

adidas Case Study

Empathising with the multicultural mind-sets of global target audiences.

Problem

No growth. No strategy.

Founded in 1949 by Adolf “Adi” Dassler, global footwear, apparel and accessories brand adidas needed copy for its Mass Customization Initiative (MCI).

More commonly, MCI is known as the **mi adidas** strategy, which allows customers to design their own footwear. Not only is this strategy pertinent for style-conscious consumers, it helps adidas innovate via direct feedback loops on trends, which is a win-win strategy in anyone’s book.

Problems facing adidas:

- Persuading global customers of the product benefits.
- Retain strong personalised messaging that would resonate with diverse cultures.
- Defining communications for each sport category.
- Connecting with multicultural target audiences from all around the world.
- Exhibiting the characteristics of mi adidas footwear in a fresh way.

The key problems facing adidas were how to connect with multicultural target audiences around the world and exhibit the characteristics of mi adidas footwear in a fresh way.

Confident in my ability, I accepted the request from Tim Jeffrey to help devise a strategy for the communication messaging and write the copy for this global marketing campaign.



Note

Thousands of companies launch new products and solutions every year. However, the default approach is to bang on about how great the product is.

Wiser to employ empathy and understanding and really get into the mindset of the target audience first, and then connect with these needs, fears and wants. Not doing this work is a recipe for mediocre results.

Businesses are then at risk of not putting their best foot forward, shelving perfectly good products and entering a never-ending cycle of new product development when the communication strategy, or website, is actually to blame.

When empathy steers strategy, and strategy drives decision making, the results can be exceptional.

Solution

In their shoes...

With a clear scope and schedule in place, I commenced work on the project, keen to get into the mindset of target audiences.

Empathise then strategise

A key part of this project was developing empathy toward each of the sportspeople within each product category and sport. As this was a global marketing campaign that would target all major cities around the world, getting into the multicultural mindsets of the target audiences was key too.

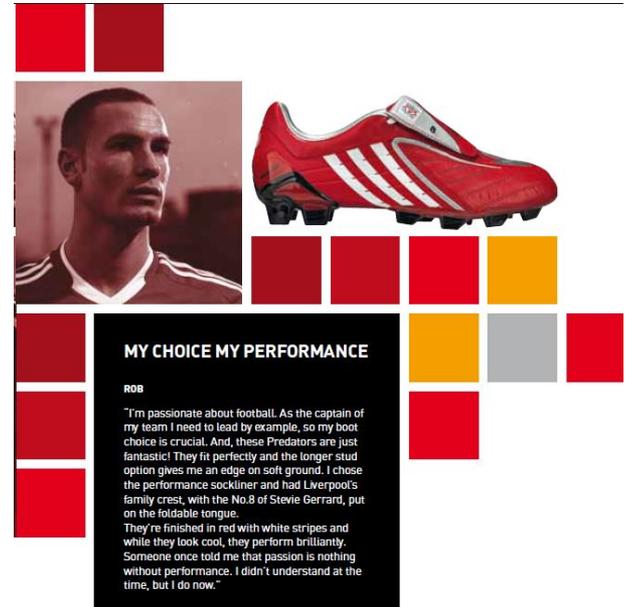
To achieve this, I put myself in their shoes and interviewed athletes who were passionate and serious about football, tennis, basketball and running. I also interviewed everyday people who enjoyed sport on a fun or semi-serious level.

I felt the lung-busting pain and euphoric highs of serious athletes, and the aspirations, commitment and insecurities of enthusiasts.

This research enabled me to write an emotionally intelligent selection of copy for each product category that helped target audiences to identify with the product's characteristics and the choices inherent in the mi adidas range of footwear.

Because the communication strategy was focused on helping adidas customers achieve their performance goals, by choosing the product characteristics they felt would improve their performance, 'passion is nothing without performance' steered my messaging design. This line of copy was integrated into Rob's profile (Right).

Passion is nothing without performance



MY CHOICE MY PERFORMANCE

ROB

"I'm passionate about football. As the captain of my team I need to lead by example, so my boot choice is crucial. And, these Predators are just fantastic! They fit perfectly and the longer stud option gives me an edge on soft ground. I chose the performance sockliner and had Liverpool's family crest, with the No.8 of Stevie Gerrard, put on the foldable tongue.

They're finished in red with white stripes and while they look cool, they perform brilliantly. Someone once told me that passion is nothing without performance. I didn't understand at the time, but I do now."

Result

Exponential growth in sales

Once translated, the copy was deployed around the world in the form of in-store posters, point-of-sale items, brochures and digital communications.

The campaign helped power a new sense of enthusiasm for the mi adidas range of footwear; sales have grown exponentially in recent years.

Testimonial

“Stuart - Sharp and responsive to a brief that grew daily in its complexity. The piece demanded clear insight and in-depth understanding of product features and benefits. However, the real test was in representing the cultural aspect of each of the disciplines featured.

The outcome was highly successful in delivering a well-rounded representation of the sport its people and client product.

His patience and flexibility was invaluable in helping deliver the project, crucial in any working relationship and why for us, Stuart is on the team.”

Tim Jeffrey

Retail Director,
i-am associates (adidas agency)

THE PERFECT MATCH

MARIA

"I need to look perfect on court. I'm obsessive about it. Finding 'my' look perfect has become a ritual before I go on. If I look perfect I can focus on my performance. Kianic always looks amazing on court. She's so beautiful. I like her dresses and now I can match the colour of my shoes with my dress. I like things to match. My newest dress is silver and lime, so I went with matching silver gray uppers and lime stripes for my shoes. I play much better when I look perfect."

MY PERFECT FIT

KOVA

"I've finally found a pair of running shoes that fit perfectly! Overpronation is a problem for me and because I have quite broad feet, I've always struggled to get the right fit. The mi adidas foot analysis is a revelation. I was advised to go with the pro-moderate™-option and a slightly wider shoe. I feel so comfortable when running now. These shoes are perfect for me. I chose the colours top and sole with purple and white. It's brilliant to have your own shoes made for you. My morning run is now a complete joy."

UNIQUE AND ELEGANT

PHILIPPE

"Great performances aren't achieved by chance. It takes hard work, talent, and the right sports gear. I will do anything to improve my game. My performance on the pitch is everything to me, so the boots I choose have to be perfect. With Adidas, I had 3 options for the sole: firm ground, soft ground and indoor. I bought two pairs. One for soft ground in the winter and one for hard in the summer. For a unique look I chose blue and white stripes. These boots are elegant and uniquely balanced."

ONE OF A KIND

CHRIS

"My new kicks are one of a kind. There's no danger I'm gonna find anyone else wearing them which is so cool. I learned something game-relevant for the uppers and as I live in Miami I went for a palm tree print. I can also change my style for each game with the interchangeable stripes. They have 360 degree CLIMACOOL™ technology, so my feet are dry for the whole game. These shoes are just awesome. They look cool and feel great underfoot. None of my friends have anything like this."

Want to connect with your target audiences?

Solving business problems and helping to achieve outstanding results is what I do.

If you'd like to talk about how I can help your business, please get in touch on stuart.wood@stuartwood.co.uk.

Lucky?

Other examples of my work

I have more than twenty years' experience improving the performance of businesses.

Suzuki

The UK was Suzuki's fourth largest market in Europe. It's now its No.1 market in Europe.



Mind Tools

Mind Tools was stuck on £800k turnover. It's now turning over more than £1.6m.



RAW Productions

From sales in decline and three inferior websites to achieving a 30% growth in sales.



Time to talk?

If you'd like to talk about how I can help transform the future of your business, please get in touch.

Get in touch

You can contact me directly on stuart.wood@stuartwood.co.uk or by visiting www.stuartwood.co.uk.

