

Do you think Nike anticipated the controversy that greeted its latest ad featuring outspoken activist Colin Kaepernick, and if so, why did it go ahead with the campaign?

Read the first part of the article and compare your ideas to the journalist's.

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Here's the Data That Proves Nike's Colin Kaepernick Ad Is Seriously Smart Marketing

With its instantly recognizable swoosh and slogan, Nike clearly knows a few things about marketing. Which makes it incredibly likely that the company thoroughly anticipated the controversy that would greet its latest ad featuring currently unsigned

NFL player and outspoken activist Colin Kaepernick.



So why did the company go ahead with the campaign?

It's almost certain it ran the numbers and saw that, despite the shoe-burning, boycott-threatening outrage on the right, the move would be good for business.

Those same numbers suggest that, depending on the demographics of your customers, your brand might want to consider doing the same, or risk increasing irrelevance.

Do you think customers want brands to speak out on social or political issues? Read the next part of the article and see what the data says.



Do customers want brands to speak out?

The first question any brand, including Nike, needs to

answer before speaking out on social or political issues is whether customers want to hear from companies on these touchy topics. There is a pretty definitive answer to this question out there, and it is yes.

"People want brands to take stands on important issues," a recent poll of 1,000 American consumers from

Sprout Social found. "Two-thirds of consumers (66 percent) say it's important for brands to take public stands on social and political issues." A 2017 survey from Edelman concurs, finding that the young in particular want to hear from brands. "The majority of Millennials (60 percent) are belief-driven buyers," the poll found.

While a majority of Americans want the brands they interact with to speak out on social issues, there are significant differences among demographic groups. What do you think those differences are? Why do you think brands are increasingly focused on liberal customers? Read the next part of the article and check your ideas.



Younger, cooler, and more woke

But while a clear majority of Americans want the brands they interact with to speak

out on social issues, it's also important to note that there are significant differences among demographic groups. "Seventy-eight percent of

respondents who self-identify as liberal want brands to take a stand, while just about half (52 percent) of respondents who self-identify as conservative feel the same,” Sprout Social found.



The fact that liberals are a lot more interested in companies getting political no doubt made Nike’s decision even

easier. As sports industry analyst Matt Powell noted: “Old angry white guys are not a core demographic for Nike.” The company’s customers skew younger, urban, and liberal, so angering conservatives is probably only going to win Nike increased loyalty.

Not only is Nike’s core audience likely to be sympathetic to Kaepernick and the causes he stands for (in a recent poll, 63 percent of those over 50 said kneeling during the national anthem is never appropriate; just 38 percent of those under 30 agreed), they’re also more

likely to spend on sneakers.

Business Insider’s Josh Barro neatly expresses why brands are increasingly focused on liberal customers: “Socially liberal segments of the public punch above their weight as potential customers (and, in some cases, as potential employees) for these companies. Think about who companies most want to advertise to: people who have a lot of disposable income and aren’t too old. Appealing to senior citizens is a good way to win an election, but it’s not a good way to sell most consumer products and services.”

What do you think the bottom line is when it comes to this sort of marketing? How has the Kaepernick ad worked out for Nike so far? Read the final part of the article and check your ideas.

The bottom line for your brand

All this boils down to a pretty clear case for Nike to risk conservative outrage by featuring Kaepernick, and it also suggests that other, smaller brands may want to consider engaging politically too.

Whether standing up for a cause is right for your brand depends, as ever, on exactly whom you’re trying to appeal to, but if you’re marketing to

young, liberal-leaning urban dwellers, you risk getting left behind if you don’t stick up for your beliefs.



How has it worked out for Nike so far?

The sportswear giant released the first version of its ad on the Labor Day holiday. It featured the quarterback and the slogan: “Believe in something. Even if it means sacrificing everything. Just do it.”

According to Edison Trends, a digital commerce research company Nike sales grew 31% from Sunday through Tuesday over Labor Day this year compared to 2017’s comparative 17% increase.

Have any brands in your country spoken out on social or political issues? Have you ever bought a brand or stopped buying a brand because of its social or political stance?

Find expressions in the article that mean the following.

- 1 make the relevant calculations and analyse the results
- 2 socially aware

Across

- 2 the act of paying a movie or TV show to prominently display a company's product during the film or show (2 words)
4 an advertisement on TV or radio
5 an organised course of activities to promote a product, etc.
6 goods such as toys and clothes that are linked with something such as a film, sports team, or pop group / the activity of promoting the sale of goods, especially by their presentation in retail outlets
9 a catchy musical refrain delivering an advertising message, frequently used on radio or television
10 a person responsible for writing advertising copy and generating creative concepts, often in collaboration with an art director or creative director
12 promote, advocate or popularise
14 a large board used to display advertisements
15 a general term to describe any aggressive advertising technique (2 words)

Down

- 1 the employee who manages the interests of a particular client, typically in advertising (2 words)
3 another word for 14 across
7 a short and memorable phrase used in advertising / a phrase identified with a firm
8 the presentation of an advertising message to a prospective or existing client
11 a clever phrase or melody used to capture the consumer's attention and help make the advertising message more memorable
13 advertisement

 Choose the correct word from the options to go in the gaps.



- 1 We are going to _____ the campaign next week.
a) shoot b) launch c) rocket d) fire
- 2 We can't afford to air the ad at _____ viewing hours.
a) peak b) high c) top d) common
- 3 Our _____ audience is teenagers between the ages of 15 and 19. a) focus b) aim c) objective d) target
- 4 Coca-Cola, Pepsi and Microsoft are _____ names throughout the world. a) home b) flat c) house d) household
- 5 The combination of the different elements of a company's marketing plan is called the _____.
a) marketing combination b) marketing mix c) market combo d) mix market
- 6 Some advertising _____ become so popular they are used in everyday language, like Nike's "Just Do It".
a) catch phrases b) catch lines c) slogans d) copies
- 7 Although the graphics are important, the _____ must be clear if the message is to be understood. a) wording b) copy c) words d) lines
- 8 I don't mind clever advertising, but I hate receiving _____ mail.
a) rubbish b) garbage c) trash d) junk