

Custom made  
apparel and  
individualized service  
at lands end



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\n[[toc title="Table of Contents"](#)]\n

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1. [Key issues:](#) \n \t
2. [Analysis and Interpretation:](#) \n \t
3. [Strategic Alignment](#) \n \t
4. [Challenges: \(competitive advantage\)/ Recommendations](#) \n

\n[/toc]\n \n

Many company uses the website as well as outlets and catalogs as ways of selling their products directly to the customers. At the beginnings since it has founded in 1963 in Chicago, Lands' End's website offered only limited products, however by the time the site offers every Lands' End products such as clothes whether they are sports or uniforms for women, men and children, luggage, overstocks, shoes and home furnishings. As of recent, the company has had success with its " Custom Clothing" line. The ordering process is not sophisticated through the company's web site; a customer would answer a variety of simple questions regarding his or her body type and style preferences in order to create the " perfect" shirt or pants. The order is processed through a sophisticated technology system, which sends the appropriate information to the respective destinations. Lands' End operates on the way that tries to achieve the best services and products for the customer. As a result, customers have learned to expect a high level of service at all times; from the beginning of the order, to receiving help and advice, to speedy shipping, and further follow-up when necessary. It is increasingly becoming larger every year as well as making itself known a lot more on the internet as well. However, catalogs do and probably will for the <https://assignbuster.com/custom-made-apparel-and-individualized-service-at-lands-end/>

rest of their lives continue to be the first in their marketing strategies; although it costs less when they bring customers to its file through e-commerce. Also the company is now also selling its products at Sears stores; most of their sales come from within their products being sold at Sears stores because by the fall of 2003, the company lines were to be available in all Sears' full line stores. Sears Roebuck acquired Lands' End in 2002 then they were bought by Kmart Holdings which is currently Sears Holdings.

### **Key issues:**

It faces some challenges in increasing its marketplace; Lands' End felt a growing need for enhancing and developing its marketing strategies, multi-channel marketing campaigns, and a shifting management focus from product-centric ( customization ) to customer-centric strategies. Their end goal was to increase customer loyalty with the intent of increasing revenue. So, they have some issues or challenges in maintain their competitive advantage in its industry regarding its product category and price. For example, the existing and new competitors like Amazon and Sears could threaten its brand' name and position in marketplace and the appropriate use of IT to sustain its competitive of advantage in the light of up coming new technologies and trends.

### **Analysis and Interpretation:**

Who are the stakeholders that should particularly involve in this case? and that have the major influence to measure the company's strengths and weakness. There are two main stakeholder groups that deal with Lands End. The customers and the investors. The customers are the people who drive all the sales through buying the apparel. They also have the greatest affect

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through having their feedback about the store as well as the web site. So, without the internet, the customers satisfaction would not be existing and could not be measured or investigated by the investors to manage operational aspects of marketing campaigns through achieving the alignment between business strategy and IT strategy. So, the internet acts as a major advertisement because it contains all their financial information and since the company is so successful.

The criteria that categorized Lands' End as a leader in marketing are quality of products, commitment to services and customization through its effective website. This can be defined as its strengths or its powerful guarantee to develop customer relationships and business communication to increase sales and market share.

Website (customization-website-customer service)

The web site itself is particularly easy and makes the shopping unique, interesting , easy and attractive. The web site design is organized regarding ordering online process, its exciting products because it presents variations and manufacturing a variety of similar but individualized. This is an example of a good company's position and strategic methods because it supports and maintain customer loyalty as Lands' End's senior vice president for e-commerce said " customer loyalty to our custom tailored clothing has surprised me. The level of feeling that customers have is amazing. This is particularly true for women. Once they get a pair of jeans to fit some will order every color in every fabric" ( Piccoli, 2007 ). Some of the advantages of customization are building and maintaining customer loyalty, pricing and

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avoiding physical scanning and body measurement if they go to the shop. (My Virtual Model) is one of the company innovative shopping tool. According to it, customers can create a 3-D model of themselves by providing critical measurements, which are then applied to the individual's personal Virtual Model. Once a virtual model is created the customer can use it to "try on" items to see how they will look on his or her body. Outfits can be stored and recalled for later reference. Moreover, the model created, a person's model can also be used at other apparel web sites in the My Virtual Model network, and can be e-mailed to family and friends. Also, from the customer's perspective, the web site allows you to be aware of everything about Lands' End from the beginnings to the end. Lands End knows how to attract customers as well as keep them on the site through an easy way which to buy. Its divisions are very organized starting with gender of sex starts off with gender of sex.; then it will divide it up in pieces of clothing whether its pants, shirts, skirts, shoes and so on. Moreover, it has section to measure the customers' willingness to pay through identifying the amount they like to pay to present all the products that have the certain price range. This way saves a lot of time and probably money; so it gives the customer a quick inside online store of what a normal outlet store would look like in person. . If the web site is unorganized or running slow, that is going to turn customers away from the web site. But Lands' End website guarantees its customers security policies and provides them with a highly standard of customer service if they order using phone. Through the website they can get the required information about their customers whether they are old, current, new or future.

It is very useful to collect the information the organization needs about the customer to actually increase the level of knowledge for the company about the customers and it allows them to know a lot more about each individual customer especially because they have profile of their customers.

## **Strategic Alignment**

One of any organisation factor of success strategically and technologically is bringing both It and IS strategies within the organisation strategy. This is called strategic alignment which means the effective correlation between internal and external domains. Internal domain comes out the integration between business strategy and IT strategy while the external domain is involved in the integration between organizational infrastructure and process and IS infrastructure and process. In this case, Lands' End achieves a high degree of strategic alignment; through using archetype solutions for custom-tailored clothes, a process engineering approach that included developing a corporate metric model and mind map that anticipated the specific ways that inventory managers would use them to improve and develop business strategy. Inventory management system is used to help ensure customer satisfaction by avoiding unexpected backorders. Orders are electronically sent to the warehouse, where the goods are packaged, shipping labels are printed, and the package is sent out to a delivery service. Alternatively, orders that include customized items are sent to a mainframe which computes estimated measurements based on user data, which is used to develop a pattern to be used in the manufacturing of the item. It supports fast shipping and embroidering. As it mentioned before the high performance of customer service is quite a good evidence of the system's

ability to retrieve orders quickly and accurately. Moreover, lower prices comes out the efficiency and effectively resulting from sending the orders to the warehouse in electronic form. That is why the web site adds the competitive advantage to Lands' End. The organisation's business strategy is presented to achieve its scope, maintaining competitive advantage and reaching business governance. It shows in the case through providing each customer with a personal experience that builds a good standard relationship to last for long time. Also, its successful business strategy shows through dependable quality, fair prices, efficient service, call back program and positive employee experience. To achieve its scope, it depends on archetype solutions that fits mass customization and custom-clothing service and web based services in clothing industry. As a result of AS, the company has made big investment in people and technology to achieve the competitive advantage and get the expected profits. After looking at Exhibit 1 and 2, the financial situation in Lands' End shows its progress which indicates its position. The first table shows their revenue in millions from 1999 to 2002. There is a big jump of about 197 millions dollars from 1999 to 2002 in the company. Each year they will continue to make a little more money mainly from increasing cliental and offering a wider span of products.

### **Challenges: (competitive advantage)/ Recommendations**

Lands' End's mass customization and web-based customer service initiatives provide a great opportunity to discuss the sustainability of competitive advantage derived from IT-driven strategic initiatives. Although AS, Inc allows the company to maintain its competitive advantage, Ends' End's mainly has competencies in apparel manufacturing and retail efficiency.

Therefore it should consider those areas in its operational integration to have the link between the organisational infrastructure and IS, It should pay its particular attention to its use of IT. The most important opportunity that Lands' End should take advantage of is to place Internet terminals along with the clothing displays in the Sears stores. This would allow customers to try-on clothes, feel fabrics, and test sizes inside the Sears store, yet still place an order for a specific item that is not offered in the store. This would increase sales by eliminating the loss of sales from stock-outs, as well as increase brand awareness. With the invention and innovation of new textiles, Lands' End can expand its current ordering system to include new fabric choices on many different products. This would allow customers to both customizing their own clothing and electing a colour, which would increase customer satisfaction and as a result customer loyalty. Lands' End should also market towards young customers aging from ( 10 - 20) in order to increase sales both presently and maintain them in the future (by retaining customers). It can do this by designing new styles and advertising through its web site. Lands' End should stay a competitive advantage in its industry regarding its operations to keep going in custom-tailored clothes; and the required enhancement of its industry is necessary and essential to product category and price. It also should have the ability to use It in the light of up coming technologies and trends. Lands' End might lose its competitive advantage due to fallen barriers, technology replication cycle.