

TO LIKE OR NOT TO LIKE:
WHEN SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING IS EFFECTIVE

By
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A THESIS

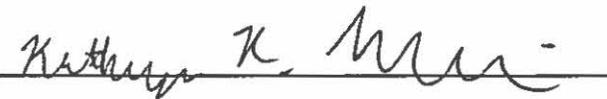
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Social networking sites (SNS's) are a set of internet-based applications that allow individuals to create content, connect with friends, and communicate with one another. As these SNS's have evolved, marketers have realized the tremendous untapped potential that these sites possess as a marketing tool due to their interactivity, accessibility and efficiency. As the popularity of social media has increased, it has given consumers a great deal of power to influence others in their social network regarding a brand or company. Due to this shift, it is essential for companies to understand when it is critical to use this medium and how to use it effectively. The purpose of this thesis is to investigate when social media marketing is effective for athletic apparel companies targeting female consumers. Social media not only serves to strengthen the relationships that companies have with their core customers but, it also influence profits, if used effectively.

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I. Introduction, Definitions and History

Introduction

With the stroke of a fingertip, humans now have the ability to interact with people across the world. Social media has become infused in every act and action in society—it has penetrated almost every society and has arranged people into an interconnected human community. Marshall McLuhan, a philosopher of communication theory describes this community as a global village, which states that humans can no longer live in isolation, but rather will always be connected by continuous and instantaneous electronic media¹. This is further exemplified by the presence of social media and social networking sites.

The original popularity of social networking sites was due to individuals seeking to interact with family, friends and those in their communities—social networking was heavily focused on personal interactions. However, in recent years, companies have begun to use social media platforms to market products and services due to the advantages they offer regarding interactivity, accessibility and efficiency. This phenomenon of marketing on social media has shifted the power from companies to consumers. Consumers now have the ability to discuss a brand with or without company involvement. As the popularity of social media increases, it gives consumers a great deal of power to influence others in their social network regarding a brand or company. As this trend develops further, and the power dynamic shifts from the companies to the

¹ West, Richard L., and Lynn H. Turner. *Introducing Communication Theory: Analysis and Application*. Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2010. Print.

consumers, it is essential for companies, and specifically marketing departments, to understand when it is critical to use this medium and how to use it effectively.

Although social media has proven to be a new, exciting and often very successful marketing channel, it is not always certain as to whether all companies should embrace social media marketing. Based on current growth and success of social networking sites (SNS), it is unlikely that social networking industry will phase out—rather, they will continue to advance and develop². With this in mind, it becomes important and essential for marketers to understand and keep up with digital marketing so that they communicate, message or connect with their consumers to foster intimate relationships like they have never done before. As the industry of public relations has done for many generations, social media now allows relationships to be created and developed on a nearly limitless scale. Similar to the goals of a successful public relations strategy which include, recognizing your audience, which platforms the audience uses and what type of relationship an organization hopes to foster with its consumers is paralleled to the tactics of a social media strategy.

The focus of this paper is to analyze the social media efforts of two publicly traded consumer retail companies, Nike and Adidas, and to identify elements of their social media strategies that other similarly focused companies can use to improve their social media efforts. The findings from the analysis will aid such companies to use the power and magnitude of social media to build and enhance relationships with existing and potential customers. In order to fully assess the impact of social media, the paper will examine the development of web and social networking sites and how they have

² Schmidt, Dale. "IBISWorld Industry Report OD4574: Social Networking Sites in the United States." 2013. *IBISWorld*. Web. 29 Apr. 2014.

matured to what they are today. In order to understand if and when social media is worth investing in, one must assess the benefits and the pitfalls of using this tool through the perspective of a marketer. Although one may determine the effectiveness of social media with ROI metrics, this paper will judge social media effectiveness through public relations' relationship management theory. I examine social media through this perspective because public relations and social networking for companies are parallel in purpose and value. After the academic review of measurement principles, I will investigate the social media strategies of Nike and Adidas, specifically their women's divisions, to identify elements of posts that are received positively by the target consumers. The information gleaned from analyzing social media efforts of Nike and Adidas can then be extrapolated and used to improve the social media efforts of other companies with similar target markets and goals. One company that could benefit from this research could be Nordstrom—another high-end retailer that targets younger, upper class women that value quality.

Definitions

Social media has become an umbrella term for many different technologies, platforms, online conversations and communities. For the purposes of this thesis, social media will be defined as a medium for people to use online technologies to share their opinions, obtain information, support, ideas, and products from each other³. From this

³ Li, Charlene, and Josh Bernoff. *Groundswell: Winning in a World Transformed by Social Technologies*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business, 2008. Print.

definition it is clear that collaboration is core tenet of social media. Five main characteristics of social media that reinforce collaboration are as follows⁴:

- *Participation*: This involves contributions and feedback from everyone who is interested. It blurs the line between media and audience.
- *Openness*: Social media must be transparent. Users must be completely open and honest about content, identity and motives. Social media services encourage voting, comments and the sharing of information.
- *Conversation*: Unlike traditional media, social media provides a platform for two-way conversation. It allows consumers to pull the information that interests them and filter the rest.
- *Community*: Social media allows communities to form quickly and communicate effectively. This allows people to gather, share and build a potentially influential community based on common interests.
- *Connectedness*: Social media thrives on connectedness, making use of links to other sites, resources and people.

Although this definition of social media is evolving and likely to change in the future, currently, there are six kinds of social media⁵. The definitions of these terms are important for the understanding of this thesis. The six basic forms are as follows:

⁴ Mayfield, Antony. *What Is Social Media?* Vol. 1.4. N.p.: ICrossing, n.d. *ICrossing*. 8 Jan. 2008. Web. 4 Nov. 2013. <<http://www.icrossing.com/sites/default/files/what-is-social-media-uk.pdf>>.

⁵ Mayfield, Antony.

- *Social Networks* – A social network is a site that allows people to build personal websites or profiles. They allow users to connect with friends, share content and communicate. These personal websites often ask people to create a personal resume where users identify their age, sex, location, education, personal interests, and identify whom they have relationship with. Communities can be built through these networks based on communalities such as, university education, location and professional occupation.
- *Blog* – Blogs are one of the more popular forms of social media. They are online journals that any user can create, customize and are organized in chronological order. These sites are often created for a certain purpose or exhibit a defined theme such as, food or fashion. Companies use blogs to not only showcase their product in another medium but to provide a story that can accompany their product so customers can relate more closely. Blogs are often public but can also remain private and for personal use only.
- *Wikis* – These websites allow people to add content to or edit the information on them, acting as a communal document or database. The most well-known wiki is Wikipedia—the online encyclopedia which has over 2 million English language articles.
- *Podcasts* – Podcasts are a series of audio and video files that are available by subscription. Users can download and listen to these recordings at their convenience.

- *Forums* – Forums are sites that allow for online discussion around specific topics and interests. Forums came before “social media” and are a powerful and popular element of online communities.
- *Content Communities* – These are communities, which organize and share particular kinds of content. The most popular content communities tend to form around photos (Flickr), bookmarked links (del.icio.us) and videos (YouTube).
- *Micro-blogging* – This is the combination of social networking with bite-sized blogging, where small amounts of content (‘updates’) are distributed online and through the mobile phone network. The leading micro-blogging site is Twitter which limits character count to 140.

History

Evolution of the Web

The main goal of Web 1.0 was to allow people to upload information onto a portal so it could be accessed anywhere. Web 1.0 had static information, was updated infrequently and served as a tool to push information to users⁶. The content generators of this version of the web were mostly companies who could dictate conversation topics, news and trends and could push this onto users. The downfall of web 1.0 was largely due to the fact that it was very slow to operate and content was limited in variety. The web 1.0 was followed by web 2.0 which moved further away from pushing

⁶ Evans, Mike. *The Evolution of the Web-From Web 1.0 to Web 4.0*. Plymouth: Cscan.org, 11 Aug. 2006. PPT.

content and migrated towards users pulling content which therefore increased interactivity—a powerful tool in social media today.

The electronic boom was exemplified by the introduction of the Web 2.0, which developed in the wake of the dot.com crash in 2001⁷. Web 2.0 represents an updated version of the original World Wide Web, which was essentially a new “set of tools that allow people to build social and business connections, share information and collaborate”⁸. As the web transitioned from a read-only environment to an interactive community, the demand for the Internet has increased more than ever before. With this growing dependency on electronic media, Internet users have started demanding rapid, accurate, and interactive information, which has brought about the ubiquitous phase of social media. The success of web 2.0 can be largely attributed to the increase in content variety and high levels of interactivity—predominant factors in the success of social media.

History of Social Networking Sites

The first generally recognized social networking site, SixDegrees.com launched in 1997. SixDegrees allowed consumers to create profiles, list friends and surf other users’ friend lists. Although some these features existed in some form prior to SixDegrees, they were the first to combine these features to create the first social networking site. They promoted themselves as a tool to help people connect with and send messages to each other. Although SixDegrees attracted millions of users, the

⁷ "What Is Web 2.0." *New Titles*. N.p., n.d. Web. 04 Nov. 2013.

⁸ Parise, Salvatore, Patricia J. Guinan, and Bruce D. Weinberg. "The Secrets of Marketing in a Web 2.0 World." *Wall Street Journal*. Wall Street Journal, 15 Dec. 2008. Web. 4 Nov. 2013. <<http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB122884677205091919>>.

founders believed it was simply ahead of its time when it shutdown in 2000. Between 1997 and 2001 there were many other attempts at social networking sites as seen in the graphic in Appendix A however the large boom of SNS's arose in 2001 after the dot.com crash. In the early years of SNS history, LinkedIn became a powerful business service however it was the rise of Friendster, MySpace and Facebook that shaped the business, cultural and research landscape of SNS's.

Friendster launched in 2002 and was designed to compete with Match.com, an online dating site. Unlike dating sites, which focused on introducing people to strangers with common interests, Friendster was designed to help friends-of-friends meet. Friendster gained popularity and grew to 300,000 users primarily through word of mouth by May 2003. Friendster continued to gain more traction and popularity, but soon encountered major problems that led to its demise. One of these problems was its lack of infrastructure for scalability due to the huge influx of visitors it attracted. Another problem was that Friendster limited users from viewing profiles of people more than four degrees of separation away. Additionally, they encountered a problem with people creating fake profiles or "Fakesters" and deleted all fake profiles while also deleting some authentic profiles, which resulted in negative user feedback. Many of Friendster's early adopters left because of the combination of technical difficulties, social collisions and a rupture of trust between users and the site⁹.

Many social media sites came about after the fall of Friendster however, MySpace made the largest impact in the social media revolution. MySpace began in 2003 to compete with Friendster however with its fall, MySpace grew rapidly by taking

⁹ Danah M Boyd and Nicole B. Ellison.

advantage of Friendster's alienation of its early adopters. MySpace differentiated itself by regularly adding features based on user demand and by allowing users to personalize their pages¹⁰. MySpace gained much of its popularity as teenagers started joining MySpace en masse in 2004. Unlike Friendster, MySpace accommodated their policies and started allowing minors however their eagerness to accommodate their policies also decreased their popularity. "The site was implicated in a series of sexual interactions between adults and minors" which created a moral panic¹¹.

It was the introduction of Facebook however, that truly revolutionized the industry. Unlike previous SNS's, Facebook was created to support only distinct college networks. The first of these networks was the community at Harvard University, which only allowed students with valid university issued e-mails to participate. Slowly, Facebook began supporting other schools, and then high school and now supports billions of people worldwide¹². Unlike previous SNS's that prevented public profile viewing, Facebook allows users to choose their privacy restrictions. Another differentiating feature of Facebook is the ability for developers to create applications that are supported by Facebook. These apps allowed users to personalize their profiles and interact within niche communities.

Soon after the rise of Facebook came the introduction of Twitter—the leading SNS in micro-blogging. Twitter is a platform that allows users to create succinct status updates that are a maximum of 140 characters. Micro-blogging "tools provide a light-

¹⁰ Danah M Boyd and Nicole B. Ellison.

¹¹ Danah M Boyd and Nicole B. Ellison.

¹² Qualman, Erik. "Social Media Video 2013." *YouTube*. YouTube, 07 Nov. 2012. Web. 08 May 2014.

weight, easy form of communication that enables users to broadcast and share information about their activities, opinions and status.”¹³ In comparison to traditional blogging, micro-blogging fulfills the need for even faster communication—it lowers users’ requirement of time and thought investment for content creation. The other differentiating aspect of twitter micro-blogging is the frequency of status updates. In traditional blogging, users may post once a day or every few days whereas micro-blogging encourages people to “tweet” several times throughout a day. This rapid delivery of bite-sized information makes twitter a source of breaking news and information for many users. An example of this was when New Yorkers received tweets about an east coast earthquake 30 seconds before they felt it¹⁴.

Since the conception of the SNS’s, it is evident that social networks have undergone huge transformations. However the main tenant remains the same—social networking sites still allow users to connect, network and interact with people in their extended communities through the ease of the Internet and SNS platforms. As social networking sites began advancing, they have also become heavily commercialized as companies and brands have realized the tremendous benefits these platforms offer. The introduction of marketing into these platforms is not too surprising considering the fact that almost half of 18-34 year old users check their Facebook account as soon as they wake up, and 28% report doing so on their mobile devices before even getting out of

¹³ Halper, Jordan. "Social Media As A News Source (with Images, Tweets) Â· Jordanhalper." *Storify*. N.p., n.d. Web. 08 May 2014.

¹⁴ Qualman, Erik.

bed.¹⁵” It is clear to marketers that there is a large market of consumers on SNS’s, which is the reason social media marketing, is becoming increasingly prevalent.

Unlike consumers, whose main use for social media is interaction with others, marketer’s objectives on social media include: increasing brand awareness, fostering brand engagement and increasing positive word of mouth¹⁶. Companies are using social media as a public relations tool—to manage and sustain positive relationships with their consumers. Since the goals of public relations and social media align, in that they both seek to build effective relationships with various constituencies, for the purposes of this thesis, I will view social media as a public relationship management tool. Managing public relations is a critical marketing tool for many companies but is it necessary for companies to invest in social media efforts as well? To answer this question, I will outline the benefits as well as drawbacks of using social media to manage relationships.

¹⁵ Buechel, Eva, and Jonah Berger. "Facebook Therapy? Why Do People Share Self-Relevant Content Online?." *Unpublished manuscript, Wharton Marketing Department, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania* (2011).

¹⁶ Hoffman, Donna L., and Marek Fodor. "Can you measure the ROI of your social media marketing?" *MIT Sloan Management Review* 52.1 (2010): 41-49.

II. Social Media Review

Benefits of Social Media Marketing

Advertising budgets that previously went to traditional advertising, such as, television, print ads, and outdoor boards have now been moved to the digital sphere of advertising for the benefits that this medium offers. The primary benefits that social media offers for companies are as follows:

1. Personification: Corporations and brands can be your Friends

The interactivity that social media offers allows consumers to rely on various types of social networking sites to pull information about products and the brand rather than a traditional web 1.0 website that simply pushed information onto consumers. This ability to directly communicate with brands makes interaction more personable and friendly¹⁷. According to research conducted by Jennifer Aaker, brands have the ability to create human-like characteristics that people can then associate themselves with¹⁸. This personification of brands is made easier when brands have a social media presence—corporations can directly interact with people, like friends can interact with friends, they can share opinions and ideas like a traditional human-to-human interaction on a social networking platform.

¹⁷Nigam, Ashutosh. "Influence of Social Networking Sites I Influence of Social Networking Sites I Nce of Social Networking Sites in Brand N Brand Development Practices Development Practices from Marketer's Prospective Marketer's Prospectiv." *International Journal of Computer Science & Management Studies* 12.02 (2012): 46-52. Web. 08 Mar. 2014.

¹⁸ Aaker, Jennifer L. "Dimensions of Brand Personality." *Jmr, Journal of Marketing Research*. 34.3 (1997): 347. Print.

2. Accessibility

One of the primary benefits that social media marketing offers to marketers is audience accessibility. Through these networks, marketers are given nearly boundless access to consumers via the Internet and particularly through SNS's. For the advertising industry, the new WWW is a promising medium in which to access and engage consumers. The popularity of the web as a commercial outlet is largely due to its ability to facilitate global sharing of information and resources and its potential to provide an efficient channel for advertising, marketing and even the distribution of goods and information services¹⁹. As of the third financial quarter of 2013, Facebook reported 1.19 billion monthly active users²⁰, along with Twitter who reported 231.7 million monthly active users worldwide²¹. These values when combined exceed the current population of India, which represents approximately about 17% of the world²². With such a large population of active SNS users, it is no wonder that marketers have demonstrated their increasing presence on these sites. These sites not only present opportunities for marketers to access large masses of people but they also provide information to consumers 24 hours a day. This 24-hour access becomes a win-win for both the marketers and the consumers since marketers

¹⁹ Hoffman, Donna L., Thomas P. Novak, and Patrali Chatterjee. "Commercial scenarios for the Web: opportunities and challenges." *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication* 1.3 (1995): 0-0.

²⁰ "Investor Relations." *Facebook Reports Third Quarter 2013 Results*. Facebook, 30 Oct. 2013. Web. 04 Nov. 2013. <<http://investor.fb.com/releasedetail.cfm?ReleaseID=802760>>.

²¹ Ahmad, Irfan. "30 of the Most Amazing Twitter Statistics [INFOGRAPHIC]." RSS. Social Media Today, 24 Oct. 2013. Web. 04 Nov. 2013. <<http://socialmediatoday.com/irfan-ahmad/1854311/twitter-statistics-IPO-infographic>>.

²² "India." *Data*. World Bank, n.d. Web. 04 Nov. 2013.

can advertise at any hour of the day while consumers can access brand relevant information at their convenience.

3. Nature of SNS's offer Interactivity Between Consumers and Companies

One of the most beneficial aspects of SNS's is the amount and level of interactivity that these sites provide to marketers. These sites foster a community of people who share information, opinions, experiences, and actions. This information sharing, especially when it is a positive remark about a particular brand, can be very useful to businesses. This type of promotion is called word of mouth advertising. Today, more and more people rely on word of mouth. It is found that 76% of people rely on what others say, while 15% rely on advertising²³. This trend shows that people trust each other's opinions far more the opinions of the marketers. Perhaps this is due to the inherent nature of marketing, which is thought of as a separate entity that focuses on convincing consumers to make purchase decisions. The difference between an endorsement from a marketer and a consumer is the fact that consumers have no inherent need to persuade others to make a purchase decision. Simply put, people trust their peers and online communities more than they trust marketers.

Additionally, SNS's allow marketers to hold the attention of consumers by engaging them in an asynchronous dialogue that happens at both parties' convenience.²⁴ An asynchronous dialogue is one that provides individuals time

²³ Qualman, Erik. *Socialnomics: How Social Media Transforms the Way We Live and Do Business*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2013. Print.

²⁴ Hoffman, Donna L., Thomas P. Novak, and Patrali Chatterjee

to construct and refine information by way of written communication²⁵. SNS's provide users a way to communication through writing, whether is be posting online, instant messaging, texting or tweeting. Written communication provides the opportunity to polish communication, and self-enhancement concerns lead people to use that opportunity to talk about more interesting products and brands.²⁶ This shows that asynchrony encourages people to engage in selective self-presentation—calculated posting makes the consumer feel better and smarter—which increases the engagement and interactivity of social media sites. The nature of social media as an interactive tool, allows for asynchronous conversation, and therefore assists the relationship that consumers can have with various brands and companies. Firms will reap the benefits of innovation in interactivity by being closer to the customer than ever before²⁷.

4. Efficiency

a. Cost-Effectiveness

Another reason that social media marketing has become prevalent is because it is cost effective. In a world that is transitioning away from traditional marketing, which is often very expensive, social media marketing is helpful because there is far less risk if a campaign or advertisement does poorly. For example, “the average sponsorship cost for a NASCAR car is in the \$15 million to \$20 million range. In comparison, the social media campaign costs between \$200,000 and

²⁵Berger, Jonah, and Raghuram Iyengar. "Communication Channels and Word of Mouth: How the Medium Shapes the Message."

²⁶ Berger, Jonah, and Raghuram Iyengar

²⁷ Hoffman, Donna L., Thomas P. Novak, and Patrali Chatterjee

\$300,000.”²⁸ The financial risk associated with social media marketing is far less—therefore making it a more appealing option for marketers.

b. Trackable & Measureable

Another aspect of efficiency that social media marketing provides is that it is more trackable and measureable than traditional marketing. There are numerous measures that marketers can utilize to determine the effectiveness of their online advertising efforts, such as, number of new visitors, number of visits, page views, ad views, and clicks through rate. On the other hand, the most common measurement tool for traditional advertising is to use custom landing pages, coupon/ad codes and custom phone numbers. The concern with this measurement technique is that it is not a measurement of viewers to conversions, which is vital for tracking effectiveness.

Drawbacks of Social Media Marketing

Despite the unprecedented benefits that social media marketing offers to the advertising industry it is also important to consider the drawbacks marketers face using social media marketing. Some of the drawbacks are as follows:

1. Control in the Hands of the Consumer

One of the risks associated with using social media marketing is the tremendous control that users possess. Although interactivity is considered a

²⁸ Qualman, Erik.

positive aspect of social media marketing, interactivity can also spoil a brand's image due to negative word of mouth. An example of this occurred on Twitter regarding Target. Here is one of the tweets that an angry consumer posted about target²⁹:



This example reveals the degree of control that consumers possess when it comes online social media marketing. This marketing mishap resulted in negative word of mouth for Target, which not only ruined their credibility as a brand but also compromised their relationships with many consumers.

²⁹ Clemens, Susan (suZen). "What the. Plus sized women get 'Manatee Grey' while standard sizes are 'Dark Heather Grey.'" @Target #notbuyingit <http://t.co/nzHNYoytnp>". 03 Apr 2013, 04:19 UTC. Tweet

2. Annoyance and Invasiveness

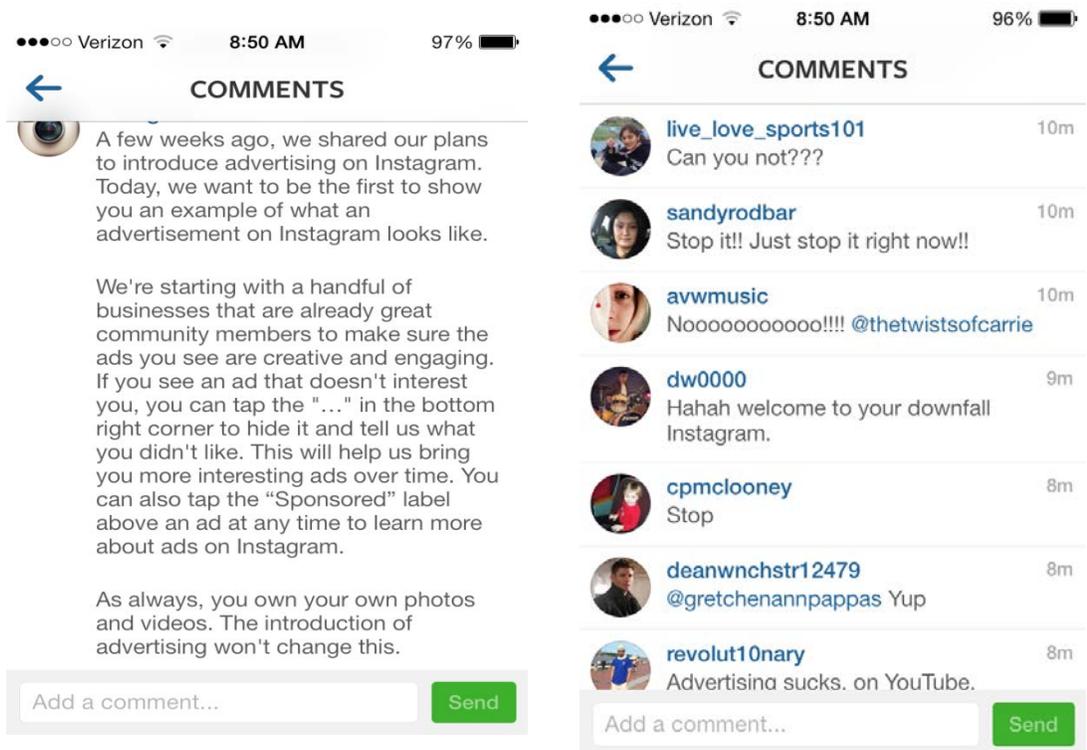
Another downfall of social media marketing is the annoyance it causes people as well as privacy concerns that result from targeted advertisements.

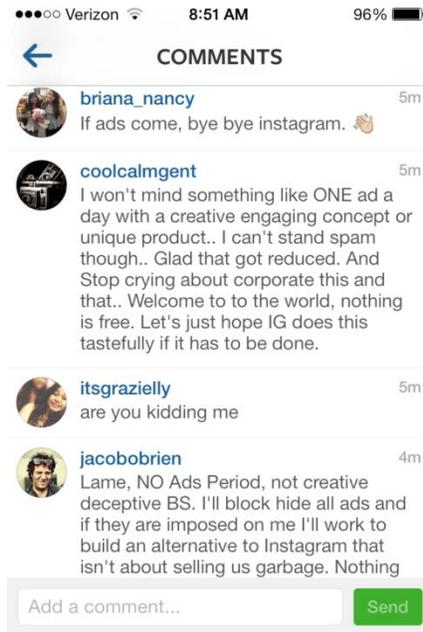
Recently, Instagram decided to allow promoted advertising on their mobile app. After this announcement, Instagram was bombarded with criticism

regarding the annoyance and hatred of advertisements. Many of these

complaints suggested that Instagram would decrease in popularity because

of the introduction of advertisements. Some of the complaints are as follows:





People also view social media marketing, especially targeted advertising as an invasion of privacy. It is no coincidence that previously visited sites show up as an advertisement on social networking pages. A personal example of this occurred when visiting the Nordstrom website. A day later, I found an advertisement similar to the one below on my Facebook newsfeed:



From this targeted advertisement, it is clear that Nordstrom tracked my web browsing and sent me a message encouraging me to make a purchase decision. The language in the ad also directly suggests that Nordstrom knew I was on the fence regarding the purchase and encouraged me to “Go for it!”

3. Information Overload

Another negative aspect of social media marketing is that it bombards the users with an abundance of information. According to Jonah Berger, a professor and social media researcher, “people share more than 16,000 words per day, and every hour there are more than 100 million conversations about brands³⁰” This surely becomes an overload of information for consumers to filter through.

Although many social media enthusiasts believe that social media is a tool to make sense of the information overload, it becomes overwhelming for the average consumer to filter through the abundance of content on their social media feeds³¹. For this reason, many people intentionally ignore the advertisements on their social media sites. Erik Qualman, the author of *Socialnomics*, suggests, “some of twitters popularity in the beginning was the fact that not everyone was on it, giving it effectiveness and a cool factor. When it becomes flooded with marketing messages, it loses both effectiveness and uniqueness, which may lead consumers to abandon Twitter

³⁰ Berger, Jonah. *Contagious: Why Things Catch On*. SimonandSchuster. com, 2013.

³¹ Qualman, Erik.

and move on.³² This scenario is not ideal—it is important that consumers remain on these sites so that marketers can still maintain access to a vast amount of consumers.

Although there are drawbacks in using social media marketing, the social networking sites industry has a projected growth of 25% for 2013 to 2018³³. This strong growth potential suggests that social networking is unlikely to decline but rather will mature and will continue to grow in the near future. Due to this increasingly popular industry, it becomes important for companies to at least consider the use of social media as it becoming a ubiquitous and rapidly developing part of society and marketing. Furthermore, this trend is influencing the ways in which consumers are receiving information, which makes it essential for marketers to understand how to effectively promote and communicate with consumers. Although some companies have concerns about adopting social media marketing due to the uncertainty in measuring their return on investment (ROI), it becomes important for companies and brands to realize that the purpose of social media is not necessarily to earn profits but rather is to manage relationships with consumers. Though one may argue that the goal of businesses is to earn profits and social media does not necessarily contribute directly to this goal, social media serves as tool to create and manage relationships with consumers, which will ultimately but indirectly support the overall goal of earning profits. Developing and retaining positive relationships with consumers is an indirect but necessary tool that will eventually lead to increased sales if social media is used effectively. The goal of this

³² Qualman, Erik.

³³ "Industry Reports." *Market Research Reports*. N.p., n.d. Web. 07 May 2014.

thesis is not to argue whether social media is necessary but rather how the tool can be used effectively. Analyzing the social media usage of Nike and Adidas will provide a holistic understanding of what makes social media marketing effective. The information gathered can then be extrapolated and used in social media strategies of other similarly focused companies.

III. Conceptual Development

Many companies are questioning whether social media is worth investing in due to difficult in accurately assessing ROI. Despite the popularity of social media and its increased usage, there is still little academic research to prove that social media use is worth the time and money in a marketing budget. Without a definitive and proven measure of ROI of social media it becomes difficult for companies to justify using the tool for their marketing efforts. Although there are many approaches to measuring the effectiveness of social media, I propose that social media marketing can be used effectively when relationship management theory is considered and applied.

Public relation researchers have developed measurements, based on relationship management theory, that help qualitatively evaluate the effectiveness of public relations efforts. Since public relations and social media parallel in the objectives, I will apply these principles in determining effectiveness of social media efforts.

The research conducted by Dr. Hon and Dr. Grunig has played a leading role in developing measures for relationship management theory. Through their research they have found that “the outcomes of an organization’s longer-term relationships with key constituencies can best be measured by focusing on six very precise elements of components of the relationships that exist”³⁴. The six elements are control mutuality, trust, satisfaction, commitment, exchange relationship and communal relationship. These six elements are explained in further detail in Appendix B. These elements of

³⁴Linda Childers Hon and James E. Grunig, “Guidelines for Measuring Relationships in Public Relations.” Institute for Public Relations Scholarly Journal, 08 May 2014 <[http://www.instituteforpr.org/files/uploads/Guidelines Measuring Relationships.pdf](http://www.instituteforpr.org/files/uploads/Guidelines%20Measuring%20Relationships.pdf)>.

relationship management can be found in Nike's social media posts, which is the reasoning for using the company as a case study. Although these aspects can be identified, it may still be difficult for another company with lacking social media efforts to use these guidelines of relationship management as practical advice for their efforts. The intent of this thesis is to identify preferred aspects or elements of social media posts that consumers prefer. These findings can then be used as practical recommendations for companies who lack effective social media marketing efforts.

This thesis will focus on Nike, and in particular, the women's division, as a case study to determine what makes their strategy effective. The knowledge gathered from this analysis will help determine what specific techniques/principles can be used in other companies' social media plans that have similar goals and target markets.

I predict that women will be more attracted to social media posts that show people in a group setting, posts that use softer colors and posts that feature celebrities or athletes. This hypothesis is based upon research regarding group dynamics, color theory and persuasion tactics and female psychology.

IV. Nike Case Study

Although more companies are starting to explore the use of social media as a marketing tool, there are few that have been able to use this relationship management tool effectively. There are many strategies and ways to implement a social media strategy. Nike's main objective is to use social media platforms to engage in conversations and build valuable relationships with their core constituencies. In an interview, Nike's Global Digital Brand and Innovation Director, Jesse Stollak stated, "We started with a notion that this was about publishing to them with the right message and at the right time. We've quickly evolved to a focus on conversations and engaging them to participate as opposed to using new media in traditional ways."³⁵ Adidas's main goals are to have customers "join the conversation, connect with other people and have fun sharing your thoughts and ideas"³⁶ Adidas and Nike have a great deal in common, especially in regards to the social media objectives. However, in comparison to Adidas, Nike has excelled in their social media strategy on numerous fronts as seen in the table below*.

³⁵ Piskorski, Mikolaj Jan, and Ryan Johnson. "Social Strategy at Nike." Harvard Business School Case 712-484, April 2012. (Revised March 2014.)

³⁶ "Social Media House Rules." *Adidas*. N.p., n.d. Web. 08 May 2014.

Brand	Logo	Facebook Fans	Twitter Followers	Instagram Followers
Adidas		16,233,331	947,583	1,090,018
Nike		17,674,425	3,114,027	4,235,059

Table 1: Nike and Adidas Social Media Metrics Comparison

The data was compiled using Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts of Nike and Adidas. The data reflects the values as of April 2014.

It is evident from the chart about that Nike has managed to embrace this social change and created valuable relationships with their consumers more effectively than their direct competitor Adidas. Analyzing the social media platforms of Nike will help determine how social media should be integrated more effectively in the integrated marketing communications plan for company that have similar objectives and target markets. First, I will provide an explanation of Nike’s social media strategy and how the brand has cultivated value effectively. Then, I will specifically review Nike’s Women’s Division and their social media efforts.

Nike’s Social Media

Nike was one of the early adopters of digital marketing strategies. They started as early as 1998 when they launched nike.com. This digital realm provided information about the brand, related athletes and the products to consumers from all around the world. Although the first social networking site developed in 1997, most companies did not join these sites until much later. Nike was considered one of the leaders when they

started experimenting with social media and networking around 2004³⁷. Nike has stood out from other large companies in digital and social marketing—in just 2010 alone, the company spent \$800 million on non-traditional advertising—which is more than any other U.S. based advertiser³⁸. Nike began to focus their budget towards “building integrated social campaigns around major sporting events such as, the World Cup and the Olympics, despite not being an official sponsor of either event”³⁹.

In 2004, before social networking had taken off as a hugely promising industry, Nike experimented with its first social-based marketing campaign. Nike partnered with the media and company website, Gawker, to create the blog, Art of Speed. Art of Speed “featured 15 filmmakers Nike had challenged to interpret the idea of speed. For 20 days the blog featured content about the directors, the short films, and the digital technology used to create the films. At the time, Gawkar had between 400,000 and 700,000 unique visitors each month.” Although this traffic was not nearly enough, Nike was curious about how those visitors interacted in conversations with Gawker. Another early social effort of Nike was in preparation for the 2006 World Cup. Nike Football division worked with MySpace, and acquired 50,000 friends. Alongside working with MySpace, Jesse Stollak was also developing a relationship with YouTube, in efforts to create buzz around Nike before the World Cup. In September 2005, Nike’s marketing team had developed a homemade looking video featured, Brazilian superstar Ronaldinho. “The video featured Ronaldinho receiving a new pair of Nike cleats on a playing field and then kicking a ball back and forth off the goal’s crossbar, and impressive feat, over and

³⁷ Piskorski, Mikolaj Jan, and Ryan Johnson.

³⁸ Piskorski, Mikolaj Jan, and Ryan Johnson.

³⁹ Piskorski, Mikolaj Jan, and Ryan Johnson.

over again⁴⁰.” Nike decided to utilize their newly fostered relationship with YouTube and uploaded the ad onto a newly generated YouTube channel, *Nike Football*. The video, called “Touch of Gold,” received almost 20 million views in just a few weeks, making it Nike’s first viral video. Jesse Stollak reflected on this new method of promotion and said, “This was our first understanding that you could use the Internet and social networking sites to communicate with the young consumer in their context, in their language.”⁴¹

Nike’s early experiences with social networking made it clear to them that there was a huge untapped opportunity for more direct communication with their target market. As their social media efforts became more purposeful and intentional, Nike learned the value that social media marketing provided to the company as well its consumers.

Value Creation for Nike Consumers:

Nike intends to use social media as a relationship management tool but also uses it to create value for their consumers. Nike provides social value, functional value, monetary value, as well as entertainment value through their social media efforts⁴².

They provide consumers a sense of social value as they develop a sense of belonging from being part of a community. They also provide functional value since consumers are able to retrieve product and company information from the brand and community.

The monetary value that they provide consumers comes in the form of promotional

⁴⁰ Piskorski, Mikolaj Jan, and Ryan Johnson.

⁴¹ Piskorski, Mikolaj Jan, and Ryan Johnson.

⁴² "Value Creation by Nike Using Social Media." *Pierres Two Cents*. N.p., n.d. Web. 08 May 2014.

events, discounts and special offers that are specifically promoted on social media sites. They also provide consumers entertainment in the form of videos, articles and games that are intended to entertain, educate and inspire consumers.

Value Creation for Nike:

Social media has not only provided value to Nike consumers but it has also benefited the company in many ways. One benefit it has offered is that it has improved customer relationship management effectiveness by gaining sentimental insights from their social media pages. It has also been cost-effective and has had low implementation and maintenance costs as compare to traditional media. Nike has also increased brand trust due to the aspect of public evaluation that occurs through social media.

Investing in social media has proven to be beneficial to Nike as well as its consumers, which is why the company will continue to spend a large portion of their marketing budget on social media and digital marketing.

Nike's Women's Division: Nike Training Club

In 2006, Nike finally elevated “women’s fitness as a major focus for the famously testosterone-driven company”⁴³. It was considered a substantial victory to the team that had been fighting for the increased prominence of this potentially lucrative market. “As Nike turned its attention to the female consumer, one of the most

⁴³ Burgelman, Robert. "Cases - Nike's Global Women's Fitness Business: Driving Strategic Integration." *Cases - Nike's Global Women's Fitness Business: Driving Strategic Integration*. Stanford Graduate School of Business, 2007. Web. 08 May 2014.

compelling statistics dealt with sheer spending power of women—in the U.S. alone, the team calculated that women spent \$7 trillion a year.⁴⁴”

At first, Nike found it difficult to integrate this division due to fear of losing or eroding “some of our testosterone,” however, it is evident that the integration of women’s division has proven to be successful⁴⁵. The main challenge that Nike faced with this integration was adjusting their communicating to best suit their female consumers. Nike described this female target consumer as “a 22-year-old, confident, slightly irreverent woman who wanted to work out hard and look good.⁴⁶” She was referred to as the “Sweat Beauty” consumer.

One of their first attempts to address the women’s market was a retail and marketing project called, Nike Goddess, which was intended to help Nike rethink the way it sold its products to women. “The Nike Goddess stores were meant to be women’s-only destinations...we wanted to offer one-on-one clienteling instead of the traditional customer service they’d get at another store,” said Jodi Sittig, marketplace development director for global women’s fitness⁴⁷. The stores were modern and emphasized a residential or “homey” feel to them. In addition to Nike Goddess, Nike Women’s Division continued to do consumer research and found that women not only want to have specific clothing for each activity but also that “she also wanted to hear from us on a consistent basis and for us to really have a relationship with her”⁴⁸. This sentiment is also reflective in Nike’s Women’s Division social media efforts as well.

⁴⁴ Burgelman, Robert.

⁴⁵ Burgelman, Robert.

⁴⁶ Burgelman, Robert.

⁴⁷ Burgelman, Robert.

⁴⁸ Burgelman, Robert.

But how exactly does Nike approach and communicate with Sweat Beauty on social networking sites and what posts are really effective? This is the question this thesis intends to answer by identifying aspects of social media posts from both Nike and Adidas to develop an understanding as to what female consumers prefer.

V. Methods

The two primary methods of investigation used in this thesis are focus groups and a questionnaire study. The focus groups were conducted first in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of Nike and Adidas, especially in the context of the tremendous influence that Nike has had on the University of Oregon. The focus group research was largely qualitative, and served as a platform, or starting point to investigate social media marketing efforts of both companies. Once general themes were recognized from the focus groups, a study, in the form of a questionnaire was administered to get more quantitative results. All methods of research were conducted at the University of Oregon in the Business Research Institute (BRI) under the Department of Marketing.

Focus Groups

Focus groups were conducted in order to gain a better understanding of what consumers thought of Nike and Adidas as brands and their social media efforts. The purpose of this discussion was also to isolate topics that could be further investigated in a more developed study. The questions for the focus group started off more general and reviewed topics such as, participation on social networking sites and then later delved more closely to the Nike or Adidas brand and their related social media marketing efforts. The discussion was informal which allowed for participants to provide their most genuine and unfiltered responses. The guiding questions can be found in Appendix C. After the focus group questions were reviewed, a short demographic written form

was provided to gain some insight about the background of the participants. This form can be found in Appendix D.

The focus groups lasted approximately an hour long, were moderated by Meghana Deodhar and were also recorded by BRI lab managers. Participants were recruited by convenience sampling and were all females. All participants had some affiliation to the University of Oregon, whether they were a student, faculty, or an employee.

The first focus group was conducted on April 4, 2014 at 10am in the BRI lab. The demographic information of the participants for the first focus group is as follows:

Participant	Sex	Age	Hometown	Education	Est. Family Income	Marital Status	Ethnicity
1	F	23	Thousand Oaks, CA	Bachelors*	/	Single	Caucasian
2	F	21	Beaverton, OR	Bachelors*	/	Single	Asian
3	F	22	Eugene, OR	Bachelors*	\$150,000	Single	Asian
4	F	24	Santa Clarita, CA	Graduate Law*	\$100,000	Single	African American
5	F	21	Tigard, OR	Bachelors*	\$52,500	Single	Asian
6	F	22	Portland, OR	Bachelors*	\$90,000	Single	Asian

*Anticipated Degree

The second focus group was conducted on April 11, 2014 at 10am in the BRI lab. The demographic information of the participants for the second focus group is as follows:

Participant	Sex	Age	Hometown	Education	Est. Family Income	Marital Status	Ethnicity
1	F	21	Portland, OR	Bachelors*	/	Single	Caucasian
2	F	18	Portland, OR	Bachelors*	/	Single	Asian
3	F	21	San Anselmo, CA	Bachelors*	\$200,000	Single	Asian/Caucasian
4	F	42	Eugene, OR	Masters	\$115,000	Married	Caucasian
5	F	22	Eugene, OR	Bachelors*	/	Single	Middle Eastern
6	F	21	Phoenix, AZ	Bachelors*	\$300,000	Single	Caucasian
7	F	22	Livermore, CA	Bachelors*	\$300,000	Single	Caucasian

*Anticipated Degree

The consolidate focus group demographic data can be found in Appendix E.

Results:

- **Geographic Proximity and University of Nike Bias**

One of the main themes raised in the focus groups was the geographic proximity bias and the University of Nike bias. This is an important bias to acknowledge since all of the participants had at least University of Nike bias or a geographic bias due to living in Beaverton or Portland, Oregon, or nearby locations to Nike headquarters. The University of Nike bias is essentially the tremendous influence that Nike Inc. has on the University of Oregon—in regards to athletics, funding and academics facilities. Some participants validated these biases in their commentary in the focus groups:

“Living in Beaverton, and always having Nike around makes it easier to pick Nike...I like Adidas but it’s not accessible to me” –Anonymous Participant

“There’s also this intimate connection with our university and Nike...” – Anonymous Participant

- **Target Market**

Although the participants acknowledged the presence of a geographic proximity and University bias, there was a general consensus in both focus groups that the participants believed that they were Nike and Adidas’ target market. They also believed that they would continue to be Nike and Adidas’ target market throughout their lives since the companies targeted them from a young age, which has fostered a strong sense of brand loyalty.

- **Platform Popularity and Usage Patterns:**

The most popular and most widely used platforms were found to be Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat. Participants primarily visited Facebook to keep in touch with their friends and communities and visited Twitter daily to

update themselves on news and celebrity gossip. Other's used Instagram as a way to view visually appealing photos and were drawn to it due to its simplicity and limited content. Some testimonials regarding platform popularity and usage are as follows:

"...Twitter because I like seeing the news and I like seeing what celebrities are saying daily. [It] feels relevant...That's where I'll see stuff first.... [I] use Facebook as a supplement..." – Anonymous Participant

" [I] go on Instagram more frequently but will spend more time on Facebook..." –Anonymous Participant

- **Nike Brand Impressions:**

Although there were some concerns among the focus group participants about Nike's labor practices and forced corporate social responsibility practices, the general reactions towards Nike as a brand was strong and positive in both focus groups. It is also important to acknowledge that this reaction may be influenced by the aforementioned biases. Some of the testimonials regarding the Nike brand and personality are as follows:

"I default to Nike...their clothes tend to catch my eye more frequently and I feel more assured getting [Nike]...even though there may be a comparable product in another brand, I will still go for Nike." – Anonymous Participant

"I would see Nike as the popular person...they are attractive [and] are really good at whatever they do" –Anonymous Participant

"Extroverted, popular, young leader who can convince anyone to follow his lead..." –Anonymous Participant

"...A woman who has a successful career...I think of success in all aspects of life." –Anonymous Participant

"I think they have better products and I don't like Adidas stripes...It's a global product and its everywhere..." –Anonymous Participant

- **Reactions to Nike’s Social Media**

It was evident that most participants in the focus groups did not follow brands however the few that did follow Nike social media found that it was relatively effective. Some topics that were raised were regarding celebrity endorsements, motivational or inspirational quotes, portrayal of women as well as the absence of ordinary healthy people in social media posts. Some of the commentary about posts that people could recall was as follows:

“The only thing that I think that stands out is when Kanye came out with the Yeezy’s—those Nike shoes—it wasn’t like inspirational at all—just memorable and loud and colorful...” –Anonymous Participant

“...There was a tweet I was thinking of—it was a girl running through the woods and it had some inspirational quote attached to it—and I just thought “oh that’s nice,” and went on with my day but I remembered it for some reason...” –Anonymous Participant

“I think of this Nike ad now—she’s singing and running and wearing pink stuff and singing about something—I thought it was the stupidest ad—why are you singing while you are running? It was really obnoxious...”—Anonymous Participant

“...The ad that was a bigger kid running really slowly—cause that’s a big thing now—a real body campaign—like dove did that, now aerie is recently not photo-shopping their bra models so I guess that’s something that I haven’t seen Nike do a lot of. It’s always the really fit beautiful athletes and not a generic fit person.... That ad was super inspirational cause that kid was one step closer to his goal and he’s running slow and is fat today...” – Anonymous Participant

- **Adidas Brand Impressions:**

Although most focus group participants acknowledged their Nike bias and how they knew much more about Nike than Adidas, most participants had interesting brand associations with the Adidas brand and personality. Most participants perceived Adidas as artsy and creative but the company was not discussed

without also raising the topic of Nike. It appeared that people's perception of Adidas was that it piggybacked on the Nike brand and was considered second-rate brand as compared to Nike. Overall, most people did not see Adidas as their own brand but rather just another brand that is similar to Nike. Some of the comments about Adidas' brand and personality comments were as follows:

"...[They have] more of an artsy feel to them...[they seem] overlooked, [but] maybe just in Oregon...I see them as Nike's competitor..." – Anonymous Participant

" [Adidas] has more of an edge to it... more alternative... more hip-hop... maybe a person who embraces things a little differently. Adidas is kind of like throwback for me...a younger feel...not as mature as Nike feels. Adidas feels more like 'I'm just gonna have my stereo and do some break-dancing, and have my gold chain, and yeah, I'm wearing athletic wear' ... and maybe they live in Britain somewhere too. A bit more edgier than Nike..." –Anonymous Participant

"I've always seen it as second ranked as compared to Nike." – Anonymous Participant

"More of a 90's vibe...stuck in the 90's" –Anonymous Participant

- **Reactions to Adidas' Social Media:**

It became evident from the focus groups that most people did not know anything about Adidas social media efforts. Participants were unaware or were unable to recall any traditional marketing efforts, besides for Adidas sponsorship of the World Cup.

Discussion:

The discussions held during the focus groups gave light to topics that warranted further investigation, which were examined in the study. The study was designed under the assumption that the participants of the study (Lundquist College of Business

marketing subject pool) were of a similar background as the participants in the focus groups. All students in the subject pool possessed a geographic bias or Nike University bias due to their affiliation with the University of Oregon. It was also assumed that the participants of the study also considered themselves the target market of Nike and Adidas. The study was also limited to studying Facebook and Twitter—as they were found to be the most popular and most used platforms according to the focus groups.

Furthermore, participants' commentary about Adidas and Nike as brands helped reveal topics that could be investigated further in the study. Some of the topics that were raised were in regards to celebrity endorsements, motivational or inspirational quotes, portrayal of women as well as the absence of ordinary healthy people in social media posts. Other topics investigated that were of interest were in regards to memory and recall and what aspects of a social media posts helped people recall the posts and therefore the brand.

Based on these topics, the main core of the study was set up so that participants had to select between which social media posts they preferred. Two social media posts were provided and different variables were tested in each question. For example, one question investigated the topic of motivational quotes. One option had a motivational quote featuring a person whereas the other option only provided a quote without the presence of a person. Although there are many variables that may be at play in regards to why an individual may like one social post over another, the posts were chosen in a way that the other variables would be held relatively constant. The independent variables that were investigated in the study were variables such as, the presence of a female only group versus coed group, products featured on person versus products

displayed as standstill, outdoor versus indoor environments as well as, ordinary people versus featured celebrities.

Social Media Effectiveness Questionnaire

The questions investigated in the focus groups helped determine which topics to isolate and study further by ways of a questionnaire. The question set began with questions about social media usage, and then focused on perceptions of Nike and Adidas as brands and companies and their social media efforts. The most important portion of the survey investigated actual social media posts from Facebook and Twitter and asked participants to choose which post they preferred given two posts. Some of the topics that were investigated were group dynamic or a lack thereof, indoor versus outdoor environments and the presence of products in posts. Additional elements that were investigated were whether people were moving in the ads as well as the presence or absence of celebrity endorsements. The last portion of the questionnaire was a memory task, which not only served as a control but also served to understand the reasoning as to why some social media posts were recalled more than others.

This questionnaire was administered to the University of Oregon subject pool during April 2014 through the Qualtrics Survey Software. The questions of the research can be found in Appendix F. The data was compiled and analyzed using IBM's SPSS statistical analysis software in order to determine whether the data found is statistically significant. The variables that were studied are outlined below:

Independent Variables:

- **People:** One of the aspects that this study intends to study is whether the presence of people in social media posts influences their effectiveness. The posts included in the survey were a mix of posts that had an individual present, a group present or no people present. The people variable was coded in SPSS as: 0=No people, 1=Individual, 2=Group.
- **Product:** The presence of products in social media posts was another element that was investigated to determine whether the presence or absence of products influenced the posts' effectiveness. A post was determined to have a product present when the logo is present. Posts that appeared to have products present but did not show a logo on them were considered as a post with no product present. The product variable was coded in SPSS as: 0=No product present, 1=Product present.
- **Environment:** Another element that was investigated was how the environment impacted the effectiveness of the post. Environment was coded in SPSS as: 0=Indoor and 1=Outdoor.
- **Movement:** An additional element that was investigated was whether movement in a post affected the effectiveness of the post. Movement was determined to be present if there was a person in the ad and it was apparent that they were not at a standstill but in some form of motion. Movement was coded in SPSS as: 0=No Movement and 1=Movement.
- **Endorsement:** Another element that was studied was the influence of celebrity or athlete endorsements on the effectiveness of the post. A post was considered to

have an endorsement if there was a celebrity mentioned in the caption or the photo. Endorsement was coded in SPSS as: 0=No Endorsement and 1=Endorsement.

- Gender: Although gender was not a variable that was manipulated as a typical independent variable would be, the ads chosen for the survey were from Nike and Adidas' Women's Division social media pages, which therefore skewed the results since most of the ads were targeted towards the female demographic. Gender was predicted to be a strong influencing factor that would affect the results of the survey.

Dependent Variables:

- Preference: Preference was investigated through the questions that asked participants to indicate which social media post they preferred. Preference was coded in SPSS as: 0 =not preferred and 1=preferred. All the data points regarding preference were compiled from questions 16-22 and were analyzed against the independent variables mentioned above.
- Recall: Recall was investigated through the memory recall questions at the end of the survey, which included questions 46-86. The questions were interspersed with posts that were seen previously in the survey as well as some posts that were inserted as "fake" posts to test participants' ability to recall a post. Recall was coded in SPSS as: 0=No Recall and 1=Recall.
- Liking: Liking was investigated in only two questions—questions 29 and 40. These two questions asked participants to rate liking on a scale of dislike very

much to like very much. Liking was coded in SPSS as: 0=Dislike, 1=neither, 2=Like.

Although all of the independent variables were tested for their impact on the dependent variables, not all elements proved to have a statistically significant impact on the effectiveness of the post. The results below are only a select subset of the complete data set collected.

Results:

Although there were three dependent variables investigated, the variable that proved to show the most significant results was the preference variable. It may be possible that the recall variable was not shown as significant because the memory recall task may be been too simple. Since participants were completing their surveys in 15 minutes (on average), participants may have found it easy to identify which posts they had seen before due to the short duration of the survey. It is possible that the liking variable may not have proven to be significant because there were only two questions that asked participants to rate their liking of a post. Due to these findings, the results below will only discuss elements that affected the preference variable.

Additionally, the results below are only reflective of the responses given by females. The males were excluded from the data set because the ads that were included in the survey were all targeted at women. Since the focus of this study was on the women's divisions of both Nike and Adidas, the results exclude the male responses. It was also found that excluding the male responses strengthened the significance of the

data, which makes sense due to the fact that the posts were not targeted at them. The total number of data points used for the female only analysis was $N=1422$.

- Main Effects on Preference Variable:

The main effect tables can be found in Appendix G. The people variable can be seen in section “A”, the product variable can be seen in section “B” and the movement variable is seen in section “C”.

- People Variable: There was a main effect of people being present in the social media posts and preference where ($F=3.653$, $p < .05$) and μ (No people=.511, Individual=.468, Group=.559). These results can be seen graphically in Appendix G, section “A”.
- Product Variable: There was no main effect of having the product present in the social media and preference where ($F=.140$, $p < .05$) and μ (No product present=.494, Product Present= .504).
- Movement Variable: There was a main effect of people moving in the social media posts and preference where ($F=22.426$, $p < .05$) and μ (No moving people=.453, People moving= .583). These results can be seen graphically in Appendix G, section “C”.

- Interaction Effects on Preference Variable:

The interaction effect table can be found in Appendix H along with the graphical representation of the interaction.

- People and Product Variables: Although there was no main effect of product on the preferences of social media posts, there was an interaction effect between people and product where ($F=8.512$, $p<.05$).

VI. General Discussion

The findings and analysis from the survey results suggest that the hypothesis was partially confirmed. The preliminary hypothesis suggested that women prefer group dynamic, the presence of products, as well as movement in social media posts. The main effects that were statistically significant impact on the female participants' preferences were people and movement. It was found that the presence of a group in social media posts was preferred as compared to no people or individuals. Interestingly, it was also found that the female participants preferred no people present in posts rather than having just an individual person. This may be due to the fact that the presence of a group increases the chances a women can identify with at least one of the people in the ad as compared to an individual. Another reason that women may have preferred to see groups as opposed to individuals may be due to the nature of social networking sites as platforms for social interaction. Question 31, which asked people to specifically identify what they liked about a Nike Women's Facebook post that featured a group of women exercising (Q27). Some of the responses to this question are as follows:

"That you can get fit while having fun and being with your friends..." – Anonymous Participant

"It shows people in the training class, in a group having fun." –Anonymous Participant

"It is encouraging social interactions with working out." –Anonymous Participant

Another main effect that affected participants' preferences was the presence of movement. It was found that people moving in social media posts was preferred to no moving people in posts. The reason for this may be due to the nature of Nike and

Adidas as athletic apparel companies and what people expect posts to look like. As an athletic company, participants expect the people in posts to appear true to the focus of the company. When asked to specifically identify what aspects of the post participants liked, some of the comments were as follows:

"I like the moves!" –Anonymous Participant

"Depiction of people actually exercising"—Anonymous Participant

"Movement in the picture. The message is appropriately simple and understandable..." –Anonymous Participant

The presence of a product was hypothesized to have an impact on preference however the findings of this study suggest that the presence of a product does not statistically significantly impact the preference of female participants. Although the product variable did not appear to reveal as a main effect impacting preference, it did reveal a statistically significant impact when it the variable interacted with the people variable. The study revealed that when there was a product featured, people preferred to have the product alongside a group of people as opposed to an individual. This suggests that participants' do not prefer to see an individual person as well as a product in the same post.

Based on the findings from this survey, I strongly encourage that high-end women's athletic apparel, retail companies consider the following recommendations outlined below.

Recommendations

1. Include Groups of People—Not Individuals.

Based on the research study, it was found that females prefer to see groups of people and have an aversion to viewing only an individual person in a post. If the post must include a person, I would recommend companies targeting women to focus on groups of people, and avoid featuring just one person in the post. It is more effective to use a group or no people in the post as opposed to using just one person.

2. Integrate movement.

Stay true to the nature of your company and present your target market with posts that they hope and expect to see from an athletic apparel company. If you are an athletic apparel company, and choose to include people in social media posts, ensure that the people are moving!

3. Featuring a product? Feature it alone or on a group of people but not on an individual!

I would encourage athletic apparel companies to feature products alone or on a group of people. Female consumers are more likely to be able to relate to a person within a group of people as opposed to only an individual person.

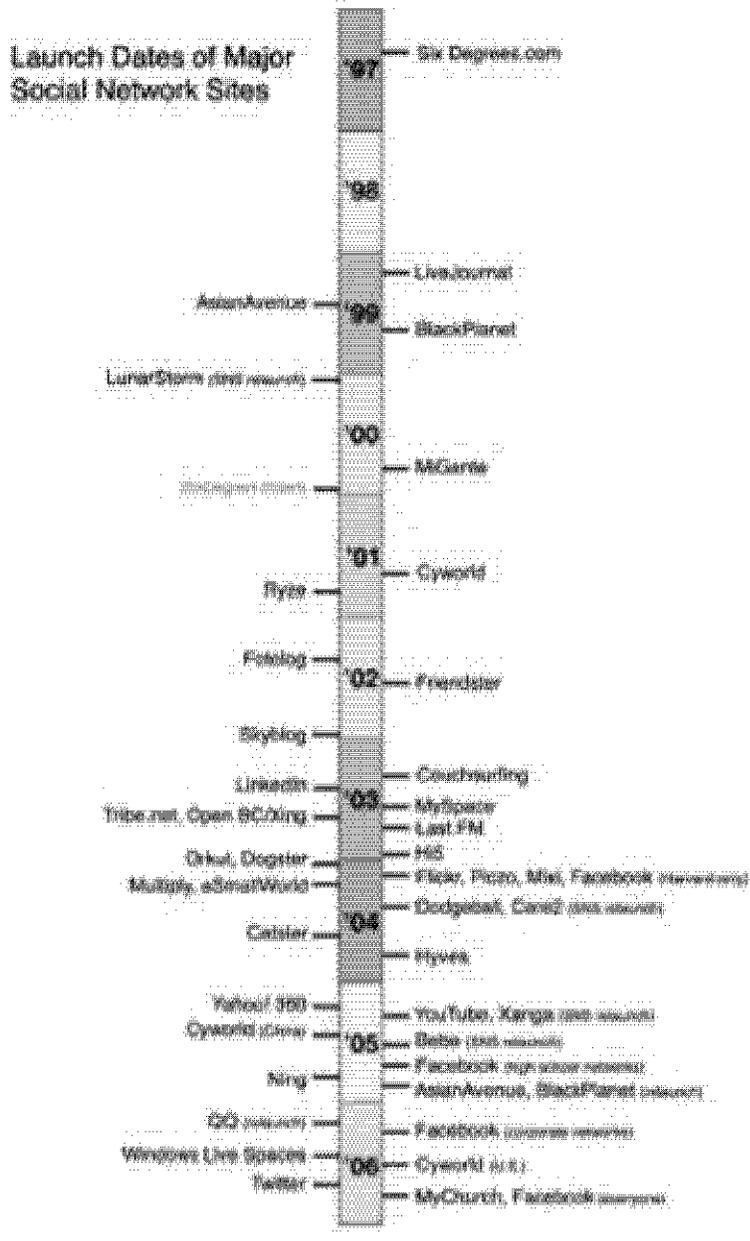
Featuring a product alone may be more effective than having it on an individual because if the woman cannot relate to that individual she can at least be interested in the product and may be able to relate it to herself better when a person is not connected to the ad.

VII. Conclusion

Findings from my analysis of Nike and Adidas social media strategies revealed elements of social media posts that were especially appealing to the female demographic. It was found that females preferred group presence over individual presence, preferred movement as opposed to no movement, and also preferred to have products featured on groups of people or stand-alone but not on individuals. The intent of this research is to use these findings and extrapolate them to help other similarly focused companies with their social media strategies. Integrating the recommendations will help such companies develop and maintain valuable relationships with their core customers. Although cultivating these relationships through social media may not directly contribute to earning profits, social media marketing should be an intermediary tool that may influence profits if used effectively.

Appendices

Appendix A⁴⁹: Social Networking Sites Timeline



⁴⁹ Danah M Boyd and Nicole B. Ellison, "Social Network Sites: Definition, History and Scholarship." Journal of Computer Mediated Communication, Scholarly Journal, 24 May 2009 <<http://jcmc.indiana.edu/vol13/issue1/boyd.ellison.html>>.

Appendix B⁵⁰: Relationship Elements in Public Relations

Control Mutuality -- The degree to which parties agree on who has the rightful power to influence one another. Although some imbalance is natural, stable relationships require that organizations and publics each have some control over the other.

Trust -- One party's level of confidence in and willingness to open oneself to the other party. There are three dimensions to trust: integrity: the belief that an organization is fair and just ... dependability: the belief that an organization will do what it says it will do ... and, competence: the belief that an organization has the ability to do what it says it will do.

Satisfaction -- The extent to which each party feels favorably toward the other because positive expectations about the relationship are reinforced. A satisfying relationship is one in which the benefits outweigh the costs.

Commitment -- The extent to which each party believes and feels that the relationship is worth spending energy to maintain and promote. Two dimensions of commitment are continuance commitment, which refers to a certain line of action, and affective commitment, which is an emotional orientation.

Exchange Relationship -- In an exchange relationship, one party gives benefits to the other only because the other has provided benefits in the past or is expected to do so in the future.

Communal Relationship -- In a communal relationship, both parties provide benefits to the other because they are concerned for the welfare of the other -- even when they get nothing in return. For most public relations activities, developing communal relationships with key constituencies is much more important to achieve than would be developing exchange relationships.

⁵⁰[http://www.aco.nato.int/resources/9/Conference%202011/Guidelines_Measuring_Relationships\[1\].pdf](http://www.aco.nato.int/resources/9/Conference%202011/Guidelines_Measuring_Relationships[1].pdf)

Appendix C: Guiding Questions for Focus Group

- A. Are you on social media platforms? If so, which ones?
- B. What are the platforms you visit the most and why?
- C. Do you follow brands on social media sites? If so, what is your motivation to do so?
- D. Do you follow Nike on social media? Do you follow Adidas? Why or why not?
- E. What are your reactions to Nike as a brand? And Nike on social media?
- F. What are your reactions to Adidas as a brand? And Adidas on social media?
- G. Describe Nike as a person
- H. Describe Adidas as a person
- I. Are you interested in the products that Nike sells? What about Adidas?
- J. What do you think each of the companies is trying to accomplish with their social media efforts? And general marketing efforts?
- K. In your opinion, are they effective?
- L. What in particular do you like about Nike or Adidas social media? Or on traditional media?
- M. How often should brands be posting in your opinion?
- N. Do you feel that you are Nike or Adidas' target consumer?
- O. Would you consider yourself as someone with an active lifestyle?
- P. Where do you shop for athletic clothes and why?

Appendix D: Demographic Questions Form

Age:

Sex:

Hometown:

Year in School:

What is your education level?

Estimated Annual Family Income:

What is your marital status?

- Single, never married
- Married or domestic partnership
- Widowed
- Divorced
- Separated

Ethnicity:

- African American
- Asian
- Hispanic
- Pacific Islander
- Caucasian
- Other? _____

Appendix E: Focus Group Participants' Demographic Data (Consolidated)

Participant	Sex	Age	Hometown	Education	Est. Family Income	Marital Status	Ethnicity
1	F	23	Thousand Oaks, CA	Bachelors*	/	Single	Caucasian
2	F	21	Beaverton, OR	Bachelors*	/	Single	Asian
3	F	22	Eugene, OR	Bachelors*	\$150,000	Single	Asian
4	F	24	Santa Clarita, CA	Graduate Law*	\$100,000	Single	African American
5	F	21	Tigard, OR	Bachelors*	\$52,500	Single	Asian
6	F	22	Portland, OR	Bachelors*	\$90,000	Single	Asian
7	F	21	Portland, OR	Bachelors*	/	Single	Caucasian
8	F	18	Portland, OR	Bachelors*	/	Single	Asian
9	F	21	San Anselmo, CA	Bachelors*	\$200,000	Single	Asian/Caucasian
10	F	42	Eugene, OR	Masters	\$115,000	Married	Caucasian
11	F	22	Eugene, OR	Bachelors*	/	Single	Middle Eastern
12	F	21	Phoenix, AZ	Bachelors*	\$300,000	Single	Caucasian
13	F	22	Livermore, CA	Bachelors*	\$300,000	Single	Caucasian

Appendix F: Social Media Effectiveness Questionnaire

Q1 The current research is being conducted by Meghana Deodhar and Kathryn Mercurio from the University of Oregon, Marketing Department, Lundquist College of Business. We would appreciate your assistance with a research project designed to examine social media usage. The results of this research will be used for publication in an academic journal, and will help marketers and academics better understand how consumers respond to social media efforts employed by sports companies. Participation in the study is voluntary. You have the right to withdraw your consent at any time. The completion of all material should take approximately 10 minutes. Your answers will remain confidential and will be considered only in aggregate with no reference to specific individuals. You will be asked to provide personal information (i.e., name, email address) in order to ensure that you receive credit for participation. Once recorded, your personal information will be deleted. A breach of confidentiality is a risk of participation in this research. By clicking through to the next page you will consent to participate. We will provide you with a hard copy of this consent form if you request it. If you have any questions regarding this research, contact Kathryn Mercurio, 541-346-8243, mercurio@uoregon.edu If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research participant, please contact Research Compliance Services at the University of Oregon, (541) 346-2510 or at researchcompliance@uoregon.edu.

Q2 Do you use social media?

- Yes
- No

Q3 How much time per day do you spend interacting with different social media sites?

- 4-7+ hours per day
- 1-3 hours per day
- Less than 1 hour per day
- Never

Q4 What social media sites do you use?

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- LinkedIn
- Pinterest
- YouTube
- Google+
- Other _____
- None

Q5 Please rank which social media sites you prefer (1 is favorite, 8 is least favorite).

- _____ Facebook
- _____ Twitter
- _____ Instagram
- _____ LinkedIn
- _____ Pinterest
- _____ YouTube
- _____ Google+
- _____ Other

Q6 What is your purpose in using social media sites? Please select all that apply.

- Staying in touch with family and friends
- Current events and news
- Coupons and Deals
- Other _____

Q7 How social media savvy do you consider yourself?

- Not Savvy
- Below Average
- Average
- Above Average
- Very Savvy

Q8 Do you follow companies or brands on social media?

- Yes
- No

Q9 Which brands do you follow?

Q10 Why?

Q11 How has your experience with brands been on social media?

- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Very Good
- Excellent

Q12 How often do you click on deals or coupons that are advertised on social media?

- Never
- Less than Once a Month
- Once a Month
- 2-3 Times a Month
- Once a Week
- 2-3 Times a Week
- Daily

Q13 Do you believe brand advertising on social media works on you?

- Yes
- No

Q14 How?

Q15 Do you believe brand advertising on social media works on other people?

- Yes
- No

Q16 Which social media post do you prefer?

 **Nike Training Club**
16 February

More focus. More friends. More fun.

Take your training to the next level with an NTC Live class near you: <http://gonike.me/61865nsM>



○

 **adidas Women**
22 March

Weekends are what you make of them. Grab a friend and go for a run or hit up a cardio class.



○

Q17 Which social media post do you prefer?



Nike Training Club @nikewomen · Feb 9
Breathe new life into your training style with Traci's studio essentials.
gonike.me/60165yWA pic.twitter.com/N0qScPkJSt



○



Nike Training Club @nikewomen · Mar 14
Our favorite Fuelband is back. #rosegold #fuelband gonike.me/6012gTwj
pic.twitter.com/YC5S3TiuPd



Expand

Reply Retweet Favorite More

○

Q18 Which social media post do you prefer?

 **Nike Training Club**
14 January

Train. Sweat. Repeat. Two-a-days start Monday. Mix it up and max it out during NTC Week.
<http://gonike.me/6187d09h>



○

 **Nike Training Club**
2 March · Edited

Energy. Originality. Intensity.

Get ready for pop artist **Jessie J**'s workout coming soon in the Nike+ Training Club app.



○

Q19 Which social media post do you prefer?

 **adidas Women**
30 March

Focus on your workout, without the bounce. The Energy Bra keeps the ladies in place.

Shop now: <http://bit.ly/EnergyBra>



 **adidas Women**
10 March

Spring forward with the perfect bra for yoga, barre and pilates.

Shop the Seamless Bra: <http://bit.ly/LightSupport>



Q20 Which social media post do you prefer?



Classic. Original. Bold. Provocative.

Show off your style today.



○



Bold color. Magical movement.

Push your performance with the Tight of the Moment,
now available: <http://gonike.me/6185e2zb>



○

Q21 Which social media post do you prefer?

 **adidas Women** @adidasWomen · Mar 30
Look good, feel good #StellaSundays adidas.com/go/lqAAA
pic.twitter.com/DAygu9qwQ



FIND YOUR PERFECT BALANCE

stella.mccartney

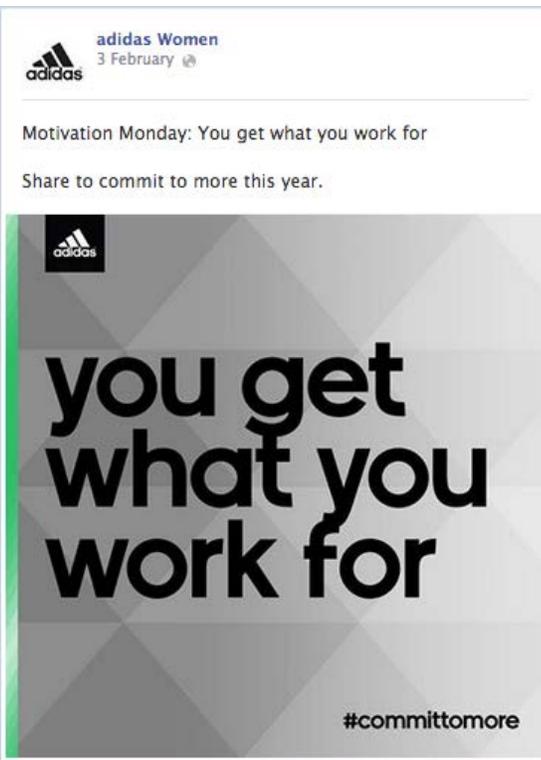
○

 **adidas Women** @adidasWomen · Mar 19
Colour blocking the #adidas by @stellamccartney way. We <3 the new SS'14 line - take a peak: buff.ly/1gfmL7x pic.twitter.com/ak7GWIPDcK



○

Q22 Which social media post do you prefer?



Q23 Do you follow Nike on any social media sites?

- Yes
- No

Q24 How has your experience been with the Nike brand in general (on and off social media)?

- Very Negative
- Negative
- Neutral
- Positive
- Very Positive

Q25 How would you describe Nike as a brand? (Check all that apply)

- Active
- Attention-getting
- Boring
- Cheerful
- Creative
- Emotional
- Energetic
- Genuine/sincere
- Honest
- Humorous
- Informative
- Irritating
- Memorable
- Natural
- Offensive
- Pleasant
- Satisfying
- Strong
- Unique
- Warm-hearted
- Other _____

Q26 Please indicate how closely you agree or disagree with this statement: "I am an athlete."

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q27 Please view Nike Women's Division Facebook post.



Q28 Do you remember this post?

- Don't remember at all
- Remember company but not product or advertisement
- Remember company and product but not advertisement
- Remember advertisement

Q29 What is your reaction to this Facebook post?

- Dislike Very Much
- Dislike Slightly
- Neither Like nor Dislike
- Like Slightly
- Like Very Much

Q30 Other than trying to get you to buy the product or service, what do you believe is the main message of this post?

Q31 What did you like most about this post? Please be specific.

Q32 What did you like least about this post? Please be specific.

Q33 Given what you know about Nike, this post...

Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="radio"/>					
<input type="radio"/>					
<input type="radio"/>					
<input type="radio"/>					
<input type="radio"/>					

Q34 Do you follow Adidas on social media sites?

- Yes
- No

Q35 How has your experience been with the Adidas brand in general (on and off social media)?

- Very Negative
- Negative
- Neutral
- Positive
- Very Positive

Q36 How would you describe Adidas as a brand?(Check all that apply)

- Active
- Attention-getting
- Boring
- Cheerful
- Creative
- Emotional
- Energetic
- Genuine/sincere
- Honest
- Humorous
- Informative
- Irritating
- Memorable
- Natural
- Offensive
- Pleasant
- Satisfying

- Strong
- Unique
- Warm-hearted
- Other _____

**Q37 Please indicate how closely you agree or disagree with this statement:
“Impossible is nothing.”**

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

Q38 Please view Adidas Women's Division Facebook post.



Q39 Do you remember this Facebook post or advertising campaign?

- Don't remember at all
- Remember company but not product or ad
- Remember company and product but not ad
- Remember ad

Q40 What is your reaction to this Facebook post?

- Dislike Very Much
- Dislike Slightly
- Neither Like nor Dislike
- Like Slightly
- Like Very Much

Q41 Other than trying to get you to buy the product or service, what is the main message of this post?

Q42 What did you like most about this post? Please be specific.

Q43 What did you like least about this post? Please be specific.

Q44 Given what you know about Adidas, this Facebook post...

Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
<input type="radio"/>					
<input type="radio"/>					
<input type="radio"/>					
<input type="radio"/>					
<input type="radio"/>					

Q45 How do you think the Adidas brand different than the Nike brand?

Q46 We are now going to do a memory task. Indicate whether you remember seeing the social media post earlier in the experimental session (yes or no).

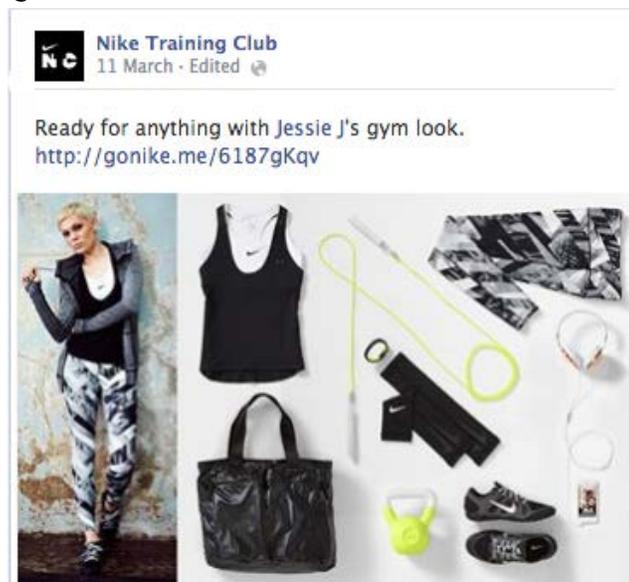
Q47



Q48 Please indicate if you saw the social media post shown above during this experiment.

- Yes
- No

Q49



Q50 Please indicate if you saw the social media post shown above during this experiment.

- Yes
- No

Q51



Q52 Please indicate if you saw the social media post shown above during this experiment.

- Yes
- No

Q53



adidas Women @adidasWomen · Mar 27

Infuse some bold colour into your fitness wardrobe. Our top style picks? Check 'em all here: adidas.com/go/OjAAA pic.twitter.com/oxUDhTwD29



Q54 Please indicate if you saw the social media post shown above during this experiment.

- Yes
- No

Q55



Q56 Please indicate if you saw the social media post shown above during this experiment.

- Yes
- No

Q57

 Nike Training Club @nikewomen · Mar 1

The Nike Midnight Craftwork Tight of the Moment has hit the streets.
gonike.me/60185Lka



Q58 Please indicate if you saw the social media post shown above during this experiment.

- Yes
- No

Q59



Nike Training Club @nikewomen · Feb 9

Breathe new life into your training style with Traci's studio essentials.
gonike.me/60165yWA pic.twitter.com/N0qScPkJSt



Q60 Please indicate if you saw the social media post shown above during this experiment.

- Yes
- No

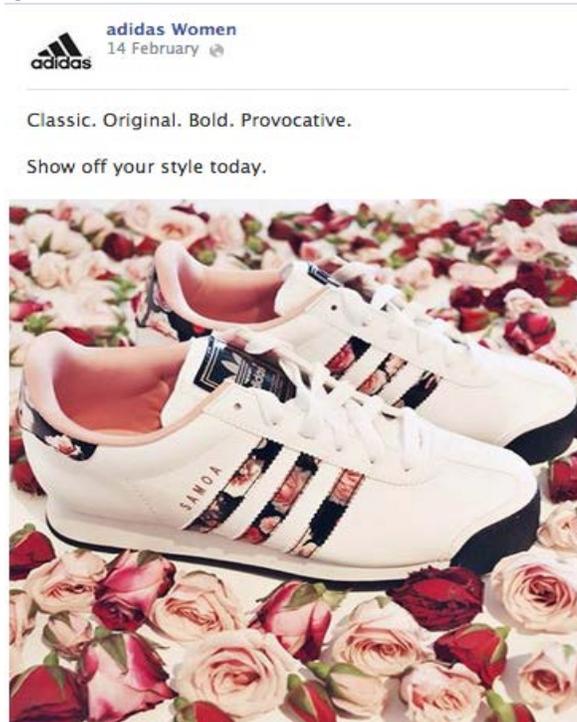
Q61



Q62 Please indicate if you saw the social media post shown above during this experiment.

- Yes
- No

Q63



Q64 Please indicate if you saw the social media post shown above during this experiment.

- Yes
- No

Q65



adidas Women @adidasWomen · Feb 16

Fine lookin' crew of @Peridance #mygirls, rocking #3StripeStyle. Check out their style story: adidas.com/go/voAAA pic.twitter.com/qcGF0pixs4



Q66 Please indicate if you saw the social media post shown above during this experiment.

- Yes
- No

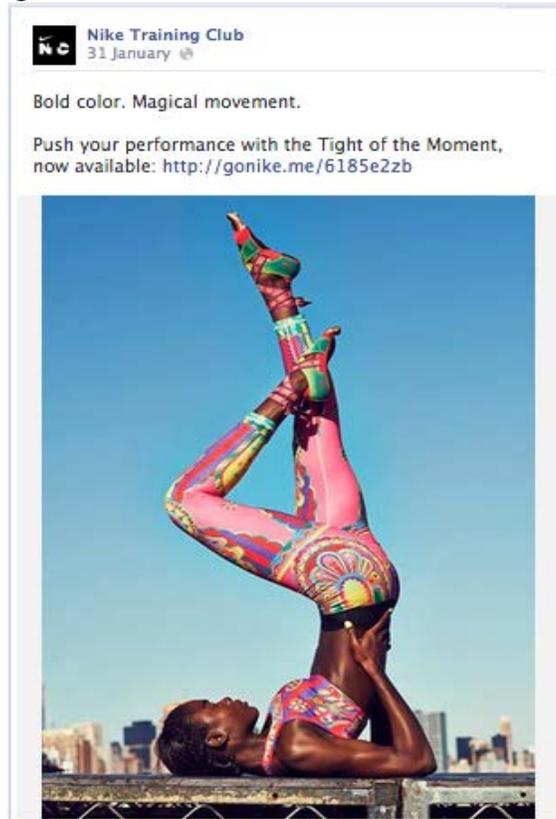
Q67



Q68 Please indicate if you saw the social media post shown above during this experiment.

- Yes
- No

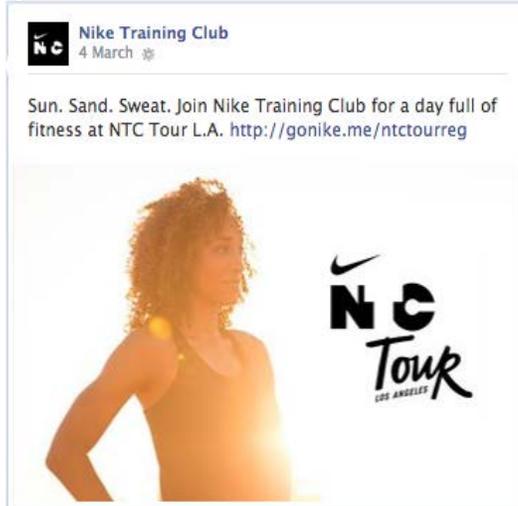
Q69



Q70 Please indicate if you saw the social media post shown above during this experiment.

- Yes
- No

Q71



Q72 Please indicate if you saw the social media post shown above during this experiment.

- Yes
- No

Q73



Q74 Please indicate if you saw the social media post shown above during this experiment.

- Yes
- No

Q75

 Nike Training Club @nikewomen · Mar 9

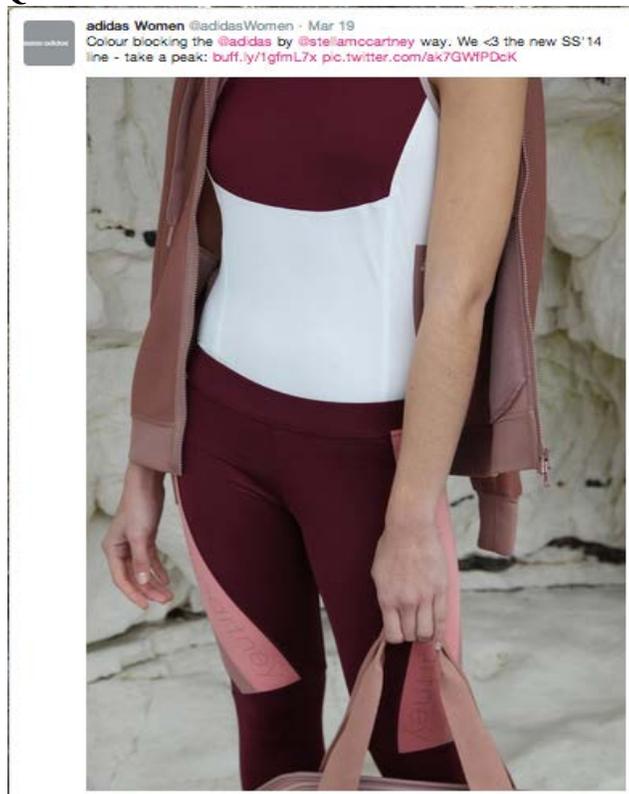
Leave your excuses at home. Join us at #NTCTour L.A. for a day full of fitness. gonike.me/6018gGPa



Q76 Please indicate if you saw the social media post shown above during this experiment.

- Yes
- No

Q77



Q78 Please indicate if you saw the social media post shown above during this experiment.

- Yes
- No

Q79

 **adidas Women** ▼
2 April 🌐

No matter your speed, today calls for a run or walk. Boost gets you there, in comfort. #nationalwalkingday.

Shop the new Energy Boost 2.0: <http://bit.ly/BoostW2>

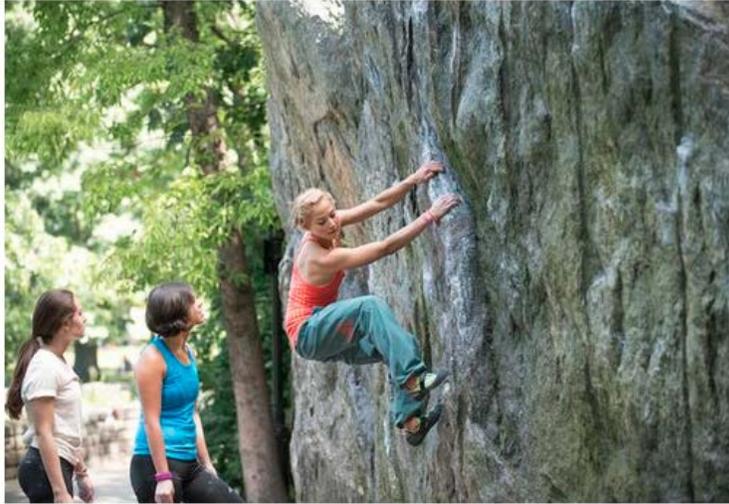


Q80 Please indicate if you saw the social media post shown above during this experiment.

- Yes
- No

Q81

 **adidas Women** @adidasWomen · Mar 31
"You don't have to be the best; you just need passion." Meet @SashaDiGiulian & her #NYC crew: adidas.com/go/wLAAA pic.twitter.com/rEnOuFya0h



Q82 Please indicate if you saw the social media post shown above during this experiment.

- Yes
- No

Q83

 **adidas Women**
3 February

Motivation Monday: You get what you work for
Share to commit to more this year.



**you get
what you
work for**

#committomore

Q84 Please indicate if you saw the social media post shown above during this experiment.

- Yes
- No

Q85



Q86 Please indicate if you saw the social media post shown above during this experiment.

- Yes
- No

Q87 Please enter your UO ID number

Q88 Thank you for your time!

Appendix G: SPSS Analysis of Main Effects

A. People Main Effects:

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Preference

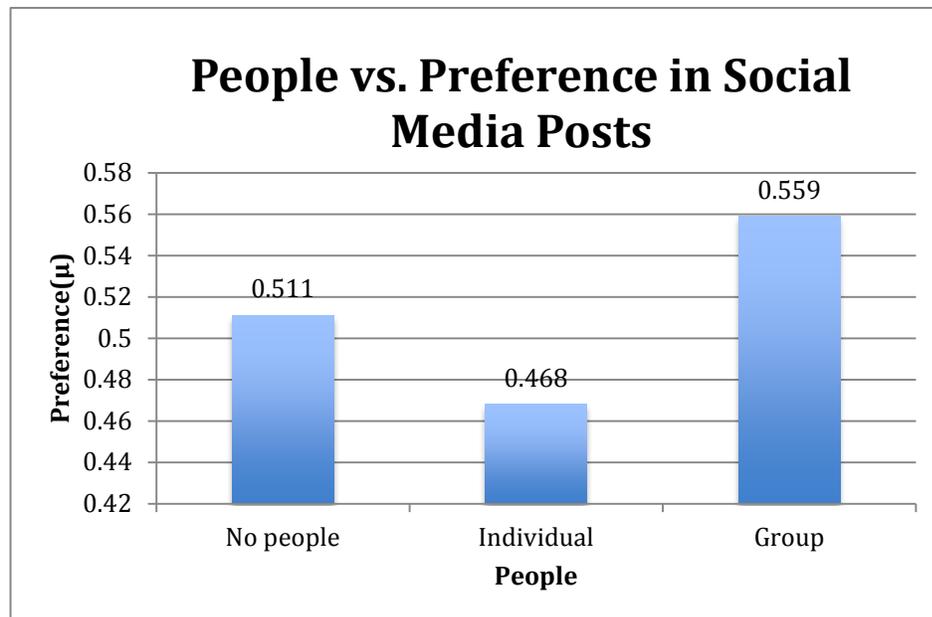
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	1.821 ^a	2	.910	3.653	.026
Intercept	331.253	1	331.253	1329.024	.000
People	1.821	2	.910	3.653	.026
Error	353.679	1419	.249		
Total	711.000	1422			
Corrected Total	355.500	1421			

a. R Squared = .005 (Adjusted R Squared = .004)

People

Dependent Variable: Preference

People	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
No People	.511	.025	.462	.560
Individual	.468	.019	.432	.505
Group	.559	.029	.503	.615



B. Product Main Effects:

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Preference

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	.035 ^a	1	.035	.140	.708
Intercept	347.484	1	347.484	1388.118	.000
Product	.035	1	.035	.140	.708
Error	355.465	1420	.250		
Total	711.000	1422			
Corrected Total	355.500	1421			

a. R Squared = .000 (Adjusted R Squared = -.001)

Product

Dependent Variable: Preference

Product	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
No Product Present	.494	.020	.455	.534
Product Present	.504	.018	.470	.539

C. Movement Main Effects:

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Preference

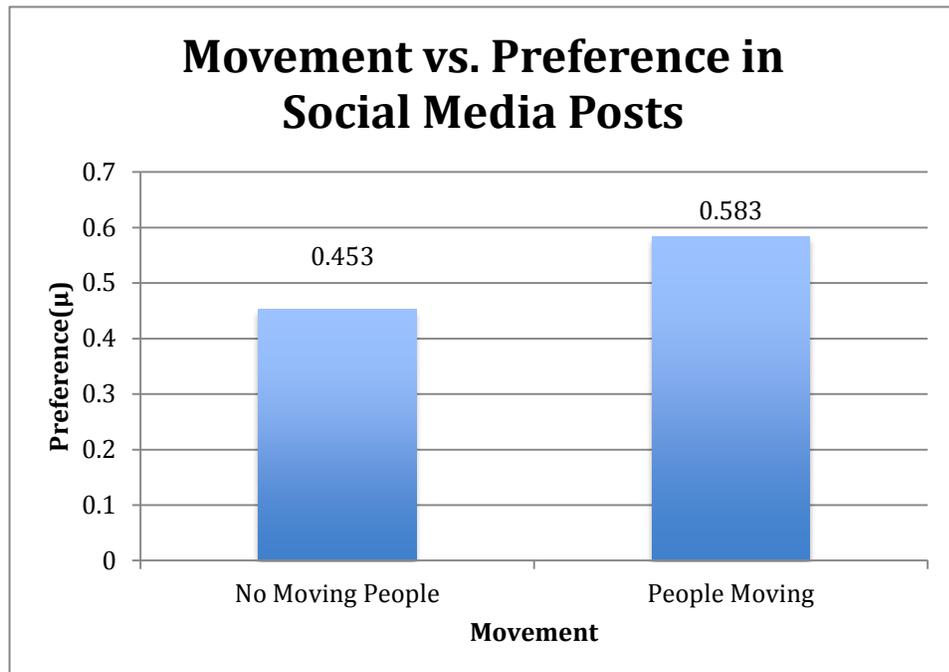
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	5.527 ^a	1	5.527	22.426	.000
Intercept	351.400	1	351.400	1425.792	.000
Movement	5.527	1	5.527	22.426	.000
Error	349.973	1420	.246		
Total	711.000	1422			
Corrected Total	355.500	1421			

a. R Squared = .016 (Adjusted R Squared = .015)

Movement

Dependent Variable: Preference

Movement	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
No Moving People	.453	.016	.421	.486
People Moving	.583	.022	.540	.627



Appendix H: SPSS Analysis of Interaction Effect

People and Product Interaction Effect:

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Dependent Variable: Preference

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	6.424 ^a	5	1.285	5.211	.000
Intercept	322.041	1	322.041	1306.332	.000
People	2.504	2	1.252	5.079	.006
Product	1.501	1	1.501	6.087	.014
People * Product	4.197	2	2.098	8.512	.000
Error	349.076	1416	.247		
Total	711.000	1422			
Corrected Total	355.500	1421			

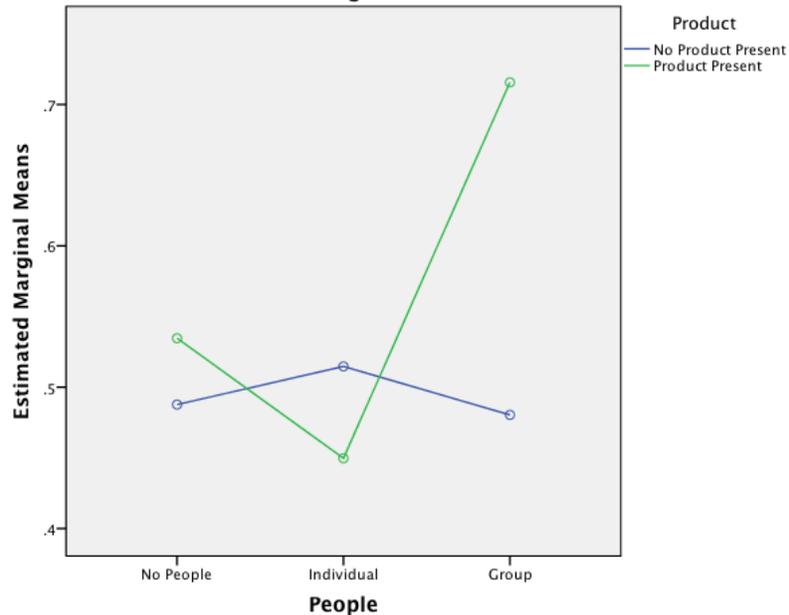
a. R Squared = .018 (Adjusted R Squared = .015)

3. People * Product

Dependent Variable: Preference

People	Product	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval	
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound
No People	No Product Present	.488	.035	.419	.556
	Product Present	.535	.035	.466	.603
Individual	No Product Present	.515	.035	.447	.583
	Product Present	.450	.022	.406	.493
Group	No Product Present	.480	.035	.412	.549
	Product Present	.716	.049	.619	.812

Estimated Marginal Means of Preference



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