Final Project: Marketing Plan Paper – Wilson Sporting Goods

Connor J. Ganyo

Concordia University, Nebraska

Author Note

Connor Ganyo, Rec and Sports Studies Major, Concordia University-Nebraska

For MBA-550: Strategic Marketing, Concordia University- Nebraska

Concerns about this writing should be addressed to Connor Ganyo, Concordia

University- Nebraska, 800 N Columbia Ave, Seward, NE 68434.

Contact: [connor.ganyo@cune.org](mailto:connor.ganyo@cune.org)

**Executive Summary**

The goal of this marketing plan

The goal of this marketing plan is to inform the reader about the company Wilson Sporting Goods. The second goal of this marketing plan is to give examples of things Wilson could utilize to strengthen its marketing strategy. This marketing plan fulfills these goals by a company situational/SWOT analysis, market segmentation/competitor analysis, product and pricing analysis, promotion, distribution, and branding analysis, proposing traditional marketing strategies, proposing digital marketing strategies, and a ROMI or Return on Marketing Investment analysis.

**Company Situational/SWOT Analysis**

Wilson Sporting Goods

Wilson Sporting Goods is an athletic equipment and apparel company. It’s one of the most recognizable sports equipment brands in North America (“Wilson Sporting Goods Company,” 2019). Wilson, “has developed a strategy to create products that will improve an athlete’s performance, an approach that emphasizes innovation” (“Wilson Sporting Goods Company,” 2019). Wilson Sporting Goods Co. has $769.7M in estimated revenue annually and has anywhere from 1,000 to 5,000 employees (“Wilson Sporting Goods Co.,” n.d.). Wilson, “manufactures high-quality products for team sports, including basketball, baseball, football, soccer, and volleyball; racquet sports such as tennis, racquetball, and squash; and golf. Wilson also produces footwear, team uniforms, and both high-tech and mass-appeal sports apparel” (“Wilson Sporting Goods Company,” 2019). They also produce equipment for badminton, fastpitch softball, pickleball, and platform tennis (“Wilson Sporting Goods – Official Website,” n.d.).

Product line

For baseball, their main products are gloves, custom gloves, baseballs, gear bags, accessories, protective gear, and stock uniforms (“Wilson Sporting Goods – Official Website,” n.d.). For basketball, their main products are basketballs, bags, and accessories (“Wilson Sporting Goods – Official Website,” n.d.). For football, their main product is footballs (“Wilson Sporting Goods – Official Website,” n.d.). For golf, their main products are custom clubs, drivers, irons, fairway and hybrid clubs, wedges, putters, golf balls, accessories, and complete golf club sets (“Wilson Sporting Goods – Official Website,” n.d.). For tennis, their main products are rackets, tennis balls, shoes, strings, bags, grips, accessories, and apparel (“Wilson Sporting Goods – Official Website,” n.d.). Wilson makes Men’s, Women’s, and lifestyle apparel (“Wilson Sporting Goods – Official Website,” n.d.). For badminton, their main products are racquets and full badminton sets (“Wilson Sporting Goods – Official Website,” n.d.). For fastpitch softball, their main products are gloves, softballs, protective gear, and bags (“Wilson Sporting Goods – Official Website,” n.d.). For pickleball, their main products are paddles, shoes, bags, and accessories (“Wilson Sporting Goods – Official Website,” n.d.). For platform tennis, their main products are paddles, accessories, shoes, and bags (“Wilson Sporting Goods – Official Website,” n.d.). For racquetball, their main products are racquets, racquetballs, bags, accessories, and shoes (“Wilson Sporting Goods – Official Website,” n.d.). For soccer, their main products are soccer balls, shin guards, and bags (“Wilson Sporting Goods – Official Website,” n.d.). For squash, their main product is racquets (“Wilson Sporting Goods – Official Website,” n.d.). For volleyball, their main products are beach volleyballs, indoor volleyballs, and bags (“Wilson Sporting Goods – Official Website,” n.d.).

Strengths

One strength of Wilson’s that’s very apparent through all of their products is that they are very customizable. You can customize baseball gloves, tennis rackets, footballs, basketballs, soccer balls, volleyballs, and all sorts of uniforms (“Wilson Sporting Goods – Official Website,” n.d.). The second strength of Wilson’s is that they own Louisville Slugger, DeMarini, and EvoShield, three booming brands that you see all over baseball. A plethora of college baseball teams use Louisville Slugger bats or DeMarini bats, and it’s almost difficult to find a hitter in baseball these days not wearing an EvoShield on their elbow when they’re hitting. An EvoShield is a protective plate that hitters will either wear on their elbow or ankle to protect from the ball directly striking bone. A third strength would be their involvement in sports like badminton, racquetball, squash, and pickleball. Not many companies have ventured into those sports but Wilson has and they’ve been successful.

Weaknesses

One weakness Wilson has is its golf equipment. The quality of their clubs, balls, and apparel are way behind their competition (zanderson39, n.d.). This makes Wilson unable to market as one of the better brands in golf. A second weakness Wilson has is its marketing being below average. They only market their products by celebrity endorsements, so basically, just professional athletes using and wearing their stuff. Honestly, think about the last time you saw a Wilson advertisement. It’s probably been a long time or maybe you’ve never seen one (Hill, 2014). A third weakness Wilson has is its difficulty marketing as the best of the best in sporting goods (Hill, 2014). It’s very difficult to do this when you compete with companies like Nike who’s enormous and extremely popular.

Opportunities

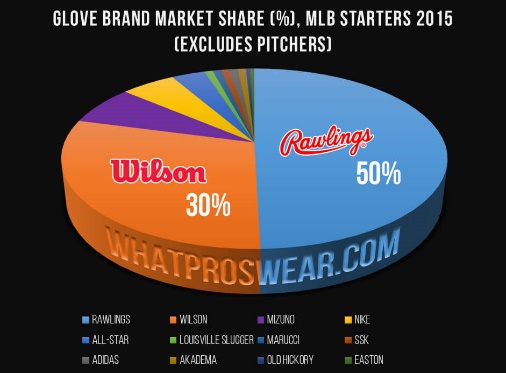
One opportunity Wilson has is the lacrosse market. Lacrosse is a growing sport and Wilson has nothing to do with it. They could easily make lacrosse products but seem to not want to join that market. A second opportunity Wilson has is to focus more on the quality of their products. For example, make Wilson basketballs have a good reputation and quality that Wilson baseball gloves and tennis racquets certainly have. A third opportunity would be to put more of a focus on marketing. There doesn't seem to be many advertisements for Wilson out there if any at all. If they made an advertisement showing their custom baseball gloves or custom tennis racquets, sales would most certainly go up (Hill, 2014).

Threats

One threat to Wilson right now is most definitely Callaway in the golf market. Callaway is a very strong name in golf and would be very difficult to overtake in the market. A second threat is other competitors in golf selling more and more products because golf is becoming a more popular sport(Hill, 2014). The third threat to Wilson would most definitely be Rawlings in the baseball market. Rawlings and Wilson are neck and neck for the best baseball glove. Right now, in baseball, it's almost a question of do you want a Rawlings Heart of The Hide glove or a Wilson A2K or A2000 glove? The problem Wilson faces with Rawlings is that Rawlings is only involved with four sports, baseball being its main one, meaning that it has less to worry about and can focus more on baseball. Most people would say Wilson’s main sport is tennis.

**Market Segmentation/Competitor Analysis**

Porter’s Five Forces

 The environment of the industry Wilson is in is extremely competitive because Wilson takes on so many sports. Their main competitors are Rawlings, Callaway, and Nike. Rawlings makes baseball equipment, softball equipment, basketball equipment, and football equipment. Rawlings and Wilson compete in all these sports markets but are competing for the most in the baseball market. As you can see from the graph on the right, Wilson and Rawlings compete and dominate the baseball glove market right now (Mike, 2015).

Baseball glove brand market share percentage among MLB starters in 2015. (Excluding Pitchers) (Mike, 2015).

Callaway is Wilson’s main competitor in the golf market. They are pretty far ahead of Wilson in the golf market and have a pretty good chunk of the golf market share while Wilson does not. If Wilson wants to be a top dog in the golf market, they’ll need to start making better products than Callaway that people will want to buy over Callaway products.

While Wilson is not going to be as big of a sporting good giant as Nike, they are still competitive in many markets. A huge market that Wilson and Nike are competitive in is football. Nike is more known for making a college type football while Wilson is known for making NFL type footballs. The two brands compete on many other things within football, one being football gloves. It would be a good idea for Wilson to try and match Nike's football glove quality and variety.

Wilson's supplier is Amer Sports and Amer Sports owns Wilson. Amer Sports says about Wilson, “At the heart of sports history for over a century, no other company has been as influential and intimately involved in shaping the games of tennis, golf, baseball and American football as Wilson. As the originator of breakthrough technologies, Wilson has produced legendary classics and earned world-wide legitimacy in each sport it participates in. Backed by generations of athletes, Wilson is the true American icon in the world of sports equipment. Wilson is the number one equipment brand across more sports than any other brand. The company’s core sports include tennis, baseball, basketball, American football, golf, volleyball, soccer, softball, badminton, and squash. Headquartered in Chicago, United States, Wilson employs over 1,600 people globally. The company’s dedicated sales network serves customers in over 100 countries” (Amer Sports, n.d.).

The power of the consumers is being able to shop online or in stores for Wilson products. If you’re a customer that’s more sensitive to price, you’ll probably shop for Wilson products in stores because they’ll be less customizable and therefore less expensive. If you’re concerned about quality, you’ll probably go to a store because you can test the product before you purchase it. If you care about availability and convenience, you’ll probably shop online because you can do that whenever you want and wherever you want. The online option is also very convenient if you were to look at customizing a product.

There aren’t any new entrants into the sporting goods industry that threaten Wilson. Every so often there are new entrants but those are just one location shops usually for a small area, so no new entrants that shoot for Wilson’s size. It is pretty difficult for a new company to move into the sporting goods market and thrive, a great example being Sports Authorities bankruptcy (Ewen, 2016).

According to O’Connell (2019), “The sporting goods market in the United States is a billion-dollar industry. Sporting goods store sales in the United States alone amount to more than 47 billion U.S. dollars annually. This includes many different product types such as athletic footwear, exercise equipment, licensed sports merchandise, and athletic apparel but does not include recreational transportation items such as bicycles, pleasure boats, RVs and snowmobiles. The United States is the key market in the sports apparel and footwear industry holding the lion share of the market with 36 percent.” Yes, it is pretty difficult for a new company to move into this billion-dollar market.

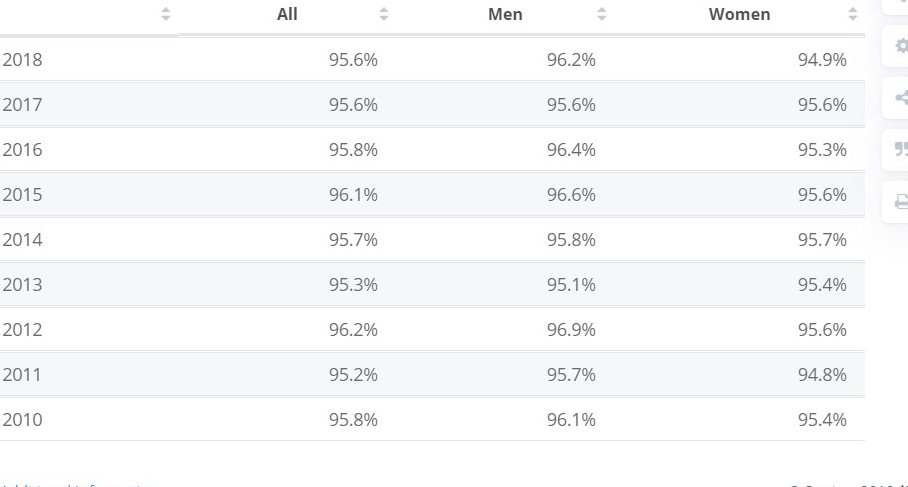
There are substitutes for basically everything Wilson makes. As I mentioned before, three main threats who create substitute products of Wilson’s are Rawlings, Callaway, and Nike. Rawlings makes substitute equipment mainly for baseball, but also softball, basketball, and football. Callaway makes substitute equipment for golf. Nike makes substitute equipment for just about everything, but they mainly butt heads with Wilson in football.

Segment description

The target segments of customers Wilson will be targeting are 40-55-year-old parents of children who are in high school or college. These parents will most likely be the ones who are buying their kids the sports products they need like baseball gloves, volleyball's, or football gloves. The parents we are targeting will be middle to upper class because they will be able to afford all of Wilson's products. Wilson will also be targeting students 16-24 years old who play sports. This age range of students has a great chance of having a job and being able to afford their own products. Students of this age will be more likely to purchase Wilson's products with their own money.

Needs and requirements

Customers buy Wilson because they need sporting goods products. They need sporting goods products because they’re engaged in leisure activities and sports. According to Gough (2019), the chart below, “depicts the daily percentage of U.S. Americans engaged in leisure and sports activities from 2010 to 2018.” So, let’s just say that in 2019, the daily percentage stays at 95.6 percent of people. That means approximately 315,244,000 people in the U.S. alone are probably in need of sporting equipment, and that’s why they need Wilson, a company that provides sporting equipment. They’re going to buy from Wilson and not its competitors because Wilson makes reliable, quality, and customizable equipment. They’re also going to buy from Wilson because it’s a trusted brand with a good reputation.



(Gough, 2019).

Keys to success

The first factor that’ll make the biggest difference within this market is availability because people are constantly in need of new sporting equipment so you must be readily available. The second factor is price because if the price of your products is off, you will fail. If it’s too high nobody’s going to buy the product and if it’s too low, you’re not going to make enough profit from your product being purchased. The third factor is features because your products have to have things that set them apart from the competition. Wilson’s products are very customizable so that sets them apart from the competition.

**Product and Pricing**

Products offered

For football, Wilson sells footballs, football gloves, football accessories, football mouth guards, NCAA apparel, and NFL apparel (“Wilson Sporting Goods – Official Website,” n.d.). For baseball, Wilson sells baseball gloves with much of its revenue coming from the A2K Gloves and A2000 Gloves that are customizable (“Wilson Sporting Goods – Official Website,” n.d.). They also sell baseballs, apparel, protective gear like helmets, gear bags, stock and custom baseball uniforms (“Wilson Sporting Goods – Official Website,” n.d.). For tennis, Wilson sells rackets, custom rackets, strings, tennis balls, bags, grips, accessories, shoes, and apparel (“Wilson Sporting Goods – Official Website,” n.d.). For golf, Wilson sells drivers, irons, woods and hybrids, wedges, putters, golf balls, carry bags, cart bags, accessories, gloves, and complete sets with clubs and bag (“Wilson Sporting Goods – Official Website,” n.d.). For basketball, Wilson sells basketballs, custom basketballs, accessories, bags, and custom uniforms (“Wilson Sporting Goods – Official Website,” n.d.). For soccer, Wilson sells soccer balls, custom soccer balls, shin guards, and bags (“Wilson Sporting Goods – Official Website,” n.d.). For volleyball, Wilson sells volleyballs, custom volleyballs, bags, kneepads, and other equipment (“Wilson Sporting Goods – Official Website,” n.d.). For softball, Wilson sells gloves, softballs, protective gear, accessories, gear bags, stock uniforms, and custom uniforms (“Wilson Sporting Goods – Official Website,” n.d.). For badminton, Wilson sells racquets (“Wilson Sporting Goods – Official Website,” n.d.). For platform tennis (ping-pong), Wilson sells paddles, accessories, shoes, bags, and balls (“Wilson Sporting Goods – Official Website,” n.d.). For racquetball, Wilson sells racquets, bags, racquetballs, and accessories (“Wilson Sporting Goods – Official Website,” n.d.). For squash, Wilson sells racquets (“Wilson Sporting Goods – Official Website,” n.d.). For pickleball, Wilson sells paddles, shoes, bags, and accessories (“Wilson Sporting Goods – Official Website,” n.d.). For apparel, Wilson sells men’s apparel, women’s apparel, tennis apparel, baseball apparel, Louisville Slugger apparel, DeMarini apparel, and EvoShield apparel (“Wilson Sporting Goods – Official Website,” n.d.).

Product mix over time

In 1913, “Wilson & Company, a meatpacking plant in Chicago, began using discarded slaughterhouse byproducts to create strings for tennis rackets, violins and sutures for surgeons.  Sensing a surge in popularity, Thomas E. Wilson, the president at the time, bought out an upstart sports manufacturing company named Ashland and began focusing only on the more profitable sport products. In 1916, he renamed the company exclusively after himself” (“Wilson Sporting Goods history,” 2019).

Wilson was at the forefront for helmet making in football (“Wilson Sporting Goods history,” 2019). Wilson also helped make helmets for war when that intervened in the 1940s (“Wilson Sporting Goods history,” 2019). In 1950, “a new niche and market was created when the National Football League mandated the use of plastic helmets after initially rejecting the idea due to a safety issue (they were considered too hard). Then in 1958, baseball’s American League followed suit by requiring all players don a plastic helmet while batting” (“Wilson Sporting Goods history,” 2019). Wilson was right there to help make these helmets for both football and baseball (“Wilson Sporting Goods history,” 2019).

New products

There aren’t any new products or brand changing redevelopments of products that Wilson can capitalize on. There is a new brand campaign that Wilson can capitalize on though. On September 8th, 2015, Wilson announced, “it has launched a new large-scale brand marketing campaign, called "My Wilson." The campaign is designed to cast the spotlight on the powerful relationship that exists between athletes and their equipment and the journeys and stories they create together. Wilson architected the campaign to create a conversation amongst youth athletes – across a wide range of sports – and celebrate the role their equipment plays in their lives as they pursue their personal ambitions in the sport they love to play” (“Wilson Sporting Goods,” 2018). Wilson’s products do not change based on region or country.

Pricing strategy

Wilson employs the cost-plus method of pricing. The cost-plus method of pricing is a method, “in which they take the cost of the product and then add a profit to determine a price. Cost-plus pricing is very common. The strategy helps ensure that a company's products' costs are covered and the firm earns a certain amount of profit. When companies add a markup or an amount added to the cost of a product, they are using a form of cost-plus pricing. When products go on sale, companies mark down the prices, but they usually still make a profit. Potential markdowns or price reductions should be considered when deciding on a starting price” (University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing, 2015, p. 448).

Wilson also employs a little bit of an odd-even pricing strategy. “Odd-even pricing occurs when a company prices a product a few cents or a few dollars below the next dollar amount. For example, instead of being priced at $10.00, a product will be priced at $9.99. Likewise, a $20,000 automobile might be priced at $19,998, although the product will cost more once taxes and other fees are added” (University of Minnesota Libraries Publishing, 2015, p. 448).

Price as a core component of value

According to Leszinski and Marn (1997), The real essence of value revolves around the tradeoff between the benefits a customer receives from a product and the price he or she pays for it.” Wilson gets value from products based on how much it costs them to make compared to what it’s priced at when consumers buy. The consumer also gets good value based on the price if the product’s benefits are deemed worth it.

Pricing change based on product mix

Wilson uses a product mix pricing strategy. Wilson develops product lines and not single products, so product line pricing plays a decisive role in product mix pricing strategies (Claessens, 2015). According to Claessens (2015), in product line pricing, the firm must determine the price steps between various products in a product line based on cost differences between the products, competitors’ prices, and, most importantly, customer perceptions of the value of different features.”

Using value to determine the right price

Because Wilson heavily utilizes a cost-plus pricing strategy, figuring out how much value they’ll get from certain products is crucial to determining the price. For example (and this is completely hypothetical), if it costs Wilson $50 to make a baseball bat, they're going to have to price that bat at least $50. Now at $50, they're not going to make any money, so they'll maybe price it at $200 to create some value for themselves. If Wilson doesn't think a product of theirs is very valuable, they're going to price it low and probably try to make the product with the cheapest cost possible. They'll do this because they know they can't sell the product at a high price and they want to make some good money off it, so they have to keep the production cost really cheap.

**Promotion, Distribution & Branding**

Audit of Wilson’s brand

Wilson’s brand equity is very solid. It’s one of the most recognizable brands in all of sports (Massingill, 2015). Wilson is and has always been one of the top dogs in the sporting goods industry. They currently produce great quality products for professionals, amateurs, and youth to use in their respective sports (Massingill, 2015).

Wilson can improve and leverage its brand equity by continuing to partner with professional athletes. There’s no better way to better your brand equity or perception of your brand than for beloved professional athletes to use your stuff while millions of people are watching. For example, Wilson needs to continue adding to its MLB Advisory Staff (“Wilson Baseball Advisory Staff,” 2019). This staff includes players like José Altuve from the American League and Ryan Braun from the National League, among many other players (“Wilson Baseball Advisory Staff,” 2019). All these players represent Wilson by using their gear in their professional games, and that’s how Wilson advertises their baseball equipment, especially gloves (“Wilson Baseball Advisory Staff,” 2019). Some of the players even help design gloves (“Wilson Baseball Advisory Staff,” 2019).

Sales promotion strategies

A sales promotion strategy Wilson employs is demo events. They run between 4,000 and 5,000 demo events around the world every year (Scott, 2016). Scott (2016) also states, "Schlegel’s efforts are directed toward telling the same Wilson story across all the events. “We’ve created centralized content about how to run a demo event and insight into new products to make sure they’re talking about them in the same manner we’re talking about them,” he said. At the same time, he wants to make sure he’s aware of local needs and ideas. “How do I make sure that I’m getting insight from them every bit as much as I’m deploying assets to them?” he said.” The references to Schlegel are references to Kyle Schlegel, the global marketing director for racquet sports at Wilson Sporting Goods (Scott, 2016).

Making decisions about executing the strategies

Market research, marketing information systems, and technology give Wilson a good idea of where they should do demo events. If Wilson wants to target a certain population with a demo that doesn’t seem to be purchasing their products, they’re able to do that. If they want to target a certain population with a demo that does seem to purchase their products, they can do that to increase sales even more. Technology certainly plays a positive role in Wilson’s demos. It makes it easier to hold them in general and helps to give better insight into their new product offerings.

Promotion strategies across product offerings

Wilson’s promotion strategies don’t differ much across product offerings. They use the demo strategy to promote all their products. A promotion strategy Wilson utilizes for certain sports that are different from others are Advisory Staffs. Wilson has Advisory Staffs for baseball, football, golf, and tennis. Along with the players I mentioned before, Mookie Betts of the Boston Red Sox and Ozzie Albies of the Atlanta Braves are also on Wilson’s Baseball Advisory Staff (“Wilson Baseball Advisory Staff,” 2019). Russell Wilson of the Seattle Seahawks and Sam Darnold of the New York Jets are on Wilson’s Football Advisory Staff (“Wilson Football Advisory Staff,” 2019). Kevin Streelman and Gary Woodland on the PGA tour are on Wilson’s Golf Advisory Staff (“Wilson Golf Advisory Staff,” 2019). Roger Federer, Kei Nishikori, Serena Williams, and Petra Kvitova are on Wilson’s Tennis Advisory Staff (“Wilson Tennis Advisory Staff,” 2019). As I mentioned before, these athletes use Wilson products in their professional sports which helps promote and advertise the products and brand. These athletes also help create products for Wilson. They're an integral part of new products being designed and created because their input is highly valued.

Distribution channels

The two channels of distribution customers go to satisfy their need for Wilson’s sporting goods are online and in physical stores like Dick’s Sporting Goods. To find their products online, the easiest place to go would be their official website. Wilson is different because you can find their products in both places. Their products are not strictly online and they’re not strictly in physical stores.

If you were looking to get a product customized, the best place to go for that would be online. The process to customize a product is much easier when you do it online. In fact, if you went into a store, the workers there would probably tell you to just go online if you wanted to customize a Wilson product. I know from personal experience that customizing a baseball glove is very straightforward and fun when you do it online with Wilson.

Marketing and sales leveraged to produce results

Marketing and sales are leveraged by Wilson to produce results by trying new things. Because of Wilson’s solid marketing and terrific sales numbers, they’re able to take risks and try different things. For example, Wilson launched an exclusively women’s line of tennis rackets (“Wilson Sporting Goods,” n.d.). The challenge of pulling this off was described as such, “With varying target audiences – industry buyers, opinion shapers, and multi-generational tennis enthusiasts – the launch of Wilson’s first-ever female-specific tennis product line was nuanced and important to get right. This involved earning trust and building buzz with the respective segments while continuing to emphasize the breadth and integrity of the Wilson brand” (“Wilson Sporting Goods,” n.d.).

The strategy for this launch was to showcase the rackets’ unique aesthetics and high-performance technology (“Wilson Sporting Goods,” n.d.). The strategy, “combined a major, buzz-worthy launch event targeted at industry professionals, a media tour, sales support, and product placement efforts” (“Wilson Sporting Goods,” n.d.). Specific tactics included a national media tour, launch event, sales support, and PR tools (“Wilson Sporting Goods,” n.d.). This product launch, “created extensive buzz within the marketplace and within company sales ranks, key accounts, and the industry at large. Hundreds of earned media placements including The Wall Street Journal, Martha Stewart Living, W, O, Women’s Health, and more helped drive sales results that exceeded expectations” (“Wilson Sporting Goods,” n.d.). Marketing and sales are leveraged by Wilson to do things like this which produces results.

Effectiveness of getting products to customers

Wilson gets its products to its best customers and all customers very effectively. They are the largest sports equipment manufacturer in the world, and for 100 years they’ve outfitted professional athletes to weekend warriors (Acquia, n.d.). I'd say being the largest sports equipment manufacturer in the world means you're successful at getting your products to your customers.

Wilson adapts to stay successful at getting its products to its customers. Wilson knew it needed to change its online shopping experience so, “they asked Acquia and digital agency Bounteous to lead a Drupal and Magento integration to provide customers with more engaging shopping experiences” (Acquia, n.d.). By adapting and getting help, Wilson’s revenue grew by 10 percent on their website and by 44 percent on mobile (Acquia, n.d.).

**Proposed Marketing Strategies Part I: Traditional Strategies**

Evaluation of traditional media channels

Wilson has never really utilized various media channels or old media platforms to market their brand. The main way they market themselves is through their Advisory Staffs. These Advisory Staff members reach a target audience and create community because so many people come to watch them play. These people see they’re using Wilson products so it influences them to go out and buy Wilson products. The thought process is that if a professional athlete I look up to is using the product, it must be great and therefore I should use it as well. There is also the element of strictly wanting to be like that athlete so they will get the same products.

Wilson’s way of marketing their products through Advisory Staffs has been extremely effective as you can probably tell because they’re the most popular sports equipment brand in the world. One thing Wilson was ineffective with in the past and needs to improve on is television advertisements. During a 30-day span in 2017, Wilson only had 132 television advertisements air for all sports which gave them an air ranking of 1,774th (“Wilson TV Commercials,” n.d.). Now it's difficult to say that Wilson needs to focus on improving this because they were so successful anyway, but I think improving on these numbers would only help. Allocating a little more resource to television advertisements would only bring Wilson more success. Their job is to figure out how many resources are worth it for improving this area, so figure out the amount of money towards television advertisements that’ll bring them a profit and the amount that would be spending too much. Wilson would then go with the amount that would bring them a profit to improve upon their television advertisement numbers.

Traditional marketing tools for implementation

Wilson's campaign target audience is the parents of middle school children who play baseball, tennis, golf, football, basketball, soccer, volleyball, softball, badminton, ping-pong, racquetball, squash, and pickleball. Wilson’s campaign also targets kids who play these sports in high school and men and women who may play these sports in college or elsewhere. The last target for Wilson’s campaign is professional athletes, teams, and organizations. Wilson’s campaign target market includes parents of middle school athletes, boys, and girls in high school athletics, men and women in college athletics, and men and women in professional athletics, all of whom are of the middle to the upper class.

The first tool I would recommend for Wilson’s campaign would be marketing on social media, especially Twitter. According to Aslam (2019), 37% of Twitter users are between the ages of 18 and 29, and 25% of Twitter users are between the ages of 30 and 49. This means that 62% of people using Twitter are in the age range of being the parent of a middle school child, playing a sport in college, or being a professional athlete. It also means that a lot of Wilson’s campaign target audience is using Twitter so they should market there. Getting Wilson’s products in front of these people on social media is a great way to reach a demographic that would rather not shop in stores. There is no doubt this marketing would help Wilson if executed effectively.

The second tool I would recommend for Wilson’s campaign would be to market on television channels like ESPN. According to Kunst (2019), 35.71% of 18-29-year-old people said they watched ESPN in the past month in 2018, and 49.67% of 30-49-year-old people said they watched ESPN in the past month in 2018. These percentages and age ranges indicate that a lot of the parents of children in middle school, college athletes, and professional athletes are watching ESPN. Odds are that if they’re watching ESPN, they’re involved in some kind of sporting activity and need sporting equipment. You couldn’t find a better place to have television advertisements for Wilson’s marketing campaign. If these advertisements were executed effectively, there’s no doubt they’d reach the target audience and help Wilson’s marketing campaign.

The challenge that I see comes in implementing these tools and it would be the cost. It may be difficult for Wilson to commit to running an advertisement on ESPN or on Twitter because they’re already so successful and wouldn’t want any extra cost at all. They may have the mindset that what they’re doing is working so why incur any more cost. According to Rudder (2019), “Businesses pay $5 to $34 per 1,000 viewers for a local TV ad and an average of $115,000 for national 30-second ad airings.” That’s a lot of money that Wilson may not deem worth spending because they’re already doing well.

I think that because of the things I previously stated, having advertisements on social media like Twitter and television channels like ESPN are opportunities. I think that whatever the cost is for these advertisements, Wilson will make a profit because of the advertisements and that will certainly lead to a successful marketing campaign. The opportunity for that much of Wilson’s campaign target audience to see their stuff on Twitter and ESPN is too much to pass up.

Brand imaging strategies

The Twitter and ESPN advertisement tools I’ve proposed will be employed for brand imaging by portraying a message that Wilson is the best for sporting goods because the best athletes use Wilson products. The advertisements on ESPN and Twitter will show Wilson’s professional athletes using their products to give the message that the best athletes use Wilson so you should use Wilson. It will also give the message that if you want to be the best you should use what the best use.

Sample copy

The first advertisement shown on ESPN and Twitter will be with Serena Williams. It will highlight her winning her 23 Grand Slam titles using a Wilson tennis racket (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019). The end of the advertisement will feature her talking to the camera about how she couldn’t get to the top without Wilson. Tennis will be chosen for this advertisement because it’s one of Wilson’s top two sports.

This approach will be effective because it will show the audience that if you want to be the best you should use what the best use. It will also give the message that the best athletes in sport use Wilson so you should use Wilson as well. The audience that sees the advertisement is going to be influenced into buying these tennis rackets strictly because Serena Williams uses one, although the product is still quality. This advertisement ties into Wilson’s brand because it shows that they’re the best of the best in sporting goods because the best of the best use their stuff.

The second advertisement shown on ESPN and Twitter will be with Mookie Betts of the Boston Red Sox. It will highlight him winning Major League Baseball’s MVP award in 2018 and the World Series in 2018 using a Wilson baseball glove. The end of the advertisement will feature him talking to the camera about how he wouldn’t have won the MVP or won the World Series without Wilson. Baseball will be chosen for this advertisement because it’s one of Wilson’s top two sports.

This approach will be effective because it will show the audience that if you want to be the best you should use what the best use. It will also give the message that the best athletes in sport use Wilson so you should use Wilson as well. The audience that sees the advertisement is going to be influenced into buying these baseball gloves strictly because Mookie Betts uses one, although the product is still quality. This advertisement ties into Wilson’s brand because it shows that they’re the best of the best in sporting goods because the best of the best use their stuff.

**Proposed Marketing Strategies Part II: Digital Strategies**

Evaluation of digital/social media channels

For the most part, Wilson hasn’t utilized various digital/social media platforms to market their brand. Wilson markets themselves through their Advisory Staffs. These staff members reach a target audience and create a community because so many people come to watch them play. The audience that comes to watch sees they're using Wilson products so it influences them to go out and buy Wilson products. The thought processes the audience has is that if a professional athlete I look up to is using the product, it must be great and therefore I should use it as well. There is also the element of strictly wanting to be like that athlete so they'll get the same products.

Wilson is the most popular sports equipment brand in the world, so I’d say their way of marketing their products through Advisory Staffs has been extremely effective. One thing Wilson was ineffective with in the past and needed to improve on was their digital marketing strategy. For Wilson to stay relevant and competitive, they needed to understand and utilize the power of their brand (“Wilson Sporting Goods - More Win - Hanson Dodge,” n.d.). Without an online strategy and no cross-category collaboration between its twelve sport categories, Wilson used Hanson Dodge to unify its brand position and marketing efforts with, “brand-level activation that would inspire the next generation of sports enthusiasts to connect with the Wilson brand” (“Wilson Sporting Goods - More Win - Hanson Dodge,” n.d.). They developed the "More Win" position and it created a platform that could increase the collective power of Wilson's twelve sports offerings (“Wilson Sporting Goods - More Win - Hanson Dodge,” n.d.). Hanson Dodge helped Wilson make a multi-year brand and digital vision with every component, “from launch video, print ads, social, promotions, webcasts, packaging and POS, amplifying the new unifying position” (“Wilson Sporting Goods - More Win - Hanson Dodge,” n.d.). A new Wilson website was also created to unify their twelve sport category sites into a single brand site, “with dynamic user experience, fully supported e-commerce and detailed, best-in-class product pages” (“Wilson Sporting Goods - More Win - Hanson Dodge,” n.d.).

Digital marketing tools for implementation

Wilson’s digital campaign target audience will be the same as their traditional campaign target audience. The first tool I would recommend for Wilson’s digital campaign would be marketing on social media, but on a different application like Snapchat, not Twitter. Of American internet users between the ages of 18 and 24, 78% used Snapchat in 2018 (“Snapchat Statistics and Revenue: Snapchat by the Numbers,” 2019). Among Americans 25 to 29 years old, 54% of them were Snapchat users (“Snapchat Statistics and Revenue: Snapchat by the Numbers,” 2019). That’s an enormous amount of people in Wilson’s target audience age range using Snapchat.

The second tool I would recommend for Wilson’s digital campaign would be beefing up on search engine optimization. By investing more in this, it can improve Wilson’s website by helping it rank well in search engines like Google for searches related to Wilson’s products (“6 Best Online Advertising Strategies,” n.d.). All of Wilson’s target audience uses search engines like Google, and it would be perfect for Wilson’s website to show up first on any search related to sporting goods. The top three results on searches earn 35 percent of clicks on desktop and 31 percent on mobile (“6 Best Online Advertising Strategies,” n.d.). Beefing up search engine optimization would definitely lead to more revenue for Wilson.

The one challenge I see is the cost of implanting tools like this. Wilson may think, why incur the cost of beefing up on search engine optimization or running an advertisement on Snapchat when we’re already so successful? The cost for Snap Ads campaigns start at $3,000 a month, and that doesn’t include the agency fee, or the cost to create the ad you would run (“Snapchat Advertising Costs - A Breakdown Of Each Offering,” n.d.). Wilson may deem that not worth it.

Running an advertisement on Snapchat and beefing up on search engine optimization are opportunities themselves. The swipe-up rate for Snap Ads is 5 times higher than the average click-through rate for other comparable social platforms (“Snapchat Advertising Costs - A Breakdown Of Each Offering,” n.d.). Whatever the cost, I think Wilson will make a profit from these tools which will lead to a successful digital marketing campaign. The opportunity for that much of Wilson’s digital campaign target audience to see their stuff on Snapchat and search engines is too much to pass up.

Brand imaging strategies

Advertising on Snapchat and beefing up search engine optimization will be employed for brand imaging by portraying a message that Wilson is the best for sporting goods because the best athletes use Wilson products and Wilson is what people first think of when looking for sporting goods. The advertisement on Snapchat will show Wilson’s professional athletes using their products to give the message that the best athletes use Wilson so you should use Wilson, because if you want to be the best you should use what the best use. Wilson is also the best for sporting goods because it's at the top of the web page when you're searching for sporting goods, and because it's what people should first think of when searching for sporting goods.

Sample copy

The advertisement on Snapchat will be with Mookie Betts of the Boston Red Sox. It will highlight him winning Major League Baseball’s MVP award in 2018 and the World Series in 2018 using a Wilson baseball glove (Castrovince, 2018). The end of the ad will feature him talking to the camera about how he wouldn’t have won MVP or won the World Series without Wilson.

This approach will be effective because it will show the audience that if you want to be the best you should use what the best use. It will also give the message that the best athletes in sport use Wilson so you should use Wilson as well. The audience that sees the advertisement is going to be influenced into buying these baseball gloves strictly because Mookie Betts uses one, although the product is still quality. This advertisement ties into Wilson’s brand because it shows that they’re the best of the best in sporting goods because the best of the best use their stuff.

**ROMI – Return on Marketing Investment**

Anticipated adjustments

The one adjustment I anticipate for Wilson would be preparing their website for higher than normal traffic once these marketing tools go live. Advertisements on ESPN and Twitter with Serena Williams and Mookie Betts are surely going to bring more traffic to Wilson’s website. An advertisement on Snapchat with Mookie Betts and better search engine optimization are also certainly going to bring more traffic to Wilson’s website. All things from the website down to the delivery need to adjust and be prepared for these tools to go live.

Anticipated competition reaction

I anticipate Wilson’s competition to react to these tools by doing the same thing. Companies like Rawlings will run an advertisement on ESPN and Twitter. They’ll also beef up their search engine optimization and run an advertisement on Snapchat. Wilson’s competition will most likely want their websites to also be at the top of the page for any searches about sporting goods. They’ll also want the world to see what products and athletes they have on their teams on ESPN, Twitter, and Snapchat.

Margins and overall marketing strategy

This reaction by Wilson’s competition means that Wilson needs to continue making the best products and marketing that they have the best products. It's up to them to get people to choose to purchase their products over products from a competitor like Rawlings when someone sees an advertisement from both of them on a platform like Snapchat. There’s no better influencer into getting people to purchase your products than having a good reputation for making quality products, and the best way to gain that reputation is to truly make quality products.

**Conclusion**

What’s next

Wilson needs to take advantage of the position they have in the sporting goods market. They may be at the top but there’s no reason they shouldn’t separate themselves even more from second place. Wilson should consider advertising on television channels like ESPN and social media applications like Twitter and Snapchat. Their target market heavily uses these applications and watches ESPN so advertising on these things has a chance to be extremely effective. There is always risk involved when making changes like this but I think it’s a risk worth taking because there is potential for huge payoff and Wilson can easily afford it.

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