Abercrombie & Co. is a company founded by David Abercrombie in 1892. Later he joined forces with Ezra Fitch and the company evolved to Abercrombie & Fitch. They almost always did not see eye to eye, and did not know what direction they wanted to take the company. Abercrombie wanted to sell outdoors gear, and Fitch wanted to sell mainstream clothing. With all the differences, Abercrombie decided to leave the company but Fitch decided to keep the company name as Abercrombie & Fitch.

Fitch kept the idea of outdoor feel with adding the mainstream clothing for the average person. Other then the store, the company started sending mail in catalog. The catalog was sent to 50,000 customers and included a lot of the items featured in the store. Although the catalog cost was running the company to bankruptcy, it was a very effective marketing tool and it increased their sales. The company kept expanding and opened a store in New York. By 1929, Ezra retired and even when he left, the company kept growing.

After several years, The Limited Inc. bought the company and changed its look and sales strategy. They re-launched Abercrombie & Fitch targeting 18-24 year old college students. It was upscale and preppy and they described their image as sexy, classy, casual, and All-American.

Now in 2010, Abercrombie & Fitch launched other brands and is part of a controversial battle. Many law suits have been done against this brand and their sub brands. Everything from discrimination with employees, customers etc and to controversial clothing quotes.

Objectives if the Research:
The reason for this research is find out if Abercrombie should expand their clothing product to a wider range of people of all shapes and sizes.

Right now, Abercrombie & Fitch clothing line does not provide the opportunity for a person of all shapes and sizes to wear their clothes, which in turn, becomes a prejudice battle.

To do this research we must first know who is currently purchasing the clothing. Then we must figure out who would like to purchase but cannot due to the size of the product. We also need to take a look at where geographically are these stores located. Does the location of the store make a difference?

Research:
According to Claire E. Driessen, a law student who researched the consumers who bought Abercrombie & Fitch, A&F is sold predominately to Caucasians. They have an All- American look. Male and females consumers who buy the clothing fit well into what A&F wants their consumers to be. In their catalog, which was taken off market, included only three African Americans and the rest were Caucasians. The in-store atmosphere also represents exactly what their models represent in all their advertising campaigns. The A&F employee is not overweight; therefore they can fit into the clothes. The clothing is not meant for curvy or slightly over weight people. Even the typography on their clothing is relating a thin message.

Abercrombie & Fitch Corporation directly enforces this message. A quote that represents the small consumer and target market comes straight from the CEO of A&F, Mike Jeffries. In every school there are the cool and popular kids, and then there are the not-so-cool kids, he says. 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 [in our clothes], and they can’t belong. Are we exclusionary? Absolutely. Those companies that are in trouble are trying to target everybody: young, old, fat, skinny. But then you become totally vanilla. You don’t alienate anybody, but you don’t excite anybody, either.

While visiting the Abercrombie and Fitch site, I went to see where their stores are located. I came to find that in California there are 41 stores and in New Mexico they are zero stores. I also checked in Miami, Florida, where they is great diversity and they only have 2 stores.

Other than the issues of who the consumers can be, we have a situation of who can work there. There have been many lawsuits against A&F and their discrimination towards African Americans, Hispanics, and Asian former employees.

In the case Gonzalez v. Abercrombie & Fitch, is one the largest discrimination lawsuits filed against a company. In this case, many people of different races, other than Caucasian, testified about the discrimination and prejudice ideals the company followed.
Hispanics are the primary target audience. Hispanics is a race that denotes the culture and people of countries who were formally ruled by the Spanish Empire. Hispanics predominantly speak the Spanish language. In the United States, there is a huge percentage of Hispanics known as Hispanic Americans. As of March 2002, there was 37.4 million Hispanic living in the United States, which is 13.3% of the total population. Just alone April 2002 to July 2002 the percentage jumped 10%. Now, in 2010 the number must be higher from all the Hispanic immigrating here for better job opportunities. Hispanics grow 4 times the rate of the U.S population in just two years. Hispanics is an ethnicity that identifies strongly with family. People sometimes perceive Hispanics as only being Mexican, but Hispanics has much more diversity. Hispanics are from many different countries, they could be white, black or mulato.

Specific Target: Hispanic women ages 15-25, who live in the United States. They are mainreemers. As their name implies, they are the mainstream of society. They respond to big established brands, to family brands and to offers of value for money. Their core need in life is for security.

Hispanic shopping characteristics:

According to Shopper Marketing, Hispanics are 15.5% of the total U.S. population. Marketers know that Hispanic shoppers represent a huge and growing customer base, and that this group is critical to the future success of their brands, says Donald Longo, editorial director for Stagnito Media Food Group, New York (producers of the Hispanic Retail 360 Summit). “The difficulty with reaching them effectively stems from the many different types of Hispanics -- it’s not a homogenous group. Typically Hispanics have different ways of buying depending on what Hispanic country they are originally from. This represents the need of having diverse clothing, especially in brands that are All-American. Hispanic who live in the United States have been more in tune with fashion and what is acceptable in the country. The Hispanic shopper today is much more savvy and sophisticated than before, says John Echeveste, principal at VPE Public Relations.

Hispanics like feeling comfortable when shopping, because they go as a family. Stores who have a comfortable appeal will most likely get more business from Hispanics.

Many Hispanics feel that Abercrombie & Fitch does not provide clothes for their body type. Hispanics are curvier than most American girls and therefore, they do not fit into the same clothes. They do not shop there because they feel there not supposed to wear them. According to a quote from the CEO of Abercrombie, Abercrombie does not want them to use their clothes. In every school there are the cool and popular kids, and then there are
the not-so-cool kids, he says. 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 [in our clothes], and they can't belong. Are we exclusionary. Those companies that are in trouble are trying to target everybody: young, old, fat, skinny. But then you become totally vanilla. You don't alienate anybody, but you don't excite anybody, either. Mike Jeffries CEO Abercrombie and Fitch.

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES THAT APPEAL TO THE TARGET MARKET.

Right now, Hispanics are consuming most of their clothes with brands/stores who do cater to their body type such as; Forever 21, Aeropostal and H&M and The Gap. The generation who was born here, 15-25, have an American mentality when it comes to dressing. These stores provide the latest fashion but for all shapes and sizes. A lot of Hispanics have American friends, therefore they want to wear what their friends can wear. These stores appeal to the Hispanic market because of the freedom of choosing what they can wear.

According to the Label Networks Hispanic youth Culture Study 07, it shows that between 13-24 year olds in the United States are impacting the future of fashion. They say that it is important to notice these trends and companies need to take advantage of the growing growth rate of Hispanics. This study looks at the Hispanic Youth culture and compares it with other races. Top named brands are considered to be favorite for these Hispanics.

SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS
- Strong brand recognition
- Strong financial performance
- Committed stockholders

WEAKNESSES
- Low inventory turn over
- Limited geographic reach
- Limited customer base
- Controversial marketing strategy
- Over priced

OPPORTUNITIES
- Expansion in new market
- High demand by other markets
- Investment in infrastructure
- Expand product/service lines
- Expand internationally

THREATS
- Competition from other apparel offering same product, lower price
- Change in consumer preference
- Counterfeit goods
- U.S economy

CONCLUSION

Technically, A&F co. is a very successful company selling to their opinion on the all American look. But from the data collection and the different law suits that they have been part of, A&F can profit more if they start to cater to all types of people. In 2007 A&F revenue was $3,318.2 million dollars with catering just to their target audience, imagine with the 37.4 million Hispanics which to date is much more living in the United States. Let's take it further, imagine with the other races who live and are born in the United States, A&F can double even triple their profit.
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book: Why I hate Abercrombie & Fitch