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The Most Successful Marketing Campaign: Case Study

Whether in the past or the present, the market has always required businesses to intensively compete with each other in order to stay afloat. In this light, marketing campaigns appear as a key to this objective that is necessary to reach the desired market share and occupy the leading niche within the market. In the 1980s, Nike launched its “Just Do it” campaign, which exemplifies the world’s most successful marketing campaign. The increasing number of sales after the beginning of the campaign points to the fact that Nike developed a highly effective strategy involving a number of contributing factors, such as the creation of a strong appeal to consumers’ needs.

Background

The 1980s was a period of intense competition between Nike and Rebook, with Nike significantly losing to its rival. In the face of the urgent need to improve its position within the market, Nike’s management focused its efforts on improving its marketing strategy, which might present Nike as a brand providing superior quality, reliability, and style. Consequently, a strong brand was expected to expand market share, command higher prices, and generate more revenue than its competitors (“Nike’s Advertising Campaign” 1). As a result, these objectives were

reached, and Nike has become an example of an international company conducting one of the most successful marketing campaigns.

As the Center for Applied Research highlights, Nike rose about as high and fast in the 1990s as any company could (1). The focus of its new marketing campaign was the slogan “Just Do It,” which expanded the advertising barriers of that time as much as possible. According to Jolie Soloman, Nike increased its share of its domestic sport-shoe business from 18 percent to 43 percent, from \$877 million in worldwide sales to \$9.2 billion in the years between 1988 and 1998 (qtd. in “Nike’s Advertising Campaign” 1). In this light, the success of the “Just Do It” campaign has become an inescapable fact.

The key idea behind the success of Nike’s marketing campaign was the shift from selling simply sports shoes to presenting fashion items. Before the campaign, Nike was attracting predominately male customers; however, after the implementation of the “Just Do It” strategy, the market was significantly expanded, involving female and teenage customers seeking for lifestyle and fashionable products. The founder and CEO of Nike, Phil Knight, focused the campaign on promoting not the product itself but the people wearing the product (“Nike’s Advertising Campaign” 1). It, in turn, became the key to reaching those outstanding results that took place between 1988 and 1998.

Factors Contributing to Success

When assessing the scope of the success of the “Just Do It” campaign, it is worth paying tribute to a range of factors. Among them are efficient objectives of marketing, market segmentation and targeting, marketing mix, market expansion objectives, outsourcing strategies, communication strategies, and many others. Below, some of the most critical parts driving the

immense success of the “Just Do It” marketing campaign is described to exemplify how that effective combination was composed.

Market Positioning. In fact, Knight’s decision to link the Nike marketing campaign to consumer needs has been acknowledged to be among the most distinguished business strategies. First of all, the “Just Do It” campaign presented Nike as a quality brand. Therefore, it met consumers’ concerns about the value of the items they were buying. To assure that Nike shoes were highly qualitative, Nike utilized the strong impact of sports celebrities, such as Bo Jackson and Michael Jordon, on people’s minds. Leading consumers by their example and showing that it was possible to play the entire NBA season in a pair of Nikes, sports celebrities dispelled any doubts regarding the quality and durability of Nike shoes.

Secondly, the marketing campaign involving celebrities added to consumers’ sense of “hipness.” The Nike the “Just Do It” marketing presentation sounded as follows: “if you want to be hip, wear Nike; if you are hip, you are probably wearing Nike” (“Nike’s Advertising Campaign” 2). By making its shoes as a fashionable item, Nike changed what was usually perceived as a time-consuming and sweaty activity. In fact, Nike provided the opportunity to appear fashionable without going through the pains of sports activities, which satisfied the needs of millions of Americans.

Thirdly, the “Just Do It” campaign influenced consumers in a way that they felt attached to the brand and shoes, which became a part of their lives. Nike’s appeal to lifestyle goals allowed this company to expand its operations and target every American, regardless of age, gender, or physical-fitness level (“Nike’s Advertising Campaign” 3). Therefore, Nike became the leading brand while pushing Reebok into the background.

Competitive Advantage. To assure its “Just Do It” campaign would be successful, Nike focused significant efforts on defining and reaching the core competitive advantages needed to occupy the leading niche within the market. The list of competitive advantages defined as the driving forces behind the successful marketing campaign included unique and efficient technologies, manufacturing costs, economies of scale, patents, and research and development strength (Ahmed et al. 15). For instance, in terms of manufacturing costs, Nike developed a global outsourcing strategy that allowed it to decrease the costs of production while having about 715 contracts all over the world (Ahmed et al. 15). In such a way, Nike utilized its competitive advantages to the most possible extent to make them serve the “Just Do It” marketing campaign and reach its objectives.

Concluding Points

It is impossible to disagree with the Center of Applied Research, which states that “the “Just Do It” campaign was not only about sneakers but about Nike’s own Renaissance” (3). The success of the Nike marketing campaign of the past has been projected on the contemporary performance of the company and its constant growth. For instance, in 2015, Nike recorded an increase of 10.1% over 2014, reaching revenues of \$30,601 million (qtd. in Zawawi & Razak 47). Also, during the same period of time, Nike demonstrated an increase of 13.5% in operating profit and an increase of 21.5% in net profit (qtd. in Zawawi & Razak 47). Such a continuous growth of Nike directly points to the fact that its “Just Do It” campaign, which traces back to the 1980s, was so successful that it is still possible to reap the benefits today. The combination of effective timing, appeal to the needs of consumers, a specific way of public communication, and the overall efficacy of its strategy has allowed Nike to be recorded among the companies launching the most legendary marketing campaigns in human history.

Works Cited

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