

**Colony Brands & Country Door Marketing Challenge:
UW-Whitewater Regional Conference, October 18th, 2024**

THE CHALLENGE

Develop a Mini-Omni-Channel Marketing Plan that continues the digital transformation of the marketing strategy for the [Country Door](#) (CD) brand and engages a younger audience. CD primarily targets Baby Boomers and wishes to broaden its served markets by targeting Gen X (those born early-to-mid 1960s to the early 1980s) and younger consumers. CD is a multi-channel retailer offering a variety of home décor products that allow consumers to express their unique style. As consumers increasingly spend time online, CD continues to evolve our marketing efforts to digitally engage our core audience while also attracting younger consumers.

Things to Consider: (1) Who are CD's main competitors and what are they doing to target Gen X and younger consumers? (2) What creative strategies most appeal to Gen X today and in the future? (3) How to position CD to be more appealing to younger consumers? (4) What Omni-Channel (Direct Mail/Digital) communication tools do you recommend, and how should messaging strategies be differentiated by omni-channel communication tools? One requirement is that at least one CD direct mail (catalog OR postcard) AND at least one digital touchpoint must be part of the plan. Your plan should identify marketing efforts designed to increase response from Gen X and younger consumers.

EVALUATION ELEMENTS (Use each as headings in your plan)

- **Competitor Audit (20%).** MUST INCLUDE at least four of the following core competitors (listed alphabetically): [Brylane Home](#), [Kirkland's](#), [Pottery Barn](#), [Wayfair](#), [Williams Sonoma Home](#), or [World Market](#); plus others identified by your team.
- **Internal Audit of CD and its current creative and tactical strategy (20%).** Make sure to include SWOT and Perceptual Maps related to how CD's marketing relates to the Gen X and younger targets.
- **Omni-Channel (Direct Mail/Digital) Strategic Platform (10%).** Statement of what you feel CD's strategic approach should be to effectively target Gen X and younger consumers. Make sure you select and develop a profile of your primary and secondary target markets.
- **Messaging Tactics (35%):**
 - Marketing touchpoints (e.g., catalog cover, postcard, web landing page, banner ad, paid search, etc.) have varying space to convey messages. For example, paid search ads have character limits, large banner ads have more space than smaller ads, etc. Marketers must therefore prioritize which key messages to communicate via the different touchpoints that are part of their omni-channel marketing plan.
 - You should identify and evaluate at least five (5) messages your research suggests will resonate for Gen X regardless of tactic.
 - Create a matrix of omni-channel touchpoints you recommend using and rank the TOP THREE messages you would prioritize for each channel (differentiate across channels). You must include at least one direct mail/print element (either a catalog cover page or postcard) in your matrix. Other marketing channels for Gen X should be selected and justified based on your research.
- **Creative Execution (10%):** Create a mock-up for a (1) a print element – either a catalog cover page (8.5 x 11 catalog) or a postcard and (2) at least one digital touchpoint mock-up. Make sure to include messaging from the matrix you developed. Additional mock-ups of digital treatments may be included as seen fit.
- **Testing and Evaluation (5%):** How you recommend CD evaluate your plan, prior to and after launch.

Contact Person if Questions:

Gracie Hughes (HughesGR29@uww.edu)

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Round 1: Submit a three-page, single-spaced strategic plan. A maximum of five pages may be included in an appendix. USE YOUR APPENDIX WISELY SINCE THREE WRITTEN PAGES IS NOT A LOT.

Due electronically by 4 PM Central, Wednesday, October 16, 2024. You will be notified October 17th if you are selected to present at the finals.

- Up to 10 plans may be submitted per school (separate teams).
- Each team may have up to three students per team; students may not compete on more than one team.
- Submit a separate cover page with your school and contact information.
- Schools may not be identified in their strategic plan.

About Colony Brands & Country Door

Colony Brands together with its subsidiaries and affiliated companies, is a multifaceted enterprise consisting of numerous multichannel retail brands, operational support companies and a portfolio of affiliate businesses. Headquartered in Monroe, Wisconsin, Colony Brands delivers an array of products and services to its customers and clients. Since 1998, Country Door (CD) (<https://www.countrydoor.com>) has been a trusted catalog brand offering customers an enjoyable home furnishings and décor shopping experience. CD, a subsidiary of Colony Brands, Inc., is a leading catalog and online retailer offering a wide assortment of home furnishings and accents that deliver the style and quality today's value-conscious shoppers expect.

INFORMATION ABOUT COLONY BRANDS INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Colony Brands Internship Program

(Visit with Colony Brands during the Regional Conference Career Corner)

Colony Brands, Inc., headquartered in Monroe, WI, consists of numerous multichannel retail brands, several operational support companies and a portfolio of affiliate businesses. Colony Brands offers consumers catalog and online shopping across an exciting selection of products including apparel, shoes, home décor and furnishings, outdoor, health and beauty, electronics, toys, food and gifts. Colony Brands has offered a strong internship and co-op program for more than 40 years and hires approximately 75 interns annually across marketing and other business disciplines.

The Colony Brands Internship Program provides hands-on, purposeful experience with significant responsibilities giving students great resume value and industry insight as they start their career. Interns also receive:

- Additional training on topics that range from business communication to emotional intelligence to help support the transition from college to career
- Service opportunities to give back
- Social events to help students meet and have fun with their colleagues
- Generous pay and benefits