

Campaign Title: Beautiful Naturally Mobile Studio

Brand: Garnet Hill

**Company(s) Involved: Cercone Brown Company, Maru/Matchbox
Kathy H Planning LLC**

Category: Reinventing Traditional Media

Summary

Garnet Hill's *Beautiful, Naturally* mobile studio is an experience-driven, integrated campaign designed to reintroduce a cherished, 40-year-old lifestyle brand to a larger audience with a fresh take on a traditional media platform: Out-Of-Home.

Made from a refurbished shipping container, the *Beautiful, Naturally* platform is part mobile showroom, part studio and part pop-up brand experience in a 350-square foot mobile space. We invited consumers to touch and feel the quality and craftsmanship of Garnet Hill's products and learn about the brand's story. The studio was a moving, living, breathing branded billboard, used to host media events, wine tastings, farm-to-table brunches and art shows for consumers, prospects and influencers to enjoy and tuned as sharable programming deployed through organic channels as well as purchased media. The goal of the campaign was to really connect to Garnet Hill fans – educated Boomer women who want their style to be inspired and not mandated by trends – as well as prospects, resetting the relationship and offering our woman an experience that was aspirational, personal and all about her.

Research spanned 18 months was leveraged every step of the way, from strategy development, consumer targeting and segmentation, campaign development, media planning, deployment, programming design feedback and campaign refinement.

The campaign realized all goals for brand metrics, including new-to-file prospects, brand engagement and affinity, including many from new target segments.

Marketing Challenge

To those who know it, Garnet Hill is a beloved direct retailer of beautifully designed, responsibly sourced, aspirationally styled lifestyle products for home, kids and women's apparel. In fact, much of the brand's success centered on "for life" loyalty in key product segments such as linen apparel basics or bedding so expanding to a lifestyle orientation was critical to growth. In 2015, the HSN-owned company was on the heels of a makeover and stood ready to reintroduce itself as a trusted lifestyle brand offering styling and products for women who want to express a personal style and be confident in the life they share with friends and family.

While research showed its strategy for expanding was sound, challenges were considerable. Competition was fierce among female-driven lifestyle retailers, so targeting creatively was key. And while Garnet Hill's new brand position – *Beautiful, Naturally* – had tested well, the prime challenge lay equally in deployment as it did in the creative campaign. How could we reimagine a heritage brand (re)introduction in ways that blend the best of traditional media with the promise of new platforms? How do we expand to new segments while staying true to that brand's heritage and core customer? How do we present a beloved, albeit two-dimensional brand ("Garnet Hill catalog") and make it a fully imagined, three dimensional, inspirational lifestyle connection? These were our challenges.

Methodology

A significant front-end effort began in 2015 with a review of benchmark brand and sales data and outside data from syndicated demographic and industry reports of retail trends.

- Benchmark Segmentation Report, Garnet Hill 2014
- Women's Lifestyle Industry Trends – One-On-One Analyst Interviews (CEB Iconoculture / Home Design, Women's Apparel Trends, 2015)
- Syndicated Industry Data (Retail Federation, Nielsen 2015)

From research, we knew the Garnet Hill target woman is open to life – learning, exploring. She values strong ties to family and friends. She loves beautiful things. She's genuine, natural, personable, connected. She's "a joiner". And she carefully selects her brands – for what they stand for, the heritage and quality behind them, what works for her and for how they are presented, sourced and made.

She is a high earner, college educated, a Boomer who closely aligns with a segment dubbed in 2014 by Nielsen as "New Boomers" – tech savvy / digitally active, empty nesting and are spending nearly three times as their younger counterparts on luxury hotels, restaurants and automobiles. Research shows our women primarily shops online, is a high user of social media channels (especially Pinterest and Facebook). She looks to editorial content like blogs and magazines for design inspiration.

From this foundation we conducted research to really listen to our target and understand how to strategically evolve the Garnet Hill brand expression, including:

- Focus Groups (Boston, New York 2015, 2016)
- Sentiment and Values: Generations (commissioned by Garnet Hill, CEB Iconoculture, 2015)
- Social Listening Report, Garnet Hill (Brand Watch 2015)
- Sales Segmentation Report (Garnet Hill, monthly, 2015/2016)
- Campaign Tracking Study, Pre- and Post-Wave (Maru/Matchbox 2016)

This process yielded a series of critical insights that held important implications for the campaign. The first was surprising. When exploring demographics from a values perspective rather than age, education, income or geography, we concluded seven of the Top 15 values of our core Boomer woman segment were shared with Millennial women, especially those over 35 years of age.

Another key came in purchase factors. We knew our woman loved the rich fabrication of Garnet Hill's products (real English flannel, double knit Mongolian cashmere, organic linen). In focus groups, women told us, "*I shop with my hands.*" But our tracking study showed Garnet Hill's best prospect ID'd two top purchase factors – "softness of fabric" and "color" – that couldn't be experienced via a catalog or online. Infusing this into the pre-purchase introduction to the brand seemed a key lynchpin for brand affinity.

Creative Execution

The true benefit of the research process came in the listening. Truly, the seeds of our tactical campaign idea – of deploying a mobile, experiential campaign presented as a living, breathing billboard to connect to women who love us and women who would likely love us – rose from what we heard from our own customers and learned from data. From this we knew we had an opportunity:

1. Present Garnet Hill as a lifestyle brand (not a series of product segments);
2. Drive engagement among our core target of Boomer women through an engaging, “touch and feel” experience;
3. Expand brand tent to demographics that share our woman’s common values (read: Millennial women, 35+);
4. Present an experience that promotes sharing and appeals to tech savvy, design driven programming.

The *Beautiful, Naturally* mobile container – as the centerpiece to an integrated eight week campaign that ran in New York and Boston/New Hampshire and included advertising (print and online), digital content, programming, events, PR and promotional partnerships – was a compelling and effective way of saying, *Come in. Let’s get inspired. Learn something new and make it your own.*

Container As Media

Our merged media platform was designed as a home, staffed and open to the public four days per week. This brand introduction featured a fully styled bedroom, closet, bathroom and kitchen, all merchandised with Garnet Hill and partner products. Side decks and a rooftop deck encouraged mingling, sharing. The platform worked with a purchased media spanning print (regional magazine, ROP), online banners, and spot radio to drive scale and awareness. Research told us our woman is inspired by editorial content including blogs and online magazines so our campaign also featured blended editorial content packets in paid media (*Boston Magazine, Apartment Therapy*) leveraging video how tos, slideshows, etc.

Programming

For eight weeks we scheduled programming that pulled consumers and influencers into the space and then broadcast branded content out from the space out through Garnet Hill and partner channels that included social media (Instagram, FB, Pinterest, etc.) and Garnet Hill’s editorial blog, THREADS and partner channels (below). Events like yoga classes, wine tastings, workshops (on oyster shucking, for instance), book signings and art shows were tuned ensure expansion to new audiences that tracked with the values segmentation ID’d in research.

Partnerships

We had an event track for partners exclusive to Garnet Hill to do four joint events that were promoted, including a bedding event with Eileen Fisher, a book signing with textile artist Susan Hable, a designer workshop with famed hotel interior decorator (and Garnet Hill accessories designer) Judy Ross. All these were cross-promoted and merchandised with editors who attended events and broadcasted from the studio.

Business Results

Did it work? Yes, especially in light of our primary objectives to expand the brand awareness and affinity, especially in the context of exposure to the *Beautiful, Naturally* mobile studio (gauged with pre- and post-campaign testing).

Overall Summary

- **41.1 million brand impressions** from the integrated campaign including paid, earned and owned media
- **43 PR placements** (from *WWD* feature to *Boston Globe*, *New York Metro*)
- **1.95 million social media impressions** for Garnet Hill and *#GHmobileboutique*

Strategic Highlights

- Digital and social media posts **increased by 67%** during the campaign;
- Online brand sentiment **increased by 20%**;
- Click through rate for banner campaign **21.98%**;
- Site visits to Garnet Hill blog **increased 3x**;
- Instagram channel engagement **increased by 600%**
- According tracking study, after visiting the mobile boutique **88% of all respondents were "Very Likely" or "Somewhat likely"** to visit a Garnet Hill retail store;
- After visiting the container, **59% said they would be likely to make a purchase online** (up from 26.9% pre-visit);
- **72%** of Garnet Hill prospects in the tracking study said **they prefer the boutique container** layout rather than a traditional store for inspiration (vs. 58% overall)