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Research Project

Nike

As one of the most recognizable brands in the world, it is no surprise that Nike has an outstanding global strategy. While Nike manufactures products in 42 countries, they sell their products in 170 different countries. This requires them to diversify their approach to how they advertise and sell products in all these different countries while remaining consistent with the brands quality and status. Although Nike is known for their quality products, what really sets them apart from competition is the brands global strategy and marketing approach.

Founded in 1964 in a small town in Oregon by a track coach at the University of Oregon named Bill Bowerman and a former student of his named Phil Knight, Nike’s original name was Blue Ribbon Sports. Originally producing a track shoe with a signature waffle style sole, they began selling the shoes to runners out of the back of a van at track events. After gaining praise from many satisfied runners, they opened their first retail outlet in 1966, not long before changing the brand to what we now know as Nike in 1971.

Upon officially becoming Nike, they also adopted the world-famous Swoosh logo in the same year. This logo has seen many different design variations for an ever-expanding product catalog, but the logo has always remained the same when representing the brand. The Swoosh is now easily recognized in virtually every country around the globe, and although it is very simple, this logo is a huge key to Nikes global success. Since the logo is so well respected and recognizable, Nike already has an advantage going into business in basically any country. Another important factor in Nike ’s branding is the “Just Do It” slogan. Created in 1987, the slogan was created to coincide with a televised commercial campaign by Nike. The commercials aired in 1988 and focused on running, training, and basketball.

With Nike bringing in an astonishing revenue of $39.1 billion in 2019, they still always are searching for new markets and focus on innovating and improving their products. In regard to their revenue in 2019, Forbes stated “Higher revenue was driven by growth across NIKE Direct and wholesale, key categories including Sportswear, Jordan and Running, and double-digit growth across footwear and apparel”. Of course they are focused on a mostly rapidly evolving product line, but they also focus on addressing social issues through their campaigns. Most recently, they have taken a stand against racial injustice in America and have chosen to show continued support for athletes who use their platform, such as LeBron James, Colin Kaepernick, and many others. They also have made many donations to health care workers and people affected by the financial impact of Covid-19, as well beginning to manufacture face shields that they distributed to health care workers. Not all of these actions are to sell products, but to help leave a positive impact and continue to build on their values as a brand, and these values are another key factor that sets them apart as a multinational corporation.

Many brands find better success in differentiating their marketing campaigns in different countries. Oreo for example uses parents teaching kids to dunk the cookie in milk in their advertisements in the United States, but in China, a country they more recently entered, it is the children teaching the parent to dunk the cookie in milk. Some brands will also change their logo or use a more recognizable parent company to manufacture their product in that country. Nike has found marketing success in a streamlined advertising style, while still tailoring it to the culture of the country. Nike often adapts product styles to fit each countries cultural norms and styles, and in their advertisements they will feature signature athletes from that country to aid in recognition and draw people in to the brand.

For example, leading up to the 2018 FIFA World Cup, Nike launched a special advertising campaign for the Brazilian national team. The argument posed in the ad is “Does Brazil still have what it takes?”, referring to the teams overall skill and potential to perform well in the 2018 FIFA World Cup. During the previous 2014 World Cup that was hosted in Brazil, the team was expected to perform well in the tournament and was considered a contender to win the cup. Being the host country, a great deal of pressure was placed on the team to perform well, and with arguable some of the best players in the world on the team, it seemed certain they would go far. The team was playing well, and made it to the semi-finals, where they were eliminated by Germany in a devastating 7-1 defeat. This led to a complete team reconstruction and a new coaching staff. This history helps to create a backstory to the commercial and also helps to build upon the idea of redemption that Nike frequently uses in their marketing campaigns. This campaign, like many of their other campaigns was very successful because they don’t push their products, they push feelings and ideas. The products really take a back seat, while the main focus of the commercial is to bring attention to the World Cup and the Brazilian national team. Jerseys, cleats, and other various clothing items are shown being worn by the players on the team and by the younger kids who aspire to be the next generation of professional players. The ad does a great job depicting the impact the professional players have on the younger generations and how they inspire and motivate them.

In many countries, Nike represents athleticism, competition, and winning. This idea stays consistent with the brand and helps them stay above competitors. The help of signature athletes and collaborating with well known designers and artists also help Nike push the envelope and enter new markets across a constantly changing global landscape.

Sources

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