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HOW TO MAKE THE BRAND TURNAROUND ON THE FIRST BIGGEST GLOBAL MARKET AFTER US?

Written by Nathalie Schneider

Before we go into the details of the brand turnaround project, I would like to give a short statement about being a women leader: **YES, I AM A WOMEN BUT** I have always behaved without thinking I am a women. Work place is competitive for all (men and women) and what will make difference is results, how to get them and how you develop your team& work with others. I have always tried to lead by example. When I took this turnaround challenge, I was the first women to do so and my sales force and customers were mostly men. I gained respect step by step from all. Then I tried to balance the team with more women as I believe **the balance creates a good mix and is part of diversity.**

Let's look at the turnaround project:

- **Industry:** Apparel
- **Positions held:** Sales Director and then General Manager
- **How hired:** Internal promotion via internal interviews
- **Brand context:** First signs of decline when I applied for the role. At that time I held a sales director role on a smaller brand within the company and became with the new role the first women in that role for this brand in this market!

STEP 1: FACE REALITY

Meet customers, spend time in the field with the sales team on different channels
Assess in depth & evaluate impact of decline on your budget in terms of revenue and profitability
Hold conversation with your top management and be transparent
Hold meetings with your direct and indirect team and be transparent about the challenge to overcome
Start working on actions to minimize the current gap

STEP 2: CHANGE - "INSANITY IS DOING THE SAME THING OVER AND OVER AGAIN AND EXPECTING DIFFERENT RESULTS" EINSTEIN QUOTE

Same behaviors will generate same results. Once you know that you need to identify what changes are required.

You need to be radical and drive their implementation.

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STEP 3: FASHION APPAREL REQUIRES ALSO PROCESS AND STRUCTURE

Apply the same principals in apparel than in FMCG but in a simple, smart way. This approach was new at that time for apparel industry.

Principles: 1) Prioritize your accounts (revenue/profit criteria) 2) Plan your visits/calls 4 weeks in advance 3) Share your final plan a week before with your manager of the whole organization 4) Prepare each call with clear quantified objectives and define agendas 5) Debrief on agreed actions regarding the next steps and the achieved results 6) Keep all information in the customer file.

Drive execution of this new way of working via your managers team and ensure by yourself it's done. Be consistent on it if you want your team to believe in it and do it.

STEP 4: CELEBRATE SUCCESS WITHIN YOUR TEAM AND GROW YOUR TEAM CONFIDENCE

Failing at delivering budget creates tension and month after month, team starts lacking confidence.

This is reason why it's key to start celebrating even small success from one team member or one region with all. It gives a light and put everyone in a different mode.

It's like in sports. If you believe you can make it, you train yourself and there will be a day when you will be successful.

STEP 5: NEVER COMPROMISE SHORT TERM WITH MEDIUM TERM

Brand turnaround comes from several factors but there is a big one called "brand equity" on which sales have a great role to play.

Sales have to drive revenue within the frame of brand equity! This is never to forget.

Align with marketing and merchandising on brand objectives and ensure sales force understand them and have also qualitative objectives to reach and reason behind those targets.

Ensure you deliver your short term with quick win that will not damage your medium term objectives

STEP 6: BRING RETAIL BEST PRACTICES INTO WHOLESALE

Sell out focus is key any case.

With a retail back ground, it's obvious.

For ones having work in wholesale, it has been a learning path.

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Focus most of your team on improving sell thru results of their customers.
Act as a retailer for your customer! It's has been a key mindset to develop and actions to put in place.

STEP 7: CELEBRATE SUCCESS WITH ALL

Important to take time to celebrate and pause to review progress and how success has been achieved.

Celebrate with all within the company to ensure team spirit is kept in good time also!

STEP 8: BE DEMANDING, CONSISTENT AND RESILIENT AND FAIR TO YOUR TEAM!

If you want your growth to be sustainable, you need to keep driving implementation all initiatives and ensure processes are used at any time. This is restless effort!

STEP 9: KEEP DEVELOPING YOUR TEAM AND EMPOWER THEM

Spend time in coaching and developing your team. Identify within your team who could be your potential bench and prepare him as best as possible. It will allow you to be promoted and feel secured if you have a successor ready for the role.

WHAT I LEARNED:

- Work under business and financial pressure
- Be transparent
- Say what you do and do what you say
- Be consistent
- Be demanding
- Encourage your team especially when times are tough
- Invest time in coaching & developing your team



PROFILE

Nathalie is an experienced commercial executive director with significant expertise of leading multi brand retail operations. She has a strong track record of aligning teams. As a senior business leader, she is adept at strategic planning, change management, driving execution of profitable sales results and delivering continuous improvement in sectors of retail, wholesale and fashion.

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS

Nathalie managed more than 2000 people on a global scale. She turned around a business back to profitable and continuous growth in 2 years with different channels of distribution and proved her ability to work with different cultures (US, European and Asian) and as a team player.

Click here to [view Nathalie's Short Bio](#)

ABOUT FEMALE EXECUTIVE SEARCH

Female Executive Search is a brand of the international executive recruitment company CEO Worldwide Ltd, operating since 2001. The intention of Female Executive Search is to actively support women leaders on their way to Top-Level-Positions bringing more diversity to company boards.

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