



WORLD CLASS MERCHANDISING FOR A CONSUMER-CENTRIC ORGANIZATION

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Today's apparel and retail organizations are challenged to become more merchandising focused to deliver timely products and services to meet consumer needs and lifestyle demands ("consumer-centric"). This research project linked merchandising theory to established practices in order to test "real-world" merchandising models and competencies required of merchandisers.

A three-stage research approach was used to develop the merchandising model. Stage one involved creative thinking to determine components of world class merchandising. Stage two included critical thinking about the goals of merchandising. A customercentric merchandising model of an apparel company with theoretical definitions was presented and application tested. Stage three included a critical analysis of key competencies of merchandising personnel (knowledge, skills, and behaviors). Development activities and internal and external programming needs were identified.

This research contributes theoretical and operational definitions of merchandising and its model components. Outcomes of this project tie the characteristics of a world-class organization from Total Quality Management (TQM) literature, links to an organization's merchandising practices, and builds a usable model for a customer-centric organization in the textile and apparel industries.