WORD OF FOOT MARKETING: NIKE’S MARKETING EFFORTS PRIOR TO THE “JUST DO IT” CAMPAIGN

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The following faculty members have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content, and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts with a major in communication.

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ABSTRACT

“Just Do It.” The iconic slogan for Nike is now intrinsic to the Nike brand. The multifaceted slogan, created by Wieden+Kennedy, debuted in 1987, and has been associated with the Nike brand since. As the most highly researched Nike campaign, many key themes about “Just Do It” have been established pertaining to the Nike philosophy, irreverent nature of the advertisements, the focus on branding, the cultural resonance, the image-oriented and emotional advertising techniques, and focus on the consumer needs. The current research study postulates that marketing appeals and key themes associated with the “Just Do It” campaign were employed by Nike prior to the campaign.

To evaluate if Nike’s marketing tactics appeared prior to the “Just Do It” campaign, numerous primary and secondary sources were analyzed. To evaluate the strategic focus and intent behind Nike’s initial grassroots promotions and marketing campaigns preceding the campaign, the study employed a history analysis integrating an interpretation of Nike’s marketing and a contextual evaluation of print collateral, television spots, outdoor advertising, and media articles. This study was constructed from a cultural-historical and narrative-analysis and found that many marketing efforts prior to the “Just Do It” campaign paralleled many of the key themes outlined.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

“Just Do It.”

Nike has engrained itself so well into the social consciousness that this iconic three-word tagline is now embedded in the cultural vernacular of everyday life. The historic words were first chanted in Wieden+Kennedy’s $20 million cross-training campaign, which was originally intended to last one month. The multifaceted slogan intended to sell athletic shoes elevated Nike’s status into a global fashion brand accessible by all and brought about a lifestyle mantra possible for all to embrace. According to Dan Wieden of Weiden+Kennedy, “the resonance of ‘Just Do It’ was completely inadvertent and unforeseen … people started reading things into much more than sports.”

The versatility of the slogan not only spoke to physical fitness junkies and athletes, but also rang true with the cultural mentality of the “do something” generation. The boldness behind the ambiguous statement helped Nike construct an iconic brand; a brand that “embraces a larger image system that possesses both a philosophy and a personality.”

Who would have guessed this ubiquitous brand and multinational corporation transcended from the trunk of a 1964 Plymouth Valiant?

Phil Knight and the humble beginnings of Blue Ribbon Sports

As a collegiate runner at the University of Oregon and graduate of Stanford University’s MBA program, Phil Knight could have been described as many things: An avid runner,

2 David Griner, “35 Years That Changed Advertising: Key moments, shocker and subtle, since Adweek’s founding,” AdWeek, Nov. 11, 2013.
accomplished athlete, and successful accountant. But, aspiring shoes salesman? Though Nike was not officially incepted until 1971, the story of Nike began a decade before. In 1960, Knight was admitted into Stanford’s Graduate School of Business where he took a small business management course. The professor required students to write a paper on an emerging business opportunity. For the assignment, many of his classmates chose to write about computers and electronics. Not Knight. The professor, Frank Shallenberger, advised the students to focus on something they knew and enjoyed, so Knight did just that. Passionate about running and well versed in the sport, Knight knew firsthand the need for better quality and lower cost running shoes available in the United States. From the research he conducted, Knight was convinced there was tremendous market potential for running shoes, and the Japanese would be the dominant force. But, after completing the course, nothing more came from the assignment.

Upon graduation, Knight sold his car, borrowed money from his father, and took off on a sightseeing trip around the world. On Thanksgiving Day that year, Knight boarded a plane to Japan; a wistful excursion that turned into a fateful journey. While in Tokyo, Knight visited a sporting goods store where he found imitation Adidas shoes manufactured in Japan that were highly recommended by the sales clerks. Onitsuka Co., Ltd., produced the shoe under the brand name, Tiger. Knight was extremely impressed by the Onitsuka Tiger shoes, which prompted

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11 J.B. Strasser and Laurie Becklund, Swoosh: The story of Nike and the men who played there (Florida: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich), 12.
12 Rhodes, “Winning is a State of Mind at Nike.”
13 Strasser and Becklund, Swoosh: The story of Nike and the men who played there, 15.
14 The first Tiger track shoe was designed after the geta, the Japanese thonged slipper. Onitsuka did not have scientific methods in developing shoes; his ideas were simply imaginative. By 1962, Onitsuka was manufacturing sixty-six models of athletic shoes, Ibid., 20-21.
15 Ibid, 16.
him to board a train to Kobe, where Tiger was located. Upon his arrival, Knight requested an impromptu meeting with company executives, where he introduced himself as an American importer with plans to be a distributor of new track shoes. Onitsuka was so impressed with Knight’s proposed plan they promptly struck a distribution deal, which entitled them to exclusive selling of Tiger in the United States. When Onitsuka asked the name of Knight’s company, Knight had to come up with a name on the spot in order to close the business deal. Quick on his feet and under pressure, Knight replied with the name Blue Ribbon Sports (BRS). Knight’s reason behind the name was simple. Blue Ribbon made him think of winning, a philosophy that has since been engrained into the company.

It took months of waiting before Knight received his first order of his Tiger shoe samples. Five pairs of white and blue leather Tiger “Limber-Ups.” Shortly after, Knight met with University of Oregon track coach Bill Bowerman, and within an hour, the two settled on a partnership. With a handshake and $500 each, Blue Ribbon Sports (BRS) was officially in business.

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17 Strasser and Becklund, *Swoosh: The story of Nike and the men who played there*, 16.
18 Ibid.
19 Brian McIver, "And It’s Good Nike From Him," *The Daily Record*, Nov. 20, 2004. Knight wrote his father requesting he invest $37 into his fictitious company by mailing a money order to Onitsuka for some samples of their shoes, Strasser & Becklund, *Swoosh: The story of Nike and the men who played there*, 18.
21 Rhodes, “Winning is a State of Mind at Nike.” Knight has told two versions of how he came up with the name. The first, mentioned above, was his realization on the train ride that he would have to say he represented someone in his business pitch. Blue Ribbon Sports eluded him as a competitor. The second version was that he faltered when the question was translated. Having been out drinking the night before, he thought of Pabst Blue Ribbon beer. Strasser and Becklund, *Swoosh: The story of Nike and the men who played there*, 17.
22 In a 1993 interview with Donald Katz, speaking about the corporate future of Nike, Knight said, “There’s just too much emotion involved. I’ll never stop worrying about Nike, and we’ll never stop needing to win.” Katz, *Just Do It: The Nike Spirit in the Corporate World*, 90.
23 Knight received the first consignment of 200 pairs of Tiger running shoes in December 1963. McIver, "And It’s Good Nike From Him."
24 Prior to meeting, Knight sent two of his samples and a note to Bowerman. "Here is a sample of the hot new shoes coming out of Japan," he wrote. "If you feel the shoes are reasonable quality, you could probably save a little money since I wouldn’t make a profit off you. Bowerman wrote Knight back, “If you can set up some kind of contractual agreement with these people, for goodness’ sakes, do it. I’ll
Initially, Knight conducted business out of the trunk of his Plymouth. In its first year, BRS sold 1,300 pairs of shoes,\textsuperscript{27} sales that didn’t come easily. In addition to selling shoes out of his car on his days off from his accounting job, Knight would visit local track meets where he handed out free shoes. "They managed to create a need where none had existed," says Jennifer Black Groves, executive vice president of the Portland investment firm Black & Co.\textsuperscript{28}

**Bill Bowerman and his pursuit of the perfect running shoe**

Bowerman’s experience and passion as a track coach made him a perfect partner for Knight. Geoff Hollister, former Nike employee and runner for Bowerman said, “aside from Bowerman’s talents as a coach, motivator, mentor, and leader, he was always a free-thinking innovator.”\textsuperscript{29} Bowerman was a coach obsessed with making shoes better, to make runners better.\textsuperscript{30} He had a theory, “that an ounce off a running shoe might make enough difference to win a race.”\textsuperscript{31} He was a consummate inventor,\textsuperscript{32} innovator, and tinkerer with an incessant desire of creating the ultimate running shoe for his athletes. As a member of Bowerman’s track team in the 1950s, Knight recalled, “He wanted to do everything he could to help you win. Even then, he was pass on some of my ideas to you; but of course, I’ll expect you to make some kind of an arrangement with cutting your old coach in, too,” Strasser and Becklund, *Swoosh: The story of Nike and the men who played there*, 33.


\textsuperscript{26}According to the History section of the Nike, Inc.’s 2014 Marketline Company Portfolio, the founders formed an agreement in 1964 and turned their agreement into an official partnership in 1966. The company was incorporated as BRS in 1967 as the successor to the Blue Ribbon Sports partnership. 2014, "NIKE, Inc."

\textsuperscript{27}Rhodes, “Winning is a State of Mind at Nike.”

\textsuperscript{28}Kenneth Labich and Tim Carvell, “Nike vs. Reebok,” *Fortune* 132, no. 6:90-114.

\textsuperscript{29}2008, “Geoff Hollister Tells the Story of Nike From the Front Lines,” *Running & Fitnews* 26, no. 2: 10-12 3p.

\textsuperscript{30}Bowerman is quoted saying, “A shoe must be three things ... light, comfortable, and it’s got to go the distance.” in Katz, *Just Do It: The Nike Spirit in the Corporate World*.


\textsuperscript{32}Bill Bowerman Inducted into National Inventors Hall of Fame (Nike, Inc).

http://news.nike.com/news/bill-bowerman-inducted-into-national-inventors-hall-of-fame; Bowerman was not strictly an inventor and innovator of shoes. He experimented constantly. A notable concoction he created was an early version of Gatorade. The drink was so disgusting he said it tasted like “sheep’s urine,” Strasser and Becklund, *Swoosh: The story of Nike and the men who played there*, 28.
playing with shoes.”33 Bowerman, a seasoned track coach who understood running form, knew
the inefficiencies of the running shoes on the market and wanted his runners’ shoes held to a
higher standard.34 This led to his constant fiddling with shoes as he toyed with various
modifications to enhance the shoes available to his athletes. Known to make running shoes by
hand if necessary,35 Bowerman was already dedicated to providing quality shoes to athletes prior
to his shoe business partnership with Knight.

But, Bowerman was much more than a premier college track coach; he was a father figure
to many of his athletes. Though competitively driven, as a coach Bowerman’s goal was not simply
to turn his athletes into better athletes, but to plant moral values in their lives — to turn boys into
men, the men of Oregon.36 In their book Swoosh, the story of Nike, and the men who played there,
J.B. Strasser and Laurie Becklund explain, “Bowerman’s teams worked together, ate together,
socialized together, and in some cases lived together. He instilled in his men of Oregon a team
ethic.”37 During his time at the University of Oregon, Bowerman built a dynasty of athletes and left
an unparalleled coaching legacy.

**Something to believe in: Nike’s culture, philosophy and personality**

Brian McIver, an early Nike employee explained, “Sports is natural, instinctive, competitive, and
in the end, rewarding. All of us at Nike get to earn a living in that world, a world that is easy to
believe in.”38 Since its inception, Blue Ribbon Sports (Nike’s predecessor) has been anything but a

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33 Rhodes, “Winning is a State of Mind at Nike.” As a track coach, Bill Bowerman had always customized off-
the shelf shoes for his runners. He was consistently tinkering with shoes and athletes on his track
team were the guinea pigs who would try out his latest inventions. Geraldine Willigan, “High
Performance Marketing: an interview with Nike’s Phil Knight,” Harvard Business Review 70, (Jul.-
Aug. 1992), 92.

Management, 33, 4:171 3p.

35 Cannon, The Ultimate Book of Business Breakthroughs, 129.

36 Strasser and Becklund, Swoosh: The story of Nike and the men who played there, 22.

37 Ibid, 27.

38 Article states Phil Knight wrote the statement on the firm’s website. McIver, “And It’s Good Nike From
Him.”
traditional corporation. Co-founded by University of Oregon runner, Phil Knight and track and field coach, Bill Bowerman, the world of sports is intertwined into every aspect of the business. Nike thrives off the synergetic atmosphere of drive, ingenuity and teamwork, prominent characteristics of the sports world. As a runner, Knight knew being an athlete was more than early practices and grueling workouts. It’s a culture, a lifestyle, and a mentality. The sports-minded co-founders cultivated a work culture similar to that of an athletic team.

Bowerman first instilled this mindset in his athletes. He taught his athletes to seek a competitive edge in every aspect of their work from their physical fitness to their sportswear; a philosophy he carried over to Nike. Not only did Bowerman establish a goal-oriented, competitive work mentality in his athletes, but also his employees and himself. Bowerman had an unwavering dedication to improving athletes’ performances and believed better running shoes were the key to their success. This obsession cultivated a relentless drive to innovate, inspire, and grow, an energy that continues to motivate Nike employees today.

Drawing from their experience and athlete insight, Knight and Bowerman developed a corporate culture eerily similar to that of an athletic team. “Bowerman emphasized teamwork on and off the track,” Geoff Hollister, former Bowerman runner and Nike employee, recalls. “One of the lessons he told us was that we have a much better chance of being successful in life as part of a team than we ever will as an individual.” He emphasized team spirit while simultaneously

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40 In the article, “Nike vs. Reebok,” it says, “[Knight] wanted them to feel the adrenaline rush of athletes performing at the highest level. He also tried his best to re-create the towel-snapping camaraderie of the locker room.” Since the inception, Knight has worked towards a culture of motivated employees working towards the same goal versus an established hierarchal structure of power like most corporate businesses. Labich and Carvell, “Nike vs. Reebok.”
41 Cannon, The Ultimate Book of Business Breakthroughs, 129.
42 Ibid, 129.
43 2014. "NIKE, Inc."
44 2008, “Geoff Hollister Tells the Story of Nike From the Front Lines,” 10-12.
encouraging competition and constantly striving to get ahead. This established an intense environment within the company that future employees compared to top sports teams chasing titles and success. Athletes thrive off their passion for the sport and their internal fire for the game. The dedication and perseverance it takes for them to succeed in their respective athletic endeavors forms the person they are on and off the field. The camaraderie cultivated within the company under the “team” mentality of Bowerman and Knight created momentum that led them down the unconventional path taken in creating the powerhouse Nike has evolved into today.

Some say Knight’s entrepreneurial spirit contributed to his company’s future success in the sporting goods industry, which Richard Lipsey explains as “a veritable fountain of entrepreneurship.” Knight, on the other hand, believes it was his fortunate ability to pick good people that led to his success. “I can’t think of anything I’ve done that could be more important,” Knight explained. One of those “good people” was Jeff Johnson, a competitive runner from California who Knight hired as a full-time salesman.

Johnson, who had worked for Adidas for a stint of time, had seen firsthand the demand for modern athletic shoes. Like Knight and Bowerman, winning motivated Johnson. Not only did the innovative Japanese shoes lure him in, but the philosophy upon which they founded their company. He said, “My impression of this company is that we’re a bunch of athletes trying to beat everybody else.”

Nike lives its intense passion. It’s a company created by athletes for athletes. In the book Just Do It: The Nike Spirit in the Corporate World, Donald Katz states, “The company would

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45 Cannon, The Ultimate Book of Business Breakthroughs, 134.
47 Rhodes, “Winning is a State of Mind at Nike.”
48 Katz, Just Do It: The Nike Spirit in the Corporate World, 61.
49 Rhodes, “Winning is a State of Mind at Nike.”
50 Ibid.
51 Alex Wipperfürth, Brand Hijack: Marketing without Marketing (New York: Penguin Group, 2005), 86.
be dedicated to the proposition that authentic athletic desires would help create authentic products for authentic athletes. The cause of the individual athlete would become the company’s cause.\textsuperscript{53} Since its inception Nike has been a company about better gear and better athletes.\textsuperscript{54} The company actively recruited its staff from the athletic community,\textsuperscript{55} a key factor in Nike’s management\textsuperscript{56} establishing themselves as athletes\textsuperscript{57} and perceived shoe experts. “I wasn’t thinking about markets or fortunes,” Bowerman explains. “I was making better shoes a foot at a time.”\textsuperscript{58} In fact, in the early days of the company, Bowerman, in his pursuit of innovation, would completely destroy the Tiger brand shoes to see how he could make improvements to make them lighter and better.\textsuperscript{59}

Bowerman’s dedication and desire to improve footwear was the driving force in cultivating a culture of innovation. In the 2009 article, “What’s your waffle shoe?” Steve Strauss explained, “[what] Nike did right, right from the start was to innovate. Great businesses, big and small, alike, dare to be different and try new things.”\textsuperscript{60} Initially, BRS had three employees — all of whom were runners — who had one goal: to understand the consumers’ wants and needs, and give them that from both a technological and design perspective.\textsuperscript{61} Nike built its athletic shoe empire off the simple notion of understanding what its consumer needed and figuring out how to satisfy that need through innovative solutions. Innovation combined with thinking big fueled the growth of the company and served a crucial role developing the brand and culture. In the Nike case study, “The

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext[52]{Rhodes, “Winning is a State of Mind at Nike.”}
\footnotetext[53]{Katz, \textit{Just Do It: The Nike Spirit in the Corporate World}, 25.}
\footnotetext[54]{2008, “Geoff Hollister Tells the Story of Nike From the Front Lines,” 10-12.}
\footnotetext[55]{Cannon, \textit{The Ultimate Book of Business Breakthroughs}, 129.}
\footnotetext[56]{According to Katz, “The early Nike guys, on the other hand, were athletes ... the young company acquired a decided preference for athletes over teams or the rule-makers controlling sport.” Katz, \textit{Just Do It: The Nike Spirit in the Corporate World}, 24-25.}
\footnotetext[57]{Ibid.}
\footnotetext[58]{Rhodes, “Winning is a State of Mind at Nike.”}
\footnotetext[60]{Steve Strauss, “What’s your waffle shoe?” \textit{Oregon Business Magazine} 32, 9: 8.}
\footnotetext[61]{Willigan, “High Performance Marketing: an interview with Nike’s Phil Knight,” 90.}
\end{footnotes}
Swoosh of Creativity,” Simona Botti, associate professor of marketing at the London Business School states, “Nike’s success lies in its ability to understand how innovation can be used to reinforce brand identity.” In the same case study, Sunhil Chandiramani, Partner and Leader, Advisory Services, EY, says, “Nike puts innovation at the heart of all its efforts. To run ahead of the competition, Nike took a unique approach for its shoe manufacturing process and occupied the mind space as a maker of athletic shoes.” Nike’s establishment is rooted in their intuitive understanding of the culture of athletics, while its initial success stems from their genuine interest in the needs and desires of its “core consumers,” the athletes performing at the highest level of the sport. In the early days, Knight said, “when we were just a running shoe company and almost all our employees were runners, we understood the consumer very well … We and the consumer were one and the same.”

Prefontaine: A Bowerman protégé and the spirit of Nike

Nike’s dedication to authenticity in its company, brand and shoes was apparent in the employees it hired. Notably, the employee who serves as the foundation of the Nike culture and a walking personification of the Nike philosophy is athlete Steve “Pre” Prefontaine. In his book, Just Do It, Donald Katz states, “the Nike historical figure whose memory and mythos evokes the most palpable emotion among Nike veterans is that of another Bowerman protégé, Pre. He was free-spirited, gutsy, possessed warrior determination and was driven by a competitive fire. Not only was he a great athlete, but he also shared Nike’s disdain for established authority. He was

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62 Sanusi, et. al., “The Swoosh of Creativity.”
63 Ibid.
64 Willigan, “High Performance Marketing: an interview with Nike’s Phil Knight,” 94.
65 Ibid, 94.
66 Katz, Just Do It: The Nike Spirit in the Corporate World, 63.
68 Cannon, The Ultimate Book of Business Breakthroughs, 133. Inside the Steve Prefontaine Center at Nike headquarters, is a display case holding Pre’s customized shoes and a letter from the American Athletics Union (AAU), “warning the ‘irascible, charismatic athlete to take the word ‘Nike’ off of his
amongst the Nike athletes described as “outlaws with morals” or “jocks with attitude,” but nonetheless, an athlete.

Pre not only embodied the characteristics and personality that encapsulated the Nike brand; he was the foundation of it. Knight explains, “Pre was a guy full of cockiness and guts. Pre’s spirit is the cornerstone of this company’s soul.” According to the book Sneaker Wars, “Knight and Bowerman both regarded Steve Prefontaine as an emblematic athlete for their brand.” As America’s best-known track and field athlete at the age of 22, more than Nike took notice of Pre. In the summer of 1970 a picture of Pre coming across the finish line adorned the Sports Illustrated cover; with the headline “America’s distance prodigy,” he was Sports Illustrated’s cover boy.

Pre’s prestige not only made him a phenomenal runner known worldwide, but also benefitted the Nike brand. His indisputable achievements and iconoclastic personality helped establish a trusted running brand, and as Nike’s first sponsored athlete, Pre converted many people to the brand. His association with Nike furthered the validity of their brand, whose priority was, and always had been, the success of the athlete.

According to Alex Wipperfürth, in his book Brand Hijack: Marketing without Marketing, successful brands are successful because the employees believe in the brand. “Unless you have dedicated buy-in from your employees … the vibe will never cross over to your consumers.

69 Cannon, The Ultimate Book of Business Breakthroughs, 133.
70 2014. “40 Years of Prefontaine: Steve Prefontaine: Fighting spirit.”
71 Smit, Sneaker wars: The enemy brothers who founded Adidas and Puma and the family feud that forever changed the business of sport, 102.
73 Ibid.
74 “Phil Knight’s idea of running the company was to make high-quality, low-cost shoes, get some top athletes to endorse them and let his sales force sell the product.” Prefontaine exemplifies how Knight’s mindset of endorsing top athletes and letting them market the brand proved beneficial for the company. Randall Lane, “You Are What You Wear,” Forbes 158, no. 9 (October 14, 1996): 44.
75 2014. “40 Years of Prefontaine: Steve Prefontaine: Fighting spirit.”
76 Around the company headquarters, Prefontaine has been a spiritual model of what employees dub a “Nike guy” –a brilliant athletes with an iconoclastic personality. Lane, “You Are What You Wear,” 44.
77 McIver, “And It’s Good Nike From Him.”
Employees serve as credible role models, aligning the internal values of the company with the external values and principles of the brand.\textsuperscript{78} In their book, \textit{Swoosh: the story of Nike and the man who played there}, J.B. Strasser and Laurie Becklund state, “Nike was shaped by the personalities of the men who built it, many of them outrageous characters.”\textsuperscript{79} The story of Nike, the success of Nike, and the culture of Nike are intertwined with the co-founders and the athletes they initially employed. The internal values of the brand were the internal values of the employees themselves; therefore, buy-in to the brand was inevitable and genuine. They were the walking (and running) endorsements of the very brand they built. Nike has continued to be successful because of their\textsuperscript{80} “shared commitment of ‘keeping the magic of the sport alive,’”\textsuperscript{81} and establishing their core values\textsuperscript{82} in the incubate years of the company, the underdog years. For Nike, this was during the time of Blue Ribbon Sports.

\textbf{Growth of Blue Ribbon Sports}

In order for Nike to evolve into the global brand it is today, BRS needed to shift out of Knight’s car trunk. Once Jeff Johnson, Nike’s first employee, was hired by Blue Ribbon’s dynamic duo, he didn’t waste any time increasing sales. A majority of the business accrued came from mail order ads Johnson ran in \textit{Long Distance Log}, direct sales or word-of-mouth drop-ins [see appendix 1].\textsuperscript{83} Initially, he ran the business from his apartment, but as the Tiger brand grew in prestige amongst competitive runners, athletes began showing up to his door. “By 1966 it just got...
to be too much,” Johnson said. “So I rented some space next to a beauty parlor.” Johnson opened Blue Ribbon’s first retail store in Santa Monica, California without Knight or Bowerman’s approval; a decision that positively influenced sales. By 1967, revenues were near $100,000 and the company was selling 10,000 to 12,000 pairs of track shoes a year. The following year, BRS opened its first retail store in Eugene, Oregon, and an east coast store in Wellesley, Massachusetts. It wasn’t until 1969 that Knight quit his auditing job to manage the Blue Ribbon Sports company full time.

Simultaneously, as Blue Ribbon Sports grew in stature and prestige amongst the serious running community, Bowerman was at the forefront of a jogging epidemic. Like Knight, Bowerman was a travel enthusiast who was highly influenced by one of his foreign excursions. This influential trip was one to New Zealand in 1961. Bowerman was amazed by the number of people who were running for leisure in the streets and wanted to see something like that happen back in the United States. Upon his return to Eugene, Bowerman introduced a series of jogging clinics. Following the clinics, Bowerman co-authored the best-seller book, *Jogging: A Physical Fitness Program for All Ages*. By the early 1970s, the jogging epidemic had taken over the United States, and Nike was at the forefront of creating the international running boom of the time. Many even credited Bowerman with instigating the craze of running and jogging for fun in the sixties.

Blue Ribbon’s sales of the Tiger shoe brand thrived from the running boom, yet inventory replenishment from Onitsuka was seemingly non-existent. Frustration for Johnson intensified. “God, we are really screwing our customers,” he wrote Knight. “I think we need a new motto for

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84 Ibid.
85 Sanusi, et. al., “The Swoosh of Creativity.”
86 2014. “NIKE, Inc.”
87 Rhodes, “Winning is a State of Mind at Nike.”
89 Ibid, 47.
90 McIver, “And It’s Good Nike from Him.”
our letterhead ... ‘If you want it, we don’t have it and can’t get it.’”91 Onitsuka took notice of the
brand’s success in the United States and set up five regional distributors, which deprived Blue
Ribbon Sports of its exclusivity.92 Additionally, Onitsuka suggested a joint venture with Blue Ribbon
Sports with the condition that they would own 51 percent of the stock.93 Knight was offended by
the proposal causing the business relationship with Onitsuka to turn sour during 1971.94 By 1972,
BRS’s agreement with Onitsuka Tiger has completely terminated95 as the companies separated
over distribution disputes.96 BRS transitioned from being distributors of athletic footwear to
designers and manufacturers. The first brand Blue Ribbon Sports would carry was Nike. Blue
Ribbon Sports struck a deal with Nissho-Iwai Corp., the sixth largest Japanese trading company,97
and began producing Nike branded track shoes adorned with the Nike swoosh. In the article “The
Force Behind the Nike Empire,” Jack Krentzman explained, “with the addition of the swoosh logo
... and the appropriate naming of Nike ... this fresh company was able to continue production by
establishing a deal with one of Tiger’s competitors.”98

The Nike swoosh

At Knight’s request, Carolyn Davidson, graphic design student at Portland State University,
designed the Nike swoosh for $3599 in 1969, predating the Nike shoe brand and company. The
swoosh was deceptively simple, yet through the years has proved synonymous with the Nike
brand.100 Knight had asked Davidson to design a shoe stripe, supportive of the shoe. He wanted a

91 Strasser and Becklund, Swoosh: The story of Nike and the men who played there, 103.
92 Rhodes, “Winning is a State of Mind at Nike.”
93 Strasser and Becklund, Swoosh: The story of Nike and the men who played there, 113.
94 Sanusi, et. al., “The Swoosh of Creativity.”
95 2014. “NIKE, Inc.”
97 Rhodes, “Winning is a State of Mind at Nike.”
99 Brian Howard, “‘I Never Get Tired of Looking at It’: Woman who designed Nike’s swoosh explains how
change encounter with Phil Knight led to its inception 40 years ago,” DailyMail, June 16, 2011.
logo that was functional, distinctive, and visible from a distance. \(^{101}\) When Davidson presented the
swoosh to Knight, he declared, “I don’t love it, but it will probably grow on me.” \(^{102}\) The swoosh, which depicts an arc of movement, was designed to represent motion and speed. \(^{103}\) Additionally, the swoosh was fundamental in the emergence of the brand name, Nike.

Originally, Johnson suggested the name “Nike” to Knight. \(^{104}\) Johnson informed Knight that the name came to him in a dream, and his inspiration stemmed from the Nike swoosh, which he believed looked like the wings of Nike, the Winged Goddess of Victory. \(^{105}\) Since then, the brand and the swoosh have immersed connotative meaning, such as flight, victory and speed, which are attributed to the mythological associations of Nike. \(^{106}\) According to Stephan A. Greyser, Harvard Business School professor, “The swoosh has become the living, vibrant symbol of the firm,” an outcome Knight would not have predicted based on his complacency at its introduction.

The Nike swoosh, an autogram \(^{108}\) of Nike, has evolved to represent the brand values of Nike. James Joice, client director for JKR, explained, “from something ambiguous, the swoosh has been stuffed with the most aspirational sporting associations — skill, determination, courage, and above all else, success.” \(^{109}\) Doused with symbolic meaning of both sporting associations and company values, the Nike swoosh offers consumers the opportunity of interpretation. Nike’s

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\(^{101}\) Strasser and Becklund, Swoosh: The story of Nike and the men who played, 126.

\(^{102}\) 2013. “Champions of Design: Nike.”


\(^{104}\) When Johnson suggested the name, almost no one at the company knew who Nike was, but the name seemed more palatable than Knight’s futuristic-sounding suggestion, Dimension Six. 1997, “Knight, Philip H.” Current Biography: Biography Reference Bank (H.W. Wilson).

\(^{105}\) Johnson’s reasoning for naming the company Nike over Dimension Six was because “some of the most memorable names in American business had only one or two syllables and included seldom used letters like “X” and “K.” Katz, Just Do It: The Nike Spirit in the Corporate World, 62.

\(^{106}\) Redding, “What Does the Nike Logo Mean?”

\(^{107}\) Allan Brettman, “Creator of Nike’s Famed Swoosh Remembers Its Conception 40 Years Later,” The Oregonian, June 16, 2011. According to Randall Lane, “Nike–just the Nike logo, that curvy, speedy-looking blur that has become as ubiquitous as Mickey Mouse.” Lane, “You Are What You Wear,” 43.

\(^{108}\) “Autograms are symbols with no inherent meaning that come to represent something specific in our mind. They are empty vessels that can be filled with meaning all their own.” 2013. “Champions of Design: Nike.”

\(^{109}\) “Champions of Design: Nike.”
swoosh, symbolic of authenticity and a spirit of determination,\textsuperscript{110} is now embedded into the public consciousness. The brand identity of Nike is entwined with the logo; therefore, Nike must keep the swoosh [see appendix 2]\textsuperscript{111} highly visible and highly valued with their consumers.\textsuperscript{112} According to Jenna McNaney, blogger and marketing analyst, “Nike’s success and dominance in the world of sports has thrived on their ability to construct their brand image, visibility, and giving the company logo extremely high value.”\textsuperscript{113}

The debut of the swoosh: The Nike Cortez\textsuperscript{114}

According to the article, “Nike is Bringing Back a Forgotten Piece of Sneaker History,” “The Cortez was Nike’s first shoe -- the rest is history."\textsuperscript{115} Though the Nike Cortez is said to be the first Nike brand [see appendices 3 and 4]\textsuperscript{116} sneaker to hit the market, as Blue Ribbon Sports transitioned from a distributor of Onitsuka Tiger to its own company, it was not the debut of the shoe design. According to the article, “Get your kicks in Japan,” one of Nike’s best-known silhouettes,\textsuperscript{117} the Nike Cortez,\textsuperscript{118} was based on the Onitsuka Tiger Corsair, designed by

\textsuperscript{110} Goldman and Papson, Nike Culture: The Sign of the Swoosh, 1.
\textsuperscript{111} The logo has since evolved from the original design and as of 1996, the word “Nike” was eliminated from the logo as it was deemed superfluous in conjunction with the swoosh. 2013. “Champions of Design: Nike.”
\textsuperscript{112} Goldman and Papson, Nike Culture: The Sign of the Swoosh, 2.
\textsuperscript{113} Jenna McNany, “How Nike Re-defined the Power of Brand Image,” ConceptDrop, n.d.
\textsuperscript{114} Bowerman and Knight originally wanted to call the sneaker the Aztec because the 1968 Olympics were to be held in Mexico City, but Adidas already had the Azteca Gold. Bowerman decided the model should aspire to crush the Azteca. Answering the question, “Who conquered the Aztecs? Knight said, “Cortez. Hernan Cortes.” And the shoe was named. Brendan Dunne, “Nike Is Bringing Back a Forgotten Piece of Sneaker History,” Sole Collector, Sept. 6, 2015.
\textsuperscript{115} Dunne, “Nike Is Bringing Back a Forgotten Piece of Sneaker History.”
\textsuperscript{116} There is speculation to this statement. The first advertisement to picture a shoe with the Nike swoosh emblem was of the Nike Cortez featured in the January 1973 edition of the Long Distance Log [appendix 3]. But, the first advertisement featuring a Nike shoe was the April 1972 edition of the Long Distance Log [appendix 4].
\textsuperscript{118} The dates surrounding the shoe’s debut at retail get a little fuzzy. Nike claims the Cortez debuted in 1972. Dunne, “Nike Is Bringing Back a Forgotten Piece of Sneaker History.” This notion is supported by Kenny Moore, who mentions Nike’s first big push for sales coming at the 1972 National Sporting Goods Association show in Chicago. Strasser and Becklund, Swoosh: The story of Nike and the men who played there.
Bowerman in 1968.\textsuperscript{119} What made the sneaker so special was the cushioning, which featured a hard sponge rubber embedded in layers of softer sponge rubber, what one writer called “a long distance-ready ride.”\textsuperscript{120} Onitsuka Tiger started a legal battle over the design — but in the end, both companies were allowed to sell the shoe.\textsuperscript{121}

Except for the logo, Blue Ribbon had indeed copied Tiger’s best-selling running shoe model. The fundamentally indistinguishable models confused retailers, and although Tiger was an established and trusted brand in the United States, dealers ordered Nike for one simple notion — dealer loyalty.\textsuperscript{122} Kenny Moore, University of Oregon runner and Bowerman’s inspiration for the original Cortez, says, “the model was pivotal in that it made BRS a viable company.”\textsuperscript{123}

Not only viable, but visible. \textit{Just Do It: The Nike Spirit in the Corporate World} pegs the 1972 Olympic trials in Eugene, Oregon, as the brand’s debut for the public.\textsuperscript{124} Bowerman persuaded his 1972 marathoners to wear the Nike shoes. Subsequently, the runners wearing Nike shoes performed well at the trials and the company piggy-backed off their success by assertively promoting their shoes as the shoes worn by four of the top seven finishers in the U.S. Olympic

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{119} Arita, “Get your kicks in Japan.” Additional reports suggest the shoe was released in 1972 as the Tiger Corsair and was renamed following the termination of the relationship between the companies. Beaudry, “25: Classic Kicks.” The article, “Bill Bowerman: Nike’s Original Innovator” suggests the dawn of the original Cortez was in 1965. This was Bowerman’s first breakthrough with Tiger shoes. Kenny Moore, University of Oregon runner, endured a stress fracture from a spike-inflicted injury during a meet. Moore’s X-ray showed a break across the third metatarsal. When Bowerman learned of the break, he ripped the shoe apart where he realized there was cushioning in the heel and forefoot but no arch support. In June of 1965, Bowerman sent Onitsuka instructions and samples of his new shoe he designed to fix the problem in the Onitsuka Tiger TG-22, the shoe Moore wore when he was injured. 2015, “Bill Bowerman: Nike’s Original Innovator.” Nike News. Sept. 2, 2015.
\item \textsuperscript{120} Dunne, “Nike Is Bringing Back a Forgotten Piece of Sneaker History.” The shoe was built to “go the distance” at 100-plus miles and featured the running world’s first full-length dual-density midsole and herringbone-pattern outsole for traction. Beaudry, “25: Classic Kicks.”
\item \textsuperscript{121} Onitsuka Tiger tried to claim that a German professor, and not Bowerman, had actually designed the Cortez. The article states, “the professor refuted this claim in an affidavit taken by Nike lawyers,” Dunne, “Nike Is Bringing Back a Forgotten Piece of Sneaker History.”
\item \textsuperscript{122} “Years of simple honesty, of unquestioning acceptance of returns, were paying off ... They hadn’t heard of Nike, but they knew Blue Ribbon Sports, and the company had never lied to them,” Strasser and Becklund, \textit{Swoosh: The story of Nike and the men who played}, 135.
\item \textsuperscript{123} Ibid. When the Nike brand hit the market in 1972, they were initially popular amongst professional players and hard-core sports enthusiasts. 1997, “Knight, Philip H.”
\item \textsuperscript{124} Katz, \textit{Just Do It: The Nike Spirit in the Corporate World}.
\end{itemize}
trials [see appendix 5]. Word of foot advertising stemming from the trials exponentially increased exposure for Nike.

Not only was Nike establishing a credible name with serious athletes, but with casual runners as well. Jogging and aerobic pursuits had created a new market; people who could barely run wanted to jog in their Nikes. “With the jogging boom in the 1970s, Nike’s advantage turned into a tidal wave,” says Barbara Smit, author of Sneaker Wars. “At the forefront of the movement, Bill Bowerman led many thousands of otherwise unathletic Americans on daily jogs — and this newly formed army of leisurely runners turned to Nike en masse.” The flourishing new market created from the aerobic and jogging boom was especially receptive to Nike, which was making innovative and comfortable shoes for casual joggers.

Cultivating innovation

Bowerman created Nike’s game-changer Nike Waffle Trainers (also referred to as “Nike Wally Waffles”) using his waffle iron. Patented in 1974, the waffle outsole is believed to have given Nike an initial impetus into the new shoe market. Though released to the public in 1973

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125 Cannon, The Ultimate Book of Business Breakthroughs, 135. In the October 1973 edition of the Long Distance Log, an advertisement featuring the Nike Cortez stated in its body copy “...the shoe whose first prototype took four of the first seven places at the 1972 U.S. Olympic Marathon Trials in Eugene, Oregon.”
126 Katz, Just Do It: The Nike Spirit in the Corporate World, 65. As the jogging boom was beginning and the masses needed a shoe that could handle long runs on the road, the Cortez satisfied that need with its thick sole. Dunne, "Nike Is Bringing Back a Forgotten Piece of Sneaker History."
127 Smit, Sneaker wars: The enemy brothers who founded Adidas and Puma and the family feud that forever changed the business of sport, 188.
128 The shoes addressed the obvious inefficiencies of traditional canvas and rubber sneakers. Katz, Just Do It: The Nike Spirit in the Corporate World, 65.
129 Strauss, “What’s your waffle shoe?”
[see appendix 6], the Oregon cross country team wore the shoe in 1971 as they won the NCAA title. Bowerman and Geoff Hollister, manager of the Eugene Blue Ribbon Sports retail outlet at the time, had developed a lightweight, spikeless track shoe intended for all surfaces and all seasons.

Although originally designed for distance runners, Bowerman was intrigued with the Astroturf the University of Oregon installed in its stadium; subsequently, Bowerman saw the need for a new type of shoe. Bowerman gave the Oregon football team a few trial pairs to test. The team responded favorably, and that fall the team took the field wearing lemon-yellow waffle football shoes. Dan Fouts, Nike legend and Oregon Duck quarterback, wore and promoted the original waffle shoes: turf shoes with soles shaped like waffles. In 1974, the breakthrough Waffle Trainers became the best-selling trainer in the U.S., and for several years Nike dominated the market because other companies saw the waffle shoe as a gimmick. “The Waffle,” Johnson said, “gave us the credibility we needed in the growing running market.” They were the most worn shoes at the 1976 Olympics, and by 1977, Nike debuted bright blue, yellow-swooshed Nikes with a black, waffle-shaped sole that felt like bedroom slippers.

At that time, the majority of Nike’s meager advertising budget went to a single monthly advertisement on the back cover of Runner’s World. Advertising efforts were focused on selling

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134 Advertisement for the Oregon Waffle ran in the 1973 edition of Runner’s World [see appendix 6].
136 Ibid.
137 2008, “Geoff Hollister Tells the Story of Nike From the Front Lines,” 10-12.
140 Katz, Just Do It: The Nike Spirit in the Corporate World, 47.
141 McIver, “And It’s Good Nike From Him.”
142 Rhodes, “Winning is a State of Mind at Nike.”
143 Ibid.
the innovative shoes Nike was producing. Nike introduced a popular trend through their advertisements featuring the flared and waffled shoes. \footnote{Sylvia Stead, “Centrepiece shoes: Balm for weary soles, running has acquired status and the canvas sneaker has given way to ultra-modern (and expensive) foot comforters.” \textit{The Globe and Mail (Canada)}, Nov 11, 1978.} “Citizens who could barely run out of the path of an oncoming vehicle,” explained Katz, “suddenly wanted to jog around the neighborhood in a pair of bright blue Nikes.” \footnote{Katz, \textit{Just Do It: The Nike Spirit in the Corporate World}, 65. By the end of the decade, one out of every three Americans owned a pair of running shoes, and half of all running shoes sold were Nikes. \footnote{Ibid, 66.} Larry Hampton, international marketing manager at Adidas France, met with Nike executives in February of 1978. Though Hampton considered the meeting uneventful, from the meeting Hampton learned Nike was soaring ahead in sales compared to Adidas. At that time, a popular Adidas shoe sold around a hundred thousand pairs in the United States per year while BRS sold about the same number of waffle trainers every month. \footnote{Smit, \textit{Sneaker wars: The enemy brothers who founded Adidas and Puma and the family feud that forever changed the business of sport}, 189. The Waffle Trainer became the best-selling training shoe in the United States. \textit{Willigan, “High Performance Marketing: an interview with Nike’s Phil Knight,”} 92.} Nike’s sales rose considerably with the waffle shoe, success that can be traced to Nike’s core value of innovation. Journalist Steve Strauss suggests, “the waffle sole begat a culture of innovation.” \footnote{Strauss, “What’s your waffle shoe?”} 146

Original shoes were the essence of Nike; the company was at the forefront of introducing novel shoes to the public. The next big shoe in their collection was Nike Air, the first air-sole footwear-cushioning unit engineered with former NASA employee Frank Rudy. \footnote{2014. “NIKE, Inc.”} The shoe consisted of a new air-bubble system that used pressurized gas to cushion the athlete’s feet and promote better performance. \footnote{Mclver, “And It’s Good Nike From Him.”} According to award-winning author Donald Katz, “The shoes had already become fixed in the public imagination as tools in aid of general return to health, but now, as the desire for things ‘high tech’ invaded most consumer market products, Nike became known

\begin{itemize}
\item[145] Sylvia Stead, “Centrepiece shoes: Balm for weary soles, running has acquired status and the canvas sneaker has given way to ultra-modern (and expensive) foot comforters.” \textit{The Globe and Mail (Canada)}, Nov 11, 1978.
\item[147] Ibid, 66.
\item[149] Strauss, “What’s your waffle shoe?”
\item[150] 2014. “NIKE, Inc.”
\item[151] Mclver, “And It’s Good Nike From Him.”
\end{itemize}
for the first overtly high-tech shoes."\textsuperscript{152} By 1979, Nike introduced its first pair of running shoes, the Tailwind, with its patented air-sole technology.\textsuperscript{153}

Nike’s propensity for innovation and the fact they entered the market during the running craze\textsuperscript{154} put the company in a position to be extremely successful. Their success was soon evident; Nike became the top-selling athletic shoe in the United States as their sales raced past Adidas in 1979.\textsuperscript{155} According to “The swoosh of creativity,” since its inception, Nike has “been pushing the technological boundaries of innovation to offer its customers new products and also differentiate itself from its competitors.”\textsuperscript{156} The pervasive mindset of innovation engrained deeply into the culture of Nike served as a force for continued technological innovation.

**Nike’s rise to dominance**

In the late 1970s, Nike also began to penetrate the college basketball shoe market in what a Nike official referred to as “an aggressive attack.”\textsuperscript{157} During this successful permeation of the market, Nike signed endorsement deals with 17 major colleges. Sports marketing executive, Sonny Vaccaro, was behind a majority of these endorsement deals of the late 1970s. Originally, Vaccaro went to Nike with an idea to give college and high-school basketball teams all they shoes they needed and pay the college coaches personal endorsement fees.\textsuperscript{158} Nike gave Vaccaro two

\textsuperscript{152} Katz, *Just Do It: The Nike Spirit in the Corporate World*, 67.
\textsuperscript{153} 2014. “NIKE, Inc.”
\textsuperscript{154} Though the running craze began in the sixties, 1979 was a monumental year in the running epidemic. Researchers had recently discovered endorphins which produced the “jogger’s high.” They theorized that stress from exercise stimulates the production of endorphins, which can alleviate pain and effect mood; a natural response that acts incentive for participating in the craze. Weissman, Rozanne, “Are You Sure You Want to Exercise?” *The Washington Post*, Jun. 22, 1979.
\textsuperscript{156} Sanusi, et. al., “The Swoosh of Creativity.”
years to try his approach to marketing, which worked, as he was the main contributor to the signing of the 17 major colleges.

The 1980s were a time of increased visibility and promotion for Nike. The industry’s move toward public ownership that began in 1980 increased visibility with media coverage. In December of that year Nike went public, and Knight became an instant multimillionaire. Also in the early 1980s, runners endorsed by Nike continually won races; notably, these included Alberto Salazar and Joan Benoit Samuelson. Salazar won the New York City Marathon in 1980, 1981, and 1982 — “the golden years for Nike” — fostering Nike’s continued influence on the international running boom. After an orthopedic surgeon performed arthroscopic surgery on her 17 days prior to the Olympic trials in Olympia, Joan Benoit Samuelson won the first women’s marathon at the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles. Nike had funded Samuelson’s surgery as part of the Athletes Assistance program. “This was a natural extension of what Nike had always primarily focused on: giving athletes everything they needed to become their best,” explained Geoff Hollister, Nike employee. “This allowed for worldwide recognition of the company that no calculated corporate sponsorship today could have ever imagined.”

Nike signs athletes with emotional appeal. These are people with the character, the personality, and the fortitude of a true athlete. They contract those who embody the Nike values of grit and determination. These were the athletes they believed in, and the athletes who believed in

them. “We take the time to understand our athletes, and we have to build long-term relationships with them,” said Knight. “We like them and they like us. We win their hearts as well as their feet.” 166

The driving force behind Nike was Knight’s “…ability to attract popular sports heroes to his cause and then build new product lines and marketing campaigns around them.” 167 According to Katz, “Knight once said that the company’s relationship with premier athletes addressed the fact that while an internal ad page of Sports Illustrated could be had for $50,000, the cover remained unpurchasable.” 168 According to James Twitchell, from 1972 to 1987, Nike grew with only modest reliance on advertising, 169 yet saw exponential growth over that time period. This is because the marketing budget wasn’t allocated to advertisements; it was allocated to athletes. The dominance they had from a marketing standpoint didn’t come from purchasing ads; it came from purchasing athletes. The “word of foot” promotion of athletes, compared to traditional word of mouth marketing of other brands, was far more successful for Nike. The influence Nike’s endorsement deals had on the company is most apparent through their key endorsement deal in the mid 1980s, Michael Jordan. 170

“During the middle of the 1980s, Nike was slightly countercultural, decidedly down-in-the-dumps … at the far end of a jogging boom,” said Katz. “Industry experts and securities analysts agreed that Nike had ‘run out of feet.’” 171 As sales faltered and began to stagnate in the mid-1980s, Knight eventually regained momentum 172 in the industry by returning to Nike’s core strategy of building new products around a popular athlete. In an attempt to contract Michael Jordan on his initial visit to Oregon, Nike executives pitched “Air Jordan,” a line of athletic clothing reflecting

166 Willigan, “High Performance Marketing: An interview with Nike’s Phil Knight,” 100.
167 Labich and Carvell, “Nike vs. Reebok.”
168 Katz, Just Do It: The Nike Spirit in the Corporate World, 80.
169 Goldman and Papson, Nike Culture: The Sign of the Swoosh, 74.
171 Katz, Just Do It: The Nike Spirit in the Corporate World, 7.
172 Nike knew that with the decline in sales they had to do more than produce another running shoe. Air Jordan was the product of a concentrated focus to “shake things up” within their product lines. Willigan, “High Performance Marketing: an interview with Nike’s Phil Knight,” 96.
Jordan’s personality, to him.\textsuperscript{173} The recruitment technique was a success as former Nike employee, \textit{Rob Strasser}, dubbed the "man who saved Nike," negotiated an endorsement deal with young Michael Jordan.\textsuperscript{174}

For the first shoe in the Jordan line, Nike created a special black and red model of Air Jordans that Michael wore in his exhibition game. NBA Commissioner David Stern vetoed the shoes because they “didn’t conform to his teammates.”\textsuperscript{175} Although Jordan was not allowed to wear the black and red shoes, the campaign for the Air Jordan shoe launched anyway.\textsuperscript{176} It included billboards, posters, and commercials with Jordan leaping in slow motion with the slogan, “Who says man was not meant to fly?” The Jordan endorsement created a product and personality that intertwined and “catapulted Nike into shoe star status.”\textsuperscript{177} The Air Jordan campaign helped turn the company around as Nike regained the market lead of the sneaker craze.\textsuperscript{178} By the end of the 1980s, the NBA moved heavily into product marketing,\textsuperscript{179} and Nike had the most iconic sportsman.\textsuperscript{180}

Following the success of Air Jordan, Nike ran an estimated $7 million campaign featuring the original Beatles recording of “Revolution,”\textsuperscript{181} signifying the first time in advertising history an original Beatles recording had been licensed for advertising purposes.\textsuperscript{182} Knight told \textit{The New York Times}, “We saw in the late 1970s what we thought was the running revolution, but it wasn’t. It was

\textsuperscript{173} Patton, \textit{The Selling of Michael Jordan}.
\textsuperscript{175} Anthony Cotton, “In Chicago, Jordan is the Prince of the City; North Carolina’s favorite son is the talk of the Bulls’ Town – and of the NBA,” \textit{The Washington Post}, Nov 4, 1984.
\textsuperscript{176} Stanfel, “Nike, Inc.”
\textsuperscript{177} Margo Berman and Robyn Blakeman, \textit{The Brains Behind Great Ad Campaigns} (United States: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc, 2009), 165.
\textsuperscript{179} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{180} McIver, "And It's Good Nike From Him."
\textsuperscript{182} Lane, “You Are What You Wear,” 46.
the first shot of a fitness revolution." Therefore, the use of the Beatles song in the advertisement was two-fold. Nike wanted to do more than simply communicate a drastic alteration in shoes; they wanted to signify that the way Americans felt about fitness, exercise, and wellness was, in fact, a revolution. Nike employees believed the campaign launch of The Visible Air, featuring Nike’s Air-Sole air-cushioned shoe, was an athletic shoe revolution. Nike’s slogan for the campaign, “Nike-Air is not a shoe, it’s a revolution.” According to Randall Lane of Forbes, “The ads were a tremendous hit, and Nike Air became the standard for the industry immediately thereafter.” Following the seminal campaign was the debut of the indelible and ubiquitous slogan, “Just Do It.”

**Nike: How to advertise when you hate advertising**

“My name’s Phil Knight, and I hate advertising.”

This is an ironic statement from the only person awarded advertiser of the year twice at the Cannes International Advertising Festival. Though young Knight had his doubts about the effectiveness of advertising for his shoe business, as his company and brand evolved, so did his opinion on advertising. In 2003 Knight told *Adweek*, “Advertising, if done well and memorably, can

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185 Ibid, 98.
188 Lane, “You Are What You Wear,” 43.
190 As of April 24, 2015, the Cannes Lions website outlined the purpose of their awards as recognizing the very best of the creative communications industry. The advertising festival is an international event held in Cannes, France. (www.canneslions.com, accessed April 24, 2015)
be a real benefit. Why do I think advertising is good now? ’Cause it works.”\textsuperscript{191} Although Nike’s advertising helped develop the brand into the revolutionary brand it is today, Nike advertising had modest beginnings. Blue Ribbon Sport’s first “advertisement” was a handout designed by Knight with the headline: “Best news in flats: Japan challenges European track shoe domination.”\textsuperscript{192} For years, Nike focused on just getting the shoes on the athletes while running a limited number of print ads in specialized magazines like \textit{Runner’s World}.\textsuperscript{193} It wasn’t until after Blue Ribbon Sports was officially incepted as Nike that Knight sought out an advertising agency.

\textbf{JOHN BROWN AND PARTNERS}

Following the debut of the waffle shoe, John Brown – founder of Nike’s first advertising agency, John Brown and Partners – invited Knight to lunch to introduce his agency where Knight frankly told Brown, “he did not much like advertising but his dealers needed some promotional support.”\textsuperscript{194} To assertively create a niche in the athletic shoe industry, Nike aggressively promoted John Brown and Partners’s printed ad “There Is No Finish Line” with the tagline, “Beating the competition is relatively easy. Beating yourself is a never-ending commitment.”\textsuperscript{195} Not only did the tagline capture the attention of many; it encompassed the “internal ethos of Nike”\textsuperscript{196} and later provided creative spark for Dan Wieden and David Kennedy, whose advertising agency Wieden+Kennedy would create the renowned 1988 “Just Do It” campaign.

\textbf{WIEDEN+KENNEDY}

Advertising agency Wieden+Kennedy was the curmudgeon of advertising; an agency founded on the principal of creating advertisements in opposition of traditional marketing. That explains why Dan Wieden told Knight that he hated most advertising when Knight informed him of

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\textsuperscript{191} Lippert, “A Leap for Advertising.” 28.  \\
\textsuperscript{192} 2003, “Nike, Inc.” \textit{Advertising Age}, Sept 15, 2003.  \\
\textsuperscript{193} Willigan, “High Performance Marketing: an interview with Nike’s Phil Knight.”  \\
\textsuperscript{194} “John Brown,” \textit{Marketing Immortals}, Jun 20, 2011  \\
\textsuperscript{195} 2003, “Nike, Inc.”  \\
\end{flushleft}
his distaste for advertising. Wieden understood the imperative behind of Knight’s statement, because his advertising agency was based precisely in opposition to traditional advertising. They found monotonous advertising formulas distasteful, what authors Robert Goldman and Stephen Papson explained, “would emerge as one axis of the Nike advertising aesthetic.”

Dan Weiden said he knew “Knight’s antiselling attitude — an attitude of grit, determination and passion — was the perfect selling technique.” Nike’s aversion to traditional selling techniques is apparent in Wieden+Kennedy’s repertoire of Nike ads. They almost never pitched a product; rather, they focused on creating an emotional tie with the consumer. The motif behind the advertisements was not to sell Nike’s shoes. The intent was to demonstrate characteristics of the Nike brand that coincided with consumers’ values. Wieden+Kennedy produced creative ads with a meaningful message.

“What makes Wieden+Kennedy successful with Nike is that they take the time to grind it out,” Knight said. “They spend countless hours trying to figure out what the product is, what the message is, what the theme is, what the athletes are all about, what emotion is involved. They try to extract something that’s meaningful; an honest message that is true to who we are.” It’s the intensity of the agency, the creativity of the advertisements, and the success of the marketing campaigns that made Knight “a big fan of advertising.”

JUST DO IT

197 Lane, “You Are What You Wear,” 46.
198 Goldman and Papson, Nike Culture: The Sign of the Swoosh, 74.
199 Ibid, 75.
201 Lane, “You Are What You Wear,” 46.
203 Ibid, 100. “It’s hard to get a fix on what kind of philosophy Mr. Wieden brings to his work, but creatives who have worked for him said he puts great importance on finding messages that resonate with genuine honesty, either in terms of the information they convey or the attitude they embody.” Anthony Vagnoni, “Iconoclast Wieden seeks ads that communicate honestly.” Advertising Age 69, no 17 (Apr. 27, 1998): 22.
Three words. That’s all it took. Just one simple statement transformed into Nike’s ineffaceable and omnipresent slogan:204 “Just Do It.”

When Scott Bedbury, brand architect205 of Nike, joined the company in 1987, Nike had just come to the realization that their advertising was delimited. Bedbury suggested that Nike’s brand had a “wimps need not apply ethos,”206 which was personified in their marketing efforts. Nike’s obsession with authenticity cultivated a culture and attitude specific to the mentality of an athlete that guided their advertising efforts.207 The issue was they had interpreted their authentic athlete too narrowly and needed to transform their message in order to speak not only to a narrow base of hardcore competitive athletes, but encompass a broader consumer public.208 Nike desired to be a more inclusive brand, rather than the exclusive brand they were. To do this, Nike reevaluated whom they were talking to and what those people wanted to hear; by doing so, they created what Advertising Age named one of the top five slogans of the 20th century.209

A slogan that Wieden of Wieden+Kennedy described as having “inauspicious beginnings”210 has since become the essence and spirit of the company.211 Following the debut of the “Just Do It” campaign, Nike established itself as the U.S. industry leader in athletic shoes,212 pulling ahead of Reebok.213 Nike’s sales, which had shown losses for the previous five quarters,214

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204 Lane, “You Are What You Wear,” 43.
206 Ibid.
213 Doug G. Ware, “Famed Nike Slogan Inspired by Killer’s Remark, Ad Exec Says,” UPI, March 19.
doubled during the campaign.\textsuperscript{215} Since then, Nike has firmly established itself as the dominant brand in the world of sports\textsuperscript{216} and proliferated the visibility of its authentic and innovative brand.

Intended to tell procrastinating Americans to take action in doing the things they should be doing for their health,\textsuperscript{217} “Just Do It” crossed over from the realm of physical fitness into consumers’ daily lives, tapping into the fitness craze of the 1980s.\textsuperscript{218} The line resonated not only in the athletic community but also with people who had little or no connection to sports,\textsuperscript{219} most notably women.\textsuperscript{220} Like all great taglines, it was both simple and memorable and suggested something more than its literal meaning.\textsuperscript{221} The multifaceted slogan now intrinsic to the brand\textsuperscript{222} established itself in the global lexicon of day-to-day life,\textsuperscript{223} selling more than products, but a way of life.\textsuperscript{224} “Very seldom do taglines turn into lifestyles. It has energized a generation of athletes, and it continues to do that. That’s the uniqueness. It resonated far beyond what anybody could have expected,” said David Carter, associate professor and executive director of the Sports Business Institute at USC Marshall School of Business.\textsuperscript{225}

“Just Do It” is a pervasive ideological appeal to the “no excuses” mentality. It’s both an argument and a command. It simultaneously gives one inspiration to start, motivation to continue, and perseverance not to quit. Nike provides a language of self-empowerment — no matter who

\textsuperscript{216} D. Roth, “Can Nike still do it without Phil Knight? Fortune 151, no. 7 (n.d.): 58. Nike regained its lead over Reebok and saw its annual revenue climb from $877 million in 1988 to $9.2 billion in 1998 -- and its share of the U.S. athletic shoe market rise from 18 to 43 percent over that same span. Doug G. Ware, “Famed Nike Slogan Inspired by Killer’s Remark, Ad Exec Says,” UPI, Mar. 19.
\textsuperscript{217} Dougherty, “The Media Business: Advertising; $20 Million Campaign for Nike Athletic Shoes.”
\textsuperscript{218} “Mini-case Study: Nike’s ‘Just Do It’ Advertising campaign,” Center for Applied Research, 2.
\textsuperscript{220} Jeffrey Martin, “‘Just Do It’ Slogan Going Strong at 25,” USA Today Sports, Aug. 21, 2013: 03C.
\textsuperscript{221} Versi, “Scott Bedbury On Branding – Just Do It (cover story),” 14-16.
\textsuperscript{222} Beth Tuschak, “Pruett Lures Nike on board at Toronto: Sponsor finds epitome of ‘do it’ attitude,” USA Today, Jul. 13, 1995.
\textsuperscript{223} Jeffrey Martin, “‘Just Do It’ Slogan Going Strong at 25,” USA Today Sports, Aug. 21, 2013: 03C.
you are.\textsuperscript{226} “Just Do It”'s implicit call to action implies a little encouragement and optimistic challenge.\textsuperscript{227} Though Nike’s brand archetype and core persona is that of an athlete pushing the limits, the ambiguity behind the quick, bold, and concise statement serves as the connective device\textsuperscript{228} between Nike’s persona and the consumer. Though one may not directly connect with the core persona — an athlete with an aggressive, incessant desire to win — he or she still finds meaning in the brand slogan. Why? According to the case study, “Constitutive Marketing: Towards understanding brand community formation,” it’s because Nike’s ad repertoire “is rife with cultural allusions and a referential system of meaning that calls upon this core persona.”\textsuperscript{229} Essentially, you don’t have to be an athlete to identify with the brand or find meaning in the statement. As Wieden put it: “We don’t set out to make ads. The ultimate goal is to make a connection.”\textsuperscript{230}

According to Jolie Soloman of \textit{Newsweek}, “It [Nike] took on a new religion of brand consciousness and broke advertising sound barriers with its indelible “Just Do It” slogan.”\textsuperscript{231} Nike’s focus on their brand identity served as the foundation of their campaign. The sentiment behind the ads focused on what athletes do and why they do it. They presented in their natural state — doing what athletes do — sweating, straining, running and jumping.\textsuperscript{232} Bedbury wrote, “‘Just Do it’, was not about sneakers. It was about values. It was not about products; it was about brand ethos.”\textsuperscript{233} Nike used emotional appeals to personify their brand philosophy and connect with consumers. Like other companies that use emotional appeal to lure customers, the brand identity is at the

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item \textsuperscript{226} Goldman and Papson, \textit{Nike Culture: The Sign of the Swoosh}, 19.
\item \textsuperscript{227} Anver Versi, “Scott Bedbury On Branding – Just Do It (cover story),” 14-16. “We want to inspire every athlete, whether it’s inspiration to run their first mile or win their fifth MVP title,” said Nike global chief marketing officer David Grasso. Martin, “‘Just Do It’ Slogan Going Strong at 25,” 03C.
\item \textsuperscript{228} B. Hunsberger, “Nike’s ‘Just Do It’ Slogan Celebrates 20 years,” \textit{The Oregonian}, Jul. 18, 2008.
\item \textsuperscript{229} Kilambi, et. al., “Constitutive marketing: Towards understanding brand community formation,” 58.
\item \textsuperscript{230} Lane, “You Are What You Wear,” 46.
\item \textsuperscript{232} Yohn, \textit{What Great Brands Do: The seven brand-building principles that separate the best from the rest}, 48.
\item \textsuperscript{233} Yohn, \textit{What Great Brands Do: The seven brand-building principles that separate the best from the rest}, 44
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
forefront of the sales pitch, and product efficacy is only used to support the values of the brand. This allows the company to develop a personal dialogue with their customers on issues that are most meaningful to them. “With its game-changing ‘Just Do It’ campaign — its imagery of athletes achieving goals, winning, and succeeding — Nike accented the emotional side of its value proposition … and the consumer become engaged emotionally,” said Tim Halloran in his book, Romancing the Brand: How brands create strong intimate relationships with customers. The “Just Do It” campaign was a subtle connection between the brand and the consumer, not an abrasive regurgitation of product details for Nike’s latest innovation shoe. Nike didn’t see the line as simply a slogan, but more of a brand identity or philosophy. Davide Grasso, Vice President of global brand marketing at Nike said, “[what] we’ve found to be most effective is inviting people to join us in what we believe in and what we stand for.” “Just Do It” was that invitation.

Wieden said, “as a statement it [‘Just Do It!’] sums up the sports brand: it is competitive, forceful, direct, as lean and powerful as the athletes that appear alongside it in Nike’s ads.” The first “Just Do It” television commercial was released in 1988 and featured 80-year-old Walt Stack crossing the Golden Gate Bridge on his daily 17-mile run. This image encapsulates Nike’s core values of grit, determination, authenticity, and effort by personifying the company’s soul. The spirit of Pre. At the inception of the company, Pre was the emblematic athlete as “America’s distance prodigy;” at the debut of the “Just Do It” campaign, he was replaced with Walt Stack. Both epitomized Nike’s key philosophy — an unwavering dedication to authenticity. The ability to

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235 Yohn, What Great Brands Do: The seven brand-building principles that separate the best from the rest, 50.
236 Halloran, Romancing the Brand: How brands create strong intimate relationships with customers (7.
238 Ibid.
239 “Close-Up: The history of advertising in quite a few objects - No 118: Nike’s ‘Just do it’ tagline,” 36.
attach the aura of a philosophy to its slogan is, “perhaps Nike’s greatest advertising
accomplishment,” according to Goldman and Papson.241

The “Just Do It” campaign is the most highly researched Nike campaign. Of the numerous
case studies, textbooks, and articles written that have analyzed “Just Do It,” key themes
established include:

- The personification of the Nike attitude, philosophy and value242
- The irreverent, self-effacing, and self-reflexive nature of the advertisements243
- The focus on the soft sell (branding over selling)244
- The cultural resonance of slogan245
- The image-oriented, emotional advertising technique246
- The focus on consumer needs247

Decades later, the slogan has become more than a ubiquitous slogan for Nike, but also the
company’s mantra.248 As the iconic slogan has continued to thrive and resonate with consumers,

241 Goldman and Papson, Nike Culture: The Sign of the swoosh, 9.
242 Goldman and Papson, Nike Culture: The Sign of the swoosh. Yohn, What Great Brands Do: The seven
brand-building principles that separate the best from the rest. Dan Wieden, “A Sense of Cool: Nike’s
On Branding – Just Do It (cover story),” 14-16. B. Hunsberger, “Nike’s ‘Just Do It’ Slogan
243 Douglas B. Holt, Why Do Brands Cause Trouble? A Dialectical Theory of Consumer Culture and
Branding,” Journal Of Consumer Research 29, no. 1: 70-90. Goldman and Papson, Nike Culture:
244 Goldman and Papson, Nike Culture: The Sign of the swoosh. Tuschak, “Pruett Lures Nike on board at
Toronto: Sponsor finds epitome of ‘do it’ attitude.” Halloran, Romancing the Brand: How brands
create strong intimate relationships with customers. Yohn, What Great Brands Do: The seven brand-
building principles that separate the best from the rest. “Nike (1987) Dan Wieden Wieden+Kennedy.”
245 Yohn, What Great Brands Do: The seven brand-building principles that separate the best from the rest.
Goldman and Papson, Nike Culture: The Sign of the swoosh. Elliott, “E.B. and Bo led ’89 Dream
Team.” “Mini-case Study: Nike’s ‘Just Do It’ Advertising campaign,” 2.
Wieden+Kennedy.” 24.
247 Yohn, What Great Brands Do: The seven brand-building principles that separate the best from the rest.
Halloran, Romancing the Brand: How brands create strong intimate relationships with customers.
other sports companies such as Under Armour and Adidas have attempted to replicate the “Just Do It” mentality and gain the prowess of Nike by echoing the same qualities in their taglines. “Not only does it still work, on a lot of levels, but its staying power — it’s clear it’s still relevant,” said David Carter, associate professor and executive director of Sports Business Institute at USC Marshall School of Business. The “Just Do It” campaign continues to influence marketing efforts as Nike refocuses efforts from print and television commercials to digital media. Nike has taken a new approach from the top-down campaign like that of the “Just Do It” campaign to a campaign that interacts and communicates directly with the core consumer, an effort that stemmed from the “Just Do It” campaign’s attempt to reach their core consumer. Though the “Just Do It” campaign has been recognized as influencing Nike’s future marketing efforts; the themes outlined above were not new to the campaign.

248 Martin, “‘Just Do It’ Slogan Going Strong at 25,” 03C.
249 “Impossible is Nothing” and “Protect This House” have yet to overtake the “Just Do It” slogan.
250 Jeffrey Martin, “‘Just Do It’ Slogan Going Strong at 25,” USA Today Sports, Aug. 21, 2013: 03C. The Nike brand has become so strong as to place it in the rarified air of recession-proof consumer branded giants. “Mini-case Study: Nike’s ‘Just Do It’ Advertising Campaign.”
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND SIGNIFICANCE

Much of the academic research previously conducted presents a comprehensive overview of the company, which is helpful in understanding the company on a broad sense, but does not extensively focus on particular marketing facets of the brand and lacks in-depth analysis. Tracy Carbasho’s book, Nike,\textsuperscript{252} summarizes Nike’s history by providing brief overviews of numerous areas of research interest. The book begins with a brief introduction of Nike cofounders Bill Bowerman and Phil Knight, a synopsis of Blue Ribbon Sports, acknowledgment of a few major endorsements, and a limited number of marketing campaigns. Goldman and Papson’s book, Nike Culture: The Sign of the Swoosh,\textsuperscript{253} focuses on the brand recognition of Nike due to the indelible nature of the swoosh, the “Just Do It” tagline and a shallow analysis of what the Nike brand portrays through advertisements. The analysis fails, however, to reference specific aspects of the advertisements, analyze how Nike uses its sponsored personalities, or outline how Nike creates value in their brand. Lipsey, Smit and Hartley provide background on Nike’s economical successes and downfalls in the sporting industry and athletic shoe market, but fail to attribute the impact Nike’s marketing had on the fluctuation in the market.\textsuperscript{254} Katz’s, Just Do It: The Nike Spirit in the Corporate World, and Strasser and Becklund’s, Swoosh: The story of Nike and the men who played there, offer the most comprehensive overview and in-depth analysis of the company culture, philosophy, brand and company evolution including an in-depth analysis of the advertising and promotion done by Nike.\textsuperscript{255} Missing from these books are comprehensive examinations of Nike’s marketing from its inception as Blue Ribbon Sports to the “Just Do It” campaign.

\textsuperscript{252} Carbasho, Nike.\
\textsuperscript{253} Goldman and Papson, Nike Culture: The sign of the swoosh.\
\textsuperscript{255} Katz, Just Do It: The Nike Spirit in the Corporate World. Strasser and Becklund, Swoosh: The story of Nike and the men who played there.
Additionally, the “Just Do It” campaign has received much attention from scholars, yet current scholarship lacks a study of Nike marketing efforts prior to the iconic campaign.\textsuperscript{256} In their book, Goldman and Papson dub the Wieden+Kennedy “Just Do It” campaign as the platform for the marketing success of Nike. They explain that Nike embraces more than just selling products, but possesses a philosophy and personality. A philosophy that they suggest is most frequently stated in the slogan, “Just Do It.”\textsuperscript{257} Though their reason for attributing the “Just Do It” tagline with embracing the philosophy of Nike is thorough, the philosophy and core values that many others describe the “Just Do It” campaign as personifying were intertwined into the advertisements preceding the campaign, but those are not analyzed.\textsuperscript{258} While Geraldine Willigan of \textit{Harvard Business Review} conducted an in-depth analysis of Nike’s marketing efforts with Phil Knight, Knight’s responses are primarily directed toward discussing how the “Just Do It” campaign influenced his thoughts on advertising as well as how the culture of Nike influenced that campaign and future campaigns alike.\textsuperscript{259} Scott Cendrwoski explained in his \textit{Fortune} article the influence the “Just Do It” campaign has on the future digital marketing efforts of Nike but failed to offer how previous advertisements influenced the “Just Do It” campaign.\textsuperscript{260}

A majority of the articles written on the “Just Do It” campaign are also written for trade publications or in newspaper articles and have a consistent ambiance of creating hype about the campaign.\textsuperscript{261} Many of these articles note that the “Just Do It” campaign created, defined, and

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{256} “Mini-case Study: Nike’s ‘Just Do It’ Advertising campaign,” 2.
\bibitem{257} Goldman and Papson, \textit{Nike Culture: The sign of the swoosh}.
\bibitem{259} Willigan, “High Performance Marketing: an interview with Nike’s Phil Knight.”
\bibitem{260} Cendrwoski, “Nike’s New Marketing Mojo.”
\end{thebibliography}
proliferated the Nike brand but don’t explain how. References to the actual campaign are rare, leaving it to the reader’s interpretation how, exactly, Nike did this. Although much of Nike’s success comes from the ambiguity of its slogan, ambiguity in the articles is not ideal.

Nike, as numerous top brands often are, was largely overlooked in their incubate years as a company. Not much attention is given to a brand when they are in their developmental stages of advertising and company branding. Therefore, giving the “Just Do It” campaign full credit for Nike’s marketing prowess is erroneous. From the intense focus on the “Just Do It” campaign in the current scholarship, strategic moves Nike, Inc. made in its advertising in the preceding years are overlooked; yet, many of the themes outlined in the “Just Do It” campaign appear to have been influenced by the philosophy and values that guided previous advertising efforts. Therefore, this historical study will analyze Nike advertising before the “Just Do It” campaign to see if there are similarities between Nike’s earlier marketing efforts and the “Just Do It” campaign.

**Research Question:** How do the marketing appeals in the “Just Do It” campaign compare to the marketing appeals employed by Nike prior to that campaign?

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CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

To evaluate if Nike’s influence in revolutionizing marketing appeared prior to the “Just Do It” campaign, numerous primary and secondary sources were analyzed. The bulk of the primary material analyzed were Nike print advertisements from the magazines *Long Distance Log, Runners World, Running Times, Track and Field News, and the Runner.* Nike marketed specifically to runners in their initial efforts, which is why the niche running magazines were chosen for the advertisement analysis. Though Nike eventually expanded the magazines they ran print advertisements in – following their first television campaign in 1973 – the running magazines are used as the primary source of print advertisements for continuity purposes.

Additional primary sources used include newspaper articles, magazine articles, and trade publications discussing the perspective the media had on Nike’s advertising efforts preceding the “Just Do It” campaign. These were used to construct the media and professional opinion of Nike’s marketing at that given time. Publications such as: *Adweek, The New York Times, The Washington Post, Advertising Age, The Globe and Mail (Canada), and New York Magazine* were the main sources of primary evidence. Recent articles in *Ad Week* and *Advertising Age,* campaign evaluations and books discussing the history, culture, values, and evolution of the company also served as supplemental material in analyzing the company’s influence.

Research was also conducted in the Archives at the Smithsonian Institution’s National Museum of American History. Research material gathered from Collection #448, Nike Advertising Oral History and Documentation Collection Project c. 1976-1992, from the National Museum of American History Smithsonian Institution Center for Advertising History included: memorandums, campaign briefs, newspaper articles, interviews, commercials, print collateral, and agency information.

263 *Runners World, Running Times, Track and Field News and the Runner* magazines were accessed through the South Dakota State “Prairie Striders Collection.”
Unforeseen limitations of the current study included the lack of accessibility to some Nike campaign pieces. Many of these campaigns included endorsements, television commercials, posters, and billboard advertising that are no longer accessible. Wieden+Kennedy, John Brown and Partners, Chiat/Day, and Nike were all contacted in attempt to access past campaign material. Without a record of advertisement placements in media, it is impossible to know if all advertisements were located. To cover any gaps, the analysis collected and synthesized publications in newspapers, magazines and trade journals discussing the Nike campaigns.

Although Nike was created as Blue Ribbon Sports in 1964 and officially became Nike in 1971, the time period analyzed in this study is 1964 to 1988. Due to the scarcity of digitally archived publications available between 1964 and 1978, the *Long Distance Log*, *Runners World*, *Running Times*, *Track and Field News*, and *the Runner* were the only magazine analyzed for the time period. Information extracted from secondary sources about Nike during the 1964 to 1978 period were included to establish Nike’s advertising efforts preceding the primary publications the researcher was able to access.

In order to evaluate the strategic focus and intent behind Nike’s grass-root promotions and marketing campaigns preceding the “Just Do It” campaign, this study employed an historical analysis while integrating an interpretation of Nike’s marketing and a contextual evaluation of print collateral, television spots, outdoor advertising, and media articles referencing specific campaigns. The study was constructed from the cultural-historical and narrative-analysis used by researchers Lisa Mullikin Parcell and Margot Opdyke Lamme.\(^\text{264}\) In particular, the advertisements were analyzed for imagery, appeal, technique, design, and copy. The study also looked for emergent themes media practitioners paid particular attention to while writing articles about Nike’s advertisements at

the time. Finally, the findings were compared to the “Just Do It” campaign to determine if influential aspects of the “Just Do It” campaign, were present in previous campaigns.
CHAPTER 4: ATHLETE TO ATHLETE: NIKE’S FOUNDATION TO AUTHENTICITY
(1960s and 1970s)

“We got started with no knowledge, no brand; we did things under impossible odds. We had the courage to change, we innovated like crazy to compete.”
– Nelson Farris, track athlete from Long Beach who joined Nike in 1972

Entering the market with a propensity for innovation\(^{265}\) and distaste for advertising,\(^{266}\) Nike’s unconventional tactics used to build its core consumer base began at the inception of its predecessor, Blue Ribbon Sports (BRS). Believing there was somewhat dubious value in advertising, Knight initially opted out of employing traditional advertising techniques; rather, he worked out of the back of his car and chose to attend track meets where he and Geoff Hollister, BRS sales representative for Oregon,\(^{267}\) sold shoes to coaches and athletes.\(^{268}\) Although originally working from the trunk of cars came from necessity – because Knight could not afford to rent a storefront – even after opening the Nike retail stores, the mobility of staff members was still an vital part of the business’s sales strategy.\(^{269}\)

Nike didn’t do any sort of formal marketing. Instead they simply tried to get their shoes on the feet of runners.\(^{270}\) “We were able to get a lot of great ones under contract,” Knight explained. “We spent a lot of time at track events and had relationships with runners, but mostly because we

\(^{265}\)Though the running craze began in the sixties, 1979 was a monumental year in the running epidemic. Researchers had recently discovered endorphins which produced the “jogger’s high.” They theorized that stress from exercise stimulates the production of endorphins, which can alleviate pain and effect mood; a natural response that acts as an incentive for participating in the craze.

\(^{266}\)Lippert, “A Leap for Advertising,” 28.

\(^{267}\)Although a runner for Bowerman, Hollister was not offered an athletic scholarship. To offset the costs of college, Hollister worked for BRS as Oregon’s sales representative where he would hop in his car and drive around the state to sell shoes in between his academic course load and training with Bowerman.

\(^{268}\)2008, "Geoff Hollister Tells the Story of Nike From the Front Lines," Running & Fitnews 26, no. 2: 10.


\(^{270}\)Willigan, “High Performance Marketing: an interview with Nike’s Phil Knight,” 92.
were doing interesting things with our shoes." Valuable feet adorned with the Tiger shoes included the Oregon cross-country team, who were the 1971 NCAA champions, top runners at the 1972 Olympic trials in Eugene, and Nike legend and Oregon quarterback, Dan Fouts, who wore the original prototype for the waffle shoes in 1974.

The fortuitous nature of Knight initially avoiding any sort of advertising is appreciated in hindsight. By focusing solely on the grassroots marketing of attending track meets – marketing Phil Knight would probably not qualify as “marketing” – Nike laid the foundation for future branding campaigns. These campaigns would become the advertising efforts meant to establish Nike’s identity as an authentic sports company. Authors Michael Phillips and Sallie Rasberry explain, “No amount of advertising will be able to develop a good reputation for a company unless there’s solid product integrity behind it.”

Predating the company, Bowerman worked incessantly in his pursuit of the perfect running shoe. For Bowerman, a good running shoe was not good enough for exceptional athletes; therefore, mediocrity in the shoes he designed for BRS was unacceptable. Bowerman, a former football player, track athlete, and track coach, saw more jocks with sore feet than he cared to remember. Knowing the athletes he encountered were not hypochondriacs, he was positive it was the low-quality shoes that caused the athletes so much pain. “I have tinkered with running shoes for years, mainly because the shoe manufacturers have never gotten the message on what runners need,” Bowerman told Runner’s World. “I think that I can make the best possible shoe for

271 Ibid.
273 Katz, Just Do It: The Nike Spirit in the Corporate World.
276 Nuyak and Ketteringham, BREAKTHROUGHS!: A teacher of competition, 237.
our needs." The standard of shoes he created from the beginning established integrity in the quality of the product. Furthermore, Knight’s persistence in speaking directly to the athletes who would wear the Tiger [later Nike] branded shoe established trust and goodwill in the product and company. The cofounders’ efforts in product integrity and grassroots marketing in the early years served as the catalyst for future branding efforts.

BRS’s predominate focus in its incubate years was establishing the company’s core values, building an athletic-minded brand, designing innovative running shoes and communicating directly with their core consumers: serious runners. In order to accomplish this, BRS made two strategic moves advantageous to the company’s marketing. First, was hiring Jeff Johnson; second, was hiring Steve Prefontaine.

“In the early days, when we were just a running shoe company and almost all our employees were runners, we understood the consumer very well,” said Phil Knight. “The company and the consumer were the same thing.” The first of these employees was competitive runner from California, Jeff Johnson. Johnson, who had worked at Nike’s rival Adidas for a stint of time, switched to BRS simply because of the people behind the company, Knight and Bowerman. As an athlete, Johnson competed against the Knight and Bowerman on the track, where he knew them as people who truly understood the athlete. According to authors P. Ranganath and John Ketteringham, “Johnson felt more comfortable with BRS because they were close to the people who wore the shoes!”

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278 Ibid.
279 Effective design tailored to athlete needs has always been the centerpiece of the Nike business model.” 2008, “Geoff Hollister Tells the Story of Nike From the Front Lines,” Running & Fitnews 26, no. 2: 10-12.
280 Quote by Phil Knight. Nuyak and Ketteringham, BREAKTHROUGHS!: A teacher of competition, 243.
281 Katz, Just Do It: The Nike Spirit in the Corporate World, 61.
282 Ibid, 243.
283 Nuyak and Ketteringham, BREAKTHROUGHS!: A teacher of competition, 243.
Instrumental in BRS’s success, Johnson developed the company’s first marketing materials and established a mail-order system for the company. He ran mail-order advertisements in the running publication, *Long Distance Log,* from 1965-1975. The first advertisement for Tiger shoes ran in the July 1965 edition. The advertisement was a mail-order for Tiger track and cross-country shoes and featured the TG22 “Training” and TG23 “Cross Country” [see appendix 1]. The copy on the advertisement focused on the quality of the shoes as it spoke to the softness of the cushioned sole and extra protective heel. It also highlighted the ideal use of the shoe, whether for road racing or training on all surfaces. Still concentrating on aspects of the shoe appealing to a competitive runner in the body copy, there was a new predominant element emphasized in the advertisement that ran from January-September 1967 [see appendix 1A]. The headline at the top of the page read, “TIGER SHOES Beautiful Beasts,” while another headline of equal hierarchy in the middle of the page read, “1st, 1st, 1st!” Below this was the subhead, “THE FINEST ROAD RACING AND CROSS COUNTRY SHOE IN EXISTENCE, WITH AMAZING RECORD:” It then further listed titles won by athletes wearing the shoes. Appealing to the competitive nature of a serious athlete, the advertisement spoke to what was most important to that athlete: winning. BRS was not only selling the innovative qualities of the shoe, but it attributed the success of runners to their shoes. Even in some of the company’s first advertisements they went beyond selling product attributes and focused on the athletes themselves.

Tiger brand’s prestige grew quickly among competitive runners, and athletes began showing up at Johnson’s door. Johnson and Hollister realized the great opportunity that currently

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284 Carbasho, Nike, 9.
285 Browning Ross, member of the 1948 and 1952 Olympic teams, was the founder of *The Long Distance Log (The Log)*, a successor to Austin Scott’s self made publication, *Distance Running Journal.* The magazine never made Ross a profit and starting with Vol. 14, No 163, July 1969, the United States Track and Field Federation began to assist Ross with printing and distributing *The Log.* Tom Osler, “The Long Distance Log,” *Road Runners Club of America,* accessed Apr 1, 2016, http://rrcahistory.org/longdistancelog.html.
286 *Long Distance Log*, Jan-Sept 1967.
287 Ibid.
existed, the need for BRS retail stores. In 1966, Johnson opened the first retail store in Santa
Monica, California, and by 1968 Hollister was managing the Eugene store. The company also had
an east coast presence in Wellesley, Massachusetts, where the Nike warehouse was located.\textsuperscript{288}
Although the retail stores were essential for BRS’s continued growth, according to Nuyak and
Ketteringham, “they remained a minor element in Nike sales and the Nike mystique, which grew
inexorably among the cognoscenti of the running world.”\textsuperscript{289} The company still relied heavily on its
face-to-face direct-selling tactics, and by doing so, they were able to set themselves apart from
competitors and establish themselves as an authentic shoe company. By simply traveling to track
meets and selling shoes to coaches and athletes they were able to provide a personal touch that
was not there for competitors. “We had an authentic presence,” said Farris. “If our guy went to a
road racer or a coach and talked about shin splints or something, he knew what he was talking
about. It was an honest authenticity. We were accepted into the running community instantly.”\textsuperscript{290}
At the end of the decade, BRS had emerged as the authentic shoe company in the running
community.

By the early 1970s the Tiger brand shoe was thriving, but BRS’s relationship with Onitsuka
was deteriorating, and the terminated their relationship in 1972.\textsuperscript{291} BRS, Inc., then began advertising
its new brand of shoe, Nike.\textsuperscript{292} The first print advertisement marketing the new shoe brand ran in
the March 1972 edition of \textit{Runner’s World} with the headline, “Born in the Track & Field Capital of
the World – A BRAND NEW LINE”\textsuperscript{293} [see appendix 2A]. The advertisement not only introduced the

\textsuperscript{288}Sanusi, et. al., “The Swoosh of Creativity.”
\textsuperscript{289}Nuyak and Ketteringham, \textit{BREAKTHROUGHS!: A teacher of competition}, 244.
\textsuperscript{290}Ibid, 244.
\textsuperscript{291}Upon the termination, Blue Ribbon Sports became BRS, Inc. in 1972 and formally adopted the brand
name, Nike, as its corporate name in 1978. Henceforth, the study will refer to the company as Nike.
\textsuperscript{292}The first advertisement for the new brand ran in the April and May editions of \textit{Long Distance Log} featuring
the “NIKE TIGER TRACKSTER” [see appendix 4].
\textsuperscript{293}Subhead: “The first new quality line of track shoes in 7 years. Designed with the athlete in mind. Nike is not
bound by tradition or long, profitable product runs. We’ve combined the best features of the old
public the brand of shoes, but it was the debut of the original Nike *swoosh* logo, designed by graphic design student, Carolyn Davidson.

That year, Bowerman was also appointed head track and field coach for the U.S. Olympic team, what one journalist referred to as, “the marketing opportunity of a lifetime.” shipped to the U.S. just in time for the Olympic trials, Knight persuaded many of Bowerman’s runners to wear the shoes, marking the debut of the Nike brand. Four of the top seven marathon finishers crossed the finish line wearing the Nike Tiger shoe, solidifying Nike’s “word-of-foot” marketing tactic. “It was clear to me,” Knight said, “that to see name athletes wearing Nike shoes was more convincing than anything we could say about them.” This grassroots marketing idea of “word-of-foot” marketing, where Nike advertised simply by having exceptional athletes wear their shoes, became an integral part of Nike’s marketing strategy. A strategy that proved successful as Nike’s sales doubled annually between 1970 and 1977.

Shortly after the debut of their new shoe brand, Nike signed their first star runner, “America’s distance prodigy,” Steve Prefontaine (Pre). An interesting deal, the signing of Pre was not a traditional endorsement. Pre was put on Nike’s payroll and in between his track workouts and long runs he worked for the company, where he became extremely knowledgeable about the products. So much so that he began visiting high schools, colleges and running clubs where he shared training tips and encouragement to aspiring athletes and introduced them to the shoes with the newest ideas of the best athletes. Introducing our first 6 models:” *Runner’s World*, Mar 1977.

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294 Rhodes, “Winning is a State of Mind at Nike.”
295 Katz, *Just Do It: The Nike Spirit in the Corporate World*.
296 Rhodes, “Winning is a State of Mind at Nike.”
297 Nike’s word-of-foot marketing will be further discussed in proceeding chapters.
299 Headline on a 1970’s *Sports Illustrated* cover featuring Pre coming across the finish line.
300 In the deal with Prefontaine, Knight and Bowerman gave him a $5,000 yearly stipend to offset his training expenses.2014. “40 Years of Prefontaine: Steve Prefontaine: Fighting Spirit.”
301 Geoff Hollister Tells the Story of Nike From the Front Lines,” 10.
Nike running shoes. Pre eventually had business cards printed announcing him as Nike’s International Public Relations Manager. In his attempt to introduce Nike to his friends – top international runners – Pre wrote personalized notes, which he enclosed with his business card in a shoe box of the latest Nike shoes. One of the athletes Pre sent Nike products to was the relatively unknown runner at the time, Bill Rodgers. In his note to Rodgers, Pre urged him to wear the pair of Nike Bostons ‘73. Rodgers agreed and won the Boston Marathon that April wearing the Nike shoes. According to Nike News:

“[Pre’s] legacy is multifaceted. To generations of athletes at all levels, he embodies the philosophy of training incredibly hard and going all out in competition. For Nike, he was both a muse on the track and a trailblazer who pioneered a highly original and personal way of inspiring athletes with the brand.”

Nike was where the real athletes were, and Strasser explained this was because of their grassroots efforts. He said, “We belonged, and people recognized us as belonging.” They established themselves as an authentic company amongst the running community.

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303 Hollister, Geoff. “40 Years of Prefontaine: Steve Prefontaine: Fighting Spirit.”
304 “40 Years of Prefontaine: Steve Prefontaine: Fighting Spirit.”
305 “40 Years of Prefontaine: Steve Prefontaine: Fighting Spirit.”
306 “40 Years of Prefontaine: Steve Prefontaine: Fighting Spirit.”
308 Hollister, Geoff. “40 Years of Prefontaine: Steve Prefontaine: Fighting Spirit.”
309 “40 Years of Prefontaine: Steve Prefontaine: Fighting Spirit.”
310 Nuyak and Ketteringham, BREAKTHROUGHS!: A teacher of competition, 255.
simply through hiring athletes who could talk to the true nature of sports. As athletes, they portrayed their genuine care for their consumers through their intuitive understanding of athletes. Pre, regarded as the emblematic athlete for the Nike brand, validated the brand and helped establish an authentic image for the company merely through his association. “Steve Prefontaine was important in creating a spirit for the company and the concept of running as a type of consciousness,” said Knight. “He is responsible for creating and merchandising product personalities.”

The dynasty of Nike was not initially built through extravagant marketing campaigns, but rather, the humble efforts of its founders and first employees. It was their allegiance to the original company mission, “to make great shoes for remarkable athletes,” that diverted them from engaging in what they considered unauthentic advertising and deterred any question of the veracity behind their early grass-roots approach. At the company’s inception (as Blue Ribbon Sports) Nike’s shoes were designed for one purpose: to make athletes perform better, an ideal engrained in the Nike philosophy. This pervasive mindset of innovation fueled the tenacity of the young company. Innovative shoes designs were the centerpiece of the Nike business model, and Nike saw no distinction between manufacturing process and marketing. They believed that simply offering the most innovative shoe on the market was reason enough for their product to sell; but eventually Phil Knight realized, “focusing on the product was a great way for a brand to start, but it wasn’t enough.” The company who prided themselves in talking directly to runners in their

311 Smit, Sneaker wars: The enemy brothers who founded Adidas and Puma and the family feud that forever changed the business of sport, 102.
312 Phil Knight Interview.
313 Swoosh! Inside Nike! By CNBC (2008)
314 Rothenberg, Where the Suckers Moon: The life and death of an advertising campaign, 199.
315 Geoff Hollister Tells the Story of Nike From the Front Lines,” 10.
316 Rothenberg, Where the Suckers Moon: The life and death of an advertising campaign, 199.
own language\textsuperscript{318} about the virtues of their shoes\textsuperscript{319} needed to expand their reach beyond competitive athletes. Simply getting their shoes on the feet of runners would not suffice in accomplishing that. So, Nike began creating print advertisements in \textit{Runner’s World} and soon hired their first advertising agency, John Brown & Partners in 1976.

\textsuperscript{318}Dan Wieden Interview.
\textsuperscript{319}Virtues such as the use of novel materials, new sold design and different support structures. Rothenberg, \textit{Where the Suckers Moon: The life and death of an advertising campaign}, 199.
By the second half of the 1970s, a cultural phenomenon referred to as the “Me Decade” was in full effect across the United States. A generation described as self-indulgent, tenacious and rebellious offered an interesting culture dynamic, one proven to be advantageous for Nike. According to authors P. Nuyak and John Ketteringham, “with the sudden emergence of the fitness movement, a scruffy, idiosyncratic, anti-establishment shoe company was in the position to be the touchstone for a generation.” The jogging craze of the late 1960s created a new market of casual runners in the 1970s, a market where Nike’s antiestablishment philosophy had a strong cultural resonance. Serious runners were no longer the only consumer loyal to the company; people who could barely run wanted to jog in their Nikes. With a thriving new market particularly receptive to Nike, Knight needed promotional support for his dealers. In late 1976, Nike hired John Brown and Partners as its first advertising agency.

The debut of the blue and yellow Wally Waffle

Nike’s focus on innovation played a key role in establishing itself as an authentic, honest company in the mind of its new fitness-conscious consumer base. Their focus on quality shoes for their athletes portrayed their genuine interest in the needs of their consumers. “Nike emanated a sense of caring,” Nuyak and Ketteringham said. “Nikes were a product you not only wore in comfort, they were something people could buy and display as symbolic of their fitness, their

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321 Runner’s World is a running magazine that Nike is most known for running its print advertisements on the back cover.
323 Nuyak and Ketteringham, BREAKTHROUGHS!: A teacher of competition, 237.
324 Katz, Just Do It: The Nike Spirit in the Corporate World, 65. As the jogging boom was beginning and the masses needed a shoe that could handle long runs on the road, the Cortez satisfied that need with its thick sole. Dunne, “Nike Is Bringing Back a Forgotten Piece of Sneaker History.”
325 John Brown.
326 Shradha Kaul, “Nike-there is no finish line!,” Management Compass, Jul 15, 2014.
individuality.\textsuperscript{328} The innovative shoe believed to have given Nike its initial impetus\textsuperscript{329} into the new market was Bowerman’s Nike Waffle Trainers.\textsuperscript{330} John Brown and Partners ran the first color advertisement for the iconic blue and yellow waffle shoe on the back cover of the October 1976 edition of \textit{Runner’s World} [see appendix 1B].\textsuperscript{331} The headline states, “Announcing the first shoe made for knees,” with body text focusing on the specific qualities of the shoes that were designed to improve foot placement to reduce the chance of knee injury.\textsuperscript{332} Explicitly stating their dedication to ever-improving the quality personified their philosophy of continuous innovation based on consumer needs illustrates their core values. Focusing on the technical attributes of the shoe is a prevalent theme in Nike’s print advertisements as they were highly product-driven.\textsuperscript{333} John Brown, of John Brown and Partners, explained, “Bowerman distrusted hype and overstatement; he was very concerned with the value of the product. He cared more about quality than making money.”\textsuperscript{334} Nike exuded authenticity and society responded favorably to their products and company. By the late 1970s, exercise began to be something the average American did for fun and Nike’s bright blue, yellow swooshed athletic shoes were seen on feet everywhere.\textsuperscript{335} Nike had introduced a popular trend through their advertisements that featured the waffled shoes.\textsuperscript{336}

\textsuperscript{328}Nuyak and Ketteringham, \textit{BREAKTHROUGHS!: A teacher of competition}, 255.


\textsuperscript{330}Clapp, “Running Long Distances, Just for Fun.”

\textsuperscript{331}Though the first print advertisement of the Waffle Shoe in \textit{Runner’s World} ran in the December 1974 edition, the shoe did not gain its popularity amongst casual runners until later. The initial advertisement was a direct-mail order ad, although it could be considered advertising, Knight didn’t see it as “advertising,” but selling [see appendix 6].

\textsuperscript{332}Runner’s World, Oct 1976.


\textsuperscript{334}Ibid.


\textsuperscript{336}Sylvia Stead, “Centrepiece shoes: Balm for weary soles, running has acquired status and the canvas sneaker has given way to ultra-modern (and expensive) foot comforters.” \textit{The Globe and Mail (Canada)}, Nov 11, 1978.
In the December 1976 edition of *Runner’s World*, a print advertisement again featured Nike’s signature blue and yellow shoe [see appendix 2B]. This time the headline read, “MADE FAMOUS BY WORD OF FOOT ADVERTISING.”337 The last part of the body copy stated, “We’d like to thank you for all the ads you’ve been running for us. On your feet.”338 Until this point, Nike steered clear of conventional print advertising,339 yet the company sales increased year after year. This advertisement served as a thank you to the athletes that promoted their brand through word of foot marketing and acknowledged that as a company, they actually had been making their productions known. Athletes sporting the Nike brand made the brand visible and increased the company’s validity. Casual runners trusted Nike because they saw outstanding athletes wearing the shoes, so in-turn, Nike used print advertising to call attention to the fact that serious runners wore the trusted brand. The influence Nike’s advertising had on competitors is evident through the ads that ran in *Runner’s World* 1977 through 1979. Competitor advertisements, in an attempt to penetrate the casual runner market, featured their own version of blue and yellow branded shoes meant to resemble the blue and yellow Waffle Trainer. In the April 1979 edition of *Runner’s World*, Nike used their print advertisement to call the other companies out [see appendix 3B]. The advertisement predominantly featured the original blue and yellow Waffle Trainer with the headline, “WHY BUY A COPY WHEN YOU CAN RUN WITH THE ORIGINAL?”340

337The body copy states: “We don’t have to tell you about the reputation of Nike running shoes. You already know. Because you’re a serious runner. You’ve seen them on training tracks and fields all over the country. You know them for their quality. Their lightweight, and long life. Mostly, you know them for the innovative design that always seems to show up first on Nike. We believed if we could build a shoe that was good enough to meet the demands of serious runners like you, the word would spread fast. And it has. Today, our shoes do most of our advertising for us. And the name Nike is famous. We’d like to thank you for all the ads you’ve been running for us. On your feet.” *Runner’s World*, Dec 1976.

338Ibid.

339Though Nike’s primary marketing efforts were initially grassroots efforts of talking directly to the athletes and coaches, Johnson was running print advertisements in *Log Distance Log*. Though the company was in fact running conventional print advertisements, they did not see it as such; what Johnson ran in *Log Distance Log* were seen as a direct-selling tactic as they were intended to be a convenience for runners to purchase their shoes. Nike employees viewed this as selling, not advertising.
Nike’s first “brand ad”\textsuperscript{341}

During their short stint as Nike’s advertising agency, John Brown and Partners had a small advertising budget allocated to monthly advertisements on the back of Runner’s World,\textsuperscript{342} which introduced a new product each month.\textsuperscript{343} “One month their [Nike’s] pipeline produced no new shoes for us to feature in a new advertisement,” according to John Brown, of John Brown and Partners. “They didn’t want to re-run an old ad so they asked us to do something that ‘just pats runners on the back, a feel good thing.’”\textsuperscript{344} The last minute advertisement ran in the August 1977 edition of Runner’s World\textsuperscript{345} and pictured no specific shoe; it was all about running itself [see appendix 4B]. A solitary runner, jogging down an empty road, surrounded by nothing but trees, was featured with the headline “THERE IS NO FINISH LINE.”\textsuperscript{346} The empowered advertisement shifted Nike’s focus from strictly selling products to portraying a brand image that evokes emotion. Nike realized the power behind image-oriented brand advertising in selling products as the ad caused uproar in consumer support with an explosion of customer response. Runners wrote more than 100,000 letters to Nike thanking them for making high performance shoes and for understanding what a lifetime of running means.\textsuperscript{347} The agency’s brand advertising created “the idea of Nike” compared to the “shoe from Nike.”\textsuperscript{348}

According to Lee Clow, of Chiat/Day advertising agency, “the insight behind John Brown’s ‘There Is No Finish Line’ ad expressed an intuitive understanding of the people to whom Nike is

\textsuperscript{341}According to the article, John Brown and Partners created Nike’s first “brand ad”–an advertisement that featured no Nike product. Kaul, “Nike-there is no finish line!,” Management Compass, Jul 15, 2014.
\textsuperscript{343}John Brown Interview.
\textsuperscript{344}“John Brown.”
\textsuperscript{346}Runner’s World, Aug 1979.
\textsuperscript{347}“John Brown.” “Nike positions itself as a lover of sports in its pure form – like you the viewer, an appreciator of the skills of a new generation of athletes.” Goldman & Papson, Nike Culture: The Sign of the Swoosh, 31.
\textsuperscript{348}“John Brown.”
The advertisement was written in a way athletes would say things, and according to author Randall Rothenberg, “Nike realized it had touched something deep inside its constituency. From that point forward, the athletic-shoe company put image at the heart of its communication.” The ad spoke to the mystique of an athlete and portrayed the true essence of what it means to be a runner, celebrating never-ending pursuit of excellence. The last few lines of the text read, “Beating the competition is relatively easy. But beating yourself is a never ending commitment.” As a portrayal of the “no excuses” mentality, the advertisement personified Nike’s brand archetype. The advertisement taught Knight that he did not need specific products in advertisements to make the advertisement powerful.

As an agency, John Brown and Partners established the foundation of branding in the company using print advertisements to not only sell Nike’s products, but to personify the company’s values. Initial print advertisements were image-oriented advertisements with bold headlines and body copy that spoke directly to the athlete. The advertisements personified Nike’s core persona – an athlete with an incessant desire to win – that validated them as an authentic brand. Although “There Is No Finish Line” is believed to be Nike’s first “brand ad,” Nike ran an advertisement in the May 1977 edition of Runner’s World with a headline and image that embodied the true essence of the Nike brand, and epitomized the “Just Do It” slogan. The advertisement [see appendix 5B] featured an image of Steve Prefontaine running across the finish line with the headline, “IT STARTED WITH HIM. NOW IT’S UP TO YOU.”

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349Lee Clow Interview.
351The researcher acknowledges the print ad serves as a remembrance to the brand’s allegoric athlete and a request for donations for the Steve Prefontaine Foundation created in his honor. The advertisement is not meant to proliferate the Nike brand or sell products but the research deemed it important to acknowledge the parallel between the headline and the “Just Do It” slogan. Runner’s World, May 1979.
352Shradha Kaul, “Nike-there is no finish line!,” Management Compass, Jul 15, 2014.
the brand, the iconic image personified Nike’s core persona of an athlete pushing the limits.\textsuperscript{354} The aura of both advertisements reoccurs consistently throughout following advertisements leading up to the “Just Do It” campaign. The concept of promoting the “idea of Nike” was the spark that ignited future brand-motivated, image-oriented and attitude-focused advertisements, revolutionizing the way Nike marketed their product and themselves; such as the “Just Do It” campaign.

\textsuperscript{354} Goldman and Papson, \textit{Nike Culture: The Sign of the Swoosh}, 19.

John Brown and Partners served as Nike’s advertising agency until the middle of 1980. An April 1980 memo from Nike’s Director of Advertising, Patsy Mest, explained the agency would be let go because the concepts, campaigns and direction of the advertisements were not satisfactory. John Brown and Partner’s main responsibility was to create the advertisements for the June and July editions of Runner’s World and Nike would transition to a new advertising agency. The agency that took over the account was Wieden+Kennedy.

The advertisements analyzed in this portion of the research are from the time period 1980 through 1987. This timeframe was chosen because Nike entered the new decade with their new advertising agency. Advertisements from the 1980 to 1987 editions of The Runner and the 1980, 1986, and 1987 editions of Runner’s World are used. The Runner, Nike’s self-published magazine began in 1979. The magazine came about when Runner’s World published shoe rankings that Nike didn’t like. According to Robert Bartley, compiler of the Prairie Striders Collection, when Nike started their own magazine the Nike advertisements in Runner’s World fell off. In 1980, advertisements in the magazine ran through June and did not begin again until January 1985.

1980

Advertisements from the 1980s seem to carry on the mystique of the 1977 “There Is No Finish Line” ad. The print ads in Runner’s World and The Runner for this year featured pictures of runners simply running. They were image-oriented advertisements depicting the authentic athlete. The text was black with a bold headline and body copy that spoke to pure athletics. Headlines were bold, concise and personified the true essence of the Nike brand. Some of these headlines

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include, “A MATTER OF CONSCIENCE,” RUN YOUR OWN RACE,” GIVE ‘EM HELL,” AND “THE RACE IS ITS OWN REWARD.” Take for example the advertisement that ran in the September 1980 edition of The Runner [see appendix 1C]. The image features no specific Nike product, but visually portrays what Nike is about—its athletes. Similar to many of their other advertisements at this time, it is ambiguous – comparable to “Just Do It.” The advertisement is about the athlete and speaks in the language or the athlete, similar to the text on the “There Is No Finish Line” ad. The last portion of the text states, “It’s not important whether we live to someone else’s expectations. What’s important is whether we can help you live up to yours,” a statement that personifies Nike’s intuitive understanding of the athlete wearing their shoes. These ads focus on the Nike’s soft sell, promoting their brand over selling their product. Though the copy does explain aspects that make the shoes great, it does it in subtle matter, as if Nike is having a conversation with the consumer.

1981-1983

From 1981 to 1983 the common theme amongst the advertisements was the focus on innovation. These advertisements contain an image that takes up about a third of the page and black body copy on a white background, a common layout for Nike advertisements. At this time all the shoe companies focused primarily on the different aspects of their shoes that make it a great shoe. Nike in particular often included graphs in their advertisements to show the science behind their shoes [see appendix 2C]. At a time when each shoe company was trying to one-up the other with the innovative new technology in their shoes, Nike did just the same. Playing on their strength of innovation that began with co-founder Bill Bowerman being a free-thinking innovator, Nike used these ads to showcase their core value of innovation. The September 1983

357The Runner, Sept 1980.
358The Runner, Sept 1981.
3592008, “Geoff Hollister Tells the Story of Nike From the Front Lines.”
advertisement in *The Runner* even featured a scientist working in the lab with headline, “OUR LAB IS BIGGER THAN THEIR LAB” [see appendix 3C].360 These ads showed the behind-the-scenes efforts Nike put in to create an exceptional running shoe for its consumers. The focus on innovation also helped Nike show their dedication to their consumers’ needs by incessantly working toward a better shoe.

Interesting with these ads is the images associated with them. None of them feature Nike shoes in the main image. The only time a Nike featured a shoe on an ad was a small picture of a shoe somewhere within the text [see appendix 2C].361 Also, throughout a majority of 1982 the graphics shifted from pictures to drawings [see appendix 4C].362 The shift in advertisement focus during these years is due to Strasser’s relocation to Germany at some point in his time with Wieden+Kennedy. “Tom Harmon, who replaced Strasser, wanted to become more technical rather than emotional,” said Peter Moore, graphic designer and marketing director at Nike. “The focus of the advertising shifted to technical images. The technical aspects were illustrated using prestigious magazine illustrators with clever images. When Strasser returned from Germany, the technical strategy was retired and the advertising returned to emotional appeals.”363 This shift back to emotional appeals is evident in 1984.

**1984**

In a memorandum between Nike marketing executives sent August 10, 1983, it stated, “simplify ads: minimal copy with striking visual and headline to say it all.”364 A notion that noticeably

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influenced advertisements in 1984. These advertisements were highly image-oriented, in most cases featuring a solitary runner. The image took up an entire page and had a supplemental page with complimentary text featuring an image of a Nike shoe [see appendix 5C]. These advertisements reflect the same quality as the minimalist “Cities” campaign Nike simultaneously ran [discussed in chapter 4]. These print ads portrayed the core of the Nike philosophy: the authentic athlete. Nike Athletic Director, Chuck Galford, explained, “Nike will retain its reputation as a company that really cares about the sport.”

The images ranged from bridges, to golf courses, to streets and featured runners in motion. The Nike swoosh and headlines were small, white, and inconspicuous. The headlines were simple and direct, such as, “CONCEDE NOTHING” AND “ANYONE. ANYWHERE. ANYTIME,” and “THE HARDER YOU PUSHED, THE MORE YOU WERE PULLED.” All seem to be an ode to the athlete, a personification of Nike’s brand philosophy created through emotional appeals. It was not an abrasive command, but a subtle statement, one that engaged the consumer emotionally. The text was the “sales pitch.” Each advertisement featured a different kind of shoe and talked about the different aspects of the design that make it a good shoe, incorporating the innovation into the advertisement as well. The following two years there is a shift away from emotional appeals and back to a rational appeal of the quality of Nike’s shoes.

1985 and 1986

Nike redirected its advertising strategy in the mid-80s in response to soft leather aerobic shoes, which Reebok introduced in 1982. “Soft white leather was the mood of 1986,” Strasser

368 Phil Knight Interview.
369 Reebok introduced the Freestyle, an aerobic dance shoe designed specifically for women. Katz, Just Do It: The Nike spirit in the corporate world, 7.
said. “Nike tried to copy, but decided that they had to take their innovation their own direction.”

The transition to the soft white leather shoe is especially apparent in Nike’s print advertisements for 1985 and 1986. Advertisements for both years featured images of Nike’s renditions of the white shoe trend [see appendices 6C and 7C]. These advertisements were highly image-oriented with a prominent picture highlighting specific shoes. The headlines were larger than usual and, for the first time, there was no or limited body text. These ads were simply visually displaying the shoes and letting the shoes sell themselves. In a memorandum dated February 20, 1986, it stated the ads should be authentic, consistent, directed, consumer driven and the overall message was that Nike made good shoes. The last advertisement, which ran in the December 1986 edition of The Runner, encapsulated what the memorandum’s directive while also incorporating themes from the Nike ads preceding them [see appendix 8C]. It included a full-page spread of an athlete in motion with a simple headline, “ALL COMERS” and a supplemental full-page spread of text. The text explained the mechanics of the shoe and the page also included pictures of the white leather shoes and technical illustrations. This all-inclusive ad represented many of the themes in Nike advertisements.

1987

In February 1987, Nike launched its “Revolution” campaign [discussed in Chapter 6]. The campaign, meant to remedy sales from Nike’s missed opportunity in the aerobic shoe craze, focused on promoting the new Visible Air product. By the mid 1980s the influence of the running boom was substantially declining and many industry experts and security analysts said this caused

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372 Parker, “MEMORANDUM: Thoughts on Advertising.”
373 The Runner, Dec 1986.
374 Ibid.
Nike to “run out of feet.” The running boom was so over, so Knight launched a campaign for what he thought was the beginning of a fitness revolution.

The ads following the debut of the “Revolution” campaign included eye-catching images. Somewhat unanticipated, the images usually had nothing to do with the Nike product [see appendix 9C and 10C]. The ads had the same visual appeal as many of the ads preceding them, with an image that took up a majority of the spread and a white box with a bold black headline and body text. The area dedicated to text, similar to many prior ads, also included a picture of a Nike shoe. A new attribute unique to these ads was a reoccurring “tagline” at the end of each body copy. The body copy focused, in some fashion, on foot pronation and the ways in which the Nike Air shoe could help, and always ended with the statement, “A revolution in motion.” As early as 1983, this campaign was brewing. According to the aforementioned August 10 memorandum, the marketing executives insisted the company needed to promote the air-sole technology because it was unique to Nike and as of January 1985, Nike would have over 40 models of air-sole shoes on the market. Though there were a few Nike Air advertisements in 1985 and 1986 [see appendix 6] there was no campaign dedicated specifically to Nike Air. Yet the executives believed the air-sole technology featured selling points, which demanded promotion. They also believed there was an excellent opportunity to launch a promotional air campaign with taglines such as, “the air-edge,” “air-power,” and “no compAIRison” suggested. “Revolution in motion,” became the tagline for the last major campaign leading into the iconic “Just Do It” campaign the following year.

375 Katz, Just Do It: The Nike Spirit in the Corporate World, 7.
378 Ibid.
379 Parker, “MEMORANDUM: Thoughts on Advertising.”
380 These selling points included: the most durable cushioning available on the market, impervious to compression set, decreases impact trauma to joints, aids running efficiency, and increases protection which increases performance. Ibid.
381 Ibid.
According to Cindy Hale, Nike’s advertising manager from 1982-1987, “Nike had been the advertising innovator and leader in the industry.”382 This is especially apparent in multiple competitors’ advertisements that look eerily similar to Nike advertisements. Numerous times throughout the decade Nike’s competitors tried to imitate Nike’s shoe designs and emulate the visual aspects of Nike’s print ads. One example was a New Balance advertisement that ran in the February 1979 edition of *The Runner*. It featured a blue and yellow shoe with a “waffled” sole like that of Nike’s Waffle Trainer [see appendix 11C].383 In a January 1984 *Runner’s World* ad Saucony imitated the large image juxtaposed with the white text box and bold black headline, a staple Nike visual cue [see appendix 12C].384 Again, in the October 1984 edition of *Runner’s World* Saucony attempted to recreate the Nike mystique in its advertisement in what looks like a recreation of the “There Is No Finish Line” ad [see appendix 13C].385 The print advertisements that Nike ran through the 1980s made an impact on both sales and competitors’ advertising efforts. These Nike ads proved influential as sales improved at the tail-end of the decade. At the same time, competitors continually tried to refashion Nike’s ads as their own, hoping to share Nike’s advertising success. By the end of the 1980s, Nike was, in fact, the leader of marketing trends far before their “Just Do It” campaign.

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Nike’s minimalist “Cities” campaign made a statement: the statement of understatement. Artistically creative, the 1983 to 1984 brand awareness campaign portrayed a realistic, authentic image of Nike’s allegoric athletes. Described at the time as “an insightful, behind-the-scenes look at some of the world’s finest athletes,” the mesmerizing, glorified depictions incorporated in the campaign reflected “Nike’s attitude about sports and exemplified its understanding of the athlete’s physical, mental, and emotional state of being.”386 As a company created by athletes for athletes,387 Nike sought to convey their internal ethos – cultivated by the mentality of the athlete – externally through what was their biggest campaign to date.388

With an intuitive understanding of athletes, Knight and Bowerman instilled in the company philosophy an indelible dedication to keeping the passion and internal fire of the athlete at the heart of their brand. A philosophy they wanted – above all else – extended to consumers. But, it wasn’t until 1982 that Knight considered injecting a large amount of money into advertising;389 which is why Nike tactically split its account between two agencies in 1983. Wieden+Kennedy, Nike’s agency at the time, retained the footwear portion of the account,390 while newly hired Los Angeles

389Rob Strasser Interview.
agency Chiat/Day was appointed to corporate image and apparel advertising. The “Cities” campaign, meant to proliferate Nike’s brand identity, adroitly represented the aura of the Nike philosophy through its holistic depiction of the heart and soul of the company: the athlete. Phil Knight explained that they used famous athletes in their advertising because, “there’s something inspirational about watching athletes push the limits of performance.” There was a palpable pre-existing emotion surrounding sports and building campaigns around that strong sentiment expedited Nike’s ability to connect with their audience through their advertisements.

Nike, who habitually ran advertisements in running magazines, incorporated television and outdoor advertising for the first time in the “Cities” campaign. Utilizing a new repertoire of marketing platforms, Nike featured emotion-stirring depictions of athletes and realistic images of exhausted, sweat-drenched athletes in their campaign. But the success of the “Cities” campaign in conveying Nike’s brand identity cannot be solely contributed to the campaign alone.

Nike’s concentration on grassroots marketing and endorsement deals with athletes who personified characteristics intrinsic to the brand preceding the campaign cultivated an image of authenticity for the company. Since its inception, Nike has had the relentless desire to be authentic—to be true to the culture, lifestyle and mentality of the athlete. The athletes they featured

392 Willigan, “High Performance Marketing: an interview with Nike’s Phil Knight,” 100.
in the campaign, “provided unique insight into the emotional motivation and makeup of athletes,”\textsuperscript{397} personifying the root of its company philosophy. The company was devoted to the simple notion upon which it was founded: building the brand around its ineffaceable ideal of living their intense passion.\textsuperscript{398} Nike initially employed and endorsed athletes who evoked a profound emotion. Athletes associated with the brand embodied characteristics that coincided with the company’s core philosophy. The internal values of the brand were the internal values of the company’s endorsed athletes, athletes such as Joan Benoit and Alberto Salazar highlighted in the “Cities” campaign. The athletes featured in the “Cities” campaign had a genuine belief in and loyalty to Nike. Because of this, viewers exposed to the ads didn’t fear manipulation through star-emulation.\textsuperscript{399} Rather, they connected with athlete and subsequently the Nike brand. The depiction of the athletes in the campaign sold "emotion, allegiance, and identification with a brand."\textsuperscript{400}

**The conception of Nike’s “Cities” campaign**

The mid 1980s presented dynamic change in Nike’s approach to marketing.

In their attempt to broaden their consumer base,\textsuperscript{401} Nike debuted their non-traditional, low-profile\textsuperscript{402} “Cities” campaign in Los Angeles in the summer of 1983. By the end of 1984 the campaign had spread to Seattle, Denver, Dallas, Minneapolis, Chicago, St. Louis, Washington D.C., New York City, Atlanta, Houston, and Boston.\textsuperscript{403} Cindy Hale, Nike’s advertising manager

\textsuperscript{397}Carbasho, Nike, 14.
\textsuperscript{398}Alex Wipperfürth, *Brand Hijack: Marketing without Marketing* (New York: Penguin Group, 2005), 86.
\textsuperscript{399}In his MEMORANDUM to Rob Strasser, Mark Parker cautions Strasser on the use of stars in their ads. “Be very careful about using ‘stars’ in ads. Runners realize these people are paid large sums and wear special make-ups. It is actually a turn-off to many people. The consumer should no feel as if we’re trying to manipulate them through ‘star’ emulation.” Mark Parker, “MEMORANDUM: Thoughts on Advertising,” Aug 10, 1983, from The National Museum of American History Smithsonian Institution Center for Advertising History Nike Advertising Oral History and Documentation Collection Project c. 1976-1992 Collection #448, Series 1: Research Files, Box 1, Folder 8: Advertising strategy.
\textsuperscript{400}Lippert, “Barbara Lippert’s Game Changers.”
\textsuperscript{401}Eller, “Nike: Non-traditional Image Campaign Presents ‘Pure Athletics.”
\textsuperscript{402}ibid.
\textsuperscript{403}Emerson, “Nike is exercising in fine art.”
from 1982 to 1987, stated, “the company wanted to increase the number of people it was talking
to, but retain the tone and personality the company had built advertising to dedicated athletes.”

Despite shifting audiences, pioneering inventive advertising techniques and focusing on brand image, Nike was successful in maintaining its fundamental personality in its first nationwide campaign.

Nike wanted its advertising to be innovative and according to Dave Luhr, Chiat/Day account supervisor, “Rob Strasser, V.P. Marketing at Nike, gave us the creative okay to be innovative, different.” In developing the campaign, Nike gave the “lifestyle-oriented ad agency,” the creative freedom to use any marketing platform desired in its endeavor to break the barriers inhibiting Nike’s ability to reach the masses. Nike and Chiat/Day understood that as long as Nike maintained the core of Knight’s passion and that passion served as the heart of the campaign, it would earn the right to do what it wanted and have fun communicating it. So, in the summer of 1983, Chiat/Day introduced Los Angeles to Nike’s advertising technique: the soft sell.

Outdoor advertising: Nike paints the city

BILLBOARDS

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405 Sharky, “Nike Image Goes the Distance in First TV Campaign.”


“In 1983 [Chiat/Day] gave the world Nike image ads that fill viewers with a gritty sense of athletic determination, while only mentioning the sponsor’s name as an afterthought.” Nike made a monumental shift from predictable hard sell product advertising to inconspicuous soft sell brand promotion in its “Cities” campaign. “The ads are almost ‘subliminal’ because the Nike name is so small,” said Barry Blue, president and general manager of Blue Wallscapes, the firm responsible for painting the L.A. murals. The striking billboards and building murals gave Nike’s campaign momentum and made the brand visible in a society saturated with in-your-face, hard-sell marketing ploys, an approach journalists suggest Nike used to escape hard-sell advertising in favor of authenticity and beauty of sports performance.

The image ads proliferated the aura of Nike’s philosophy, personifying Nike’s steadfast dedication to the athlete – an ideal intrinsic to the brand [see appendices 1D and 2D]. At the time, The Film and Videotape Production Magazine believed Nike used its image ads “to push a feeling – a commitment to athletics – instead of pushing a product … to represent ‘pure athletics’ in the advertising world.” This genuine and intensely realistic portrayal of athletes further personified Nike’s commitment to the athlete. Tom Patty, senior vice president of Chiat/Day, said, “the overall theme of the ad campaign is ‘Nike understands the athlete’ and knows how much athletes must train and sacrifice to become winners.” The campaign had no intention of selling specific products; rather, it sought to put Nike in the minds of the public. The objective was to establish an

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410 Peischel, “Chiat/Day Breaks Free from Pack: Pushing the boundaries of advertising creative, C/D stands alone.”
412 Rogers, “Scouting; Eye on Athletes.”
413 Eller, “Nike: Non-traditional Image Campaign Presents ‘Pure Athletics.”
authentic image of who Nike was, consequently increasing brand awareness and visibility for company. Gary Johns, associate creative director for Chiat/Day, said, “They’re [Nike] an authentic kind of company so we wanted to get back to that idea of what Nike was all about and in doing so use authentic athletes that represent Nike;” a representation evident in the outdoor advertising aspect of the campaign.

In a time when advertising was under massive creative critique, Nike broke barriers with the “Cities” campaign. It was believed that American creativity and imaginative advertising was lost in current marketing efforts. Yet, Nike broke free from advertising’s dull format. Enticing and captivating, the billboard advertisements in the campaign featured oversized athletes, an undersized logo, and no copy [see appendices 3D and 4D]. Nike embraced the idea that they could speak without words. Nike realized effectively communicating the ethos and philosophy behind their brand through minimalist advertising; that it was said best by saying nothing at all. According to a 1984 New York Magazine article, “Nike, Inc., began whispering, a whisper so subtle, so artistic, and indeed, so audible it has begun to define a new style in advertising – the advertising of understatement.” In the world of advertising, Nike was creative, yet silent. And until the “Cities” campaign, there had never been a silence quite this loud. While other advertising fell into the straightforward, traditional marketing that screams and shrieks, Nike’s soft-sell message was so discrete people would miss it if they were not looking closely. Many brands relied

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415 Eller, “Nike: Non-traditional Image Campaign Presents ‘Pure Athletics.”
417 Ibid.
418 Lippert, “Barbara Lippert’s Game Changers.”
420 Most advertisers haven’t yet learned to speak in whispers. It’s an idea, in fact, that seems to defy all that advertising stands for.” Ibid.
421 Eller, “Nike: Non-traditional Image Campaign Presents ‘Pure Athletics.”
on responsible and predictable advertising at the time. Nike successfully broke free of conventional advertising in what ad agencies referred to at the time as a “responsible creative revolution.” And this was just the beginning of Nike’s creative prowess.

Though Nike’s national brand awareness campaign consisted of eye-catching billboards featuring larger than life athletes, the affiliation with Nike was completely understated. According to an article at the campaign’s launch, the “billboards use a lot of white space, no words, an athlete extending beyond the edges, and the Nike logo dropped into a corner.” So subtle and discreet, the Nike trademark de-emphasized in the corner of the billboard could easily be overlooked. Another 1984 article explained, “The boards themselves are simple to the point of austerity … the focus is on the athlete, not the product.” In the Forbes article, “You Are What You Wear,” journalist Randall Lane articulates an idea that serves as the foundation to understanding how a company could successfully proliferate its brand identity through advertisements that inconspicuously incorporate the brand name and logo. “Knight didn’t know much about advertising,” Lane explained, “but as an old athlete himself he did understand sports, which he calls ‘the culture of the U.S., the language of the world.’ People don’t root for a product, Knight reckoned, but for a favorite team or a courageous athlete. Nike would sell not shoes but the athletic ideals of determination, individuality, self-sacrifice and winning.”

423 Nike broke free of the rules that traditionally governed advertising, which, many believed, was necessary for creative advertising.” Morgan, “What’s New in Advertising; Moving to Break the Old ‘Format’ Molds.”
424 Ibid.
426 Sharky, “Nike Image Goes the Distance in First TV Campaign.”
428 Randall Lane, “You Are What You Wear,” Forbes 158, no. 9 (October 14, 1996): 44.
In reference to Chiat/Day, Peter Moore stated, “they do a good job of getting to know the heart and soul of their clients.” They understood their client, Phil Knight, wasn’t selling shoes. He was selling attitude, an attitude that epitomized the philosophy behind the Nike brand. The “Cities” campaign needed to simultaneously increase brand awareness, while creating a brand identity that coincided with the Nike philosophy. Chiat/Day realized the language of sports is not necessarily communicated through words, but through dynamic images that represented these athletic ideals, hence the image-oriented advertising used on the billboards.

According to Advertising and Popular Culture, “the transfer of meanings from artful imagery to a product constitutes the labor of the advertisement.” In this case, viewers’ individual interpretation of the campaign images is what would ultimately determines its meaning, subsequently signifying their discernment of the brand. Nike was essentially “selling” their brand identity in their billboards, which is why this transfer of meaning from image to “product” generated their brand perception. The billboards were selling an attitude. A personality. A philosophy. All intangible values deeply rooted in the Nike brand. The realistic depiction of the athletes became the Nike aesthetic by radiating the true essence of the Nike brand.

The understated billboards were striking because of their simplicity and authenticity. Nike wasn’t trying to make athletics vogue, but personify the gritty, agonizing pain athletes endure in their pursuit of success. What Nike portrayed was real, and because of this approach consumers connected with the image. By not selling product and barely selling themselves, Nike came across as an honest, authentic brand in their billboards. Under-promoting themself gave them credibility. A credibility that stemmed from the meticulous act of creating new billboards that were not to be

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429Peischel, “Chiat/Day Breaks Free from Pack: Pushing the boundaries of advertising creative, C/D stands alone.”
viewed as advertisements, but simple, pure forms of art and decoration.\textsuperscript{432} According to a 1984 article, “only the small logo keeps the images from being exercises in fine art.”\textsuperscript{433} Therefore, not drawing attention to the Nike swoosh was a deliberate tactic employed by Chiat/Day to convey the implied message that “Nike is their athletes.”\textsuperscript{434} According to Steve Doctrow of Chiat/Day, “our whole strategy was to understate the product name and emphasize the athlete. It is reinforcing a commitment by Nike to the athlete, showing that we understand the spirit of competition.”\textsuperscript{435}

In a time when “outdoor advertising had developed a reputation as an industry moribund to the point of catatonia,”\textsuperscript{436} newspaper editorials called the boards “a welcome addition to the skyline rather than an example of urban clutter.”\textsuperscript{437} The dramatic billboard images\textsuperscript{438} instantly generated buzz. One journalist described, “one thing that made them so striking was the extension of the picture … beyond the limits of the board, breaking the frame and making the athlete seem larger than the billboard he rested on.”\textsuperscript{439} Chiat/Day used intriguing shots such as an athlete in mid-air, straining for distance in the long jump and long-distance runners at the end of a grueling race\textsuperscript{440} where the viewer could feel the intense emotion portrayed in the image.\textsuperscript{441} It was the authentic image of an omnipresent athlete – the emblematic Nike athlete – on the billboards that sparked an emotional reaction from the viewer.

The image-oriented, emotional advertising of the “Cities” campaign is an advertising technique attributed to the “Just Do It” campaign. According to a \textit{Forbes} article, in the “Just Do It”

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item[432] Lee Clow Interview.
\item[433] Emerson, “Nike is exercising in fine art.”
\item[434] Sharky, “Nike Image Goes the Distance in First TV Campaign.”
\item[435] Emerson, “Nike is exercising in fine art.”
\item[436] Shields, “Breaking the Mold.”
\item[437] Ibid.
\item[438] Eller, “Nike: Non-traditional Image Campaign Presents ‘Pure Athletics.”
\item[439] Shields, “Breaking the Mold.”
\item[441] Lee Clow Interview.
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campaign, “Nike would sell not shoes but the athletic ideals of determination, individuality, self-sacrifice and winning.” A statement that would accurately describe the characteristics portrayed through the billboard advertisements of the “Cities” campaign. With a principal focus of conveying Nike’s core persona through their brand image, Nike’s solitary campaign goal was proliferating their authenticity as a brand through their athletes.

PAINTED WALL MURALS

Nike’s “Cities” campaign bombarded the nation with what Strasser called “a guerrilla war.” Beyond traditional billboards, Chiat/Day integrated painted murals on the sides of prominently located buildings. According to a 1984 New York AdWeek article, “Nike, Inc. is painting walls around its competitors in an extension of its eye-catching billboard campaign, by focusing on athletes – rather than the Nike gear they wear – in giant, hand-illustrated murals throughout the city.”

Based on a wall done at the London marathon, Nike contracted artists, not to paint advertisements, but create something as pure as the murals periodically found on the sides of buildings in L.A. Instead of an artist’s name, the signature on these murals was Nike. Like the billboards, these murals were not intended to serve as an advertisement selling a product, but a piece of art celebrating the athlete. Blue Wallscapes, responsible for painting the L.A. murals, treated the murals as such. Barry Blue said, “our artists grid sections, then paint free-hand – the same way Michelangelo painted the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.” In some cases, the Nike

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442 Randall Lane, “You Are What You Wear,” Forbes 158, no. 9 (October 14, 1996): 44.
443 Emerson, “Nike is exercising in fine art.”
444 In L.A., Chiat/Day Paints the Town for Nike.”
445 Ibid.
446 Rob Strasser Interview.
447 Lee Clow Interview.
448 Ibid.
449 In L.A., Chiat/Day Paints the Town for Nike.”
signature was so small you had to look carefully to find it. Blue explains, “the ads are almost ‘subliminal’ because the Nike name is so small.” Again, the idea that propagating an authentic brand image took precedence over selling a product or the company in the “Cities” campaign.

Some of the recognizable athletes featured in these murals were well-known Nike-endorsed athletes such as Pedro Guerrero, John McEnroe, Alberto Salazar, Joan Benoit, Mary Decker and Tom Petranoff. Additionally, it included photos that personified the mystique of athletics. One of these photographs was included in a design known as “Battle of Atlanta.” The photograph was of the 1978 Peachtree Road Race, which first appeared on the cover of Runner Magazine in December 1978 [see appendices 5D and 6D]. It had now become a four-story mural in New York City and at an approximated total cost of $42,000, would eventually be painted on a wall in Los Angeles. It was also located in two places along Peachtree Street in Atlanta, along the route of the 15th annual 10K run, the run the photo originated from. In the campaign, Nike not only used impactful, eye-catching images in their outdoor advertising, but did so strategically. A conspicuous mural adorning the entire four-story building is difficult to overlook as a passerby, making the campaign visible to an immense number of people; yet, the core of the

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451 Ibid.
454 Emerson, “Nike is exercising in fine art.”
455 Ibid.
457 Emerson, “Nike is exercising in fine art.”
Nike consumer base at that point was still athletes. Therefore, Nike strategically placed the billboards and murals in places of high visibility for that specific consumer – such as placing the murals of runners Salazar and Benoit on the Olympic Marathon route – ensuring they would reach current and potential consumers. By using such vivid images of athletes personifying the very essence of the culture and mentality of an athlete, Nike was able to communicate their brand philosophy to the viewer without words.

**Television advertising: “Slice of life” vignettes**

**COMMERCIALS**

In addition to its outdoor advertising, Nike incorporated television commercials into their campaign. As their initial venture into television advertising, Nike advertising believed it should be off the wall, but Chiat/Day had a different mindset. Peter Moore, marketing director at Nike, states, the agency “told us they didn’t think we should be wild and crazy on TV. We should be authentic and true to what athletics is.” To do this, Nike mirrored the same marketing technique used in the outdoor advertising. One journalist said, “refusing to subscribe to conventional ‘hard sell’ techniques, Nike’s television commercials feature athletes … in ‘slice of life’ vignettes sharing their respective insights as to what makes them tick.”

The TV spots referred to as “meditations” don’t mention any product or the featured athlete; instead, the ads centered around the performance of sports, not Nike. Personifying

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460Sharky, “Nike Image Goes the Distance in First TV Campaign.”

461Peischel, “Chiat/Day Breaks Free from Pack: Pushing the boundaries of advertising creative, C/D stands alone.”

462Eller, “Nike: Non-traditional Image Campaign Presents ‘Pure Athletics.”

463Parrott, “No message; just the Nike logo.”

464Sharky, “Nike Image Goes the Distance in First TV Campaign.”
the spirit of competition,\textsuperscript{465} The Film and Videotape Production Magazine described these ads as “depicting a moment in the life and mind of a noted athlete.”\textsuperscript{466} In the same article, executive producer for Chiat/Day, Baran, explained, the commercials were meant to signify “Nike understanding what the athletes’ mental and physical stress is and what they go through in order to be in the positions they are.”\textsuperscript{467} The commercials simply told stories about the athletes.\textsuperscript{468} Moore explained, “They [Chiat/Day] took what is basically the true aura of sports, but portrayed it on a personal basis.”\textsuperscript{469} By focusing extensively on showcasing a true representation of the athlete, Nike portrayed a genuineness behind their brand.\textsuperscript{470}

Jeff Gorman, Chiat/Day copywriter for the campaign spots, told The Washington Post, “What comes across to the consumer is an honesty about Nike. We’re not hitting you over the head with a sledgehammer. The commercials draw you in, and they’re asking you to fill in the blanks. You take away what you want to take away.”\textsuperscript{471} The simplicity behind the ambiguous television commercials allowed consumers to connect with them on a personal basis. The meaning behind the commercials turned into an individualistic message unique to each person exposed. The versatility of the campaign paralleled the ambivalent nature of the “Just Do It” campaign; which allowed consumers to identify with the values of the Nike brand. Nike sold the athletes — their stories, their attitudes, their lifestyles — before they sold their products. Describing the commercials, one journalist said, “The messages they convey – ‘Pick the one thing you do best in life and keep at it,’ ‘Don’t ever give up,’ and ‘You’ve got to keep hungry and really committed’ –

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\textsuperscript{465}Emerson, “Nike is exercising in fine art.”
\textsuperscript{466}Eller, “Nike: Non-traditional Image Campaign Presents ‘Pure Athletics.’”
\textsuperscript{467}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{468}Sharky, “Nike Image Goes the Distance in First TV Campaign.”
\textsuperscript{469}Peischel, “Chiat/Day Breaks Free from Pack: Pushing the boundaries of advertising creative, C/D stands alone.”
\textsuperscript{470}Account supervisor at Chiat/Day, Dave Luhr, explained, “we want the image of Nike to be different, that it is a company that understands athletes and what they’re all about.” Sharky, “Nike Image Goes the Distance in First TV Campaign.”
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serve to illustrate Nike’s sensibility about the athlete, while perhaps holding as universal truths.\textsuperscript{472} A description eerily similar to those of the “Just Do It” campaign.

\textbf{“Not” advertising at the Olympics}

An additional element of the “Cities” campaign was the renowned “I Love L.A.” television commercial featuring Randy Newman’s Song “I Love L.A.”\textsuperscript{473} Though Nike’s “Cities” campaign ran throughout the United States, the focus was primarily Los Angeles due to the 1984 Olympics. Nike was not interested in being an official sponsor of the L.A. Olympics, but wanted to ensure they would be highly visible during the games. This was the ideal opportunity to make a statement and leave an impression. But, focusing on promoting their authentic brand image and positioning themselves as the being in the business of sports, they chose to steer clear of any “official” Olympic advertising. Doctrow said this was because “the company felt that was too blatantly commercial.”\textsuperscript{475} Instead, they had what one journalist called, “a very ingenious plan to gain an Olympic ‘image’ for Nike, making the public ‘aware.’”\textsuperscript{476}

Although not participating in Olympic advertising, the entire campaign was built around the Olympic theme with the main objective of rebuilding Nike’s image in the sports arena.\textsuperscript{477} And even

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item Eller, “Nike: Non-traditional Image Campaign Presents ‘Pure Athletics.”
\item Laurie Deans, “LA CLIPS Young director seems to have teen flickitis,” \textit{The Globe and Mail (Canada)}, May 11, 1984. According to the article, “Randy Newman and Athletes Imprint Nike on the Psyche,” “the L.A. spot is the lighthearted centerpiece of the rest of the campaign. Other TV spots are as dramatic and minimal as the street murals and billboards, which now can be seen in 10 cities.” Barbara Lippert, “Randy Newman and Athletes Imprint Nike on the Psyche,” \textit{New York Adweek}, May 21, 1984 from The National Museum of American History Smithsonian Institution Center for Advertising History Nike Advertising Oral History and Documentation Collection Project c. 1976-1992 Collection #448, Series 1: Research Files, Box 1, Folder 2: Advertising agency: Chiat/Day.
\item Sharky, “Nike Image Goes the Distance in First TV Campaign.”
\item Parrott, “No message; just the Nike logo.”
\item Peter Moore, interviewed Nov 21, 1991, from The National Museum of American History Smithsonian Institution Center for Advertising History Nike Advertising Oral History and Documentation Collection
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without an official affiliation with the games, in an interview, Phil Knight stated, “[the] L.A. Olympics was a breakthrough for Nike’s advertising.”[^478] By focusing on celebrating the athlete instead of their products, Nike stood out amongst the other advertisements at the time. It was the subtlety and pure simplicity of their advertisements that captured the attention of many. One article stated:

“Nike already has demonstrated a lighter hand and more subtle touch than most advertisers jumping onto the Olympic bandwagon, screaming their officialness and hitting us over the head with their go-for-gold cliché. Nike, meanwhile, has been passing around TV spots that concentrate on the athletes and leave the Nike pitch to a brief visual logo at the end of the bit.”[^479]

In addition to the aforementioned low-key television advertisements – 30-second meditations on the spirit of competition[^480] – the down-to-earth 60-second spot created around the “I Love L.A.” was included in the gamut of television ads. A little more upbeat than the other commercials, the video not only captured L.A. in all of its funky, quirky, and natural beauty,[^481] but did so while incorporating elements of Nike building murals and billboards located around the city.[^482]


[^480]: Emerson, “Nike is exercising in fine art.”

[^481]: According to the Smit, the campaign was a hit, “and Nike’s beach party was the talk of the town.” Smit, *Sneaker wars: The enemy brothers who founded Adidas and Puma and the family feud that forever changed the business of sport*, 193.

[^482]: Lippert, “Randy Newman and Athletes Imprint Nike on the Psyche.” In the Nike ad, with Newman’s song still coming through loud and clear ... we pass, as if in Newman’s car, the stark new billboards of Nike athletes, and Mary Decker running down Hollywood Boulevard past Mann’s Chinese Theater, and Carl Lewis sailing away, in eerie slow motion, into the blue on a long jump, not coming down until two bikinied women pass on the beach.” Jeansonne, “Starting Tuesday, They’ll Carry the Torch: A lighter-handed commercial.”
Though the video was intended to be a television ad, Doctrow explained that it generated more free publicity when it was aired as a music video on music video television shows. It didn’t look like an advertisement or feel like an advertisement and received positive feedback because of that. One article stated that the collaboration between Newman and Nike left “a better impression than any of the thousands of L.A. Olympics commercial ventures so far visited upon the public.”

With the debut of their “I Love L.A.” commercial, Chiat/Day instigated a trend of combining outdoor boards and TV spots by integrating Nike’s outdoor boards into the video.

By integrating the boards into the commercial it expanded the visibility of their overall message and drew public attention to the boards and murals around the country, specifically those in L.A. Lee Clow of Chiat/Day explained the billboards in L.A. contributed to the aesthetics of the Olympics, by paying tribute to the athletes participating. Most notable were the building-sized murals of Olympic athletes Alberto Salazar and Joan Benoit located near the Coliseum that just happened to be on the 26-mile route the Olympic marathoners ran. As an accolade to the athletes featured and those competing in the Olympic games, the mural bore no advertising message; just the Nike logo discreetly placed in the corner of the image. With such high visibility in L.A., a survey done by ABC Network’s 20-20 program found, “32 percent of those polled responded, when asked about Olympic sponsors, that Nike was indeed a sponsor.”

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483 Emerson, “Nike is exercising in fine art.”
484 Jeansonne, “Starting Tuesday, They’ll Carry the Torch: A lighter-handed commercial.” And Barbara Lippert commented, it was “an easy, graceful way to celebrate Americanness and the coming Olympics without resorting to the jingoism of pompous announcers talking in deep voices about greatness and victory.” Lippert, “Randy Newman and Athletes Imprint Nike on the Psyche.”
486 Lee Clow Interview.
487 Emerson, “Nike is exercising in fine art.”
488 Parrott, “No message; just the Nike logo.”
489 Ibid. According to Smit, “Nike had hijacked the Games in Los Angeles. Although Converse paid $5 million to be the official partner of the organizing committee, consumers were under the impression that Nike had sponsored the Olympics.” Smit, Sneaker wars: The enemy brothers who founded Adidas and Puma and the family feud that forever changed the business of sport, 193.
As Nike’s first major push into branding, there are many parallels between the “Cities” campaign and the successive “Just Do It.” The enigmatic nature of the predominantly visual commercials in both campaigns created an emotional image that was culturally resonating.

According to the book, *Brand Hijack: Marketing without Marketing*, “When designing a marketing campaign for your brand, you’ve got to stick with the spirit of the original hijack: Grassroots. Real. Anti-hype. Transparent yet enigmatic. Even a bit imperfect.” An idea both campaigns exemplify. The “Cities” campaign was subtle, yet captivating. Blatantly honest with its portrayal of the athlete, yet discreet with brand affiliation. It focused on breaking the mold of traditional advertising techniques and shifted its focus to the brand. Conventional advertising concentrated on pushing a product; the “Cities” campaign completely contradicted that idea. According to one journalist, “Nike’s ‘Just Do It’ rekindled the use of irony and reflexivity to distance the brand from the overly hyped and homogenizing conceits of conventional advertising,” an analysis that directly applies to the preceding “Cities” campaign. The campaign’s objective was to increase visibility of the brand and, according to Peter Moore, it was good for brand awareness. So good that, “the public thought the city campaign was its first campaign, and that Chiat-Day had created the brand,” according to Nike’s Cindy Hale. When the “Just Do It” campaign emerged, it wasn’t the first time Nike launched a branding campaign or made a statement with its understated, ambiguous advertising.

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492 Peter Moore Interview.
493 Cindy Hale Interviewed.
494 According to the article, Nike “ignited athletic passion and elevated sports awareness in the minds of millions via its new nationwide image campaign.” Eller, “Nike: Non-traditional Image Campaign Presents ‘Pure Athletics.”
"You believed if you had a pair of Air Jordans that you could fly. Literally, you really believed that you could fly through the air like Michael Jordan. You really believed that you could shoot a fade away like Michael Jordan. And that you can win championships like Michael Jordan. Just because you had those shoes." – LeBron James

In 1985, when Nike was at the brink of death, Robert Strasser, dubbed the “man who saved Nike,” negotiated an endorsement deal with a young Michael Jordan. Referred to as the “most iconic sportsman in their history,” Jordan – alongside Nike – ascended into what James Twitchell, author of *Twenty Ads That Shook the World*, believes to be “one of the success stories of modern celebrity advertising.”

“Jordan Flight” – Jordan’s first commercial – ran during prime-time television; replayed often through 1985, Jordan became ever famous as “The Nike guy who could fly.” During the mid-1980s, sales stagnated, and Nike knew that with the decline in sales they had to do more than produce another running shoe. Air Jordan, designed specifically for Michael Jordan, was the product of a concentrated focus to “shake things up” within product lines. The endorsement of Jordan was a success, and the guy who could fly made Nike sales soar.

*Nike’s penetrates the basketball arena*

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496 Swoosh! Inside Nike! By CNBC (2008)


498 Ibid.


500 McIver, “And it’s good Nike from him.”


502 Ibid, 206.


Prior to the endorsement of Jordan, Nike had already begun their aggressive attack into the college basketball shoe market,\textsuperscript{505} most notably through endorsement deals with 17 major colleges in the late 1970s. As they entered the 1980s, Nike continued to assertively infiltrate the basketball arena and by mid-1983 Nike had contracted 75 Division I basketball coaches,\textsuperscript{506} Converse, the leading brand in basketball shoes, contracted 170 of the 277 Division I teams. In an attempt to increase their market share, Nike \textit{swooshed} their athletes top-to-bottom. According to sports journalist Nick Santora, Nike’s endorsed basketball players “always had the freshest sneaks on the court, but more importantly, they were laced head-to-toe in Nike warm-ups, sweat-suits, jackets, bags, and caps off the court too.”\textsuperscript{507} Nike took the same grassroots approach they used to permeate the running shoes market to penetrate the basketball market. This time instead of visiting local track meets, they took their efforts straight to the court.

Nike knew that in order to gain substantial market share they had to put their products on the athletes themselves. To be successful they needed two things: visibility of their products to the mass consumer and validation of the quality of their products by the athletes. To do this, Nike chose to cut endorsement deals with top NCAA coaches – paying the coaches to deck their teams out in Nike gear – rather than following the traditional marketing technique of simply promoting a specific product through print advertising.

Nike used print advertising to reinforce their endorsements of college teams and professional players. In 1982 Nike had endorsement deals with some of basketball’s biggest names at the time and featured them in the eminent “Air Force 1” poster\textsuperscript{508} [see appendix 1E]. \textit{“Air

\textsuperscript{505}Mark Asher, \textit{“Driesell, Others Signs Up to Endorse Shoes; Shoe Firm Signs Up Driesell, 16 Others; Marketing War on Compuses Widens,” The Washington Post, Nov 11, 1978.}

\textsuperscript{506}Mark Asher, \textit{“Shoe Contracts Fit Many,” The Washington Post, Mar 22, 1983.}

\textsuperscript{507}Nick Santora, \textit{“The Billion Dollar (Jump)Man: Jordan 1 retrospective,” Sneaker Freaker 26, Dec. 12, 2013.}

\textsuperscript{508}Ibid.
Force 1” featured the “Original Six”
posing in Nike shoes and apparel, with the Nike logo in the top right-hand corner. Shortly following, in 1985, Nike released the Nike Dunk – Nike’s original team shoe.510 The “Be True To Your School” print advertisement featured the same shoe eight times in eight different color schemes [see appendix 2E]. The colors represented Georgetown, UNLV, Michigan, Iowa, St. John’s, Villanova, Kentucky and Syracuse, the college teams that made the original Dunk High their team’s official shoe. The bottom of the advertisement featured the headline, “Be True To Your School,” and subhead, “Basketball team colors by Nike,” and the Nike logo.511

Though both ads included Nike products, they represented more than that. They symbolized characteristics of the endorsed teams and featured players, the authentic athletes who personified Nike’s values of winning, victory, and success. There is no call to action to purchase the Nike product; rather, it featured the athletes Nike worked to endorse preceding the creation of the printed collateral. Before consumers were exposed to the printed media, they had most likely had seen the players of “Air Force 1” play wearing the Nike shoes they wore on the poster, and knew which team each color scheme represented on the “Be True To Your School” advertisement. This was because of Nike’s grassroots efforts to get the product on the athletes first, and advertise second. In addition, visibility of the brand was high because basketball was entering a new age of television and marketing.512 Specifically, exposure to Nike’s endorsed NCAA teams amplified the brand’s visibility.

509 Nike’s top NBA players of the time: Michael Cooper, Bobby Jones, Moses Malone, Calvin Natt, Mychal Thompson and Jamaal Wilkes.
510a “The Dunk High was done up in color schemes for each shoe, and have since become the most recognizable and coveted classic Dunk styles of all time.” Luiz Sanchez, “A Brief History of The ‘Be True To Your School’ Nike Dunk,” Sole Collector, Mar. 21, 2014.
Nike bombarded television sets as the distinct swoosh adorned the college players who wore Nike during their nationally televised games. Initially, Nike did not pay for commercial spots, as they relied on their endorsed players to be their presence on television. The palpable success of Nike’s decision to allocate a majority of their marketing budget for basketball to endorsement deals rather than commercial spots was evident. Not only did the endorsements allow Nike’s brand to be in the public eye, the athletes implicitly and explicitly endorsed them. Implicitly, the athletes endorsed the products by simply wearing them on the court. Explicitly, many of the athletes validated the products through verbally stating their approval. The testimonial advertising approach allowed the brand to prosper because it proliferated the cachet behind the products. By leveraging the power of the athletes’ stature in society, Nike embraced their ability to promote the innovative products made specifically by athletes, for athletes.

**Michael Jordan: The rookie worth $500,000**

By the time Jordan entered the league, Nike had about half the NBA players under contract but knew with the changing dynamics of sports marketing they needed a new face to represent their brand. Individual superstars were quickly becoming celebrities and cultural icons, and Nike needed a phenomenal player to serve as a catalyst for their brand. According to sports journalist, Nick Santora, “legendary basketball fixer Sonny Vacarro convinced Nike that MJ would take the brand to the next level.” Strasser asked Vacarro, “Would you rather sign 10 guys for $50,000 or one guy for $500,000?” Vacarro responded, “If that guy is Jordan I’ll take the one

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517 Santora, “The Billion Dollar (Jump)Man: Jordan 1 retrospective.”
518 Ibid.
519 Ibid.
After negotiating the terms of the endorsement deal, the final agreement paid Jordan roughly $2.5 million over five years, plus royalties and a long-term security package. Additionally, there was a rare clause in his contract, a love-of-the-game clause. Jordan’s genuine love of the game paired with his unprecedented skill made him the epitome of Nike’s authentic athlete. Donald Dell, ProServe’s chief, said “Michael Jordan has a charisma that transcends his sport.” Nike had struck an endorsement deal with the Prefontaine of basketball.

Air Jordan: “Who says man was not meant to fly?”

David Falk, senior vice president of ProServe and Jordan’s agent, proposed the name for the new air-sole shoes, Air Jordan, that Nike created for Jordan. Peter Moore, designer of the logo and shoe, liked the melding of the air technology of Nike shoes and the visual metaphor of Jordan flying through the air on the basketball court. Before Jordan had played his first rookie game, Nike had created print ads, posters, billboards, and television ads featuring Jordan with the high-top, spaceboot-like shoes – the first Air Jordans. The slogan of the campaign was, “Who says man was not meant to fly?”

Jordan had created a name for himself through his balletic and gravity-defying drives to the hoop, and the campaign exemplified those qualities of Jordan’s game. For the commercial “Jordan Flight,” Spike Lee, a young movie director, shot Jordan slam-dunking in slow motion to

521 Ibid.
523 Patton, “The Selling of Michael Jordan.”
524 Ibid.
525 Peter Moore Interview.
526 Ibid.
528 Patton, “The Selling of Michael Jordan.”
the sound of jet engines. The commercial glorified Jordan’s athleticism.\footnote{Knight, Philip H.}" As the revving engines intensified, Jordan launches into the air toward the basket where he seems to hang indefinitely in flight.\footnote{Goldman & Papson, Nike Culture: The Sign of the Swoosh, 47.} The dramatic image lionized Jordan as the man whose hard work (and fancy shoes) enabled him to fly.\footnote{Lane, “You Are What You Wear,” 45.} According to Robert Goldman and Stephen Paspon in their book, Nike Culture: The Sign of the Swoosh, “this commercial not only propelled Jordan into the air but also restored Nike as a growth corporation.”\footnote{Goldman & Papson, Nike Culture: The Sign of the Swoosh, 47.} The supplemental Nike Air Jumpman print advertisement [see appendix 3E] also highlighted Jordan’s exceptionally graceful flight to the basket through the still shot of Jordan suspended, with spread legs, above the basket.

The integrated campaign increased Jordan’s visibility and his association with the Nike brand.\footnote{Rob Strasser Interview.} Soon, the image of Jordan in flight became fused with the Nike swoosh,\footnote{Goldman & Papson, Nike Culture: The Sign of the Swoosh, 47.} synchronously associating the symbolic and connotative meanings of the swoosh with Jordan. He was now paired not only with the connotative meanings behind the swoosh such as flight, victory and speed;\footnote{Meaning attributed to the mythological associations. Redding, “What Does the Nike Logo Mean?”} but, also Nike brand values of skill, success,\footnote{“Champions of Design: Nike.”} and a spirit of determination.\footnote{Goldman and Papson, Nike Culture: The Sign of the Swoosh, 1.} Michael Jordan’s strong association to the swoosh personified the philosophy and value of Nike, a key theme many attribute to the “Just Do It” campaign.\footnote{Ibid. Yohn, What Great Brands Do: The seven brand-building principles that separate the best from the rest. Dan Wieden, “A Sense of Cool: Nike’s theory of advertising,” Harvard Business Review 70, no. 4 (July 1992): 97. \footnote{Versi, “Scott Bedbury On Branding – Just Do It (cover story),” 14-16. B. Hunsberger, “Nike’s ‘Just Do It’ Slogan Celebrates 20 years,” The Oregonian, Jul. 18, 2008. “Nike (1987) Dan Wieden Wieden+Kennedy.” 24. “Mini-case Study: Nike’s ‘Just Do It’ Advertising campaign,” 2. Carbasho, Nike.}
In addition to the first Air Jordan marketing campaign, Nike attracted much attention following the debacle with the NBA; free publicity that Nike, the Bulls and the NBA benefitted from. According to an Geraldine Willigan’s article, “High Performance Marketing: an interview with Nike’s Phil Knight,” Phil Knight said,

“[the Air Jordan] was so colorful that the NBA banned it – which was great! We actually welcome the kind of publicity that pits us against the establishment … Michael Jordan wore the shoes despite being threatened with fines, and, of course, he played like no one has ever played before. It was everything you could ask for, and sales just took off.”

Jordan’s actions mirrored that of his predecessor, Steve Prefontaine, the emblematic athlete of the brand. When Pre was competing, he received a letter from the American Athletics Union (AAU), “warning the ‘irascible, charismatic athlete to take the word ‘Nike’ off of his shirt, because it violated official rules,’ the likes of which Prefontaine violated all the time.” The irreverent nature of the advertisements of the “Just Do It” campaign stemmed from the athletes who preceded the campaign. Though paid advertisements of Pre and Jordan could be considered self-effacing and

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540 Jordan was not allowed to wear his black and red model of Air Jordans because the did not conform to his teammates. Cotton, “In Chicago, Jordan is the Prince of the City; North Carolina’s favorite son is the talk of the Bulls’ Town – and of the NBA.”

541 Patton, “The Selling of Michael Jordan.”

542 Willigan, “High Performance Marketing: an interview with Nike’s Phil Knight,” 70. Martin Farricker, writer for the trade publication, Sporting Goods Business, believes the controversy insured the success of the line. “Kids, he says, got the impression that it was some performance factor that led the NBA to ban Air Jordan, as if they had springs in their soles. Phil Patton, “The Selling of Michael Jordan,” The New York Times Magazine, Nov. 9, 1986. Jordan also caused a stir during the 1985 NBA All-Star Weekend when he performed his first slam dunk of the contest in a Jordan warm-up outfit, not his Bulls Uniform. Nick Santora, “The Billion Dollar (Jump)Man: Jordan 1 retrospective,” Sneaker Freaker 26, Dec. 12, 2013.

543 Smit, Sneaker wars: The enemy brothers who founded Adidas and Puma and the family feud that forever changed the business of sport, 102.

544 Cannon, The Ultimate Book of Business Breakthroughs, 133. Inside the Steve Prefontaine Center at Nike headquarters, is a display case holding Pre’s customized shoes and a letter from the American Athletics Union (AAU), “warning the ‘irascible, charismatic athlete to take the word ‘Nike’ off of his shirt, because it violated official rules,’ the likes of which Prefontaine violated all the time.” Katz, Just Do It: The Nike Spirit in the Corporate World, 63.

self-reflexive – phrases also used to describe the later “Just Do It” advertisements\(^{546}\) – the athletes themselves occasionally acted in an irreverent nature. For Jordan, this resulted in furthering “advertising,” the kind Nike did not have to pay for.

Though an irreverent nature is not an inherent part of the Jordan commercials, the “Jordan Flight” commercial has the undertone of a later “Just Do It” self-reflexive or self-referential advertisement. In order to understand the nature the “Jordan Flight” commercial, one must first understand the foundation of the brand. Monika Hestad in her book *Branding and the Product Design: An integrated perspective*, explains, “Some brands have strongly defined personality traits or brand archetypes. Nike could be understood as an individualistic hero archetype with its slogan ‘Just Do It.’”\(^{547}\) Though Hestad is referring to the “Just Do It” campaign, this idea can be applied to Michael Jordan incongruence with Goldman and Papson’s explanation of the hero archetype. According to their book, *Nike Culture: The Sign of the Swoosh*, “Advertising, in general, amplifies a culturally ambivalent relationship between identity and hero worship. Athletic heroes represent prevailing societal values, particularly those linked to the triumph of individualism.”\(^{548}\) They continue by explaining that the “Jordan Flight” used a “self-referential intertextual style for Nike”\(^{549}\) to create personalities for Jordan and Nike which then formed a relationship between Nike, the athletes, the media and the audience.\(^{550}\) Essentially, the individualistic hero archetype the “Just Do It” campaign portrays Nike as, was adapted from previous campaigns. Jordan was presented as a hero archetype, a person who encompassed societal values. Through the self-referential nature of Jordan’s personification of these values, he was able to make a triadic connection between himself, Nike, and the audience through the media. The audience aspired to be like Jordan

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\(^{548}\) Goldman & Papson, *Nike Culture: The Sign of the Swoosh*, 48.

\(^{549}\) Ibid, 48.

\(^{550}\) Ibid, 48.
because they related in some fashion to the values his personality conveyed in the ads. He was a cultural icon because he could show aspects of his personality that coincided with the values of Nike and the cultural mentality of the time. Subsequently, Jordan impacted the consumers’ psyche beyond buying shoes. He established himself and Nike brand in their consciousness.

**Jordan defies the laws of physics**

Jordan missed the majority of the 1985-86 season due to a broken foot; causing stress amongst the Nike executives who were worried about the effect Jordan’s absence from the national television spotlight would have on the Air Jordan line. Despite their concerns, Falk was adamant in his attempt to keep Jordan from playing following his injury. He is quoted saying, “The doctors told me that there was a 5 to 10 percent chance of reinjury. Any chance seemed an unacceptable risk.” Against Falk’s wishes, Jordan returned to the game sooner than doctors recommended. In his first game back, he scored 49 points and helped secure a seed for the Chicago Bulls in the Eastern Conference playoffs. In game two Jordan scored a playoff record 63 points, making Jordan an instant cultural phenomenon. “He’s God disguised as Michael Jordan,” said Boston Celtic player, Larry Bird, following the game. Jordan suddenly became an indelible name in the world of sports.

It was well known to the public that Falk was persistent in urging Jordan not to play in those playoff games, but Jordan’s determination to play showed him “placing love of the game ahead of prudence.” In his actions, Jordan emitted the aura of the Nike philosophy. His passion and dedication to the game cultivated his authentic image, one that resonated with consumers. An athlete with an unparalleled caliber of greatness proved himself an integral part of Nike’s

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551 Santora, “The Billion Dollar (Jump)Man: Jordan 1 retrospective.”
552 Ibid.
553 Patton, “The Selling of Michael Jordan.”
554 Santora, “The Billion Dollar (Jump)Man: Jordan 1 retrospective.”
555 Ibid.
557 Patton, “The Selling of Michael Jordan.”
success. Nike understood that being a superior athlete took a certain mentality, and it was their goal to convey their understanding of the athlete to consumers, which they did through their unparalleled endorsement deal with Jordan. He had the internal fire of a great athlete and an accessible personality – one the consumer could either relate to or aspire to possess.

According to Goldman and Papson, “the celebrity athlete always speaks to what one wants to be, as well as what one is not.” Michael Jordan and other Nike endorsed athletes spoke to who a person wanted to become. Jordan and the endorsement deals preceding the “Just Do It” campaign served as the foundation of the “Just Do It” mentality embedded in the slogan. Consumers wanted to just be Michael before they were told to “Just Do It.” Jordan and other endorsements did not directly tell you to “Just Do It;” they simply Just Did It. The idea of the “Just Do It” slogan is the compilation of the characteristics and personalities of the athletes that built Nike. More than simply portraying a brand, Michael Jordan advertisements were successful in selling Nike product.

“There has never been a more seamless partnership in the history of sneakers and sport,” explained Santora. “Nike was just about to launch visible Air in 1986 and their biggest superstar seemed to defy the laws of physics. This synergy couldn’t have been more fortuitous.” Though serendipity may explain the convenient timing of Jordan’s exceptional return to the game and Nike’s new product launch; it was Nike’s ability to use Jordan’s success to promote their brand image and products that made them successful. Through their advertisements they highlighted the qualities of Jordan that coincided with their core values; the Jordan persona and the Nike persona became synonymous. Therefore, Nike’s marketing efforts not only generated Jordan’s prestige in the public eye, but also simultaneously developed and personified the essence of the Nike brand. When

558 Goldman & Papson, Nike Culture: The Sign of the Swoosh, 48.
559 Santora, “The Billion Dollar (Jump)Man: Jordan 1 retrospective.”
the aura of Nike and the aura of Jordan became interchangeable, Jordan became the
brand, which in turn sold shoes.

Knight understood that focusing solely on Nike products was a great way to establish the
company, but wasn’t quite enough. According to Knight, “Nobody roots for a product. The
products needed to be tethered to something more compelling and profound.” For basketball,
that was Jordan. He had far exceeded the benchmark established by his counterparts who set the
standard for sports marketing. These were the superstars that established themselves as the
celebrities on the court and in the commercials. When Nike cut the initial endorsement deal with
Jordan, they needed a player be the cultural icon they desired, and they found him. The entire
game of basketball revolved around Michael Air Jordan. The success of the Jordan endorsement
in selling products is rooted in the strong brand image of Nike and its parallel to Jordan. As
journalist Barbara Lippert explained, “Nike humanized athletes. The ads took what was funniest
and most vulnerable about them and exaggerated it.” With Jordan, Nike was extremely
successful in establishing a coherent image between the brand and the athlete promoting the
brand.

561 Katz, Just Do It: The Nike Spirit in the Corporate World, 6.
563 Lippert, “A Leap for Advertising.”
CHAPTER 9: NIKE’S RADICAL REVOLUTION (1987)

Though Nike started the decade strong, by the mid 1980s they saw a slip in sales. The major reason for this blunder was the company’s miscalculation of the aerobics boom. The aerobic dance niche was sweeping the nation and Nike felt the brunt of the missed opportunity. Nike quickly learned that sticking strictly with what they knew – running – would be detrimental to the company with the ever-evolving market tastes of the sporting goods industry. To be successful, they needed to be on the cutting edge of innovation, which Nike usually was with running shoes. With a new focus on broadening their consumer base, they either needed to expand the breadth of their products to satisfy the aerobics market or they needed to refocus their advertising efforts on promoting the innovative shoes their company was already creating. If they failed to quickly adapt their advertising efforts to coincide with the changing climate of the market and cultural dynamic of the time, the brand would become obsolete.

The launch of the “Revolution” campaign remedied Nike’s faltering sales. The campaign featured Nike’s air-sole technology, engineered by former NASA employee Frank Rudy. Though Nike had introduced its first pair of running shoes with the patented air-sole technology in 1979, there was little internal support during its initial debut on the market and Visible Air didn’t appear on a product again until 1986. The new Visible Air product launch was a critical launch for Nike, and luckily, the “Revolution” campaign was a tremendous hit.

Knight explained to The New York Times that the jogging epidemic of the late 1970s wasn’t the running revolution they thought; rather, it was just the beginning of a fitness revolution.
Therefore, the campaign did not simply communicate a radical modification in their shoes, but personified the mindset of Americans caught up in the fitness craze. The eight-page magazine spread debuted in the March issue of Runner’s World, and appeared in women’s magazines and general-interest publications [see appendix 1F]. In addition to the print advertisements, Nike integrated a television spot, which featured the Beatles song “Revolution.” Nike’s revolution encompassed the new technology of their shoes and the fitness revolution – revolution they wanted the average consumer to be part of, just as Nike was. “Nike wanted consumers to make a commitment to fitness and a healthier lifestyle,” said Mark Thomashow. According to Randall Lane, through the juxtaposition of shots of Nike athletes playing sports against shots of regular people playing sports, the commercial was “designed to suggest to the world that real athletes prefer Nike. Buy our shoes and play better – or at least feel better about yourself.”

Nike executives believed the song truly signified the radical step the company took with their new running shoes. The estimated $7 million campaign signified the first time in advertising history an original Beatles recording was licensed for advertising purposes. According to Advertising and Popular Culture, using a popular song enhances the value of the commercial. “When Nike purchased the right to use the Beatles’ ‘Revolution,’ the company and its agency knew precisely the sorts of meanings they were buying.” Nike chose the song because of its cultural prominence. The lyrics of the song not only coincided with the message Nike wished to

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574Mark Thomashow Interview.
575Lane, “You Are What You Wear,” 46.
577Lane, “You Are What You Wear,” 46.
578Fowles, Advertising and Popular Culture, 132.
portray to the public, but it was a well-known song at the time. The cultural relevance of the song in-turn established the culture resonance of the message.

Dan Wieden chose producers Peter Kagan and Paula Greif to produce a commercial that portrayed and honest and realistic\textsuperscript{579} depiction of the lives of athletes. Because of this, there were mixed reviews about the aggressive imagery,\textsuperscript{580} as well as the use of the Beatles song in the commercial. Canadian journalist Tom Hawthorn, called Nike’s use of the first original Beatles recording in a TV commercial a “coup” for Nike, but a “travesty” for many others.\textsuperscript{581} Though the song received backlash, the commercial received positive reviews of the montage of images, including cameos of many of Nike’s endorsed athletes.

The campaign actually did better, according to Thomashow, because of the lawsuit\textsuperscript{582} that came about for using the song. He explained that, “The perception was that Nike was on the cutting edge because it had the guts to use the Beatles in an advertisement.”\textsuperscript{583} The antiestablishment philosophy of Knight and Bowerman\textsuperscript{584} unintentionally surfaced from the lawsuit. Although the commercials were not intended to cast an irreverent undertone – common in the “Just Do It” commercials\textsuperscript{585} – the commotion around the commercial was serendipitous in its proliferation of Nike’s brand identity and product visibility.

\textsuperscript{579} Sharon Edelson, “They say they want a revolution; New progressives Kagan & Greif style spots with a music-video sensibility,” Advertising Age, Jun 1, 1987.
\textsuperscript{580}Ibid.
\textsuperscript{581}Tom Hawthorn, “Turning pop classics into ads has rock fans singing the blues,” The Globe and Mail (Canada), Jun 17, 1987.
\textsuperscript{582}In 1987 Apple Records sued Nike for the use of the Beatles song, ‘Revolution.’ “Swoosh! Inside Nike!"
\textsuperscript{583}Mark Thomashow Interview.
\textsuperscript{584}Cannon, The Ultimate Book of Business Breakthroughs, 133. Inside the Steve Prefontaine Center at Nike headquarters, is a display case holding Pre’s customized shoes and a letter from the American Athletics Union (AAU), “warning the ‘irascible, charismatic athlete to take the word ‘Nike’ off of his shirt, because it violated official rules,’ the likes of which Prefontaine violated all the time.” Katz, Just Do It: The Nike Spirit in the Corporate World, 63.
Though different marketing approaches were used, Nike’s primary advertising focus in this campaign mirrored past marketing efforts as it continued to focus on creating transparent advertisements that depicted a genuine and honest portrayal of the brand and values. Even Dan Wieden credited “Visible Air” for Nike’s comeback as the industry leader,\textsuperscript{586} and their “Revolution” campaign as the catalyst that recovered the momentum Nike had lost to Reebok.\textsuperscript{587}

\textsuperscript{586}Dan Wieden Interview.
\textsuperscript{587}Ibid.
CONCLUSION

Just Do It. “Those three words by themselves don’t really mean anything,” said Scott Bedbury, director of advertising at Nike. “In fact, when it was presented no one jumped out of their seat … truth be known – off the record – it was presented as ‘Just Fuck It.’” Nike’s omnipresent slogan stemmed from a simple ambiguous statement and an inauspicious pitch by Wieden+Kennedy. The tagline was meant to serve as the unifying message between the initial half-dozen commercials highlighting various sports. “We had no idea the true potential of not those words, but that frame of mind could take you,” said Bedbury. The multifaceted slogan brought about a lifestyle mantra accessible by all. The cultural resonance of “Just Do It” was inadvertent and unforeseen, but the versatility of the slogan aligned with the cultural mentality of the “do something” generation. The whole notion of, “get on your with your life and do what you gotta do,” found resonance with the culture. The slogan, now intrinsic to the brand, captures the true essence of the Nike brand, personifying its brand archetype and core persona – an athlete pushing the limits.

As a highly researched campaign for Nike, many key themes of the “Just Do It” campaign have been established through past research studies. Outlined in the methodology portion of the study, these themes include:

- The personification of the Nike attitude, philosophy and value
- The irreverent, self-effacing, and self-reflexive nature of the advertisements
- The focus on the soft sell (branding over selling)
- The cultural resonance of slogan
- The image-oriented, emotional advertising technique
- The focus on consumer needs.

588 Scott Bedbury Interview.
589 Lane, “You Are What You Wear,” 43.
590 “Close-Up: The history of advertising in quite a few objects - No 118: Nike’s ‘Just do it’ tagline,” 36.
591 Scott Bedbury Interview.
592 Lippert, “Barbara Lippert’s Game Changes.”
594 Elliott, “E.B. and Bo led ’89 Dream Team.”
595 Scott Bedbury Interview.
These themes will be applied to Nike’s marketing efforts preceding the “Just Do It” campaign explained in chapters one to six to establish how the marketing appeals in the “Just Do It” campaign compare to the marketing appeals employed by Nike prior to that campaign.

**Personification of the Nike attitude, philosophy and value**

The now universal brand of Nike began with $500, the desire to create the perfect running shoe, and the trunk of a car and no traditional advertising. What has become a multinational corporation first began with two men: one constantly tinkering with shoes and one attending track meets in attempt to get athletes to wear the shoes. Initially there was no formal marketing, just the task of getting the shoes on the feet of runners. Phil Knight told *Advertising Age* that originally the tagline for the “Just Do It” campaign was “Out of Eugene,” with the major concept behind the campaign focusing on where the birth of Nike really was: the running tracks of Eugene. Though “Out of Eugene” was not the tagline used, it highlights the sentiment behind the “Just Do It” campaign. The ubiquitous slogan stemmed from the core of the company. In effort to create a tagline representative of the true identity of the brand, Nike reverted back to its roots—the tracks of Oregon.

The tracks of Oregon not only provided the ideological roots of Bowerman’s philosophy – a philosophy engrained into the heart of the company – but provided Bowerman’s Men of Oregon, some of the first employees of the company. Wieden said, in reference to the “Just Do It” campaign, “We don’t set out to make ads. The ultimate goal is to make a connection.” This exact mentality was the very essence of the original employees of Nike who marketed their shoes at a grass roots level by attending track meets, talking directly with athletes and coaches, and

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596 Rance Crain, “Phil Knight on becoming a believer in advertising and forgiving athletes,” *Advertising Age* 84, no. 18, May 6, 2013: 1.
597 Lane, “You Are What You Wear,” 46.
sending personal letters to exceptional athletes. A key theme from the “Just Do It” campaign was the personification of the Nike attitude, philosophy and values. Not only were the initial sales efforts of the staff the personification of this theme, but it was the establishment of it. Of these initial employees, Steve Prefontaine had the most notable influence on the future “Just Do It” campaign.

The first “Just Do It” television commercial was released in 1988 and featured 80-year-old Walt Stack crossing the Golden Gate Bridge on his daily 17-mile run.598 This image encapsulated the company’s soul:599 the spirit of Pre. “Prefontaine was the James Dean of running – the rebel – he was a household name,” said Bedbury. “To talk about the soul of Nike you have to have Prefontaine – having him is vital.”600 He was featured in the May 1977 Runner’s World ad with the headline, “IT STARTED WITH HIM. NOW IT’S UP TO YOU” [see appendix 5B]601 His mystique was then personified in the August 1977 edition of Runner’s World in the advertisement featuring a solitary runner and the headline, “THERE IS NO FINISH LINE” [see appendix 4B].602 This advertisement resonated with the athletic community as it encapsulated Nike’s intuitive understanding of what it truly meant to be an athlete. Nike continued to personify this core value through print advertisements and campaigns leading up to the “Just Do It” campaign. At the inception of the company, Pre was the emblematic athlete for Nike and at the debut of the “Just Do It” campaign Walt Stack embraced this spirit of Pre. Both athletes epitomized Nike’s key philosophy — an unwavering dedication to authenticity. Not only did Stack personify Pre, but the image of him running across the bridge mimicked previous print advertisements for Nike [see appendix]. Though this was the first time Nike resonated beyond their core consumer base, the imagery, personification of Nike’s core values, and the pervasive ideological appeal to Nike’s “no

598“Close-Up: The history of advertising in quite a few objects - No 118: Nike’s ‘Just do it’ tagline,” 36.
600Scott Bedbury Interview.
excuses” mentality was not unique to this commercial. It was a compilation of various Nike marketing efforts preceding it.

**Irreverent, self-effacing, and self-reflexive nature of the advertisements**

“It was Michael Jordan who shot Nike deep into the Lovemarks zone, from irreplaceable to irresistible,” said author, Kartikeya Kompella. “This is because Jordan gave Nike soaring aspiration; he gave it emotional connectivity.”⁶₀³ The cultural resonance Jordan had served as a catalyst for the Nike brand. A phenomenal player with unprecedented skills, as an NBA rookie, everyone wanted to be like Mike. By the time Nike signed Jordan, Nike already had a well-established brand archetype and core persona. Jordan was to society what Prefontaine was to the running community. He was emblematic of the Nike philosophy and society’s desire to be like Mike was the self-referential nature of Jordan in the campaign. Nike didn’t present Jordan as an idealistic phenomenal athlete, but as a human. Society bought into the idea that if they wore Nikes that somehow they would then emulate the characteristics of Jordan they desired to replicate. According to Rothenberg Nike’s endorsement deals had meaning. “Nike meant to apotheosize them and implicitly identify itself their home, as the Olympus of America’s 1980s-celebrity-worshipping-hero-adoring consumer culture.”⁶₀⁴ Jordan established himself and the Nike brand associated with him within the psyche of the consumers. Nike also used culture relevance in the following campaign; the “Revolution” campaign. In the “Revolution” campaign, the use of the Beatles song easily connected with society at the time, serving as a connective device between the company and the consumer. The campaign also had an irreverent undertone – a key theme of the “Just Do It” campaign – because of the lawsuit that occurred for the use of the song. The campaign, which served as the launch of Nike’s fitness revolution, laid the foundation for “Just Do

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It.” It planted the idea of the fitness revolution in the conscience of Nike’s consumers – creating a platform from which the “Just Do It” campaign could find its initial momentum.

**Focus on the soft sell (branding over selling)**

Nike’s focus on their brand identity of the “Cities” campaign served as the foundation of their “Just Do It” campaign. The sentiment behind the ads in the campaign focused on what athletes do and why they do it. They were presented in their natural state — doing what athletes do — sweating, straining, running and jumping. The “Cities” campaign epitomized this aspect of Nike’s brand philosophy three years prior to the debut of the “Just Do It” campaign. Image-oriented as it was, Nike focused extensively on showcasing a true representation of the authentic athlete. According to author Randall Rothenberg, “Chiat/Day’s innovation was to show that pure visual imagery, sans words, was valid on the page, in the environment, and on the screen. The agency proved that subtext and context could substitute for text in advertising.” The ambivalent nature of the commercials in this campaign allowed consumers to interpret them as they wished and connect on an individual basis. Journalist Douglas Holt explained that, “Nike’s ‘Just Do It’ rekindled the use of irony and reflexivity to distance the brand from the overly hyped and homogenizing conceits of conventional advertising” This can also be said of the earlier “Cities” campaign. In this campaign, the images of well-known Nike endorsed athletes were used as the root of Nike’s emotional advertising technique, similarly to the following campaign featuring Michael Jordan.

**Image-oriented, emotional advertising technique**

The print advertisements also incorporated the “Just Do It” theme of branding quite frequently. According to Peter Moore, Nike marketing director, “John Brown created the ‘There Is

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605 Yohn, *What Great Brands Do: The seven brand-building principles that separate the best from the rest*, 48.
No Finish Line’ campaign, which is still part of the corporate image. The mentality of that advertisement highlighted Nike’s intuitive understanding of the athlete, a value extremely important to the Nike philosophy. According to authors, Robert Goldman and Stephan Papson, “Nike’s profile of self-awareness has developed over time through a range of ads that address the relationship between brand identity and consumer identity.” The print ads leading up to the “Just Do It” campaign were soft-sell branding advertisements, a theme also evident in Nike’s first television and outdoor campaign, the “Cities” campaign.

Focus on consumer needs

A key value engrained into Nike’s philosophy has always been continued innovation to meet consumers’ needs. Though Nike showcased Bowerman’s passion of making shoes better to make runners better in numerous print ads, the promotional momentum for highlighting innovation stemmed from the debut of the blue and yellow Waffle Trainer in 1973. The first color advertisement of the iconic shoe ran in the October 1976 edition of Runner’s World and the advertisement not only included an image where the shoes were prominently featured, the supplemental body copy spoke to the specific aspects of the shoe that were designed to improve foot placement and reduce the chance of knee injury [1B]. This approach of showing how innovation meets athletes’ needs continued through the “Just Do It” campaign.

According to author, Denise Lee Yohn, “‘Just Do It’ became a brand ethos. It found a way of respecting its past while embracing its future.” There is no argument that the “Just Do It” campaign is what solidified Nike into the social consciousness of much more than its initial core consumer: the athlete. The multifaceted, ambiguous slogan elevated Nike’s status and helped construct an iconic brand. But, it cannot be overlooked that key themes attributed to the “Just Do

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608 Peter Moore Interview.
609 Goldman & Papson, Nike Culture: The Sign of the Swoosh, 75.
610 Yohn, What Great Brands Do: The seven brand-building principles that separate the best from the rest, 50.
The "Just Do It" campaign were not unique to the campaign. Many advertising appeals and techniques attributed to originating from the "Just Do It" campaign, Nike actually employed in preceding marketing efforts. Even when Nike was not employing traditional advertising techniques, themes from the "Just Do It" campaign are apparent in initial selling tactics. Nike didn’t grow its legendary brand through extravagant advertising campaigns. It simply, Just Did It.
Appendix 1:
Long Distance Log, Jul. 1965.

TIGER TRACK AND CROSS COUNTRY SHOES

#TG22 "TRAINING"—Soft calfhide upper, super-soft cushioned sole. Extra cushion in ball and heel. Ideal for road training and racing. Best protection from road shock of any shoe on market. White/blue trim...$7.95

#TG23 "CROSS COUNTRY"—Light weight kangaroo upper, one piece long-wearing sole. Extra wedge of protective heel cushioning. Superbly comfortable. Adapted to racing and training on all surfaces. White/blue trim...$9.95.

COMING SOON —#TG1: "MARATHON"...the lightest, fastest racing flat in the world. Recently worn to world's fastest ever marathon clocking! Available by fall, priced at low, low $7.95!

Ask about TIGER track shoes. Light weight, long wearing "SUB-YOUR" with 1 permanent spikes—$10.95. With replaceable spikes—$11.95.

BLUE RIBBON SPORTS

3650 SE CLAYBOURNE or P. O. BOX 492
PORTLAND 2, OREGON or SEAL BEACH,
CALIF.

Please include $1.00 for postage. Rates vary and difference will be refunded. California residents please add 4% sales tax.
Appendix 2:

Appendix 3:
Appendix 4:
Long Distance Log, Apr/May 1972.
Appendix 5:

The new marathon champions choose NIKE. At Western Hemisphere, Trail’s End, and Boston, the winners wore the NIKE “Ohoi,” the shoe whose first prototypes took four of the first seven places at the 1972 U.S. Olympic Marathon Trials in Eugene, Oregon.

Renamed “Boston ’73” in commemoration of its latest victory, this model has come a long way since Eugene. Featuring a newly compounded outer sole for extra racing life, the “Boston ’73” has wrapped a nylon smoothfiber upper around the most complete ball-to-heel instep support found in any running shoe and added a SPENCO® innersole for extra comfort and blister protection. (NIKE is the only running shoe in the world to give you a built-in SPENCO® at no extra charge.)

“Boston ’73,” race tested and better than ever.

Blue Ribbon Sports

4355 S.W. 142nd Avenue
Beaverton, Oregon 97005
(503) 643-6696

4 Jeffrey Avenue
Holliston, Massachusetts 01746
(617) 425-1200
Appendix 6:

OREGON WAFFLE

Oregon, the state that brings you Mt. Hood, Crater Lake, considerable rust and NIKE sport shoes, is proud to present its newest attraction THE OREGON WAFFLE. The WAFFLE is the most revolutionary and innovative concept to be introduced to running since the starting block.

7.2 ounce lightness; super cushioning and unparalleled traction are the ingredients which make the WAFFLE the shoe for all purposes, whether it be cross-country, marathoning, roadrunning, or on-the-track racing and training.

The shoe that sprang to life on Mrs. Bill Bowerman’s now famous waffle griddle is currently available exclusively at the nine ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT retail outlets or through the A.D. mail order.

The supply is limited, so come in early and beat your competition to the WAFFLE.

*VITAL STATISTICS: 7.2 ounces (one shoe, size 9); Red nylon swoosh-fibre upper, built on a spike last; SPENCO® innersole; cushioned heel wedge; long wearing, high density rubber waffle sole; Sizes 6-12. Price: Retail $21.95, volume $17.95.

December ’73 Runner’s World ad for the new Nike Waffe Racer
APPENDIX [Athlete to Athlete]

Appendix 1A:
Long Distance Log, Jan-Sept 1967.

TIGER SHOES
Beautiful Beasts

“TG-4 MARATHON SHOE”

1st, 1st, 1st!

THE FINEST ROAD RACING AND CROSS
COUNTRY SHOE IN EXISTENCE, WITH
THIS AMAZING RECORD:
4 of first 6, 1964 Olympic Marathon
5 of first 6, 1965 Boston Marathon
1-2-3-4, 1966 Boston Marathon
World’s fastest marathon, 2:12:00
3 of first 4, 1965 West Ham. Marathon
1st, 1966 East. Reg. Marathon Champs
1st, 1966 NCAA Cross Country Champs
1st team, 1966 NCAA Coll. X-C Champs
1st team, 1966 NCAA Coll. X-C Champs
4 of first 5, 1965 Alamosa Marathon
4 of first 5, 1966 Heart-of America
1st, New England Schoolboy X-C Champs
Many, many, many more conference,
regional, and district titles won
in TIGER shoes!

AVAILABLE ONLY FROM:

BLUE RIBBON SPORTS
Exclusive U. S. Tiger Distributor.
P. O. BOX 492 - SEAL BEACH, CALIFORNIA 90740
Telephone: 431-5724

Because of a TIGER size variance, it is advisable to
order TIGER shoes 1 size SMALLER than usual track
shoe size. Please add 75c for postage.
Appendix 2A:

Born in the Track & Field Capital of the World — A BRAND NEW LINE

The first new quality line of track shoes in 7 years. Designed with the athlete in mind, Nike is not bound by tradition or long, profitable production runs. We’ve combined the best features of the old shoes with the newest ideas of the best athletes. Introducing our first 6 models.

1. SUPER CORTEZ — Designed with many of the features of the popular Cortez including the great sponge midsole with those extra poly foam tongue arch support, 4-way stretch rubber innersole and padded ankle collar. Available only in limited supply thru April.

2. NYLON CORTEZ — May be the finest long distance training shoe ever. Blue nylon suede shaft upper on a well accepted distance sole creates a road runner’s dream. Extra miles of wear; great cushion and light weight. Soft sponge midsole under ball and heel offers road shock reducing soreness and injuries. Raised heel eliminates achilles tendon strain.

3. NYLON MARATHON — Designed for cross country and road racing. Extremely lightweight with blue suede shaft upper which never stiffness or cracks. Blue foam rubber midsole and salt, corduroy outer sole grips on all surfaces.

4. FLYTE-REGULAR — Same as the Flyte Wet without the poly urethane coating. Standard white leather upper on the great style sole.

5. FLYTE-WET — The first wet look shoe. the best yet for all around use. Liquid-looking poly urethane coating gives this model a perpetual shine. Gum rubber sole, sponge midsole with all around flexing, padded ankle cushion. Available, beginning March, in blue only.

nike
NIKE shoes available thru
The Athletic Dept.
855 Olive Street
Eugene, Oregon 97401
ANNOUNCING
the first shoe
made for
your knees

The revolutionary new Nike LD-1000
Trainer. The first training shoe designed to
improve your foot placement. Because the
wider the sole, the less chance of twisting
an ankle.

YOUR KNEES
More important, Nike research and
development has found that the
bigger your feet touch down, the better
for your knees and hips. Sideways
twisting, or torquing, can cause
medial lateral wear in the knee, as
well as other foot, leg and hip
problems. Although the LD-1000
can’t solve all difficulties, it can help
cut the chances of wear or injury.

MORE THAN A WIDE SOLE
But there’s more to the LD-1000
Trainer than just a wide sole. It
features things like pockets of
closed-cell synthetic plastic foam
at critical points to absorb complex
kinds of shock. The new angular sole
flare is designed to reduce heel lever,
causing less stress on the anterior
femoral muscle. And of course the
other proven Nike features:
Patented waffle sole to
allow natural leg torque,
yet absorb maximum
shock. Spenco® innersole
and fitted ankle collar to
prevent slippage. Tough
nylon mesh upper.

STOP BY
No matter what kind of running you do, we’d
like to help you train safely. Your Nike dealer
will have a limited quantity of the new LD-1000
Trainer soon. So come in and try on some-
things really revolutionary—the first training
shoe made for your knees.

NIKE
sport shoes
Keeping your feet in touch
with what’s new.
Appendix 2B:
Appendix 3B: 
*Runner’s World, Apr 1979.*

**WHY BUY A COPY WHEN YOU CAN RUN WITH THE ORIGINAL?**

A funny thing happened back in 1974 when we came out with our first Nike Waffle Trainer. Almost everybody except serious runners laughed. 

“It’ll never last,” some said. “Looks like a shoe made to run on ice,” they chuckled.

Well, they’re not laughing anymore. In fact, most major shoemakers have tried to copy our Waffle Trainer. Because it has become the best selling training flat ever made. The classic running shoe. So if you’re looking for the real thing, accept no substitutes for the original Nike Waffle Trainer. Because there aren’t any. Only copies.

NIKE
Beaverton, Oregon.
Appendix 4B:
Appendix 5B:  

Steve Prefontaine was a champion. While he was at the University of Oregon, he ran away with national records. And after college, he ran for the U.S.A. in the greatest competition of them all: the Olympics.

He not only worked hard at running, he worked hard at helping other runners, both men and women. Especially runners who are no longer in school, but want to continue running national and international meets.

That’s why the Steve Prefontaine Foundation was set up. Its goal is to continue the work he started. Funds are used to promote international meets, to finance foreign exchange athletic programs, and to set up clinics.

The Foundation helps with training and research projects. And it helps find jobs for high school runners who want to train seriously. On occasion, it also provides medical and legal assistance.

The whole idea of the Foundation is to do everything possible to help runners keep running. Please help.

Send your tax-deductible donations to the Steve Prefontaine Foundation, P.O. Box 55043, Eugene, Oregon 97405.

After all, if runners won’t help other runners, who will?

This message was brought to you by the people who make Nike shoes, because we care.
A MATTER OF CONSCIENCE.

The day running became big business it started down a questionable, but predictable path.

We can’t go along.

Maybe it’s because we remember how it all began.

We don’t feel comfortable with mass marketing. We bristle at the idea all runners are created equal, and all shoes should be made to a single standard.

Then judged.

Because the more we learn – in the laboratory, in working with podiatrists, orthopedists, in studies of biomechanics – the less we see of this so-called “average” runner.

And the more we appreciate the different foot types, gait patterns, body weights, speeds and training schedules.

If success brought us to this crossroads, it has only strengthened our commitment.

Nike is introducing a complete new line of performance shoes. With models for every kind of athlete, every kind of foot, every kind of regimen. And we’re making it easy to choose the right one. Without counting stars, stripes or anything else.

It’s not important whether we live up to someone else’s expectations.

What’s important is whether we can help you live up to yours.
Appendix 2C
The Runner, Sept 1981.
Appendix 4C

The Runner, Mar 1982.
Appendix 5C
A lot of runners believe any
time you design one shoe to
meet the requirements of a wide
range of people, you automatic-
lly give something away in the
process. At Nike, we disagree.
And the Pegasus Plus
could be our best argument yet.
The Pegasus Plus is a direct
descendant of two shoes that
knocked the running shoe mar-
ket for a loop when they were
first introduced. The Pegasus
and the Pegasus Gx. Predes-
sors that put features like NIKE-Air
Cushioning, a Center-of-Pressure
Waffle outsole, and lightweight
versatility within reach for over
2 million runners.

We said then that our R&D
department had outdone
themselves. And quite truly we thought
they’d probably pushed the
Dexterity of the Pegasus as far
as it could go.

But they’d no sooner finished
and they were at it again.
The result is the Pegasus Plus.
The new Pegasus Plus was
designed to improve on the one
feature that most runners can’t
get enough of. Comfort. To pro-
vide it, we slip-lasted the shoe.
So along with flexibility, you get
a more natural fit that makes it
inviting to run longer.

Obviously, that’s going to
mean more footstrokes. So we
kept the already proven NIKE
Air-Wedge. Taken to the extreme;
you could run up to 10,000 miles
in the Pegasus Plus, without
experiencing any break-
down in cushion-
ing. The
rest of the
shoe would wear out first.

At the same time, we look
on another challenge. Stability.
By extending the polyurethane
middle and wrapping it around
the heel counter the Pegasus Plus
centers the heel and provides
better motion control. That, com-
bined with its Center-of-
Pressure Waffle
Outside, makes the
Pegasus Plus
one of the most
stable, friction hungry shoes run-
ing the roads.

Finally, we gave the Pegasus
Plus new reflective piping and
mesh, so you can run at night
without having to look over
your shoulder.

Yet, with all of its new fea-
tures, the biggest
breakthrough
just might be the
one thing
we didn’t
change about
the Pegasus Plus.
It still takes all comers.
Appendix 9C
Anyone with rubber ankles can make a comeback.

Some people's bodies are just different. Those with flat, flexible feet tend to overpronate. Which leads to injury. Which should lead to the Nike Air Odyssey. A superior stability shoe with an anatomically correct fit. A heel base width perfected to the millimeter for rearfoot control. Plus Nike-Air. A revolution in motion.
Appendix 11C
*The Runner, Feb 1979.*

Trail 355 New trainer designed for road training as well as trail or cross-country work, with high-quality carbon rubber sole of Nora-Tuff for guaranteed road-flat durability. An earlier version was rated number one in cushioning (both ball and heel) during *Runner's World* lab tests, and this new sole has that maximum shock absorption combined now with the durability of a radial tire. The flat-head stud provides excellent traction on all surfaces, and the foam-backed polyester-mesh upper adds great comfort and breathability. Men's sizes 6-13, widths A, B, C, D, E, EE, and EEE. (Sizes 13½-15 and widths AA and EEEE available at additional cost.)

See your local authorized New Balance dealer, or send for our free color catalog.
New Balance Athletic Shoe, Inc. 36 Everett Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02135.
Appendix 12C

Runner’s World, Jan 1984.

Survival of the fastest.

The evolution of running shoes is based on a very simple concept: you live or die based on performance. And only the survivors go on to help create the next generation.

That's why our new Dixon Trainers were made in the image of the fastest shoes in last year's New York marathon. Rod Dixon's Saucony racing flats. They inherited features like the "Dixon Mattress," an E.V.A. midsole wedge drilled with holes for extra cushioning.

And a super-soft protective insert under the metatarsal head. The flexible backtab relieves Achilles tension over the long run, and its flatter outsole helps propel you forward. They may be the best training shoes we've ever made. But then they should be. After all, look whose footsteps they're following in.

Saucony®

Division of Hyde Athletic Industries, Inc., 432 Columbus St., Cambridge, Mass. 02143. For a free copy of our new "Construction Blueprints" brochure on our full line of athletic shoes, write our Promotion Department D.
Sometimes it's best to take the long way home.

The shortest distance between two points is not necessarily a straight line. Easier, maybe.
But after years of running, you've learned a bitter-sweet lesson: Short cuts are dead ends. So you put it out through the lows, and hang in there for the highs—those rare, floating moments when the experience is so intensely personal it defies description.
And that's when you know everything you put into running comes back.

Nobody knows that better than the running shoemakers at Saucony. Take our Advance, for example. We put a lot of work into it, but it paid off in a shoe like no one has ever crafted before. In fact, each pair is registered.
The Advance comes close to perfection for protection and control. A unique inner "boots" laces up to position your foot in the optimum location. And holds it there.
A four-density EVA midsole wedge gives you heel stability, a softer toefoot soaks shocks, and a supersoft insert helps protect the metatarsal head against injury.
And down under is a two-color, two-density carbon rubber Bi-Tech outsole, with negative spaces in the pattern that store energy and release it in a population action as you toe off.
The Saucony Advance. Our proud contribution towards the human race.
APPENDIX [“Cities” & “I Love L.A.” Campaigns]

Appendix 1D:

Appendix 2D:
Appendix 3D:
Appendix 4D:
Museum of American History Smithsonian Institution Center for Advertising History Nike Advertising
Oral History and Documentation Collection Project c. 1976-1992 Collection #448, Series 1:
Research Files, Box 1, Folder 2: Advertising agency: Chiat/Day.
Appendix 5D:  
Appendix 6D:
Museum of American History Smithsonian Institution Center for Advertising History Nike Advertising
Oral History and Documentation Collection Project c. 1976-1992 Collection #448, Series 1:
Research Files, Box 1, Folder 2: Advertising agency: Chiat/Day.
APPENDIX [Nikey or Mikey?]
Appendix 1E
Appendix 2E
Appendix 3E
APPENDIX [Nike’s Radical Revolution]
Appendix 1F
AND WORKS.

Nothing works like NIKE-AIR™ cushion in the lab. But just wait till you test it in the real world.

It has already carried world class runners like Joan Benoit Samuelson first across the finish line in numerous marathons and road races.

In basketball, NIKE-AIR™ cushioning is the choice of the pros (Moses Malone), the strong (Charles Barkley), and the limpet (Michael Jordan).

NIKE-AIR™ cushioning is also making an impact on aerobics and low-impact aerobic routines everywhere.

And in tennis, John McEnroe is still proving he's years ahead of the conventional, competing on an Air tour in Air Trainer Highs.

Literally hundreds of the world's best professional and amateur athletes wouldn't compete in anything but shoes with NIKE-AIR cushioning.

At their level of competition, NIKE-AIR™ cushioning is more than a revolutionary idea. It's a matter of survival.

REVOLUTION THAT WORKS.

At the Nike Sport Research Lab, one thing is more important than a love of sports. A passion for science.

Our findings helped develop NIKE-AIR™ cushioning to begin with. And the Sport Research Lab continually puts it to the test.

Using accepted standard testing methods, we measured the impact on different shoes when the foot strikes the ground. The lower the force transmitted through the shoe, the better the cushioning. Here's what we found:

An extra forefoot cushion is crucial because the forefoot strikes the ground first in nearly all movements. Better forefoot cushion reduces the shock that can cause injury to the foot and leg.

We conducted impact studies with the Air Max and nine competitors' shoes. Compared to shoes with conventional rubber materials, the Air Max showed an average of 13% better cushioning, 12% better than Converse, and 8% better than Reebok.

Running: We conducted impact studies with the Air Max and nine competitors' shoes. Compared to shoes with conventional rubber materials, the Air Max showed an average of 13% better cushioning, 12% better than Converse, and 8% better than Reebok.

Basketball: A player lands on a jump with the force of up to 6 times body weight. Better forefoot cushioning can reduce the shock and the chance of injury.

We tested the Nike Air Force against the adidas Conductor, Converse Weapon, and Reebok 6000. The Air Force was shown to have the best forefoot cushioning which was better than adidas, 21% better than Converse, and 8% better than Reebok.

While other systems begin to lose their cushioning with the very first step, the superiority of NIKE-AIR™ cushioning increases with use.

For instance, after 504 miles, the Air Max retained 96% of its cushioning properties. After 400 miles, an EVA-cushioned shoe retained just 67% of its cushioning. After just 40 miles, shoes using Tiger Gel had already lost 8% of its cushioning.

It’s a matter of how different cushioning systems work.

In conventional systems, like EVA, the midsole has small cells containing bubbles of air. When the foot strikes the ground, the air is squeezed out and the cells walls break down or compact.

But in an Air Sole, until the gas can’t escape. The Air Sole unit remains undamaged, mile after mile.

The research that supports these findings assures us that we can provide the best cushioning possible in an athletic shoe.

For concerned athletes and coaches, it can provide an equally important measure of comfort. The facts.
IT'S A REVOLUTION.

Like many revolutionary ideas, NIKE-AIR™ cushioning is simple. Yet, as a feat of engineering, it remains unmatched. Even eight years after we first introduced it, NIKE-AIR™ cushioning is a patented system. It consists of a special gas, pressurized inside a tough, flexible, urethane shell. Called an Air-Sole™ unit, this is what provides the spring-like cushioning. Because after each step or jump, the Air-Sole™ unit springs back to its original shape.

It provides, far and away, the best cushioning available. Cushioning that reduces the chance of foot related injury to the bones, muscles, and tendons of the foot and lower leg. Cushioning that can release muscular energy it takes to run, walk, or jump.

But perhaps most importantly, NIKE-AIR™ cushioning prevents compacts. It cushions as well after 500 miles as it does after the first. After years of improvements, the introduction of new designs, and new applications, we're still uncovering more potential for NIKE-AIR™ cushioning.

For instance, our studies showed that we could improve the level of cushioning by enlarging the Air-Sole™ system. As a result, the new Air Max™ contains three times more air under the heel than any previous Nike shoe.

We're using separate Air-Sole™ units under the heel and forefoot of many shoes, to improve flexibility. We're using new systems in combination with Air-Sole™ units to provide more support. More stability. Wherever cushioning is needed for all kinds of athletic activities. It's in every one of the shoes you see on these pages. All this takes research. Experimentation. Challenges. Worthy of the most capable scientists and engineers in their fields. You can see some of their work right here. And more on the next page.

NIKE-AIR IS NOT A SHOE.