

NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

Accentera Business Plan

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**HONORS THESIS ABSTRACT
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ABSTRACT (100 – 200 WORDS):

The purpose of this study is to purpose a business plan for a handbag and shoe store named Accentera. The business plan is developed based on current market trends and consumer research. A survey questionnaire was developed and completed by 100 women. Findings indicated that they desire a brightly decorated store with affordable, but high quality handbags and shoes that are fashionable in every season. Based on the results of the survey, this business plan is purposed.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	3
Market Research.....	4-6
Consumer Research.....	6-8
Implications.....	8-9
Organization and Management.....	9-12
Financial Summary.....	12-13
Interior Style Summary.....	14
Logo for Accentera.....	15
Appendix:	
A. Survey	
B. References	
C. Survey Results	

Executive Summary

Mission Statement. It is the mission of Accentera to provide young women with quality and affordable accessories to accentuate their ensembles. Our friendly, knowledgeable, and efficient staff will encourage, educate, and excite every customer with superlative customer service.

Date of Opening. May 12, 2012

Founder. Jaimee Lipps- Owner and Manager

Number of Employees. There will be two employees total. Their duties will include handling the cash register, customer service, cleaning up the store, and other duties as assigned.

Location. Cherryvale Mall

- 7200 Harrison Ave. Rockford, IL 61112
- Phone (815) 332-2440

Description of Products. Accentera will carry an assortment of handbags and shoes to fit the wants and needs of consumers aged between 18-30 years old. The handbags and shoes we will carry will be affordable, good quality, and also in a style that the customer prefers. Every season the assortment of products will change to flow with the demand. Also, any new trends will definitely be put into the store as soon as possible to stay current and up to date with the competition.

Market Research

My market research was conducted to find out the current trends of accessories business focusing on what has been sold, price range, where, promotion, style, color, and other aspects of the industry. The stores I researched the most were Charming Charlie's and Claire's because not only did I want to discover how they sold their products to gain ideas, but to research my future competitors. The research was done to be able to find the ideal handbags and shoes that the target customer is looking for. That way when it comes to promotion and quality Accentera will be up there with the rest of the accessories stores.

Products. There are several handbags that are trending right now on the market in different types of stores. They are offered in a variety of styles, materials, colors, and prices. One of the styles is a satchel, which is a medium sized bag with two handles. The price range for this style of bag falls between twenty-five and thirty-five dollars. The other type of style that is currently available is the cross body. This has become more of the popular style, and it can range from a large to small in size. Also, it has very long strap that is worn across the body. The price range for the cross body is between fifteen and twenty-five dollars. Another popular style is the classic clutch purse, which has no straps and is usually worn for special occasions. This falls into the ten to twenty-five dollar price range. One of the larger bags currently on the market is a tote bag, and the price range is from twenty-five to forty dollars. Finally, the other style available is the wallet. The price range for wallets is between ten and twenty dollars.

There is a wide variety of materials that used to create these fashionable handbags. They are faux leather, cotton fabric, faux croc, faux snake, brass, silver and nickel combination, and even genuine leather too. These all greatly affect the price that the handbags are sold for within the

stores. Not only are the materials offered vast, but the colors as well. The colors that are available on the market today are shades of brown, black, bright colors, white and gray. There are sold during the correct season to draw the attention of those women who are shopping for them.

The types of shoes that are currently available on the market are very diverse and the market continues to expand all the time to stay with most current fashion trend. For instance, the styles that are being offered right now are only displayed and sold during the correct season. The boots that are on the market right now fall between twenty and fifty dollars. There are many different types of boots offered too like heeled, flat, snow, and rain. In addition, many versions of the pump are available on the market too. They are priced at about fifteen to thirty dollars. Sandals are very popular at this time, since summer is about to start. The prices these are usually sold at are between twenty and twenty-five dollars. Throughout the year flip-flops are sold, but the height of sales is usually in the spring and summer months. They can range from five to twenty dollars in price.

The price is extremely dependent on the material that is used to construct the shoe. These materials are faux leather, genuine leather, cotton fabric, Patten leather, colored beads, rubber, plastic, and various metals. The color of the shoe can be the deciding factor for a purchase for some women. The colors that are currently on the market are shades of brown, black, bright colors, white, and gray.

Promotion. The current trends of communicating with consumers are very bold and bright overall. The flyers and signage that are currently being used in the accessories market are bold and colorful. The information about the product, price, and maybe even a sale is legible. The signs are easy to find and are at eye level of the average customer. This is to ensure there is not

confusion when purchasing a product. These signs are generated for different reasons such as operational, informative, and promotional. This way the customer is never lost within the store or being misled about any of the merchandise.

Currently, the trend for the majority of advertising in the fashion industry is done through television commercials. Advertising for accessories on television is usually only done for department stores and fine jewelry stores. There is a commercial for a specialty store sometimes, if there is a special sale or event. Television advertisements are usually pricey and take a lot of work to put together that is why smaller stores usually do not use them to promote their items.

Internet shopping has been more popular for women's accessories. Currently, the companies I researched have sold accessories via the internet. Since most consumers use the internet, it has become one of the best ways to advertise for any kind of fashion apparel.

Consumer Research

Consumer research was conducted to develop an assortment plan and marketing strategies. Based on the results, I will provide products and advertisements in my store for my customers.

Data Collection Instrument. A survey questionnaire was developed based on current trends in the accessory industry. The survey questionnaire contained questions asking importance and preference of materials, promotion, price range, style, color, and other characteristics of shoes and handbags. The questions used were closed ended questions. There were multiple choice and numerical rating questions asked throughout the survey. The answered these questions by writing down their answers on a hard copy of the survey itself.

Data Collection. People from college, church, and coworkers of a family member were asked to complete the survey. Excel program was used to summarize the data.

Findings. The sample consists of a total of 100 women in the DeKalb and Rockford, Illinois area. The majority of the sample was Caucasian (58%), and following that was African American (27%). Over seventy percent of the women were between the ages of 18 and 20 and college students. Forty-four percent of the women have part time jobs, and are supported by their parents (27%). The majority of the sample (62%) has an annual income of less than \$5,000 per year. The survey results also indicate 50% of the women prefer shopping for handbags and shoes in a department store and 30% of the sample likes to shop for shoes and handbags in a franchise style store (e.g. Charming Charlie's).

Handbags. Forty-seven percent of the women surveyed purchase handbags two or three times a year, while thirty-seven percent might only buy one per year. The price range they would purchase handbags was between \$20-\$39 dollars (45%), which is followed by less than \$20 (21%). The materials that were chosen the most by women were genuine leather (31%), faux leather (34%), and cotton fabric (28%). The most preferred style and size of the handbag was the cross body handbag (37%), which is followed by satchels (34%), and totes (18%). The majority of the sampled would like to have a neutral handbag (40%), which is followed by classic black handbags (32%) and colorful handbags (19%).

Shoes. The results of the survey indicated that the average women purchases shoes 4 to 5 times a year (28%), which is followed by 7 or more pairs of shoes a year (24%). The favorite style of shoes is flats (29%), and then followed by pumps (26%). The most wanted price range for shoes was \$20-\$39 (47%) then followed by \$40-59 dollars (17%). The top four materials for shoes

from the survey results were faux leather (31%), suede (13%), cotton fabric (33%), and genuine leather at (20%). Women that completed the survey said that their shoe size between an eight and nine (41%), which is followed by sizes six and seven (32%). The top choice for shoe width was the average shoe width of C (32%), and this is followed by a tie between A and B (28%).

Promotion. Findings indicate that the majority of the sample pays attention to television commercials (36%). Twenty-six percent of the women indicated that flyers is one their top choices for how they receive advertising. Emails (14%) were a highly preferred media to receive product information and coupons.

Implications

Based on the previous findings I would offer the following products for my target consumers. For handbags, the majority of women that I surveyed thought that price, material, color, style, and size of the handbag were very important when choosing a handbag. The satchels that will be sold at Accentera will be priced between twenty-five and forty dollars. These will be sold in a variety of materials that consist of faux leather, cotton, fabric, and genuine leather. Also, they will be available for purchase in neutral browns, black, and bright colors depending on the season.

For shoes, they will be sold in several styles and will coordinate with the season of weather. In addition, they will be sold from sizes 4-12 and in widths from AA to DD. This is to accommodate every foot size that may be coming to Accentera. In addition, the majority of the women surveyed bought between four and seven pairs of shoes per year. This information shows that there should be all seasons of shoes available. Overall, the women that participated in

the survey thought that price, material, color, style, and size was extremely important when choosing a new pair of shoes.

Pumps will be sold at a price range of twenty to forty dollars. Flats will be sold within the price range of fifteen and thirty-five dollars. Sandals are going to be priced between fifteen and thirty-five dollars. Any finally, boots will be priced between thirty and forty-five dollars. All of these styles will be available in faux leather, suede, cotton fabric, and genuine leather. The colors that will be available will be a variety of bright colors, neutrals, and the classic black.

Regarding promotion, flyers and other signage will consist of information about the grand opening and special promotions for the first day of sale. In addition, they will be posted throughout the mall as well as around the store entrance. Since the findings indicated that women like to receive advertising through flyers, which is what will be used. Over 75% of the women I surveyed said that they used coupons regularly when shopping for handbags and shoes. A television commercial will be run on at least five channels one month prior to opening. Also, this was the very top choice for the women that were surveyed to see ads for a certain store or sale. This will be one of the first priority ways that Accentera will advertise. The opening will be posted on the malls website with all the store hours and contact information. Many of the women indicated that a coupon or notification of a sale through their email would be preferred to receive sales promotions.

Organization and Management

Organizational Structure. The sole owner will be me, Jaimee Lipps. I will be the head manager and handle all aspects of the business until there is a substantial amount of money to

sustain a well sized staff. I will be hiring two other employees that will be called customer assistants. They will man the register and taking care of customers needs, while I will be overseeing the whole operation. This will include the financial side as well.

Ownership Information:

- Names of Owners- Jaimee Lynn Lipps
- Percentage of Ownership- 100%
- Extent of involvement with the company- I will be the head of every department. This includes the finances, shipping, ordering, receiving, merchandising, management, marketing, customer service, and other various duties that may arise.

Management Profile:

- Name- Jaimee Lynn Lipps
- Position(s)- Owner/Head Manager
- Primary Responsibilities and Authorities- Head of every department and need that will arise including supervising the two employees that will be hired as well.
- Education- Bachelor of Science in Textiles, Apparel, and Merchandising and a minor in Business Administration from Northern Illinois University on May 12, 2012.
- Unique Experience and Skills-
 - Retail Management Intern at Kmart (May-August 2011) - This is where I gained a substantial amount of retail experience in a short amount of time. I learned every

department from customer service to soft lines to hard lines. I even worked in the back of the store with receiving as well. I was given several tasks where I was the head of a certain project like monthly training for the employees, or working on a new way to get more “shop you way rewards” sign-ups. This position gave me the chance to show what a leadership skills I do possess as well as how to work with people on all different levels.

- Community Advisor at Northern Illinois University (August 2011-May 2012) - I was really bumped up to the next level in leadership with position. My duties consisted of enforcing policies, crisis management, executing numerous programs, conducting meetings, making and giving presentations, and working in an extremely diverse environment. I believe I really grew in the position into the leader I am today. I am now able to take control of situation before it gets out of hand, and also being able to have energy at all times. Multitasking, time management, and stress management have become second nature for me and now I feel confident entering into any heavy leadership position.
- Community Involvement-
- One Love Youth Leader at Faith Center in Rockford, IL (May 2005-present)
 - Guide and direct youth ages twelve to eighteen towards leading a Godly life
 - Plan and execute several different types of events
 - Teach specific classes on different issues

- Elogeme Adolphi Christian Sorority Inc. (March 2011-present)
 - Incorporate Godly aspects into Northern Illinois University's campus
 - Teach and guide women from all walks of life
 - Lead and plan different campus events

Financial Summary

All of these expenses given are hypothetical since this is not an already established business. These are estimated numbers for each category that is listed. All of this information is and template is summarized from the Business Plan Startup Templates website.

- **Cost of Goods Sold:** Total cost of goods sold for handbags and shoes determined by from the Charming Charlie's website. The cost of both products offered 20% of the selling price. The cost of Internet access is \$250 per month, paid to Comcast for networking fees. The cost of e-mail accounts is 25% of the selling price.
- **Fixture Costs:** Fixture costs associated with starting Accentera are the following: 2 computers and wireless hubs \$3,000, two printers \$1,000, one scanner \$400, two telephones \$200, decoration expense \$14,110 for a total fixture cost of \$39,305.
- **Salaries Expense:** The founder of Accentera will receive a salary of \$24,000 in year one, \$36,400 in year two, and \$49,040 in year three.
- **Payroll Expense:** Accentera intends to hire two part-time employees at \$8.25/hour. The total cost of employing two people at these rates for the first year is \$1,320/month.

- **Rent Expense:** Accentera is leasing a 1700 square foot facility at \$.85/sq. foot. The lease agreement Accentera signed specifies that we pay \$2,000/month for a total of 36 months. At the end of the third year, the lease is open for negotiations.
- **Utilities Expense:** As stated in the contract, the lessee is responsible for the payment of utilities including gas, garbage disposal, and real estate taxes. The only utilities expense that Accentera must pay is the phone bill and dedicated phone line for internet access. The basic monthly service charge for each wireless hub provided by Verizon is \$17.29. The 13 wireless hubs used to connect the modem will make local calls to the network provided by Verizon resulting in a monthly charge of \$224.77. The two additional lines used for business communication will cost \$34.58/month plus long distance fees.
- **Marketing Expense:** Accentera will allocate \$5,000 for promotional expenses at the time of start-up. These dollars will be used for advertising in local newspapers, magazines and online in order to build consumer awareness.
- **Insurance Expense:** Accentera has allocated \$1,440 for insurance for the first year. As revenue increases in the second and third year of business, Accentera intends to invest more money for additional insurance coverage.
- **Legal and Consulting Fees:** The cost of obtaining legal consultation in order to draw up the paper work necessary it is \$1,000.
- **Accounts Payable:** Accentera will try to acquire a \$24,000 loan from a bank at a 10% interest rate.

Interior Style Summary of Accentera

The overall style of the store will be geared towards what the women indicated within the survey results. The women were surveyed indicated that the interior of the store does matter to them, and makes a difference as to if they purchase something. Majority of the women that were surveyed find fashion trends very important. This meaning that the store must be trendy and up to date with the metals, tables, counters, colors, patterns, and other decorations that are used. The store itself is preferred by the women surveyed to be very bright and colorful at all times. This will definitely be eye catching and give off an inviting atmosphere to customers.

Logo for Accentera

This logo was created by Colin Eash. He is a graphic designer from Rockford, Illinois. This will be used on all publications that are affiliated with Accentera.



Appendix

A. SURVEY:

Survey for Shoes and Handbags

I, Jaimee Lipps, am conducting a survey to collect information regarding the creation of a business plan and potentially opening an accessory store for the Rockford, Illinois area. I would greatly appreciate your participation in this survey and hope to see you in my store someday. If you have any questions please contact me via email at jlipps21@gmail.com

Directions: For each item please circle the answer that best reflects your agreement with each statement. 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree.

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Fashion trends are important to me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. I am an impulse buyer | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. Interior design of the store is important to me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. I always like bright and bold colors in a store layout. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. I love neutral colors in a store layout like brown, tan, and gray. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

HANDBAGS:

Directions: For each question please mark the answer that best reflects the importance to you. 1 being least important and 5 being most important.

6. How important is price when you shop for handbags?

1 2 3 4 5

7. How important is the material when you shop for handbags?

1 2 3 4 5

8. How important is color when you shop for handbags?

1 2 3 4 5

9. How important is style (design) when you shop for handbags?

1 2 3 4 5

10. How important is size when you shop for handbags?

1 2 3 4 5

Directions: Please mark you answer appropriately.

11. How many times do you buy handbags in a year?

- a. 0-1
- b. 2-3
- c. 4-5
- d. 5-6
- e. 7 or more

12. What type of material do you prefer in a handbag?

- a. Faux Leather
- b. Cotton Fabric
- c. Faux Croc
- d. Faux Snake skin
- e. Suede
- f. Genuine Leather

13. What style of handbag do you purchase most often?

- a. Satchel (medium size bag with two straps/handles)
- b. Cross Body (long strap that goes across the shoulder to hip; wide range in size)
- c. Clutches (small, handheld)
- d. Wallets (small goods)
- e. Totes (very large bag with two straps/handles)

14. When choosing a handbag, what colors do you tend to purchase most often? (Check all that apply)

- a. Neutrals (brown, cream, beige, etc.)
- b. Black
- c. White
- d. Gray
- e. Colors (blue, purple, green, red, orange, yellow, etc.)

15. How much do you usually spend on a handbag?

- a. less than \$20
- b. \$20-39
- c. \$40-59
- d. \$60-79
- e. \$80-99
- f. \$100 or more

SHOES:

Directions: For each question please mark the answer that best reflects the importance to you. 1 being least important and 5 being most important.

16. How important is price when you shop for shoes?

1 2 3 4 5

17. How important is the material when you shop for shoes?

1 2 3 4 5

18. How important is color when you shop for shoes?

1 2 3 4 5

19. How important is style (design) when you shop for shoes?

1 2 3 4 5

20. How important is size when you shop for shoes?

1 2 3 4 5

Directions: Please mark your answer appropriately.

21. How many times do you purchase pairs of shoes per year?

a. 0-1

b. 2-3

c. 4-5

d. 5-6

e. 7 or more

22. Which style of shoes do you tend to purchase most often?

a. Boots

b. Flats

c. Pumps

d. Sandals

e. Flip-Flops

23. On average, how much do you spend on one pair of shoes?

a. less than \$20

b. \$20-39

c. \$40-59

d. \$60-79

e. \$80-99

f. \$100 or more

24. Shoes are made of many materials. What is your preference?

a. Faux Leather

b. Cotton Fabric (slippers or cozy boots)

c. Faux Croc

d. Faux Snake skin

e. Suede

f. Genuine Leather

25. What size of shoe do you wear?

a. 4-5

b. 6-7

c. 8-9

d. 10-11

e. 12 and up

26. What width of shoe do you wear?

a. AA (narrow)

b. A

c. B

d. C

e. D

f. DD

g. DDD (widest)

PROMOTION:

27. What advertisements do you believe catch your attention the most?

a. Mailers

b. Television Commercials

c. Internet Ads

d. Emails

e. In-store Flyers

f. Handout Flyers

28. How do you pay when purchasing for handbags and shoes?

a. Cash

b. Check

c. Credit/Debit Cards

d. Other _____

29. Do you use discount coupons when shopping for handbags and shoes?

YES

or

NO

30. Where do shop most often for shoes and handbags?

- a. Chain Stores (e.g. Charming Charlies, Claires, etc.)
- b. Department Stores (e.g. Macy's, JCPenny, Kohl's, Sears etc.)
- c. Discount Stores (e.g. Target, Wal-mart, K-mart etc.)
- d. Second-Hand Stores (e.g. Salvation Army, Goodwill etc.)

DEMOGRAPHICS:

31. What is your age?

- a. Less than 18
- b. 18-20
- c. 21-23
- d. 24-26
- e. 27-29
- f. 30 or older

32. Where does your main income come from?

- a. Full- time job
- b. Part- time job
- c. Social security checks
- d. Seasonal job
- e. Parents
- f. Other: _____

33. What is your average yearly income?

- a. Less than \$5,000

- b. \$5,000-9,000
- c. \$9,001-15,000
- d. \$15,001-25,000
- e. \$25,001-35,000
- f. \$35,001-45,000
- g. \$45,001-55,000
- h. \$55,001 or more

34. Gender

- a. Female
- b. Male

35. Race

- a. African American
- b. Caucasian
- c. Asian
- d. Hispanic
- e. Middle Eastern
- f. Native American
- g. Other_____

36. Marital Status

- a. Single
- b. Married
- c. Widow
- d. Separated

- e. Divorced
- f. Other _____

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C. SURVEY RESULTS:

Market Analysis Survey Data
 "Accentera"
 Jaimee Lipps
 Honors Capstone Project
 20-Mar-12

KEY	
1st Choice	
2nd Choice	

Question	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL	Majority%
1	9	13	36	30	12	100	66.0%
2	15	12	25	35	13	100	60.0%
3	9	15	30	37	9	100	67.0%
4	3	9	25	41	22	100	66.0%
5	17	29	33	9	12	100	62.0%
6	3	2	11	25	59	100	84.0%
7	4	8	27	32	29	100	61.0%
8	4	1	10	33	52	100	85.0%
9	5	0	8	29	58	100	87.0%
10	5	2	8	34	51	100	85.0%
16	3	6	10	29	52	100	81.0%
17	3	10	22	32	33	100	65.0%
18	2	1	10	29	58	100	87.0%
19	0	0	5	28	67	100	95.0%
20	0	0	2	11	87	100	98.0%

Question	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	TOTAL
11	37	47	8	8	0	0	0	0	100
	0 to 1	2 to 3	4 to 5	5 to 6	7 or more				
12	34	28	1	4	2	31	0	0	100
	faux leather	cotton fabric	faux croc	faux snake skin	suede	genuine Leather			
13	34	37	7	4	18	0	0	0	100
	satchel	cross body	clutches	wallets	totes				
14	44	32	0	5	19	0	0	0	100
	neutrals	black	white	gray	colors				
15	21	45	15	8	4	7	0	0	100
	less than \$20	\$20-39	\$40-59	\$60-79	\$80-99	\$100 or more			

21	5 0 to 1	22 2 to 3	28 4 to 5	21 5 to 6	24 7 or more	0	0	0	100
22	14 boots	29 flats	26 pumps	18 sandals	13 flip-flops	0	0	0	100
23	12 less than \$20	47 \$20-39	17 \$40-59	13 \$60-79	6 \$80-99	5 \$100 or more	0	0	100
24	31 faux leather	33 cotton fabric	2 faux croc	1 faux snake skin	13 suede	20 genuine Leather	0	0	100
25	4 4 to 5	32 6 to 7	41 8 to 9	21 10 to 11	2 12 and up	0	0	0	100
26	4 AA	28 A	28 B	32 C	6 D	1 DD	1 DDD	0	100
27	9 mailers	36 TV commercials	8 internet ads	14 emails	26 in-store flyers	7 handout flyers	0	0	100
28	25 cash	0 check	75 credit/debit	0 Other	0	0	0	0	100
30	30 chain stores	50 dept. stores	17 discount stores	3 second-hand stores	0	0	0	0	100
31	1 less than 18	71 18-20	21 21-23	2 24-26	3 27-29	2 30 or older	0	0	100
32	12 full-time	44 part-time	1 social security	16 seasonal	27 parents	0 other	0	0	100
33	62 less than \$5,000	19 \$5,000-9,000	7 \$9,001-15,000	3 \$15,001-25,000	3 \$25,001-35,000	2 \$35,001-45,000	0 \$45,001-55,000	4 \$55,001 or more	100
34	100 Female	0 Male	0	0	0	0	0	0	100
35	27 African American	58 Caucasian	7 Asian	7 Hispanic	0 Middle Eastern	0 Native American	1 Other	0	100
36	91	6	0	0	1	2	0	0	100

	single	married	widow	separated	divorced	other
Question	YES	NO	TOTAL			
29	70	30	100			