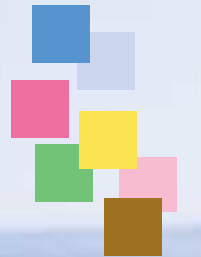




# Sally On The Move 2004



acorn



Sally, circa 2004



Carrie Gilmore, circa 1910



# Background

## How To Begin Morphing A 100 Year Old Family Retail History Into A Prosperous Future.

In early November of 2003 PATT COTTINGHAM got a call from STEPHEN PHILLIPS the CEO of Acorn/Gilmore Brothers. He explained that Acorn, a women's specialty company with 20 stores in the southeast and mid-west, was at a critical crossroads. They needed to reframe the business in a way that would get everyone excited, grow bottom line, expand the opportunities, and head it into a robust future. Stephen saw branding as the map that could get them there. Patt knew that today's most successful brands such as Starbuck's, Coach, Whole Foods, and Home Depot always brand first within the organization by telling their people the brand's story, clearly communicating the brand goals, and engaging everyone in the brand strategy. With the February 2004 Managers Conference just 3 months away there was no time to lose. Patt agreed to meet with Stephen, and his merchandising director DOROTHY LIERMAN, in New York the following week.

In December, Patt flew to Kalamazoo, Acorn's headquarters, to meet chairwoman, MARTHA PARFET and the executive team. Through conversations, with Martha, Patt learned of her family's rich retail history dating back 100 years. Within the history there was a story about Martha's grandmother, Carrie Gilmore, whose tenacity had kept the business going after her husband passed away in 1910. Patt felt that this story could be the catalyst for the new brand attitude and vision moving forward.

In hanging out in hallways, meetings, and phone conferences Patt heard everyone talking about "Sally", "Sally wouldn't wear that", "Sally doesn't like pastels", "Sally likes being noticed". Who was Sally anyway? As Patt learned "Sally" was the code name for the core Acorn customer. Dorothy's merchandising team had done good work in identifying how she lived,



what was important to her, what she liked in style and fashion, etc. Now it was time to touch down in the stores and get direct feedback from the managers, associates, and retail environments about how to connect to her with an offering distinctly different from Chicco's, Talbots, J Jill, and others. Patt called CHRIS TURNER, who has many years experience in sales environments, to go out in the field, speak with the managers, hear their thoughts and concerns and bring the information back to corporate. At the same time planning was under way for new computer systems in all the stores. This would allow for vital, "real time" communications between corporate and the sales managers. In January the executive team, managers, and buyers came together in a "SketchinSally Workshop". The outcome of the meeting was a more defined understanding of Sally's attitude and style. In addition the key attributes – Joyful, Spirited, and Confident were identified as most defining "Sally". These attributes along with the attribute Real became the DNA for evolving the brand.

Funneling down months of conversations, store visits, showroom meetings, trade show, managers conferences, and competitor analysis led to a clear branding platform. Patt worked with the executive team to create the vision statement "Every Day Women Do Amazing Things". The company's operating principles were agreed to and established in May of 2004. In June, Patt contacted the photographer ARIEL SKELLEY to take some fashion shots to begin to develop a style and attitude. Patt worked side by side with Acorn's marketing/communications director JULIE KAUFMAN to create a visual language of color, icons, and images to communicate the new brand vision and messages. Patt documented all the brand development work on a visual timeline so that the organization could collectively see the brand as it morphed into its new future.



# BEGINNING THE BRAND MORPH

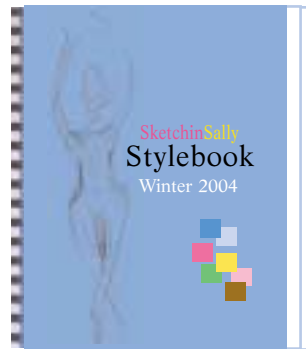
## BRANDSCAPE

- Corporate Community
- Culture
- Store Communities
- Communications
- IT/Systems
- In Store Research
- Market Research
- Products/Service
- Image/Marketing
- Good Works

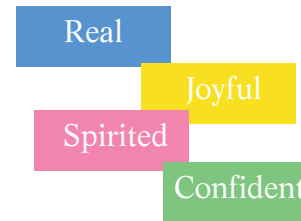
**FACETS ICON**  
Communicating Women's Lives



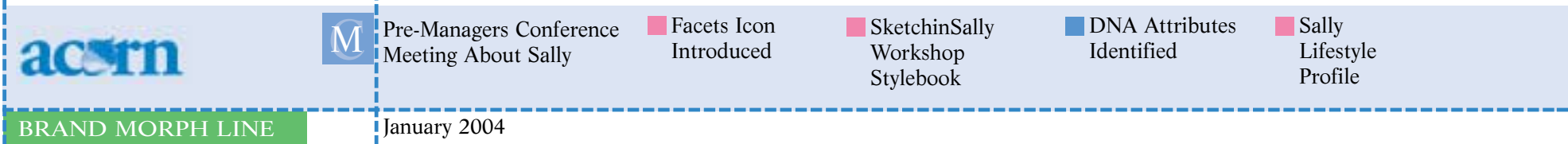
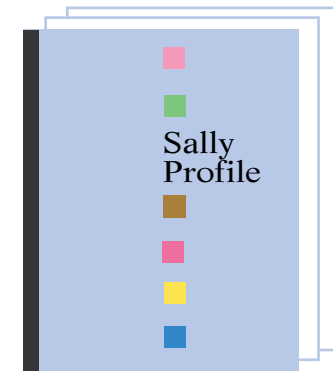
**SKETCHINSALLY STYLEBOOK**  
Workbook #1



**BRAND DNA**  
4 Attributes That Reflect The Character Of The Company



**SALLY PROFILE**  
Written Statements  
Fleshing Out Sally



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SALLY ON THE MOVE  
2004 WORKBOOK



BRAND CODE STATEMENTS

Real, Spirited, Joyful, Confident

Who We Are

To Acknowledge The Real Lives Of Women.

Our Reason For Being

Every Day Women Do Amazing Things.

How We See It

Fresh Styles, Colors, Details And Product Selections  
That Uplift Women.

What We Offer



WINTER MANAGERS  
CONFERENCE

■ Setting The Context  
Gilmore Retail History/  
“Carrie Gilmore”

■ Beginning The Brand Morph  
Sally On The Move  
Workbook

■ Brand Code Statements



## Looking Back To Move Forward (A bit of real retail history)

At this important time we are working together to map the new direction and vision for the business. As chairwoman of Acorn, I feel that it is extremely helpful to look back into our retail history in order to gain the perspective needed to create a dynamic and prosperous future. The following is the story of how all of this came to be.

During the 1800's, businesses in the midwest sprung up and grew along with the growing needs of their communities. In 1881, my Irish grandfather, James Gilmore, and his brother John started a small dry goods store in Kalamazoo, Michigan. This small store prospered and became known as Gilmore's; in the early 1900's it moved to where the Acorn store resides today.

The success of Gilmore's led to building additional floors to the department store. In 1909, with two floors left to build, James Gilmore died suddenly, leaving his wife Carrie, my grandmother, to take over the business. More money was needed to complete the remaining floors, so Carrie Gilmore went to the bank in town to secure the additional funds. She was turned down.

The banks in those days were not accustomed to lending money to women, however, my grandmother was not accustomed to being defeated. So she got into the family roadster, accompanied by the woman treasurer from Gilmore's, and headed 50 miles north to a bank in Grand Rapids. There she was able to talk them into loaning her the money to complete the six-story building.

Carrie Gilmore's tenacity back then was referred to as gumption, pluck or spunk. Nowadays we call it nerve, chutzpah, or savvy. This persistence, this not giving up even when faced with real life obstacles, is part of our retail DNA and will continue to serve us as we head in to these challenging and exciting new times.

Gilmore's interpreted and served the needs of the Kalamazoo community through two world wars, the depression, the moon landing, and all the various twists and turns in our country at large.

The "Sally's" back then wore very different styles - the fabrics that made their clothes

were manufactured in domestic garment and textile mills. Their lives were centered around family, neighbors, schools, and community. They used Gilmore's as a social meeting place - they had their hair done in the salon, they had lunch in the tea room, and they shopped .

In the 60's, Irving Gilmore, one of Carrie's sons, was president of the store and put me on the board of directors. By this time my own children had grown and my husband, Ted Parfet, was busy directing Upjohn Pharmaceutical Company. These were times of great change and upheaval. Losing a young president who said, "Ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country", was very wrenching. The social changes in our culture were just the beginning of many changes still to come. Through the 60's and 70's Gilmore's continued selling baby layettes, prom dresses, ties for dad, bathing suits, pots and pans, fine china, and other household items.

The 70's and 80's, marked the beginning of the mass merchants drawing the business from downtown communities to suburban



malls. The domestic textile mills that prospered in the Industrial Revolution were slowly losing manufacturing to mills overseas. In 1983 Irving Gilmore handed the Gilmore Brother's business over to me and retired.

While the business served its customers until the late 90's, the age of the downtown department store was over. Closing Gilmore's was no small feat. After all, it had been a part of Kalamazoo for over 100 years. In some cases the customer relationships were third generation. I felt responsible for the livelihoods of the 200 people who had worked for Gilmore's. We assisted in finding everyone new jobs and opportunities before finally closing the doors.

As the Gilmore chapter was beginning to end, I found a marvelous women's specialty chain store called Acorn, which I purchased in 1993. It specialized in casual country wear and decorated sweaters. Over time we have changed the product offering to better reflect the way women live today. We offer the current "Sally" a more versatile wardrobe with coordinated pieces that can keep up with her multi-faceted lifestyle.

As I look forward to the future, this is what I see:

**A company that understands the real lives of women.** We know that family is very important to Sally and that she is often raising her own children while caring for her parents. We know that she volunteers her time to her community. How can we give something back to her?

**A business which will adapt to the ever – changing dynamics of women.** We know that she is working at home, in corporate offices, and in home offices. What kind of apparel does she need now?

**A product offering that translates the needs of Sally in fresh and unique ways** in a store environment that is fun and uplifting.

And while there is a fabulous tool called the internet that helps us communicate and stay connected to her, nothing takes the place of the social aspect of shopping in a store. It is the human contact and the personal relationship that goes beyond the sale which

she will come to us for. She will come to us because we "get it". We get the real, nitty gritty, beautiful, confident humorous, brilliant, spirited, silly, joyful, tenacious, graceful way she lives her life.

All of this makes her life challenging, rich, and colorful. Now we are reframing our thinking, communications, organization, business, merchandising, store environments, and new name to reflect her vibrant and unstoppable spirit. **I ask all of you to join "Sally" on the move as we head into the future together.**

*Martha G. Parfitt*





BRAND CHART

# BRAND PRINCIPLES & BELIEFS

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

PRINCIPLES

CODE

DNA

**OUR PROMISE**  
To commit to practices that bring more joy into the lives of women.

**OUR STRATEGY**  
To redefine the shopping experience of women.

Have the determination to see things as they are.

Every Day Women Do Amazing Things  
(How We See It)

Commit to be open, direct, and responsive in all our communications.

Fresh Styles, Colors, Products, And Services That Uplift Women.  
(What We Offer)

Real  
Joyful  
Spirited  
Confident

Respect and appreciate each individual.

To Acknowledge The Real Lives Of Women.  
(Our Reason For Being)

Bring energy, and optimism to our everyday experiences.

Encourage new thinking, new ideas, and innovation.



5 Brand Operating Principles Established



May 2004

BRAND MORPH LINE

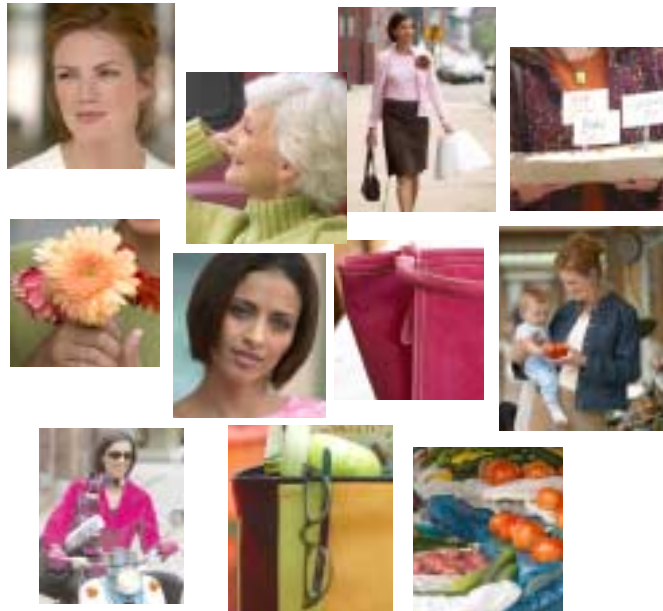


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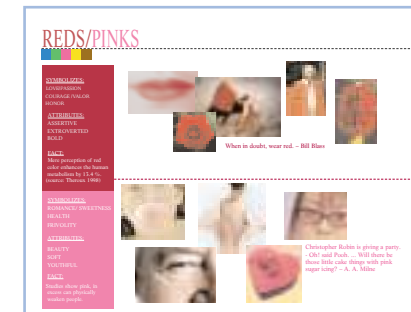
“EVERY DAY WOMEN DO AMAZING THINGS”  
Clothes shot in context of real life

ARIEL SKELLELY PHOTOGRAPHS FALL 2004



COLOR EXPERTISE TOOLS

COLOR GUIDE & COLOR REFERENCE STRIP



COLOR GUIDE	
COLOR ATTRIBUTES:	
	CALMING SOOTHING INSPIRING
	INTUITIVE ARTISTIC INVENTIVE
	HARMONIOUS BALANCED RENEWED
	ASSERTIVE EXTRAVAGANT PASSIONATE
	SOFT YOUTHFUL ROMANTIC
	OPTIMISTIC ENERGETIC HAPPY
	ENTHUSIASTIC VIVACIOUS CREATIVE
	ORDERLY CONVENTIONAL DEPENDABLE
	SOPHISTICATED STRONG MYSTERIOUS
	RESERVED NEUTRAL ELEGANT
	PURE PEACEFUL INNOCENT

■ Ariel Skelley Fall Shots

■ Little Color Savvy Guide  
In Store Materials

■ Color Attribute  
In Store  
Reference Strip



BRAND MORPH LINE

June 2004

July 2004

July 2004



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# IN STORE TOOLS TO ENGAGE THE CUSTOMER

**LATTE CENTRAL**  
Free Lifestyle Tips,  
Recipes, And  
Wardrobe Advice



**FALL APPAREL GUIDE**  
Style, Fabric, Color Info  
On Fall Lines



**FALL COLOR STRIPS**  
Color Palette References



**WARDROBE ESSENTIALS GUIDE**  
Recommended Essentials

- Color,Color,Color...
- Skirts...
- Jeans...
- Pants...
- Turtlenecks...
- Knit Tops...
- Cardigan
- Medium Weight Sweaters...
- Shirts...
- Jackets...
- Accessories...



Latte Central  
In Store Concept

Little Color Savvy Guide  
In Store Materials

Color Attribute  
In Store  
Reference Strip

BRAND MORPH LINE

July 2004

August 2004

August 2004

## FUNNEL PROJECT



2004

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