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## Nike's Colin Kaepernick Campaign

### **Exigence**

Nike has been a very successful and well-known brand for over fifty years. Endorsing star athletes such as Ronaldinho, Roger Federer, and LeBron James have led them to beat their competition. This rise to the top allows them to take a risk once in a while to see how their publics react. When Nike released their Colin Kaepernick campaign, the media went crazy as expected. Their public relations team calculated and expected this turn out when a population of their customers boycotted Nike. Kaepernick voices his reasoning for kneeling with an interview with NFL Media saying, "I am not going to stand up to how pride in a flag for a country that oppresses Black people and people of color" (Wyche, 2016). Due to Nike's endorsement for Kaepernick, many wonder if Nike is an unpatriotic brand. And if so, how will they prove that they are patriotic?

The campaign itself has led stocks to increase by 0.62 percent and sales to increase by 31 percent (Garcia, 2018). They have also received gaining support from celebrities that give Nike an advantage if their brand suffered an image crisis. However, Nike has also lost loyal and long supporting customers when the campaign was released. Videos of customers burning their Nike apparel have surfaced the internet, encouraging other Kaepernick non-supporters to boycott the brand. While these boycotters are seen as a threat to their public image, Nike viewed Colin Kaepernick as an opportunity to take a stance on an important, national issue. Culture is evolving to the point where more individuals are standing up for equal rights for everyone. Nike saw this trend and wants to help change the culture of sports. They hope, with this new campaign, besides the obvious potential increase in sales, that sports will change with the new trends in culture. They want to show they do not discriminate or show favorites in their company and would like to see the sporting world as a whole move in this direction.

### **Publics**

Nike has several important publics that they must appease to keep their brand in business. Their most important, as well as primary, public are Nike customers who have the same values as Colin Kaepernick. This public benefits from the Nike brand because they are represented on a global scale. With Nike's endorsements to athletes such as Michael Jordan, Kobe Bryant, and Tiger Woods, Colin Kaepernick draws a unique audience. Since his deal with this brand, Nike is showing this public that they stand with what they value. They are not alone in how they feel about civil rights and injustice in the United States. Nike also benefits from their support in their products as they continue to purchase them. As Kaepernick supporters buy new Nike apparel, sneakers, and jerseys, they support Nike in continuing to make new products.

### **Mission Statement**

"Bring inspiration and innovation to every athlete in the world" (Nike). This guides our campaign because we want to inspire everyone in the world. It corresponds with how we want to address the controversial campaign right now. This also implicates that we want Nike to be for everyone of every race, color and culture.

### **Campaign Goal**

Our campaign goal is quite simple; we want our customers and all of our publics to know Nike is patriotic. We believe this is an important issue to address as the recent ad campaign with Colin Kaepernick has created a question of what we stand for based off what he stands for. This campaign goal will address both of these questions that arose by using Kaepernick as our new face as well as correspond with our mission statement. This goal will give inspiration to those athletes who may think Nike is unpatriotic. Accomplishing this goal will create a clear image of what Nike stands for.

WHAT NIKE STANDS FOR.

## **Objective Statements**

To increase the recall of Nike customers, Nike will donate from 0% to 10% of profits made from advertisements to the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), a civil rights movement organization, and to the Wounded Warriors Project (WWP) by 2020. This objective statement will help Nike reach their goal of becoming more patriotic because this shows the primary audience, the customers, that Nike supports the beliefs of all their customers. With Nike donating a portion of the profits made to the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and Wounded Warriors Project, this can be viewed as patriotic because they are giving back to American organizations wanting everyone in the United States to be equal. Nike chose to donate to both organizations because rather than focusing on one side of the issue, Nike wants to bring together both opposing sides in the form of donating to well-known organizations that represent each side of the problem.

To sustain a patriotic image, Nike will endorse three celebrities including Rihanna, Ellen DeGeneres, and Kid Rock by 2020. Rihanna, Ellen DeGeneres, and Kid Rock are all celebrities that voice their opinion on controversial matters within the United States. These celebrities do not have the same political beliefs and lifestyles, but they are looked up to by many fellow Americans. Nike will collaborate with these celebrities' companies such as Ellen DeGeneres' daytime tv show, the Ellen DeGeneres show, Rihanna's clothing line, SavageXFenty, and Kid Rock's clothing line. This will show the customers, who either agree or disagree with the Colin Kaepernick advertisement, that no matter what your personal views are in life, they will support you. Nike plans to collaborate with these celebrities by 2020.

To sustain a patriotic image, Nike will endorse three USA National teams including baseball, rugby, and field hockey by summer 2020. These teams are formed from people around the United States who are considered to be a well-representative of the United States while playing their sport. Although a few of these teams are sponsored, Nike will wait till their endorsement contracts are up and sign with them. For those who do not have a sponsor, Nike will create a contract with them. Nike already sponsors many professional league athletics such as the NFL, NBA, and MLB. For Nike to go one step lower than the professional league and sponsor USA National teams, this allows customers to view them as patriotic because they are sponsoring teams that do not get much recognition, but still represent the United States. The United States has also been known for citizens wanting the 'American Dream'. The American Dream is defined as "the ideal that every US citizen should have an equal opportunity to achieve success and prosperity through hard work, determination, and initiative" (Dictionary, 2012). These athletes that make it to the Olympics have been working hard and working their way up to become the best. They are accomplishing their own American Dream by representing the United States while competing against other professional athletes in other countries. Sponsoring these individuals allows the public to see how Nike is supporting the American Dream, therefore being patriotic.

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