

Ralph W. Blessing

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Seeking full time or adjunct faculty position as Professionally Qualified teacher, with focus on consumer marketing, innovation and market research that leverages over 20 years of experience in a range of companies and assignments from major multinationals to family run businesses. Ideal position would also facilitate my interests in research and publishing.

EDUCATION

Master of Business Administration, - Indiana University, August 1984 (Marketing)

Bachelor of Science, Butler University, May 1982 (Business Administration)

Master of Christian Ministry, North Park University, May 2006

TEACHING / RELATED EXPERIENCE

- Completed AACSB “Bridge Program” Training, Babson College (October 2009)
- Annual guest lecturer at Kelley School of Business (Indiana University) - ½ day lecture for MBA and undergraduate students on new product innovation best practices
- Periodic guest lecturer at Miami University (semester-long custom case project for level 400 Market Research), Northwestern University, University of Wisconsin, and Butler University
- Developed and ran 2-day workshop for Bayer on “How to Develop Winning Concepts”
- Developed and taught 5-day course at Unilever on “Finding Insights and What to Do With Them”
- Developed and led training 1-day workshops at Helene Curtis on “How to Get The Most From Market Research”, “How to Tell a Story” and “Volume Forecasting”
- Served on Brand Management Advisory Counsel at Kelley MBA, Indiana University from 1999-2005
- Served on Advisory Counsel for Nielsen School of Market Research, University of Wisconsin from 1991 to 1995
- Member of ARF, AMA, PDMA and MENG (Marketing Executive Network Group)
- Led over 20 one or two day ideations for companies including Kraft, Wrigley, Unilever, Barber Foods, World Kitchen, Pharmavite, Continental Mills and Colgate
- Moderated over 300 focus groups, ethnographies or laddering interviews

PUBLISHING / MAJOR RECENT PRESENTATIONS / NEW TOOLS DEVELOPED

- Author of “Consumer Research Techniques” (chapter in ***Hair and Hair Color***, 1997)
- AMA Webcast – “Evolution vs. Smart Design – How Need States Evolve” (420 online attendees, 2009)
- PDMA Conference: “Predicting the Future – How Need States Evolve” (Michigan, 2007)
- Galaxy™ - Developed a year One new product volume forecast model (used by Helene Curtis, Unilever and ASG)
- FutureScape™ - Designed a projective, future oriented need-state segmentation approach for GfK

AWARDS

- Marketing 100 Award; Advertising Age (2001)
- Finalist; Cannes Lion Film Awards (1989 and 2002)
- International Brand Packaging Silver Award for Creative Excellence (2004)

WORK EXPERIENCE:**GfK Consumer Research North America (Arbor Strategy Group-Acquired by GfK 8/08)**

GfK is the 4th largest global Market Research Company. Arbor Strategy Group (ASG) is a consulting firm focused on innovation strategy and new product / brand development.

Executive Vice President / Senior Partner*1/06 –Present*

- Developed 5 year global innovation strategy and new idea pipeline for Wrigley Gum product and packaging, including qualitative/quantitative research in US, Germany, Russia and China
- Developed Innovation Strategic Platforms in US for Kraft (shelf stable meals, non liquid beverages, salad dressing), Pharmavite (supplements), Kellogg's, Continental Mills, Bauer Hockey, and Barber Foods
- Led development of Wal-Mart's first Strategic Learning Plan for their \$50 billion Private Label business
- Identified new business size/entry strategy assessments for several investment banks

Unilever Home & Personal Care North America, Chicago, IL

Unilever is the world's second largest consumer package goods company.

Brand Development Director - Suave Masterbrand*12/98 – 10/05*

Responsible for strategic and annual operations of Suave Personal Care (\$900 million brand, \$100 million marketing budget)

- Developed five year Masterbrand strategy and relaunch, which led to over \$500 million sales growth and 20 pt. gross margin improvement.
- Introduced successful new sub-lines including Suave for Kids, Suave for Men and Suave Professionals, each with retail sales of over \$25 million in their first year.
- Successfully led introduction of Suave in Canada, Australia/NZ, Turkey and South America.

Director of Global Innovation, Hair and Deodorant Categories*11/97 - 12/98*

- Re-filled innovation pipeline with major new project ideas, including initial development of successful Axe deodorant and Dove hair care brands.
- Designed and launched first ever Packaging Innovation Team in Unilever.

Director of New Brand Development – Hair Care*10/96 – 11/97*

- Overall project leader for development and national introduction of ThermaSilk brand. First year marketing budget was \$85 million, with sales over \$180 million - 60% ahead of budget.

Helene Curtis, Inc.

Helene Curtis was a \$1 billion Personal Care Company acquired by Unilever in 1996.

Group Marketing Manager – Hair Care*7/95 – 10/96*

Led overall category marketing and financials, with sales of over \$600 million.

- Developed portfolio strategy which resulted in Helene Curtis passing P&G for #1 dollar share.
- Led development of two new global hair care brands.

Director of Market Research*9/91 – 7/95*

Responsible for all market research activity. Staff of 20, with budget of \$10 million.

Market Research Manager*5/87 – 9/91***S.C. Johnson; Racine, WI**

Analyst/Manager - Market Research

6/84 – 5/87