



Pinterest, 2015

# **Nike Athleisure Trend Report**

Anna Baldwin and Lana Banjavcic

# Introduction

Oyster Magazine, 2015

In a world where style and practicality collide, come fashionable sneakers made by brands such as Nike. Maybe you're wearing them in public because you have just come for the gym, or maybe you do not even exercise at all!

This new fashion wave has taken workout footwear out of the gym and into the streets of mainstream society. Whether an individual is trend setting or following a trend, consumers are constantly aiming to express their social identity and aesthetic tastes. This can be done through the latest seasons threads, which either set consumers apart or allows them to blend in with contemporary society. We believe that Nike's selling power is driven by these particular desires, and in turn, creates enthusiasm and loyalty to the brands products.

After conducting research from both primary and secondary sources, we found that the growing health and wellness trend has contributed to the high demand for stylish trainers. The 'athleisure' trend, which is the broader movement of wearing Nike shoes in casual settings, has allowed athletic wear to become increasingly acceptable in a wide variety of social situations (Petro, 2015). Casual and 'athleisure' is no longer just a trend consumed by people of all ages, but has evolved into a type of lifestyle (Petro, 2015).

Therefore, the following report will explore the consumption of this growing trend, specific consumers who partake in this craze and the manipulation created by the media, which ultimately influences the trends popularity.



Nike, 2015



Our research found that this trend is extremely widespread and exists in places all over the world. Nike has effectively engaged consumers through this colossal fashion wave and has marketed their product to suit their mission statement; “to bring inspiration and innovation to every athlete in the world. If you have a body, you are an athlete” (Nike, 2015).

It is the leading branded shoe, followed by Converse, Adidas, Vans and New Balance. Nike has also been noted as the world’s largest supplier and manufacturer of athletic shoes, apparel and other sports equipment with their global yearly revenue amount to be around 30.6 billion U.S. dollars. Their footwear specifically, has sales of 90 million dollars which is 65 million more than the following front runner of Adidas (Petro, 2015).

The recent trend in ‘athleisure,’ combining athletics and leisure, and Nike footwear is particularly strong amongst Millennials and tweens. This lifestyle can be characterised by wearing casual bottoms and tops for everyday living (Phalguni, 2015). Mark Parker, the chief executive of Nike, continuously sees this trend as an opportunity to further grow the business (Phalguni, 2015). He is extremely optimistic about fashion focused active wear at a premium price, particularly within the shoe sector.



Nike, 2015



# Sub-Groups



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We have identified two sub cultures which participate in this trend, being the 'fashionista/hipsters' and the 'gym junkie'.

## The Fashionista/Hipster

A hipster is someone who wears Nike sports shoes, particularly the Nike Roshe. They pairing of a sports shoe with casual wear, particularly jeans and a t-shirt, can identify them. They follow the latest fashion trends in hoping to differentiate themselves, yet they just end up being apart of a group of everyday consumers.



Pinterest, 2015

## The Gym Junkie

Your stereotypical healthy lifestyle living enthusiast. These people genuinely shop for work out shoes to improve their fitness and physique. They are generally seen at the gym or outside a raw food or paleo café. They are the real deal and wear work out footwear for it's main purpose.



Fame Watcher, 2015



Nike, 2015



# Potential Market

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As a fashion and lifestyle statement, we noticed that consumers in Brisbane were turning to the Nike 'Athleisure' trend due to the performance, convenience, comfort and aesthetic features they involve. This was particularly apparent within 'the fashionista/hipster' who consume the Nike trend for fashion and lifestyle trends and the 'gym junkie' who consume the Nike trend for the performance-based practice of exercise. This growing consumption of the Nike 'athleisure' trend among Brisbane consumers ultimately shows the trend has become a controlled and manipulated construction of a new market due to the culture of mass media, marketing and advertising. Ultimately, we have found the mass of manipulated consumers are participating in this mass produced commodity trend (Featherstone, 2007). In western society, it is believed the symbolism in the design and imagery of a product and its marketing process is linked to the symbolic association of goods that are utilized and renegotiated among consumers to emphasize differences in lifestyle which distinguish social relationships (Featherstone, 2007).

Vogue (2012) describes this symbolic association of goods as a specific system consumers come up with as it helps them to figure out where they fit in, in society and argues especially with the current economy, with individuals losing status, maintaining a sense of who they are becomes even more important. Our clothes and the commodities we consume help place us as consumers and individuals where we think we want to be. Unfortunately when society doesn't have a specific system, people come up with their own system (Vogue, 2012). This capital logic among modern day consumers has become the reason for the progressive destruction of traditional and high culture, creating a new idea of 'mass culture', the culture of a capitalist modernity contributing to the cultural dissemination and mass consumption of the Nike 'athleisure' trend (Featherstone, 2007).

Nike has ultimately engaged in the growing 'athleisure' among their consumers, continuing to market their product to a demographic that participates in both a performance-based lifestyle and the rising niche market of fashion and lifestyle trends. The Nike Roshe style were debuted in 2012 as a part of the growing niche market of Nike's 'to live' styles, that are considered to be part performance, part lifestyle and a hit for its comfort and low price and has been one of Nike's most popular and successful sneakers in history due to the 'athleisure' trend (Complex Sneaker, 2015).



Nike, 2015



# Discussion

Daisies at Dawn, 2015

In a conducted ethnographic study of participant observation we found 23 consumers wearing Nike footwear within a 30-minute span of observation in a busy shopping center. Out of those 23, it was observed 2 female and 1 male were wearing Nike footwear with an athletic appeal, compared to the remaining 20 consumers appearing to be wearing Nike footwear for the aesthetic appeal. This ethnographic study of participant observation translates to a statistic of 86.95% of consumers we found to participate in the 'athleisure' trend.

Furthermore, we conducted two separate qualitative interviews with employees from Nike stores situated in busy shopping centers to ensure a comparative view on the trend. Of those qualitative interviews, we were informed of the rising 'athleisure' trend among consumers especially among the rising niche market of Nike's 'to live' trending styles:

"The black and white Nike Roche 5.0, all the girls come and buy them as casual shoes just to wear with their outfit. I wear them with my outfits all the time. I have them in every different colour and style as the brand and style is aesthetically fitting among consumers" (Emily, Nike Store).

*"I feel the brand gives the consumer a feeling of status, also they are aesthetically fitting among consumers whether it be for fashion and lifestyle or for performance practice. The casual Nike types that are popular among consumers are Nike 3.0, 4.0 & 5.0, Roshe 3.0, 4.0 and 5.0 and Nike Airmax" (Emily, Nike Store.)*

**"I wear Nike everyday as casual shoes because they are comfortable and easy to walk around in all day or be on my feet at work all day. The Nike Roshe are by far the most popular style, both guys and girls come in and buy mainly the black and white ones, which seems to be the most popular among consumers. I suppose it gives an athletic lifestyle look, which seems to be the most recent fashion and lifestyle trend" (Jordan, Nike Store).**



Nike, 2015



# Discussion

Trackie Nation, 2015

Additional secondary research from the NPD Group, U.S. shows consumers spent \$323 billion on apparel, footwear, and accessories in 2014 – a 1% increase over 2013. That 1%, however, shows \$2 billion of sales driven by consumer spending on active wear and performance footwear driven by the ‘athleisure’ trend (Petro, 2015). Investors.com (2015, p.1) also stated, “revenue was very strong in all markets, Nike is doing a very good job of diving the industry with very compelling products that the consumer is demanding.”

Concluding our research, we believe the trend has become a controlled and manipulated construction of a new market due to the culture of mass media and its effects of marketing and advertising exposed to consumers, ultimately manipulating those who participate in this mass-produced commodity culture.



Nike, 2015





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