A study of Filene's "This is the Life" promotion

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Thesis
A STUDY OF FILENE'S "THIS IS THE LIFE" PROMOTION
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PUBLIC RELATIONS SIGNIFICANCE:

The role of an effective public relations program in the life of a retail store is becoming increasingly important during these highly competitive times. The retail field can look to an horizon of growing sales volume, but there are also more ominous dark clouds threatening the future successful operation of the traditional retail store. One possible storm-warning is being publicized more and more—the retail revolution between the discount house and the department store. Another threat not so well known but of more far-reaching significance is the fact that retailers aren't competing too successfully for the consumer's dollar. The public has been spending an increasing proportion of its money for service and not for merchandise. It has been spending an increasing more money for necessities and less for luxuries. Because he now owns his basic necessities, Mr. Consumer prefers doing things to buying things. Thus the retail store if it is to grow—and what healthy business doesn't—must actively create wants and desires for goods.

Retailing must be a dynamic and creative force. The
retailer's greatest asset is the character and personality of his store--to stand for something in the community. His greatest weapon is the ability by effective promotional activity to create in the public a desire and want for merchandise in his store. With these objectives in mind, this thesis attempts first to analyze an effective and co-ordinated store-wide promotion and then to point out the stimulus such a promotion affords to the growth of the store in sales and prestige and to its over-all contribution to the American economy.
What happens when the largest specialty store in the world joins forces with the magazine that has the greatest circulation to create a huge-scale, two weeks' store-wide promotion? From this union of Wm. Filene's Sons Company and Life magazine was born an unprecedented fashion promotion which dramatically publicized to thousands and thousands of New Englanders that "THIS IS THE LIFE!"

In addition to the unusual press and prestige potentials of such an exciting promotional concept, "This is the Life" program formed a springboard for extra selling during the fall months and after.

Filene's utilized all its sales promotion tools--its interior and exterior display spots, its major windows, a huge percentage of its daily and Sunday newspaper advertising, all of its fashion show facilities, its special events, stunt and publicity-making resources--to dramatize to its customers Filene's fashion alertness to the significant changes in their living habits and in their consumer needs as a result of this.

In announcing plans for the program, H. D. Hodgkinson, Chairman of Filene's Management Board said,
Since the end of World War II there has been a great upsurge in American productivity; the general standard of living has increased tremendously; the five day week has become almost universal. The result? People have more time for leisure, and our native ingenuity has found infinite ways for them to enjoy it. For all of these activities, sports, travel, entertaining or what have you, they can array themselves in attire that was undreamed of a generation ago. In making this presentation we're particularly grateful to Life Magazine, whose film, "The Changing American Market" sparked our thinking on this happily important subject.

As far back as April, 1954, Filene's October, 1954, THIS IS THE LIFE promotion was being born, Fortune Magazine featured a comprehensive report proving that consumers were buying many more kinds of clothes than ever before ... clothes to fit the more casual life Americans are living. The Fortune article had this specifically to say about the causes for casuality:

Viewed broadly, the great movements in the apparel market in the past six or eight years have resulted from the movement of U. S. families up the income scale. As they grew richer, they moved to the suburbs; as they moved to the suburbs, they began to dress more casually; as the casual style was widely adopted, Americans began to buy different types of garments of inherently lower price; and this practice in turn reduced the percentage in income that they spent on apparel.

But the important point is that consumers have the income to support a high level of clothing expenditure. Given a reasonable degree of innovation by the apparel makers, consumers could be upgraded in the newer garments that have recently found favor.
In the end, though, it is the retailer who must effectively promote this "air of casuality" in clothes. He has a selling job to do: on himself, the store featuring the right merchandise to cash in on this casual trend; on the consumer and how his store can provide the kind of casual attire the customer wants.

LIFE and Filene's joined forces to promote this new trend that could be labeled, "This is the Life -- more fun for you in this changing America".
CHAPTER II
TYPES OF PROMOTION TOOLS

"THIS IS THE LIFE" FILENE FASHION SHOW IN NEW YORK

This and the following sections deal with the promotion tools that Filene's used to dramatize to the public, specifically its resources and customers, the store's fashion alertness to this trend of THIS IS THE LIFE...more fun for you in this changing America -- a million ways to have it, a million ways to dress for it.

The first and foremost special event and that which officially launched the THIS IS THE LIFE promotion took place in New York City, at the exclusive Town Tennis Club on East 56th Street. The formal reason that prompted a New England store to stage a major fashion presentation in New York was given by H. D. Hodgkinson, Chairman of Filene's Management, in his speech of welcome to the guests at the show:

Much of the fashion inspiration and most of the fashion merchandise that is so important to our business comes out of New York. For their quick perception of the changing trends in American fashions we congratulate the American designers and creators whose clothes we show. Their awareness of recent rapid changes in American living habits has been of incalculable value. Since the end of World War II the general standard of living has increased tremendously. People have more time for leisure and infinite ways to enjoy it. And for all their leisure activities they can array themselves in attire that was undreamed of a few years ago.

In addition, the fashion show in New York was an effective publicity tool, since it was a very dramatic way
of obtaining press notice, particularly in the Boston papers which usually pursue the policy of not reporting fashion events which take place in the store.

How does a store set-up a cocktail-picnic-fashion show over a hundred miles from its base of operations? Organizationally, such a staging involves an elaborate and detailed plan. There had to be fashion show fittings in Boston and photographs made of the fashions a week before the show was scheduled to be done in New York. Physical installation of such things as a mechanical runway, lighting, planking and canopy, a public address system with complete amplification, a tent to cover entire area of tennis courts, a separate small tent for checking service, and other show set-up was done beginning 6:00 P.M. on Monday, October 4, and finished by 8:00 A.M. on Tuesday, October 5. Quite a night's work! Besides the physical set-up, the agenda included plans for the dressing area, merchandise handling, signing, programs, aprons, checking service, music, alterations, models, catering service, smoking insurance, dressers, photography and press, admission cards, extra personnel, and clean-up.

Clever invitations were first sent out to the complete guest list, consisting of press, fashion leaders, and representatives of the clothing industry.
To the guests that accepted the offer of "come join the fun and the commotion, learn about a great promotion, see the Filene fashion show, will you join us? Good! Let's go!", regular admission cards were sent. In attendance there were some 600 guests, all of whom were feted in the following manner, as the prepared news release indicates:

Under a billowing canvas canopy, largest seen on Manhattan Island since the circus went indoors, at the swank Town Tennis Club on East 56th Street, Filene's of Boston staged a picnic fashion show yesterday unlike any ever seen here before, or anywhere else, for that matter.

For one thing, the models, twenty-eight of them, all imported from Boston by the leading New England specialty store, never lifted a foot. Instead they were displayed before the 600 top brass guests on a gliding fashion runway that moved them slowly through the crowd so that everyone had a close-up view. For another thing, the guests were served with all manner of exotic tid-bits to eat from wheeled chariots, pushed by attractive red-heads. And each red-head wore as a hat an arrangement of phonograph records, sporting goods and theatre programs to symbolize the leisure life.

Eight of the models, each of whom measured no less than six feet in height stockingfooted, appeared in costumes as visioned by some of this country's best known designers to show how women will dress for their leisure life a few years from now if today's trends in fashion continue.12

Further description of the gala event shows the well-handled and well-heeled public relations treatment
of these important personages. Greeted by a 6'7"
doorman at the entrance to the Town Tennis Club,
each guest received a cocktail picnic apron to wear
during the party. Filene's personnel were identified
by the huge hot pot glove embroidered with a sequined
Filene "f". LIFE magazine personnel wore red ribbons
on their jackets. Attractive models manned the picnic
carts strewn about under the circus tent. Each cart
was decorated with a mobile depicting one of the six
categories of fashions in the promotion, and the fare
ranged from barbecued hot dogs to caviar, depending on
the theme each cart represented. The music began ... 
the stage revolved ... and models posed in mannequin-
like positions passed before the guests. Each float
had identifying legend written beneath it, so that the
guests would know the designer or manufacturer and the
"fun" part of life for which the clothes were designed.

And the inevitable closing of the show. This time
nothing was put in storage or even completely dismantled.
There wasn't time, for the fashion show had to be put
on in Boston beginning the very next week. Immediately
after the show, all merchandise, props, accessories,
costumes, etc., were re-loaded into trucks for return
to Boston. On Wednesday morning, tenting, curtain,
lighting, and mechanical runway were dismantled. The
show must go on -- and on it went to and in Filene's in
Boston.

"THIS IS THE LIFE" BOSTON FASHION SHOWS

Filene's first open-to-the-public fashion shows were presented during the second and final week of "This is the Life" promotion. Six complete matinee performances were staged for the public in Filene's main restaurant on the eighth floor, the public being invited to the shows by continuous box announcements in all "This is the Life" advertising. Three-hundred tickets for each performance were distributed by the Personal Service Balcony and the Restaurant office. There was actually no charge for the fashion show per se; but since it was held in conjunction with a tea there was a charge of 99 cents for the tea ticket. The tea was held at 3:00 p.m., following at 3:30 by the fashion show.

In addition, two special performances were given in the evenings for the career girl customer group, a very active and loyal membership and whom Filene's has long had close and warm relations. A special flyer announcement was distributed, which in addition to the usual THIS IS THE LIFE theme material contained such slanted slogans as: "You're our girl ... we're your store ... Filene's at work for the working girl", ...
and "In this changing America, Career girls' have more
hours -- more ways for fun!... Filene's shows you hundreds
of ways to dress for this new leisure in our dramatic
fashion show series!" A supper was served at 6 p.m. --
showing at 6:30 p.m.

Special fashion show programs were distributed
to the public. On the front cover was the much
publicized theme slogan, "This is the Life", more
fun for you in this changing America; see it in pictures,
stories, advertising ... every week in LIFE, see the
clothes for it in Filene's. On the back cover of
the program, though, was a poem written to introduce
the fashion show program, itself, and which added a
distinctive flavor to the institutional advertising.

If you had fallen off to sleep a hundred years ago
The famous Rip Van Winkle way,
that all good children know,
And woke from heavy slumber
in the year of fifty-four,
You'd find all life and living changed,
a million ways or more.

You'd find more hours for fun and play,
for sport and travel too,
And special clothes for everything
that Winkle never knew
You'd find one voice to tell it all to you,
your kids, and wife
In pictures, stories, advertising,
every week in Life.

You'd find one store to dress you for a
million leisure scenes
We bet you've guessed its famous name---
of course the store's Filene's.
More poetry was used to give the audience the dramatic impact of the clothes fashioned for the following 6 "This is the Life" activities, which provided the framework for the showing of the clothes by the stationary models on the slowly moving mechanical runway; "THIS IS THE LIFE" ... FOR INDOOR SPORTS AND HOBBYISTS; FOR OUTDOOR SPORTS AND SPECTATORS; FOR TRAVELLERS AT HOME AND ABROAD; FOR ENTERTAINING AT HOME MORE - AND MORE - INFORMALLY, and FOR A BIG NIGHT ON THE TOWN. One poem, offered not as a sample of modern poetry, but on how some "life" was put into "This is the Life" fashion show.

"Whoever made TV, says Rip
Was smarter than a fox,
How does he get those little midgets
Inside that little box?"

After this introduction via poetic license, the fashion show presented to the public the clothes that fitted this new leisure life. The inside of the program contained a list of the fashions that were showed, plus designation where they could be bought in the store. As the model wearing, for instance, Turquoise Jersey Separates, glided motionless across the stage, the fashion announcer was heard to say:
Here's how to add more leisure to your life!
Plan to serve Sunday night supper in Tina
Leser's turquoise jersey blouse and clover
embroidered skirt! He won't let you near the
kitchen ... all this, and no cooking, too!
Both from the French Shop!

In this way the show had thematic continuity as well
as selling appeal, so that audio-wise in addition to
visually, the audience's attention was held.
A big, broad hobby program was the main attraction during the first week of "This is the Life" promotion. Besides attracting thousands of people to the store and to THIS IS THE LIFE thinking, the hobby show engendered much press coverage. Since this special activity covered a wide field of interests, it also served to broaden the promotion appeal of "This is the Life."

The show was publicized as a salute by Filene's "to the millions of Americans who pursue collecting and creative hobbies." "Acquired from sources all over the country, the numerous exhibits highlighted the great variety of hobbies in existence and the extremes of value and creative talent involved." The exhibit was staged in the store's restaurant, where special booths and cases were installed to show the various displays to the best advantage.

In order to illustrate the wide public appeal of such a special event, the following run-down is given of THIS IS THE LIFE hobby show exhibits: Antiques loaned by the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities, consisting of six separate exhibits from "unusual mug collection depicting fashions, manners, customs of early New England" to a "history of lighting
in America exhibit, with all kinds of devices, including a 3000 year old Roman lamp; Stamps, Coins, and Autographs loaned by members of the Boston Philatelic and Numismatic Societies; Arts and Crafts made in wood, metal and clay by outstanding hobby craftsmen of the Boston Philatelic and Numismatic Societies; twelve displays of Flowers, arranged themselves to depict hobbies and overall presentation saluting the hobby of gardening for home decoration; more than one-hundred old and rare Dolls, loaned by the president of the Doll Collectors of America Inc. and Miss MacMahon of Everett, Massachusetts; and two Photography displays, one consisting of fifty prize-winning photographs selected in the recent National High School Contest, the other exhibit showing for the first time the prize-winning photos chosen by the New England Associated Press News Executives from photos submitted by eighty-seven member papers.

It should be emphasized that all these exhibits were loaned and consequently, the hobby show was presented at a nominal cost and was free to the public. Also, the public appealed to was not only broad in the sense of all walks of life but in the age groups as well. Considerable emphasis was placed in the exhibit on the contributions from children. Exceptional items displayed
included a ship's model made by an eight year old boy at the New England Home for Little Wanderers and a small scale copy of the Greek statue, the Laocoön, made by a fourteen year old boy who studies after school at the Elizabeth Peabody House in Boston's West End. Thus, the hobby show covered a wide segment of Filene's public, income-wise, age-wise, and geographically, too, since these exhibits came from various parts of New England.

An other feature of "This is the Life" hobby show which added to the drawing appeal of the exhibit as well as enlarged its press potential was the personal appearance of outstanding personalities. That which especially received excellent publicity were the two special teas featuring baseball commentator Curt Gowdy and the nationally known economics radio and newspaper editor, Majorie Mills. Also, the various six booths had for the benefit of the public an expert appear at a specified time to answer questions concerning that particular exhibit. These personal appearances were arranged so that each display was singularly honored on a particular day by having a personality on hand. For example, the program of events mentioned that on Saturday, October 9, "Mr. Walter Green of the Associated Press, winner of many awards for his professional and Hobby pictures, and also well known for his European Associated Press pictures will be in the PHOTOGRAPHY BOOTH between
two and three p.m."

INTERIOR DISPLAY

The full impact of Filene's interior display tools were applied to the THIS IS THE LIFE promotion. Street floor ledges, all the major interior display areas in the selling floors throughout the store, were unified under the promotion theme. Individual departmental displays, posters, signs, sign toppers, merchandise tags—all collateral display help such as elevator cards, escalator cards, column decorations, sign copy, etc. were also directed to the THIS IS THE LIFE theme.

Those departments which had resources who cooperated fully in the promotion featured this merchandise in highlight interior display locations. ADVERTISED-IN-LIFE or "ingredient" merchandise ADVERTISED-IN-LIFE was used in auxiliary point-of-display areas, and in feature display areas for those departments who were not using special promotion resources.

Special street floor mobiles, repeating the THIS IS THE LIFE theme, were situated at strategic locations. Reader signs, at the base of the mobiles, said: "This is the Life, more fun for you in this changing America; a million ways to have it, a million ways to dress for
it. See it in pictures, stories, advertisements, every week in LIFE."

Posters and signs were displayed near manikins modeling THIS IS THE LIFE apparel, bearing an appropriate heading—"and Filene's has the clothes for it, Fun at Home Skirts."
The promotion theme, THIS IS THE LIFE, wholly dominated all of Filene's major windows.

The key institutional window at the corner of Summer and Hawley Streets featured a mechanically controlled Rip Van Winkle who comes to life and marvels at the wonders of today's leisure pursuits. He takes part in the action on a series of twelve tiny animated floats, each representing a phase of spare-time activities -- golfing, motoring, entertaining and the many pastime that spell "This is the Life."

In another window New Englanders had their first look at the low-slung, brand-new Ford sports car, "The Thunderbird."

Other major windows carried the THIS IS THE LIFE theme in various ways suited to the dimension of the window and the particular merchandise story being told. The re-occurring copy was: "This is the Life" -- more fun for you in this changing America, more ways to dress for it, and Filene's has all of them! The major fashion windows told the story through a special group of three-dimensional mobiles, cleverly and artistically depicting the articles of a fun-loving life--from footballs to cars. Other mobiles, posters
or strong signing carried the theme into every other Filene window. All of these major Filene windows were installed for a minimum of two weeks and were seen literally by hundreds of thousands of New England readers and customers.
In Filene's "This is the Life" promotion, actual merchandise was created by Filene's most important manufacturing resources to engender fashion excitement for the press. Six specific ways in which most people spend the all-fun, no-work part of their life dictated the special and suitable clothes to be highlighted in the promotion. Clothes were created suitable for outdoor sports, indoor sports, hobby enthusiasts, car hop trippers, come to supper crowd, go-out crowd, and these were dramatized throughout the merchandise presentation, from the fashion show to the individual departments. Poems and cartoons helped to further play up these six themes. The quite broad and general nature of these six categories of fun held wide public appeal, since they covered the interests of almost everyone.

As an added attraction -- and which proved to be extremely newsworthy, since it got a play in papers from Texas to London--Today's Leisure Life was projected into the future when eight Filene models appeared in spectacular costumes of tomorrow indicating some of the fun ways America's top designers think. Filene's Functional Fashions of the Future ranged in character
from "shopping on the moon" to "gardening and cooking a meal in six minutes" costumes. It hardly need be noted that this futuristic merchandise could not be bought at Filene's until the year 2054.

A second and major segment of the merchandise coverage inside Filene's was the very substantial quantity of merchandise in Filene's stocks in this fall promotional period which was ADVERTISED-IN-LIFE or which contained a basic ingredient which was ADVERTISED-IN-LIFE. All such merchandise was tagged and identified in the following three classifications: ADVERTISED-IN-LIFE, special tags to be used on all merchandise in Filene stocks which contain basic "ingredients" ADVERTISED-IN-LIFE, and Filene's special THIS IS THE LIFE tags to be placed on merchandise that Filene's has had especially developed for the promotion.
EMPLOYEE'S PLAN AND PROGRAM

"This is the Life" promotion was introduced and "sold" to employees of Filene's-Fileneites -- by staging two "This is the Life" rallies. The turn-out for the show was great, the response due in part to such publicity devices as addresses about the show over the Public Address System, mention in the house organ, The Echo, and, the plaintiff cry of a poor soul of the Public Relations Department as he attempted to stem the morning-rush tide of employees through the swinging doors. Also, there was notification of the show down-the-line, as the following mimeographed memo illustrates:

TO: DEPARTMENT MANAGERS

FROM: MERCHANDISE MANAGERS

On Thursday and Friday, September 30 and October 1, Filene's exciting fall fashion promotion THIS IS THE LIFE will be previewed for all Fileneites. There will be a color slide show of highlights of the promotion to come (October 3 - 16), skits, a message from LIFE magazine, who is joining us in the promotion, and PRIZES, PRIZES, PRIZES for those attending. Admission is by ticket. Will you please schedule your people for one morning or the other, and return one copy of this bulletin to the Training Department. Tickets will be delivered to you on Wednesday.

The ticket-takers for the employees shows held in Filene's restaurant were stretched out on couches --
a salesman, even early in the morning, was bound to be put in a "This is the Life" mood by seeing a lounging siren attired in form-fitting slacks. The entire promotion, from displays, advertisements through some of the fashion clothing, was dramatically presented to stimulate their interest, cooperation, and education about the promotion.

Filene's employee weekly helped to further stimulate employee interest, as will be shown in the following section.
HOUSE ORGAN

THE ECHO, Filene's weekly newspaper that goes to the homes of over 4,000 Filene employees in the nine Massachusetts communities where branches are located, carried a running account of the "This is the Life" program. Two articles which described the "This is the Life" Employee Show are worth quoting, not only for the further description of the employee program but as excellent examples of journalism slanted to elicit employee attention.

In the October 1, ECHO, appeared:

Eight Fileneites struck it rich last week at the two THIS IS THE LIFE rallies in the Main Restaurant. For answering Maestro Stacy Holmes' questions before the bell tolled, Mary Donovan, Section Supervisor, and Katherine Moran, Women's Dress World, each won three sets of tickets for two current cinemas. Jane Seyls, Young Bostonian Shop, and Florence Stern, are guaranteed LIFE every week for the next three years... Bill Heyer, Little Shoe Shop, and Ralph Goneau, Children's Wear, are both assured of a "night on the town" with a blond or brunette of their choosing."

Were you among the thousands who visited the hobby exhibits in the Main Restaurant this week? Catch it before closing time tomorrow if you want a rare treat.

The big attraction next week is the fashion show to be presented daily in the Main Restaurant. See out of this world creations, styled by our leading resources, displayed in a revolutionary new manner.
THE ECHO helped sell THIS IS THE LIFE to Fileneites with other articles, such as one of the fashion show, so that the store in turn would be able to sell the promotion to its customers effectively.
RESTAURANT FOOD SHOW

Filene's restaurant is one of the store's most outstanding customer services...perhaps a better classification would be an institution. For sound business reasons, it functions to help and enrich the shopping adventure of Filene's women shoppers. It has become such a down-town Boston landmark that it attracts sundry people—even luncheon-eating businessmen. In "This is the Life" promotion, the restaurant featured a special menu, harmonious with the promotion theme, which gave the Filene customer an inner as well as an outer "This is the Life" feeling.

Two thousand diners each day, during the period of the promotion, saw table tents in the restaurant playing up the events, displays, and merchandise of the promotion. A special "This is the Life" menu cover was also featured. A variety of new buffets, designed for delicious casual eating, were offered. They were inspired by the up-to-the-minute recipes and ways of serving food described in the recent pages of LIFE Magazine. They ranged from elaborate "Party Hostess Buffet", complete with roasts, fish, cheeses, jellies and sweetmeats, to a comparatively simple "Patio Buffet" with only two easily prepared hot dishes. There was a
casserole and a barbeque buffet, and even a "Quick-as-a-Wink" buffet for quickly prepared frozen foods. Recipes for all the "This is the Life" fares were available to the patrons of Milene's restaurant. This part of the promotion was unquestionably the most readily digested by the public.
ADVERTISING

Filene's "This is the Life" promotion was launched with both strong merchandise advertising and institutional advertising in scale with the very large dimension of the program.

On Sunday, October 3, four Boston newspapers introduced the story in Filene ads. The ads were almost completely institutional in nature, except for mentioning in small print a particular "This is the Life" outfit which could be worn while doing one of the six leisure time activities. The ads besides announcing to the public the theme of "This is the Life", listed the calendar of special events, called attention to the unusual animated window, and thus generated the drama of the promotion concept.

In a period of two weeks Filene's ran pages and pages of advertising which directly tied in with the "This is the Life" promotion. A wide cross section of merchandise, from homemakers departments to ready-to-wear, was featured in the ads. The specially-developed THIS IS THE LIFE heading was the unifying graphic on all of the advertising. The heading used
a script version of the word LIFE. However, in any advertising that included merchandise actually advertised in LIFE during the base period, including ingredients advertised in LIFE, this particular merchandise was identified, further acknowledging this fact and using the LIFE logo in connection with these items only. (See Bibliography, 1-5)
PUBLICITY

The Public Relations Department was responsible for all phases of publicity connected with "This is the Life" promotion, particularly the detailed planning for radio, TV, and press coverage and the preparation of fashion photographs. In addition, it carried out many correlated publicity functions, i.e. the assembly of press kits for the New York fashion show, the set-up and handling of the hobby show, etc. Generally speaking, therefore, the Public Relations Department supplied and supervised all newsworthy "This is the Life" material, especially that relating to the special events.

The kick-off for the publicity created around "This is the Life" promotion was the Filene fashion show in New York. The guests invited to the show played an important part in the dissemination of this news-producing event. Filene's and LIFE Magazine invited 600 members of the New York and Boston papers, the syndicate, radio and television and national magazine press, as well as leading manufacturers in the promotion and the manufacturer's guests to this unique cocktail-picnic-fashion show. For the benefit of the press, a press table featured a huge billboard of photographs keyed so a newspaper person could have the photos of
his choice from Filene's wide selection. Press kits were prepared containing related news releases on the New York showing and, also included were advance stories on the parts of the program that were later produced in Boston. The best results in publicity were produced with the photographs of the futuristic costumes, which obtained coverage on a national scale as well as in Boston. Photographs of models wearing costumes for "planet hopping" appeared in such papers as New York Journal American, The Stamford Advocate, and a column written by one of the guests at the show, Berta Mohr, featured three photographs of "This is the Life" apparel and was widely circulated in newspapers in and around New York. A photograph of the futurama Miss dressed for swimming, "with X-ray goggles, superfins for speed, self-purifying breathing-gear and a jeweled trident that attracts men and fish with equal success," appeared in papers throughout the country, Filene's publicity department released the picture to a mat service who in turn sent it out to members of their service. Thus, "This is the Life" futuristic costume was seen by readers in such places as Susquehanna, Pennsylvania, East Rainelle, West Virginia, San Saba, Texas, George, Iowa, and Taft, California, to mention a few. Another
widely publicized photograph, particularly around Boston, was a variation on the "hand-shaking" photograph of Andrew Heiskell, publisher of LIFE Magazine, receiving an "F-Oscar" from Harold D. Hodgkinson, general manager of Filene's. The Boston Daily Globe, The Boston Herald, and The Boston Post all carried photographs of this event with an accompanying story on the show. The fashions featured in the show were shown and described in the Women's Editor columns of all four of the Boston papers. The show even received special attention by such columnists as Ted Ashby of The Boston Daily Globe, Rudolph Elie of The Boston Herald, and John Harriman of The Boston Daily Globe. The Boston Daily Globe printed a limited special edition for publicity purposes, with the entire front page devoted to pictures and write-ups of the banner heading, "FILENE'S SAYS 'THIS IS THE LIFE'!" Fifty copies of this October 12, 1954 edition of the Globe were sent to Filene's resources that had been guests at the "This is the Life" Filene Fashion Show in New York. This was an excellent way to dramatize to important manufacturers the success of "This is the Life" promotion and how it was publicizing their trade names and clothes.
The New York show was featured on one television show and received special mention on another. Over WNHQ-TV (New Haven, Connecticut) Lyle Malgren, Your Window Shopper program at 11:00 A.M. had models wearing "This is the Life" apparel, i.e. cocktail dress, several leotards and toreador outfits were shown as well as a futuristic costume parade before the camera, and mentioned Filene's specifically in the script: "...these are the Fashions of the Future, presented in New York by the Boston store, Filene's." There was also additional monologue describing that fashion being televised. On Dave Garroway, Today at 7:00 A.M. over WNET-TV (New York) and NBC Television Network, Filene's and Life received an excellent "plug":

There's a fashion note I see here you might be interested in. Filene's department store up in Boston in cooperation with Life Magazine will be displaying their clothes of the future designed to stay with the, quote, "Ever changing American markets." Leisure clothes are featured in this fashion show along with their theme "so this is life." More fun for us in the country, they say. Lots of fun if you're up Boston way and can drop in.

Yesterday, though, the Filene people and Life put a futuristic fashion display on over at the Town and Country tennis club here in New York and eight of their models wore clothes which were designed for the distant future of space travel or clothes for everyday use in the world of a thousand years from now.16
Radio also played an important part in the "free advertising" of "This is the Life" fashion show when it arrived in Boston. It was mentioned on two stations; on WEEI, on the program "What's News in the Stores" with Nancy Dixen, the complete fifteen minutes discussed "This is the Life" apparel. Since it was a Cluett Peabody program, the emphasis was placed on the merchandise that had a Sanforized Label.

Louise Morgan, Shopping News, at 10:35 A.M. over WNAC gave over a minute plug to the fact that "Filene's To Have Fall and Winter Fashion Show."

Another important public of Filene's, the resources of the retail business, were exposed to news about "This is the Life." Trade Magazines carried stories featuring special merchandise that was used in the promotion. Luggage and Leather Goods for January, 1955 had an article on "Luggage featured for leisure life" and showed two photographs of windows displaying luggage and the travel part of leisure activity.

"This is the Life" -- Filene's tells Bostonians,. Store cashes in on magazine's impact. More fun for you in this changing America is window theme of blankets, spreads, and towels.

This was the appropriate heading by the trade magazine, Linens and Domestics for February, 1955. Besides showing photographs of window displays using
articles as bedspreads and blankets and then slanting the article towards the resources manufacturing such merchandise, it also lauded the **Hobby Show** with the heading, "Hobby Show good tie-in." The paragraph continued with:

In a hobby and craft show on an upper floor, various types of spare time activities were demonstrated. Children and adults were enthusiastic participants. This special event drew extra traffic into the store and served to tie up the entire promotion.

In Toys and Novelties--February, 1955, there was a large red headline, "Leisure Time Fun" Stressed in Filene Promotion", the article emphasizing the Hobby exhibits and the fact that "The toy departments gave particular emphasis to hobby lines popular to both children and adults, since whole families came to the store for the occasion. Models of all types were most popular. Ledge settings carried impressive mobiles that held tiny cutout cars, toys, cards, games, etc. to suggest leisure time activity.

Approximately five weeks before the opening of the promotion, "This is the Life" fashion photographs and photographs of other aspects of the program were planted in advance with rotogravure editors of the Boston papers for release to coincide with the start of
the promotion. In the *Boston Sunday Globe* of October 3 (the promotion broke on October 4), there appeared an article entitled, "When Doing Is Fun", and which previewed for the public the Hobby Show: "This is the Life" is an apt title for the current show of crafts and hobbies at Filene's. The pastimes of millions of Americans are shown..."and there were four accompanying photographs of displays -- miniature animals and children's mug collections, photography, and the craft of silversmithing. The fashion part of the promotion was depicted in the roto section of the *Boston Sunday Herald* of October 10 (the day before the fashion show was scheduled to open in Boston) by the Women's Editor, Patricia Porter, with the lead:

A fact we're all beginning to realize -- that women "never had it so good" -- has been announced at Filene's with a gala series of special events throughout the store. "This is the Life" theme for the program, also presents new fashions for your leisure.2

and six fashion photographs were shown with the article.

Other advance publicity concerning "This is the Life" special events were planted in the Boston papers. On October 3, *The Boston Sunday Globe*, *The Boston Sunday Post*, and the *Boston Sunday Herald* all carried articles on the fact that "Thousands and thousands of
New Englanders are expected to troop through Wm. Filene's Sons Company, Boston, during the next two weeks for a first-hand look at a dramatic presentation of changes that are taking place in American habits of living."\(^1\)

In addition, The Boston Sunday Globe of October 3, even contained an article on the news that the "Hobby Exhibition to Feature Bromoils."

The Christian Science Monitor of October 4 had an article entitled, "Magazine's Film on Changing Market in United States Inspires Retail Promotion", and mentioned besides the background for the promotion that "The two weeks' promotion, starting today, will run through October 15 in Filene's ten New England stores."

"This is the Life" promotion received wide publicity coverage while the program was in full swing. An excellent opportunity for publicity occurred when the Public Relations Department arranged to have The Greater Boston Community Fund Red Feather Trio make their first appearance before a public at the "This is the Life" fashion show. A picture of the Red Feather Trio with the accompanying sub release which announced at the end that the "Filene Show will be repeated at 3:00 p.m. tomorrow and Saturday" was carried by The Boston Daily Record, the Boston Daily Globe, and the Boston Traveler.

\(^1\) Quote from Boston Sunday Globe, Herald and Post.
October 14. Besides the hobby and fashion show, other special events received "free advertising." Curt Gowdy, Boston sportscaster, gave his world series summation to a "ladies only" audience at 3:00 p.m. on Monday, the first day of the promotion. Advance publicity announcing the event appeared the week before in three Boston newspapers, The Boston Herald, September 28, Boston Daily Record, September 30, and The Boston Daily Globe, September 28.
RELATION OF FILENE'S "THIS IS THE LIFE" PROMOTION WITH THE POLICIES AND PUBLIC RELATIONS OF FILENE'S.

After first spotlighting in great detail Filene's "This is the Life" promotion, the focus shall now be shifted and broadened in order that an examination may be made of the general public relations significance of this particular promotion to Filene's and to the American economy as a whole.

Filene's defines a policy as:

a principle or set of principles for conduct of business designed to insure that objectives are attained consistently throughout the company and in a manner which customers, suppliers, employees and stockholders will recognize as being in their mutual best interests.21

Filene's as a going business enterprise has the direct primary aim of making a profit. This profit motive which is inherent in all healthy businesses is a means and not an end, in itself, to its goal of being "a progressive leader in Boston and other New England communities, and a dominant factor in the distribution of goods and services with which Filene's has been identified traditionally." Thus, one of the store's foremost policies is:

to take a position of most progressive leadership in fashion and mass-merchandising; in customer services; in personnel administration; in publicity and promotion; in vendor relationships; in sense of community responsibility; in financial administration; knowing that such leadership will maintain its position as New England's most progressive
store and will thereby produce a satisfactory profit without which no business can continue. 21

Of particular relevance to "This is the Life" promotion and which was one of its foremost "raison d'être" is Filene's concern for fashion leadership in particular. "This is the Life" promotion helped to dramatize this to the public. The fashion shows, for instance, were created not only to sell specific clothes but to point up Filene's fashion alertness and leadership. To Filene's fashion is not a word that can be used only by elite customers but is simply something that the majority of its customers accept. Filene's caters to the mass middle income group and to the fashions they want. Harriet Wilinsky, the Sales Promotion Manager of Filene's, is concerned with all types of publicity and promotion events "relevent to the business of Filene's which is fashion." Miss Wilinsky explains Filene's policy as "finding continually new and exciting ways to highlight fashion. Since our focus is the unusual expression of things related to fashion, we try to dramatize events in terms of the store's merchandise." Filene's has become renowned for its pioneering in the post of fashion stylist and for its broad program of fashion coordination and promotion, now a model for many outstanding stores. By calling "This is the Life"
a fall, fashion promotion, the basic policy of Filene's leadership in fashion, maintenance of fashion contacts, and integration of fashion appeal and rightness in all its merchandising and selling programs is adhered to and promulgates.

The wide and broad appeal of "This is the Life" promotion to the mass buying public is consistent with another deep-seated policy of Filene's, to cater to all types of customers.

It is our policy in the Main, Men's and Branch Stores to cater to the mass middle and higher middle income groups--with the French Shop reaching the highest income group--the greatest sales and profit producing groups. 21

"This is the Life" dramatized the changes that are taking place in American habits of living by saluting the hobbies and leisure time activities that absorb so much of people's interest these days, brought about by the increase in the general standard of living. As has been already pointed out, Life Magazine's film, "The Changing American Market", provided the germinating seed for the whole promotion, and the exclamation "This is the Life!" pertains to the life of this newly formed mass-middle-income group. Filene's considers that "the heart of its business" is the great middle class and its appeal is directed to what the masses
want and not specifically the individual. This is a sound business policy, since the largest volume can be achieved by an appeal right down the middle to the masses, based on what the multi-million want rather than the individual. This policy is especially manifest in the Customer Preference Program instituted by Filene's which determines what the majority of its customers want and then stocks accordingly the right merchandise in depth. From the series of special events, such as the hobby show and restaurant food show, to the fashion show, "This is the Life" catered to the mass middle income group, which constitutes to a large degree Filene's public.

Another inherent characteristic of Filene's is its emphasis on specialization. The business has always strictly adhered to the "principle of developing and promoting many specialized merchandise departments, each becoming the leader in satisfying customers' specialized needs and wants." The very nature of "This is the Life" fashion show, with its highlighting of special apparel for a special activity, was an outgrowth of Filene's policy of leadership in satisfying the needs and wants of its customers.

Filene's is also unique in its conduct of store-wide sales and sale events. It does not have store-wide
sales except semi-annual stocktaking sales. In regards to sale events, it does "take advantage of market opportunities for securing additional business by offering Customer Preference merchandise at less than its normal price so long as it does not interfere with our primary merchandising objective -- day-to-day rightness. Sale events shall be of limited duration." Special mention of this characteristic of the business is to obviate any confusion concerning the category of "This is the Life". It was not a store-wide sale or sale event, nor any species of sale. "This is the Life" was store-wide but it was only a promotion featuring ADVERTISED-IN-LIFE merchandise and certain stock merchandise which tied in effectively with the promotion. It did not offer any slow-moving or heavily stocked merchandise at reduced prices. It did attempt to stimulate customer buying by highlighting certain apparel and creating an interest in the customer towards the fashion rightness of its merchandise. Thus "This is the Life" in no way tried to lure the public into buying merchandise simply because it was reduced in price and came under the loose heading of a "bargain." It in no way violated any sale policy of Filene's, since it no way offered mark-down merchandise to the public, but, on the contrary, tried to build up the public's confidence
in the quality, price, and fashion-rightness of its regular stock.

Filene's also has some specific policies pertaining to the sales promotion activities of the store.

It shall be our policy to present Filene's to the public in such a manner as to win its confidence, approval, friendship, and unquestioned acceptance of Filene's as New England's dominating, best, and most progressive retail store. We will consistently present the store in a manner which dramatizes its leadership in fashion and mass-merchandising; in customer services; in sense of community responsibility; in personnel relationships, and in vendor relationships. Our promotion efforts shall be planned to hold our present customers and constantly to attract more in order to expand our business in New England.

Other sales promotion policies which have direct bearing on the conduct of "This is the Life" are of "maintaining a standard of good taste in promotion and dramatizing... those things which make Filene's different and better than other competitive stores, the best store in New England." There is also a sales promotion policy which determines the character of the publicity released by Filene's.

No exaggeration, no misleading statement, and no half-truths shall be made under any circumstances in connection with any of our publicity. Any statement of whose truth we do not have reasonable proof in our possession shall be excluded from our publicity.

One of the basic reasons for "This is the Life" promotion
was to create customer interest by using certain types of advertising, particularly fashion and institutional. The distinctive quality of the "This is the Life" advertising can be traced to the sales promotion policy which asserts that "Filene's advertising shall mirror the store's own personality rather than imitate that of any other store." It was this special uniqueness, originality, and freshness which gave "This is the Life" a novel appeal that set it apart from the mass promotional matter.
The Public Relations Director of Filene's, along with the Advertising Manager, The Display Manager, and the Fashion Promotion Director, is under the direction of the Sales Promotion Manager. His over-all responsibility is to "present Filene's to its many publics through speeches, articles, reception of visitors, and all publicity media, etc., as a great merchandising institution aware of, and discharging its civic responsibilities."

As "This is the Life" promotion illustrated, one of his chief duties is to "assist the Sales Promotion Manager in all sales promotion activities, merchandise promotions, special events, and public relations." He also is to "develop original ideas and assist in the execution of all merchandise sales promotion plans such as employee contests, shows, etc., and arrange for radio and television support of same." Another duty which has relevance to "This is the Life" is the Director of Public Relations' supervision of all Store publicity, budgets, and expenditures.

A few of Filene's Public Relations Policies have ramifications in "This is the Life" promotion.

It shall be our policy to call the attention of the public to newsworthy Filene activities by giving full, complete, and truthful information to newspapers, magazines, and radio stations. 21
Of particular public relations worthiness is the policy not to exercise undue influence with regard to free publicity but we will make available information and leave the editorial treatment to their discretion.\textsuperscript{21}

Harriet Wilinsky, the Sales Promotion Manager, said in reference to this policy,

It is common practice to get extra free publicity by calling up the advertising managers and asking that the paper write an article, on which gets stamped BOM (Business Office Must). We at Filene's feel that this would not create good-will between our store and the newspapers. Instead, Filene's creates news which could be of interest to everybody and then files it with the editors, themselves.
CONTRIBUTIONS OF "THIS IS THE LIFE" TO FILENE'S INCREASE IN SALES AND PRESTIGE

The primary object of any retail promotion, whether directly or indirectly, is to sell more merchandise. This is often accomplished by promoting through one or more advertisements a special item or items with an appropriate selling slogan, from "SILK-LOOK SEPARATES FOR THE COUNTRY CLUB SET -- in 4 delicious flavors" to "SAVE 35% - 75%", depending on the public you are trying to influence. This type of item promotion limited to one department is at one end of the promotion spectrum, while at the other end is the special theme and institutional promotion as illustrated by "This is the Life." On the surface, it would seem that the first type of promotion is more a short-term investment—spending money for an add which will tomorrow pay dividends in an increase in volume on the advertised merchandise; while the institutional promotion of selling the entire store through a dramatization of a special theme is aimed at producing added volume for a long-term. It would consequently be assumed that it would be much easier and more effective to measure the contribution of a particular add featuring a special item -- see how the advertised merchandise sold -- than to judge the dollar and cents...
worth of a store-wide promotion. The fallacy of such reasoning is that even the one-special-item type of promotion cannot be judged in the immediate nor has there been developed any objective criterion to measure the real pulling-power of any one add. Even if the advertised item did a land-slide business, it would be foolhardy to give the add complete credit for the added volume, since word-of-mouth, across the backyard fence type of dissemination as well as the mysterious forces of mood, impulse buying, and even the weather can cause the most hardened merchant to exclaim, "Strange things are happening!"

There is also the disturbing fact that most wise merchandisers hope that the customer can be "switched" or "traded-up" from the advertised merchandise to an item bearing a higher price and mark-up. This is, in fact, one of the essential qualifications of a good sales force. It is, therefore, just as unfair to judge this type of individual promotion with such a "loaded" scale of seeing how the advertised item sold as it is to measure the ultimate value of any institutional promotion by some dollar and cents yardstick.

Now that certain popular myths about the real value of any type of promotion have been exploded to varying
degrees, it is possible to discuss somewhat more cautiously and realistically the contributions of Filene's "This is the Life" promotion.

The advertising as well as the publicity about the special events created more traffic to the store. Whether this additional number of people realized larger sales cannot be authentically reported, although the objective statement can be made that there was a "potential" increase in volume through more customers being in the store. Filene's realizes that even on a normal day-to-day operational basis, many a "potential" customer gets lost in the shuffle. In fact, a Better Selling Program was instituted to help correct this loss.

In recent months much publicity has been given to the point that retail salesmanship has reached a new low. A recent store survey revealed that one-third of the potential customers entering Filene's are not approached at all, and that two-thirds approached are not asked to buy all the goods they are conditioned to buy.22 Therefore, even though "This is the Life" was a success in terms of attracting more "potential" customers to the store, a corresponding increase in volume of sales was not necessarily achieved.

The most direct contribution of "This is the Life" to an increase in sales was in the actual merchandising part of the promotion, which was advertised not only through
special "This is the Life" newspaper advertisements but through a presentation of some of the apparel in the fashion show. There were actually two phases of merchandise promotion. The first was the crystallization, for the first time, of the types of clothes Americans wear for their new kinds of leisure activities. In this category falls the freshly designed, brand-new "This is the Life" apparel, which were particularly dramatized throughout the merchandise presentation. They were featured in windows, interior displays, and in the fashion show. These clothes were sold in the various women's apparel departments of Filene's, and thus, added to the total volume of goods sold. A second and major segment of the merchandise that was especially promoted by "This is the Life" was the ADVERTISED-IN-LIFE or which contained a basic ingredient which was ADVERTISED-IN-LIFE. As has been pointed out previously, this merchandise was properly tagged and identified. This merchandise was, of course, further promoted by being featured in "This is the Life" advertising. Such a large coverage of merchandise presentation helped stimulate selling of customer preference, deep stocks as well as the new things created especially for the promotion. It, therefore, acted as a springboard for extra selling during the fall weeks. Thus, "This is
the 'Life' not only interested the public in its fashion merchandise, i.e. clothes used for leisure time activities, but the promotion stimulated selling throughout the entire store.

The other contribution of "This is the Life" promotion was to build up the prestige and personality of Filene's in the mind of the public. In this promotion, though, Filene's public was not only its customers but its resources, particularly those connected with American fashion designers. In the latter case, it set out to impress the fashion industry by staging a "This is the Life" fashion show in New York. This "salute" to the American designers and creators for their quick perception of the changing trends in American fashions not only generated an immeasurable amount of goodwill among many firms from which Filene's buys but enhanced the prestige of Filene's in the entire fashion industry. It also served as a most effective way to launch the "This is the Life" promotion in the eyes of the general public, since it created many press releases not only in the immediate vicinity of Boston but on a national scale as well. The New York newspaper press, wire services, syndicates and feature services, columnists, magazines, radio, television and newsreel reporters, trade press as well as the full complement of the four Boston newspapers were guests.
at the New York showing. This helped to generate goodwill among the many medias as well as secure excellent publicity coverage.

"This is the Life" also influenced Filene's customer public by dramatizing the store's fashion alertness to this new needs. The promotion constantly reiterated the theme: "This is the Life", more fun for you in this changing America; see it in pictures, stories, advertising... every week in LIFE, see the clothes for it in Filene's. The prestige factor that Filene's was the place for purchasing clothes of the latest fashion became the keynote of the promotional theme.
GENERAL PUBLIC RELATIONS EFFECTS OF "THIS IS THE LIFE"

PROMOTION

Up to this point, an examination has been made of "This is the Life" promotion with Filene's and its specific public as the frame of reference. There exists, however, a much larger universe, the American economy and its public. Viewed from this broader perspective, there emerge certain concepts which are often times lost sight of by the individual business concern.

"This is the Life" promotion helped to further the role of the retail store in the economy as a whole. All too frequently a store is viewed as merely a distribution link between the manufacturer and the consumer. Many a retailer considers this the only function of his store. This is a completely passive attitude, however, and does not allow a store to realize its potential as a dynamic and creative force in the economy.

No business nor businessman is predestined to be a passenger on the train of economic events, to be carried along helplessly in any direction... And in the improvement of living standards, stores are not only beneficiaries but the prime activating force.

Thus, a store can and should set the standards of the people. It should adopt an active dynamic role of creating wants and needs in the public and consequently, foster the
general level of economic activity. This may sound all well and good in theory, but in practice how does a store adopt such a positive and dynamic role? One prominent head of a large retail chain feels that the answer lies in "the art of obtaining desired emotional reactions" from customers.

"Emotional reactions" are of much greater importance to the retailer than are "logical conclusions"... One has reached the highest pinnacle of all that is illogical when he insists on trying to be logical about what is seemingly the most illogical factor in the world -- women (who spend eighty per cent of the family budget). Yes retailing is selling; selling is the art of influencing people; and in general, people are influenced more through their emotional reactions than by logic.15

The same answer but couched in slightly different terms was given in a column pertaining to retail matters.

People not only want to live well, they not only want to be thrifty and find value received, but they have deeper feelings. They have desire and impulses for "things", for beauty, for possessions. Any business can nail down its security by studying human nature, by studying "wants" as well as "needs".17

This all boils down to the problem of what motivates people, or in retail language, what causes impulse buying?

Store operators have concluded from their observation and study of the trend of sales that impulse sales are becoming more important while planned purchases are becoming less important. The pent-up needs of the war and postwar periods have been satisfied. As people's needs have become less, their desire and ability to satisfy their wants in non-essential merchandise have become commensurately greater.18
And now the importance of a promotion geared to this dynamic role of creating wants becomes apparent, for "obviously, this trend places greater responsibility and burden on store display, store advertising, and merchandise presentation." "This is the Life" promotion stimulated buying of leisure apparel through its fashion shows and its window and interior displays, pursuing Filene's sales promotion policy which states that "...Filene Display shall present merchandise so that it can be seen quickly by a maximum of people creating in them the desire to own the merchandise." The other special events brought more traffic into the store and sought to stimulate public interest in new apparel that was featured throughout the store. The promotion as a whole effectively dramatized by use of all the store's sales promotion tools that Filene's was alert to changes in fashion as affected by changes in living, and as a result of this consumer needs and wants had been altered. "This is the Life" helped Filene's play an active and dynamic role in the creation of better living standards for its customers and could claim the reward in increased sales and profits. To parody a now famous remark, what is good for Filene's is good for the American economy as a whole.

Another broad public relations effect of "This is the Life" promotion was that it contributed to the building
up of the reputation of the traditional retail store. The personality of a retail store is becoming of paramount importance, even though a name and good-will have seemed quite nebulous things since the time of Shakespeare. "What's in a name? That which we call a rose/ By any other name would smell as sweet" averred the bard, and penny-wise businessmen have echoed similar sentiments. However, in these intensely competitive times, a retail enterprise is worth very little without a name.

In the drama of retailing in 1954, CHARACTER was unquestionably the hero and TRADE DIVERSION the villain. The great asset was to mean something--to stand for something in the community. You have observed by the expansions on one hand and closings on the other, that sometimes a store's personality is accepted in one community, rejected in another. The great liability was to be the victim of the various types of trade diversion. The most damaging forms have been catalog selling, discount houses, open showrooms, mail-order, and door-to-door.

A customer buying in a store with a middle-or-upper class personality:

will pay a higher price, and be convinced that it is better merchandise -- whether this is true or not. Similarly, a customer buying at a store with a "bargain" personality will pay a normal price and be convinced it is a bargain -- facts to the contrary notwithstanding.

By building up the public's awareness of the character an make-up of a store like Filene's, its specialization in fashion apparel and its catering in general to the mass middle income group, "This is the Life" promotion
served to reinforce the legitimate position of stores which emphasize quality and service as well as price. By featuring attractive displays and advertisements, the promotion informed the public how the store can best serve its customers, such as in this particular case that Filene's can provide the right clothes for leisure time activities. "This is the Life" approached positively how a traditional retail store functions with the interest in its public tantamount to its own success. If a store fails to effectively dramatize and publicize the reason for its existence, that existence will certainly suffer "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune."
CONCLUSION

A study of Filene's "This is the Life" promotion has revealed the methods and procedures by which a large retail store produced, in conjunction with LIFE, a huge scale two weeks' fall fashion promotion, in which there was whole-hearted cooperation and planning between the Sales Promotion Department and its closely-allied subsidiary departments of Fashion Promotion, Advertising, Display, and Public Relations. These five departments co-ordinated their activities and utilized all of the sales promotion tools of the store.

The special event which launched the promotion, the "This is the Life" Filene Fashion Show in New York, was staged by the Fashion Promotion Department, while the Public Relations Department was responsible for inviting the 600 guests -- the full complement of four Boston newspapers, the New York newspaper press, wire services, syndicates and feature services, columnists, magazines, radio, television and newsreal reporters, the trade press, and special Filene and Life guests -- and covered all publicity phases of the showing, from complete radio, TV, and press coverage to preparation of fashion photographs.

A big, broad hobby program set-up and supervised by the Public Relations Department opened the first week of the promotion at Filene's, attracting thousands of people...
to the store and to "This is the Life" thinking and engendering excellent press coverage.

Filene's first open-to-the-public fashion shows were presented during the second week of the promotion, involving a co-ordinated plan for all Sales Promotion Departments: The Advertising Department invited the public by continuous box announcements in all "This is the Life" advertising; The Public Relations Department sent out news releases and photographs of the show and its fashions for leisure living; The Display Department did all the sign identifications for the floats; The Fashion Promotion Department took care of the programs, merchandise shown, and staging supervision; while it was the responsibility of the Sales Promotion Manager to develop and supervise the over-all special event plan.

Display, both window and interior, carried out the promotion theme—"This is the Life", more fun for you in this changing America... a million ways to have it, a million ways to dress for it... see it in pictures, stories, advertisements, every week in LIFE—by using this key copy with "THIS IS THE LIFE" apparel, and the Display Department further dramatized the promotion with an animated window, three-dimensional mobiles, and all types of signing—posters, sign toppers, merchandise tags, etc.
The promotion crystallized for the first time the types of clothes Americans wear for their new leisure life of outdoor sports, indoor sports, hobby enthusiasts, car hop trippers, come to supper crowds, go-out crowd, and special and suitable apparel for these activities were dramatized from the fashion show to the individual departments.

The whole concept of the promotion was sold to the employees of Filene's by staging two "This is the Life" rallies, which gave a dramatized run-down of the entire promotion in order to stimulate their interest, cooperation, and education.

The house organ, THE ECHO, carried a running account of the program, helping to further sell "This is the Life" to Filene's 4,000 employees, so that the store en masse would be able to sell effectively the promotion to its customers; the write-ups were supervised by the PR Department.

Filene's restaurant, one of the store's most outstanding customer services, featured a special menu of new buffets for casual eating, and two thousand dinners each day saw table tents playing up the events, displays, and merchandise of the promotion.

The promotion was launched with both strong merchandise and institutional advertising in scale with the very large dimension of the program, and for a period of two
weeks Filene's ran pages and pages of advertising which directly tied in with "This is the Life".

The Public Relations Department was responsible for all phases of publicity connected with the promotion, particularly the detailed planning for radio, TV, press, and trade publication coverage and the preparation of fashion photographs; and in addition, carried out many correlated publicity functions, i.e., the assembly of press kits for the New York fashion show, the set-up and handling of the hobby show, and providing the promotion with newsworthy material.

Thus, these promotion tools were utilized to effectively dramatize to the public Filene's policies of fashion leadership, mass-middle-income appeal, and satisfying the needs and wants of its customers in its specialized apparel departments. The promotion as a whole reflected the individual personality of the store and created news which was of interest to everybody. The promotion was effective in bringing more traffic to the store and building up its reputation in the eyes of the public, resources and customers specifically. "This is the Life" also had a positive effect on the economy as a whole. It was an affirmative and dynamic answer to a difficult question, one which has great significance to an economy built on
supply and demand and needing continuous stimulus:

There's little alternative to promotion but that of running a warehouse instead of a store. The former accommodates needs, the latter creates desires and stimulates demand...through promotion. We're not only back in a buyer's market, we're in an era in which the consumer's needs are insufficient alone to absorb production. If the consumer buys only what he needs, where will you find customers for fashion goods?10

It should be emphasized, however, that while focusing the spotlight on the promotion tools that can be used by a store, there is the underlying, all-year public relations of a store -- from the friendly and cooperative salesperson's approach to a customer to the human relations exercised by the employees and executives of the store. "Good public relations can't be achieved overnight -- and they can't be achieved with the spectacular alone."9
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