“Protect This House”: Three Words That Have Become One Movement

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Introduction

In 1996, Kevin Plank turned his dream of creating a t-shirt that would wick away his sweat into a reality. As a football athlete at the University of Maryland, he started the game with a dry shirt and ended with a sweat-soaked shirt that weighed him down. This inspired him to make something great and that is exactly what he did. Less than twenty years later, Under Armour has become a multi-billion dollar international company, with a $330M marketing budget (up 54% from 2013) and the number two sports-gear maker in the US. However, it wasn’t an easy road. Under Armour has had its fair share of controversies, but through it all, Under Armour has been true to its core and never given up. This project explores the marketing strategies that make Under Armour successful and how its corporate culture permeates into its marketing strategy.

Marketing Strategy: Three Pillars

Storytelling

- Stories are vessels to transfer information to people
- Under Armour stores take individuals through company story and lifestyle
- Under Armour looks for spokespeople who have a unique, real and relatable story to tell
- Stories focus on overcoming challenges and beating the odds, not fame
- Under Armour hosts events that encourage people to tell their own stories

Building Personal Relationships

- Under Armour engages its customers in-store
- Under Armour has relationships with universities and national sports teams
- Under Armour is a sponsor of the Baltimore Orioles and Baltimore Ravens – Under Armour has its own defensive cheer
- Under Armour brand ambassadors work in department stores to serve as the face of the brand, communicate the story and build relationships with customers and employees

Lifestyle Emphasis

- Under Armour has created different ways for people to get involved with the brand beyond apparel by:
  - Hosting running clubs
  - Partnering with yoga studios
  - Offering “I Will” classes
- Under Armour incorporates philanthropy through its Give Back Events to support the Baltimore Fire and Police Department
- Power in Pink for breast cancer
- Events to support the Baltimore Orioles

Social Media:
Under Armour uses Instagram and Facebook with page categories showcasing its latest apparel and technology.

Digital:
Under Armour recently acquired three fitness apps for $710M which align with the lifestyle emphasis. This allows the brand to look to the future of digital capability combined with the fitness world.

Cluster Marketing:
Under Armour relies on cluster marketing for their three holidays (campaigns), which include TV commercials, PR events, product launches and store openings.

Baseball Strategy:
Under Armour’s goal is to outfit every catcher in Under Armour gear. This serves as a billboard for Under Armour during every pitch.

Controversy:
When the US 2014 Speedskating team failed to medal, they blamed Under Armour and the new uniform technology. Under Armour accepted this allegation, knowing they could not retroact. That strength and determination showed the type of resilience in the brand that drives its success everyday.