

**BRANDLESS**

**TM**

## **Creative Strategy Marketing Plan**

Megan Guerra

IMC615

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## SWOT ANALYSIS

Brandless is an online-based company that offers everyday products, hygiene supplies, and food at a low price that will be delivered to the customer's home. Brandless began in 2017, aimed toward making high quality products at fair prices available to online consumers by cutting out the middle man, in-person stores (Brandless, 2017). Brandless claims that by "building direct relationships with our suppliers and customers from the start, we eliminate all the extra costs associated with inefficient and unnecessary markups," which is how they can offer consistently low prices on all of their products (Brandless, 2017).

This company markets their products toward the Millennial age group, with their co-founder Tina Sharkey saying, "Seventy-eight percent of millennials have said they don't want to buy the products they grew up with. They don't want their parents' government. They don't want their parents' institutions and they don't want to go with the brands" (CBS News, 2017). Offering products online or to be shipped to the customer's homes allows for a more convenient option for those in this target group that don't have the time or accessibility to visit an actual store. The majority of marketing efforts are through social media and television platforms, with advertising on Twitter and Facebook, as well as commercial spots on Hulu.

Brandless claims to have a strong level of communication between the company and its clients, saying that "The whole Brandless organization is built around customer feedback. Our merchants, marketers, and compliance gurus all talk directly to our customers, every day" (Brandless, 2017). The company does this in-person, over the phone, through email, or using social media platforms. Another unique aspect regarding this company is that it partnered with Feeding America to donate meals to food banks across the country. Currently, with every online order from

May 2018 until May 2021, “Brandless will help provide a meal\* to someone in need through the Feeding America network of food banks with a minimum commitment of \$300,000” (Feeding America, 2018).

Companies that are in competition with Brandless are Boxed, Aftcra, and Memebox. These companies are all online shopping sites, with Boxed being the most similar to Brandless in terms of products sold. While Brandless has the most amount of funding between those companies with \$289 million, it has the second lowest revenue, behind Boxed with \$100 million and Memebox with \$15 million (Owler, 2019). Amazon could be considered a competitor, but co-founder Tina Sharkley explains, “‘Amazon is the everything store,’ she says. ‘We’re a highly curated collection.’” (McBride, 2018).

Brandless plays on the ideal shopping experience and personal values that resonate with today’s consumers. It offers organic, natural, and eco-friendly items at a price that rivals big convenience and grocery stores. It offers a convenient way to shop for any and all products that a person could need, all online that will be delivered straight to their door. In that sense, Brandless works for those who are not able to physically visit a store, or simply don’t have the time to. Brandless leaves off the bells and whistles in advertising and promotion that other brands do to attract and promote their products, which further reinforces their overall minimalistic image that they convey through their personal branding.

While Brandless has been in the public eye more recently, it has only been in business since 2017. Brandless does not compare to much of their competitors in the marketplace in terms of popularity and visibility. In addition, when consumers typically shop for specific products, they would be more likely to gravitate toward brands that they are familiar with and have an already

established relationship with, rather than a new brand. Despite the competitively low prices, consumers may feel wary about this company since it is solely online, not allowing an opportunity to physically handle the products, which would lead prospective buyers to rely on other customers' reviews rather than use their own judgement.

Brandless' all-online platform gives consumers an easy and convenient way to purchase the items they need. In time, and with expansions and other partnerships, Brandless could potentially become a larger online retailer similar to Amazon. In order to do that, it must first prove to that their 'generic' products live up to and exceed the expectations that are in the minds of their consumers regarding popular brands they currently use, gain more customers and their loyalty to the brand, and work with other companies to provide a larger array of products through merging with retailers with similar goals.

Large, well-known brands for products that are sold by Brandless that have already gained the loyalty of consumers poses the biggest threat to the brand. While the consistently low prices may entice some consumers, some may be willing to pay more for a product if they know it is quality. In addition, popular online marketplaces with a large selection of products can also be considered a threat since consumers may already be accustomed to the products, deals, and overall design of the company, and may not be as willing to change their habits to try out a different marketplace.

Overall, Brandless is currently a smaller company that has the potential to become a larger and more popular sector of the online marketplace. While there are certain issues that need to be overcome in order to grow and expand, such as exposure and customer loyalty, Brandless can grow as a company and be more successful.

## **CREATIVE STRATEGY STATEMENT, CREATIVE BRIEF & AUDIENCE PROFILE**

The advertising will convince individuals in the Millennial age group that the online retailer 'Brandless' will provide a cheap and high quality alternative to name brand products, which will be conveniently delivered to their homes. The support will be vocalized through previous customer's testimonies, as well as blind comparisons of Brandless' products versus name brand products. The tone will be casual and conversational, but at the same time informational.

Brandless is an online retailer that carries home goods, hygiene products, and food - made organically, environmentally friendly, and all for only \$3 each. Brandless has been in business since 2017, but has yet to break into the market as a well known company.

Through this project, we are trying to raise more awareness to Brandless, and its line of products, as well as create more business from individuals in the Millennial age group, which many are unaware of right now or use bigger brands when it comes to their everyday products.

The most persuasive idea that we can convey to the audience is that the products sold by Brandless live up to and exceed the expectations consumers have about items that are similar and sold by name brands. Consumers will learn about and accept this idea by seeing advertisements where previous customers in the same age demographic give their positive testimonies about Brandless' products. The positive reviews as well as product comparisons where prospective Millennial customers try Brandless items and similar name brand items and blindly choose which one they prefer over the other will show that Brandless products are just as quality as name brand ones. With Millennials seeing other Millennials' positive opinions and experiences with Brandless'

products, they can confidently purchase products from this company without reservation since the value of the products has been shown by those who share the same thoughts and values.

The “style” of the advertisements and overall tone will be casual and conversational while also being informative. The information on the brand will be presented in a way that isn’t too showy or in the customer’s face.

Brandless’ simple and minimalist style of branding will need to be present in this project and all future projects since it matches the product packaging and overall image of the brand. Bright colors are used to grab an individual's attention in packaging and current advertising plans, with a clean looking and easy to read font. This will also play into the overall tone of the advertisements.

The best platform to carry out this project on would be television and social media, with some billboard ads in city settings. The television ads can be incorporate the minimalist style and include customer testimonies to prove to prospective customers that the products are high quality. Social media ads can be bright and include animations or graphics to grab the audience’s attention while they are scrolling through their various social media feeds. In major cities, some billboards and bus stop ads are electronic and are compatible with advertisements with movement (graphics and animation). The electronic billboard ads can be similar to the social media advertisements where they are not static photos, but have elements that will attract and engage bystanders.

Alex is a 24-year-old woman who is living in the DC area, working at her first real adult job. Contrary to what she may think, she leads a busy life. On top of her full-time position working in the

city as a public relations specialist, she also takes classes online working towards her Master's degree.

Alex spends a lot of his time online. At work, she is in charge of keeping in touch about what is going on all over the country and the world relating to the company she works at. She also is active on social media to keep up with her friends and family and gets a lot of information about just about anything online, so she sees advertisements and promotions for many products, services, and events that are available around her and in the DC area.

Being financially independent, Alex is conscious about her budget - the amount of money she has to save up each month for rent and bills, paying back student loans, groceries, money for her Metro card to get to and from work, and other things she may want or need. She is also environmentally and health conscious, so she makes sure that the food and other products that she purchases at any given time are natural and not potentially damaging to the environment or her body, as well as healthy to consume.

Between a 40-hour work week, taking time to work on assignments, and spending time with friends, finding time to travel to the grocery store is not always in the cards; especially since she lives in the city and does not have a form of transportation to get there.

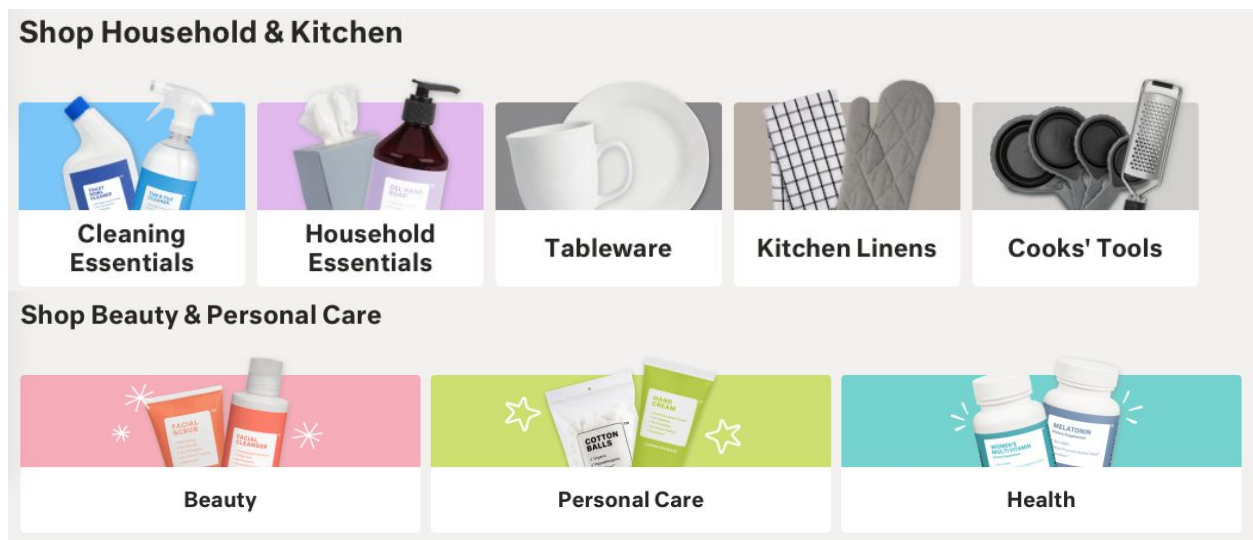
This is where Brandless comes into play: an online retailing company that allows busy people like Alex to shop for the things she needs all in one place, all \$3 each, and delivered right to her apartment. The products offered at Brandless appeal to the values that Alex holds important - high quality, environmentally friendly, and healthy.

## DIGITAL/TRANSIT ADVERTISEMENTS

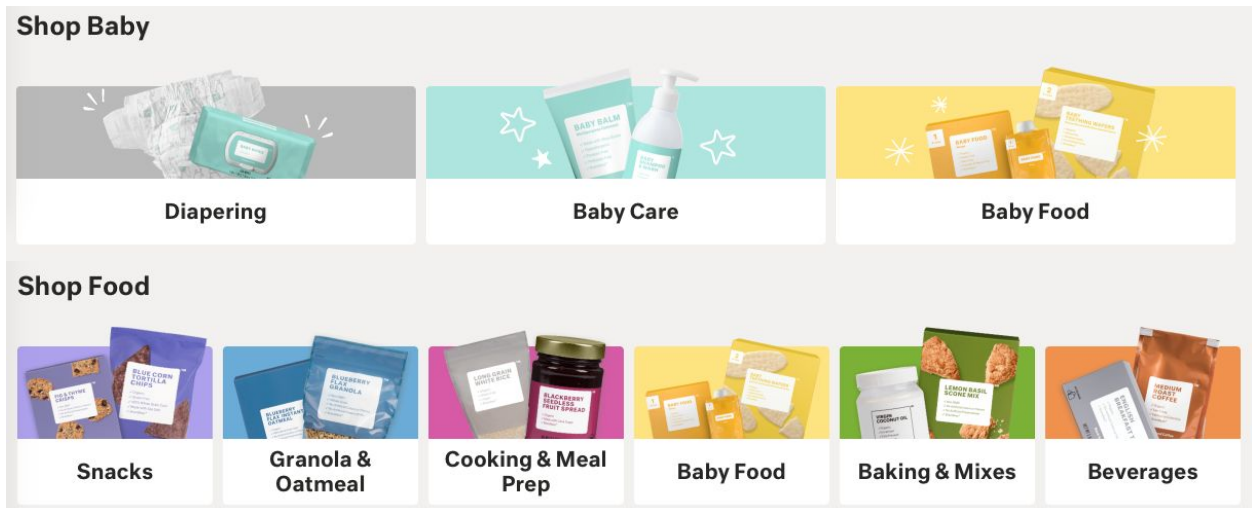
This idea is for a digital ad that can be published on social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. It will be a fast-paced ad that will last for 10-15 seconds, that would inform the audience about the different products that Brandless has to offer in the wide range of categories the products fall in.

There can be a fun-sounding song in the background for those who click on the ad itself, otherwise it will be silent if the user is simply watching it on the social media platform's timeline. There can also be text incorporated into the video, highlighting the most important selling points of Brandless - cheap prices, eco-friendly, and healthy options.

In terms of design, this will be as simple as straight-on shots of the products on backgrounds that correspond with the colors that are seen in packaging or on the Brandless' website, as seen below:







The fast-paced speed of the ad will effectively show the large amount of products that are offered by this company, while the pops of color can help to catch the average user’s eye to make them stop and look at the ad in its entirety. At the end of the ad, the tagline, “Ditch big brands, go Brandless!” will be shown as well as the social media icons that can lead those passing by to be able to connect with the brand after the ad experience is over and they exit the application they’re viewing it on.

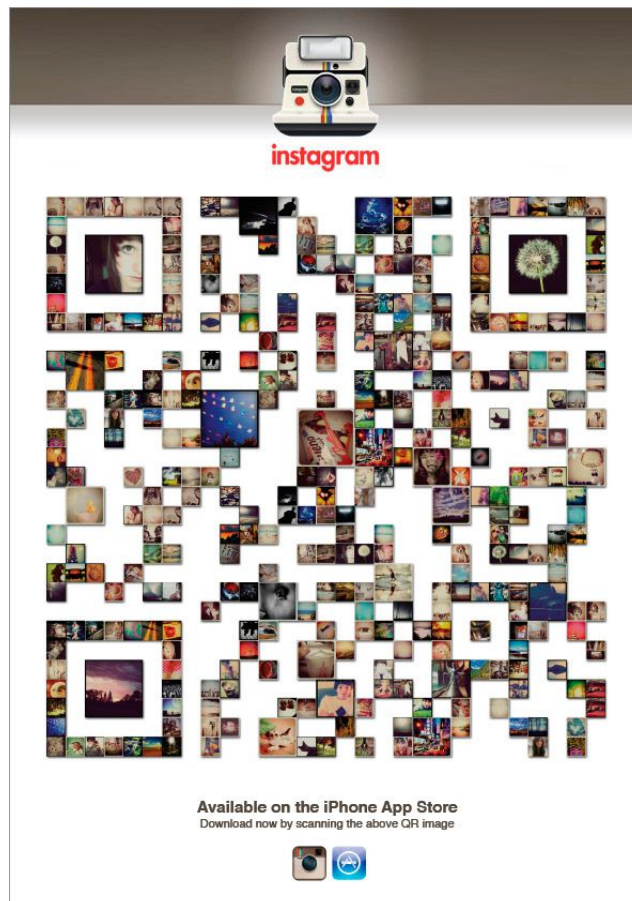
We can use the demographic information to tailor our advertisement to reach those in the target audience, which is the millennial age group, to raise awareness to the brand and bring in more business.

Inspiration for an outdoor ad came from this Instagram ad (shown on the next page) where a number of Instagram photos are compiled together to create a QR code which takes the individual to the App Store where the app can be downloaded.

This will be modified for Brandless by using photos of different products to create the logo, instead of a QR code. Since the packaging of these products are monochromatic, there can be different forms of this advertisement where the colors are all similar - such as all the blue and

green products; reds, pinks & purples; grays, blacks & whites, etc. At the bottom of the ad, the tagline, “Ditch big brands, go Brandless!” will be shown, as well as the social media icons so that the audience is aware of the different ways to connect with the company.

This will be a great way to catch a bystander’s eye, as it has somewhat of a mosaic, while also getting them to take a closer look to see the smaller products that make up the bigger picture. To reach the highest possible amount of people, this ad can be placed in areas where there is high foot traffic but people will still be able to stop and look, such as bus stops, subway stations, and street corners.



## **RADIO/WEB/TV SPOT SCRIPTS**

**Radio:** TIRED OF PAYING MORE THAN YOUR SHOULD FOR BIG BRAND PRODUCTS? WANT TO HAVE YOUR GROCERIES AND OTHER HOME GOODS SHIPPED RIGHT TO YOUR DOOR? TRY BRANDLESS... AN ONLINE SHOP WHERE EVERYTHING - YES, EVERYTHING, IS UNDER 9 DOLLARS. WHETHER YOU'RE SHOPPING FOR FOOD, HOME GOODS, BEAUTY AND PERSONAL CARE ITEMS, EVEN THINGS FOR YOUR BABY OR PET! ALL NON G-M-O, ECO-FRIENDLY, AND ALL FOR 9 DOLLARS OR LESS. TRY IT TODAY! GO TO BRANDLESS-DOT-COM AND START SHOPPING. DITCH BIG BRANDS... GO BRANDLESS.

**Web:** GET EVERYTHING YOU NEED: FROM FOOD AND HOME GOODS TO BABY AND PET CARE ITEMS. AT A LOW PRICE, SHIPPED RIGHT TO YOUR DOOR. SHOP NOW AT BRANDLESS DOT COM. DITCH BIG BRANDS, GO BRANDLESS!

**Television:** The concept for this ad will be a compilation of Brandless customers (4-5 max) from a wide range of ages/backgrounds talking about why they have become loyal to the company and what their favorite product they purchase is. It is very important to get a wide range of customers for this because it will allow individuals that are close in age or have similar lifestyles to connect and identify with these people and choose to use this company because people like them use it.

These customers will note the selling points of Brandless: low prices, healthy options, environmentally and animal friendly products, convenient shipping, etc. while having their favorite product in the shot with them. This can be more of an interview/documentary style that the customers are shown in rather than a way that looks too posed or commercialized, to keep a

casual feel to the ad and show the personalities of the customers. We will close with the tagline "Ditch big brands," voiced over by an announcer and have quick cuts of all 4-5 of the Brandless customers saying "Go Brandless," and finishing with the Brandless logo wiping onto the screen with the website, as well as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram logos.

This ad will follow the minimalist style that the logo has, so there will be very simple backgrounds that the subjects will be in: kitchens, bathrooms, bedrooms, parks, etc. Light, bright colors will be used for clothing options. Nothing too busy in the scenes that will take away from the overall message that we are trying to convey.

## **NONTRADITIONAL/INTERACTIVE MARKETING**

### **Execution 1**

This interactive marketing campaign for Brandless would include influencers on social media and other online platforms. In Drewniany & Jewler's text, the concept of sending promotional items to popular social media users is brought up, as their positive opinions on products can be influential in raising awareness and boosting sales (239).

For Brandless, influencers will be sent an array of items from all of the different lines of products that they offer: food, household & kitchen, stationary, baby, and pet. These individuals will have the opportunity to try out the products for a week and if they are satisfied and/or willing to endorse the brand, they can post about it to their followers. The influencers would need to be carefully selected in order to reach the highest possible number of potential customers, meaning that these individuals will need to be public figures that are known and followed by a wide range of different ages and demographics.

This would work the best on social media platforms such as Instagram, Youtube, and Facebook, since these allow for an interactive nature between the influencers who are posting and their followers. On Instagram, the influencer can either post a regular photo or video for their followers to see, or they could reach more people by posting an Instagram story or doing an IGTV video where they detail their experience with Brandless. On Youtube, the influencer could post a vlog-type video where they take the time to describe the different Brandless products they tried and voice their opinions on them and comparisons to similar name brand products. Posts on Facebook would be along the same lines as Instagram, but there would be Facebook Live posts in place of the IGTV videos.

These links show examples of the proposed concept for Brandless. This Instagram post is from Catherine Lowe, wife of a former contestant on *The Bachelor*, who has over 1 million followers and is promoting Hello Fresh (<https://www.instagram.com/p/BrlsYgAgFgV/>). This Youtube video is actually reviewing Brandless that was posted from a user that also has about 1 million subscribers to their channel ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ts9Y\\_D3jFus](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ts9Y_D3jFus)).

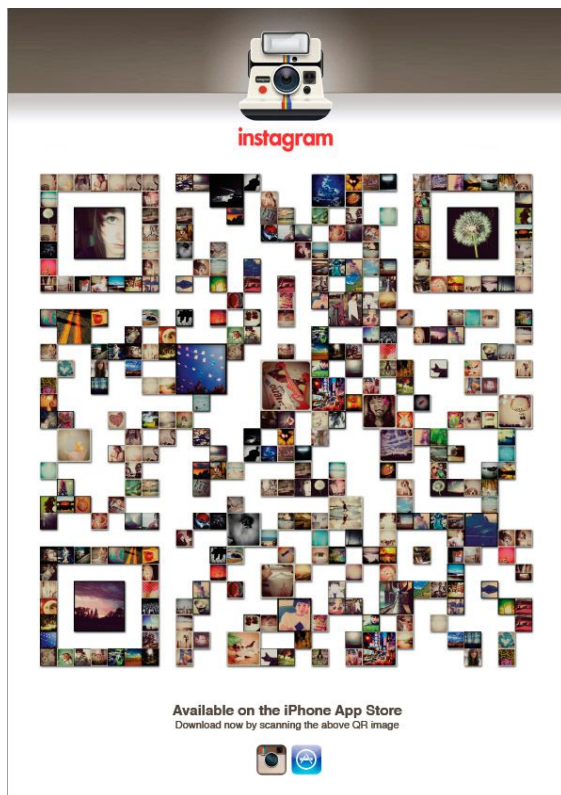
## Execution 2

This marketing effort will be in the form of QR codes scattered about high traffic areas in city settings. Since Brandless is primarily an online entity, there needs to be a bridge created between the real world where people will see advertisements and the digital world where the company exists. Upon scanning, the customer will be brought to Brandless' website. The QR codes will need to be eye-catching so that the average person who will see it will be compelled to stop and scan the code in order to find out more information. This also plays into the target market that we are advertising to, since there are a higher number of millennials in cities, and the majority have smartphones that are capable of scanning these codes.

In terms of design, the QR codes can be on a simple background that parallels the packaging that the Brandless products have, with the logo in the bottom corner or the tagline, "Ditch big brands, go Brandless!" There can be a variety of ads that go out in colors similar to the ones in this photo:



Another option would be a more creative design with the QR code that incorporates the different products that are sold by this company, similar to this one from Instagram. For Brandless, the QR code can include various items that can be purchased on the online store, using the color



scheme that matches the product's packaging. This will be a good way to showcase the wide range of products that Brandless has to offer, with a creative delivery that potential customers will be able to interact with.

In terms of location, these will need to be placed in areas where people come and go frequently throughout the day, such as bus stops and subway stations, like this link shows

(<https://www.techinasia.com/7-awesome-qr-code-marketing-campaigns>), or busy street corners

on the sidewalk and curb, and lamp posts. Placing these ads in places where thousands of people will see it on a given day will increase awareness of the brand and lead potential customers to the company's website to browse and purchase products. Something that could be kept in mind for the outdoor ads would be to have them be eco-friendly to mirror the company's values that their products possess.

## **MOBILE MARKETING**

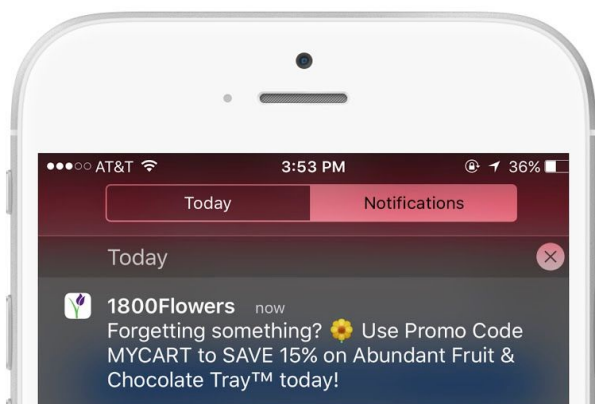
An idea for mobile marketing would be sending out coupons or notifying customers of promotions through email or text messages. This would be good to interact with customers through their phones and offer them an incentive without having to do too much work or spend an excess of money.

This could be implemented by sending out emails about new or trending products that Brandless has to offer, notifying customers about special sales or markdown that will be happening, or even going a more interactive route and sending recipes or DIY ideas that go with specific products that they have purchased. By doing that, it shows that Brandless is going the extra mile in being connected with customers and taking an interest in them. In terms of text messages, these should be used primarily to send out information about special deals and sales that are happening that day in conjunction with the emails. For example, if Brandless is doing a free shipping promotion with the purchase of a specific item for only one day, that would be something to send out via text in addition to email. This is a good way to quickly and effectively get a message across without any extra bells and whistles to entice the customer.

Another idea for mobile marketing would work if Brandless expanded their reach to consumers by launching a mobile app, where they could purchase products the same way as they could through the website, but with more ease straight from their smartphones. For this form of marketing to work effectively, the customer would need to have their push notifications on, so that the app can send out reminders and/or messages to keep the customers up-to-date and involved with what any specials or promotions Brandless is holding.



Two specific ways that these push notifications can be implemented would be to remind customers to purchase products, and to promote special sales that take place only on the app. If a customer is shopping on the Brandless app and adds items to their bag, but then closes the app without making a purchase, a push notification can be sent out after a certain amount of time to remind the customer that they left things in their bag. These notifications can even include a coupon code to further promote the transaction being completed, like this one below:



By giving the customer a subtle reminder and an incentive to make a purchase, it can lead to more sales, as well as decrease the number of abandoned carts in the app.

Push notifications can also be used to let the customer know about sales that are happening on the website or exclusively on the app. These

would be particularly helpful in boosting traffic and usage on the app or website, as the notifications that are worded well can entice a customer to stop what they're doing and visit the website or open the app to make a purchase.

The most effective way to implement this idea would be to send out notifications of the different promotions that are going on at strategic times when customers could potentially be using their phones such as: the morning, lunch time, and in the early evening. This could help to ensure that the customer will stop what they are already doing on the phone and visit the website or the app, as opposed to sending out the notifications when the phone isn't in use and the individual would see it later.

For all of these options, the company would need to be careful to not send too many emails/texts/notifications in a given time, as an overload of messages from the company can be seen as annoying to the user, who could opt to unsubscribe to email and text notifications, turn off push notifications completely or delete the app. In that case, the means of communication between the company and the customer are more limited, and the amount of sales may be affected. It is extremely important to communicate with customers and keep them up to date with current sales and promotions, but there must be a level between being too distant and being too present that must be reached and maintained.

## **SUMMARY**

All in all, the combination of some or all of these marketing ideas for Brandless should be effective in promoting awareness and sales to the company. The different ideas that have been presented are all geared toward allowing for the highest possible level of interaction between potential customers and the company. More advertisements and engaging material that implement social media will show to be the most effective for this company since it is primarily online, and the target audience of Millennials are more active on social media and connect more with technology. With more creative and interesting advertisements that are put out by Brandless, the more buzz the company will receive and can start to gain momentum against the competing companies, or merge with others to become bigger and reach more customers.

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