

## Saks Fifth Avenue® Goes High Fashion for the Plus-Sized Woman

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Selling high fashion even to women who have a smaller body frame has always been a risky business. High-fashion magazines and top designers seldom cater to those who seek sizes larger than 8, or at best, 10-12 (cf. Critchell, 2010). However, Saks Fifth Avenue®, the high-end fashion-oriented department store, has decided, at least partially, to venture into the market for larger sizes of fashion items of this nature by adding sizes 16 and 18. While Saks operates Salon Z, a women's fashion department which carries apparel in the 14-24 size range, top designer-items are absent from the line. The new additions are expected to include designs by Oscar de la Renta® and Caroline Herrera® (Critchell, 2010). One of the concerns of offering fashions in larger sizes is to make sure that the apparel looks flattering when worn by women who require the larger sizes (Critchell, 2010).

### Questions:

1. Explain how market segmentation applies to this situation. Identify all of the segmentation dimensions that are relevant.
2. Check out the Saks website and exam the prices for the fashion lines for young females [age 2-14] and for adult females (<http://www.saks.com>). Based on what you find, how would you describe the economic means of these consumers or their parents?
3. Explain how Ansoff's Product-Market Growth Matrix applies to this situation [see Ansoff, I. (1957). Strategies for diversification. *Harvard Business Review*, 35(5), 113-124.] This matrix is also known as the Marketing Opportunities Matrix.
4. Explain how the concepts of merchandise depth and width apply to this situation.
5. If fashion magazines use models who appear to be perfect in every way, including having the culturally-desired body-frame size, how would young females who are not of this nature feel? Explain how the concepts of body image and self-esteem apply when young females see such models in fashion magazines? [see the Dove® self-esteem campaign videos: <http://www.dove.ca/en/default.aspx#/cfrb/gallery/> - click on the Dove Films icon]. Since Saks sells fashions for females within the 2-14 age group, if these females remain store customers when they grow older, what are the marketing implications for Saks by making the identified additions to the merchandise offering?

**Sources.** [1] Critchell, S. (2010, August 1). Saks adding bigger sizes in fashion collections. Retrieved from [http://www.usatoday.com/money/industries/retail/2010-08-01-saks-sizes\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/money/industries/retail/2010-08-01-saks-sizes_N.htm) and [2] Saks Fifth Avenue website: <http://www.saks.com>