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# Aerie

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Brand Case Study

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## About the Company:

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Aerie is a women's clothing retailer set in the U.S.

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Mostly known for their intimate wear

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Founded in 2006

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Sub-brand owned by American Eagle Outfitters

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Currently 332 store locations

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Shared headquarters with AEO in Pittsburgh, PA

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# #AerieReal Campaign

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- Marketing campaign started by the brand in 2014 (has been an on-going campaign ever since)
- Focus: Body Positivity
- The Idea:
  - > Use models of all shapes, sizes, colors, etc. in their advertising
  - > Leave the photos untouched
  - > No photoshopping to make the models look perfect



# 2014 Campaign Ads

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The ad makes sure to point out that woman's body has not been altered with photoshop.



# Toxic effects of the modern advertising world:

Most models weigh an average of 23% less than a typical woman; compared to 20 years ago when the difference was a mere 8%

Nowadays, over half of women in media are perceived as sexual objects

Only 5% of women in the US actually fit the current body type popularly portrayed in today's advertisements

Over 25% of girls surveyed felt that the media makes them feel pressure to have a perfectly shaped body

69% of girls say in a study said that models found in magazines had a major influence on their concept of what a perfect body shape should look like



# Filling the Gap

The lingerie/women's intimates industry has been the same for centuries: Using supermodels in their ads that make everyday women insecure about their own bodies.



Ex.- Victoria's Secret



Aerie changed the game and showed women that they don't need to look like society's "perfect" image of a woman







# People want relatable, not perfect

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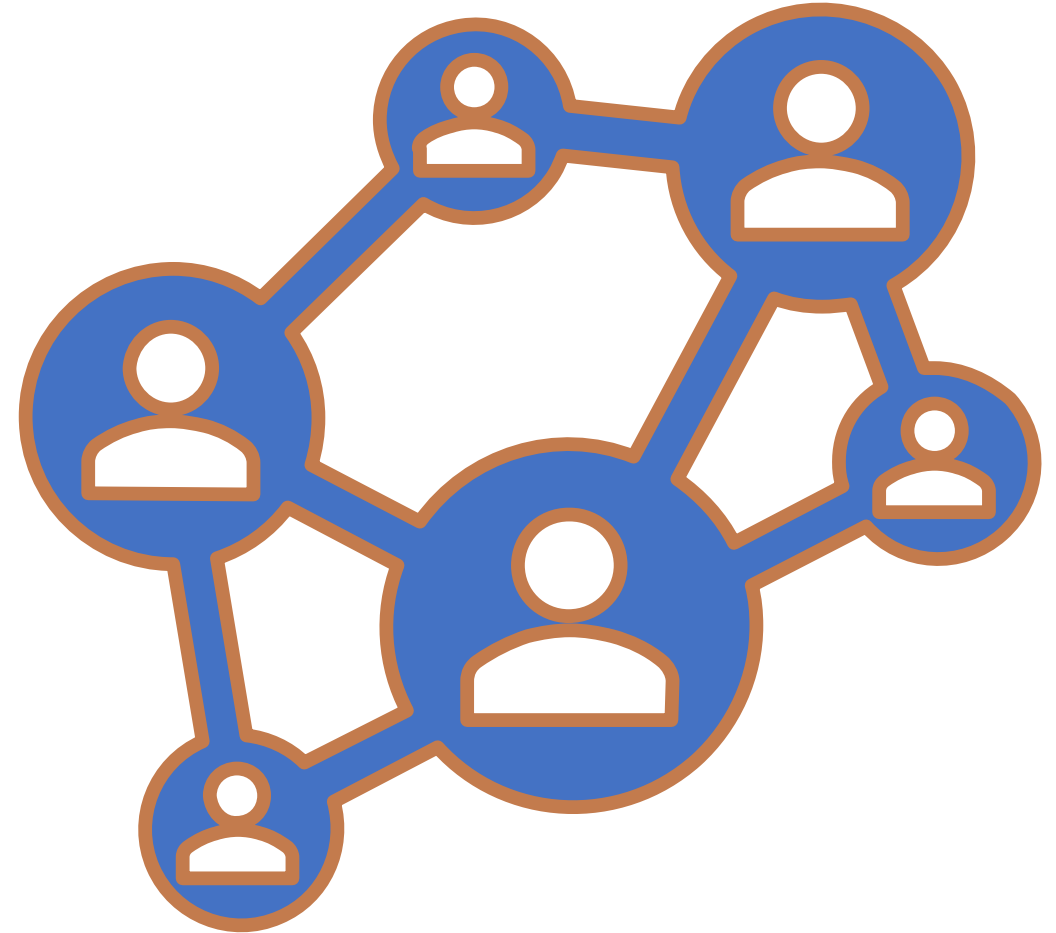
Pictured: Victoria's Secret ads using supermodels that do not depict what most women look like.



# Aerie Meeting Consumer Needs

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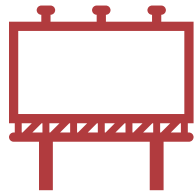
Aerie's marketing team noticed these problems and decided to make a change; a change that would not only benefit their brand and bring success for the company, but help to change society and make body positivity more of a celebrated concept in everyday life.



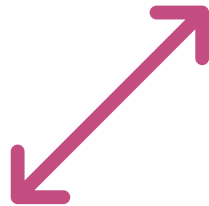


# Ideal Outcome for the Campaign:

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Create a positive image for the  
brand



Broaden audience



Strengthen consumer relations



Do what competing brands are  
missing



"The Real  
You Is  
Sexy"

TIME TO GET REAL.  
TIME TO THINK REAL.  
NO SUPERMODELS.  
NO RETOUCHING.  
BECAUSE...

*THE  
REAL YOU  
IS SEXY.*

*#aerie* REAL

A collage of six photographs of diverse women in various poses and outfits, representing the 'The Real You Is Sexy' campaign. The images show women in different settings, some in bed, some sitting, and some standing, all in casual, comfortable clothing.

- Short and simple tagline to go along with the ads
- Makes a big impact and has a lot of meaning for women and body image
- All women want to feel beautiful



# Research Stage

Previous success in going against social norms in advertising: Dove “Real Truth About Beauty” campaign (2004).

This campaign was proof that if Aerie kept their marketing real with no gimmicks and embraced imperfections, they would create the brand image that they wanted, strengthen consumer relations, and raise sales.



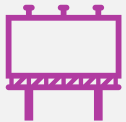
# Campaign Objectives



Awareness Objective- Find what platforms and tactics to use that would best reach Aerie's target audience



Attitudinal Objective- Research how target consumers react to/ feel about different types of ads; decide what the best options are to connect with them (ex. Surveys)



Behavioral Objective- Study how target consumers interact with certain types of ads and find what will be the most effective and successful for the brand and its audience



# Key Messages

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1

Make all women feel beautiful and confident; embrace body positivity

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Stand apart from competitors

3

Advertise wide spread of comfortable clothing, intimates, swimsuits, and other apparel and accessories.

4

Find/strengthen brand voice

5

Connect with consumers and build brand equity



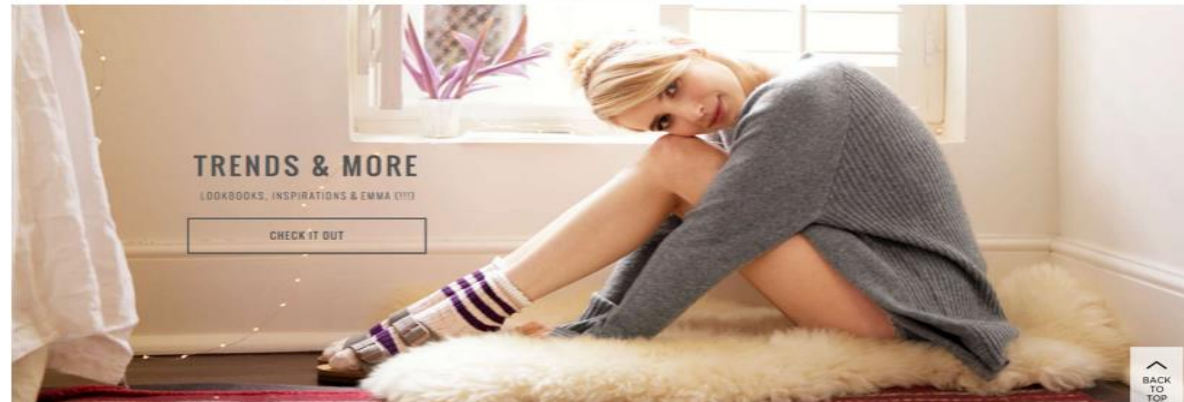


# Creating Brand Voice

- Aerie took all research into play and decided that their target consumers wanted a brand that they could relate to and think of more than just a company that they buy clothes from
- Through their marketing (ads in traditional media and social/digital media) they were able to place messages that not only caught lots of attention, but resonated with consumers and potential consumers.



# Start of the Campaign



- Celebrity endorsement (Emma Roberts)
- Use of a hashtag to help spread the word among audience







# Campaign Now!

- Many more celebrity and influencer endorsements
- Real women, not just models



## #AerieReal Role Models

Women that girls and other women can look up to. Very diverse group; from women with disabilities, to women of color, to LGBTQ members. These role models stand for the message that everyone should feel comfortable in their own skin and be proud of their differences and who they are .



# Platforms & Tactics

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- Social medias (made biggest impacts): Allowed Aerie to connect on a more personal level with their audience, posting photos of merchandise and getting feedback.

## Socials

Instagram: @aerie (1.3 million followers)

Twitter: @aerie (102.9k followers)

Facebook: @aerie (1.9 million likes)



# Power of the #

Aerie trademarking the #AerieReal was a huge move in the right marketing direction (earned media or “free media”; consumer created buzz or WOM tactic). Aerie encourages this on their social media pages and website; even going a step further and getting involved with donating to different charities to give back (helping to build more brand purpose).

Statement from Aerie’s website:

“For EVERY unretouched photo you share with #AerieREAL @Aerie, we'll donate \$1 to NEDA, a non-profit that supports those affected by eating disorders.”

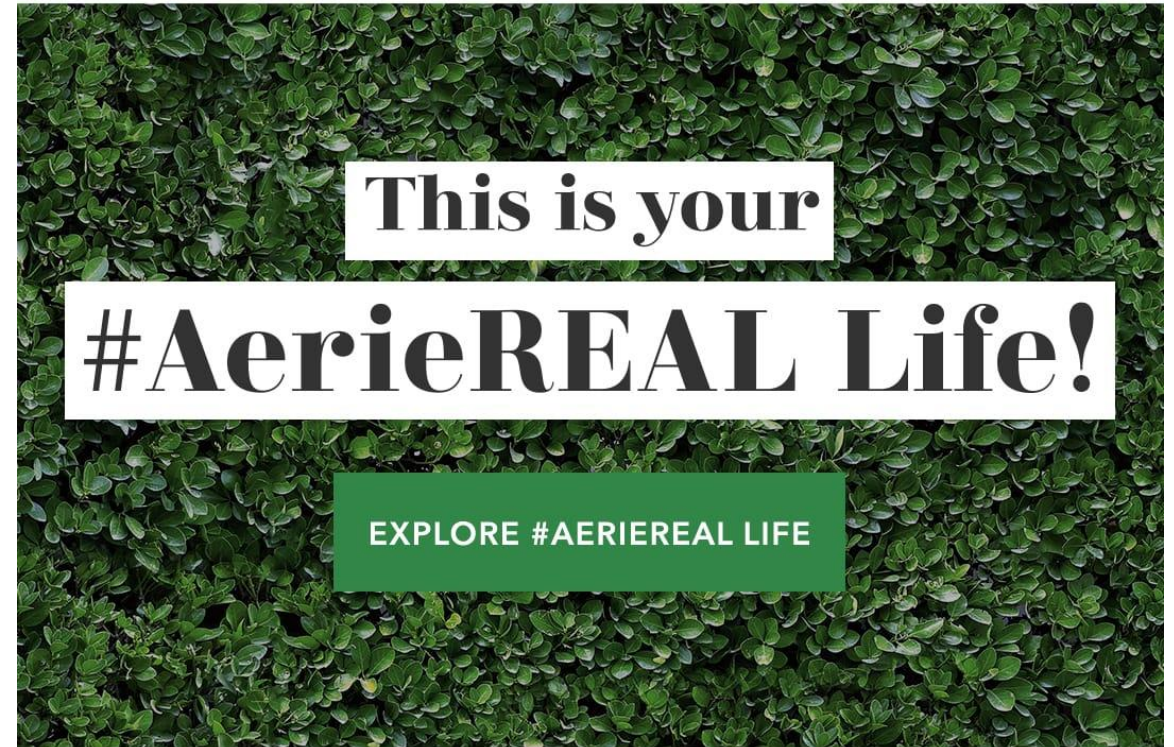




# #AerieREAL Life Website

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Another platform that Aerie uses to connect with consumers- A whole web page dedicated to building brand voice and creating a place for their audience to feel good. The site includes blogposts about many different things including style tips, self care, advice, and more. Along with fun DIY projects, a calendar of upcoming events that the company holds for its customers, and a place to share encouraging messages of positivity. The site doesn't push the brand's products, but focuses more on building good relationships with consumers.



# Results



Aerie's profit growth went from 9%-20% in one year after the release of the #AerieReal campaign.



In 2018 sales increases 29% from the previous year



Sales jumped another 20% in 2019



Revenues increased from around \$310 million in 2015 to almost \$650 million in 2018 at an average annual rate of 27%.



Aerie is currently the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest e-commerce lingerie retailer according to the NPD group



# References

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