

KAREN P. BUCZEK

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GLOBAL MARKETING EXECUTIVE

Collaborative, strategic, and results-focused business leader with a proven track record of driving exceptional results. Known for the strength in combining rigorous analytical and strategic thinking with creative problem solving to bring clarity, focus, and new ideas to complex business situations. Voracious learner adept at assessing key market drivers and translating insights into new business opportunities that drive growth. Valued by organizations for the ability to develop a shared vision, empower individual accountability, and inspiring extraordinary results. Fluent in English and Spanish.

EXPERTISE

Brand Strategy and Innovation | Marketing Plan Development | Agency Management | Budgeting | Business P&L Development & Management | Category & Brand Portfolio Management | New Product Development & Commercialization | Cross-Functional Team Leadership | D2C and B2B | Negotiation | International Business

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

BRANDThink Marketing and Brand Strategy Consultancy, Kalamazoo, MI

MARKETING AND BRAND STRATEGY CONSULTANT

2021

Working with start-up to develop strategic framework for line of all-natural skincare products. Engagement includes competitive analysis, brand name and visual identity definition, pricing, and go to market strategy.

BISSELL Inc., Grand Rapids, MI

Leading manufacturer of floorcare cleaning devices and cleaning formulas.

MARKETING LEAD – HOUSEHOLD CLEANING PRODUCTS

2016 - 2020

- Executed integration of the BETTER LIFE® natural cleaning products acquisition, with accountability for the development and oversight of the brand strategy and all marketing efforts to ensure alignment with business objectives, brand standards, and strategic plan.
- Spearheaded RFP process and contract negotiations to identify and engage advertising agency, consolidating creative, asset development, and performance media efforts and freeing up internal resources to focus on business development, product quality improvement, margin expansion, and innovation pipeline.
- Developed creative strategy, collaborating with agency partners to create compelling, brand-building and sales-driving advertising and other forms of communication (web, mobile and in-store), resulting in 2X website and 3X Amazon sales, improving all KPIs including conversion rate, consumer loyalty (63% repeat purchase), and email subscriptions.
- Championed new to the market power-strips laundry detergent, winner of a Nexty™ Award for best new natural living product. The product eliminates traditional plastic jugs, lacks virgin plastic, and its reduced weight and volume allow for a dramatic reduction in transportation carbon footprint.
- Revitalized Woolite carpet cleaning portfolio and developed channel management and distribution strategy, resulting in +34% revenue, +6pts gross margin, and +9pts share.
- Analyzed consumer behavior and identified path to purchase, used to develop a new merchandising strategy that improved shopper experience, driving 21% sales growth.

BRANDThink Marketing and Brand Strategy Consultancy, Kalamazoo, MI

MARKETING AND BRAND STRATEGY CONSULTANT

2014 – 2016

- Addressed a 10% decline in ticket sales in the K-Wings organization (AA Hockey team), analyzing client's capabilities, business environment, competitive offerings, and consumer target, and develop a turnaround strategy. Project included consumer research, pricing, brand identity development, and execution of marketing plan. Recommended and executed a 15% price decline, resulting in a 27% increase in sales and 13% gross margin improvement.
- Re-engineered client's product offering and internal cross-functional operations of The Wedding Studio, an all-inclusive wedding service and group of venues, doubling annual revenue in the first 6 months.

Kalsec, Inc., Kalamazoo, MI

Leading global producer of natural ingredients, colors, and antioxidants for the food and beverage industry.

DIRECTOR OF PRODUCT MANAGEMENT – SPICE AND HERB FLAVOR EXTRACTS 2011 – 2014

- Crafted product line strategy, long term innovation pipeline, and messaging strategy, driving growth for product lines accounting for 60% of company gross margin, increasing product line profitability, and driving revenue growth by 18%.
- Created first hands-on instructional workshops (KalSmart™ Educational Series) targeted to customers' procurement team and product scientists to train them on key product differentiators and benefits of Kalsec's products– resulting in 124% sales growth from customers attending workshop.

Kellogg Company, Battle Creek, MI

Leading producer of cereal, cookies, crackers, and savory snacks.

MARKETING DIRECTOR OF INNOVATION – MORNING FOODS DIVISION 2009 – 2011

- Evaluated customer, competitor landscape, and market intelligence to develop growth strategies to support new product development, creating a 5-year product innovation pipeline that addressed meaningful and unmet consumer needs.
- Led internal cross-functional team to identify opportunity, validate concept, develop product, secure supply chain solution, and deliver a sustainable financial model that culminated in the launch of Krave® Cereal, what Kellogg's 2012 annual report called "the most successful (Kellogg) innovation ever in the US", with the brand delivering \$100MM in year 1.

The Coca-Cola Company, Atlanta, GA

2006 – 2009

Global beverage company.

GLOBAL MARKETING DIRECTOR – SPORTS & ENERGY

- Defined strategy for winning in the fast-growing Sport Drinks category by assessing Powerade's various global brand positionings and market performance, spearheading project to create a cohesive global brand with unified brand identity, messaging, and positioning.
- Developed a new global brand proposition and marketing bundle, generating 9% sales growth and +3 share points, successfully uniting 75 PowerAde markets behind one winning business growth plan.

GLOBAL MARKETING DIRECTOR – BOTTLED WATER

- Led development of global strategy for winning in the fast-growing Water & Enhanced Hydration category by rationalizing and strengthening global product ranges and developing optimal marketing bundles.
- Provided global leadership and change management expertise, partnering with worldwide offices to understand consumer preferences at each region to create scale via consolidation of bottles, brand positioning, and a common marketing mix.
- Developed go-to-market capabilities, processes, and proven marketing mix to expand the newly acquired Glaceau VitaminWater business outside the US.

General Mills, Inc., Minneapolis, MN

1994 – 2006

Global consumer product manufacturer marketing over 100 brands.

DIRECTOR OF MARKETING EXCELLENCE

- Appointed by CMO to co-write 4.5-day hands-on training program designed to educate marketers and cross-functional teams in the intricacies involved in building and maintaining enduring and innovative brands. Trained over 500 brand builders worldwide.
- Created and managed the 1st Wednesday's speaker series (featured in AdAge), monthly internal case studies, and best practice sharing.

MARKETING DIRECTOR – CPW – LATIN AMERICA REGION, MEXICO CITY, MEXICO

- Provided strategic oversight of Latin American region, directing marketing activities, brands, P&L/budgets, and country leaders as part of a \$500M joint venture between General Mills and Nestlé.

- Conceptualized, developed, and launched Fitness® & Yogurt cereal, the first cereal in the world to contain shelf-stable live and active cultures. Partnered with key cross-functional partners to develop differentiating value proposition and financial and commercial forecast valuation models. Product received CPW Global Product of the Year Award.
- Boosted sales volume by 16%, profits by 186%, mentoring and developing a high performing marketing organization, earning the designation of Center of Marketing Excellence.

EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

MBA, Marketing and Corporate Strategy, University of Michigan, Ross School of Business

BS, Biology and Psychology, Emory University

Executive Education

Digital Marketing Certification and SEO Specialist Certification, expected completion December 2021

Digital Marketing Strategies: Data, Automation, AI, and Analytics, Northwestern Kellogg School of Management

Pricing Strategies and Tactics, The University of Chicago Booth School of Business

Marketing and Corporate Strategy, University of Michigan Ross School of Business

AWARDS & HONORS

University of Michigan Ross School of Business, Full Academic Scholarship

General Mills, Chairman's Award for Excellence in Brand Stewardship

General Mills, Chairman's Award for Outstanding Performance