

### Designing a Marketing Experiment: Puma Skateboarding

**Introduction:** I am focusing on Puma, a German multinational corporation that sells athletic apparel including shoes, shirts, shorts and other lifestyle products. Puma has seen a resurgence in their basketball division after signing higher-profile clients including basketball players in the National Basketball Association but this marketing campaign will focus on Puma's newest sneakers in the skateboarding category. The independent variable will focus on increased television advertising of its skateboard sneakers and the dependent variable will focus on shoe sales.

The experiment being utilized for this campaign will be the before-after design. The reason for choosing this design makes it easy to compare the effects of increased television advertising during a specific time on sales for this product.

**Experiment design:** The independent variable I am focusing on is increased television advertising and the dependent variable is sales for Puma's newest skateboard sneakers.

The test will be run in Portland Oregon, with a population of just around 650,000 people and the control group will be in Milwaukee Wisconsin, with a population just around 590,000.<sup>1</sup> These two cities are very comparable in size and other key demographics and have a well-known skate culture, making these two cities logical choices and statistically significant for this experiment. These are also two of the larger television markets in the country, and this is important to note for this experiment because it will reach a lot of consumers.<sup>2</sup>

This experiment will run from June to August in Portland, a time of year where the weather is most suitable for skateboarding and outdoor activities. Sales will be recorded for this time period as well in both the test and control markets. The change in sales during the experiment will be then used to calculate the lift in sales for Puma's newest skateboard sneakers. Likewise, the X Games, a celebration and competition of Action Sports that airs on ESPN, is a perfect event to run more targeted and specific television advertisements for Puma's newest skateboarding sneaker.

The experiment does follow the first three rules of causality. However, the experiment has no control over the fourth rule, which deals with the presence of external factors. There is no external factor impacting the

experiment, but the issue of competition from other brands is something to be considered in this category where consumers can be loyal to its skate brands.

Conducting this experiment in the summer is a key ingredient of this campaign and performing it outside of the summer months (i.e. winter) might have an effect due to weather and seasonality of the sport where consumers may be less inclined to look at skate products and perform skate activities.

Likewise, Nike and Adidas stores are located in Portland (with Nike's world headquarters in nearby Beaverton, Oregon), and there could be other grassroots activations and events tailored to the skateboard community implemented by these brands during the same time period and serve as a viable alternative to Puma. Likewise, lower prices from other sneaker competitors could adversely affect results of this field experiment.

**Outline a second version of the experiment that tests in another medium:** Social media advertising would be the alternative form of media for this experiment given that it can reach a large number of people with far less expenses. For example, there could be an opportunity to run sponsored advertisements of videos of skateboarders wearing Puma's newest shoe skate product on Instagram, where a younger audience tends to spend its time on social media.<sup>3</sup> While television spots could reach skaters and outdoor enthusiasts in a city like Portland watching the X Games, digital media can be shared with friends, family and other skaters in the community while watching or consumer skateboarding.

Puma would have the opportunity to lead consumers to their website to buy or check out the newest skate shoe whereas television advertising's call-to-action could be a specific URL that a user would have to enter. The aforementioned social media medium would yield more informative results as it relates to social media interactions, engagement and potential sales metrics for the newest skate product considering how easy it is for consumers to research, view and buy products on their mobile devices. Digital experiments provide an immense amount of data that can be pulled for a specific time frame that can be used and updated and tested as more information about core consumers becomes readily available.

## Sources

<sup>1</sup><https://www.census.gov/topics/population.html>

<sup>2</sup><https://mediatracks.com/resources/nielsen-dma-rankings-2020/>

<sup>3</sup><https://www.statista.com/statistics/325587/instagram-global-age-group/#:~:text=As%20of%20Jully%202020%2C%2033.8.platform%20particularly%20attractive%20for%20marketers.>