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DTC 338 Social Media Case Studies

Case Study: Final

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### **Adidas Falcon**

Social media is a large contributing factor in today's society. We rely heavily on it for everything from advertising, research, staying in contact, and much more. What some people don't realize is that every day, we are influenced by advertisements through Twitter, and Instagram, along with various other media platforms. It's a way for people to quickly spread the word on an upcoming event or product that often times people end up purchasing. Approximately 25% of people will end up purchasing a product they have seen from an advertisement through social media (Meyers). In this study, we will be analyzing the marketing campaign that the Adidas Originals launched.

The Adidas Company continues to produce well-loved shoes for over 69 years. It all started with two German brothers who wanted to create the ultimate sport footwear for all athletes around the globe (James). These two brothers, Adi Dassler and Rudi Dassler started their first business called the "Gebruder Dassler Schuhfabrik (Dassler Brothers Shoe Factory)." It wasn't until 1947 when the brothers had a disagreement and they decided to part ways. Because of this, Adi took the opportunity to register the Adidas brand while Rudi started his own brand which became Puma. Interestingly enough, these brand names were inspired by their actual names. Both brothers took parts from their names in order to create the well known symbols that we know today. The Adidas Originals was created to encompass the brands heritage products such as Spezial and Superstar Range. Not only have these two brands split up brothers, but also family members. Before signing onto Adidas, Kylie Jenner was originally the face for Puma (McDonagh, 2018). Because she was involved with Puma, it caused strife with

her family members currently endorsing Adidas. It wasn't until Kanye West convinced Adidas to give his sister-in-law a contract, bringing family came back together.

In the fall of 2018, Adidas Originals launched their newest shoe called the "Falcon" in additional colors. This shoe was originally released June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018 in just one color, Core Black/LT Granite. The silhouette of this particular shoe was first released in 1997, which explains the reason behind the 90's retro style of the shoe (Kickyanz & Kane, 2018). They discovered the name for the shoe while they were in Germany. Falkendorf, a small town near the Adidas headquarters, was where the Falcon name originally "internationalized to Falcon Dorf." When word hit the streets about the Adidas new product to be released, people started to follow the company closely in hopes that pictures or descriptions would be leaked about the shoes. It wasn't until June 2<sup>nd</sup> that people were able to purchase them. Not only would the release of the Falcon be in June, but Adidas also planned to release four more colors in September. The company went global with the product on Sept. 6<sup>th</sup> ("Adidas Originals"). Conflicting for the consumers, they had to make a choice on waiting for the four new colors in September or purchasing them in June.

The Adidas Originals wanted to gain more attention to the shoe since this was the second launch of it. People became more interested in the shoe after hearing that the new face of the Falcon would be Kylie Jenner. Kylie signed with Adidas and became one of their newest ambassadors for the company in August 2018 (Dike, 2018). Adidas was even quoted saying that "as a lifelong fan of the brand, Kylie embodies the bold spirit of Falcon" (Muller, 2018). With her as the face, the shoe gained more attention because people respect Kylie's sense of style. They interpret her sense of fashion as the trend to follow. A majority of Kylie's followers range between the ages of 18-34 years, which tells us that these particular people keep up with the

latest trends (Robehmed, 2018). The colors and style all contain a vintage feel, which appeals to today's culture. Adidas are purposely marketing towards the people who want the retro/vintage style. On the Adidas website, it even claims that the "falcon is not for the faint-hearted, but for those who do whatever they want, regardless of other people's opinion" (The Adidas). This statement alone tells consumers that if you're a rebel at heart, these are the shoes for you. These are unlike the normal everyday shoes. The style contains a chunky feel with vibrant colors. They're bringing back something that was old and making it new and fashionable. Their second statement states "designed for the unapologetic ones who know what they want." Even though the style of the shoe is a running athletic style, a majority of the public are wearing them for a fashion statement.

The Adidas Company focused on several different social media accounts. The main ones were Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat and even some YouTube. The company utilized variations of hashtags such as [#adidasfalcon](#) and [#adidaoriginals](#). By using these tags, they were able to track the public's responses towards the shoes. One thing that made the company's marketing skills stand out on social media is that they were the first product to launch on Snapchat Show (Chochrek, 2018). Back in 2017, Snapchat wanted to begin having regular TV-like shows (McAlone, 2017). They wanted the app to have 2-3 shows per day and in length 3-5 minutes long. The shows would differ from reality, scripted, news and horror. Not only would they have such a diverse range, but they would also have shows from other networks like NBC, ESPN, the NFL, ABC and more. The Snapchat show that Adidas used was entitled "Styling Statement Sneakers?" (Lafayette, 2018). While on the show, consumers were able to purchase the shoes directly from the Snapchat show simply by swiping up. However, those who purchased them off of the Snapchat Show would not be able to receive them until the actual release date on Sept 6<sup>th</sup>.

Adidas made a smart move. They broke out of the everyday norm and appealed to the social media crowd. Not only did they host one Snapchat Show, but they also held one prior. The first one was held on August 21<sup>st</sup> which was a pre-release (Jennings, 2018). Once again, the viewers were able to swipe up to purchase them directly from the app, but this time they could have them shipped shortly afterwards. What amazed the users was the fact that the “shoes sold out in six hours.” “A spokesperson for Snapchat said millions watched this specific episode and 70 percent were 13-to-24- year old women” (Jennings, 2018).

By those reports alone, this tells us that their usage of social media accounts were spot on. They were able to take each social media account and post fairly regularly about the release of the shoes. The company promoted excitement among customers with the thought that more colors would be released this fall. Not only did the company actively post on social media accounts, but Kylie Jenner also hosted a 90’s theme party in honor of launching the shoe (Muller, 2018). Kylie turned an old car wash into a 90’s theme nightclub which filled the “entire block sidewalk on Sunset Boulevard.” During the party, she uploaded videos and pictures to Instagram. Every time Kylie posts on Instagram, she gets paid 1 million for every post she makes (McDonagh, 2018). Adidas knew this when they chose her as the face of the Falcon shoe, realizing the amount of exposure she would provide.

As soon as the Falcon was released on September 6<sup>th</sup>, people were constantly using the hashtag [#adidasfalcons](#) on Instagram. Posts would come from all around the world. People would pose with their new purchase or they would simply take a picture of the Falcon itself and express their excitement. The public was able to involve the company and Kylie by tagging them in their posts. By having various hashtags for people to use, it created a community engagement and fandom. People showed their support towards the company by posting about the

latest product. Not only could they show their support, but the company was able to follow along. Instagram compiled the hashtags into a list which allowed others to simply search that specific hashtag. Because of this feature, it allowed Adidas to view the feedback on their latest product. Before the shoe was released, Adidas Originals launched a unique posting. They had gathered various models from different ethnic backgrounds to create 6 postings with titles like New York, Paris, LA, London, Tokyo, and Shanghai. Creation of these global posting, reinforced public awareness of their universal appeal. It proves to us that not only did that make an impact in the US, but also other countries. Another marketing tool that Adidas was able to employ was SMROI, which stands for Social Media Return on Investment (Solomon & Tuten, 2018). This move was to show “how much income did our investments in social media marketing generate.” By using this method, a company has the ability to review its marketing successes on social media and discern whether consumer purchases reflect that success.

During the release of the shoes, they quickly sold out. Some people had difficulty finding stores that carried them. In addition, once they were able to locate a store which carried the shoes, they were limited to only one pair. This marketing strategy was a part of Adidas original plan to raise the perceived value of the shoes in the public eye. Limited quantities equate to higher value. On the Adidas Originals website, you could easily navigate to the area of purchasing the product, but you were limited to one pair. By using this ploy, they were able to instill scarcity in the public in order to drive up the sales on the product. The downside to this type of marketing is the possibility of negative responses when the product is unavailable. Controlling product availability can also have the opposite affect and cause frustrated customers to search for a different product from a competitor. Other people chose to make a profit over the scarcity of purchasing the shoes. Those who were successful enough to purchase them ahead

would often turn around and sell them for a higher price. Another issue that consumers encountered was the challenge of purchasing them online. Some people complained that during the checkout process, it would crash on them and wouldn't complete the transaction. For a company that recently launched a product, this could potentially create customer frustration. However, one thing they did do successfully was their ability to advertise over social media.

Social media has been a large contributing factor to this campaign. What's interesting is that digital media and technology activity has progressed by 24% from 2015 to 2016 (Meyers). This means the more than 25% of people who see an ad on social media will more than likely respond by visiting the store or website. Looking back to the launching of this product, the company relied heavily on their abilities to make the shoe seem appealing to viewers. They appealed to the younger demographic by having a well known person as the face of the product and they used hashtags to interact with the community. In the few months that they advertised, Adidas already had people interacting with the company. They had customers talking about the product on Twitter and when the shoe was released they had them posting pictures on Instagram. However, some people were not as thrilled as others were when they heard Kylie was involved with the campaign. Whether it was positive or negative, reviews continued to have the public discussing and thus providing additional marketing. Soon after the launch of the Falcons, the amount of posting produced by both the company and Kylie quickly declined. Not only is Kylie is the Ambassador for the company, but she also produces her own cosmetics line. As soon as the Falcon was released, she was no longer involved with posting updates on the product. Kylie would only talk about her cosmetics or her daughter in a majority of her postings. Even during the marketing of the shoes, she would almost never respond to any comments that were directed to her about the product. Around the same time Kylie quit posting, Adidas did the same. Because

of the amount of publicity the shoes attracted, both Kylie and the company changed their focus. During the time of the Falcon, Adidas was already lining up their next product. The company launched a new shoe called the Dragon Ball Z on the 29<sup>th</sup>. Based on that, it shows that the Falcon was successful enough to no longer require the services of Jenner to continue to post on social media.

In the data analysis, we can see the amount of interactions people had pertaining to the Falcon. A majority of the posts were made on Instagram. Whenever Adidas would make an update regarding the shoes, they would receive interactions, but never as much as Kylie's postings. Practically every time Kylie posted, she would have more likes, shares, and even comments. In some of her pictures, she didn't even add a caption and received a couple million likes. When comparing followers between Kylie and Adidas, Kylie has 80% more followers than Adidas on Instagram. This means that more people follow Kylie in comparison to Adidas. Granted, people are more likely to be interested in a celebrity than a shoe company, but this only reiterates why a company would choose someone like Kylie to be their face. They desired a well know celebrity to seal the success for their shoe sales. It goes to show that whatever product a company is marketing, more viewers are going to see it based on followers. What was interesting is the amount of postings the company made in comparison to Kylie. Even though she only made a total of 10 posts on Instagram, she boosted awareness for the company. On the other hand, Adidas posted a total of 13 postings and still didn't come close to the amount of responses she brought in.



As we can see based on the charts, the amount of responses between the actual company and Kylie differs greatly. The most influential social media account that received a majority of involvement was Instagram. One beneficial aspect of Instagram is the fact that it's built around images and videos. It allows the users to post pictures and "stories" which makes it one of many useful social media platforms. Even though they were successful in the other platforms, they failed to utilize their means with [Facebook](#). During the entire campaign, Adidas never posted once regarding the Falcon. The last post that they made was on January 25<sup>th</sup>, which was on an entirely different shoe. It appeared that little effort was put into targeting those users who normally use this social media platform. The average age of a Facebook user is 18-29 (Osman, 2018), which was actually one of the targeted age groups. One can only assume that since they declined to have an active presence on Facebook, that there were newer social media sites which would have greater activity and ability to reach a larger consumer group. The only person who posted on Facebook regarding the campaign was Kylie. She made a total of 3 posts, while Adidas made none. However, Adidas made 2 posts on Twitter, whereas Kylie only posted about her cosmetics. Throughout the entire campaign, Instagram was the main account that both Kylie and Adidas constantly used to market the Falcon. Between Adidas and Kylie, they covered each of the key social media accounts. In a survey that was completed earlier this year, statistics show that 35% of the public use Instagram, 29% use Pinterest, 27% use Snapchat, 25% use LinkedIn, 24% use Twitter, and 22% use WhatsApp (Murnane, 2018). This data reflects the importance for companies to diverse themselves across multiple social media platforms. Utilizing multiple media social sites provided maximum public exposure and brand familiarity.

In conclusion, based on analysis results, this marketing campaign was successful. The amount of responses regarding the shoes has continued to grow exponentially. Neither the

company nor Kylie has made a post since September 7<sup>th</sup>. The Falcon continues to be one of the hottest topics on the market and not just in one location, but all around the world. The [#adidasfalcon](#) produced 26,300,000 postings. By those numbers, it's evident that this campaign was a success. Even though the company more than likely spent a small bundle in the initial cost for this campaign, it was well worth it. Without having a well-known celebrity as the face, it's more than likely that people wouldn't have been drawn towards the shoe as much as they were. Influential people have a strong impact on individuals in society. They're the ones who influence us on how to dress and sometimes act, especially someone as successful as Kylie Jenner. If a celebrity endorses a product, the public will usually purchase it. Adidas chose Kylie for this very reason and it was a success. The Falcon continues to sell itself, even though Adidas Originals has moved on to their next newest product.

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