Williams Honors College, Honors Research Projects

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Strategic Recommendations For Sherwin Williams

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Project Report

Black to the Fuchsia

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Primary Research Methods

Sherwin Williams ("Company") has recently expressed a desire to improve the recruitment and retention of employees. To aid in bettering these processes, our team conducted primary research that built upon prior, secondary research. Our team's primary research was centered around benchmarking Sherwin Williams' business related practices with those of similar retail companies and employees. Specifically, the research was focused on areas of opportunity that were identified in secondary research, namely company culture, training and support, employee referrals, and treatment of part-time employees of the different organizations. To complete the benchmarking effectively, our team created two variations of a survey to capture the necessary feedback and data. Additionally, our team attended a training center visit and an in-store visit with the Sherwin corporate team to provide more insight on Sherwin's business practices.

Initially, the team gathered information about Sherwin Williams HR practices through a training center and in-store visit with Sherwin corporate representatives. Our team was then able to compare the information we received from the Sherwin corporate visit with the information gathered by our Sherwin retail survey to focus in on any gaps between corporate HR strategies and their implementation in the Sherwin retail stores. Using a benchmark survey, we also compared the Sherwin corporate strategies to the strategies used by similar retail companies.

The first survey was tailored to the Sherwin Williams employees and managers. This survey was intended to gauge where they stood on the different business related practices. To be mindful of the employee's time, the survey was short and streamlined, taking only about two minutes to complete. In addition, we also collected basic information to determine the demographics of the survey participants, such as age and number of years they worked at the Company, while keeping the survey anonymous. The majority of the questions included in the

survey were semantic differentiation and likert questions to help quantify the employees' attitudes regarding the different business practices. The survey questions used are included in Appendix A and were verified by University of Akron faculty, Dr. Hanlon and Mr. Andy Platt.

The sample size for the Sherwin specific survey included both management and associates of the Sherwin Williams retail stores in the Northeast Ohio area. Our team traveled to 20 stores within a 20 mile radius of the University of Akron. Equipped with mobile devices, we administered in-store surveys to 31 Sherwin managers and associates from the different stores. We also participated in value added conversations with the employees while distributing the survey. These conversations were more difficult to quantify as the conversations were not reproduced in anyway. However, they did provide our team with a deeper understanding of employee sentiment.

The second survey ("benchmarking survey") our team distributed was similar to the Sherwin Williams specific survey, but it did include minor changes. Since this survey was distributed to different retail stores and to the general public through social media and university emails, our team created a question to determine if the survey respondent had worked in retail before. Through our analysis, our team then stratified the benchmark survey respondents into two separate pools, retail and non-retail employees (See the "Statistical Testing of Data Collection and Results & Primary Research Findings" Section for more details). The remainder of the survey questions were the same as the Sherwin survey with the replacement of the words "Sherwin Williams" with the words "company." The survey questions for the benchmarking survey also followed the semantic differentiation and Likert styles utilized in the Sherwin survey. The benchmarking questionnaire is included in Appendix B.

To distribute the benchmarking survey, our team utilized Qualtrics.com on mobile devices to record the responses. By using this platform, the survey respondents were able to be kept

anonymous, and their email was only included at the end of the survey if the respondents wanted to be entered for a chance to win a gift card. The emails and data were kept separate during the analysis to ensure anonymity amongst respondents.

The sample for the benchmarking survey included various retail stores in the Northeast Ohio area including but not limited to local malls, Walmart, and Target. Furthermore, we also disseminated the survey through social media and the university email to gather additional responses. In total, we gathered 239 responses for this survey. Of these responses, 53 percent (128 count) of respondents indicated that they had worked in retail.

Statistical Testing of Data Collection and Results & Primary Research Findings

Category	SW Stores
Your Work Ethic	1.83
Accepting Position Again	1.8
Coworkers Available for Help	1.74
Recommend to others	1.73
Relationship with Manager	1.5
Manager Fit for Position	1.43
Access to Resources	1.4
Company's Positivity / Support	1.37
Coworkers Viewed as Friends	1.33
Understanding of Career Path	1.3
Your Value to Company	1.2
Company Value of Employees	1.13
Work Life Balance	1.1
Reaching Full Potential	0.93
Wish for More Connection	0.53

All responses from the surveys were assigned point values from -2 to +2, with a neutral zero. The response points were totalled and averaged for each category that was surveyed, as shown in the chart on the left.

The areas where Sherwin Williams employees had the most positive responses were their work ethic, their likelihood to accept the position again, their likelihood to recommend the position to others, and the availability of coworkers for help. The areas where Sherwin Williams employees had the most negative responses were a sense of value to the company, work life balance, ability to reach their full potential, and a wish for more connection. Note that even the lowest average response for Sherwin was still positive (0.53). This numerical score would equate to a response between "neither agree

nor disagree" and "somewhat agree." All of the responses for Sherwin Williams averaged a score above the neutral zero.

We were then able to compare these responses to the results of our benchmarking survey. Because our benchmark survey included a preliminary question to indicate whether or not the respondent had worked in a retail position, we were able to analyze Sherwin Williams' employees responses against all responses as well as against the responses from only those who have worked in a retail position.

Sherwin vs Benchmark Store Survey - Mean Results					
Category	SW Stores	Benchmark (Total)	Difference (SW-BMTotal)	Benchmark (Retail Only)	Difference (SW-BMRetail)
Understanding of Career Path	1.3	-0.04	1.34	-0.08	1.38
Manager Fit for Position	1.43	0.26	1.17	0.07	1.36
Reaching Full Potential	0.93	-0.13	1.06	-0.30	1.23
Recommend to others	1.73	0.58	1.15	0.55	1.18
Accepting Position Again	1.8	0.82	0.98	0.70	1.10
Company Value of Employees	1.13	0.22	0.91	0.09	1.04
Company's Positivity / Support	1.37	0.63	0.74	0.59	0.78
Coworkers Available for Help	1.74	1.14	0.6	1.09	0.65
Relationship with Manager	1.5	1	0.5	0.88	0.62
Coworkers Viewed as Friends	1.33	0.81	0.52	0.75	0.58
Wish for More Connection	0.53	0.07	0.46	-0.01	0.54
Your Value to Company	1.2	0.62	0.58	0.66	0.54
Work Life Balance	1.1	0.62	0.48	0.59	0.51
Access to Resources	1.4	0.95	0.45	0.91	0.49
Your Work Ethic	1.83	1.62	0.21	1.65	0.18

Mean response from likert scale (range 2 to -2, neutral 0)

Note that in every category, Sherwin Williams ranks higher than our benchmark, with an average difference of 0.74 points in the total benchmark and 0.81 in the retail benchmark. Even the areas where Sherwin Williams had the lowest score, the benchmark showed much more negative responses.

The top areas where Sherwin Williams employees expressed more positive feelings than our general benchmark stores were their understanding of the career path, good management fit, their likelihood to recommend the company to others, feelings that they were reaching their full

potential, their likelihood of accepting the position again, and the sense that their company values their employees. In the analysis comparing Sherwin Williams stores and the retail benchmark, we identified these six areas were once again the top six areas that Sherwin outperformed the benchmark. Interestingly, the difference between Sherwin Williams mean responses and the retail benchmark responses for these six areas were greater than the difference between Sherwin Williams and the general benchmark. For example, in the area of manager's fit for position, Sherwin Williams outscored the general benchmark by 1.17 points and the retail benchmark by 1.36 points. This same pattern continues across all surveyed areas with the exception of work ethic. See "Discussion & Implications" for a wider conversation regarding these areas.

Discussion & Implications

The six areas listed in the previous sections were revealed in our survey as the top areas that outperformed the retail benchmark. The six areas that the Sherwin employees answered stronger in are understanding of career path, good management fit, the likelihood to recommend the company to others, the feeling that they were reaching their full potential, the likelihood of accepting the position again, and the sense that their company values their employees. Each of these areas indicate Sherwin employees value their company and its aspects to a high degree, especially as it relates to recruitment and retention.

First, a strong understanding of a career path is an area that allows employees to visualize a clear goal within their Company. A career path involves "understanding what knowledge, skills,
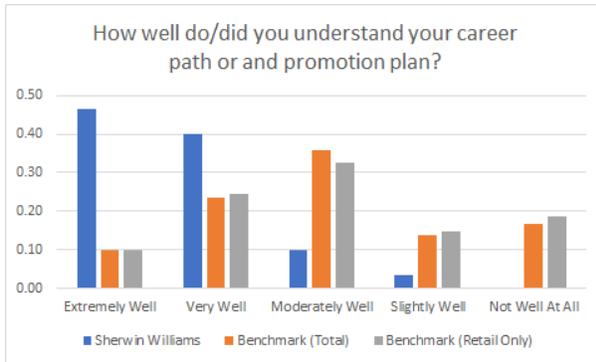

personal characteristics, and experience are required for an employee to progress his or her career laterally, or through access to promotions and / or departmental promotions" (Heathfield, 2018). This is particularly important when it comes to recruitment. In a recent study, 41 percent of millennials said personal growth or advancement is the primary driver in choosing one job over another (Adkins, 2016). Because Sherwin has such a strong career path and opportunity with their manager trainee program, they should be able to advertise this within their communications to millennial employees.

The next area, a good management fit, relates to how well each employee believed their manager's personality is right for their position. When an employee believes their manager is the right fit for their position, it is likely that a good relationship will follow. A positive employee and manager relationship will promote
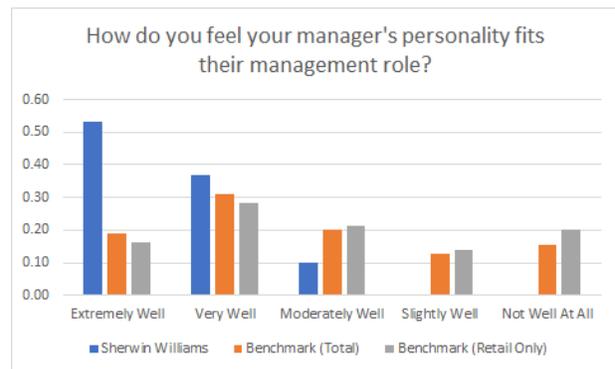
employee happiness on the job, and company success will only increase (Landrum, 2017). As evidence, one of every two employees reports that they left their last job because of management, or an issue managers had control over (Gallup Research, 2017). Sherwin Williams' positive position with manager fit helps reduce turnover and keep retention numbers high.

The third area that strongly outperformed the benchmark, the likelihood to recommend the company to others, goes hand-in-hand with the fifth area, the likelihood to accept the position


again. Each of these areas are strong indicators that the employees are enjoying their time at work. In order for an employee to confidently recommend a job to someone, they must actually enjoy it. The same can be said about their likelihood to accept the position again, if they had to do it all over. The latter had a completely positive review, indicating that the Sherwin employees surveyed are very passionate about

their positions, and if they had to choose whether to accept a similar position with the Company again, they would choose to continue with Sherwin. Of course, this has positive effects on recruitment.

What may be less-well known, however, is the positive effect these surveyed areas have on retention. The average employment duration is 70 percent longer for referred hires than for a non-referred hire (Frazier, 2018). The personal connection that is added through a referral hire also affects the current employee in addition to the new hire. In the same study, it was found that the average employment duration is 20 percent longer for employees who refer than those who do not refer others to the company (Frazier, 2018). These statistics further demonstrate the positive effect between employee referrals and retention.

In regards to each employee feeling as if they are reaching their full potential, the implications are very similar to the those of the first area, which is a defined career path. Reaching full potential, however, has greater
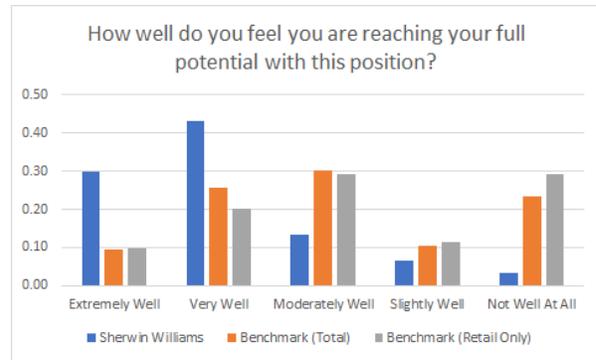
implications regarding personal accomplishment and fulfillment rather than career accomplishments. In the same study referenced above, it was found that 34 percent of millennials cite this personal fulfillment as the primary driver in choosing one job over another (Adkins, 2016). This was the second highest scoring category, following right behind personal accomplishment and growth mentioned above. Both of these areas will allow employees to keep a positive mindset regarding themselves and their performance.

Our reason for conducting a survey that only included Sherwin Williams employees was to uncover opportunities for growth within the retail stores. We were expecting negative results, especially since the original goal of the project was to increase retention and have better methods of recruitment. Since the results were positive, it changed our approach to a solution (See Recommendations section). Instead of improving aspects of the Company, we decided to promote the already positive aspects based on the results of our survey.

Limitations

All research conducted results in limitations, or aspects of the research that inhibit the data collection process. The data collected in the benchmarking survey and Sherwin Williams specific survey were not exceptions. The first and most apparent limitation our team faced in our research was with our Sherwin Williams survey. The Sherwin survey we distributed was done in

person. Therefore, our team was restricted geographically to only the stores in the Northeast Ohio area. With the inability to reach out to other Sherwin stores or contact employees nationwide, our survey results were limited to stores in close proximity to the Company's corporate headquarters in Cleveland, Ohio.

The geographic barrier we experienced could potentially skew the results more positively when answering the survey questions regarding their career path and the connection to other stores. Additionally, during a team visit to Sherwin Williams, corporate recruiter, Lauren Kraska, explained that the Northeast Ohio district loses a lot of managers to corporate sales roles. Corporate is likely to be an end goal for some of the managers at the Northeast Ohio stores, which explains the knowledge of the surveyed participants on their promotion path. Furthermore, Sherwin Williams has a greater concentration of store locations in the Northeast Ohio region due to the Company's history in the area. For instance, there are 20 stores within a 20 mile radius of the Akron, Ohio. With a greater number of stores in the area and the corporate headquarters located in the area, we expect the connection employees feel to each other to be higher than normal in this region compared to other Sherwin stores across the United States. The best way to resolve this issue that we can see would be to distribute a similar survey to a company email list that has every employee fill it out so you can get results from a national pool of respondents.

Additionally, our benchmarking survey also demonstrated some limitations in regards to the geographic location of the results, similar to the limitation highlighted with the Sherwin survey above. The benchmark survey was limited to the Northeast Ohio region mostly which gave the results a lack of generalizability. However, since the Sherwin surveys were also taken from the same region, the surveys were very comparable to each other in this way. Another

limitation from our benchmarking was the distribution amongst ages, as well as from retail to non-retail responses. From our respondents, 128 had worked in retail while 102 had not worked in retail before. For the age distribution, 64.35 percent, or 148 responses, were in the 18 to 24 age range. Both of these limitations found in our benchmarking survey would be best solved with additional capital to reach out to more respondents in a wider distributed survey. Future surveys could also be focused on only retail responses to ensure a larger survey pool of retail employees was achieved. However, it is beneficial to examine how the retail employee reponses compare to the non-retail results.

Another limitation of Sherwin survey was the presence of the associate's managers and other co-workers in the store with them when they were participating in the survey. The management's presence may have skewed the positive results we gathered through the distribution of the survey. Even though the collected survey results were anonymous, the employees may have answered the questions cautiously knowing that their managers were in the room. We also fully disclosed that our team was working on a project for Sherwin Williams headquarters, and the associates and managers could have felt obligated to speak highly of their employer knowing that the results might be reported to corporate.

If Sherwin Williams were to scale this survey and administer at a Company-wide level, both of these limitations could be addressed. First, by sending out a mass email, the geographic limitation and presence of management, would be solved due to the increased sample size and the employees being able to take the survey on their own time away from the stores. Increasing the sample size and distributing it from corporate (instead of our team) would also decrease the pressure to answer positively to make the Company look better since it would not be focused on a small region located close to the corporate headquarters. Additionally, if Sherwin headquarters

is asking for responses to their survey, this would eliminate the added pressure to speak highly of the Company to a third party, University of Akron students.

An additional limitation experienced in our research was the alternating topic requests from Sherwin Williams. Throughout the project, our team experienced a shift in direction regarding two primary project topics, retention and recruitment. Our team focused heavily on retention during our secondary research and the design of our surveys. The retention focus was the reason survey questions that gauged understanding of career path / promotion plan, feelings of reaching one's full potential, and work-life balance were asked.

After the creation and distribution of the survey, the project focus then shifted to recruitment rather than retention. Despite this, our team believes that the results of our primary research are still relevant. As evidenced by the Discussion section, the data collected reflects positively on the Company, and the results of the surveys would be positive attributes to for recruiters to highlight when attracting new hires into the organization. In the end, the survey our team distributed was great for determining any success or faults within the Company, but it did not allow the team to gauge what type of employees are preferable to attract or how to appeal to them. We also lacked knowledge of the respondent's recruitment perspective and experiences which could have been collected through additional research questions or asked during the value-added conversations our team engaged in while distributing the surveys.

From our research, our team lacked the inclusion of a preliminary question that asked whether each survey response was from a manager or associate, or full or part time employee. The distinction between the two groups would have been beneficial when analyzing the results of the surveys to determine any noticable differences between the two subgroups. For instance, one of our survey questions was "How would you rate your work-life balance?" Managers and

associates would have a different opinion on the work-life balance of their roles since management works 45 to 55 hours a week while part-time employees work no more than 29 hours a week. By applying our survey results to the 'general' Sherwin store employee, the accuracy for our recommendations may be slightly diminished, but overall, the results from the general survey should be sufficient for most of the questions included in the survey. If our survey was reproduced, this would be another question to ask within the survey. This is another way in which a corporate wide survey sent through email would be beneficial.

Potential Solutions

Due to the limitations of our primary research, we recognize that there may be other potential solutions to Sherwin Williams' recruitment questions. From our research, we have found three other possible solutions for Sherwin Williams to discuss or research further. These solutions may be a better use of resources and capabilities the Company currently possess, or may better fit the solution they may have had in mind.

Our first potential solution is to raise the reward associated with their employee referral program. In 2016, employee referral programs represented 30 percent of all hires, and they also accounted for 45 percent of internal hires (Maurer, 2018). Sherwin Williams currently has an employee referral program in place at the Company for their full-time employees. The employees who refer a new hire through the program receive $100, if the referred employee is hired and stays with the Company past the 90-day probation period. However, the $100 reward Sherwin Williams offers is far below industry standard for employee referral programs. The 2016 industry standard was $1,000 to $2,500 for full-time employees (WorldatWork, 2016). In addition, Sherwin Williams does not seem to place a high value on the program although they have mentioned that it is a very lucrative program. Sherwin employees overwhelming answered that would accept their

position again (80 percent extremely likely / 20 percent somewhat likely) and that they would recommend their position to others (86.67 percent definitely yes). If the employee referral program had more of an incentive matched with the industry standard, they may be able to pull in more applicants to their management trainee program ("MTP") and assistant manager programs.

Another potential solution is to increase the awareness and advertisement of the Manager Trainee Program as a step to 'running your own business.' One of the major topics that was brought up throughout our experience working with Sherwin Williams was that once you became a store manager, you were essentially running your own business. However, this is not mentioned on their website regarding the MTP program, nor on their LinkedIn page. The entrepreneurial aspect of the program is an incredible attribute that not many people would know of if they do not know someone who currently works in the Company. Additional research could also be conducted to analyze the type of majors that are most attracted to running their own business, such as business administration or entrepreneur majors (see Further Research Questions). Focusing recruiting on more small business and entrepreneurial centered candidates could become a great launching pad for recruitment.

A third potential solution would be re-evaluating their current HR recruitment structure. The recruiters for Sherwin Williams are stretched extremely thin working across state lines to find candidates. In many of these areas, they have to advertise who Sherwin Williams is because it is not as prevalent in those areas. This makes their job extremely difficult and would create a disconnect when trying to be innovative in recruiting techniques. To create an innovate and welcoming recruiting environment, Sherwin may want to restructure so recruiters can spend more time seeking and speaking with potential applicants. Additionally, our in-store experiences and survey results revealed that Sherwin Williams employees are a major asset to the Company. The

survey revealed their positive feelings toward many areas that others are interested in when seeking work, such as corporate culture, promotion plans, and management relationships. Rather than using corporate employees only as recruiters, it may be beneficial for Sherwin Williams to include associates and managers in their recruiting efforts. This may mean incentivizing and bringing along an associate to job fairs or recruiting events, so that the employee can share their positive experiences with others.

Recommendations

After analyzing our primary research and referring back to our secondary research, we focused our recommendations on Sherwin Williams increasing their corporate reputation to prospective new hires by utilizing and embracing their employer brand image. Employer brand image is an employer's reputation as a place to work, and their employee value proposition (Potgieter & Doubell, 2018). Employer branding, as a variable, has a strong influence on corporate reputation. The main objective of employer branding is the creation of the perception that a specific organization is the most attractive place to work for a prospective employee. Sherwin Williams has created a company culture where their employees understand their career path and have an environment where workers are comfortable asking their coworkers for help, based on the results from our survey. With these results being so different compared to other benchmarked companies, Sherwin Williams should make this a primary communication.

To better communicate their employer brand image, they will need to be interacting in a more communicative and engaging manner on social media. Often times just telling applicants about your culture and values is not enough, you must show them (Zielinski, 2018). Social media is a huge recruitment tool to spark interest in a company and have others join the conversation (Weinstein, 2017). If Sherwin Williams is looking to attract Millennial and Gen Z applicants, they

must be advertising their positions on social media, since 97 percent of this age range report using some form of it (Moreno, et. Al, 2017). Through this Sherwin Williams will be able to reach a vast audience, and perhaps an audience that had not previously considered a position with Sherwin Williams.

Our main recommendation is that Sherwin Williams creates employee testimonial videos that showcase their culture and how much employees value their jobs. From our Sherwin Williams survey, 86.67 percent of employees said they would "definitely" recommend their jobs to others, compared to only 21.26 percent of other retail employees who answered similarly. This is a huge strength for Sherwin Williams as a company. Similar to employee referral programs, employee testimonial videos are an excellent way to attract high-quality talent using the organization's existing employees. Employee referral programs are one of the top resources for new hires, as cited in Potential Solutions, and employee testimonial videos can be utilized to the same effect since they are both using employees to advertise their roles and company culture experiences. These videos can serve as employee referrals for those who do not know others that currently work for the Company. One of the biggest criticisms of employee referral programs are their linkage to stifling diversity. However, when creating these videos, you can chose diverse employees to showcase and encourage Sherwin's diverse workforce.

To help the Company visualize this concept, our team created a video that can be used in this way. In the video, we had a Sherwin Williams associate who is in the process of applying for the Management Trainee Program speak on his experience of the culture at Sherwin Williams. It was not a scripted video, and he was encouraged to speak freely. It is extremely important for employee testimonials to be real and believable for prospective applicants (Zielinski, 2018).

Another recommendation we have is engaging other forms of social media outside of just LinkedIn. LinkedIn is an amazing platform to match jobs with talent and skill sets. However, other social media sites, such as Instagram and Youtube, are also platforms that reach a lot of people. Instagram has 1 billion global users, with 41 percent of those users being under the age of 24 (Weinstein, 2017). Instagram is a great place for HR and Marketing to work together to promote their business operating activities, share promotions, and cultivate and share their company culture. Followers are able to engage with the content and interact with the company. Another great avenue is Youtube. Youtube has 1.5 billion global users. Of these users, 73 percent of US adults regularly access Youtube (Weinstein, 2017). This is a great space to have dedicated business channels for employer branding. You can post your videos to Youtube, and then share them on your other company social media accounts to get a wider audience. Social media usage amongst companies has grown to 84 percent and is expected to continue to grow (Society for Human Resource Management, 2017). Sherwin Williams should start utilizing social media now, before they are far behind competitors.

Finally, the last component to our recommendation is to promote a company-wide mindset. This will also help Sherwin promote their culture on social media in a clear and concise way of who they are. For example, Cisco, an American technology company, often uses the hashtag #WEARECISCO to promote their culture (Weinstein, 2017). This is a way for followers to look back at previous posts to get a better idea of who the company is, a way for employees to get involved, and a way for prospective applicants to get involved. The three most important mindsets for creating the best company culture possible are general positivity, growth, and mental toughness (Van Hove, 2017). For Sherwin Williams, our team recommends the hashtag #PaintYourOwnWay. Not only is this in line with Sherwin's product offering, paint, buy it also

speaks to the growth and career path Sherwin offers while still expressing individuality of employees. With the MTP, in particular, Sherwin employees could potentially work their way up to upper management and 'C' suite level positions by progressing through the program. Sherwin's current chief executive officer began his career in the management trainee program and worked his way up through the Company (Cho, 2015). Using the hashtag signifies that the MTP program is a stepping stone for potential employees to pave their own way, or in Sherwin's case, PAINT their own way.

Sherwin Williams employees are a huge asset for the Company that is currently not being utilized to its full potential. With our recommendations, we believe that Sherwin Williams' employer brand image will be better known among potential applicants and will help recruit by highlighting one of Sherwin's greatest strengths. Creating the testimonial videos will show the public who Sherwin is, and what working for the Company is like. By utilizing more than just LinkedIn for recruiting, they will have other platforms to share these videos and a greater platform to reach these potential applicants. Additionally, Sherwin will be reaching their target demographic where they are, social media. With creating a company-wide mindset, and utilizing it on social media, you are opening up the dialog to all of your employees. These are ways to recruit for Sherwin Williams' MTP program in a new and more engaging way.

Projected Financial Results

Recruiting is not only included in the human resource department's budget, but it requires a collaborative effort between both human resources and marketing in order to ensure the Company has a strong brand image for customers and prospective employees alike (Olenski, 2018). Therefore, a need for a portion of the marketing budget to be spent on recruiting is necessary. If the two business functions are able to work collaboratively, cost synergies between the two

functions can be utilized. The human resources and marketing cross-functional groups can make better use of the Company's resources by leveraging them together. Company resources can include their physical assets, such as budget funds, facilities, and company memberships (LinkedIn, social media, etc.), and intangible assets, including the company's brand image, customer knowledge, and corporate culture (Benecke, Schurink, & Roodt, 2007). Company synergies can be developed by one functional area without being depleted by the use of another business sector. For instance, the marketing department may develop the company's brand image, but it can be utilized by the human resources sector for the purposes of recruiting.

Furthermore, the usage of the brand image in the recruiting sector can also be utilized through the use of social media, which has a relatively low cost compared to other recruiting platforms (Appendix C). However, the increased use and demand for recruiting in this platform is bound to drive the monthly subscription price up. For instance, LinkedIn's hiring premium plan is currently priced at $99.95 per month, but users are willing to pay up to $152.86 for the service (Campbell, 2018). With demand increasing for social media services, the prices are bound to increase in the future. However, for a large organization, like Sherwin Williams, a $100 to $150 recruiting subscription would be immaterial especially since the cost of the social media platform would ultimately be incurred by the overall Company budget, according to Sherwin liaison, Lauren Kraska.

Employers can utilize their social media subscriptions by creating employee testimonials and utilizing one of the Sherwin Williams' biggest assets, their employees. The testimonial videos, as explained in the Recommendations section, can also showcase the Company's culture and brand image in the same medium. Thus, further utilizing the marketing and human resource cost synergies referenced above. Although the content of the video, the employee's, the retail location,

and corporate offices, are readily available for the testimonial videos, there are additional costs the Company needs to factor regarding the production of the clip.

First, the Company needs to take into consideration the amount of time they want to spend on the video clip. Typically, the actual interview takes about one to two hours per person depending on how prepared they are and the number of questions being asked (Sternaimolo, 2018). A larger company may want to have more employees interviewed to showcase their diversity and wide range of employees. Therefore, the amount of time spent on filming will be higher. The employees will not be filming the video for free, and the Company should weigh the costs and benefits of the length of time the employees are taking part in the video and be considerate of their role responsibilities within the Sherwin Williams.

Next, Sherwin will need to consider the actual production costs they are willing to spend on the employee testimonial video. The production costs could include: a producer, camera operator, and lighting technician at the minimum (Sternaimolo, 2018). The Company will need to consider the size and quality of their testimonials to determine the amount of crew members needed to film. As the number of crew members increases, the budget for the production will also need to be increased.

Finally, companies interested in creating employee testimonial videos will need to consider the budget needed to produce the film. Depending on the size and scope of the video the company desires, the budget required will fluctuate. For instance, WireBuzz, a company specializing in employee testimonial videos, estimates most of their clients spend $12,000 to $20,000 on a testimonial video (WireBuzz, n.d.). On the other hand, Grey Sky Films, who is a testimonial video specialist, estimates most companies spend $4,000 to $5,000 (Sternaimolo, 2018). It should be noted, Grey Sky Films does cater to smaller clients compared to WireBuzz. Although the overall

upfront cost is expensive, in the long run, the Company will be able to utilize the film into the future on platforms of their choice. Ultimately, the amount of capital Sherwin puts in the video is up to them. The Company could also utilize the marketing department's budget for the film or consider implementing a contest for their employees to make testimonial videos on their own for prizes and monetary rewards. There are minimal ongoing costs associated with the testimonials in the form of updates to keep the videos in line with the Company's current strategic objectives and culture and paid social costs. Paid socials allow more viewers to see the post compared to the organic method, but it comes at a slight cost per view (Siu, 2018). The costs per view for YouTube and Instagram is shown in Appendix C.

By increasing recruiting costs and hiring better employees, the upfront hiring costs will increase. However, higher upfront costs will benefit the Company in the long run. For instance, the average cost to hire one employee is $4,129 (Society for Human Resource Management, 2016). The more time and effort companies put into the recruiting process to determine if the candidate is the right fit, the lower the turnover rate will be in the future (O'Connell & Kung, 2007). It is more beneficial for companies to spend more in upfront costs to hold onto employees because the turnover costs do not only include new hire costs. Vacancy costs, amount of time the position is left open, and training costs are other types of turnover costs (O'Connell & Kung, 2007). Both vacancy and training costs cut into the productivity of the employees and the potential loss of business due to understaffing. The Company's culture and morale may also be damaged by increased employee turnover (Link Consulting, 2018).

Action Steps for Client

With the main recommendation being to create a recruitment video, there are a number of steps that must be taken to ensure the most effective content is produced. To begin, the right

employees of the Company must be chosen to give testimonials. The employees chosen should be from all levels of the Company, from upper management to part-time retail associates. By having a wide range of employees, potential candidates will get see the types of people they will be working with, not just those they will be working for. Furthermore, since Sherwin's chief executive officer, John Morikis, went through the MTP program, the Company may want to consider including a testimonial from Morikis on his experience. By including him in the testimonial, the Company can then effectively utilize the hashtag, #PaintYourOwnWay, at the end of the video to emphasize the career progression that is possible through the management trainee program. Sherwin Williams should also consider sharing the video on all of their social media platforms to not only bring awareness to the Company and the MTP but to also make use of the Company's investment in the video.

The most important aspect of the video is the content provided by the employees. It is important to include enough content to draw viewers in, while still keeping it simple. The reason for keeping it simple is to ensure the viewer does not lose interest quickly. Furthermore, the video should also be short in length, and an appropriate time length for the video is about two to five minutes (Dixon, 2018). To begin, the video should contain a small amount of information regarding what the Company does and sometimes its history. Then, the interviewer begins asking the employees in the videos questions regarding why Sherwin Williams is a company they love working for. Open-ended questions are the best type to ask, as they promote free and unique responses. Some examples of questions are 'What makes Sherwin Williams an enjoyable company to work for?' or 'What are some positive experiences you have had in the past while working?' To get into further detail, questions like 'How did you begin at Sherwin Williams, and how did you

get to where you are now?' and 'Can you explain your day-to-day routine while at work.' are great to ask.

The videos should also be upbeat that way the viewer enjoys the video and takes away a positive experience, leaving a good image of Sherwin Williams in their mind. This can be done by ensuring the employees in the video are positive and have smiles on their faces. Lastly, the video should end with some sort of further direction that the viewer can go into, if interested. For example, if viewers are interested in applying, the video will end with directions on how to apply, such as a website link.

Thoughts of Future Research on the Topic

Sherwin Williams should research what attracts younger people to work for a company, in terms of future research. Particularly, the Millennial or Gen Z generations, as this is roughly the college age population, and Sherwin aims to maintain a large amount of college degree holding employees to promote to managers within their MTP. Additionally, Sherwin should consider researching the types of employees that are more attracted by recruitment videos to determine if testimonial videos is the route the Company should explore further.

First, Sherwin should research the how to use social media most effectively to attract the Millenial and Gen Z populations to the Company. It is important to note that people most commonly share things on social media to give off a sense of who they are to others (Ham, Lee, Hayes, & Bae, 2018). This means that researching the interests and means of expression that line up most with this age range is crucial to make recruiting through social media effective. Without this knowledge, the brand will not catch on with the target market and not only will it have been a wasted effort in recruiting, but it can also hurt the chances of attracting anyone in this

demographic. As not only are you not catching the attention of those you want to recruit, but you now run the risk of posting something that damages the brand in the eye of this age group.

Second, Sherwin should research the type of college students the Company is looking to recruit for their management trainee program. Only listing the requirements as "College Degree" is too broad, and the Company should look into the type of student that best fits with the job requirements. For instance, during our visits and conversations with corporate, the Sherwin representatives stress the ability of their store managers to essentially run their own business. Sherwin needs to look into the type of college students that both have the skills and the desire to own their own business. Once a select few college majors are identified, Sherwin should focus on recruiting these types of students to their management trainee program.

Another area of study for Sherwin Williams would be to test the types of employees most likely to be brought in with a recruitment style video. The Company should look into the content within the videos that most fit with the target market's values, as well as where to post the video, and even how long it should be to keep interest throughout the whole video. Focusing on the content will be highly beneficial as it can be applied to any target audience for any position.

While our team feels the research conducted can be used to great effect, as with any study, there are always more questions to be researched. If Sherwin Williams is serious about implementing our recommendations or potential solutions, we think it would be best to ask themselves some of these questions, so that the implementation would become a competitive advantage for their Company.

Appendices:

Appendix A: Sherwin Williams Questionnaire

1.   How long have you worked for Sherwin Williams?

- 0-1 year

- 1-3 years

- 4-6 years

- 6-9 years

- 10 + years

2. What is your age range?

- Under 18

- 18-24

- 25-34

- 35-44

- 45-54

- 55-64

- 65+

3. Would you recommend working at this company to others?

- Definitely yes

- Probably yes

- Might or might not

- Probably not

- Definitely yes

4. How well do/did you understand your career path and promotion plan at Sherwin Williams?

- Extremely well

- Very well

- Moderately well

- Slightly well

- Not well at all

5. How well do you feel you are reaching your full potential with this position?

- Extremely well

- Very well

- Moderately well

- Slightly well

- Not well at all

6. How would you rate your work-life balance?

- Extremely good

- Somewhat good

- Neither good nor bad

- Somewhat bad

- Extremely bad

7. How would you rate your work ethic?

- Extremely good

- Somewhat good

- Neither good nor bad

- Somewhat bad

- Extremely bad

8. If you had to do it all over again, how likely would you be to accept this position?

- Extremely likely

- Somewhat likely

- Neither likely nor unlikely

- Somewhat unlikely

- Extremely unlikely

9. How do you feel your manager's personality fits their management role?

- Extremely well

- Very well

- Moderately well

- Slightly well

- Not well at all

10. Rate your relationship with your manager.

- Extremely good

- Somewhat good

- Neither good nor bad

- Somewhat bad

- Extremely bad

11. How would you rate Sherwin Williams' work atmosphere/culture, in relation to positivity and support?

- Extremely good

- Somewhat good

- Neither good nor bad

- Somewhat bad

- Extremely bad

12. Rate your value to Sherwin Williams.

- Far above average

- Somewhat above average

- Average

- Somewhat below average

- Far below average

13. Do you feel like you have the resources you need to do your job adequately?

- Definitely yes

- Probably yes

- Might or might not

- Probably not

- Definitely not

14. How do you feel that Sherwin Williams values their employees?

- Extremely well

- Very well

- Moderately well

- Slightly well

- Not well at all

15. Do you wish you were more connected with the employees of other Sherwin stores?

- Definitely yes

- Probably yes

- Might or might not

- Probably not

- Definitely not

16. Do you consider your co-workers your friends?

- Definitely yes

- Probably yes

- Might or might not

- Probably not

- Definitely not

17. Do you feel comfortable asking your co-workers advice regarding your job?

- Definitely yes

- Probably yes

- Might or might not

- Probably not

- Definitely not

Appendix B: Benchmarking Questionnaire

1. Have you previously or currently worked a retail job?

   - Yes

   - No

2. What is your age range?

   - Under 18

   - 18-24

   - 25-34

    ○   35-44

    ○   45-54

    ○   55-64

    ○   65+

3. At the company you work/worked for, would you recommend working there to others?
   - Definitely yes
   - Probably yes
   - Might or might not
   - Probably not
   - Definitely yes

4. How well do/did you understand your career path and promotion plan at the company you worked for?
   - Extremely well
   - Very well
   - Moderately well
   - Slightly well
   - Not well at all

5. How well do/did you feel you are reaching your full potential with this position?
   - Extremely well
   - Very well
   - Moderately well
   - Slightly well
   - Not well at all

6. How would you rate your work-life balance?
   - Extremely good
   - Somewhat good
   - Neither good nor bad
   - Somewhat bad
   - Extremely bad

7. How would you rate your work ethic?

- ○ Extremely good
- ○ Somewhat good
- ○ Neither good nor bad
- ○ Somewhat bad
- ○ Extremely bad

8. If you had to do it all over again, how likely would you be to accept this position?

- ○ Extremely likely
- ○ Somewhat likely
- ○ Neither likely nor unlikely
- ○ Somewhat unlikely
- ○ Extremely unlikely

9. How do you feel your manager's personality fits their management role?

- ○ Extremely well
- ○ Very well
- ○ Moderately well
- ○ Slightly well
- ○ Not well at all

10. Rate your relationship with your manager.

- ○ Extremely good
- ○ Somewhat good
- ○ Neither good nor bad
- ○ Somewhat bad
- ○ Extremely bad

11. How would you rate your company's work atmosphere/culture, in relation to positivity and support?

- ○ Extremely good
- ○ Somewhat good
- ○ Neither good nor bad
- ○ Somewhat bad
- ○ Extremely bad

12. Rate your value to the company.

- ○ Far above average
- ○ Somewhat above average
- ○ Average
- ○ Somewhat below average
- ○ Far below average

13. Do you feel like you have the resources you need to do your job adequately?
- ○ Definitely yes
- ○ Probably yes
- ○ Might or might not
- ○ Probably not
- ○ Definitely not

14. How do you feel that your company values their employees?
- ○ Extremely well
- ○ Very will
- ○ Moderately well
- ○ Slightly well
- ○ Not well at all

15. Do you wish you were more connected with the employees of other stores in your company?
- ○ Definitely yes
- ○ Probably yes
- ○ Might or might not
- ○ Probably not
- ○ Definitely not

16. Do you consider your co-workers your friends?
- ○ Definitely yes
- ○ Probably yes
- ○ Might or might not
- ○ Probably not
- ○ Definitely not

17. Do you feel comfortable asking your co-workers advice regarding your job?

○   Definitely yes

○   Probably yes

○   Might or might not

○   Probably not

○   Definitely not

Appendix C: Different Platform Recruiting Costs

Recruiting Platform:	Monthly Subscription or Estimated Monthly Cost (for Corporations):
LinkedIn	$99.95 (LinkedIn, 2019)
Indeed	$500 + with custom pricing for enterprise clients (Indeed, 2019)
Career Builder	$499 for 5 job postings a month (CareerBuilder, 2019)
Glassdoor	$499 for 5 job postings a month (Glassdoor, 2019)
Instagram	$0.20 to $2.00 per click - around $5.00 per 1,000 views; free to create your own page

	(Influencer Marketing Hub, n.d.)
YouTube	$0.10 per view; free to create your own page (McLeod, 2018)
Job Fairs & Traditional Methods	$9,000 to $1250 per fair (Chen, 2013)

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