

Nike: She runs

SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA: Nike organises a night race for women in Australia to reach out to a female target group.



Challenge

Nike was the top consideration for female runners but Asics was seen as the running specialist and the brand most likely to be recommended to others. Nike set about changing this perception, determined to turn the situation around.

Nike was strong in running but Asics had a slight edge in shoes, especially in female shoes. Nike had always designed shoes specifically for women's feet but had never communicated exclusively to females. This was a challenge-cum-opportunity.

The media challenge was to find a way to connect with female runners and get them talking about Nike in running.

Insight

Nike found out that apart from young females who took their running seriously, running was an individual pursuit dominated by men and male-targeted communication.

When women ran, they ran alone - often left to overcome their fears and achieve their goals by themselves. To Nike, this seemed at odds with women's natural inclination to discuss, share and overcome barriers together. Unlike male runners, female runners loved to chat with people like themselves about running and the challenges they faced in going for a run.

Running for young women lacked something fundamental to the female psyche: a forum to discuss, share, achieve goals and overcome barriers together.

Solution

Nike ignited the conversation through Nike's social media channels - stimulating chat around the barriers women face. It was during this conversation that Nike identified the need to tackle the biggest barrier amongst the community: running alone at night. Nike decided to challenge women by announcing that it would hold a 13K night race for female runners. Nike solicited the help of young runners to be the voice of the brand; their posts brought instant authenticity to Nike's community. The brand encouraged runners to share their running experiences.

With 87% of young female runners running with their phone, an app was a logical device to provide inspiration and motivation. The app had live, sharable content generated by Nike and runners. Recruiting for the run meant using ambassadors across multiple channels. Each had content made about their story which was then used to recruit other women. Nike sought out where runners congregated and discussed running/fitness, then placed its ambassadors in those environments with QR code activated videos. Efforts included tie-ups with Fitness First gyms, posters on well known running routes, Cosmopolitan partnership including editorial feature on night running and advertising, website integration with cosmopolitan.com.au via editorial content, impactful display pushing through to race registration on Facebook and a running workshop.

Nike replicated its approach within universities, recruiting ambassadors who networked and recruited within clubs, societies, sporting groups, gyms, sport and faculties on campus. They also put up posters across the five campuses, fired off eDMs to 39,834 students and used their own social channels.

Each ambassador held weekly run clubs in different locations around Sydney, allowing women to not only train for the 13K run, but also to connect with other women along the way. Race night was where the community came together. Runner journeys were published via all media partners and owned media.

Results

Nike was onto something by the speed of growth of the community and the high engagement levels (16,000 likes and 14,000 people talking about it within one month). Nike run clubs are still happening on a weekly basis - now training for the next big event.

Nike smashed down its own barriers too, exceeding all expectations and KPIs.

It built a community of 54,762 female runners: 83% above KPI. 98% of the digital community positively engaged with Nike: 40% above KPI. 90% of runners surveyed via Facebook intended to run the race again next year: 13% above KPI.

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