



lululemon athletica Brand Analysis

Lululemon athletica is an athletic apparel brand that embodies four core aspects: the technical function of its products, the people it appeals to, its stores, and community relationships. Lululemon athletica's mission statement is, "creating components for people to live longer, healthier, fun lives." The brand is meant to promote a healthy lifestyle, and create clothing that can last a lifetime; therefore, the company promotes high-end athleisure wear that is made to last and is backed by five-year quality assurance. The brand's personality is one built on goal-chasing, motivation, and community values that target a niche market usually in urban areas.

An important part of lululemon's brand is its logo, a red, stylized "A." This originated from the company's original name, "athletically hip." When the new name, lululemon athletica, was implemented it had specifics to remain lowercase to appear laid-back to its audience. And sales associates are referred to as educators, also always lowercase, to reflect the same appearance. The company wants to implement this relatable feeling to create a space where customers feel comfortable finding clothing not just for their workouts, but for their everyday lives and goals. The 'educators' are trained to ask what the purpose of the purchase is, or what the customer's ultimate goal is. This drives forward the brand's goal-setting value, instilled by its founder Chip Wilson.

This goal-setting value is shared by a lot of lululemon's primary competitors. Nike, Under Armour, Inc., Athleta, and Gymshark all try to promote this value in different ways, but with the ultimate goal of supporting client endeavors. Nike's Fuel Band has taken strides in guiding its consumers, and lululemon has recently followed with its recent product, the Studio Mirror. This product is an at-home workout program with world-class trainers to help motivate and train. The Studio Mirror was created to keep up with Nike, remain innovative, and remind customers that the lululemon brand values busy schedules.

One thing that sets lululemon's brand aside is its niche market. The company has stand-alone stores and an online presence, but its competitors are also sold in some department and sporting goods stores. This broadens the audience for companies like Nike and Under Armour whose goals are to reach a vast market. Nike's "Just do it" and Under Armour's "make all athletes better" slogans reach their target market for the everyday athlete. These two brands appeal to a larger audience in the context of size, gender, geography, socioeconomic status, and even age. Nike and Under Armour's brands are centered around the idea of inspiring athletes. Whereas, lululemon is more geared towards a healthy lifestyle and the convenience of athleisure.

Lululemon is purposeful in its intention to remain in-store only with hopes of growing personal connections with its customers. It's supposed to be an experience when customers enter

a lululemon store; one where they feel valued and motivated to reach their goals after speaking to an ‘educator.’ Athleta also does an impressive job with this niche brand personality but is even smaller because it is female-only. Gymshark’s brand is also geared towards a smaller community, but one centered around traditional workouts such as weight-lifting and running. This differs from lululemon’s brand which primarily focuses on yoga and more whole-body health exercise.

Lululemon consistently utilizes phrases such as ‘healthy,’ ‘stylish,’ ‘convenient,’ ‘choose better for the planet,’ ‘unique,’ ‘sharp,’ ‘standout,’ ‘weightless,’ and ‘sustainability,’ throughout its website. The visuals evoke these phrases with put-together and sharp-looking models that motivate the customer to look like the picture. The pictures under each product have outfits that show the model in various situations, from working out to daily life activities. All of this implies that if the customer buys lululemon athleisure wear he or she will be more motivated to workout and will perform tasks efficiently. A phrase on the website states, “Build strength, gain speed, and find balance in a shade – or matching set – that’ll spark some motivation.” This expresses the ideal of ‘look better, feel better,’ reminding customers that if they look the part they may feel more inclined to workout.

Lululemon reaches its market by prioritizing personal connection with its customers. Most of the advertising budget is spent on sponsoring sporting events and creating community connections through in-store promotional activities. Lululemon stores offer complimentary weekly group yoga sessions taught by ‘educators,’ and host goal coaching opportunities. These forms of outreach reflect the people-oriented brand that lululemon has strived to become to have a competitive advantage in the market. In contrast to its competition which utilizes mass media, such as television and print to promote its sales.

Lululemon also has a strong social media presence with 82% social media interaction with its customers, ranking it the highest among its competitors. All social media accounts and the website are seamless in brand identity portraying an organized format. Every platform is minimalistic and utilizes red, white, and black to create a sophisticated look. The brand’s social media universally uses the hashtag #thesweatlife on posts about customers and their athletic accomplishments. The lululemon Instagram specifically posts about individual customers who attended the company’s sponsored sports event, and their personal stories. The social media team responds to customers’ comments and reposts stories and TikTok videos that the company is mentioned in. This creates an online community for lululemon to gain ideas and receive constant feedback, as well as grow customer loyalty.

Lululemon’s target audience is an educated, goal-chasing yogi in her thirties who is willing to spend a little more money because she values quality over quantity. She is upper middle class, active, motivated, trendy, health-cautious, and an urban citizen. She wears fitness clothing in her daily life going from a workout to errands to leisure all in her lululemon leggings.

Lululemon’s brand voice is effective in reaching the audience it strives to connect with. The brand voice has room to grow in the male market and is currently working to make strides with this demographic. When people think of lululemon, they think of high-end, quality

athleisure that is worth the price because it will last them a lifetime. Lululemon customers are loyal and continue to support the brand because of their satisfaction with the products.

Lululemon and its customers work together to stay motivated, constantly innovate and improve lives, and promote community connection. The lululemon values are what give the brand a strong presence in the market, despite its niche audience. And the consistency of its sophisticated brand image will help lululemon remain in competition with the bigger and broader athletic apparel companies as the industry continues to mature.