

Campaign Title: Take On TJ

Brand: Nike

Company(s) Involved: R/GA, Nike, Kik

Category: Social Media

Summary

Marketing Challenge: How can we motivate teen athletes to anticipate the upcoming athletic season and visit Nike.com on "Gear Up Day".

Methodology:

Social Listening

Google search trend analysis

One-on-one interviews

Creative: "Take on TJ" rolled across multiple social platforms including Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube leveraging athletes and influencers along the way. It included an experiential event and tapped into multiple parts of the Nike ecosystem including the app and customer service.

Business Impact: Increased social engagement and successful repositioning of Nike's Back To School approach.

Marketing Challenge

Twice a year, Nike launches a cross-category initiative called “Gear Up” where several sports categories come together to encourage teen athletes to buy the gear they’ll need for the upcoming athletic season.

Buying new and essential sports gear has been left out of the “back to school” shopping mindset. Regular teens set out to buy school supplies and fall outfits, but teen athletes have to buy sports gear on top of everything else. With all the rush, teens end up compromising on sports gear in exchange for more necessary, everyday items.

Essentially, we needed to create a shopping holiday in the month of July aimed at teen athletes called Gear Up Day.

Methodology

First, we wanted to understand how teen athletes spend their summer months – are they training or playing in summer leagues, and are they even preparing for the season ahead?

We also wanted to understand what the conversations and communications around preseason were like. As consumers, we were interested in discovering how much thought they put into their gear and products – What was essential for them to own? Did they have a dream product?

To answer these questions, we used social listening and Google search trends to get a pulse on this conversation – there was none. In reality, teen athletes were worried about what teens worry about in the summertime: vacations, parties, friends and summer jobs.

However, we discovered that “tryouts” was the most commonly searched sports term for our teen athlete in June and it peaked in July. At the same time, we discovered people searching for “hell week”, which peaked in August right before preseason. We learned that teen athletes suffer a lot of anxiety and pressure when it comes to preseason and saw this feeling intensify as hell week approached.

Because they spent all summer doing what teens do, they dreaded their two-a-day training sessions: they were worried about being sore and out of shape. They wish they could just skip preseason. **Preseason felt like impending doom, but they took no action.**

This insight led us to the attitudes and behaviors of our teen athlete, but we still needed to identify how to motivate them to take action and get themselves ready. Inventing a shopping season and pushing out product claims wasn't enough, we needed them to feel intrinsically motivated. We continued with strategic exploration and it was one-on-one interviews with teen athletes that led us to gold: **every teen athlete has a rival, a nemesis, an adversary who gets in their head and pushes them to work harder and play harder. This person is *the* ultimate motivator.**

These two insights led us to our strategy:
PROVOKE TEENS TO GEAR UP AND GET TO WORK WHEREVER THEY ARE THIS SUMMER BY CREATING AN ARCHRIVAL TO MOTIVATE AND MOVE THEM.

Creative Execution

Based on our strategy, our creatives came up with **Take on TJ**.

TJ was a made up a digital persona who represented our biggest rival, frenemy or motivator. No matter the sport or the gender, we all have a TJ. TJ's that kid who's always just a little bit better than you. The local headline maker. The one you're gunning for yet always seems just a bit out of reach. TJ is that irritatingly perfect persona, girl or boy, to get you riled up this summer.

Prior to 7/11 we leveraged influencers and athletes to seed the TJ character through Nike-sponsored tweets. We launched a hero film on Nike Category Facebook and YouTube channels to introduce the concept. In 24 hours we had over 4M non-paid views and 9x greater engagement than the average Nike post. Teen athletes were going crazy trying to figure out who TJ was. Some even revealed who their personal TJs were.

Later we partnered with Kik to launch a live chat with TJ. We broke engagement records by 31% for the platform.

Finally, on July 11, we took over 34th street in NYC and unveiled to the world via Instagram and Twitter TJ's not-so-humble brag. Think: Nike+ runs posted at 4AM. On that day, Nike Athlete, Richard Sherman, manned the Customer Service center fielding all TJ-related calls.

Business Results

Take On TJ drove amazing results against our core business objective: traffic to Nike.com.

Typical Nike seasonal and sport category campaigns generate 10,000-12,000 visits to Nike.com in a month. Take On TJ generated 1.5 million visits in the first month of the campaign. Nike considers it to be one of their most successful social campaigns to date.

Furthermore, Take On TJ turned Gear Up Day into a digital holiday. Not only did the campaign drive traffic and engagement, it also helped Nike reposition its back to school approach and in doing so, created a whole new opportunity in the marketplace.