

# Burt's bee's: leaving the hive



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Burt's Bee's: Leaving the Hive 01-26-2013 Burt's Bee's is committed to providing the best products for its consumers by ensuring they are 100% natural and produced in environmentally friendly conditions. I believe it is possible for the company to become the "Starbucks of personal care" without foregoing the initial values established by Roxanne Quimby. Roxanne's original vision was making Burt's bees a big brand, not an exclusive brand, and so moving into the mass market sector is in-keeping with this idea.

Arguably, moving away from a specialty and health product, to a mass market brand is risky and results in specialty stores pulling back and reducing shelf space. However, the company today is very loyal and focused on their core values. They insist on only developing products that serve an explicit healthful purpose. They delayed launching the shampoo, for example, because they wanted to create a natural, cleaner shampoo that also lathered, to meet customer needs.

The company pursued products other firms didn't, like carrot lotion, adding to Burt's authenticity. As well as this, they make all their packaging from recycled materials and encourage customers to reuse or recycle shampoo bottles for example. I believe that if they keep this up, they can definitely become the "Starbucks on personal care" without foregoing the values and narratives that made the brand successful. In my opinion this model is replicable. All Burt's Bee's is trying to do is what's best for consumers and the environment.

No matter how big the brand gets, no matter how much profits increase by, the firm in question should try follow in Burt's Bee's footsteps, and continue

focusing on their core competencies and outsourcing tasks where they are not as efficient. In Burt's Bee's case, by fully disclosing ingredients, they promote transparency; by not testing their products on animals they communicate their values to the consumer; finally, by striving to use 100% natural ingredients in each of their products, they are upholding the firm's original values.

The model is easy to replicate as long as the firm is committed and loyal to the core values. I think Burt's Bee's have done a very good job so far. Seeing as packaging is not their core competency, they outsourced it to contractors thus minimizing waste and boosting efficiency. Herbs used in their products can be used for bio-fuel and are actually used by the employees as substitute fuel. All packaging is made from recycled materials and they encourage customers to reuse or recycle shampoo bottles.

In addition to this they have shortened their supply chain by selling directly to all of their accounts. By cutting out the middle channel of distribution, they effectively reduced Burt's Bee's carbon footprint and saved money at the same time making them more environmentally and economically sustainable. The risks involved with this acquisition are many. As stated in the article, Clorox plans to turn Burt's Bees into a mainstream American brand sold in big-box stores like Wal-Mart.

Already, the move from specialty health stores, to Walgreens and CVS has had an impact on Burt's Bee's shelf space in these smaller specialty stores. The risk is that if they move to the other extreme, they may no longer be viewed as the quirky authentic firm that was initially established. The link to Clorox alone will bring Burt's Bee's under a lot of scrutiny, given the fact that

they aim to provide the best and most natural products for their customers, and the consumer perception of Clorox is the total opposite. However, there are also a lot of opportunities Burt's Bee's will gain from this.

With Clorox's help, they can really strive to be a national brand, and increase their already growing market share in natural personal care. The resources Clorox will provide will boost advertising spending and increase the firm's power when negotiating with suppliers and retailers. In addition to this, as the competition in the industry grows, having Clorox's funds and support will go a long way for Burt's Bee's. And with Clorox's Green Works initiative, the public's perception may improve and so loyal customers will remain loyal.