

## **Client: Nike Training Club App by Nike Inc.**

### **EXTERNAL ANALYSIS**

Nike Training Club is well positioned in the current market and is found to be performing favorably among consumers. Analytics provided by Sensortower show that most sentiments shared regarding the app are positive; most moderate or negative sentiments shared expressed technology or functionality concerns (2021). Those who have experienced issues with the app continue to regard it well, making statements that the app is great “when it’s not crashing” (Sensortower, 2021).

With that said, Nike is currently dealing with a less than ideal domestic economic situation. The effects of COVID-19 have been felt across various markets, and overall declines in economic performance have had their effects on Nike. According to reports released by Bureau of Economic Analysis, real gross domestic product increased 4% in the fourth quarter of 2020 - a staggering decrease from the 33% growth experienced in the third quarter (2021). Personal income experienced a gain of 0.6% in December 2020 (Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2021). This positive growth rate is a welcome change from the -1.2% growth rate experienced in November 2020, but does not suggest consumers are able or willing to spend disposable income on anything not considered a necessity.

Issues throughout modern social climates have led to Nike facing considerable scrutiny for its approach to corporate social responsibility. Recent events surrounding the Black Lives Matter movement have especially garnered criticism as the honesty of the organization’s actions has been brought into question. However, while some viewers question how genuine these messages really are, most believe the effort made to make a statement is significant enough in itself to justify the usage of such tactics. The most notable social campaign executed by the company during this time involved the rebranding of its trademark slogan “Just Do It.” In May 2020, Nike released its rebranded “For Once, Don’t Do It” as a response to the ongoing racism and police brutality perpetrated against Black communities in the United States. Ad insights released by Ace Metrix found that an “overwhelming majority (60%) of respondents indicated the message was the Single Best Thing about “For Once, Don’t Do It,” driving the high Empowerment score” (Ace Metrix, INC, 2020). The ad was active among target audiences, but a large number of viewers did also state they felt the overall message felt exploitative. Respondents stated they did not feel the message was necessarily attempting to exploit a cause because it was delivered by an organization like Nike, but were instead “bothered by other exploitative aspects of the spot, including taking advantage of the situation to sell shoes” (Ace Metrix, INC, 2020).

## **The Industry**

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected all industries, and an industry giant such as Nike still could not manage to dodge all side effects. Temporary store closures made in the summer of 2020 in an effort to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 among employees and shoppers led to a steep decrease in profits of 38%. The 150% increase in demand throughout the first quarter of 2020 was significant, but the losses felt by the lack of sales made in-store were enough to offset the success found in the digital revenue front (Safdar, 2020). Nike has been able to since persevere with online retail efforts, eventually seeking an overall revenue growth of 9% when compared to performance from the year prior. This growth, however, is attributed to a 24% surge in growth in the Greater China market; in North America, Nike's largest market, sales rose only 1% (Safdar, 2020).

## **THE CLIENT: Nike Training Club App by Nike Inc.**

### **History of the Organization**

Nike Inc. was founded in 1964 as Blue Ribbons Sports in Beaverton, Oregon, by Bill Bowerman, a track-and-field coach at the University of Oregon. Bowerman's love for sports eventually led to his desire to resolve his dissatisfaction with the running spikes available on the market. They were made of heavy leathers and metal, which was less than ideal for track sports. Bowerman "became obsessed with shaving ounces off shoes to help runners slash seconds off their times" (Nike, Inc., "Bill Bowerman: Nike's Original Innovator," 2015). His work, alongside the help of his future associate Phil Knight, would eventually change athletic footwear forever.

Prior to developing Nike, Bowerman found success through multiple endeavors. After fighting in World War II and returning with a series of accolades, he returned to the University of Oregon where he led the university to four NCAA titles. Bowerman began tampering heavily with athletic footwear during this time, looking for new and innovative ways to craft the best footwear possible for athletes. When his friend and mentee Knight expressed that he was frustrated by the "clumsiness" (MIT, n.d.) of his running shoes, Bowerman set out to create a shoe that would address his needs. He worked meticulously to craft a shoe to Knight's specifications. The shoe was a success, so much that Knight's teammate Otis Davis kept the prototype for himself after trying it on. Davis then went on to win a gold medal in the 400-meter event at the 1960 Olympic Games while wearing Bowerman's prototype sneakers. Together, Bowerman and Knight launched Blue Ribbon Sports.

Bowerman and Knight continued developing sneakers, eventually developing a prototype known as the "Cortez." The shoe was a success among consumers, and the subsequent success that followed led Bowerman and Knight to end their distribution efforts through Blue Ribbon Sports. The company was then renamed Nike, allowing Bowerman and Knight to be credited as the

designer and maker of the athletic shoes which they produced. Two years later the company went public. Nike Inc. continued creating innovative shoe designs, which they promoted heavily through celebrity endorsements with such sports superstars as Michael Jordan, Tiger Woods and LeBron James (Meyer, 2019). In 1988 the company launched its first “Just Do It” campaign. Since that time Nike acquired a few other companies, such as Hurley and Converse, and became the official supplier for NFL and NBA apparel (Meyer, 2019).

## **Composition**

Nike’s current geographic divisional organizational structure has been defined as having the following characteristics (Thompson, 2019):

1. Global corporate leadership which includes the following leadership groups: office of the President and CEO, Nike Brand, Finance, Global Human Resources, Product and Merchandising, Administration and Legal, Global Sports Marketing, Operations.
2. Semi-autonomous geographic divisions, responsible for regional markets, are: North America, Western Europe, Central and Eastern Europe, Greater China, Japan, Emerging markets.
3. Global divisions for Converse and brand licensing, which manage the operations for Converse, Nike’s subsidiary, and licensing the Nike brand.

Nike has 47 offices located throughout 42 countries (Craft, n.d.). The Nike headquarters offices are: Nike World Headquarters in Beaverton, USA, Nike European Headquarters in Hilversum, the Netherlands, and Greater China Headquarters in Shanghai, China ("Nike Headquarters," n.d.). The company has 1,096 retail stores worldwide, with over 300 of them in the U.S., as of May 31, 2020 ("Total Nike retail stores worldwide from 2009 to 2020," 2020).

The company’s key executive team includes ("About Nike - Executives," n.d.):

- Phil Knight, Chairman Emeritus;
- John Donahoe, President and CEO;
- Mark Parker, Executive Chairman.

## **Products and Services**

Nike’s main line of business is manufacturing and selling athletic footwear, clothes, equipment and accessories for men, women and kids. The Nike By You builder feature allows customers to design their own one-of-a-kind pair of shoes and see them in an interactive 3D model. Jordan and Converse brands have dedicated retail space.

Nike currently has six apps that are available for both Android and iOS users ("Android apps by Nike, Inc. on Google Play," n.d.; "Nike Apps on the App Store," n.d.). The apps that focus

mostly on shopping are: Nike, which strives to give customers a personalized shopping experience by providing member-exclusive gifts; Nike SNKRS, which is dedicated to shopping for sneakers. Nike Adapt app is designed to enable customers to remotely adjust Nike Adapt footwear from their phones. Jordan Keyboard is a personalization app, which allows users to send Air Jordan emojis. The two health and fitness apps are: the Nike Run Club and the Nike Training Club, which aim to help people reach their fitness goals through guided, customizable workouts.

## **Purpose and Objectives**

Nike was founded in 1964 by Phil Knight and Bill Bowerman. Nike's purpose statement states the organization aims to "unite the world through sport to create a healthy planet, active communities and an equal playing field for all" ("Nike, Inc. - Our Purpose," 2020). The company was bred from a genuine desire to provide athletes with innovative footwear that would allow them to perform to the best of their abilities. It has only since evolved in the sense of expanding to provide a wide range of products to meet the needs of various types of athletes at all levels. Nike's purpose is separated from its competition by the way in which they define athletes, seeking to include all those who choose to partake in any form of athleticism.

## **Financials**

Nike's revenue for 2020 was \$37,403,000 ("Nike Overview," n.d.). Stock price for Nike Inc. (NKE) is currently \$139.20 as of February 3, 2021 ("Nike, Inc. (NKE) stock price, quote, history & news," n.d.). The current brand value given to Nike Worldwide in 2020 is \$34.8 billion ("Nike - Statistics & Facts," 2020). Nike had the largest market share of the fitness apparel market in 2020, which is shown in Table 1 in Appendix 1 ("Nike - Statistics & Facts," 2020). Nike also held a solid market share of the athletic footwear market in 2020, as shown in Table 2 in Appendix 1 ("Nike Inc comparisons to its competitors, market share and competitiveness by segment," n.d.).

Nike has been showing a consistent pattern of growth since its foundation, with a slight revenue decline throughout fiscal quarters of 2020. There are several factors mentioned throughout the external analysis of the current industry that are believed to have contributed to this decline. In-store closures and a lack of wholesale business as a result of COVID-19 were cited as the largest hindrance to the company's performance as the company heads into its first fiscal quarter of 2021 (Nike, Inc. "Reports Fiscal 2021 First Quarter Results," 2020). An overall revenue growth from 2005 to 2020 is shown in Table 3 in Appendix 1 ("Nike - Statistics & Facts," 2020).

## **Mission Statement**

Nike's mission statement is "to bring inspiration and innovation to every athlete in the world," with the added clarification that "if you have a body, you are an athlete" ("About Nike," n.d.). The company's values are emphasized on the corporate website and include: innovation;

empowered, diverse and inclusive team; social and community impact; sustainability.

## **Media Analysis**

Nike received nearly 30 million media mentions throughout 2020. There were various topics and tones of coverage surrounding Nike. Recent media coverage has focused on evolving company practices as a result of COVID-19 and how the apparel giant has been attempting to mitigate the sales losses caused by store closures. Media coverage surrounding Nike has also covered topics that have followed the organization since its early years. The company's ethical practices have been brought into question many times over the past several decades, and 2020 proved to be no exception. Multiple articles were released throughout 2020 questioning Nike's usage of forced labor camps throughout Xinjiang, and some statements have been made that find that Nike has "lobbied hard against a draft bill by the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act, which aims to keep products made with forced labor out of the U.S." (Allen-Ebrahimian, 2021).

Nike has managed to garner a good deal of positive media coverage throughout 2020 and leading into 2021. Two years after its original release, the aforementioned ad featuring Kaepernick is still gaining positive attention for the brand, and consumers are still resonating positively with the company's decision to be "out in front on supporting Black Lives Matter" (Uhler, 2020).

## **Current Reputation in the Marketplace**

Nike is a top name and "has the largest market share in the athletic apparel industry in North America" (Palmer, 2021). As a recognized sponsor for major sporting events and prominent athletes, Nike has well established itself as an iconic name in fitness apparel. The company is known for developing impactful media efforts that resonate with target audiences.

Nike has currently made strides to establish itself as a leader in innovative apparel offerings, with its most recent accomplishments being the development of a pair of hands-free sneakers. The sneakers, which are the first of this kind, were the brainchild of then 16-year-old Matthew Walzer (Sparks, 2021).

## **Social Media Research**

Nike currently has a social media presence across all major platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and LinkedIn. Nike is not consistently active across all these platforms; the organization has not made a post to its official Facebook page since 2018. They have instead focused their efforts on creating diversified accounts across more popular platforms such as Instagram and Twitter. Nike has also been making good use of YouTube, using it as a platform to share longer-form content such as full-length campaigns. Overall, Nike primarily focuses on the usage of social media as an extension of public relations efforts. Social media is used as a way to communicate information with key audiences as well as a way to receive feedback.

## Promotions

Nike is well regarded in the world of communications. They are known for delivering messages through impactful imagery that resonates well with target audiences. The company boasts a myriad of successful campaigns, one of which includes the company's 30th Anniversary campaign featuring former San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick (Kish, 2018). Kaepernick, who rose to fame in 2016 after choosing to kneel during the national anthem in protest of police brutality, was not signed to another NFL team following the end of the season. He soon became known as a civil rights activist, and his protest was recognized and repeated by athletes across the world. The campaign did receive backlash from consumers who did not agree with the controversial choice of Kaepernick. Those in the communications industry considered the move to be a bold one and heralded the choice positively (Bradley, 2018). The campaign resulted in a 135% increase in brand mentions, both negative and positive (Bradley, 2018).

Nike uses a variety of tactics and strategies from all areas of communications, including marketing, advertising and public relations. Nike's application of public relations is part of its marketing communications functions. Most of the company's PR efforts focus on responding to criticism towards company practices. Nike has been accused of unethical labor practices since the 1970s and recently came back under fire after recent speculation of its involvement with using forced labor from camps based in China (Bain, 2020). In response to these claims, Nike's crisis communications tactics included releasing a statement entitled "Statement on Forced Labor, Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery for Fiscal Year 2020." The efforts are so far proving successful as the company's practices have not since come under recent scrutiny.

Nike also utilizes public relations in the form of sponsoring a variety of sporting events and prominent athletes. Nike has a presence in all major nations involved in sports and also is responsible for sponsoring South Korean eSports team T1. Some notable sports associations Nike sponsors include:

- MLB
- NBA
- WNBA
- MLB

Some notable athletes include:

- Kobe Bryant
- Alex Morgan
- Simone Biles
- Tiger Woods

Nike has also partnered with artists outside of sports, such as Bella Hadid and lead singer of Thai pop-punk band Bodyslam, Atiwara “Toon” Kongmalai.

## **COMPETITION**

Nike currently holds the largest market share in the North American fitness apparel market. The organization also maintains a dominant global presence and has a recent market capitalization of about \$203 billion as of November 2020 (Palmer, 2020). In terms of other large fitness brands, large names such as Adidas, Puma and Under Armor each pose a unique set of threats to Nike’s dominant share of the global market.

In the fitness app market, Nike Training Club currently faces competition from only one other large fitness brand, Under Armor. Both brands are posted with a new set of competitors, but Nike Training Club is set to outpace other apps given current market advantages. With a total of 170 million users between its various apps, Nike is proving to be a competitive force in the digital app market. Nike Training Club faces competition in the form of other popular fitness apps including:

- Sworkit
- FitOn
- MyFitnessPal (owned by Under Armor)

### **Sworkit**

Sworkit is a fitness app established in 2012. They provide a variety of services including “workouts, customizable plans, and resources that allow people to adopt and maintain healthy habits for life” (Sworkit, “About Us,” n.d.). The app is considered one of the top fitness app options and was ranked as the top choice among 30 fitness apps in a study conducted by the University of Florida (Downs, 2015). Sworkit was found to be one of the only fitness apps whose workout models follow guidelines specified by the American College of Sports Medicine guidelines. These parameters measured include overall safety, number of warm-up and cool-down exercises, stretching and progression. After this analysis, Sworkit received a score of 9.01 on an overall scale of 14.

Sworkit has the advantage of being an innovative, new app that is committed to connecting with communities in meaningful ways. The organization utilizes social media to foster a sense of community, which is an area in which Nike Training Club currently lacks in comparison. The company’s Facebook page is currently a hub meant to provide users with short clips of workouts to complete at home, along with quirky tips that can help users achieve their at home workout goals even when they’re lacking the proper tools. The app received a total of 58,262 downloads within the past 30 days according to a report by Crunchbase (2021). While Sworkit is well

regarded among users, the application has not yet proven to be competitive enough in posing a threat to Nike Training Club's hold on the market.

## **FitOn**

Founded by former FitBit executive Lindsay Cook, FitOn is a free fitness app that has experienced a rapid growth spurt since its launch in 2018. The app currently has 6 million members and is "on track to hit 20 million members by the end of 2021" (Robert, 2021). FitOn boasts an impressive retention rate; Cook states the app's 30 day retention rate is "four times" (Robert, 2021) higher than the industry average of 15%.

The emerging app has quickly found ways to appeal to potential users, including workouts led by celebrities such as Gabrielle Union and Julianne Hough. It is also working to quickly establish its brand across social media, building its presence across platforms such as Instagram and YouTube. Potential users are able to access workouts featured on the app through YouTube, which has likely served effectively in attracting potential users. FitOn is a formidable threat to Nike's position given the variety of services the platform offers and the positive sentiments among users. The app currently has a 4.9 star rating on the Apple App Store with a total of nearly 159,000 reviews.

## **MyFitnessPal**

Developed by Under Armor, MyFitnessPal is a tool that allows users to log diet and exercise. While the app does not offer users workout programs like the aforementioned competitors, it still holds a valuable share of the Health and Fitness application market. With 180 million users (Curry, 2020), MyFitnessPal is currently ranked 11th among health apps on the app store. Its large community of active users is a channel MyFitnessPal has utilized well. They have added community features to allow users to share experiences with one another, ask for advice or serve as one another's support network.

The brand utilizes social media channels to further nourish the sense of community fostered among users. The company's Twitter account serves as a reference point for users to find articles sharing recipes and other relevant tips (MyFitnessPal Official Twitter Account, 2021). This proves useful not only in terms of retaining current users, but also in providing value to potential new users. The brand's official Instagram account provides even more extensive content. Users can find week-long exercise guides, videos of recipe recommendations and infographics chock-full of relevant dietary and health information. MyFitnessPal does a great job of connecting with existing and potential consumers, posing a threat to Nike as the organization still lacks in this area.

## **SITUATION ANALYSIS**



## Current Position

Nike's current market position is unique to its competitors. The company has an advantage due to its sheer scale and spending power. With over \$4 billion available in cash (Sonenshine, 2018), Nike has the advantage of outspending competitors. This growth allows for Nike to continuously reinvest in its own growth at a rate "its competitors simply can't match" (Sonenshine, 2018).

## Internal Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strong sense of brand awareness among consumers, which includes well recognized brand identity with a "distinguished brand name and brand logo, the swoosh" (Lin, 2017).</li><li>• Low labor costs and inexpensive materials keep product prices low (Bush, 2019).</li><li>• Niche brands such as Converse and Jordan, which allows for Nike to quickly adjust when attempting to meet consumer needs (Palmer, 2021).</li><li>• Innovative and impactful marketing efforts have had positive, lasting impacts on brand image among consumers (Uhler, 2020).</li><li>• Nike's dominant market position means more spendable cash, which means Nike simply has the resources to outpace the performance of competitors.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Repeat issues facing organizational behavior and company culture have faced repeated criticism, which can bring the integrity of the brand under question (Pratap, 2020).</li><li>• Nike has received backlash for making empty promises on delivering on more eco-friendly practices. In terms of brands leading the way in pioneering change, Nike is not considered a notable one, and "other brands are more deserving of your attention" (Bauck, 2019).</li><li>• Nike has had a history of workplace culture issues, with many female employees coming out in the past to say workplace environments while working at Nike "turned toxic" (Creswell et al., 2018).</li></ul>

## External Opportunities and Threats

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Nike has the opportunity to work on further developing the methods used to reach direct audiences. While the company has worked to develop an impressive repertoire of campaigns,</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The rapid growth of competing brands poses a large threat for Nike. The brand spent \$3.5 billion on marketing and demand generation in 2020 (Gupta, 2020).</li></ul>

<p>the company has the opportunity to “offer better customer experience and win higher customer loyalty” (Pratap, 2020).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nike has the opportunity to penetrate growing and emerging markets outside of the United States. Recent success in China indicates that Nike’s positive growth trend is likely to remain in national markets (Statista, 2021), providing Nike the opportunity to further expand its reach.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disputes over patents regarding Nike’s Flyknit technology can potentially pose threats to the brand's integrity. While Nike has managed to prove itself to be the original creator of its patented technology, disputes by Adidas have caused legal warfare and millions of dollars in legal fees for the two industry giants (The Fashion Law, 2020).</li> <li>• A lack of community engagement strategies can create a void for Nike where other brands can take over.</li> </ul>
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## PRIMARY RESEARCH

A variety of research methods must be employed to ensure the successful execution of a campaign for Nike. The primary research methods we believe fit to employ include:

- Focus groups
- Surveys
- Questionnaires
- Monitoring performance of competing fitness apps
- Social media audits

These primary research methods would best fit the needs of developing a Nike campaign given a variety of factors, the biggest of which being the level of specificity to which the information acquired can be tailored. Conducting primary research would allow for target audiences to be reached directly, also allowing for guided questioning to ensure questions are addressed in a way that allows for the most valuable insights to be drawn. Using a variety of formats to reach target audiences would ensure the largest pool of potential customers is reached. This then allows for a method of analysis that considers the synergistic viewpoints that exist among audiences, as well as the potential disparities that can cause tension.

Given the unique position that Nike currently faces in attempting to remain competitive in the fitness app market, conducting appropriate research is all the more important in ensuring that strategies and tactics are successful in their implementation.

## **Methodology**

The data collected would directly guide PR plans and provide the necessary insights to modify strategies and tactics where appropriate to ensure maximum success. Reaching out to target audiences directly would ensure that the appropriate data is acquired in order to guide strategy and tactical development. The information found thus far is invaluable in providing the necessary background to understand how to appropriately address the needs of a client like Nike. With considerable organizational strengths in mind, there are multiple strategic avenues that can be successfully implemented to achieve the goals of a brand such as Nike. Sample discussion prompts for a focus group can be found in Appendix 2.

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