

Branding Framework: Dollar Shave Club



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Background

The One-Dollar Shave Club is a men's razor blade company that utilizes entertaining digital platform made up of viral videos, word of mouth and social media marketing, and the "Join the club" appeal to reach its audience of 18-35 year old men. CEO Michael Dubin created this company in his apartment with just 35,000, he's since raised nearly \$25 million from a variety of investors, including venture firms Andreessen Horowitz, Kleiner Perkins Caufield & Byers, incubator Science-Inc. and TV giant Comcast.ⁱ

Description

One Dollar Shave Club has a clear business proposition and stance on over priced and over complicated process of buying men's razors. They have positioned themselves as the underdog, start-up, corky, man's man, do it cheaper, modern razor company.

"Membership vs. Subscription"

The Dollar Shave Club makes built its original customer base around it's YouTube campaign, but more specifically it's YouTube community. DSC looks as it's month subscription as more of a membership into a club, "Where customers can look from the inside out, and feel they are entailed to something, rather than the other way around" says CEO Dubin.ⁱⁱ DSC has created rewards and prizes for it's YouTube community and encouraged DSC users to post videos and share with their friends. This word of mouth advertising through this fan base bridged his company into the spot light with mainstream media organizations such as as the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Forbes, Los Angeles Times, Esquire, Mash able and AOL.ⁱⁱⁱ

"Instead of throwing up a broadcast message and hoping it sticks, Dollar taps into social engagement," he says. "This is the way of the world now. Everyone knows it's an ad, but because it's humorous, you'll watch it over and over, and share it with your buddy."

- Dollar shave Club CEO, Michael Dubin

Viral YouTube Humor, then TV commercials.

With similar over the top. Dude centric, sarcastic humor, SDSC's videos have the same ambiance as the old spice commercial^{iv}, and the Kenny powers K-Swiss commercial^v for a fraction of the cost. Their videos use many continuous shots of the talent breaking the forth wall by looking and speaking at the camera. Clever dialoged and humor settings are used to keep their audience entertained. DSC's gripping, direct and short video is was essential in making DSC sharable through social networks. There use of humor to create word of mouth advertising catapulted their company into the razor industry, battling with top dogs like Gillette. While their campaign started on YouTube, DSC now has television commercials as well. They are toned down to fit the television viewing experience verse the web experience. However, the DSC brands identify and core values are identical across all platforms.

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Web Page and Vocabulary

Their webpage is designed for the male eye with wood background and a cross bones like logo, except instead of cross bones they have razors. The vocabulary they use throughout their webpage and video is very laid back and personal. Their sub navigation uses words like "Shave Butter" instead of shaving cream, "Post shave" instead of after-shave, and "One Wipe Charlie's" for their latest tissue product. This brand motto is a clever play on word - "Shave time. Save Money."

Presidential Election and Social Media Campaign

DSC goal with the 2012 presidential election campaign was to elevate and associate the DSC brand with "Great American Moments" and unique, shareable and relevant artwork. The DSC extended this campaign by engaging consumers with a faux election microsite and the chance to win discounts and prizes.^{vi} This campaign Required DSC to hire an outside digital entertainment branding company "The Famous Group" to create sixteen campaign posters depicting past presidents as if they were running in the 2012 election. The purposes of the posters were to focus on bridging events in American history with the digital era.

Results

One-dollar shave club has two of these unique branding videos on their webpage. On the landing page is their original video about their razors, and on their "wipes" page is their latest video about toilet tissue. The tissue video was released in June 2013 and has over 2.8 million views on YouTube, while their razor video was released march 6, 2012 and has over 18.2 million views.

Their website is ranked 2,976 in the United States with an above average amount of Home watching, college educated males.^{vii} Almost 15% of site visit come from search engine searches, which is above average and shows good SEO. Google is use most often to redirect searches with 34% and then Facebook with 11.8%. There are also over 1,817 sites on the web that link to DSC's website. Their daily time on site is an impressive 3:30+, which is probably due to video viewing, However their page per visitor is only 2.9 which is well below average and their bounce rate is at 20% which could suggest they need a more enticing or user friendly layout.

Key Learning Experience & Suggestions

Humor + Viral Videos = an inexpensive way to reach a large audience. In this day an age creativity is key. No longer do you have to start with a big budget on the mainstream channels. DSC did a great job in positioning itself with clever content and a social media and word of mouth advertising campaign. The only thing they could have done was be more prepared for success. Their site crashed for 12 hours upon launching their first viral video. Many potential customers could have signed up with DSC had they been more prepared.

Product - SWOT Analysis

- Strength

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- Strong start in creating relationship with audience through inexpensive social media marketing & viral video techniques.
- Creating a new system that makes it cheaper and easier to buy razors. People like the new kid on the block, underdog approach.
- Weakness
 - Brand doesn't have near the customer base of bigger brand companies
 - Reliability. Is this company legit? How are they actually going to be able to deliver razors to my door on time?
 - Subscription base – not everyone likes the idea of subscribing to things, what if I decided to go a few months without shaving or if I don't need new razors on a monthly basis.
- Opportunities
 - The old system of buying razors is expensive, time consuming, outdated and kind of ridiculous.
 - These big razor companies don't have loyal customers. Most people aren't bound by a particular razor company.
 - Clever initial interaction with customers creates a relationship and brand awareness. DSC has the razor community's attention.
 - Potential partnerships.
- Threats
 - Big companies have more resources and can adjust their price point, or adopt a similar method as DSC.
 - The trend of younger people not shaving as much as they used to.

Unique Selling Point

The Dollar shave club's unique selling point is how they have positioned themselves as the new company on the block with a chip on their shoulder about big razor companies. They offer a solution to a problem that most never really thought much about; changing the outdated, hassle filled, overpriced way to buy razors. Unlike big razor companies, DSC takes time to build relationships with their customers by creating an online community with the use of social media marketing and funny Internet videos.

Consumer Analysis

Demographics

Age: 21- 35
Gender: Male
Race: white
Marital status: Single
Education: some college – college graduate
Income: 30,000 – 45,000k annually
Occupation: entry-mid level position

Psychographics – “John”

Attitudes: John is annoyed with big corporations. He feels pushed around at times when making purchases at the gas station or in the razor aisle. It hasn't been an easy couple of years, with the economy in the gutter and baby boomers clinching onto every last dime and job, **it's been hard to find a good job, make a good wage and find a decent chick**. Then when you do find a good job, you have to shave, which means you have to donate a small fortune to a big corporation like Gillette.

John likes running numbers and making smart purchases where he could to save a few bucks, Though he usually spends his extra money on something like beer, smokes or fixing up his project car. **He likes supporting the underdog, like himself**. He also likes team sports and the idea of kicking back with the boys, He plans to have a man cave one day but he has to get out of his shitty apartment on the Southside 1st.

Interest: John likes to party, but he is in the real world so his version of “partying” has changed. Instead of going to the clubs and bar crawling until he's drooling on himself, John now likes to go fishing with a couple work friends and tailgate at the local university football stadium. **John is economical in how he tries to pick up women, and spending a bunch of money on women isn't in his budget** so instead he tries to meet women at the beach, while walking his dog, or somewhere else casual. John enjoys a little bit of a darker side of comedy, **sarcasm and dry humor are a second language to John**. He often downloads illegal movies and standup comedies.

Opinions: John values his time over money. Life is too short to do things you don't care about he always says. He **isn't particularly into politics**, because it hasn't done much good for him – not poor enough to get an Obama phone, not rich enough to care about being taxed. John's mom is always telling him he needs to go to church more, he knows he should but he just “doesn't have time”. **He's pretty wrapped up in his small world, but he wasn't always that way. John misses the days where he was a world traveler, partying college student, and an resident to the gym**.

Consumer Product Relationship – Free bird narrative and thoughts

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John can't stand shaving. He defiantly can't stand the process or buying razors, the cost, and getting razor burn. **He misses his beard.** He's never had an intimate relationship with his razor company, but he has never really thought about it either, until seeing DSC. DSC fires up his underdog, rebellious side. Why do I pay so much for stuiped razors? He asked himself. He starts to think of all the old farts who work for those big companies, the guys who wouldn't give him a job because he had a Facebook picture of him chugging a beer. It really fires him up in a way.

John has to buy the 4 blade razors because his beard is pretty thick and they are pretty expensive so **he ends up buying the economy 32+ pack, that takes up a little to much room in his small apartment bathroom.** His lady friend who he has sexual relations with but isn't classified as his girlfriend always takes a razor from him when she stays over. It's kind of annoying but John is a standup guy so he pretends its ok. He wishes it was the other way around, and that he could steal her razors.

John ends up dancing a delicate line between using razors several times and contracting razor bumps. It's a risk he is willing to take in order to shave a few bucks off is grocery budget (that was a good one).

Color

John likes James Franco and Seth Rogan movies. Sarcastic Bro comedy is his favorite type of movie. He doesn't buy popcorn at the movie theater unless he is with a date, instead he sneaks in some candy from the corner store across the street. **Likes to hangout with the boys and pretend he "still has it"** whatever that means. He goes to college tailgates, bars, and concentrates pretending he is not to old to be there.

Money

John is tight with his money but he doesn't mind investing in the latest technology. He has an apple TV to watch netflix (so he doesn't need cable), an iphone, Ipad, lap top (or two), big new tv, xbox. HE keeps a bunch of his old technology like his Nintendo 64 because sit reminds him of the good ol days, he's connected to it in a way still. He even pulls it out and plays Mario kart for old times sake every once in a while. **John is savvy on the web, he knows how to navigate, upload and download media. He has the basic dude social media sites – Facebook twitter, instagram** but he isn't really into that like he ust to be (he says) but he still spends more time on Facebook and the internet then he does watching TV.

The Brand

Brand Benefits

- More convent process

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- Less expensive (presumably)
- Social value in being a supporter of the brand
- Being apart of a community or “club”
- Feeling of going up against status quo

Brand Personality

“Slick, Sensible, Personal”

The DSC Brand Personality was established by DSC CEO Michael Dubin when DSC launched their 1st viral video in March, 2012. DSC brand personality has stayed consistent since. In this viral video Michael does a very good job at relating to people on a personal, down to earth, yet over the top funny way. His message was direct and Sensible. Clever punch lines were well thought out and kept viewers on their toes. Viewers are still waiting to see what the brand will do next.

Brand Values

“Creating a more convent, inexpensive and fun way to shave.” The DSC Values are within its clear and straight forward mission statement. They are trying to revolutionize a system that hasn’t changed due to comfortable high ups in bigger companies. They represent the essence of free market and what America was built off of. Good old fashion competition in the market place.

Brand Character

The character of this brand is a real person, not a cartoon, or paid actor. This person is down to earth, fed up and looking to make a big change in the world with enough time to still drink a beer on Sunday. The character is male and has seen struggles but isn’t phased by these struggles. He lets his intuitive nature guide him and it always seems to work out for him.

Brand Essence

“Creating a more convent and inexpensive way to shave.”

Brand Voice

The brand voice isn’t afraid to tell you how it is. This voice isn’t afraid to make fun of itself or point out its flaws. It’s a manly man voice. It’s down to earth, straightforward and direct. The voice gets a little to drunk at the family barbeque, but everyone loves it because this is an entertaining, but more importantly surprisingly intelligent with Intuitive ideas the more he drinks.

The voice likes to entertain and make you laugh and is proud to be different then the others in the room (razor industry). It’s a young, but seasoned, some may say experience.

Brand Flag

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The brand colors are a wood stained brown and orange. The wood stained brown is mainly. It represents a sturdy, reliable, tough, natural cooler. The marks in the wood give the color texture and character. Not town shades of brown on a tree are the same. It also goes with the “down to earth” essence of the brand, we aren’t reinventing the wheel here, we don’t need robots and steel black.

The orange sits with the brown nicely. The brown is the power color where the orange is the accent color that gives the brand a softer more intellectual side. Orange combines the colors and energies of red and yellow, which can be known to represent creativity, enthusiasm, success and happiness.

Online Strategy Overview

The Dollar Shave Club’s (DSC) “under dog” brand identify does not make much use of online advertising in the typical “banner here, banner there” strategy. The DSC is challenging the status quo of the razor industry and one on the man ways they have done that so far is in the content and execution of there advertising messages.

The dollar shave club does not want to be scene as a big corporate company that just throws up side banners on random websites. The DSC finds their audience through word of mouth about their mission to stick it to the corporate, over charging, outdated razor blade industry. Typical side banners will not communicate this message.

This is why DSC will focus on creative content creation through article, videos, gifs, pictures, music to reach it’s audience. DSC will team up with a band of established “Bro” or “Man’s Man” sites to create sponsored multimedia content.

Potential DSC Website and Blogs:

<http://www.broslikethissite.com/>

<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/college/>

<http://www.collegehumor.com/>

<http://totalfratmove.com/>

<http://www.brobible.com/>

<http://www.barstoolsports.com/>

Branding Content

The messages created between DSC and these partners will aim to promote the companies jointly. The content will aim to cleverly combine the DSC brand with the partner brand. Below is a list of potential topics as well as a list of # keywords that go along with the campaign.

Potential topics

- Artistic - The Art and Beauty of Shaving
 - Create HD time lapses and animated gifs of the shaving of some of the most gnarly beards, mustache etc. Have shavers talk about their shave techniques.
 - #BeardArt, #ShavingBeauty
- Scientific/Sports - Beard Science and Aerodynamics in Sports.
 - Article about how beards are a “detriment to your sports career”. List a bunch of the best clean shaving athletes.
 - #BeardScience, #SportsScience, #Cleanletes
- Women - A video survey of college women who prefer the clean cut man.
 - This could get interesting. Maybe end up creating an x rated outtakes clip and then delete it. Could make a parody of “Safe Sex” with “Shave Sex”.
 - #shaveforher #whatwomenwant #ShaveSex
- Sports - The Shave Challenge
 - Contract a big bearded sports star to shave his beard. Invite fans to choose how he will shave the beard by voting on different beard and mustache designs. If you made a series out of it you could call it “ShavingStars”.
 - #(Star’s Name)Shaved, #ShavingStars,
- Girly Satisfaction – Beard confessions – (HerCampus.com)
 - Sponsor girls that have big bearded boyfriends to create a web diary of the struggles they face as a girl with a boyfriend with a beard. Give them a DSc membership and then it ends happily ever after.
 - Make the guys pick between beard and girl friend. Some pic the girl, some pic the beard.
- Shaving America Road trip
 - Get big bearded guy to travel across the country shaving people’s beards into weird designs. This campaign is ment to promote “Hair Art”. Create series of #HairArt and then let pubic vote on their favorite hair art.
 - Promote through blogs like <http://thedailybeard.net/>

Citations

- ⁱ **USA Today - Dollar Shave Club's Dubin: From YouTube star to CEO**
<http://www.usatoday.com/story/money/business/2014/06/09/ceo-profile-dollar-shave-clubs-michael-dubin/9993045/>
- ⁱⁱ **Dollar shave Club: Social Campaign Done Right (8:20)**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cW8S-QBKcq4>
- ⁱⁱⁱ **Dollar Shave Club Press Page -** <http://www.dollarshaveclub.com/press/1>
- ^{iv} **Old Spice Commercials**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-SHPxyhkfnY>
- ^v **Kenny Powers K-Swiss Commercial**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XI_9Yxr0blo
- ^{vi} **The Famous Group Portfolio -**
<http://www.thefamousgroup.com/work/dollar-shave-club>
- ^{vi} **Alex - Web analytics tool**
<http://www.alexametrics.com/siteinfo/http%3A%2F%2Fwww.dollarshaveclub.com>

Video URLs

- Dollar Shave Club - Our Blades are Fucking Great -**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZUG9qYTJMsI>
- Dollar Shave Club - Let's talk #2**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3F0ae1V1-Xg>
- Dollar Shave Club - Free Gift - TV Commercial**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JbsJPO-ZreM>
- Dollar Shave Club - Security - TV Commercial**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pui78pskx24>