were not making the choice to move into plus sized markets. To answer this in part,

the article references the backlash received by Abercrombie after comments the CEO made, including, "a lot of people don't belong [in our clothes]." This seems to suggest that the plus sized community was not "cool" or worthy enough to promote the Abercrombie logo.

Furthermore, another article was published in 2013 called, "Abercrombie & Fitch Refuses to Make Clothes for Large Women," detailing CEO Mike Jefferies' responses to potentially expanding their size range. According to the article, Abercrombie's highest size at the time was a size 10, while H&M's standard line went up to a size 16 and American Eagle went up to an 18 (Lutz). The article also mentions a quote from Jefferies, quoting about sex appeal, "It's almost everything. That's why we hire good-looking people in our stores. Because good-looking people attract other good-looking people, and we want to market to cool, good-looking people. We don't market to anyone other than that" (Lutz). He also spoke about excluding certain customers, saying, "In every school there are the cool and popular kids, and then there are the not-so-cool kids. Candidly, we go after the cool kids. We go after the attractive all-American kid with a great attitude and a lot of friends. A lot of people don't belong and they can't belong. Are we exclusionary? Absolutely" (Lutz). Abercrombie executives were clearly not shy about their decision to maintain the brand as a very exclusive one, and this strategy arguably worked for a while, as the brand was popular. However, this positioning also exiled potential consumers and caused negative brand associations.

Another article we found in our research is titled "Abercrombie and Fitch: Is it Unethical To Be Exclusive," from 2014. This article discusses how the former CEO stood by his claims denying the addition of plus sized options for women, even though the male side of the brand had a larger range of sizes. The idea behind this was that "average-to-large sized female consumers do not fit the company's target market" (Lee, Cotte, and Blanchard). We found it interesting to find that this article argued both the pros and kinds of adding additional sizes, with the cons including "charges that the company is encouraging obesity and unhealthy lifestyles" (Lee, Cotte, and Blanchard). Although this is a valid argument in part, it is also implying that larger people, specifically plus sized women, are automatically unhealthy. This projects a certain idea that the only acceptable and healthy size is thin, which is unrealistic and problematic.

Abercrombie in Transition (2015 - 2018)

The group also looked into an article from 2016 titled, "Abercrombie Teen Angst Not Going Away," which discussed how the brand had closed a third of its stores over the past six years, and it had started to rebrand, moving away from the "logo-covered merchandise" that people were used to. It also mentioned how the brand had started trying to market towards young adults instead of teens. This piece of information is particularly interesting in relation to the insights we gained from our depth interviews. The target audience is not terribly clear, whether it is teens or young adults. We think the brand's intended versus actual target audience might be disconnected. Additionally, the group learned in this article that Abercrombie was still in the beginning stages

of rebranding and had not gained enough traction to interest investors. Therefore, we look to other secondary resources to help us see whether this branding shift really stuck.

Current Abercrombie (2019-2021)

In 2018, an article from the *Chicago Tribune* discussed Abercrombie's comeback, admitting that the brand has become "cool again." The author admits his knowledge of the brand attempting to reposition itself as kinder and more accepting, but he notes the negative connotation that could still be present in the minds of consumers who remember what the brand was like before the change.

In a CNBC article from 2019, we learn more about Abercrombie's efforts toward erasing its past and redefining its brand image. According to CEO Fran Horowitz, Abercrombie is "... a very different company than we used to be. We are a much more inclusive company, we are closer to the customer, we're responding to what the customer wants and not what we want them to want" (Wu 2019). This article goes into detail about the initiatives taken within the rebrand such as redesigned stores, more targeted market spending, and a more inclusive brand image. This statement from the new leadership is vastly different from previous statements, which supports drastic change in branding.

Additionally, we are able to see a change vocalized by the brand itself in a recent article from Business Insider. A spokesperson "described the brand as celebrating 'the individuality and authenticity of our associates and customers'" (Hoffower and Davis). This provides another stark contrast from the former comments made by the CEO. The previous branding did not demonstrate much concern for the consumer and certainly did not give any attention to individuality. Also, this article briefly touches upon the updated advertisements. A big jump from the former provocative and black and white ads, "Today's color photos of a diverse group of smiling, beach-going, bike-riding young people fit the more modern lifestyle ideals of wellness and inclusion perpetuated by millennials and Gen Z" (Hoffower and Davis). The key word here is "diversity," which was nowhere to be found before the rebrand. The new advertisements seem to reflect today's consumers, while the old advertisements reflected unrealistic societal beauty standards. Regarding the rebrand, Business Insider discusses how Abercrombie is "Ditching the privilege and the prep for a more down-to-earth look and refined basics. Abercrombie has emerged a more wholesome and on-trend brand targeted at those entering adulthood, a reflection of the increasing spending power and changing consumer designers of the under-40-shopper" (Hoffower and Davis). The article also goes into about the new older age demographic talking about how the brand has toned down its once sultry ads and have also created new products such as basics and casual wear to attract young professionals. The brand has also started getting involved with important issues, creating "The Abercrombie Equity Project, a social and racial initiative to "empower" the voices of "marginalized" communities. It partnered with the Steve

Fund, a nonprofit that supports mental health initiatives for people of color. In support of Black History Month, Abercrombie Equity Project donated \$250,000' (Hoffower and Davis).

In an article from October 2021, the importance of inclusivity in “However, these days we hold brands to higher standards (when it comes to a lot of things, but mostly size inclusivity), and I can say from experience that the retailer is carrying truly some of the most size-diverse and stylish options for denim on the market.” It is hard for a brand to check both boxes: size, inclusivity and style; but Abercrombie & Fitch has found a way to meet consumers' needs on all levels in 2021. In the past, brands focused on either having the most trendy denim styles, or promoting their brand as size inclusive. But, currently, Abercrombie & Fitch is trying to promote their current brand as stylish and versatile, while offering sizing perks to their shoppers, which Abercrombie & Fitch has never done in years prior.

Industry and Consumer Trends

While conducting secondary research, we wanted to learn about more general industry and consumer trends to look at our objective through a different lens. A newspaper article from 2019 called “The biggest trend in fashion? Compassion” notes how the fashion industry has recently changed, and along with it came a trend of simply being nice. This article reads, “In a climate in which we wear our hearts (and logos) on our sleeves, the brand that stands for ‘kindness’ or ‘sustainability’ has more power” (Ellision). Abercrombie & Fitch is trying to steer clear from their past brand logo, and is trying to implement more positive, and inclusive attributes to their modern brand image. For years, consumers associated the “A&F” lettering on sweatshirts with exclusivity and a niche market, but now, Abercrombie & Fitch is expanding their styles to those of all sizes, ages, and backgrounds, proving that they have progressed with the times and have learned from their past

In addition, in an article from 2020 covering a recent Adobe study, eMarketer discusses consumer perceptions toward inclusivity. According to the findings, “62% of US adults said diversity in a brand’s advertising had at least some impact on the way they perceived that brand’s products and services, with 24% reporting it had a “major” impact” (Petrock). Detailing data found within another study by Female Quotient, Google, and Iposos, these companies, “surveyed nearly 3000 US consumers from diverse backgrounds in an attempt to understand the relationship between ads that were diverse and inclusive and people’s behavior after seeing those ads. The study found that 64% of overall respondents reported taking some type of action after seeing an ad they thought was diverse or inclusive” (Petrock).

PESTLE (“Abercrombie & Fitch Swot & PESTLE ANALYSIS: SWOT & PESTLE” 2021)

Political	Economical
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Impact of political uncertainties like Brexit, Hong Kong protest on the operations 2. US-China trade war would increase the prices 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Worsening global economic conditions amidst pandemic would affect the distributors and consumers 2. Impact of fluctuations in foreign currency exchange rates and inflation
Social	Technological
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Launch travel pop-up stores and partner with influencer to attract young people 2. Specifically targeting Generation Z 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Engaging in mobile commerce to serve customers
Legal	Environmental
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fluctuations in tax obligations and effective tax rate. 2. Compliance with various international laws owing to the global operation of the firm 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Focused on conserving energy and reducing water wastage in internal operations 2. Committed to manage and reduce waste sent to landfills 3. Responsible sourcing of materials in supply chain

SWOT (Bhasin 2019)

<p>Strengths: Global presence Unique retailing Design A complete retail profile Excellent quality Strong brand building and brand protection Window merchandising An easy-to-use website</p>	<p>Weaknesses: Employee management Numerous controversies Declining brand equity</p>
<p>Opportunities: Market penetration and expansion Franchising option Advertising in developing countries Rebuilding their brand image</p>	<p>Threats: Competition is at its highest Differentiation is becoming difficult Consumers are switching to other brands A&F needs a faster expansion rate</p>

Competitor Analysis

Abercrombie & Fitch's main competitor is American Eagle Outfitters, along with sub-brand Aerie. Other competitors include H&M, Zara, Urban Outfitters, Gap, Forever 21, and J.Crew, but for the purpose of this project American Eagle and Aerie are most relevant to our objective because of its strong presence of inclusivity and well-known body positivity initiatives.

Methodology

Research Design, Data Collection Method & Sampling Plan

To dive into our research objective and questions, we used both descriptive and exploratory research methodologies. Through descriptive research, we were able to discover opinions of our audience using in-depth interviews and focus groups.

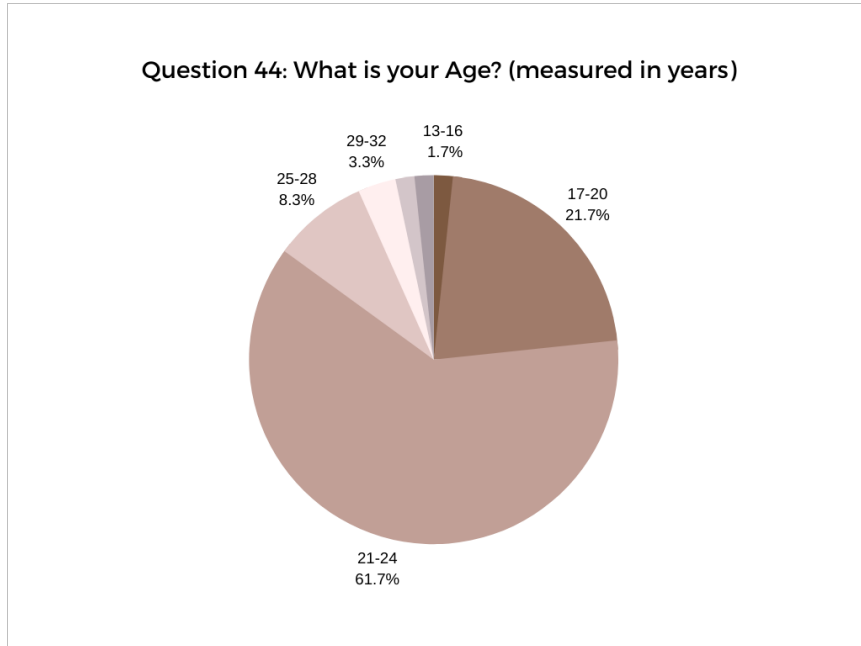
For our in-depth interviews, the research team each selected a different interviewee, including a twenty-seven year old female, twenty year old female, seventeen year old female, and twenty-one year old man, making the total five. The interviews all took place within the last week of September and were all conducted over the phone. Within our in-depth interviews, we used a few different tactics to motivate our interviewees to elaborate on their answers. One technique we used was probing. Every opportunity that we got we asked our interviewees to elaborate on their answer. This technique provided our group with more intimate details that revealed a lot about consumer perceptions about the Abercrombie brand. We also used projective methods in order to gain insights into what the interviewee really thinks. We asked them questions with the phrase “other people like you” to shift the focus away from them and receive more honest answers. This technique provided our group with key details about consumer emotions about the brand and what consumers today truly value.

Our focus group was made up of five 20-21 year old females in our class. The focus group took place on Monday, October 4, 2021 within the classroom. For our focus group, we used a few different tactics to acquire more meaningful responses from our participants. We used probing by asking questions that weren't in the guidebook based on their answers to get more of a sense of their answers. Since our focus group participants initially gave quite short and vague answers, probing definitely helped to drive more fruitful responses and conversations amongst the participants. We also used projective methods and gave each focus group participant enough time to take their turn, so that they could go off of each other's ideas before the next question was asked.

Additionally, we designed and distributed a survey using Qualtrics as another method to collect data. We spotted gaps in the information we collected from the depth interviews and focus groups and used them to craft corresponding survey questions. Survey responses were collected from October 31, 2021 to November 16, 2021. We estimate that 150 people had the opportunity to participate in our survey, and with 99 responses, this gives us a 66% response rate. In order to ensure a healthy response rate, we followed up with the people who we sent the survey to make sure they were able to fill it out without problems.

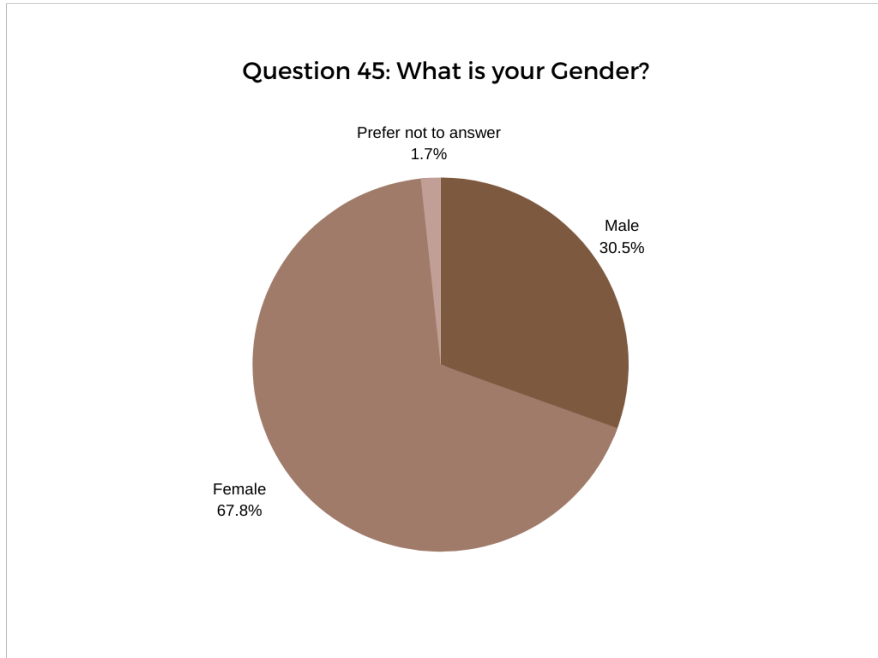
Respondent Profile

QUESTION 44: What is your age?

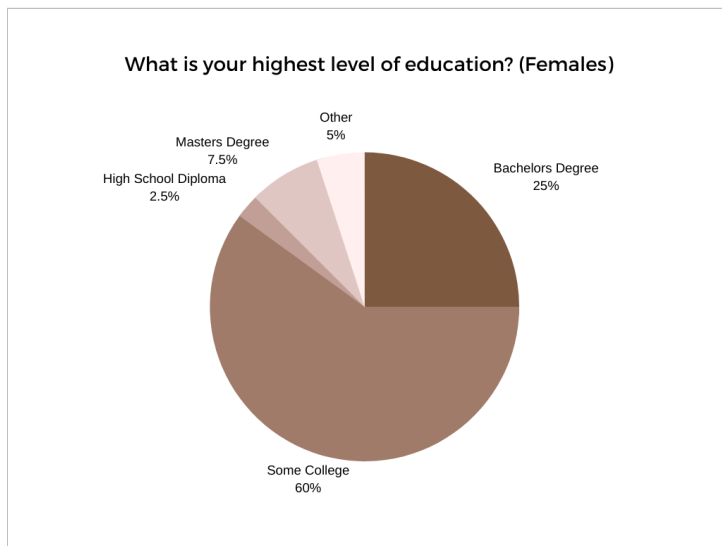
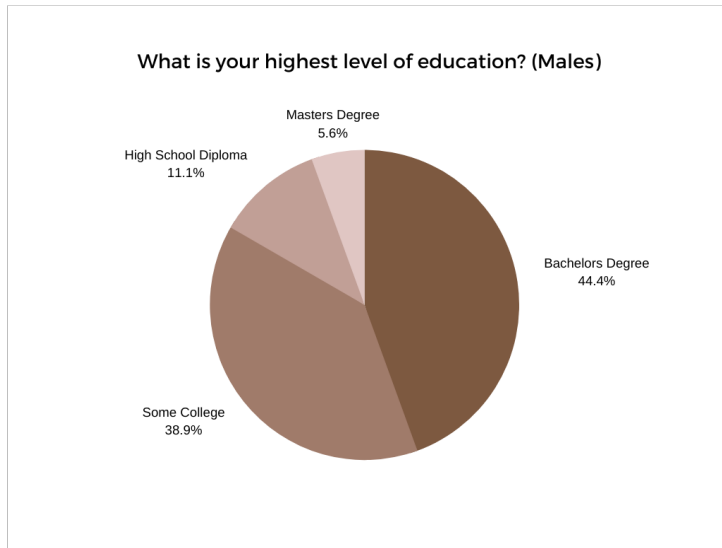


Based on our survey, a majority of our respondents fit within the “21-24” age demographic (63.79%). This did not come as a surprise considering our team primarily surveyed college students. While a majority of our participants fit within this one age demographic, it aligns with Abercrombie’s target audience. Thus, this allows our team to trust in our data to help us make strong business decisions. The next largest age demographic was surprisingly “17-20” aged participants (22.41%). Since we hoped to target a more Millennial age demographic, our team was quite surprised to find that there was only 8.62% of “25-28” and 3.45% “29-32” aged participants.

QUESTION 45: What is your gender?



When we asked our respondents what gender they identified with, most identified as female (67.80%). This was not surprising to our group considering we primarily sent our to female individuals for a convenience sampling. Among the mix, 30.51% responded saying they identify as males. While the ratio of women to men is quite uneven, this was an anticipated result due to the limited number of men we could survey due to time constraints. Finally, a small 1.69% of participants answered that they preferred not to answer this question. While we included many other options for gender such as Non-binary, Gender-queer, Trans, etc., none of our samples fit within those groups.

QUESTION 46: What is your highest level of education?**Men**

In this question, we asked our participants to disclose their highest level of education. Amongst the male population, the highest majority (44.44%) of participants answered, “Bachelor’s Degree”. This was not surprising considering we mostly surveyed college students. 38.89% of participants disclosed that their highest level of education was “Some college”. This sample likely included those who are still completing college. The smallest demographics were those who completed their “High School Diploma” (11.11%), and those who completed their “Masters Degree” (5.56%).

Women

Amongst the female population, the highest majority of participants answered they have completed “Some College” (60%). This is not surprising considering most of our participants

answered that they fell within the “21-24” age demographic. The next largest groups were those who completed their “Bachelor’s Degree” (25%) and “Master’s Degree” (7.50%). Finally, the smallest demographic answered that their highest level of education was “Other” (5%), and “High School Diploma” (2.50%).

Study Limitations

We used a convenience sample, meaning the data we collected is not necessarily representative of the overall population. All of the members in our group sent the survey to everyone we knew, which primarily consisted of college aged individuals. We had to rely on those we knew to take the survey and asked them to share with others. Although this is Abercrombie’s target market, we did possibly miss out on the input that could be gained from both younger and older individuals who may shop there or be familiar with the store. This sampling limitation also transfers to our focus group, where participants were narrowed to college aged students in our class.

Results

Qualitative Findings:

The two main methods of qualitative research we used were five in-depth interviews and one focus group. Through our examination of these, we were able to determine main themes that gave us insight as to what questions to ask in our survey. These themes also helped us to reach conclusions that would further be developed by the quantitative research we collected.

The in-depth interviews gave us many insights into our research objective. We learned that a lot of people still think of Abercrombie's old brand image when asked about the brand. This entails the exclusive target market, male models with abs, the brand logo on everything and overall lack of inclusivity. When interviewing our millennial participants, they alerted us that they were not even aware of Abercrombie's new brand image. Our interviewees elaborated on the district features of the old brand image such as their exclusivity through their limited size offerings, risqué and racy ads featuring half-naked models, and perceived social status behind the brand. This ties back to the research question about ridding Abercrombie of their old brand image, because clearly they still need to work on spreading the information of their rebrand due to the prominence of the old brand image. While the brand has made large strides toward a more inclusive image, consumers are not aware of these changes which are problematic for the brand. Since the brand was one of the most hated brands for so many years, it is essential that the brand improves their communication strategies to inform consumers of these significant changes.

Additionally, there is a lack of advertisements for Abercrombie that would help get their rebrand across. A few of our interviewees mentioned that they had never come across an Abercrombie ad on social media. In a day in age where social advertising is highly influential in capturing consumer engagement and buying power, it is surprising that Abercrombie is not heavily advertising. Many interviewees thought a partnership with influencers and utilization of more social media platforms would benefit Abercrombie. Our research question about how to best communicate the rebrand can be tied back to this, it gives us an idea of how they have done communicating the rebrand so far and how they can work to improve their future communication and engagement strategies. Abercrombie is known for their jeans, but the price for jeans and some other products is not cheap. Not everyone who falls within their target market can afford them. This was a common theme among our interviews as many interviewees mentioned that a key reason they have not shopped with Abercrombie is due to their expensive pricing.

Most of our interviewees also did not know that Abercrombie is trying to have more sizes for products, but were aware of inclusive initiatives through brands such as Aerie. We want to ask more questions about whether people view price as part of being an inclusive brand, in order to determine if changing the price is something Abercrombie needs to do to establish themselves as an inclusive brand, the second research question. We also plan to ask more questions about the

perceived quality of the Abercrombie products compared to other competing brands. If perceived quality seems to be lacking, it is understandable why consumers view the products as unaffordable and expensive. However, through the recognition of the quality of the Abercrombie jeans from our interviewees, it is clear that most consumers do recognize the quality. This is a key detail in helping to answer our potential research questions such as “better targeting millennials” and “differentiating the brand from its competitors” since product quality can be a persuading and impactful communication tactic to alter consumer attitudes and increase their market share.

After conducting our in-depth interviews, we decided to see if the findings would be similar within a focus group, where participants could build off of each other’s ideas. The most prominent finding from the focus group was how present the old brand image still is in the participants’ heads. Both when asking about the old brand image and other questions it was brought up. The theme of the shirtless men and all skinny models was discussed multiple times. This brings us back to multiple research questions about how to communicate the rebrand and remove its old brand image. It also ties to the question of how the rebrand has affected Abercrombie’s success. Participants were overall unaware of Abercrombie’s inclusivity campaigns, they saw the rebrand more as a change in clothing than in overall brand values. This may be preventing them from being as successful as they could be, if people still have this bad idea of Abercrombie in their head. One of the participants even cited how her parents didn’t want her shopping at Abercrombie when she was younger because of the brand image. However, we know from our research how they have rebranded to be a brand with better values as well as clothes. We saw this, for example, with the new versus old advertisement. The new advertisement is much more focused on community, but none of the participants had ever seen it before.

This shows us that Abercrombie needs to focus more on communicating the rebrand to their target market. One of the ways that the participants think we can do that is through the use of social media and influencers. This was also stated when we asked them how we could get them to shop more at Abercrombie, so overall it seems as though increasing the social media presence would be beneficial all around for Abercrombie. The feedback we got on the jeans and sizing was also overall positive. They all said the size options were good compared to other brands. This was one of the things they cited as part of being an inclusive brand, having many sizes, so this is a step in the right direction for Abercrombie, they just need to advertise it more to those who don’t shop there regularly, so who wouldn’t know.

Within our focus group and in-depth interviews, our group came across several common themes. Beginning with the old brand image, most of our participants knew more about this versus the new brand image. Participants in both pointed to how Abercrombie used to have the bags with boys with abs on them, and how they felt like you had to fit a certain body image to shop there.

A few of our participants elaborated on their personal experiences with the brand and how insecure and discouraged they felt when they could not fit into the clothes due to the very limited size range. Another common theme we came across was the heavy branding. Several of our participants mentioned how Abercrombie used to put their logo on everything. A few of our participants elaborated on how the Abercrombie logo was regarded as a sort of “status symbol” which inferred that the consumer was small enough to fit into the clothes, cool enough to wear it, and rich enough to buy it.

While the limited size range caused negative experiences for a few of our participants, their new extended size range in their jeans was regarded as a positive one for a few of our participants. One focus group member mentioned how she could not find jeans long enough for her legs until shopping at Abercrombie recently. Similarly, another interviewee also mentioned how she was finally able to find jeans that fit her due to the extended size range.

In terms of the rebrand, most of our participants did not know too much about it. Almost no one had any knowledge of Abercrombie’s inclusivity campaign. Some knew about the rebrand in regard to the clothing maturing, going from the branded t-shirts to up to date, trendy clothes, but none had seen any inclusive ads from Abercrombie. In fact, no one remembers seeing any advertisements on social media from the brand at all, and all said how that might be a way to get the word out and persuade people to buy things from the brand, regardless of the old brand image that they might still have in their head. Another common theme we noticed was how consumers regarded the products as unaffordable and too expensive. While a few of the participants found the jeans to be worth the money, almost everyone agreed that it was outside their price range for clothing.

Quantitative Findings:

After receiving our survey responses, we transferred our results to SPSS in order to run a number of statistical analyses that would later aid us in creating our recommendations for Abercrombie. The first test that we ran was a multiple linear regression test. In order to run our regression test, we focused on question 8, which asked survey respondents to “rate the degree to which you agree with the following statement: Abercrombie & Fitch is an inclusive brand”. This question included a likert scale with one corresponding to “strongly disagree”, and five corresponding to “strongly agree”. The other question that we compared this to was question fifteen, which asked respondents “how do you feel about Abercrombie ads on social media?”. This question included an emoji with a slider scale, with one corresponding to an “angry face” and two corresponding to a “smiley face”. We found our p-value to be .045, showing that the relationship between the independent variable (question eight) and the dependent variable (question fifteen). We

determined that based on our model, consumer's attitudes towards Abercrombie's social media ads significantly predicts their perception of the brand as inclusive based upon the p-value.

Variables Entered/Removed ^a			
Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	How do you feel about Abercrombie ads on social media? ^b	.	Enter

a. Dependent Variable: R_Q8_1
b. All requested variables entered.

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			Sig. F Change
						F Change	df1	df2	
1	.369 ^a	.136	.105	1.04210	.136	4.413	1	28	.045

a. Predictors: (Constant), How do you feel about Abercrombie ads on social media?

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4.793	1	4.793	4.413	.045 ^b
	Residual	30.407	28	1.086		
	Total	35.200	29			

a. Dependent Variable: R_Q8_1
b. Predictors: (Constant), How do you feel about Abercrombie ads on social media?

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.217	.685		3.235	.003
	How do you feel about Abercrombie ads on social media?	.358	.170	.369	2.101	.045

a. Dependent Variable: R_Q8_1

The next test that we ran using our re-coded SPSS data was a one-sample t-test. In order to run this test, we focused on question 8, which asked survey respondents to “rate the degree to which you agree with the following statement: Abercrombie & Fitch is an inclusive brand”. This question included a likert scale with one corresponding to “strongly disagree”, and five corresponding to “strongly agree”. Analyzing the results of the test, we found that the mean response for this question was 3.16, falling in the middle of the scale, whereas 3 corresponded with the response “neither agree nor disagree”. Based on these results, we concluded that Abercrombie consumers do not view the brand as either inclusive or non-inclusive. This suggests that consumers are not aware of Abercrombie's current brand image since their rebrand is essentially defined by inclusivity. Thus, we can conclude that consumer awareness is quite low for the brand since consumers are neither familiar with the old brand image that did not support inclusivity, or the new one that does support inclusivity. This data is significant as it reveals how

little awareness consumers have about the brand which is problematic for business. Low awareness makes it difficult for consumers to understand or resonate with the brand image. While this is a problem for the brand, it can also be an opportunity to educate consumers about their new rebrand and grow their customer base.

Rate the degree to which you agree with the following statement.

Abercrombie & Fitch is an inclusive brand.

T-Test

One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
R_Q8_1	77	3.1688	1.12861	.12862

One-Sample Test
Test Value = 3

	t	df	Significance		Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
			One-Sided p	Two-Sided p		Lower	Upper
R_Q8_1	1.313	76	.097	.193	.16883	-.0873	.4250

One-Sample Effect Sizes

		Standardized Point Estimate	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower	Upper
R_Q8_1	Cohen's d	1.12861	-.076	.374
	Hedges' correction	1.13990	-.075	.370

a. The denominator used in estimating the effect sizes.
Cohen's d uses the sample standard deviation.
Hedges' correction uses the sample standard deviation, plus a correction factor.

Rate the degree to which you agree with the following statement.

Abercrombie & Fitch is an inclusive brand.

We proceeded to run a descriptives test using our data. In order to run this test, we focused on question 8, which asked survey respondents to “rate the degree to which you agree with the following statement: Abercrombie & Fitch is an inclusive brand”. This question included a likert scale with one corresponding to “strongly disagree”, and five corresponding to “strongly agree”. The mean results were consistent throughout genders, with the mean for females being 3.26, corresponding to the response “neither agree nor disagree”, and the mean for males being 3.17, corresponding to the response “neither agree nor disagree”. Across all genders and respondents, the mean was 3.23, also corresponding to the response “neither agree nor disagree”. Based on these mean results, we concluded that the brand’s customers do not feel strongly about the brand being inclusive or non-inclusive. Again, this is an issue for the brand as their rebrand is defined by inclusivity initiatives. If consumers do not strongly associate inclusivity with Abercrombie, they are not aware or educated of the company’s brand image. Therefore, this data suggests that

Abercrombie focuses on increasing consumer awareness to grow their customer base and resonate with their desired target audience.

Descriptives								
R_Q8_1								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Male	18	3.1667	.61835	.14575	2.8592	3.4742	2.00	5.00
Female	39	3.2564	1.22942	.19686	2.8579	3.6549	1.00	5.00
Total	57	3.2281	1.08934	.14164	2.9443	3.5118	1.00	5.00

ANOVA					
R_Q8_1					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.099	1	.099	.085	.771
Within Groups	63.936	55	1.162		
Total	64.035	56			

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Rate the importance of each aspect when thinking of an "inclusive brand." - Sizing	58	2	6	5.57	.775
Rate the importance of each aspect when thinking of an "inclusive brand." - Prices	58	2	6	5.36	.892
Rate the importance of each aspect when thinking of an "inclusive brand." - Variety of Models	58	1	6	5.26	.983
Rate the importance of each aspect when thinking of an "inclusive brand." - Body Positivity	58	1	6	5.29	1.325
Rate the importance of each aspect when thinking of an "inclusive brand." - LGBTQ+ Campaigns	58	1	6	4.79	1.472

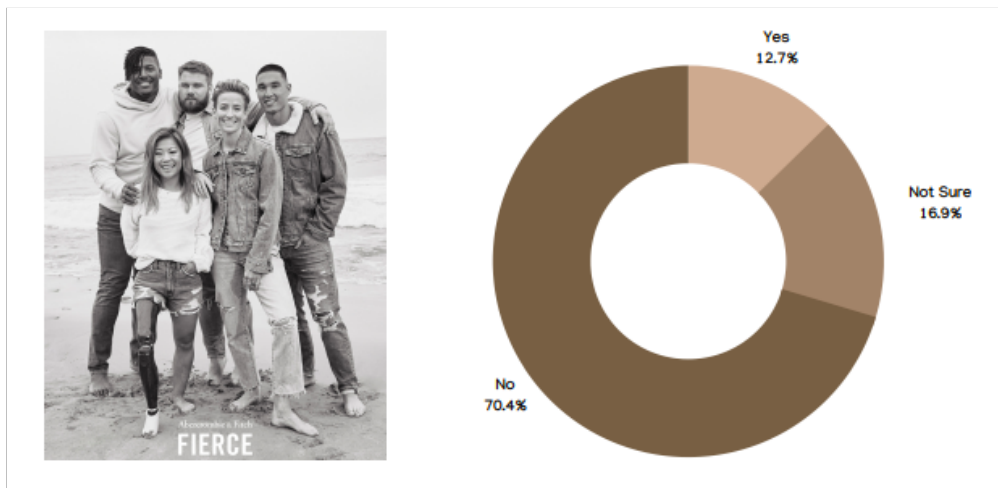
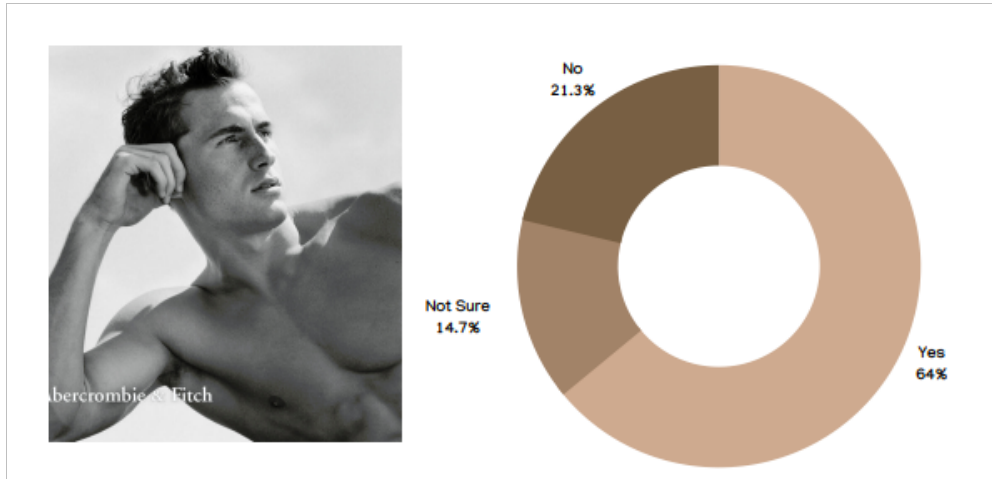
The final test that we ran was a frequency analysis. For this test, we focused on question 28, which asked respondents “do you associate body positivity with Abercrombie & Fitch?”. This question included a nominal scale with zero corresponding to “yes”, one corresponding to “not sure” and two corresponding to “no”. Based on valid percentages, we found that only 24.6% of Abercrombie consumers associate the brand with body positivity, while 43.5% do not. This is significant for our research as Abercrombie’s rebrand embodies body positivity through their extended size ranges and advertising. If most consumers are not associating body positivity with the brand, it is clear that consumers are not aware of the company’s current brand image. However, this data also suggests the brand could be doing more to be a more “body positive” brand.

QUESTION 28

Statistics		
Do you associate body positivity with Abercrombie & Fitch?		
N	Valid	69
	Missing	27

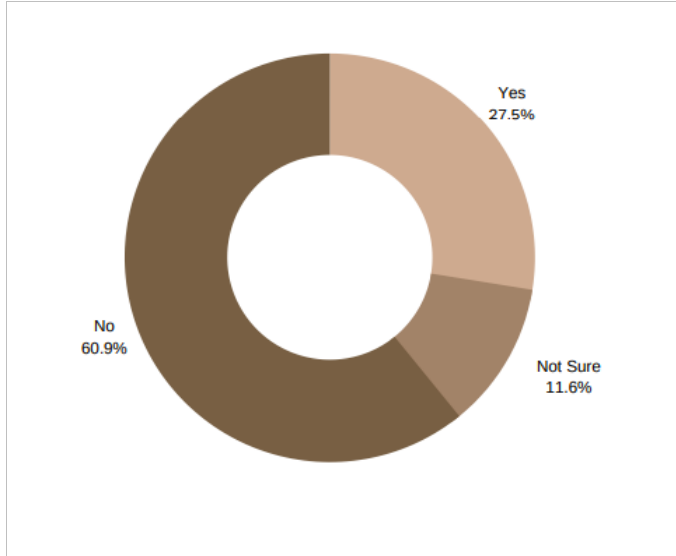
Do you associate body positivity with Abercrombie & Fitch?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	17	17.7	24.6	24.6
	Not sure	22	22.9	31.9	56.5
	No	30	31.3	43.5	100.0
	Total	69	71.9	100.0	
Missing	System	27	28.1		
Total		96	100.0		

Upon further analysis of our survey responses, we discovered more significant results that were relevant to the problem we hoped to address as well as the recommendations that we had put in place for Abercrombie. One of these questions was question 17, which asked respondents “does this Abercrombie & Fitch advertisement look familiar to you?”. The advertisement that was displayed before this question was one of their old brand’s ads, depicting a shirtless and seemingly perfect man with the Abercrombie & Fitch logo below him. Out of our survey respondents, 74.47% strongly agreed that this advertisement was one that they would expect to see from the brand. Question twenty-two then asked a similar question, “does this Abercrombie & Fitch advertisement look familiar to you?”. Out of our survey respondents, 65.52% somewhat disagreed that this advertisement was familiar to them. The advertisement displayed one of Abercrombie’s new advertisements from their campaign “Face Your Fierce”, which features a number of diverse models representing Abercrombie & Fitch’s new brand image of inclusivity and diversity. These results show that Abercrombie & Fitch’s consumers are not very aware of their rebrand, which means that Abercrombie should look to different platforms and consider new campaigns or other options that will better display the brand image they are trying to create.



Similar to the questions about specific Abercrombie advertisements, question 31 from our survey asks respondents “are you aware of Abercrombie’s inclusivity campaign?”. Of our respondents, 60.9% answered that they are unaware of the inclusivity campaign. Only 27.5% responded that they are aware of the inclusivity campaigns that Abercrombie has run. These statistics prove that Abercrombie & Fitch’s new campaigns and push for more diversity, equity and inclusion in their stores is not as effective as they might think. The brand must consider how they can effectively promote their new brand to the right target market.

Question 31: “Are you aware of Abercrombie’s inclusivity campaign?”



Question 41 on our survey asked respondents “what are the most important things a brand can do, in your opinion?”. The options available for respondents to choose from included “acting on words”, “integrating societies social movements”, “having hard conversations”, “having a progressive desire to change” and “taking accountability for past actions”. From the results, we concluded that 58.33% of respondents believe that taking accountability for past actions is very important. Additionally, we found that 48.33% of respondents believe that acting on words is very important. Finally, our results showed that 45% of respondents believe that having a progressive desire for change is very important.

Conclusions, Recommendations, and Limitations

Conclusions

The rebrand of Abercrombie & Fitch has not altered consumer attitudes significantly enough in terms of inclusivity. Abercrombie & Fitch has certainly taken initiatives to become more inclusive, including more diverse models, sizing options, etc. However, consumers either still have associations of past branding, or are indifferent. They have no opinion on inclusivity, and do not find the brand to be body positive. They expect to see ads similar to those in the past instead of current ones. However, it is important to consumers that brands they shop with reflect good values, such as inclusivity and diversity. Abercrombie & Fitch needs to take steps to embrace these values and reject their controversial past, as it still continues to plague the mind of consumers. From our research, our team believes Abercrombie & Fitch needs to promote its rebranding effort more effectively through implementing new promotional strategies.

Recommendations

In order to help Abercrombie's ongoing issues with consumer attitudes, our group has brainstormed some recommendations for the brand to implement. All of our recommendations stem from common themes we found in our focus groups, secondary research, and interviews; as well as statistical data we uncovered through our survey.

Recommendation #1

For our first recommendation, our team suggests that Abercrombie & Fitch focus on increasing their brand awareness through brand-specific, unique advertising. While conducting our exploratory research, our group was informed about the lack of awareness consumers had for Abercrombie's new rebrand. Beginning with our interviews, almost all of our respondents were not aware of this rebrand and even the ones who did, could not describe how it is different from its previous brand image. Similarly in our focus group, our participants were not aware of Abercrombie's rebrand and could not distinguish what made the retail brand's image unique. While many participants mentioned that they have shopped at the brand before, they could not define the brand mission or values. When we sent our survey, we hoped to test our hypothesis that Abercrombie has poor brand awareness amongst a larger sample. After analyzing our data, we were able to prove that our hypothesis was correct. We came to this conclusion by analyzing several questions that covered Abercrombie's current values such as Inclusivity, Diversity, and Body Positivity.

Supportive Data

In order to understand whether consumers perceived Abercrombie as an inclusive brand, we ran a T-test to analyze our data. From this test, we were able to conclude that Abercrombie consumers do not view the brand as either inclusive or non-inclusive. These results alerted our

team that our participants are clearly not aware of Abercrombie's new brand image that is essentially defined by its inclusivity. If most of our respondents associated Abercrombie with inclusivity, we could reject our hypothesis and suggest that consumers are potentially aware of Abercrombie's new brand image. However, due to the inconclusiveness of our results, we can suggest that most consumers are unaware of the brand's new image.

To better understand consumers' awareness about Abercrombie's diverse and body positive advertising, we decided to show our participants two ads: one that resonates with their old brand image and one that resonates with their rebranded image. Beginning with the old advertisement, a majority of respondents (64%) claimed that the old ad was familiar to them and 74.47% strongly agreed this ad is one they would expect to see from the brand. In contrast, when shown a new advertisement from the brand 70.4% claimed that this ad was not familiar and 65.52% disagreed that this ad is one they would expect to see from Abercrombie. Based on this data, we can conclude that a majority of our respondents are not aware of Abercrombie's newly diverse advertising.

Based on this data, along with other tests in our results, we can conclude that consumers are not familiar with Abercrombie's current brand image. In order to educate consumers on Abercrombie's new image, we believe the brand could benefit from increasing their ad spend. The brand should also focus on creating unique- brand-specific advertising that quickly alerts consumers that the ad resonates with Abercrombie's values. Through this recommendation, we believe that Abercrombie can grow their market share and become a positively recognized brand amongst its consumers.

Recommendation #2

Our next recommendation suggests that Abercrombie publicly address their controversial past image to educate consumers on the brand's growth. One common theme we noticed amongst our exploratory research and survey was how negatively consumers perceived Abercrombie's old brand image. While the brand has taken many steps toward becoming a more positively perceived brand, many consumers still regard Abercrombie as the same brand before its rebrand. We believe that Abercrombie addressing their controversial past will resonate positively with consumers based on what participants revealed in our survey and insights we found in our secondary research.

Supportive Data

When we asked our survey participants, "What are the most important actions a brand can implement?", a majority of consumers (58.33%) reported that taking accountabilities for past actions is very important. We believe this statistic is very informative about what consumers resonate with today. It also allows us to feel confident that consumers would likely respond positively or change their negative perceptions about Abercrombie if the brand publicly

addressed and took responsibility for their old controversial brand image. Our team also found countless secondary data that supports consumers' negative attitudes toward Abercrombie. Many consumers believe the brand's new efforts toward becoming inclusive and diverse are ingenuine and are only being employed to stay relevant. Thus, if the brand were to address their controversial past, we believe this would establish a more genuine and authentic brand image.

Recommendation #3

Another recommendation we suggest Abercrombie implement is establishing a body positivity campaign to diminish popular consumer attitudes that associate Abercrombie with unrealistic, model-like body standards. We discovered consumers do not associate the brand with body positivity, and are indifferent when it comes to inclusivity. Instead of slowly incorporating more diverse models and sizing, a more overt approach like a campaign could lead to more awareness among consumers regarding the brand's inclusivity efforts. This body positivity campaign could be distributed through social media platforms, since we found a common belief of the brand's lack of social media presence in our research.

Supportive Data

When we asked our survey participants "Do you associate body positivity with Abercrombie & Fitch," we found that 24.6% of respondents associated the brand with body positivity, while an overwhelming 43.5% do not. Additionally, our Qualtrics survey provided us with the results that about 35% of respondents had not seen Abercrombie & Fitch advertisements on social media, which we believe could be improved upon.

Recommendation #4

Our final recommendation for Abercrombie & Fitch is to implement in-store advertising that reflects Abercrombie's new values of diversity, inclusivity, and body positivity. Similar to the body positivity campaign recommendation, we think directly addressing the consumer perception that Abercrombie lacks in reflecting body positivity in their branding would benefit Abercrombie & Fitch going forward. This could include implementing larger imagery in the stores and outside to attract consumers who may be passing by.

Supportive Data

We asked survey participants "what are the most important things a brand can do, in your opinion?" From this we determined that 45% of respondents believe a progressive desire for change is very important. When we asked if respondents were aware of Abercrombie & Fitch's inclusivity campaign, 60.9% answered that they are unaware. These statistics prove that more overt advertising being implemented in-store that reflects the brand's new values would be effective in influencing consumer perceptions about the brand.

Limitations

While conducting this research, there were a few limitations that could affect the overall accuracy of the report. The first of which is the survey sample. As mentioned in methodology, our survey was a convenience sample. This means that although we collected from Abercrombie & Fitch's main target market, it is not necessarily representative of the entire population. Another limitation concerns the focus group. Since the focus group occurred in class, the participants were narrowed down to people within our class. Again, this may leave out some input from those outside of this age range. Additionally, our focus group was only made up of females so we did not get the male point of view from that session. A third limitation has to do with time constraints. Research could only be collected within the duration of the semester, so our data collection was limited to these time constraints. Had we had more time, we could have conducted more diverse focus groups and survey responses, in order to more accurately apply conclusions to the population. Finally, our last limitation was that we were unable to access internal information from Abercrombie & Fitch's databases. Since internal data is an important part of market research, this limits the accuracy of our findings to outside reports, which could face bias or errors.

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Appendix

Appendix A: Survey

Q1 Have you heard of the brand Abercrombie & Fitch?

- Yes
- Not sure
- No

Q2 Have you ever shopped at Abercrombie & Fitch?

- Yes
- Not sure
- No

Q3 How would you rate the following in terms of Abercrombie & Fitch?

	Far below average	Somewhat below average	Average	Somewhat above average	Far above average
Affordable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inclusive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
High quality products	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Up to date/trendy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q4 Rate the following aspects of your shopping experience with Abercrombie.

	Extremely displeased	Somewhat displeased	Neither pleased nor displeased	Somewhat pleased	Extremely pleased
Size availability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Welcoming atmosphere	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Good customer service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fit of clothing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Affordable prices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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End of Block: Attitudes About Abercrombie

Start of Block: Attitudes About Inclusivity

Q5 What does the word inclusivity mean to you?

Q6 Rate the importance of each aspect when thinking of an "inclusive brand."

	Not at all important	Slightly unimportant	Neither important or unimportant	Slightly important	Very important
Sizing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Variety of Models	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Body Positivity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
LGBTQ+ Campaigns	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Civil Rights Campaign	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q7 Rank the truth of the following statements.

	Definitely false	Probably false	Neither true nor false	Probably true	Definitely true
It is important to me that a brand I shop makes an effort to be "inclusive."	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I pay attention to the sizes of the models when I am online shopping.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I pay attention to the races of the models when I am online shopping.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would not shop somewhere that did not carry extended sizes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I notice when brands do campaigns in support of different movements.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Attitudes About Inclusivity

Start of Block: Abercrombie and Inclusivity

Q8 Rate the degree to which you agree with the following statement.

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
Abercrombie & Fitch is an inclusive brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q9 Rate the following elements of Abercrombie & Fitch based on how inclusive they are.

	Extremely exclusive	Somewhat exclusive	Neither inclusive nor exclusive	Somewhat inclusive	Extremely inclusive	I don't know

The range of clothing sizes offered	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The types of models seen on the website	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The messages shown in advertisements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Abercrombie and Inclusivity

Start of Block: Advertisements, Social Media, and Influencers

Q10 To what extent do you prefer the following types of advertising?

	Don't prefer at all	Somewhat don't prefer	No preference	Somewhat prefer	Prefer very much
Print	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
TV	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Internet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social Media	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Radio	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q11 How likely are you to visit a brand's website after seeing an advertisement?

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

Q12 How likely are you to make a purchase after seeing an advertisement?

- 0
- 1

- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

Q13 Have you seen Abercrombie & Fitch ads on social media?

- Yes
- Not sure
- No

Q14 On what social media platforms have you seen Abercrombie & Fitch ads?

- Instagram
- TikTok
- Facebook
- Other _____

Q15 How do you feel about Abercrombie ads on social media?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

Q16 Take a minute to look at this Abercrombie & Fitch ad.

Q17 Does this Abercrombie & Fitch advertisement look familiar?

- Yes
- Not sure
- No

Q18 How much do you like this ad?

- Dislike very much
- Dislike
- Neither like or dislike
- Like
- Like very much

Q19 If you were describing this ad to a friend, you would say it is...

	Not at all - 1	2	3	4	Very much - 5
Creative	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Irritating	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Memorable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inclusive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Offensive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Informative	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
None of the above	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q20 Based on the image and brand features advertised...

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
The advertisement is believable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ad is something you would expect to see from the brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ad resonates with me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After viewing this ad, I would consider purchasing the brand's product.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The ad is better than other ads for products in this product category.

Q21 Take a minute to look at this Abercrombie & Fitch ad.

Q22 Does this Abercrombie & Fitch advertisement look familiar to you?

- Yes
- Not sure
- No

Q23 How much do you like this ad?

- Dislike very much
- Dislike
- Neither like or dislike
- Like
- Like very much

Q24 If you were describing this ad to a friend, you would say it is...

	Not at all - 1	2	3	4	Very much - 5
Creative	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Irritating	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Memorable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inclusive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Offensive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Informative	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
None of the above	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q25 Based on the image and brand features advertised...

	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
The advertisement is believable.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ad is something you would expect to see from the brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ad resonates with me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
After viewing this ad, I would consider purchasing the brand's product.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ad is better than other ads for products in this product category.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Advertisements, Social Media, and Influencers

Start of Block: Sizing

Q26 Does Abercrombie & Fitch carry your clothing size?

- Yes
- Not sure
- No

Q27 If Abercrombie did carry your size, would you shop with them?

- Yes
- Not sure
- No

Q28 Do you associate body positivity with Abercrombie & Fitch?

- Yes
- Not sure
- No

Q29 How important to you is purchasing from a brand that promotes body positivity?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

Q30 Rank the truth of the following statements

	Definitely false	Probably false	Neither true or false	Probably true	Definitely true
I am more motivated to shop with brands that are body positive.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If a brand is not body positive, I will not shop with them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Body positivity in advertising motivates me more to make a purchase.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
More brands should offer products in extended size ranges.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q31 Are you aware of Abercrombie’s inclusivity campaign

- Yes
- Not sure
- No

Q32 Does Abercrombie’s inclusivity campaign motivate you to shop with them?

- Yes
- Not sure
- No

End of Block: Sizing

Start of Block: Competitors

Q33 To what extent do you associate each of the following words with the brand Abercrombie & Fitch?

	Not at all - 1	2	3	4	Very much - 5
Body-positive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Affordable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Stylish	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inclusive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Diverse	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Comfortable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
None of the above	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q34 How likely are you to recommend Abercrombie & Fitch to a friend or colleague?

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

Q35 To what extent do you associate each of the following words with the brand Aerie?

	Not at all - 1	2	3	4	Very much - 5
Body-positive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Affordable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Stylish	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inclusive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Diverse	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Comfortable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
None of the above	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q36 How likely are you to recommend Aerie to a friend or colleague?

- 0
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

Q37 Move the following factors in order of what persuades you to enter a retail store. (1=persuades you the most, 6=persuades you the least)

- _____ I have seen the brand's advertising.
- _____ The brand has inclusive sizing.
- _____ I stand behind what the brand promotes.
- _____ I am familiar with the brand.
- _____ The brand sells what I am shopping for.
- _____ The brand is having a sale.

Q38 Rate the extent to which you feel most satisfied with a clothing purchase.<div>
</div>

Very dissatisfied	Slightly dissatisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Slightly satisfied	Very satisfied
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I got a great deal.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The clothing expresses my personal style.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I had a great experience while purchasing the clothes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The clothing fits me well.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My peers praise/praised my purchase.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I helped support an inclusive brand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Competitors

Start of Block: Genuinity

Q39 Are you familiar with Abercrombie & Fitch's campaign: 'Face Your Fierce'?

- Yes
- Not sure
- No

Q40 How meaningful is each of the following to you?

	Not meaningful at all	Slightly not meaningful	Neutral	Slightly meaningful	Very meaningful
The meaning behind a brand's mission statement.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The meaning behind a brand's campaign message.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The meaning behind a brand's advertisement.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The meaning behind a brand's slogan.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Q41 What are the most important things a brand can do, in your opinion?					
	Very unimportant	Slightly unimportant	Neither important nor unimportant	Slightly important	Very important
Acting on words	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Integrating societies social movements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Having hard conversations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Having a progressive desire for change	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Taking accountability for past actions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q42 In your opinion, what can Abercrombie & Fitch do to be a more inclusive brand?

End of Block: Genuinity

Start of Block: Demographics

Q43 If you have been paying attention to this survey and have answered all questions honestly, please select "Yes" and type "Focus" in the blank box.

- Yes
- Not sure
- No
- Other _____

Q44 What gender do you identify with?

- Male
- Female
- Trans male/Trans man

- Trans female /Trans woman
- Genderqueer
- Nonbinary
- Prefer not to answer
- Other: _____

Q45 What is your age?

- Under 13 years old
- 13-16 years old
- 17-20 years old
- 21-24 years old
- 25-28 years old
- 29-32 years old
- 33-36 years old
- 37-40 years old
- Over 40 years old
- Prefer not to answer

Q46 What is your highest level of education?

- No education
- Elementary
- Some high school
- High school diploma
- Some college
- Bachelors degree
- Masters degree
- Doctoral degree
- Other: _____

Q47 Which of the following best describes you?

- Asian or Pacific Islander
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- White or Caucasian
- Native American or Alaskan Native
- Multiracial or Biracial
- A race/ethnicity not listed
- Other: _____

End of Block: Demographics

Appendix B: Interview Guide

*Thank you for taking the time to meet with me. Before we begin, I do want to ask your permission to conduct this interview. For our records we would like to record this interview. May I have your consent to record our conversation?

1. How are you today?

- What are you most looking forward to this Fall?

2. Are you familiar with the brand Abercrombie & Fitch?

- What do you know about the brand?
- What feelings come to mind when you think of Abercrombie & Fitch?
- Can you describe an experience you may have had with Abercrombie & Fitch? How did this experience make you feel?
- What type of association/images come to mind when thinking about the brand Abercrombie & Fitch?

3. Can you recall any advertising for Abercrombie & Fitch?

- Can you recall/describe specific advertisements?
- Where did you see it?

- Do you think their advertising methods are effective? Can you elaborate on this answer?
 - What qualities and attributes of their advertising would motivate you to make a purchase?
 - What changes would you make to the way that A&F advertises their products?
4. Brand image is defined as the impression of a product held by real or potential consumers.
- Knowing this, how would you describe A&F's brand image?
 - Has this always been the case or has it changed?
5. If you had to describe the Abercrombie & Fitch brand in 3 words, what would they be?
- How come you chose these words?
6. When you think about inclusivity, what comes to mind? What associations do you have?
- What products or services do you think of?
 - What brands do you associate with inclusivity?
 - What words come to mind/how come?
 - What experiences come to mind?
7. Do you associate A&F with body positivity?
- How important to you is purchasing from a brand that promotes body positivity?
 - Do you think body positivity is important to people like you when choosing a brand? How come?
 - What is your perception of A&F's sizing? Have you ever had a hard time finding your size in store? On-line?
8. Who would you say is their Target Market?
- Do you think this is effective? Can you elaborate more on this answer?
 - Who do you think Abercrombie & Fitch appeals to?
 - In your opinion, who would you say Abercrombie & Fitch tries to get to purchase their product?
9. Do you currently shop at Abercrombie & Fitch?
- If yes, why do you shop there?*
- Do you think that people like you shop at Abercrombie? Or do you think there is a different typical consumer? Please explain.
 - Can you describe the last time you purchased something at A&F? How did it feel to buy it?
 - What feelings do you experience when wearing A&F?
 - What products do you purchase at Abercrombie & Fitch? What Products do you not purchase?
 - How long have you been a customer of A&F? Has this been consistent or was there a time when you didn't shop there as much? How come?
- If not, have you ever shopped there?*
- What is preventing you from shopping there?
 - What characteristics or qualities turn you away from shopping at brands you dislike?
10. What changes could Abercrombie & Fitch make that would make you want to make you want to shop there more frequently?
- What makes you think this way?
 - How do you think these changes would be more effective in comparison to what A&F is already doing?
11. Do you think Abercrombie & Fitch is an affordable brand?
- What is your monthly budget for clothing and expenditures every month?
 - If you are not comfortable sharing, that is totally understandable, but do you think Abercrombie & Fitch would fall within that budget?
12. Are you aware of Abercrombie's inclusivity campaign?
- If yes, how does that make you feel about the brand?*
- Does it make you more likely to shop there?
- If not, how does learning about the campaign change how you feel about the brand?*
- Would you consider shopping at Abercrombie more frequently upon learning about this campaign?

*That concludes our interview. Thank you for your time. This information is going to be used in a Marketing Research project for our Marketing 434 research class within the Ryan School of Business at Providence College. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me with any questions you may have regarding the project. Again, thank you for your time.

Appendix C: Interview Transcript, Emma Lowrey

Emma:

Are you okay with me recording this conversation for the purposes of future research?

Declan:

Yes, you can record.

Emma:

How are you doing today?

Declan:

I'm doing fantastic.

Emma:

Good! What are you most looking forward to this fall?

Declan:

I'm looking forward to classes, I'm enjoying school.

Emma:

Very nice. Are you familiar with the brand Abercrombie and Fitch?

Declan:

Slightly. A little bit.

Emma:

What do you know about the brand?

Declan:

They sell clothes.

Emma:

What feelings come to mind when you think of Abercrombie and Fitch?

Declan:

Comfortable clothing.

Emma:

How come?

Declan:

Because they have a lot of sweatshirts and sweatpants.

Emma:

Can you describe an experience you have had with Abercrombie and Fitch?

Declan:

Online shopping just looking at sweatpants and sweatshirts.

Emma:

How did this experience make you feel?

Declan:

It made me feel warm because I was looking at a lot of warm clothing.

Emma:

What type of association or images come to mind when you think about their brand?

Declan:

I think about their logo, AF.

Emma:

Interesting. Can you recall seeing any advertising for Abercrombie and Fitch?

Declan:

No.

Emma:

You've never seen one of their advertisements?

Declan:

No.

Emma:

Okay. Since you haven't seen one of their advertisements, what would you assume an Abercrombie and Fitch advertisement would look like based on your online shopping experience?

Declan:

It would be men, women and children all wearing their clothing, having a good time in comfortable clothes.

Emma:

So, brand image is the impression of a brand's products that it has on its consumers, right? So how would you describe Abercrombie and Fitch's brand image based on what you've seen on their page?

Declan:

I would say it's a pretty realistic brand image, and it's a pretty solid painted picture. It is very comfortable looking image with everybody relaxing in their clothing.

Emma:

How come it gives off this image for you?

Declan:

Probably because of the style of clothing and the way they have the people pose and look in the photos.

Emma:

Has this always been the brand image you've seen, or has it changed?

Declan:

No, I would say from what I know this has been it.

Emma:

Okay. So, if you had to describe the brand in three words, what would they be?

Declan:

Comfortable. Stylish. And we'll go with fun.

Emma:

How come you chose these words?

Declan:

Well, all their clothes look very comfortable, and I was intrigued by the comfortable clothes. The people they had wearing the clothes while I was online shopping wore the brand very stylishly, and they all smiled looking like they were having a good time which is why I chose fun.

Emma:

Interesting. Is this how you feel when you shop with the brand?

Declan:

I guess so, yeah.

Emma:

When you think about inclusivity, what comes to mind?

Declan:

Including people.

Emma:

What products or services do you think of when it comes to inclusivity?

Declan:

Types of products I would say is probably clothing.

Emma:

Interesting. Why do you associate clothing with inclusivity?

Declan:

Because everybody wears clothes, and everybody goes out shopping for it, so it's a very inclusive community.

Emma:

Are there any specific brands that you associate with inclusivity?

Declan:

Not off the top of my head.

Emma:

Okay. Do you have any experiences that come to your mind in terms of inclusivity?

Declan:

Being a student at Providence College.

Emma:

Interesting. Do you associate Abercrombie and Fitch with body positivity?

Declan:

Yeah!

Emma:

How come?

Declan:

Their clothes seem to represent body positivity because they came in all types of sizes and all the models were not the stereotypical model.

Emma:

How important is it to you to purchase from a brand that promotes body positivity?

Declan:

I'd say it's pretty important, because a company that represents body positivity and other important values is a trusting company.

Emma:

Do you think body positivity is important to people like you when choosing from a brand?

Declan:

Yes, I'd say it's important to everyone when choosing a brand.

Emma:

How come?

Declan:

You can be the most fit person in the world but still have concerns about your body. So, I think body positivity, even if some people don't think about it, can be a very important issue.

Emma:

What's your perception of their sizing? Have you ever had a hard time finding your size in their stores?

Declan:

I have not had a hard time finding a size in stores. I've noticed that they have a type of product labeled "oversized" so people can feel extra comfortable in types of clothing.

Emma:

Interesting. So, what do you think is Abercrombie and Fitch's target market? Describe that person to me: their age, gender, financial status?

Declan:

I think Abercrombie and Fitch goes for the general population, it goes for men, women and kids, they have a section for all three on their website and they categorize them very well. I think they go for all body shapes and sizes, so I don't know if they target a specific audience, but they target the general population.

Emma:

Do you think that this is effective?

Declan:

I would say it's effective, because some audiences that target only one type of person would not get as much attention as a brand saying that a large and diverse group of people can shop all together at one place.

Emma:

Who do you think Abercrombie and Fitch most appeals to?

Declan:

I'd say their most frequent shopper might be women, women probably in their 20's, only because it seems to be more of a "keeping with the times" and modern brand, not necessarily noticed by males as often.

Emma:

Do you currently shop at Abercrombie and Fitch?

Declan:

No.

Emma:

What is preventing you from shopping there?

Declan:

Personally, I'm just not a big shopper, and I don't like spending a lot of money, and Abercrombie and Fitch is a large brand name so their products aren't as cheap as some other companies.

Emma:

So, what characteristics or qualities turn you away from shopping for certain brands?

Declan:

I guess financial reasons and the reasons behind a company, like what makes it.

Emma:

How come, about the reasons behind the company?

Declan:

Well, you need to know if it's a moral, trusting company and not just a random company with a big brand name.

Emma:

How come?

Declan:

I find it important that a company represents important matters in the world because it allows people to connect with the product and represent something more than just clothing.

Emma:

What changes do you think Abercrombie and Fitch can make that would make you want to shop there more frequently?

Declan:

More deals.

Emma:

What do you mean by deals?

Declan:

Like price deals.

Emma:

How do you think these changes would be effective in comparison to what they're already doing?

Declan:

I think it could be effective for those who are not financially stable enough to purchase their products on a regular basis.

Emma:

Do you think Abercrombie and Fitch is an affordable brand?

Declan:

I'd say it's affordable to most with a stable job and stable income, but unfortunately some people who have student loans and are still looking for jobs in a competitive market do not go looking for their clothes immediately because of their prices.

Emma:

How much do you spend on clothes each month?

Declan:

I'll be honest I have not bought clothes in a few months now.

Emma: Okay. How come?

Declan: I'm comfortable with all the clothes I have at the moment and they still fit me, so I can just reuse them.

Emma: Are you aware of Abercrombie's inclusivity campaign?

Declan: I am not.

Emma: Okay, I'll explain it a little bit. They had a campaign called "Face Your Fierce" which included a number of different people from the LGBTQ+ community, athletes but also people who were heavier, and it was a very diverse campaign. So, hearing about this, how does it make you feel about the brand? Does it change anything for you?

Declan: It makes me like the brand more that they're going out of their way to include more people and let the world know that they're there for everyone.

Emma: Is that important to you in a shopping experience?

Declan: Yeah, I'd say that's important to me.

Emma: How come?

Declan: It's important to me because I don't want to shop somewhere that excludes certain people for no reason.

Emma: Understandable. Would you consider shopping at Abercrombie more frequently after hearing about this campaign?

Declan: Yes, I would consider it.

Emma: How come?

Declan: Abercrombie sounds like a great company now, but I still need to get my financials in order.

Emma: Okay, great. This concludes our interview.

Appendix D: Interview Transcript, Nicole Sikora

Nicole: Hi Marissa! Thank you for taking the time to meet with me. Before we begin, I do want to ask your permission to conduct this interview? For my records, I would like to record this interview. May I have your consent to record our conversation?

Marissa: Hi Nicole, no problem at all. Yes of course you can record this conversation.

Nicole: Great, thank you so much. So, to start, how are you doing today, what are you most excited about this Fall?

Marissa: I am excited to go apple picking with my two sons, and to dress them up in Halloween costumes, it is my youngest son, Eli's first Halloween this year!

Nicole:

So cute! That sounds like so much fun. So, to get started, are you familiar with Abercrombie & Fitch? What do you know about the brand?

Marissa:

Yes, history wise I don't know too much about it, but I know they have a clothing line for men, women, and children—I really only know basic things about the brand.

Nicole:

You're absolutely right! When you think of the brand Abercrombie & Fitch, what feelings come to mind, or what do you first think of?

Marissa:

I would say nostalgia is the first thing that comes to mind when I think of Abercrombie.

Nicole:

Do you think it's a personal association or nostalgia?

Marissa:

In a sense because I am not that old, but back in the day that brand used to be big.

Nicole:

Was Abercrombie & Fitch big when you were in high school?

Marissa:

I would say more so middle school, but a little bit of high school too.

Nicole:

Not dating you, but if you don't mind sharing, what years were those when you would wear Abercrombie & Fitch in middle school/ high school?

Marissa:

I was thinking that too—I would say, I mainly wore Abercrombie in 2006-2008.

Nicole:

Can you tell me about an experience you have had with Abercrombie & Fitch? How did this experience make you feel?

Marissa:

Recently, I went to the mall with my fiancé and kids, and we saw an Abercrombie Kids store, and it was my first-time walking into the kids store, and I saw that the style they had for the kids was completely different than how it was in the early 2000s and its something that since I have a kid now, I would shop for him there, and I did, I bought him some tops.

Nicole:

Would you say that you would rather shop there for Noah (3 years old) or Eli (10 months old) rather than yourself?

Marissa:

Yes, but I do like their jeans. I haven't fully shopped there for all different types of clothing recently, but I've been eye-ing some Abercrombie & Fitch jeans.

Nicole:

Did you like the jeans they displayed in the store, or did an Abercrombie & Fitch advertisement pop up on your phone that made you interested?

Marissa:

Online I would say—I follow a few bloggers and they do collaborations with Abercrombie & Fitch of clothing hauls, which made me like some of the jeans shown in the hauls.

Nicole:

That's so cool! What is the name(s) of the blogger you like?

Marissa:

I think her name is Bre Shepherd, and another one is Courtney Shields

Nicole:

That's cool, do you watch them on YouTube, or another platform?

Marissa:

No on Instagram actually, they are more Beauty/Fashion influencers than Youtubers. They also post a lot of hauls on Instagram stories of clothing hauls where they include the "swipe-up" links, which I have clicked on a few times, or watched all the way through.

Nicole:

Awesome, I do that too! What type of associations or images come to mind when you think of the brand Abercrombie & Fitch? Which I don't know if they still have that do, they?

Marissa:

What comes into mind first is the cologne smell when you walk into the store and seeing all the models' pictures everywhere—the beach abs pictures. Which I don't know if they still have that do, they?

Nicole:

They don't anymore, but that's funny I remember that too especially those photos on the shopping bags, and then I would walk around the mall carrying that at 8 years old?!

Marissa:

But to answer your question, I mainly think of the smell of the cologne when I am in Abercrombie stores, it is so distinct.

Nicole:

So, I know we've talked a little bit about your bloggers on Instagram, but do you remember any specific advertisements that have ever popped up for you?

Marissa:

I mainly see advertisements on Instagram after I was just searching their website, I will see pop-up advertisements on my feed, or in the corner of my web-browser on my computer too. I also remember I saw a lot of advertisements pop up on my phone after I downloaded their app on my phone.

Nicole:

Do you think those types of advertisements are effective for someone like you? How come?

Marissa:

Yeah, I think so, I have clicked or swiped up to a story with the item link attached and actually gone on their website and spent more time on their website than I normally would have. Sometimes I don't feel like going through the whole website myself, so it is nice when someone else shows me what is "in" at the moment and I can get inspiration that way.

Nicole:

Do you get a lot of those advertisements when they are promoting sales, or will the pop-ups show you a pair of jeans you thought were cute?

Marissa:

Sometimes sales, or sometimes when I have recently clicked on something, that image of what I was looking at will pop-up again.

Nicole:

Got it! Moving on, brand image is defined as the impression of a product held by real or potential consumers, knowing this, how would you describe Abercrombie & Fitch's brand image?

Marissa:

I see the brand as, I don't want to say conforming, but trying to conform to the style that people have now, or the style that people are into now.

Nicole:

Do you think the Abercrombie & Fitch's brand image used to be more preppy and now they are more casual/chic?

Marissa:

Yes, they definitely used to be preppy, like polos, and the different prints, and their logo on their clothes. Now, I don't see Abercrombie putting their name out on clothing as much, and I think their color scheme has

changed to a lot of neutrals, which is different than the early 200s when they had lots of pinks, and blues, and floral patterns.

Nicole:

When you think about inclusivity, what comes to mind, what associations do you have?

Marissa:

I guess in my case it is a little different, but recently, in my case, when I have been looking for clothes, I always look for brands that have a maternity line, so that is one big thing with me, and I feel included in a brand when they offer those items for someone in my situation. I don't think Abercrombie has anything for maternity, but I don't think that would be too on-brand for them anyways. I think size wise; I have noticed that Abercrombie is more inclusive with size-ranges. I want to say that Abercrombie is size inclusive now, but I am not fully sure. It seems like most brand nowadays must include all different types of sizes to include everyone.

Nicole:

What made you think that Abercrombie & Fitch has expanded their sizes? Was that from you searching their website and seeing various sizes offered, or from looking through their clothes in stores?

Marissa:

When I am online, I see more sizes offered for all different body-types. Their website even uses more diverse models now online, too. You can even change a model's size and weight online to see how an item would fit someone close to your body-type instead of the typical tall and thin models modeling the clothes.

Nicole:

Do you associate Abercrombie & Fitch with body positivity? What does that phrase mean to you?

Marissa:

I wouldn't say I would associate Abercrombie & Fitch specifically with body positivity, I guess because it comes back to nostalgic times too. I don't think Abercrombie & Fitch is as body positive as a brand like American Eagle or Aerie, not like that.

Nicole:

How come, can you explain further?

Marissa:

I know that American Eagle and Aerie don't re-touch their photos online or retouch their models at all to create unrealistic beauty expectations.

Nicole:

How important is purchasing from a brand that promotes body positivity to you?

Marissa:

I think it's important. For example, with American Eagle, that is always a stand-out that they take pride on that and it is something you don't see too often, so when a company does that, it makes them stand out, and makes me want to buy more from a brand like that.

Nicole:

Have you ever had a hard time finding your size in Abercrombie & Fitch stores or online?

Marissa:

No

Nicole:

What is your preferred method for shopping, do you like to shop in stores or online more?

Marissa:

Online

Nicole:

Who would you say is Abercrombie's target market?

Marissa:

I would say the millennials

Nicole:

Do any of your friends who are your age shop at Abercrombie too?

Marissa:

I think a couple of people do—for the most part I think me, and my friends shop at Nordstrom or ASOS.

Nicole:

Would you say that you shop at American Eagle or Aerie often?

Marissa:

Not so often, I would say I still shop at Nordstrom and ASOS more than any other store. Especially when I am scrolling on my phone shopping online.

Nicole:

Who do you think Abercrombie & Fitch appeals to? What type of person?

Marissa:

I would say more like laid back, casual people who like to wear comfy clothes, and have a realistic, every-day like lifestyle or approach to life.

Nicole:

Do you think people like you shop at Abercrombie & Fitch?

Marissa:

I think so, because coming back to the jeans, everyone is always looking for their perfect type of jean, and with Abercrombie coming out with a lot of different styles of jeans, and washes, and collaborating with influencers who are like every-day people

Nicole:

Do you remember the last time you purchased something from Abercrombie & Fitch?

Marissa:

The last time I purchased from Abercrombie & Fitch was when I bought a handful of Christmas presents

Nicole:

What made you inclined to go into Abercrombie & Fitch around the holidays?

Marissa:

We were at the outlets and there was a long line to get inside, and I hadn't been into their store in a while, so I went in, and the prices were at a discounted price, so we ended up buying a lot more than expected

Nicole:

What feelings do you experience when you wear Abercrombie & Fitch?

Marissa:

I would say comfortable, and young.

Nicole:

Can you elaborate on that?

Marissa:

I think sometimes Abercrombie still reminds me of high school because it reminds me of that time in my life when I would wear those clothes.

Nicole:

Do you think that may be a reason why you don't shop there all the time is because Abercrombie & Fitch reminds you of being in high school, and you want to move past that chapter of your life?

Marissa:

In a sense yes, but I also associate Abercrombie with the brand that I knew during that time in the early 2000s, so it is a reminder of how I am not in the same style or mindset from that time

Nicole:

How long have you been a consumer of Abercrombie & Fitch?

Marissa:

I would say I have shopped at Abercrombie on-and-off since 2006. I even remember taking my piece Mia shopping there. Sometimes I think Abercrombie gets passed down through generations, so I associate the brand with younger people than me at times.

Nicole:

Do you think that you started to bring Mia to Abercrombie when she was in middle school, around the same time as when you started shopping there?

Marissa:

I think she was in middle school, around when I shopped there too

Nicole:

If you were to make any changes to Abercrombie & Fitch, what would they be?

Marissa:

It is hard because I still associate them as being expensive from when I shopped there in middle school/high school, so Abercrombie is not the first store I think of to go to because of high prices. Other than prices, which you can't change that much because they do have a lot of sales, and they are in outlets. Maybe they should collaborate more with celebrity children if they are trying to target millennials. I think consumers might be more inclined to want to shop at Abercrombie & Fitch or Abercrombie kids if they see celebrities choose to shop there for their kids since so many millennials are starting to have families now. I think they should capitalize more on the kids.

Nicole:

Do you feel like Abercrombie doesn't want to change their culture currently?

Marissa:

I think so, I think sometimes the clothes I buy are similar to what they were years ago, they haven't changed their clothes drastically, because you can't change basics. I do think they are trying to be more inclusive though especially with jean sizes.

Nicole:

Do you think Abercrombie & Fitch is an affordable brand?

Marissa:

I think they try to make it affordable, because I remember the last time I went into the store, they greeted us and let us know about the promotion they are doing, which was 20% your entire purchase. I do think they have promotions often to have you buy more and for consumers to spend less because for that promo, the more you buy, the less you will pay. I think they are trying to make it more affordable mainly with sales and promotions, but not when their new arrivals come out.

Nicole:

What is your monthly budget for clothing and expenditures?

Marissa:

It depends in the month, especially now with COVID-19, I don't go out as much as I used to, and I can't wear jeans to work in the office, so I would say the budget within the month would be roughly under \$200.

Nicole:

With that \$200, do you think if you were in stores, or at the outlets, would Abercrombie & Fitch fall into this budget for you? Would you rather spend money at another store?

Marissa:

If I needed specifically jeans, I think Abercrombie would be on my list to look at, but if it were a different article of clothing, I probably wouldn't look at Abercrombie.

Nicole:

How often do you shop for jeans every year?

Marissa:

Probably towards the Fall-Winter time, with the seasons changing.

Nicole:

Are you aware of Abercrombie's inclusivity campaign that they are doing? Such as "Face your Fierce" or "Denim Your Way"

Marissa:

A little bit, but not really. I think it is good to hear Abercrombie is promoting more inclusivity, especially given their history. But also, it seems like Abercrombie and other brands currently could be making those positive changes to steer clear from "cancel culture".

Nicole:

Does this make you change the way you feel about Abercrombie & Fitch? Would you be more willing to shop there? Would you consider shopping at Abercrombie more frequently?

Marissa:

Yes, I do think it is important to make these changes. If they kept their same mindset from the early 2000s, then I don't think a lot of people would want to shop there or be associated with that.

Nicole:

That concludes our interview; thank you so much for your time. This information is going to be used in a Marketing Research project for our Marketing 434 research class within the Ryan School of Business at Providence College. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me with any questions you may have regarding the project. Again, thank you for your time.

Appendix E: Interview Transcript, Olivia Tette

Olivia:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me. Before we begin, I do want to ask your permission to conduct this interview. For our records we would like to record this interview. May I have your consent to record our conversation?

Tess:

Yes.

Olivia:

How are you today?

Tess:

I'm good, how are you?

Olivia:

Good, what're you looking forward to most this fall?

Tess:

Buying fall things from Trader Joe's.

Olivia:

So the first question I am going to ask is: are you familiar with the brand Abercrombie & Fitch?

Tess:

Yes.

Olivia:

And what do you know about the brand?

Tess:

I know that they're a clothing brand, that sells both women's and men's clothing all throughout the year.

Olivia:

And what feelings come to mind when you think about Abercrombie & Fitch?

Tess:

I think of comfy and positive feelings overall.

Olivia:

And can you describe an experience that you may have had with Abercrombie & Fitch?

Tess:

One time when I was in seventh grade I was in Abercrombie & Fitch and they asked a pretty girl in there if she wanted to work there?

Olivia:

And how did this experience make you feel?

Tess:

I was shocked because I didn't just expect them to ask people to work there, right off the bat when they were just there shopping. Almost made me wonder why they didn't ask me as well.

Olivia:

And what types of associations/images come to mind when thinking about the brand?

Tess:

I think of jeans right off the bat, and I think of your classic Abercrombie & Fitch half naked models and mannequins, and their perfume.

Olivia:

Now I am gonna ask you about some of their advertising. Can you recall any advertising for Abercrombie & Fitch?

Tess:

Yes.

Olivia:

And can you describe some specific advertisements?

Tess:

Definitely like I said in the early 2000s it was shirtless men and women, that was the image that stuck out to me. But definitely have noticed that they don't really have that image anymore in most of their advertising.

Olivia:

And where would you see these advertisements?

Tess:

Up in malls and on their website. I don't really remember if I ever got catalogues from Abercrombie but I'm sure that we might have in which case I'm sure those images would be in there too.

Olivia:

So do you think that their advertising methods are effective?

Tess:

Yeah, I mean I think that a lot of people who shop at Abercrombie are already familiar with the name, so I'm not sure how much their advertising effects the number of customers they bring in, just because the company is already so well known.

Olivia:

And would you make any changes to the way they advertise?

Tess:

I would add more Instagram ads because I feel that is a really mainstream way to reach people nowadays and I don't see many of them on Instagram even though I shop there frequently.

Olivia:

Okay thank you. Brand image is defined as the impression of a product held by real or potential consumers. Knowing this definition, how would you describe Abercrombie & Fitch's brand image?

Tess:

I think that their brand image has kind of shifted to age with us, to age with the people who were shopping there in seventh grade for Abercrombie branded things. And I feel the brand image has matured into a more popular brand that sells both nice clothes for events, but also has a very popular loungewear section of their website.

Olivia:

Has this always been the case or has it changed?

Tess:

Oh definitely has changed. Like I said, my first image of Abercrombie was getting an Abercrombie logo hoodie and wearing it to school, and that being very cool. But now their clothing is less focused on branded clothing and just is more about all different lifestyle clothing and less about wearing Abercrombie on your chest. They are trying to keep up with each season's fashion trends more and styling pieces that anyone will wear.

Olivia:

And if you had to describe Abercrombie in three words what would they be?

Tess:

Stylish, comfortable, and diverse in terms of the products they sell.

Olivia:

How come you chose these words?

Tess:

I chose those words because I personally have clothes from their different categories of clothing, I have their loungewear which I think is very comfortable; but I also have their dresses that I would wear out to a nicer event. I chose the third word diverse just because of this range that they have, it's not like if you're comparing it to Lululemon they basically just sell clothes for one type of activity. Abercrombie & Fitch sells them for all sorts of different things.

Olivia:

And when you think about inclusivity in general what comes to mind/what associations do you have?

Tess:

People of all different shapes, colors, ethnicities, just getting the largest group of people to represent whatever you are selling or whatever you're doing.

Olivia:

Are there any specific products or services that come immediately to mind?

Tess:

I think there are certain clothing brands that are working to be more inclusive. Also you see in windows of stores or restaurants how everyone is welcome.

Olivia:

You mentioned certain clothing brands, can you name some of those brands who you think are inclusive?

Tess:

Yeah, American Eagle and Aerie have kind of had a big push towards real models that are all different types of people and not just your cookie cutter model that brands like Victoria Secret only really use. And I think that Abercrombie has also kind of started to make that shift towards like what American Eagle is doing in their advertisements, you see less of the ripped shirtless models like they had in the early 2000s, and just more real people.

Olivia:

Do any experiences come to mind? Maybe with specific brands?

Tess:

Aerie is one of them. They have that Aerie Real campaign that is really in your face when you walk into the store and all over their advertisements and packaging. They really seem to promote the body positivity like with their mirrors in the dressing rooms that have affirmations on them.

Olivia:

Do you associate Abercrombie & Fitch with body positivity?

Tess:

I don't think that would be my first thing when I think of the brand, but I think it's getting there. But definitely not the first thought I have.

Olivia:

And how important is it to you to purchase from a brand that promotes body positivity?

Tess:

I think it's very important. I don't think that brands that support one body type are effective in their own business strategy or just improving society in general. I just think as a corporation you have a duty to society to provide products for all of the different types of customers, and kind of a social contract where you are doing the best for the people who buy your products, and those people are people of different sizes and such.

Olivia:

So do you think body positivity is important to other people like you when they're choosing a brand?

Tess:

Yes.

Olivia:

Can you elaborate on that please?

Tess:

I feel that there is a movement especially with people our age to be inclusive. So many people struggle with insecurities and mental health issues, and corporations should have a responsibility to not contribute anymore to that, to only help lift people up.

Olivia:

What is your perception of Abercrombie & Fitch's sizing? Have you ever had a hard time finding your size in store or online?

Tess:

Sometimes but I think that's because I have a pretty average size which frequently goes out of stock in all stores not just Abercrombie, but they do have a large range of sizes. If something is out of stock I do realize that it is back in stock pretty soon.

Olivia:

Who would you say is Abercrombie's target market?

Tess:

I would say people between the ages of 18 to 25. I mean I have older sisters who are 26 and 28 and I know they still shop there. I think that the brand has matured with the original shoppers that they had in the early 2000s and it's definitely been a brand that I grew up with and am into still. So I do think that it has matured I don't think seventh graders would be as likely to shop there as we were in 2012.

Olivia:

So in your opinion, who would you say Abercrombie tries to get to purchase their product?

Tess:

Like 18–25-year old's, probably people who try to keep up with the trends and want to be stylish and have different lifestyles. The clothes are stylish enough to keep up with people of those ages and have enough variety in their collections that cater to all different activities and ways of life.

Olivia:

Do you currently shop at Abercrombie & Fitch?

Tess:

Yes.

Olivia:

And why do you shop there?

Tess:

I think that they have good designs, I like the quality and materials that they use in their products, and the longevity of the products that I purchase from there.

Olivia:

So do you think that other people like you shop at Abercrombie? Or do you think that there's a different typical consumer?

Tess:

No, I think a majority of the people are just like me. As I have said the brand has seemed to mature with us making it less likely that younger people are shopping there, even though we did in seventh grade.

Olivia:

Can you describe the last time you purchased something at Abercrombie? How did it feel to buy it?

Tess:

I purchased something from Abercrombie around a week ago, I felt very happy when I ordered it because I had been wanting to try some of the clothes I ordered for a long time. When it arrived I didn't need to send anything back which is something I usually have to do when I do online orders, but I kept everything in my order. I got a diverse range of products too like lounge shorts and a sundress and both were great.

Olivia:

Are there any products you do not purchase at Abercrombie?

Tess:

I don't really purchase their accessories or shoes.

Olivia:

And how long have you been a customer of Abercrombie & Fitch?

Tess:

Since 2007.

Olivia:

And has this been consistent? Or was there a time where you didn't shop there as much?

Tess:

I think that I definitely took a break from shopping there during high school. I think that was a weird in between where they hadn't quite evolved into clothes that were mature enough for me at the time. So yeah probably from 2014-2018. Not saying that I didn't shop there at all, but it was definitely less. Now I shop there more frequently, and before that from 2007-2013 I shopped there frequently, but there was a slight dip.

Olivia:

So what changes could Abercrombie & Fitch make that would make you want to shop there more frequently?

Tess:

Sometimes I think the prices of their clothing are a little bit high, even though I do think that you're paying for good products. But I do notice that I shop their sale items more than I shop their full price items. I think that if I saw more reviews or more Instagram influencers wearing Abercrombie clothes I would be more incentivized to buy them because I would see them I would probably want to go shopping if somebody had said good things about their clothes. Or if I just had more exposure, I feel like the only times I see what Abercrombie has in stock for the season is when I go onto their website myself, I don't really feel targeted by them all the time. But I'm not exactly sure where they do the bulk of their advertising, I don't watch a lot of tv with commercials, so I don't know if there are ads on there, but I do know that in what I use, the social medias I use, like Instagram and TikTok and Snapchat I personally am rarely targeted for them. I haven't seen any of the famous influencers that I follow sponsored by Abercrombie at all.

Olivia:

So do you think that Abercrombie could be benefitted by the use of influencers?

Tess:

Yes I definitely think influencers are a good way of reaching their target audience, it is a good way to see what is current in stock and to try and convince people of the quality of their products. Especially too since Abercrombie is maturing, it could help them get away from their old brand by not using their old image of half-naked models, but of people of all different sizes, ethnicities, and lifestyles.

Olivia:

Thank you for that insight. I also just wanted to go back to what you said about price before and wanted to know what your monthly budget for clothing is?

Tess:

I probably spend around \$300 on clothes per month. Abercrombie does fall within that budget, but I don't usually order more than three things at a time from Abercrombie just because when you fill up your cart with three things from there, you know that your prices are probably \$100 to \$150 range already, so that is a big chunk out of that budget.

Olivia:

So with those higher prices, do you think that other people like you also work Abercrombie into their monthly clothing expenditures?

Tess:

I would say the majority of people probably do not. I am lucky enough to be able to work a job during the school year, so I can keep that up, but a lot of people I know probably would only buy Abercrombie 5-6 times a year especially at our age.

Olivia:

Are you aware of Abercrombie's diversity campaign?

Tess:

I haven't heard of any campaigns by name, but I have noticed more inclusivity with the pictures that they use on their website and the different styles of jeans specifically that they have, they have their curve love collection, that are inclusive in terms of sizing. I've definitely noticed that but can't point to a brand name slogan off the top of my head like I can with some other brands such as Aerie.

Olivia:

So does learning about the campaign change the way you feel about the brand?

Tess:

I definitely like that they are making positive changes to their company and are trying to make their brand more inclusive, especially because people who are shopping at their stores are kind of in a vulnerable age where body positivity should be highlighted.

Olivia:

Can you elaborate on that idea that the target audience is at a vulnerable age?

Tess:

Yes definitely, just if their target audience is people who are from the ages of 18-25 I think that's an important age developmentally to be surrounded by media that represents who you are as well as people of all different kinds too. It is important to be able to feel as though you belong because it is such a tough age where a lot of change and maturing takes place.

Olivia:

So do you think if they added more advertisements about the campaigns that would be more effective in bringing in customers?

Tess:

Yes I think it definitely would because I think there's definitely still a portion of consumers who think that Abercrombie is still the same company they were in 2010.

Olivia:

And can you clarify what you mean by "the same company that they were in 2010?"

Tess:

Just in the early 2000s I remember that there was a lot of controversy around the brand and if it was brought to light that they were trying to be more inclusive, that would be a reason for someone to shop there. I remember children who weren't allowed to shop at Abercrombie when they were younger because their parents didn't agree with their values, so that mindset might still be ingrained in a lot of their audience. If they expanded their campaign regarding their inclusivity programs I think that it would give people more reason to shop there, whether because they already like the brand and would continue to support it just because that's an extra good effort, or if they had negative connotations associated with Abercrombie but that would correct their perception of the company right off the bat.

Olivia:

Okay thank you. That concludes our interview. Thank you for your time. This information is going to be used in a Marketing Research project for our Marketing 434 research class within the Ryan School of Business at Providence College. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me with any questions you may have regarding the project. Again, thank you for your time.

Appendix F: Interview Transcript, Caroline Wilson

Caroline: Thank you for taking the time to meet with me. Before we begin, I do want to ask your permission to conduct this interview. For our records we would like to record this interview. May I have your consent to record our conversation?

Hannah: Yes.

Caroline: Thank you. So, how are you doing today?

Hannah: I'm good, how are you?

Caroline: Good! Just a quick unrelated question, since it's almost October, what are you most looking forward to this Fall?

Hannah: Probably Halloween.

Caroline: Nice! I would say fall flavored foods and drinks. I just went grocery shopping at Trader Joe's yesterday and got lots of good things.

Hannah: That's cool.

Caroline: Alright, so let's jump right into it. Are you familiar with the brand Abercrombie & Fitch?

Hannah: Yes I am.

Caroline: What do you know about the brand?

Hannah: It's a clothing store.

Caroline: Can you elaborate on that at all?

Hannah: I used to go to it a lot when I was a kid to shop there, there was a kid's store, Abercrombie and Kids or something.

Caroline: Yes I remember Abercrombie Kids I shopped there a lot as well. What else do you know about the brand?

Hannah: I know it has both mens and womens clothing but it's mostly towards women, and it's in a lot of malls.

Caroline: Great. So, what feelings come to mind when you think of Abercrombie & Fitch?

Hannah: Probably nostalgia. It reminds me of my childhood. The smells that are in there are very strong; they smell like cologne and perfume.

Caroline: That's interesting! I agree with you about the smell, it's a hard one to forget. Are there any other feelings?

Hannah: I don't think so.

Caroline: Can you describe a specific experience you may have had with Abercrombie & Fitch?

Hannah: Every single year on the first day of school my mom would make me wear an Abercrombie and Fitch outfit, like a collared shirt or something.

Caroline: Do you know why she might have had you wear it?

Hannah: I think because it was preppy, cute, in, trendy, things like that.

Caroline: Okay, do you remember how these experiences each year made you feel?

Hannah: Pretty good from what I remember, I was pretty well-dressed as a kid, probably the best dressed out there. Pretty confident.

Caroline: That's great! When thinking about the brand, what type of associations or images come to mind?

Hannah: Probably the cute boy models on the walls.

Caroline: Okay, anything else?

Hannah: Not really that I can think of right now.

Caroline: Okay, how about we move on. Can you recall any advertising for Abercrombie & Fitch?

Hannah: I remember the shopping bags that you would get with your purchases with the models on it.

Caroline: That's interesting, what did you think about those bags?

Hannah: At the time I thought they were cool I guess, but I was young so I don't really remember if I ever really thought about them.

Caroline: Do you remember where you saw this type of advertisement?

Hannah: In malls, people coming out of the store, my house when I bought something or my sisters bought something.

Caroline: Can you recall or describe any more current advertisements?

Hannah: No, not really, not anymore. I don't see current advertisements.

Caroline: That's interesting. So knowing that you don't really see many of the brand's current advertisements, do you think their advertising methods are effective at all?

Hannah: I think they used to be when I was younger and when it was more in, like it was more of an "it" store, I don't know, not as much anymore because I don't see any of the ads.

Caroline: Okay, so what qualities and attributes of the brand's advertising would motivate you to make a purchase do you think?

Hannah: Probably the neutral tones of the bags like the black and white vibes and the models and all that.

Caroline: Okay, what changes would you make to the way that A&F advertises their products?

Hannah: I'd probably just have them make it more trendy and up to date with the current times.

Caroline: Anything else you would like to add about their advertising?

Hannah: No

Caroline: Brand image is defined as the impression of a product held by real or potential consumers. Knowing this, how would you describe Abercrombie's brand image? So, the impression it gives off to consumers.

Hannah: Can you say what brand image is again?

Caroline: *repeats definition*

Hannah: I'd say people think of it as basic, trendy clothing.

Caroline: Has this always been the case or do you think the brand image has changed?

Hannah: I honestly think the brand image has stayed the same.

Caroline: Is there anything you can pick out that has changed?

Hannah: Not really, maybe the styles changed just as what is trendy has changed.

Caroline: If you had to describe the brand in three words, what would they be? You can take your time to think.

Hannah: I would probably say trendy, basic, and preppy.

Caroline: How come you choose those words?

Hannah: Because they have pretty up to date clothing so it's trendy but I also feel like it's very basic. It's not for people who want to have different and unique styles.

Caroline: Can you elaborate on what you mean by basic?

Hannah: I think the colors and styles, and the two combined are both a little, not necessarily plain, but basic in a classic way, I guess. It's not bad, but not really that fun if you know what I'm saying.

Caroline: Okay. When you think about inclusivity, what comes to mind? Like inclusivity in general, what comes to mind? And what associations do you have?

Hannah: Inclusivity?

Caroline: Yes.

Hannah: Accepting everyone and everything.

Caroline: Can you expand on that?

Hannah: When everyone is accepted and appreciated as much and on the same level as other people, or not leaving people out based on some characteristic or something.

Caroline: Great. So, when it comes to inclusivity, what products or services come to mind?

Hannah: Some makeup/foundation brands have a lot of shades of colors which I think promotes inclusivity.

Caroline: How come that promotes inclusivity?

Hannah: Well having a lot of colors makes sure as many people can buy it as possible because it matches so many different skin tones.

Caroline: I see. What brands do you associate with inclusivity?

Hannah: Aerie for sure. They have plus-sized models.

Caroline: Can you elaborate on that please?

Hannah: They show models of every weight and hair color, etc.

Caroline: How do you find this inclusive?

Hannah: Because showing models of all sizes and colors and other different characteristics appeals to the people who might shop there and makes them feel accepted.

Caroline: Do any experiences come to mind when it comes to inclusivity?

Hannah: Like with clothing?

Caroline: Yes, or in general.

Hannah: Like me personally or just in general?

Caroline: Any experiences. It could be you or something you've seen.

Hannah: I've seen Aerie's website but I haven't really experienced it personally.

Caroline: So since we have been talking about inclusivity, do you associate Abercrombie and Fitch with body positivity?

Hannah: Not really.

Caroline: Can you elaborate on that a little bit?

Hannah: I have never seen a plus-sized model for Abercrombie and Fitch. Ever. And there's no like large sizes that would fit all, or super small sizes that would fit smaller people.

Caroline: How important to you is purchasing from a brand that promotes body positivity?

Hannah: For me, I shop at places where I like their clothes and don't always pay attention to other things, so I guess that means it isn't that important to me. But it would be nice to see different sizes and varieties for other people to relate to and show more realistic models.

Caroline: Do you think body positivity is important to people like you when people are choosing a brand?

Hannah: People like me? What does that mean like me?

Caroline: Like people similar to you.

Hannah: Do you mean teenagers? Or my height and weight?

Caroline: Let's say teenagers.

Hannah: Okay, for teenagers yeah it definitely is because I think as a teenager your body image is something you're insecure about and stuff so stores having your size just increases body positivity.

Caroline: You already touched on this a little bit, but what is your perception of Abercrombie's sizing?

Hannah: I mean they definitely have big sizes and small sizes but they could definitely go bigger and smaller in their range.

Caroline: Have you ever had a hard time finding your size in store or on-line? Has there been a difference one way or the other?

Hannah: Do you mean like they're out of stuff or it's just not big or small enough?

Caroline: Just that they don't have the size you want.

Hannah: Smalls and mediums are usually sold out of a lot of things.

Caroline: Why do you think that is?

Hannah: Because a lot of people are small and medium I guess. I feel like the average woman that shops at Abercrombie is that size. Well, or because people who aren't that size know it doesn't go high enough in size so they would just shop somewhere else.

Caroline: Who would you say Abercrombie's target market is?

Hannah: Teenage girls.

Caroline: How come?

Hannah: I'm not really sure why I think that but I do, I mean I think the clothes are what teenage girls wear and from what I've heard I guess.

Caroline: Do you think this target market of teenage girls is effective?

Hannah: Yeah, I don't think they could market the clothes they sell to any other age and have it work as well.

Caroline: Can you elaborate on that?

Hannah: Well, it's not like business clothes, it's like clothes that teenagers wear.

Caroline: So, who do you think Abercrombie & Fitch appeals to the most?

Hannah: Teenage girls.

Caroline: So is there anyone else the brand appeals to or is that it?

Hannah: Well, is there still Abercrombie Kids?

Caroline: I think so, but that is a separate thing from what we're talking about anyway.

Hannah: Okay well, nevermind. I'd say lower 20s, like 20 to 25 maybe, I don't know. Not like older people, it's more for younger people.

Caroline: In your opinion, who would you say Abercrombie & Fitch tries to get to purchase their product?

Hannah: I think it's directed towards who buys it, so that's teenage girls.

Caroline: Okay, so do you currently shop at Abercrombie & Fitch?

Hannah: Not often.

Caroline: Have you ever shopped there?

Hannah: Yeah. It's the main store I shopped at when I was younger.

Caroline: How young?

Hannah: Probably 8 to 13 or 14.

Caroline: What do you think is preventing you from shopping there more often?

Hannah: They have some good things but it's also very overpriced and it's not as much my style as it used to be.

Caroline: What characteristics or qualities turn you away from shopping at brands you dislike? Like what is the reason? Like you said, it's not your style, but is there any other specific reason why you wouldn't shop somewhere?

Hannah: The price I would say, and for Abercrombie I always think of the graphic t-shirt that I really don't like and always think of.

Caroline: Is there anything else?

Hannah: No.

Caroline: Okay, so what changes could Abercrombie & Fitch make that would make you want to make you want to shop there more frequently?

Hannah: They could offer more unique options of clothing and maybe just have more advertising in general so more people see the clothes and that could make them want to buy it.

Caroline: Would this make you shop there more frequently do you think?

Hannah: I don't know, maybe, but I think they could probably get more people to shop there.

Caroline: How do you think these changes would be more effective in comparison to what A&F is already doing?

Hannah: Well from what I've seen they don't do that much advertising so it would be more effective to promote the brand.

Caroline: Do you think Abercrombie & Fitch is an affordable brand?

Hannah: No

Caroline: How come?

Hannah: Because it's overpriced, well not necessarily overpriced for the right buyers but it's definitely not affordable for a wide range of people.

Caroline: Who are the right buyers?

Hannah: I'm not sure. I guess it could be people in their early twenties but they might not have a lot of money either, so I don't really know.

Caroline: Okay, If you are not comfortable sharing, that is totally understandable, but do you think Abercrombie & Fitch would fall within your monthly budget for clothes each month? And first of all, what is that budget?

Hannah: I don't have a budget. I don't buy clothes monthly so I don't really know what my budget would be.

Caroline: Do you think Abercrombie would fall into your budget in general?

Hannah: I mean, yeah I would buy it.

Caroline: Are there circumstances that would affect that? Like when you would buy?

Hannah: I don't get it. Can you explain what you mean?

Caroline: Is there anything else that would cause you to buy or not buy?

Hannah: If I wasn't making money I wouldn't buy. Also Abercrombie has good sales I think, so probably then too if I saw something I wanted.

Caroline: Are you aware of Abercrombie's inclusivity campaign?

Hannah: Not at all.

Caroline: Interesting. How does learning about the campaign, which does exist actually, the brand is trying to be more inclusive, so after learning about that does it change how you feel about the brand? Knowing they are more inclusive or trying to be?

Hannah: I mean, yeah, I just feel like if they advertised it enough I would know about it, so they must not be doing it that well.

Caroline: What advertisements would you expect or want to see from a company that is trying to promote inclusivity?

Hannah: I feel like social media ads, like Instagram, is where you're going to find the most people, like teenage girls specifically, because I don't think TV or something like that would work that well. And they might have it on their website but I don't really go on their website a lot.

Caroline: Do you think you would consider shopping at Abercrombie more frequently after learning about this campaign? Or would it not really have an effect?

Hannah: Well I don't necessarily not shop there, I don't shop there more because it's not my style anymore, but still that's great to hear. I think that would mean the brand is moving in the right direction and more people would want to shop there because of the body positivity and stuff.

Caroline: That concludes our interview. Thank you for your time. Just so you know, this information is going to be used in a Marketing Research project for our Marketing 434 research class in the Ryan School of Business at Providence College. Feel free to ask me any questions and thank you again for your time!

Appendix G: Interview Transcript, Aria Wolkowicz

Aria:

Hi Emilie! Thank you for making time to chat with me today. I know you're so busy with student teaching right now.

Emilie:

I'm always happy to help!

Aria:

Now, before we begin our interview, I just want to ask for your consent to conduct this and digitally record it for research purposes... May I have your consent?

Emilie:

Yes, I consent to this interview and you may record whatever you need!

Aria:

How are you today?

Emilie:

I am doing pretty well, might be better after the Eagles game later. How are you?

Aria:

That's great, I am doing great today, thanks for asking! Is there anything in particular that you're looking forward to this Fall?

Emilie:

I am looking forward to student teaching because that is all that consumes my life right now! It is definitely a chore sometimes but it's been great to be at my old school with my old teachers again. The kids are so funny too which keeps things interesting. How are things with you?

Aria:

Things have been good! I have definitely been very busy with school but I am really enjoying my classes. Now, I would like to ask you some questions about your awareness of a certain brand... Are you familiar with the brand Abercrombie & Fitch?

Emilie:

Yes, I am. Wow, I haven't heard that name in awhile!

Aria:

What do you know about the brand?

Emilie:

That.. it was really popular in the mid 2000's with teenagers. So many of my friends had stuff from there. It was like a status thing... if you were wearing something with the logo you were somehow deemed "cool".

Aria:

I can attest that I was certainly one of those teenagers haha! What feelings come to mind when you think of Abercrombie?

Emilie:

Somewhere between like California beachy and then like preppy also? Kind of? It was always kind of between Pac Sun and Hollister. You know Hollister is the same thing.. Hollister and Abercrombie are like the same thing in my brain. I certainly did not fit in Abercrombie.

Aria:

I know you said you haven't heard of the Abercrombie name in a long time but can you describe an experience you may have had with Abercrombie & Fitch?

Emilie:

Actually I do have one!

Aria:

Oh okay, great!

Emilie:

I was always too big for like standard clothing like teenager clothing. They never had my size in anything, but Abercrombie surprised me like one time. One time. They had jeans in my size which never happened when I was a kid. I was like, wow, I can have Abercrombie jeans?! And they weren't like.. you know... down your butt. It was on your waist and like a normal pair of jeans and um, it was actually a positive experience. But, that was the only experience. Every other experience was like ugh this shirt is too small and I can not fit into it.

Aria:

I'm sorry to hear about that, however that's great that you had a positive experience with the brand that one time! Examining in on that one experience you talked about, do you mind elaborating more on how that experience made you feel?

Emilie:

Yeah, definitely. Like I said before, it was very hard finding clothes that fit me when I was growing up. Being able to find something from a trendy brand that fit me made me feel really confident and good about myself. However... this was VERY short lived because that was like the only item that I fit into there.

Aria:

Ugh, I'm sorry Emilie. I know that must've been hard. Can you elaborate a little on what types of images come to mind when thinking about Abercrombie? Like if you know of any specific clothing items or models, I'd love to hear about that!

Emilie:

Yeah! I can envision like every article of clothing... I really remember the extra long tank tops my best friend always wore. She was super skinny and super long waisted and they had everything like super long for no reason and she fit in them perfectly. So that's what comes to mind... that or like the AF logo on all the t-shirts

Aria:

I remember those AF logo tees! I think I had one when I was younger haha.

Emilie:

It's crazy how popular those were. If I fit into the shirts at the time, I definitely would've had a bunch of them.

Aria:

So I know you talked a lot about the specific clothing items, but can you possibly recall anything about Abercrombie's advertising?

Emilie:

Ummm, not print media.

Aria:

Yeah totally fine. Can you think of anything from inside a mall or in the store?

Emilie:

Oh yeah I remember seeing it around the mall.

Aria:

Do you remember any of the images or anything about the types of models they were using?

Emilie:

Laughs Not a chance! Wait, were those the one's with the pretty people on the bags or was that Hollister?

Aria:

Yes haha!

Emilie:

Yes, I remember that.

Aria:

Based on the limited knowledge you have about the advertising, do you find their strategies effective?

Emilie:

I mean, I'm 28 and I still remember it's so it can't be that bad. I mean... it made me feel like sh*t. But it was like a thing and it was like Abercrombie and you had the bag with the hot people on it like... we were also like 12 so it was kind of weird.

Aria:

Yeah the bags were definitely very mature for young middle schoolers. So like what qualities and attributes of Abercrombie's advertising would motivate you to make a purchase? I know you mentioned a little bit about the bags and how they almost served as a sort of status, so can you elaborate a little more on that?

Emilie:

Yeah, I mean circa middle school. Do you mean how it motivates me now as an adult?

Aria:

Yeah, you can elaborate on either back then or even now.

Emilie:

Back then it was definitely a status thing. Because it was not cheap but you also had to fit in their size range... which I did not. It was honestly a joke.

Aria:

I guess just reflecting on everything now, what could the brand change to motivate you to make a purchase?

Emilie:

I think in today's age, they need to do more with body positivity. I think that is the best way to go, catering to more people of different sizes and races. I would say they should be more down to earth, wait like don't they own Aerie?

Aria:

No, that is American Eagle that owns Aerie.

Emilie:

Wait, was I thinking of American Eagle this whole time?

Aria:

Abercrombie owns brands like Hollister, Gilly Hicks, and I think one newer brand, I don't remember the name.

Emilie:

American Eagle was right up there though. I feel like it was similar to Abercrombie and Hollister... wait... was American Eagle where I got my jeans?

Aria:

Based on the research I have done on Abercrombie, they had very limited sizes at the time. I think it would make more sense that you found those jeans at American Eagle. I believe they have more of an inclusive size range compared to Abercrombie.

Emilie:

I think you're right. Scrap that last question then. I thought it was Abercrombie.

Aria:

Haha no worries!

Emilie:

Like it was very popular. It was so popular. But yeah, still the same I think they should really offer more sizes and be more inclusive. Inclusivity is really in right now and I'm really here for it. I like that and if you're going to promote something it should be something good! Like maybe something more eco-friendly? Like a brand that is promoting actually good things.

Aria:

I totally understand that. Moving into the company's brand image, can you describe Abercrombie's current brand image? To give you a little definition, brand image is defined as the impression of a product held by real or potential customers.

Emilie:

I haven't seen their rebrand so I can't really tell you anything about their brand image now. But back then, it was kind of rich, preppy, but like beachy? Do you know what I mean by beachy?

Aria:

Yes I do.

Emilie:

Think California, like the shirts would just say California. And yeah, I think that is really my perception of their brand image. Their brand was definitely a status thing but that was also the mid 2000's. I think of really bright colors at the time it was very pre-teen/ teen styles. And I was like the perfect demographic at that time... like huge, so it really worked for me! (Sarcastic)

Aria:

Those are some great descriptions. If you were to sum up Abercrombie's brand image in 3 words what would that be? You can refer to your perception of the brand back. When you were younger or now.

Emilie:

What were the three words I just used?

Aria:

California, beachy, preppy

Emilie:

Yes, those make sense

Aria:

Do you feel like you resonate with those words

Emilie:

laughs Not at all! I do not feel like I resonate with anything Abercrombie. I am too old and too big for their vision.

Aria:

I think you are too good for Abercrombie haha! Moving on from this question... this question is definitely more broad but when you think about inclusivity, what comes to mind and what associations do you have?

Emilie:

Inclusivity for me is making an effort to understand your customer base, um, its great to see inclusivity in advertising but it is more important to back it up by hiring people of color and more company structure initiatives. Also, it is important to make products that don't just feature someone in a campaign with a disability like in a wheel chair. You better make sure that you make a product where that person is able to try that item on and put it on themselves even in a wheel chair. I feel like most clothing items aren't cut right or don't have accessible buttons that cater these people. If you're really thinking about inclusivity, you should just do it... do it.

Aria:

Wow, you really made some great points. I really like what you said about how companies will feature adds with disabled models in it, yet wont make products that are more accessible to them. I never though about it like that before. Really makes me question how inclusive even the most inclusive companies are.

Emilie:

Right? And when they say plus sizes, sometimes they take the same cut like the same shape and make it bigger. But that isn't real for a plus size person because you're building for a different size and type of body. You have to keep that all in mind to prevent things from fitting right or wrong.

Aria:

You make an excellent point there. Just making something bigger isn't going to cater to plus sized people, companies should be tailoring and designing clothes specifically for plus sized bodies.

Emilie:

Exactly!

Aria:

Now, diving deeper into the topic of inclusivity, what brands come to mind that really embody inclusivity?

Emilie:

Hmmm, they're all kind of sucky.

Aria:

I can definitely agree with that. However, are there any companies that you believe are heading in the right direction or have caught your eye in a positive way when it comes to inclusivity?

Emilie:

Aerie is the one I think of first but that is strictly campaign based. Like I still can't buy a bra at Aerie. Like they do not make them in my sizes. But they stopped retouching their photos... I don't know how true that is but that is a positive thing.

Aria:

Aerie is a great example. They have definitely been more inclusive with their models and everything.

Emilie:

Yeah I really like how they are not pretending that something is reality... hopefully. I think that Old Navy is also a great example. They have always been pretty good about diverse advertising but are really good about quality clothing in all kinds of sizes.

Aria:

Yeah Old Navy is a great example. I think you've elaborated on my question really well so I would like to dive a little deeper.... Do you associate Abercrombie with inclusivity and body positivity?

Emilie:

No.

Aria:

Can you elaborate on that a little further?

Emilie:

I think I have mentioned in this interview that Abercrombie seems pretty exclusive. I never fit in their sizes, they always used pretty, stick-thin models... Nothing about their brand promotes body positivity because their brand revolves around lifting up only one type of body

Aria:

You make a great point. Now, how important is it to you to shop from a brand that promotes body positivity?

Emilie:

For me it is VERY important because I am either fitting in it or I am not! If they're not promoting it then I am not getting it.

Aria:

I totally understand that. What is your perception of Abercrombie's sizing and have you ever had trouble finding your size in store or online?

Emilie:

Yeah considering my one positive experience was with a different store, I would say so! Um, no it runs super freaking tiny and for one body type for women, at least. Young girls, not women.

Aria:

I know you mentioned that you believe young girls are their most common customer but who do you believe is Abercrombie's target market?

Emilie:

Teenage girls.

Aria:

Do you think this is an effective target for the brand? Do you think there is someone better they could be targeting?

Emilie:

I mean everyone needs a trade. The teenage girls are going to have to wear something. I feel that the only thing is if I had a company, I would want to be targeting people who are independently wealthy.

Aria:

Exactly! Haha.

Emilie:

But not a kid who has to ask for things from their parents?

Aria:

Totally understandable haha!

Emilie:

So if I were running a clothing company, no I would not be targeting children. Especially teenagers because there is nothing that they wanna wear that their parents are like “okay that’s appropriate” (sarcasm), and like the parents are the ones who are paying for their clothes sooooo.

Aria:

In your opinion, obviously you believe that Abercrombie is trying to target teenagers to buy their clothes but do you think the company is targeting with their ads? Like obviously they’re using older models and such.

Emilie:

No I think they were targeting younger teenagers and I think they purposefully used older models to give the impression that you get to look older and more like a grown up by wearing their clothes. So yeah I think they were targeting kids but using older models to resonate with teenagers who wanted to look older than their age.

Aria:

You make a very great point there. So, I think I already know the answer to this question but do you currently shop at Abercrombie?

Emilie:

No I do not.

Aria:

So what is preventing you from shopping there?

Emilie: I don’t think I have seen an Abercrombie in forever. I don’t get ads for it but I’m sure after this conversation I probably will!

Aria:

Haha, your phone is definitely listening right now.

Emilie:

Certainly. But, the biggest reason I am not shopping there is their limited size range. Their tiny shirts will not fit me. Nor do I want them to fit me because styles like that just don’t look good on me. If they had more modest pieces in plus sized styles, I would definitely consider shopping there, but Abercrombie only caters to the skinny teeny boppers.

Aria:

I totally get that. Moving onto a more general question, what characteristics or qualities prevent you from shopping at brands you dislike?

Emilie:

Um, its really about the cut of clothing because I know what shapes fit me. Um, yeah. You also want to be a little more sophisticated in your, ugh, late twenties. Yeah I think they haven’t showed me something worth getting that’s worth the higher price. If its something like basics, I am not gonna spend \$50, I am going to want to spend \$3. I will go to Old Navy because they hold up... Most of my best pieces are from Old Navy. People sleep on it.

Aria:

I love Old Navy too. They have such comfortable and affordable pieces... like I don’t know why more people don’t shop there.

Emilie:

Right? Like my shirt is from Old Navy. They have the best basics and they have the BEST sales.

Aria:

I love a good sale!

Emilie:

Everything is always on sale! Want leggings for \$12? They have them! I have so many cropped tops from there that actually look good on me! The same with activewear. It’s so comfy and actually affordable.

Aria:

I need to check it out soon. I haven’t shopped there in a while!

Emilie: Yes you do!

Aria:

So you kind of already touched on this topic, but do you find Abercrombie to be an affordable brand?

Emilie:

It wasn’t when I was a teenager and it wouldn’t be affordable for teenagers now. From what I remember, at least.

Aria:

Can you elaborate more on that? Do you think most teenagers would agree with you?

Emilie:

No, I am definitely more cheap.

Aria:
I wish I could say that... I definitely spend too much on my clothes.

Emilie:
It definitely varies from person to person but I do believe that Abercrombie is quite expensive. They have such basic styles that I could easily get at Old Navy for half the price. It's funny because their clothes are so tiny and have so little fabric... yet are so expensive? I don't understand how parents could afford to buy a whole closet worth of items if one shirt was worth like \$50.

Aria:
I totally agree with what you are saying. I know this is hard to estimate, but what is your average budget spent on clothes a month?

Emilie:
Um... maybe like \$100? I don't really spend a lot on clothes because I have so much. So I feel like \$100 would maybe even be a bit much. I do have a clothing box subscription though that I use from time to time.

Aria:
Can you elaborate more on this subscription?

Emilie:
Yeah, I love it. I answered a few questions online and they just send me pieces that they think I'll like. It's also great because they only send me things that will actually fit me which is sometimes hard to find in normal stores.

Aria:
Wow, that sounds great. Would you say you prefer this method of shopping now?

Emilie:
Definitely. It is so easy and more affordable in my opinion.

Aria:
Do you have any brands that you're still loyal to though?

Emilie:
Um, not really anymore. Just Old Navy really. Everything else I just get shipped to me.

Aria:
Yeah the clothing box subscription sounds great. I should really look into that haha!

Emilie:
I can show you next time I see you!

Aria:
Sounds like a plan! So.. moving forward with the big question... Are you aware of Abercrombie's current inclusivity campaign?

Emilie:
Nope!

Aria:
Knowing about this now, would you say that you're more inclined to shop there now?

Emilie:
Yeah I would give it a look!

Aria:
Do you believe the brand could change your past perceptions? Like do you think you could ever look at Abercrombie again without thinking the way you think now?

Emilie:
I mean, it would definitely be hard to look past what I knew to be true for so long. But I believe it is possible for people and companies to change for the better.

Aria:
I completely agree with that. Now, this answers all the questions I had prepared for you, but I think one general question I'd love to ask you is there anything more the brand could be doing right now to be targeting people like you within your age demographic and body type, etc.

Emilie:
Trendy things in appropriate cuts. Because, ya know you want to look modern but you don't want to look like a teenager... but that is a weirdly fine line. Yeah... more adult cuts... Like I don't want a crop top that shows half my stomach. I want pieces that fit and cater to me.

Aria:

I understand that and definitely agree with that statement. Can you better elaborate on what teen styles don't resonate with your taste now?

Emilie:

Crop tops, low rise jeans, mini skirts... um, bra tops... really anything with tiny bits of fabric. I think they should really look at the structure of the clothing and yeah... Nothing that works for my age.

Aria:

I think that's a great answer... So now that we have gone through all the questions, I want to give you some more insights about Abercrombie's current rebrand. So obviously you know the older side of things... the exclusive sizing, brand image, and young target market. However within the past few years, the brand has almost completely turned itself around. They now feature diversity in their campaigns, they have expanded their sizing, and they have also started targeting your age demographic, millennials. They have done this through their more mature and modest pieces and have gone away with their old ad campaigns featuring half naked men and stick-thin half naked models.

Emilie:

Wow. I'm going to look at the website right now.

Aria:

Do it!

Emilie:

These jeans are so cute! And they actually have them in my size.

Aria:

Wow, that's great!

Emilie:

This faux leather square neck top is so cute. I could actually wear this. It's still expensive though and I am REALLY cheap.

Aria:

I get that. They have definitely increased their prices since I shopped there. But that might just be inevitable with the market.

Emilie:

I feel like I'm cheap because I am going to be in art room with kids. Like I do not need to be in an art room in \$100 jeans. But wow this stuff is really cute!

Aria:

It is crazy to see how much they have changed.

Emilie:

They did what I wanted them to do! Make trendy pieces in a more modest fashion.

Aria:

There you go! Now, this concludes our interview. Thank you for your time. This information is going to be used in a Marketing Research project for our Marketing 434 research class within the Ryan School of Business at Providence College. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me with any questions you may have regarding the project. Again, thank you for your time!"

Emilie:

I'm happy to have helped! I will definitely be looking more on this website.

Appendix H: Moderator Guidebook

1. When you think of the brand Abercrombie, what words come to mind?
2. What does it mean to be an inclusive brand within the fashion industry? Can you think of any relevant examples?
3. What are your feelings on inclusion within brands? Does it determine what brands you do/don't shop from? What brand/brands do you associate with being inclusive?
4. What does this ad tell you about Abercrombie's brand image? How does looking at this ad make you feel?
5. What more could Abercrombie be doing to redefine themselves as a more inclusive brand? What more could the brand be doing to motivate you to shop with them?