

Mavrick's Mission To Mow Down Marketing Mediocrity. **By Mavrick**

Keeping Your Edge



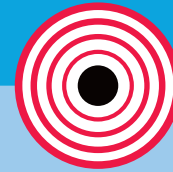
YOUR EDGE IS NOT STATIC

Once you've determined your brand's EDGE it's imperative to maintain it. Keep a sharp eye on the competition, technology and market trends, socio-economic conditions, etc. If your EDGE is a step behind it's no longer an edge... it's part of your history.



NURTURE YOUR EDGE

Your EDGE is an asset. A valuable one at that! As with all assets it's wise to keep your EDGE healthy and robust. Keep your EDGE front and center of business decisions - large and small. Doing this ensures your EDGE is a relevant component of your company culture.



STAY FOCUSED

Taking your EDGE for granted is a mistake. Distractions interfere with focus. Be especially sensitive to hot topics on social media and elsewhere. While they may be top of mind today... such topics have little staying power and are most certainly not an EDGE.

Previously, in *Textile Insight*, I defined and identified the principle of the EDGE. Next, I presented the often challenging task of finding your EDGE. In this issue I will share the steps to keep your EDGE. Keeping a brand's EDGE has proven difficult even for brands with a rock-solid grasp of what defines their EDGE.

To prove this difficulty, I will start off with two examples of brands that lost their EDGE. Then we'll open Mavrick's fishing fly box with a few tools proven to help keep a brand's EDGE.

The Edge That Ran Aground

For over 20 years Lands' End owned mindshare and market share of dozens of casual wear categories such as men's button-down shirts, sweaters and outerwear. Much of the company's success came down to its "Principles of Doing Business." Of the eight "principles" the one that stood out was #3: "Our products are GUARANTEED. PERIOD. No questions asked. No fine print. No arguments."

Why was this EDGE effective? In the earliest

days of the direct mail boom the concept of buying clothing without trying them on was new to consumers. GUARANTEED. PERIOD. nearly dared consumers to buy shoes, swimwear even dresses based on a picture and size chart.

After competitive challenges from other brands and ecommerce companies Lands' End made strategic changes to offset margin erosion. Corners were cut, suppliers changed, standards lowered. The result? Lost customer satisfaction and trust. GUARANTEED. PERIOD. lost its value and the EDGE was diluted.

The Edge That Failed To Materialize

Borg Textiles pioneered the field of high pile fabrics (knitted Sherpa, Berber, faux fur, etc.) receiving numerous patents throughout the 1950s and 1960s. When Borg's technology was at the height of fashion, Borg was the dominant brand.

As the demand for faux fur cooled in the 1970s, the outdoor apparel market emerged creating opportunities for "performance" textiles. Consumers pushed brands to innovate

and deliver better solutions.

Borg was uniquely positioned to own the synthetic fleece category introduced by Patagonia and others. Borg's manufacturing capabilities could have easily pivoted from fashion to the outdoor sector. Unfortunately for Borg, their EDGE was undefined and focused on fashion. Borg was unable to introduce the textiles for outdoor apparel.

Demand for synthetic pile fleece created an opportunity for Malden Mills to step in with a synthetic pile called Polar Fleece. As a result, Borg lost its dominance, its EDGE and most of its business.

These are just two examples of many brands that failed to give their EDGE the TLC it requires.

Can your brand avoid this fate? Of course! ■

Next up in the series:

Leveraging Your EDGE To Sell More.



Mavrick is a life-long merchant/ marketer who can be found in the basement at R2 Branding or rambling about the Rockies with a fly rod or skis depending on the season.