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### Kmart and WB will promote each other

#### Young viewers part of strategy

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**BY GRETA GUEST**  
FREE PRESS BUSINESS WRITER

**Kmart Holding Corp.** has hitched its flickering star to **WB** television network in a cross-promotion plan that branding and retail experts called cool and smart - adjectives not usually applied to the nation's third-largest discounter.

The plan, announced Thursday by Paul Guyardo, Kmart's new chief marketing executive, will debut during the back-to-school season starting July 25. The campaign includes WB celebrities from five shows, "Reba," "One Tree Hill," "7th Heaven," "Summerland" and August newcomer "Blue Collar TV," wearing Kmart's new fall apparel in episodes and in the Troy retailer's marketing and advertising campaign.

In exchange, WB will have its shows featured in Kmart ads that appear on other networks including **MTV** and **ABC**, in newspapers and magazines, on radio, online, on billboards and in-store promotions, Guyardo said. The WB logo will appear on Kmart shopping bags through the campaign, which ends Sept. 16.

**Robert Passikoff**, president of **Brand Keys Inc.**, a New York-based brand consulting firm, said the move could reverse Kmart's sales slide and shows the discounter is getting smart about marketing after years of missed opportunities. It also brings Kmart visibility with the critical 12- to 24-year-old demographic that watches the WB shows.

"It's more than the demographics. It's the halo effect you get from a relatively vital brand. It is today, and that is what they need to do from an image point of view," Passikoff said. "It's the only smart thing they have done in the past five years."

Ed Nakfoor, a Birmingham-based retail consultant, was impressed with the all-encompassing promotion plan that includes a "Look the Part, Get the Part" contest that will award one Kmart customer a trip to Hollywood and a walk-on part on one of the WB shows.

"I kind of gave Kmart a little applause this morning," Nakfoor said. "It is the ultimate product placement. The WB is a good fit for Kmart's customer. I think the WB is solidly middle-class."

Guyardo, who was hired in March from the **Home Shopping Network**, said he went out to Hollywood and pitched the idea to the WB.

"My No. 1 goal is to drive profitable sales... Back-to-school is all about getting the word out to the younger demographic."

Kmart also will promote the WB shows through programming highlights that will air in its stores. The retailer plans to remodel all its electronics departments starting in August, he said.

Retail experts say the real test of Kmart's successful turnaround will come in the second half of the year when shoppers see the launch of these five apparel lines overseen by former **Gap Inc.** executives Lisa Schultz, Kmart's chief creative officer, and John Goodman, Kmart's chief apparel officer.

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"It is ultimately about revitalizing an American icon. That is what Kmart is... an American icon. That is what the three of us are trying to do," Guyardo said of Schultz, Goodman and himself.

Outdoor ads will include billboards in Times Square and on the Sunset Strip. The marketing plan also includes product placements. Stars of the WB will also make personal appearances at select Kmart stores in New York and Los Angeles.

During the promotion, Kmart estimates it will expose the WB's celebrities and shows to more than 2 million shoppers a day, who will carry out nearly 200 million shopping bags with the WB's logo displayed from its 1,500 stores.

The campaign is being developed by **Grey Worldwide**, Kmart's New York-based advertising agency. The print portion of the campaign will be shot by fashion and celebrity photographer Peggy Sirota. The 30-second television commercials will be shot by director Dewey Nicks, known for high-fashion branding campaigns.

The WB's copresident of marketing Lew Goldstein said he was "knocked out" by Kmart's creative vision on the campaign.

"That, coupled with the massive scope of Kmart's print, outdoor and television buy and their willingness to make this a collaborative process, sealed the deal for us," Goldstein said.

Kmart's exclusive apparel collections will be matched to WB shows including the Thalia Sodi collection, which will be featured with stars of "One Tree Hill," and Joe Boxer apparel, which will be featured on "Blue Collar TV"

Route 66, men's and women's casual wear and denim fashions, will be featured with stars of "7th Heaven" and "Reba." Athletech, a new line of men's and women's sport and athletic apparel, will be featured with stars of "Summerland," and Gear 7, a new line of men's urban and hip hop-inspired apparel, will be featured with stars of "One Tree Hill."

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