

Lucy Hebb
Summer 2014
Walrus

As a senior hoping to work in advertising, the ACE internship at Walrus immediately caught my eye. Walrus is a creatively led advertising agency located right off of Union Square in New York, New York. It was founded by Frances and Deacon Webster in 2005. Some of the agency's regular clients include Bloomberg Businessweek, Pfizer's Emergen-C, Pret a Manger, and Bazooka Candy Brands. Walrus has also worked with Amazon, AMC, Rent the Runway, and Staples. Walrus was named Ad Age's 2012 Small Northeast Agency of the year, and its campaigns have won Cannes Cyber Lions, a Webby, One Show Pencils, and an Effie. Its website showcases a talking, animatronic walrus—just one example of the agency's unconventional yet witty style, as well as its digital abilities and creative talent. Like the species the agency was named after, Walrus' team is quirky and amusing on the surface, but they don't mess around.

Although I mainly worked with the account team as an account management intern, the agency's small size allowed me to see all aspects of the industry. Some of my daily tasks were typical of an unpaid internship—answering the phone, sorting the mail, watering the plants, ordering office supplies—but most of my duties seemed like they were vital to what the rest of the agency was working on and relevant to my career interests.

Bonefish Grill Pitch

The biggest project I worked on this summer was Walrus's pitch for Bonefish Grill. I got to see the entire process of a new business pitch, from the initial creative brief to the final presentation for Bonefish's team. Every morning, I sent an office-wide email with daily restaurant news I found online. I researched Bonefish Grill's competitors, such as Cheesecake Factory, PF Chang's, and Outback Steakhouse. I put together a report of Bonefish Grill's competitive

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landscape, which included each restaurant's digital and social media presence, advertising and marketing strategies, and overall "feeling" or vibe. I began this research by searching the archives of casual dining trends at the American Association of Advertising Agencies' headquarters. Then I visited several Bonefish Grill locations and locations of its competitors in Manhattan, Long Island, and New Jersey. At the restaurants I talked to the staff, took photos, took notes, and conducted "patron intercepts," where I interviewed restaurant guests on camera.

I also researched Bonefish Grill's new locations. I read tourism books of the regions where Bonefish Grill is expanding and researched the specific cities of upcoming Bonefish Grill openings. After learning about the culture, demographics, weather, main attractions, and the dining scene of each region, and finding the population, local sports teams, colleges, and competitors present in each specific city, I wrote a report of my findings and possible challenges the Bonefish team might face in each location.

To me, the most interesting part of the pitch process was sitting in on the creative meetings, where the creative team rattled off ideas that were all smart, original, and hilarious, and then narrowed them down to four directions across all mediums (radio, television, print, digital, social, in-store, billboards, newsletters).

When Frances and Deacon went to Florida to present in front of Bonefish's team, I made their travel arrangements, booked their flights and hotel rooms, and reserved a conference room and audiovisual equipment at the hotel. Ultimately, Bonefish Grill decided to partner with another agency that its team had worked with in the past, but Walrus' creative team produced excellent work, and it was a great learning experience for me. If nothing else, I can confidently say that I am now an expert on the casual dining segment of the restaurant industry.

Competitive Research

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Walrus is constantly researching new technology and what other brands are doing, to make sure that Walrus' clients stay ahead of the game. I was able to help with this by conducting competitive research for several of the agency's accounts. For Bloomberg Businessweek, for example, I researched campaigns of news brands, like CNBC. In the write-up, I included the name, date, location, duration, and medium of each campaign, and a brief summary of the campaign and what it was promoting.

Another example is Bazooka Candy Brands. Walrus maintains the brand's website Candymania.com, a kids gaming site featuring Baby Bottle Pop, Push Pop, Ring Pop, and Juicy Drop candies. For this account, I researched Candymania's competitive landscape. I looked at candy brands (like Wonka), kids snack brands (like Goldfish), and kids gaming sites (like Nickelodeon Games). In the report, which was 130 slides long, I included each site's production value, target audience, partners, types of games and videos, strengths, missed opportunities, and the implications for Candymania.

Another account I worked on was Brown Brothers Harriman. I researched advertisements of other investment firms and banks, like Wells Fargo. In the write-up, I included the brand, campaign title, ad title, medium, agency, date broadcasted or published, concept, and message of each advertisement.

Artistic Tile Company

One of Walrus' newest clients is Artistic Tile Company, the most prestigious brand in the tile and stone industry. Artistic Tile hired Walrus to develop an architect and developer outreach program. The company's founder actually saw Walrus' work for Pret a Manger in a store window and said, "*That's* the agency I want to work with!" I visited and took notes at Artistic

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Tile's warehouse, an Artistic Tile showroom, and an architecture firm called HOK. Then I wrote and presented the Artistic Tile creative brief at an internal meeting. A creative brief includes the assignment, mandatories (things we have to keep or include), what we are selling, what we want to accomplish, our target audience, why they would like the product and company, what to keep in mind about the project and the audience, and the brand's tone.

Experience

When I began my internship at Walrus, I knew that I was interested in advertising, but I didn't really know what that meant. During my time at Walrus, I learned about the different aspects of advertising, as well as the variety of career opportunities in the industry. Interning at Walrus gave me the chance to work with a fun and talented team—including two Sewanee graduates—and to improve my research, writing, and presentation skills. Spending the summer in New York City was a nice perk, too.