

In the News March 2014



March 4, 2014

Radio Shack closing 1100 stores – by Lari Barager

George Low, associate dean of undergraduate programs, was interviewed by KDFW's Lari Barager regarding RadioShack closing stores and what RadioShack needs to do to stay in business.

Radioshack is embarking on a battle to remake its image and cut down on losses. The Fort Worth-based retail corporation announced today that 4th quarter sales were down 19%. During the holiday season, Radioshack lost more than \$190 million. In an effort to recover, the company is closing 1100 underperforming stores.

"Advertising is costly to reposition the brand. Revamping the stores is very costly because it's expensive to redo all those stores. So they are in very tight situation where they have to spend a lot of money to completely remake the company and the image in the public eye," Low said.

Dr. Low said it takes years to change public perception of a long standing image like RadioShack, but he believes the company could use its many storefronts as an asset, using them to fill sales placed by online buyers. The hope there is that incorporating the internet usage and convenience of neighborhood pickup could draw upon a younger market.



March 4, 2014

Radio Shack's latest survival strategy: Close stores – by David Weinberg

Radio Shack announced today that it could be closing more than 1,000 of its stores. Sales are way down for the electronics retailer. The company is trying to remake itself as a place to buy cell phones. It's not the first time the company has tried to be the go-to-store for new electronic products.

"We were kind of the parts place. You could go and get resistors, transistors capacitors, that type of thing," says Illinois State marketing professor Gary L Hunter. For 17 years he worked Radio Shacks in North Carolina and Kentucky.

And Hunter worked at the company in the eighties, when a new product came along called "the computer."

"I sold Tandy Computers, Compaq computers, we sold IBM computers for a while," says Hunter.

The company, in its latest incarnation, wants to be mobile phone store. But it's not working.

"It's tough for any retailer to sell and make significant margins on cell phones," says George Low is Dean of the Neely School of Business at Texas Christian University, in the Tandy building, named after Charles Tandy.

So how has Radio Shack managed to stay alive? They're everywhere.

"It's convenient for people to go pick up whatever it is they need to pick up and that's why they've survived," Low says.



March 24, 2014

M.B.A. Brings Success for Dallas Marketing Professional at AT&T– by Robin Everson



Ray Carpenter earned a Bachelor’s Degree in Political Science based on his interest in the topic, but was not looking to apply to it a specific career. He worked as a financial analyst at Morgan Stanley and as a college football coach in California. Carpenter was looking to broaden his skills to give him a long-term fulfilling career. **He wanted to understand more about corporate and investment finance so he moved to Texas and earned a Master’s of Business Administration from Texas Christian University (TCU) Neeley School of Business.**

As the assistant vice president of marketing for emerging business markets at AT&T, he is responsible for setting price and developing strategic initiatives. He oversees five different teams comprised of 43 people in strategy, pricing, marketing communications, channel activation and predictive analytics.

How important was getting an M.B.A. for your career?

“It was necessary for me to get an M.B.A. to get to where I am today – career wise. What I took away the most from the experience, had to do with working in high performing teams and getting things done in a team environment. That kind of dynamic is really important in my career. The depth of knowledge in learning things in corporate and investment finance was invaluable. I was encouraged to get my chartered financial analyst (CFA) accreditation by my instructors. This helped to separate me from my peers. I love what I do. I work with people who really care about helping businesses succeed. I am able to help develop young leaders and that is a very rewarding part of my job,” said Carpenter.

What did you take away from your M.B.A. experience?

“The things that I took away from my M.B.A. experience includes working well in teams, a deeper and broader knowledge of certain skill sets and a hands-on approach to getting things done.”

What advice do you have for those considering an M.B.A. program?

“If you are going to get an M.B.A. to advance in career opportunities, know that it is a worthwhile investment. It isn’t a time to figure out what you want to do. You need to have a purpose. Working towards an M.B.A. is an invaluable experience.”

Cypress Creek MIRROR

March 24, 2014

Cypress Entrepreneur Un-limits Life– by Crystal Simmons

HOUSTON - UNlimiters founder Justin Farley’s first taste of freedom came when he was a Cy-Fair ISD middle school student.

Born with cerebral palsy, Farley struggled with simple tasks such as brushing his teeth, getting dressed and cooking.

“I was in school wearing elastic sweatpants,” he said. “I was the only one in school wearing sweatpants, so I felt like a loser and an outsider. Then one day my parents decided to go to the tailor and get elastic sewn into the waistline of a pair of jeans. From then on, I never wore sweatpants to school. I felt like a normal kid again.”

Since then, Farley has worked to find the tools that will allow him to live more independently.

“There was a time when I couldn’t put toothpaste on my tooth brush or cook my own meals,” he said. “All my life I have created or adapted products to help with these simple activities, plus many more.

“I don’t let my disability limit me and I don’t think anyone else’s should limit them.”



That first pair of jeans sparked an idea in Farley that he would later develop into a business. In 2009, Farley and his father got serious about starting a business to serve the handicapped community. By that time, Farley was a college student at University of Houston.

"This was an opportunity for me to help other people living with these limits and realize my goal of starting a business," he said in a statement. "After months of discussing it, my dad and I thought of the name (unbelievably available), and in 2009 we bought Unlimiters.com as a domain name. I owned it, I knew I wanted to do something with it, but I was busy with school and it just sat there."

Farley didn't put his business on hold for long. As a student at the world renowned Wolff Center for Entrepreneurship at University of Houston, Farley began getting the help and direction he needed to start an online market place specializing in products for those with disabilities. After hearing about a contest through the Bauer College of Business and college of architecture at University of Houston, Farley began collaborating with architecture students to design new products and create a working business plan. Soon after, **Farley won first place Richards Barrentine Values and Ventures Business Plan Competition held at the Neeley School of Business at TCU in 2012** and placed first and second in three national competitions, winning more than \$40,000 in prizes.

"My favorite product is a shirt with magnetic buttons," he said. "I was in the entrepreneurship school and they like to make everybody dress up with ties and the whole getup. Two or three years ago, I couldn't dress up like my classmates because I couldn't do buttons. Shortly after I started the site, I found a shirt with magnetic buttons instead of normal buttons. It really allowed me to dress appropriately for any occasion."

While the project looked good on paper, Farley still had to concentrate on transitioning his company out of the classroom and into the real world. As a student, Farley had help from mentors and other students. After graduation, he had to rely on himself.

It turned out though, Farley had uncovered a deeply underserved market. With more than 43 million people living with a disability in the United States, UNlimiters had found its niche, he said.

"There is such demand for it," he said. "I'm still surprised no one thought of it before."

After graduating from UH in 2012, Farley recruited fellow Cougar, Derek Yeung, a graduate from the College of Architecture's Industrial Design program, to design the UNlimiters website and help locate new products.

"It's definitely something that's needed," said Yeung. "When I was doing research, it was really hard to find products for the website. The information just wasn't available. It's definitely an underserved market."

To locate items for the online store, Farley and Yeung rely on a group of bloggers with varying disabilities to write about their experiences using products ranging from mainstream ones such as the Keurig to specialty ones such as MagnaReady, the magnetic button shirt. The website also provides product designers and inventors a place to showcase their wares as well as a SHOUT! section, where community members can also suggest items for the store.

The plan worked, and now UNlimiters is becoming like ebay.com for people with disabilities. For more information, visit www.unlimiters.com.