

Barth Research Essay

In Dr. Lefkoff's Introduction to Marketing class, BMGT350, I was asked to "assume the role of a marketing consultant making suggestions for ways to improve the effectiveness of the marketing mix being used by an organization to attract a target segment." I began by considering the topics that interested me most, thinking that my enthusiasm would turn a chore into an activity. Growing up, I had always played sports that required certain athletic equipment, jerseys, and leotards. I remembered typically wearing *Adidas* apparel. After indulging in this nostalgia, I conducted research on the Adidas Company to learn about its brand recognition and marketing campaigns. Concluding that Adidas is consistently ranked second in the market after *Nike*, I thought it would be an appropriate brand to research and suggest improvements regarding its marketing mix. I conducted thorough research on Adidas and its presence in China, specifically in the youth domain, and converted my research into a strategy that Adidas could potentially use to engage the youth of China.

When I began my research I visited the official Adidas website, reading previous annual reports to educate myself as to the company's current positioning and its long-term goals. I learned about its continued expansion and its global logo penetration in the open market. Furthermore, this provided me with the foundation to conduct research on other websites. I keyed many of the significant words I had come across from the annual reports into other information sources such as Reuters, China Daily News, Yahoo Finance, and, of course, the University of Maryland library portal. I found that going straight to the source was a beneficial step in narrowing my research. I also utilized the techniques I learned in freshman year on library day to narrow down the number of sources found. I used asterisks to include a particular word in any tense or quantity (e.g.: "*cause" will also locate articles with the word "caused" or "causing;") In addition, I used the ">" and "<" functions to include an article only if it fit my requirements (e.g.: "3<") greater than three mentions of the term "Beijing Olympics".)

At the University of Maryland, there are a tremendous number of resources made available, which I utilized fully. One such resource was the business librarian, Lily Griner, whom I contacted via email and in person with inquiries. She explained the different methods of citation when an author has written multiple articles, and helped me

locate an article that had previously been inaccessible. Ms. Griner was speedy in her responses, which allowed for my research to progress smoothly.

In terms of my evaluation methods of the articles I encountered, I ensured that they involved vocabulary at a high caliber and/or a high density of information that was applicable to my topic. My sources included the Adidas website, the Wall Street Journal, case studies, and articles from Chinese newspapers to make my research as relevant and authentic as possible, the latter of which was a very effective way to learn about Chinese markets. Business Source Complete, via the University of Maryland library portal, was also very helpful as I was able to find information about the apparel industry and the competition that Adidas faces.

Throughout my research I learned about the goals that Adidas has set for itself as well as China's reception to its products and marketing. I examined the nature of collectivism in China, exploring how its youth fits into this mentality and way of life. I made it my goal to give advice on how Adidas can help Chinese children veer away from this mentality in the realm of athletic activity. In my opinion, this is one domain of their lives where they deserve to be acknowledged for their individual prowess.

I thoroughly enjoyed this exercise as it allowed me to step out of the typical mindset of an accounting major, which focuses on "punching numbers" on a daily basis. Upon completion of the research paper, I decided to take this newfound enthusiasm and pursue a second degree in marketing. This dual-degree will enhance my academic career by exposing me to a wider array of information and give me the foundation necessary to be an effective businesswoman. My research has allowed me to explore my creativity, and encouraged me to stay motivated, despite the arduous academic process. I plan to apply my newly honed research skills toward my academic career and ultimately my professional work.