

Walmart

ABOUT

Category:

Retail – department stores, grocery stores, e-retail

Owner of the brand:

Walmart Inc.

Key competitors:

Amazon, eBay, Aldi, Target, Costco, Lidl, Tesco, Carrefour

BRAND STRATEGY ANALYSIS

Brand essence

Helping families save money and live better.

Brand values

Affordability, accessibility, family.

Brand character

Approachable, American, down-to-earth, familiar, unpretentious.

Dominating archetype



The Regular Guy

EVIDENCE

Comments

1

Walmart is one of the most powerful companies on the planet. It is the world's largest retailer and the world's largest company by revenue, according to Fortune's Global 500 ranking¹. It employs more than two million people globally² and has an unprecedented impact on a huge number of suppliers (including FMCG giants Procter & Gamble and Unilever) as well as on local communities. Walmart owns almost 70 brands globally including other retail brands such as Sam's West, the US wholesaler, and multiple private labels (e.g., Sam's Choice, Great Value and White Stag).

2

A big part of Walmart's brand equity is rooted in its heritage. To this day, Walmart senior executives refer to the founder of the company, Sam Walton, and his philosophy of serving often "overlooked and under-appreciated customers"³ and "helping the people living in small towns and rural America enjoy a similar quality of life as those who live in the big cities"⁴.

Walmart's business model and its brand strategy have always been based on the promise of the lowest prices: "Every Day Low Prices on a Broad Assortment – Anytime, Anywhere". This vision has proven to have a substantial impact on the US economy, contributing to the lower inflation rate and increased productivity⁵, as well as on Walmart's stakeholders – it is an attractive proposition for customers, but a challenging one for suppliers.



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3

For many years, Walmart primarily targeted the lower end of the market, that is, the most cost-conscious demographic. The company's messaging was focused on the fact that it offers low prices, which was encapsulated in the tagline: "Always Low Prices. Always". Over time Walmart realised that in order to grow, it had to widen its target audience so that it also included customers, who want great value, but not necessarily at the lowest prices. In order to achieve that, it shifted its approach. The company changed its tagline to "Save money. Live better." and in 2008, went through a rebranding process, which is believed to be one of the most successful rebranding stories of all time as it helped the company improve its customer satisfaction ratings. With the help of the brand consultancy, Lippincott, Walmart changed its messaging approach and instead of focusing on low prices, it started emphasizing the emotional benefits of saving money. Lippincott explained on their website: "We looked to the most important outcomes of saving money: feeling smart for making the right choice, spending more time with family, and, to simply live better."⁶ This strategy was reflected in the new Walmart communication strategy and visual identity with a new logo at its heart: warmer and more modern, with a spark symbol representing "a light bulb that goes off in your head when you feel smart about something, or the burst of energy you feel when you enjoy a better life"⁷. In 2025, Walmart refreshed its identity, refining its design system to reflect a more digital-first approach.

4

For a few years, in the late 2010s, Walmart attempted to reach a wider audience – younger and more aspirational – by purchasing new companies with a strong e-commerce presence. On the one hand, it was growing its main e-commerce site (walmart.com) relatively cautiously, trying not to cannibalize its in-store sales. On the other hand, it invested a lot in dotcom acquisitions such as jet.com (general e-commerce) ModCloth, Bonobos, Moosejaw, Eloquii (apparel), and others. This approach was different from that of Walmart's biggest competitors like Amazon, which prefers to build its capabilities in-house, and Target, which has a trendier image and therefore does not avoid associating its name with newly acquired companies.⁸ In the early 2020s, Walmart changed its diversification strategy. It shut down jet.com, sold the apparel brands and began focusing on its core customer and its core proposition, placing a stronger emphasis on growing walmart.com and creating additional sources of revenue (e.g., retail media networks).

5

In the past, Walmart was known for not engaging in CSR-related activities, believing that the price for these activities would be ultimately paid by customers and investors. This approach started changing in 2005, when Lee Scott, Walmart's CEO at the time, committed to turning Walmart into a more sustainable company, even though at that point he admitted he did not know how⁹. Since then, Walmart has made substantial progress in becoming a more socially responsible company, paying closer attention to its environmental impact, helping the victims of natural disasters (e.g., Puerto Rico Hurricane Relief) and treating its employees better (in particular by increasing their salaries above the national minimum wage in the US).

6

Even though Walmart is the biggest company in the world, it does not focus on its size or power in its messaging. It mostly emphasizes its family character and affordability (EDLP—everyday low prices), and as such it is a Regular Guy type of brand.

Tagline

“Save money. Live better.”

Official brand statement

“Sixty years ago, Sam Walton started a single mom-and-pop shop and transformed it into the world's biggest retailer. Since those founding days, one thing has remained consistent: our commitment to helping our customers save money so they can live better. Today, we're reinventing the shopping experience and our associates are at the heart of it.”¹⁰

“From our humble beginnings as a small discount retailer in Rogers, Ark., Walmart has opened thousands of stores in the U.S. and expanded internationally. Through innovation, we're creating a seamless experience to let customers shop anytime and anywhere online and in stores. We are creating opportunities and bringing value to customers and communities around the globe. Walmart operates approximately 10,500 stores and clubs in 20 countries and eCommerce websites. We employ 2.1 million associates around the world — nearly



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1.6 million in the U.S. alone.

Every Day Low Prices on a Broad Assortment – Anytime, Anywhere

Every Day Low Price (EDLP) is the cornerstone of our strategy, and our price focus has never been stronger. Today's customer seeks the convenience of one-stop shopping that we offer. From grocery and entertainment to sporting goods and crafts, we provide the deep assortment that our customers appreciate — whether they're shopping online at Walmart.com, through one of our mobile apps or shopping in a store. We currently operate three primary store formats in the U.S., each custom tailored to its neighborhood.”¹¹

Interesting facts

Walmart is well-known for its conservative views. It sells only clean versions of music albums (with no parental advisory warnings), has banned so-called “lad magazines” and has stopped selling particular items based on customer complaints (e.g., a pregnant Barbie).¹²