Will Setliff  
Director of Marketing at Target Corporation

My group at Target is responsible for Target’s programs for communicating with our guests through new media (Internet, email, and mobile) and in-store media. Traditionally, retailers have spent most of their communication budgets on newspaper, radio, and television advertising. While these media have a low cost per message delivered, they are not very effective because they deliver the same message to a large group of potential customers. Also, the audiences for these traditional media are shrinking.

We are in the process of shifting our communication budget from traditional media to new media. The new media allows us to provide messages and services targeted at specific guest segments and even specific customers. For example, at our SuperTarget® web site, www.supertarget.com, guests can get announcements of specials, coupons, recipes, order party food, and sign up for a personalized email newsletter. My group is now working on an application enabling guests to select the coupons and recipes they want, make up a shopping list, and have this information download to their mobile phone so they can access the information when they are shopping in the store.

We are also using more electronic media in stores to improve our guests’ shopping experience. For example, buying a television set is becoming more complicated with home entertainment centers, HDTV, and LDP, LCD, and plasma screens. So we made a 25 second video for display on the store’s televisions to help customers understand the different options and clarify the category.

We are also exploring the use of digital signage in stores. The digital signs allow us to economically change the messaging for different stores and different times of the day. The messaging is also more dynamic than traditional signage and thus attracts more attention.

My career path is a bit unusual. I graduated from the University of Florida with a degree in religious studies. I was, and still am, very interested in people, their relationships in society, and how they find meaning. After graduation I worked in variety of jobs involving photography and film. I worked for a retailer in Los Angeles and then I worked for an ad agency that handled a number of retail accounts including McDonalds, Steinmart, and Target and later was offered this position at Target. The technology for communicating with retail customers is changing and it is exciting being in an environment that is embracing these changes.