



BACARDI

SILVIA LAGNADO - CMO OF BACARDI

Silvia Lagnado, the CMO of Bacardi, was voted one of the Wall Street Journal's '50 Women to Watch' in 2009. Her global work with Dove, '*Debunking the Myth of Real Beauty*' is widely recognized as instrumental to the brand's phenomenal growth over the last decade.

With 20/20 hindsight, it's now easy to see why Unilever considered the Brazilian native the best possible person to fill the role of the company's first Global Brand Director. Silvia's directness, passion and transparency about what she knew – and also willingness to admit what she didn't know – quickly convinced her colleagues she was the 'real deal.'

When this engineer-by-training joined Unilever marketing in Sao Paulo, she rose swiftly through the ranks with jobs in high-growth categories such as Deodorants and Hair. Appointed in 2001 to the newly created position of Global Brand Director for Dove, Silvia, whose vitae at this point comprised 15 years working mostly in local or regional positions, had no idea what to expect.

Unilever, the US\$50 billion consumer goods conglomerate that owns Dove as well as brands such as Lipton, Vaseline, and Ragu, was pursuing a 'Path to Growth' strategy. This entailed a company-wide focus on a handful of high-value core brands. The company's goal: To reduce the total number of brands from 1600 to 400 – and all over a period of five years no less.

Silvia's 2001 brief from Unilever read as follows: She would have full global brand responsibility for Dove yet regional directors would continue to report up their regional lines. Among Silvia's responsibilities was to align the Dove brand worldwide while continuing to drive annual growth of over 20 percent.

In the wake of a preliminary round of visits to some of the biggest country markets, and candid conversations with regional marketers overseeing these regions, Silvia was understandably apprehensive. Everyone she met was accustomed to operating under the rules of the 'old' Unilever. That company was a decentralized environment in which leaders encouraged country managers to make autonomous marketing decisions. Even more

troublingly, some off the local marketers refused even to speak to her. Others were obviously leery of how Silvia's new position would affect the old way of doing things.

Silvia got the message in a hurry: a massive task lay ahead. Dove alone was running over 400 innovation projects from disparate locations. Many were duplicative. The brand had at least four conflicting positioning statements in use around the world and lacked any global consensus on where the brand was going, and how it should get there.

While daunting, the opportunity was also intoxicating. Imagine lining up all of Dove's global resources – not to mention 600 marketers and advertising agency support staff – behind a handful of clear-cut, highly focused goals. It would be a struggle, Silvia knew, though certainly not the first she'd squared off against during her career. So how was she going to get everyone to play along?

The story of how Silvia Lagnado faced down one challenge after another to attain an audacious triumph forms the backdrop for a generation of global marketers who have successfully followed similar boulder-strewn paths. The obstacles Silvia and her team faced, and the principles they adopted to overcome these hurdles, mirror a genre that has emerged to drive unprecedented business growth in the 21st century: Marketing on a Worldwide Stage.