

## **Retail Brand Activation for Consumer Engagement**



**Kathy Harvey**  
Founder & President

### **About Harvey Agency**

Harvey is an award-winning, Baltimore-based, brand activation agency that engages consumers as they shop. For nearly 30 years, Harvey (formerly Harvey & Daughters) has taken a holistic approach to shopper marketing. Today Harvey bridges its in-store shopper heritage into the digital environment, creating one seamless omnichannel brand experience for the customer. Leading brands, including COVERGIRL, McCormick, and Manischewitz trust the agency to deliver programs that drive results. The firm is on track to become the largest brand activation agency in the mid Atlantic. The *Baltimore Business Journal* has recognized Harvey as one of the fastest-growing woman-owned businesses in Baltimore and one of the fastest-growing private companies in Greater Baltimore. For more, visit us online, on Facebook, or call 410-771-5566.

**Interview conducted by: Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor, CEOCFO Magazine**

### **CEOCFO: Ms. Harvey, would you tell us about the history of the company?**

**Ms. Harvey:** When I started the company back in 1986, my dad had a company FM Harvey Company and he was threatening to retire. He said he was going to name the company Harvey & Sons. I told him he has four girls and one boy. The youngest has never worked for him but the three girls have worked for him at some point so how could he name it & Sons? He told us it was a man's world and it was construction. I told him I was going to name mine Harvey & Daughters as a playful little riff and he thought it was hysterical and he loved it. My dad never did change the name of his company. He did slowly retire and he passed away about fourteen years ago back in 1996. My brother now owns the company and my sister Sheila still works at that company. People think that my father is involved and that I have daughters, but I do not. That was just the name of how it came to be. The name Harvey & Daughters opened many doors and it got me into many companies.

### **CEOCFO: What is Harvey Agency today?**

**Ms. Harvey:** We are into shopper marketing and it is a digital brand strategy agency. We do marketing; retail brand activation for CPG companies. It is shopper marketing from products on shelves, products in-store and products online. It used to be that advertising was the first thing that would happen and then people would go into the store, but now that path to purchase is not so simple. Advertising has been supplemented by social media and user generated content online that influences buying habits.

### **CEOCFO: What do you understand about the area you work in that perhaps other companies might not understand as well?**

**Ms. Harvey:** Twenty-eight years ago, I started the company on the foundation of packaging. Back then people were not focusing on that market and there were maybe two other companies that were doing that. Every other company was focusing on traditional advertising and our focus was strictly the packaging and in-store environment. The years of experience and growing up in this era where at one time it was not important, to now seeing how important it has become is incredible. Other people have jumped into the mix in the last ten years because they see the importance of that market. For us it is our experience, heritage and background. We were well ahead of the curve years ago.

### **CEOCFO: How do you engage with a client?**

**Ms. Harvey:** Every company is different so we work in different ways with different companies. We work with them how they want to work. Typically they would call us and tell us of a certain problem they have and ask us

if we would like to pitch for their account. We go in and do research to show them what their competitors are doing and how they might get the cutting-edge and gain more ROI. We pitch it to them and nine times out of ten, they like it and assign us. We then work directly with marketing to come up with ideas and promotions.

**CEOFCO: *What will you create?***

**Ms. Harvey:** One of our best examples was when McCormick came to us their core line of spices had been the same for years. It is hard for the consumer to shop because there are so many spices and yes they are in alphabetical order but it still takes the consumer a long time to stand there and look for the spice. They needed us to help them organize this and they needed our help to sell to upper management. We did research and put together a marketing plan in conjunction and with the help of the brand manager and put together a proposal to upper management of why they needed to spend millions of dollars in changing these walls in thousands of stores. They said go ahead. We developed the racking system that you see today on the wall for McCormick spices and it is similar to Campbell's; they were done basically about the same time. They have a bigger display area and it is easier for the consumer to shop. There was a 50% increase in sales just from that change alone.

**CEOFCO: *How do you reach potential customers? Is Harvey Agency well known throughout the consumer product world?***

**Ms. Harvey:** No, because we stayed under the radar. We are changing that so how we have gotten business in the past has been two ways; I knock on doors and talk to people. I have a big network of friends and customers, so I reach out to them for help and through referrals.

**“We are a scrappy group with big ideas. We are not the traditional agency with a ton of red tape to go through. If you call us, we are there.” - Kathy Harvey**

**CEOFCO: *Things are changing; why is this the time?***

**Ms. Harvey:** I used to cold call companies and tell them my name and they would talk to me. You cannot do that anymore with voicemail and email. People just do not want you to sell to them. Now we need to go out and find pain points of our customers because we do a great deal of in-store research where we say look at this package or look at this promotion and look at what our competitors are doing. We could probably really help XYZ company beat their other competitors. We go out and put together some intel and send it to them. We show them our findings and ask them to talk to us.

**CEOFCO: *Is it working?***

**Ms. Harvey:** It is. We do not do it that often though. In the past few years, we have stayed under the radar and just let things come to us or I have gone out and tried to get it. We are now being more proactive.

**CEOFCO: *I would imagine that your client list helps you get in the door as you have worked with recognizable names. Do you find that counts?***

**Ms. Harvey:** It does count but the thing that counts the most is our longevity with these clients. We work with Proctor & Gamble 27 years and counting and McCormick for 26 years, Philips over 20 years, and others. When do you ever see agencies that hold onto their clients for that long a time? Our clients are like friends and I really get to know them and it helps to have that personal relationship with us.

**CEOFCO: *Are there new areas that you would like to work on?***

**Ms. Harvey:** We are working on some new things now in retail and it is exciting. I would like to continue pushing boundaries in the digital environment and doing videos and gorilla marketing tactics.

**CEOFCO: *How do you keep us with the new ideas?***

**Ms. Harvey:** It's a team effort. Our team works collaboratively to keep up with new trends. We regularly brainstorm to help keep our clients relevant.

**CEOFCO: *Would you tell us a bit about your dogs and the Harvey corporate culture?***

**Ms. Harvey:** Yes I have been bringing dogs ever since I started the business. I refuse to let them go so every office space that we ever rented or owned must allow dogs. Every employee who comes here is aware that the

there are dogs, so for people who have allergies or are afraid, maybe this is not the place to work. The dogs are friendly and come every day. We have one of our client's dogs that on occasion stays with us maybe two days a week. The dogs bring a great amount of stress release to all the employees, but not too much when they go after their lunches and sometimes it is humorous.

**CEOCFO: *Why should the business community take note of the Harvey Agency today?***

**Ms. Harvey:** We are quicker, faster, cheaper and better. We are a scrappy group with big ideas. We are not the traditional agency with a ton of red tape to go through. If you call us, we are there. We are so eager to please and to make our clients happy; it is not about us but about our clients.

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**BIO:** Kathy launched Harvey in 1986 because she understood, long before many, that the retail environment would become an incredibly powerful marketing medium. She believes that strong relationships and killer work make both the agency and the client successful. And that flexibility, a unique set of focused marketing services, and tangible results are integral to keeping the biggest brands in the country happy. Kathy's primary responsibilities include business planning and client relations. She has experience working on award-winning projects with national and international clients including Fortune 500 companies such as Procter & Gamble, McCormick, Phillips Foods, H&S Bakery, Manischewitz, and Glory Days Grill.

Kathy is as passionate about animal rights as she is about package design, and gives regularly to non-profit animal rights organizations, like the African Wildlife Foundation and Phoenix Wildlife Center.

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